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dialogue

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Dialogue

Volume 35, Issue 2

November/December 2002

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Editorial

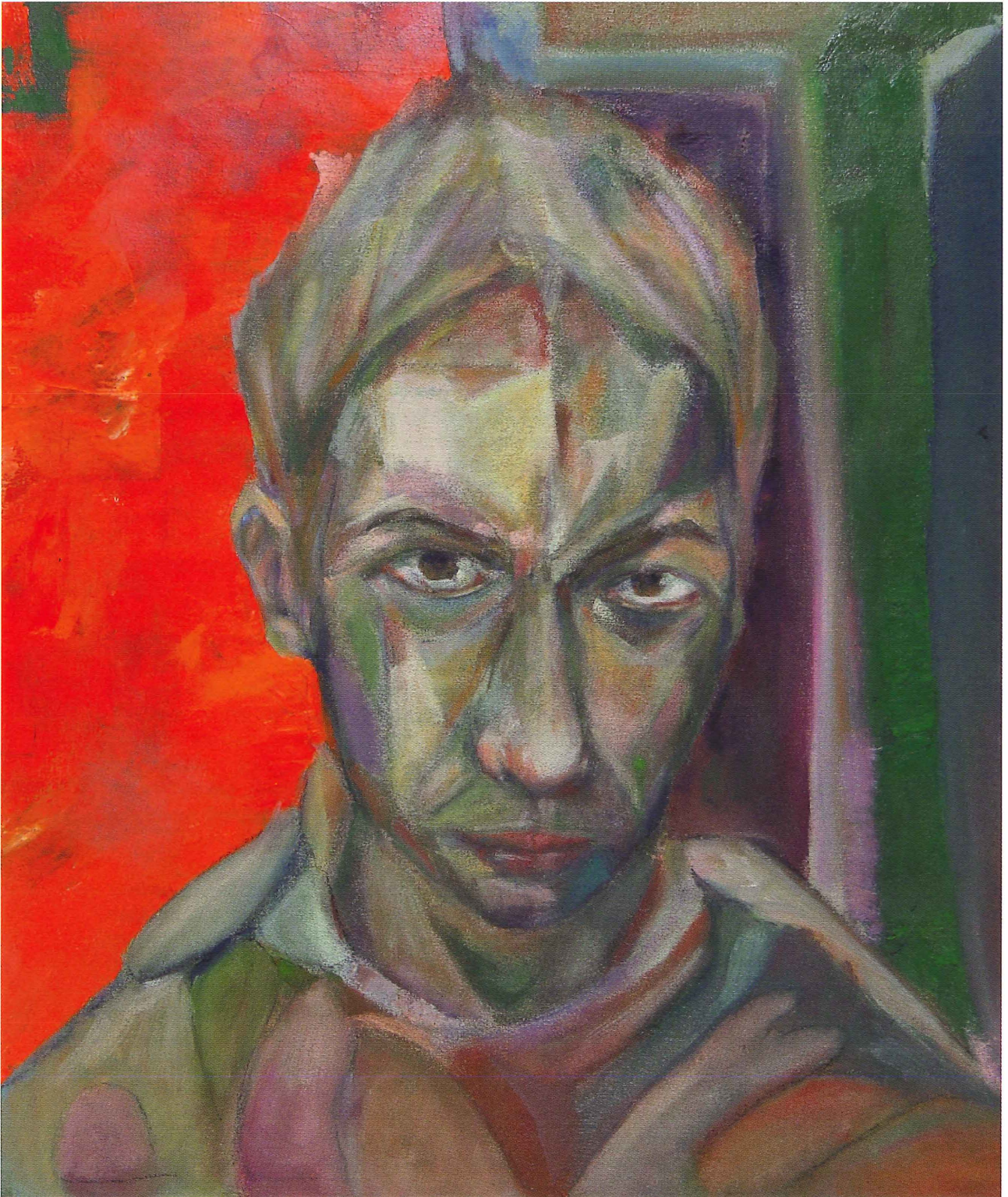
Meagan Luhrs

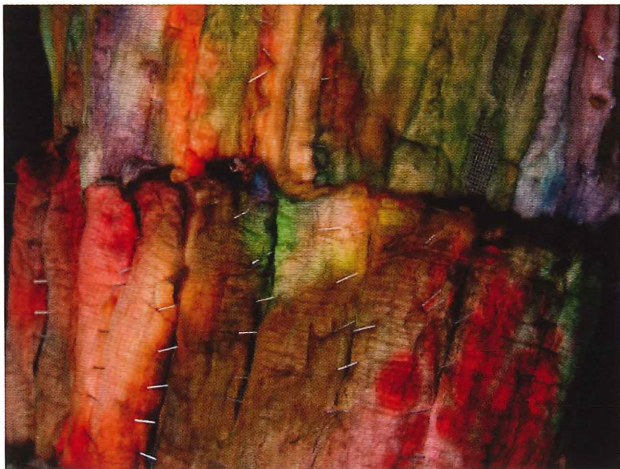
Co-Editor of *Dialogue*

On the second floor of the De Vos Communications Center, in the Political Science Department, one would find *Hood*, a lithograph by the German artist Gerhard Richter. The work is part of a recent acquisition made by Calvin in order to enhance their permanent collection and to create a broadened understanding of contemporary art. As one can see from *Hood*, Richter poses questions to numerous communities of viewers with engaging subject matter and varying methods. Though eminent in Europe, Richter remained relatively unknown to the American public until Robert Storr, Curator of Painting at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, developed the exhibition *Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting*. What Storr illustrated most effectively was not only Richter's prolific career, but also the ease with which he oscillated between various styles. Though critics constantly imbue categories and labels upon his work, Gerhard Richter refuses narrow definitions and allows his techniques to work in conjunction with one another. Both his methods and philosophy are not easily defined; he holds little allegiance to any specific movement, style, or art historical trend.

Artists such as Gerhard Richter challenge our assumptions about the categorization of art; however, this does not seem to be an isolated trait as many contemporary artists and poets also refuse categorical limitations. In the last couple of weeks, the *Dialogue* staff has engaged these questions on a local level. During a recent critique of literature, our staff came across a somewhat unconventional poem. We offered our opinions and debated issues of form, style, and voice until one member stated, "this may be art, but it is not a poem." This comment spurred a good deal of discussion and challenged us to consider how types and categories affect our criteria for judging submissions to the journal. If we encounter an arrangement of words with 14 lines and an alternating rhyme scheme, we assume this to be a sonnet, and therefore judge it accordingly. However, a free-verse poem allows for a less stringent set of rules. Is it fair to judge Art, in its most general sense, with fewer standards than a haiku, a ceramic vase, or an installation? Does it even matter if a creative work is art or poetry? Considering an arrangement of words is not merely visual, in what manner is it not merely literary? Further, is the emotional, conceptual, or aesthetic value lost when an art object or piece of literature cannot be classified into a specific genre? After numerous debates, it appears that once the visual or literary develops beyond the familiar, we become, simply; confused.

Despite my background in English and Art History, I feel rather unequipped to answer these questions. What I have learned, however, is that the postmodern era is laden with discussions such as these, and they will most likely increase. Perhaps my reluctance to fully engage this debate on categorization is indicative of the postmodern condition as well. Still, our everyday actions are indicative of our attitudes towards labels and specificity. If the staff of *Dialogue* were without standards or conventions, it would be impossible to select works for each volume of the journal. Each of us comes to the words and images before us with a lifetime of opinions about the definition of art and its purpose in our lives. We come with categories--we come with criteria. While our experiences are essential to the task, the immobility of visual and literary conventions can impede the process of developing a journal with thought-provoking elements and mediums. The works that most effectively capture our eyes and thoughts engage both tradition and progress, thus connecting the familiar and the unknown. This balance is precarious, though indispensable to transforming customs into the contemporary.





Cancer, Communion, and Christmas

Chad Engbers

Grandma's kitchen smelled of warm soup as I stepped in from the cold December night. I stomped the snow from my boots and softly said, "Hello?" I heard mom's quiet voice from the other room: "Come in, Chad; get yourself something to eat."

Grandma was dying of cancer, and mom had been living with her in her townhouse condominium for several weeks. Mom's brother and sisters were all there, too: Marcia had come in from Lansing, Julie from New York, Mel from Montana. I was in the habit of stopping by the condo after a full day of work and school. Usually I would find them all sitting in the living room—talking, crying, praying, laughing—while from the dark bedroom came the slow rasp of Grandma's breathing. It was approaching Christmas time, but it didn't feel like Christmas. Now and then the small condo would fill with the fits of warm laughter characteristic of our family gatherings, but in the weeks just before Grandma died, the house typically felt heavy and empty. Friends from church provided hot meals at least once a day—the various pans and crock pots on the counter seemed never to run dry of homemade food. And we were always hungry in those days.

Several weeks earlier, Grandma had asked me what I thought heaven was like. She had been feeling just strong enough to move from her bed to the couch, and she wondered what it would be like to fly on angels' wings. It had snowed heavily the night before, and I remember looking out her sliding glass doors into the blinding whiteness of her front yard. There were no twigs or leaves showing—not even the shadow of a slight snow bank. Is this what heaven is like? A white so bright and clean that the eye cannot even choose a place to rest? I was relieved to see her so happy; the loss of independence had been difficult for her. She had lived alone for nearly fifteen years, and she had filled her days visiting shut-ins and running errands for elderly friends who needed some help. No fewer than three of these friends told me at her funeral, "Your grandma took care of everyone—especially me." Cancer had changed all of that, though she was no longer even able to care for herself. I looked across the living room at her on the couch, empty and feeble. She looked very sick. I tried to think of her pale complexion and bare scalp as a sort of snowy heavenliness; I could not. So I tried to think with her about what God and heaven would be like.

In some ways it is impossible to think of God at times like this. How can you truly talk of someone who transcends all time and suffering when your first thought is for the dying mortal speaking to you what may be her very last words? But in other ways it is absolutely necessary to think of God at these times, because at these times God represents the only hope beyond death, and without that hope your first thought—your every thought—will end in despair. So I tried again.

I tried to describe for my grandmother my notions of God. He does not know a past; he does not know a future. All times are present for God because he transcends time. He "was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be," as the song goes, but that is to cast him into temporal terms—which we need to do because we are finite creatures, limited in our understanding. We cannot even speak of God as he truly is; we can only hope someday simply to know him so. A poster on my grandmother's refrigerator door read "Do not be afraid of tomorrow: the Lord is already there."

We run into similar difficulties trying to describe God's existence in space—how can you give shape to a being with no edges, no places at which his presence ends? It is like describing an endless field covered with newly-fallen snow: you can let your eye wander until it is blind from the brilliance, but you will not find a bare spot or a jagged twig to provide you with a point of reference. After I stopped talking, my grandmother and I sat silent for a time. I do not know what she was thinking, but I was thinking how relieved she would feel to claim immortality for herself. Watching her suffer the physical and psychological trauma of cancer with her characteristic patience, I wondered if she wanted immortality as badly as I wanted it for her. Soon, I thought. Soon she will not know weakness. She will not know humiliation. She will not know hunger. The hopeful lines from a favorite folk song kept running through my head: "Secure yourself to heaven; hold on tight, the night has come. Fasten up your earthly burdens; you have just begun."

But as the days passed, I recognized that this hope was only possible because Jesus had seen immortality completely differently. Although he enjoyed more power and glory than my grandmother would ever achieve, surpassing by far our highest hopes for her, he understood his divine status not as something to secure or hold on to, but as something to let go. "Have this mind among yourselves," writes Paul to the Philippians,

which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

The Greek word *kenosis* signifies this self-emptying. It is one way of explaining how a single being could be simultaneously divine and human—an infinite identity in a finite creature. Jesus simply emptied himself of those qualities which were incompatible with a human form—those very qualities which I so deeply wanted for my grandmother—and allowed himself to suffer a cruel and humiliating death.

Why would he do this? As true God, Jesus had the power to ease all human suffering in an instant; he could have fed the hunger of the world with five loaves and two fishes; he could have cured the poison of our pain and never tasted one drop for himself. Yet he confined himself to the body of a single man; he resigned himself to a life of thirty-some years, and he willingly suffered an excruciating death among a mob of bitter enemies. Why the unnecessary sacrifice?

Hebrews 4:15 speaks of Jesus as a high priest who is able to “sympathize with our weaknesses . . . one who in every respect has been tempted as we are . . .” There is power in weakness. It is the power of empathy: the unique bond shared only between companions in suffering. We identify with Jesus more deeply than we ever could with some transcendent deity who has never known what it's like to be lonely, to be desperate, to be hungry. We recognize in him something of our own weakness; we find in him a friend willing to share our anguish in full. And we can barely comprehend the greatness of the loss he suffered in order to meet us this way. It is simultaneously comforting and humbling to know that, for us, a God became man.

A few weeks before her death, in early December, Grandma asked to receive the Lord's Supper. Because she was too weak to leave her bed, a pastor friend of hers agreed to perform the ceremony in her bedroom. The family formed a circle around her and joined hands; I stood at her side and held her warm, wrinkled hand in mine. When the elements were served, I did not let go. With my right hand, I received the body of Christ, broken for humanity: the very token of his *kenosis*. With my left hand, I held what seemed to be the epitome of human weakness. As I ate the bread and drank the wine, I thought of three things. I thought of cancer and the feebleness of human life. I thought of Communion, our acceptance of the empathy offered us through Christ's emptiness and pain. And I thought of Christmas and the omnipotent God who, out of unhuman love, emptied himself to become a naked baby in a box of straw.

Beginning to cry, I closed my eyes. In the darkness, I thought I saw a human form, broken and humbled. As I stared past his tangles of hair and into his deep black eyes, I heard a quiet voice ask, "Do you know me?"

Radioactive Jesus, Abril 25, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Ben Frederiksen

Twinkle twinkle twinkle little lights of life

A million candles of

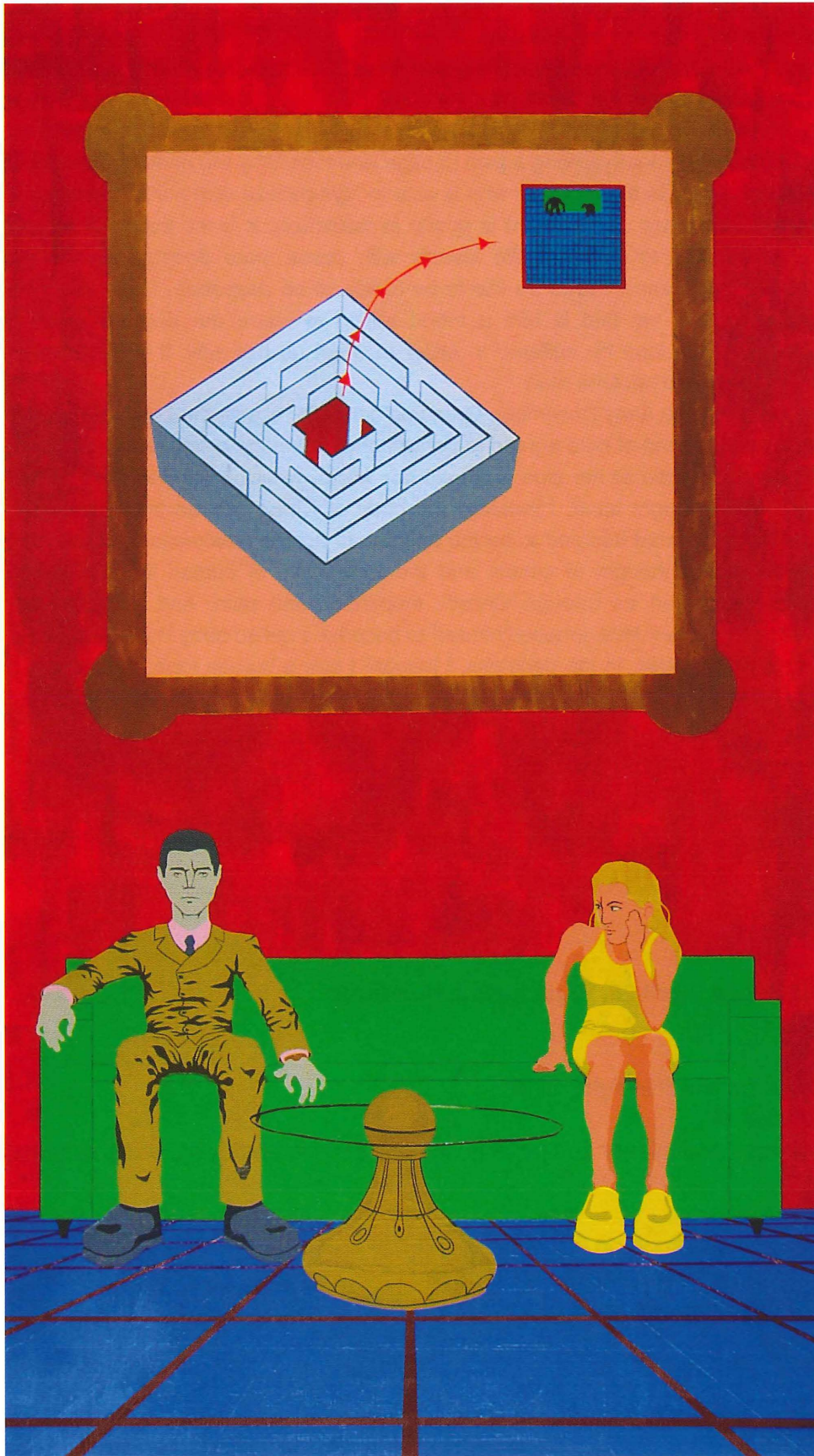
Hope and dreams and misery and poverty and sex and life and dying and eating and laughing

And Sweet Jesus

Glowing radioactive orange on the hill

Looking out over us all with outstretched arms

Sweet Jesus watching with tears running down



Black Roses

T. C. Avery

I'm going to cultivate black roses
so I can send them to the
girl I do not like in any way whatsoever.
And maybe then she will think:

'That's nice,
he gave me black roses.
It must have taken years to find them.
I wonder what he thinks of me.'

Then I'll laugh, sigh, inebriate, cry,
and go on looking for someone else
to give black roses to;
someone I don't care anything about.

Untitled

Zachary Campbell

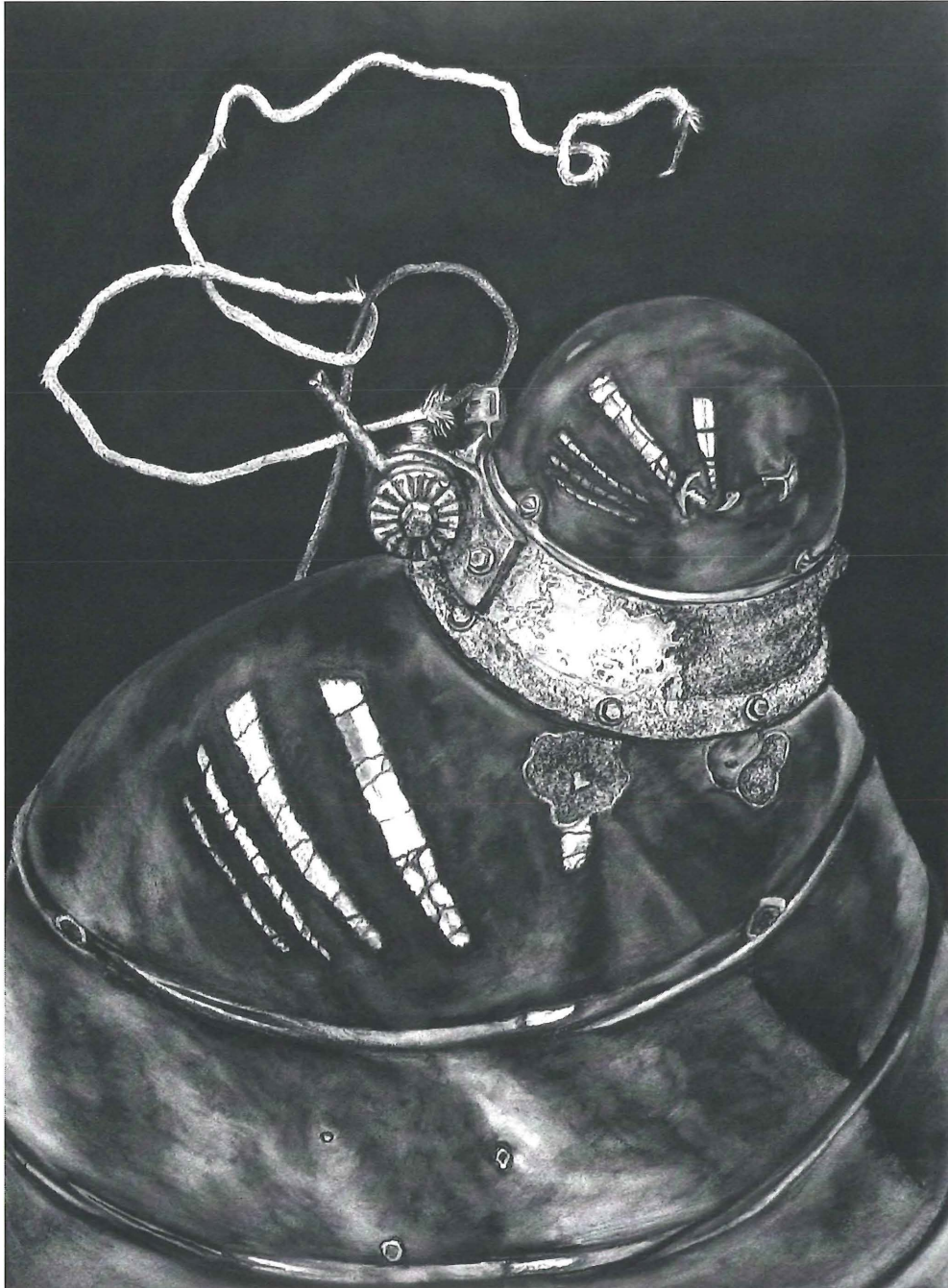
(scene opens with _____ and _____ in the middle of involved phone conversation)

_____: ...I'll think of you as a present that some-one else gets to open for the rest of their life.

(Pregnant Pause)

_____: Think of me as a telemarketer, and it won't be so hard to hang up the phone...this time.

(_____ hangs up the phone, and some-where some-thing dies, and in a Woods, one path becomes two again)



cop-out

zachary campbell

i plagiarized the anthem of my generation
and ripped off some shit
that jesus said once
in a study bible
in red print.
mistakes and i
take turns making each other
and really mostly this idea of an original success(etc.)
is doomed
because i'm just some guy
with,
so far,
a legacy of dirty pain and half-assed love
who, probably,
will not do something or say something or think something
that's much different
than every single thing that's come before me
like the 1960's
or the ice age,

or exist even faintly in minds 500 years from now
except more generally
as a specimen of 21st century man
and
when looked at in this sort of light
(or darkness),
my motivation sort of breaks down
and i don't feel like jumping readily
through hoops
or jumping
in bed with capitalism,
anyways.
so i'll just sit here for awhile
on the bottom of this ocean
or this swimming pool
because beauty isn't always believing in yourself
as much as realizing what you are.

Heaven-Haven

Nathan Sytsma

It is very appropriate, at certain times of the day or night, to look deeply into objects at rest.

Pablo Neruda

I have desired to go
live among the bookshelves,
leaving every clock-watched thing—
except, perhaps, fresh pure paper
and free-flowing pen
with which to trace my steps
through nave, labyrinth, and font.

I have desired to look
deeply—as a poet on an island
with sea-vertebrates and driftwood—
to look deeply into spines at rest
among enticing covers turned,
where, instead of mastheads,
aspire only stories, only words.

I have desired to forget
myself, fingers passing through
wood pulp until elbow-deep
in liquid ecstasy of syllables
so that, sinking further, I could
swim among fibers of language,
dive into cool pools of lines.

And I have asked to be
where other readers wander—
in wooden corridors where,
finding me lying there,
they will turn me over tenderly,
remarking each to the other,
“how gracefully, how carefully

the letters stroke across his pages,
the dim light glides across his pages.”



November, PA

Noah Borgondy

All right, I won't fool you--won't try and make something up. Certain stories are asking to be told, and I don't think it would work if I tried to avoid those and tell you different ones. For you, it would be like chatting with me at a party, while I'm looking over your shoulder for someone that I'm hoping will show up. And I won't do that to you.

So I'll tell you a story. I'll tell you what's on my mind: Autumn - October turning into November. All I've had are the crude elements: anti-freeze purchased at a supermarket in Pennsylvania, a blue drum set, a mobile home, Ricky's Pizza (they deliver), and, among other things, a chained-off, grown-over driveway leading into the woods. I have always left it at this, out of what I thought was reverence or respect, out of silence for mystery and pain and mourning. But now it's the story floating in my head - insisting that it be set free.

The thing is that I've never read the real story, not in the main character's very own words. But I have felt the story, maybe even understood it. I have tasted it and cried it and seen the leaking roof. And I have had to bear witness to the leaves falling, over and over, every fall since then.

Tim.

There are parts of Tim's story that are not mine to tell. But there is also this: maybe there isn't such a definite division, maybe our stories are all connected. And that's why, in trying to tell you just my story, I am finding that parts of other stories are all wound up in it.

To get Tim's story maybe you'd read the letter that he wrote, except that you can't, because it's lost. I think that if you were to read the letter it wouldn't be a beautiful or heroic thing, just a sad thing, a depressed thing. It might talk about the roof of the mobile home, how it was leaking. Maybe Tim wrote, "I tried to fix it myself because Mobil was laying people off, and I was one of them. Mike took my keys from the company truck, and I knew he didn't like having to do it, but he had to. So I fixed it myself, the roof, because I didn't have the money to have someone else do it. But I had to call a guy out here anyway. He says it's worse now than if I just hadn't messed with it at all."

Maybe it says something like that. Maybe it's less concrete, speaking not of events but of longings felt for love and acceptance. Whatever it says it probably goes downhill, sinking deeper and deeper. And then, on the last day of October, it would end. No more words.

A few days after that someone would have found Tim, dead, in the woods across the street from his mobile home. Lying there, his face against the cold and brittle leaves, a bed of stark, faded colors. His beard, his glasses, maybe a stocking cap to keep the cold from his balding head. He put on his coat, his fingers fumbling with the zipper. Then he took his hat out of the right front pocket and put it on his head, then his gloves from the left pocket and put them on as well. He walked outside.

I don't know, I'm making that part up. I'll stop. He did, though, have a large quantity of anti-freeze in his body.

My story is that a few days after the end of the letter, my sister and I would step off the bus after school to find my father waiting for us, at the bottom of the long driveway, with tears in his eyes. "They found Uncle Tim. He's dead."

Tim was my uncle, my mom's little brother. He lived in Pennsylvania. What I have of his story are pieces, like rough sketches or old snapshots, from people's memories. There's one of him when he is very little, when he hated to take naps and would only do so outside: It's winter and Tim is asleep in his crib, which is outside in the back yard, and his mother has wrapped him up in a big warm snowsuit.

And then he used to stack plastic cups in the kitchen to entertain his baby sister, my Aunt Julie, sitting in her high chair. They'd get as high as they could go, the baby smiling all the while, and Tim's mother, my Grandma, would come in and tell him to stop playing with the cups, at which point they'd all come crashing down, the baby bursting into laughter.

He worked hard at two paper routes so he could buy a drum set. He loved the fair and when he joined a band he got to play at it, up on stage with the Ferris wheel and all its lights turning in the distance - I know this because I was there.

And there's one snapshot that really is a photo: I'm little, sitting in Tim's lap in front of his blue drum set, with drumsticks in my hand, like he is teaching me to play. We're both looking at the camera with big smiles on our faces.

I saw that picture at the funeral home, on a bulletin board set up with pictures of Tim. I stood there, looking up at it and crying, and someone came and put their hand on my shoulder and told me that Tim was very proud of us, meaning my sister and me.

And I know that he loved us, too. For Christmas he never knew what to get us, like our parents and grandmas and other aunts and uncles did. So we always got those envelopes with the cards in them made just for gifts of money, each with a \$20 bill in them.

And I remember that somehow it was awkward. That somehow the twenty dollars was more than just a Christmas gift, and maybe even more than just a lot of money for Tim, it was Tim's way of saying he loved us.

Not everyone knows how to express their affection well, and maybe a harder thing than that is to receive it. So you wonder if there was something you did, if somehow you scoffed at a beautiful gesture because you couldn't see its beauty for its embarrassment, whether the embarrassment was yours, or the giver's, or both.

Rodney.

Rodney's story comes about two months after Tim's death, when school let out for Christmas break. Remembering it now, I notice how each year the joy of that last bell seemed to lessen, not really by leaps and bounds, but in small fragments. Not that I didn't enjoy the break - it was nice to have the time off to be outside in the snow, and the following day we'd be heading on our annual Christmas trip to Pennsylvania. Maybe it's just that I didn't think I could keep up with the tradition of being bright-eyed and joyful on Christmas morning. It was nice, but it wasn't as magical anymore, and maybe that felt like failure.

Anyway, my father took my little sister and me out to lunch at The Bear, a local restaurant on Main Street. My mom stayed at home that day, getting ready for the trip. It would be a hard Christmas for her as it would be the first without her brother, so my father said we should give her some time and decided to take us out to lunch. He was explaining to us that mom might be sad this Christmas as we ate.

The restaurant wasn't too crowded. Besides us, two ambulance drivers sat at a table in the middle, and a small gathering of middle-aged married couples sat at the big table in the back. They wore sweatshirts and flannels and mesh hats and boots, and they were laughing and talking loudly. On a few of the women's sweatshirts were brooches appropriate for the season: snowmen, angels, Christmas wreaths.

It was a sunny day outside. Cars drove by on Main Street, past snow plowed up into small hills lining the curb, past store windows glistening in the sunlight. People walked by The Bear, some with stocking caps and gloves, some with red ears and their hands in their pockets, some with plastic shopping bags. Everyone had visible breath in the cold air.

My father was talking to us while my sister ate her Frosted Flakes and I ate my scrambled eggs. In mid-sentence he leveled off some of the whipped cream from his pumpkin pie and put it in his coffee. Then, to emphasize whatever he was saying, he gestured with his fork in the air (which still had some whipped cream on it) just as Rodney walked by the window.

Rodney is mentally retarded. I remember that he used to frequent the high school baseball games in the spring and pretend to be the announcer, sitting in the bleachers, usually surrounded by a space of empty seats. He actually knew most of the names and stats by memory and sounded like he knew baseball too. I don't really remember much else about Rodney, except that he limped and that we were vaguely afraid of him as kids. I've since heard rumors that he sexually molested some children, but I don't know if they're true or not. Maybe he did.

Anyway, he was walking past The Bear with his awkward, limping stride, and a crooked smile on his face, when he saw my dad with his whipped cream covered fork in the air. I guess Rodney thought he was waving to him. So he stopped, turned, and pushed open the glass door into the restaurant. The bell rang to say that someone is coming or going, and Rodney walked past the salad bar, past the ambulance drivers, and over to our table.

"Hi," he said, and smiled.

"Hi," my dad said.

Rodney looked at my sister and me and then reached into the front pocket of his coat. He pulled out a stocking cap and then two crumpled dollar bills.

"Here," he said, and handed one to each of us, beaming, as if he were awarding us checks from Publisher's Clearing House.

"You guys be good, Ok? Merry Christmas."

Then he gave us all a little wave and walked out, past the ambulance drivers, around the salad bar, through the door, the bell ringing once again. I don't think any of us said anything. I glanced up to see if the people at the back table were watching, and they were. Again passing in front of the window Rodney smiled at us, and we awkwardly at him. He gave us a final wave, his hand high in the air above his head, and then limped down the sidewalk.

My sister and I put our dollars in our pockets without looking at them, and finished off our breakfast quietly, waiting for someone to break the silence and talk about something other than Rodney or Tim or Christmas.

Tim(continued).

While cleaning Tim's mobile home some friends of his came to help out for awhile. We all took a break and decided to order pizza from Ricky's, which we found coupons for on the counter. My dad called and placed our order. He was having trouble giving them directions for where to deliver, when the person on the other end said, "Wait, is that Tim's house?"

"Yes," my dad said.

"Oh yeah, we know where that is. Tim gets pizza all the time."

My dad told us what happened and I smiled and cried all over again, thinking of Tim ordering pizza all the time. We sat at the dining room table and ate. Outside the window was Tim's front yard - a few scattered pine trees and the short, cold grass and hard ground of autumn. I could see a driveway across the street that led into the woods. The driveway was chained off and someone had hung a bunch of flowers from the middle of the chain, where it sagged almost to the ground.

We finished eating and started cleaning again. Tim's drum set was disassembled in a closet in the living room. Tim's friends just looked at it for awhile, and then one of them told me that Tim had been a good drummer.

He didn't overplay - he just knew his stuff and fit in.

Bill.

I guess one last thing to tell you is about Tim's funeral, and about my other uncle, who lives in Boston, Uncle Bill. He's not really even my uncle, just a friend of Tim's who I'd seen around some Christmases, and I guess he and Tim used to be in a band together. He drove out to be with us that November. The main thing to tell you is that I remember sitting next to him, at the funeral, while some other friends of Tim's played this song, "May the Circle Be Unbroken." It was kind of an upbeat song, but the words tore me apart. I was impressed that they could even get up there and sing for more than ten seconds without breaking down.

And I remember Uncle Bill crying. Weeping. And actually, I remember feeling a sense of relief because I hadn't seen him that open: not at the viewing or when we were all just sitting together in my Grandma's living room with visitors coming and going, or at any time really, and I had been wondering what he was feeling.

So there my Uncle Bill sat, while the music played, weeping. And, through my own teary eyes and little sobs, I watched his left hand, which was resting on my knee, shaking uncontrollably. We were a mess.





Threads of Home

Abram Van Engen

I

Everyone is in the kitchen,
talking loudly, laughing long.
I slip off to the restroom,
no one is asking where I'm going,
no one pointing me the way:
"Up the stairs," they once would say,
"around the corner, first door on the right."
Just the slip, the silent steps,
and I'll be back to join the laugh.

II

They are reading in the living room,
beside the kitchen where I stand,
their telephone in hand,
no polite preceding plea.
Just something slowly come my own.

III

Beyond the window pane the night descends,
turning glass into mirrors
which reflect another's light above her desk.
Waters run and someone hums.
My friend is cleaning in another room
with sounds that weave a home
upon this house's loom.

Just that humming household weave
where questions used to host,
that being left alone surrounded
in a house that we can walk through in our dreams--
arranging the Tupperware,
making coffee,
and waking, slowly,
on a couch,
in a living
room no longer
strange.

Michelle Vondiziano/Chris and Nina/silver gelatin print/5x7



Tiffany Leighton/Window Sight/silver gelatin print/8.25x12





A Small Wreath

Daniel McWhirter

As the funeral procession descended into the dry valley wails reverberated off its normally quiet walls. The Valley of the Kings it is called, though at first glance it seems common enough. Yet under its skin of earth, parched by Ra's golden rays, lie corridors strewn with gold; chariots of gold, couches of gold-inlaid ebony, figures of the gods in gold. Gold more plentiful than copper and used as commonly as clay.

Into this valley of gold, the realm of Ka and grave robber, we progressed, bearing our dead king to his tomb. The pharaoh was young, had lived less than a score of years. He had fought no great wars, led no campaigns of conquest. No extraordinary pomp was demonstrated for his burial, only a small tomb and a rudimentary display of gold. The procession was not large, by the standard of Ramses. The household was accompanied by a vanguard of priests only a score strong. The bald priests performed their duties to the pharaoh, acting out the rites needed to send him on his journey to Osiris with due solemnity. A few of the men had known the young king as a boy being brought up as adopted son of Ikhnaton. Never had they thought that they would grieve the death of their pupil, so young and full of potential. Paphos, the young pharaoh's adviser, wore a wig not only out of fashion but also to hide his white hair. How strange it was for the white haired to mourn the dark, the frail to grieve for the strong. The young queen, Anches-en-Amen, walked with her husband for the last time. Widowed before her prime she following the coffin weeping, her eyebrows shaved in mourning. So young, a girl. Among the treasures placed in the young king's tomb was a throne, beautifully inlaid with stones of many colors to portray the young royal couple in life. There, in a loving caress frozen for eternity, the queen is depicted gently touching her husband, a simple display of tender love. Young it was, and young it died, struck down by death.

As we descended the stair so the coffin descended into the underworld. The pharaoh would have his deeds judged on the scale of the gods against the feather of truth by Osiris, his short life's work against the divine standard. Then his Ka would be sent in the direction the god of the dead deemed his deeds deserved: if he found favor these stone halls would be the home of his Ka; if not his Ka would be cursed to forever roam the desert wastes. He had not time to become over-proud or tyrannical, as seems the wont of kings, so surely his young life would serve him well. Yet how long does it take a man to damn his soul?

The coffin was carried to the burial chamber where the sarcophagus awaited its treasure. The priests lay the gold coffin with its image of the pharaoh in the first wooden coffin, there it sat with his face still gazing in an unseeing stare, awaiting the priest to touch its lips and release them to speak to Osiris when his time came. The high priest performed the rite in calm formality, wrapped in the leopard-skin robe used for the occasion. When finished there was a pause, and a small form stepped forward to the coffin. There the young widow set a small wreath of simple flowers around the gold cobra of her lover's headdress, looked at his face of gold so young, and retreated to the shadows once more: each step further distancing the girl-queen from her dead husband, each further pressing the king towards the land of the dead. The priests placed the wooden cover over the gold coffin, setting the coffin in a great stone sarcophagus.

This I know--I, Pti, son of Hormabi, a scribe. Of all the golden figures of this tomb, of all the painted walls and sculpted shapes, there was no treasure of more value than that small wreath of flowers and the love they were token to. Though the pharaoh lives no more, and two score years have separated this day from that, the love imbued in that small wreath and the memory thereof is indelibly imprinted on the papyrus of my mind. I write to urge the man in search of riches, to seek the treasure of the wreath... I have sought it, and tell you:

It is far more elusive than the chariot of the sun

Far more scarce than the dust of the moon

Of far more value than the words of the oracle

Far less tangible than the gold of the pharaoh.



Arse Poetica

Noah Thomas

I'd like a pome please (I don't have exact change)
in tempo with
iam--
bic Shakespeare. (He's bald--my goodness!)
I'd like it
in my garden
where cat droppings still
rot and frogs stil croak.

Death and life still make out
the patterns of ivy on the willing walls
inside the once again removed
images forced by words.
And moved to color (red color, like for breathing)
the insolent white blue
cheaply made frames (a bad attempt at describing a
piece of paper)
from which this poem,
in true phoenix fashion (Phoenix, AZ is fashionable)
rises from dead trees (more paper imagery)
and rinses the air above
the podium with light breath.

Exhalation, inhalation
and annihilation
in broad strokes. (change please)

On the Poesy of Dialogue v. 35.1

A. B. White

Then, dry your eyes for the death of rhythm and rhyme,
Stressed no more by the poet's pen.
Now, bring mild mediocrity without an aim,
Unstressing the difficulty of design.
Leave everything a mystery, mastery void.
"But, where is the object?" I object,
Drowned in subjective, subversive verse.
Yet, some merit remains to be revealed
In emotions and ergatives that ring true.

Title Nine*

Molly F. Delcamp

1. Run like the boys until you grow an ass and they grow hair.
2. Force cotton "for the active woman" into your girl-womb so you can keep up.
3. Pull your long curls back in a ponytail and remove all jewelry.
4. Wrestle into a sports bra to level your chest and the playing field.
5. Spread Vaseline on your thighs so that your womanlegs will not chafe.
6. Shave your hair to fit the uniform--top and bottom.
7. Step onto the track and keep your head lowered to avoid their eyes on your half-naked body.
8. Get strong, big, fast, tough, mean.
9. Run like a girl.

*Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 to the 1964 Civil Rights Act reads, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."



The Beejagers

Thomas B. Phulery

In one dream, I find the room and arrive on time, but the seats remain empty. In another I search pantingly for the room as the clock ticks relentlessly past the starting time. Still another has me arriving on time with the students all in place, but I have forgotten some important item of clothing. Sometimes the students hiss and jeer and fail to laugh at my jokes. I wake up early. The semester approaches. These are teacher dreams, familiar as regret, reappearing every August as a new term looms.

The trepidation is part of the job. Anxiety seems appropriate when you are tinkering with the lives of young adults, college students. Every new semester I walk down the hall toward them muttering a prayer for wisdom and faith and imagination. Using texts of enormous power for good and ill, I'll try to point them toward insights that might change their lives. Enough to make you toss and turn at night.

So what might an institution do to support its fretful faculty at this frightful juncture before the students start filing in? Here's what my college did this year. We had required workshops: Sexual Harassment Awareness Training (SHAT). And I thought I was frightened before. The workshops, run by a lawyer, made perfectly clear the specter of sexual harassment accusations that looms like Damocles' famous sword over all "educators." (The lawyer avoided terms like "professor" or "teacher.") The gist seemed to be that, first, the whole idea of sexual harassment is indefinable, so whatever anybody says will be granted the weight of truth. And second, we are all vulnerable—the faculty member, the school, all of us.

The logic became increasingly inescapable: avoid students, never be alone with anybody, say little beyond the formal dissemination of information in the classroom, keep your doors open when you have to be in the office, be wary of any relationships with students, and mute your personality. Find a foxhole. Hostile work environment indeed.

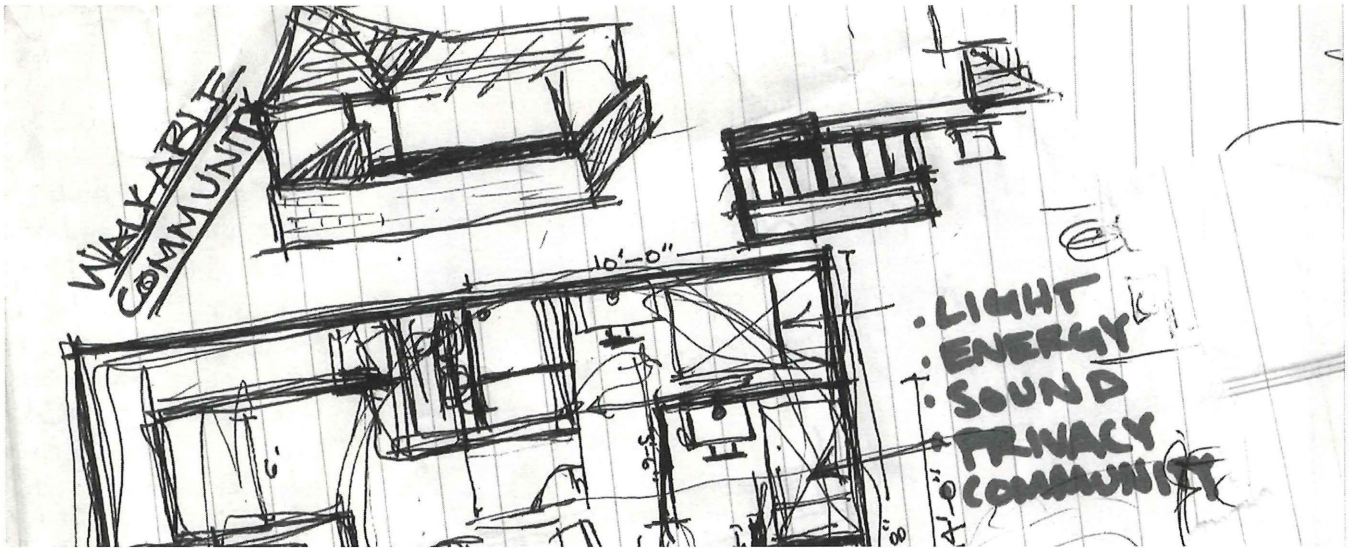
The lawyer seemed to have little feel for the potential dangers of the classroom experience itself, disturbing texts thrusting students into speculation, disturbing conversations turning preconceptions upside down. The lawyer seemed to think of the classrooms as neutral, innocuous places. I guess she hasn't read Socrates.

I also wondered about the absence of a theological vocabulary for all this since my college is quite emphatically placed in a religious tradition. But the word sin did not come up. Or forgiveness either, for that matter. Nobody made reference to biblical injunctions or principles dictated by faith. Nobody offered words of consolation. Nobody promised that I'd be defended, represented, or supported if words were spoken against me.

This event was about the lawyers and the corporate culture that has spread like an oil-slick over the green cascades and weathered brick of our campus. Admitting the validity of such discussions, I trudged along with my colleagues to the workshop. I did think of Wendell Berry's fine analogy that our contemporary self-righteousness about sexual harassment is like training people to free-fall from skyscrapers and telling them on the way down that it is illegal to hit the sidewalk.

The nightmares are more frequent this year.

Architecture Charette, November 2, 2002



The word 'charette' finds its architectural roots in the Beaux Arts tradition. Today it is frequently used to describe community planning events. A group of residents sit down with urban planners and decide what needs to be changed. They draw pictures and make diagrams. The people make the place they live in.

Across the Beltline there is a group of apartments known as Knollcrest East. In 1974 Calvin purchased the first group of buildings. Over the years it has added, each time refining design to better fit the need of students. No consolidated masterplan for the apartment area exists.

For the next phase of Knollcrest East's renovation, Student Life and the campus architect came to the students. Working with the Calvin chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS), they set up a student charette with the intention of developing a masterplan for the apartment area. On November 2nd, a group of students from a range of disciplines came together to make drawings and discuss the issues. They worked during the morning and presented their ideas to the administration that afternoon.

The program consisted of two parts: designing the ideal, yet practical student apartment for four people, and designing a site plan. Designs were to emphasize the development of a community, not just a place to sleep. The range of ideas was fairly broad, but certain concepts were pervasive. To boost community, more group spaces were needed. Environmental responsibility was also stressed. If the area was to function as a walkable community, there would need to be more than just housing. A convenience store and coffee shop were both recommended.

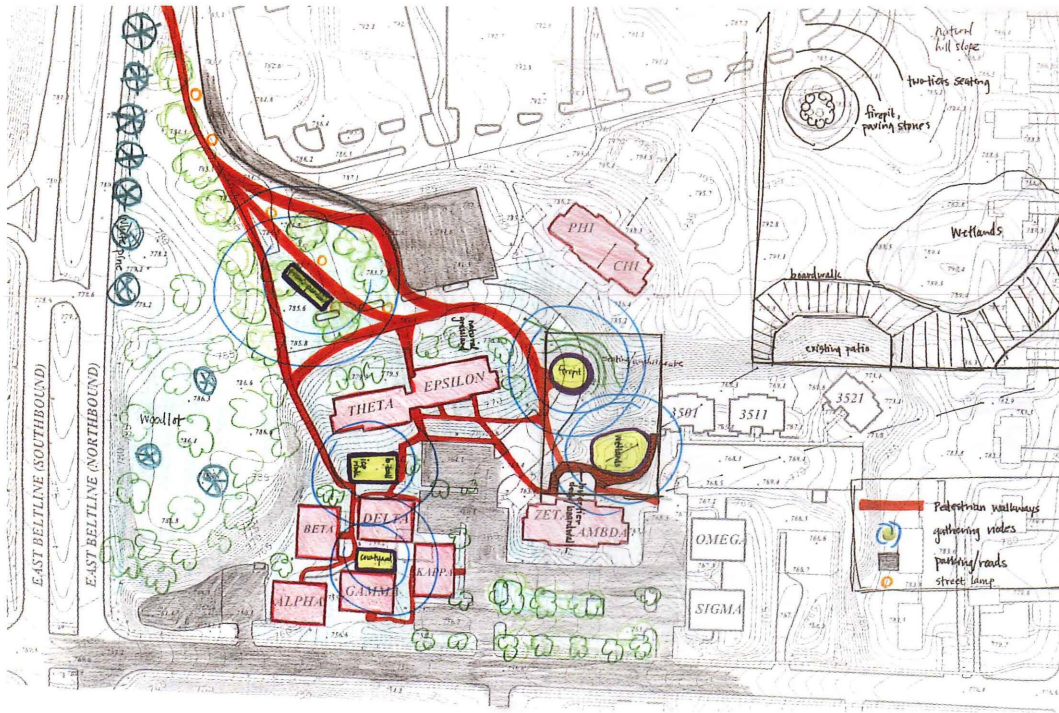
As a whole the event was successful. The administration in charge of investigating the project (which is not yet guaranteed to occur at any level) found student information to play a beneficial role. It is hoped that this sort of planning will occur on future projects, and that it will include an even larger body of students.

teams:

- A: Missy Smith, Anne Prins, Elizabeth Kuiper
- B: Greg Hoogland, Nate Funk, Derek Petersen, Pete Larsen
- C: Nadia Kropewnicki, Aaron Bandstra, Linnea Egblom, Alan Kalf
- D: Molly Veldkamp, David Malda, Jorden Hoogendam

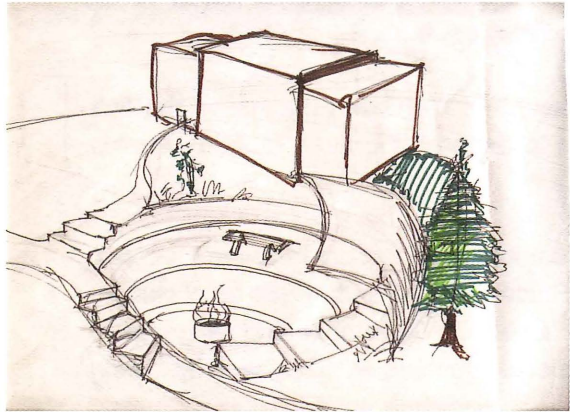
administration:

- Frank Gorman- Campus Architect
- Henry DeVries- VP Admin. & Finance
- Shirley Hoogstra- VP Student Life
- Phil Beezhold- Dir. of Physical Plant
- Jane Hendriksma- Dean of Residence Life
- Patrick Hummel- Residence Director, KE Apartments
- Rick Zomer- Asst. Dean of Residence Life
- Sarah Koeze- Student Life Assistant



site plan, team C

Developments to the site include grass amphitheater space and removal of the connector road between upper and lower parking lots. Ground cover would be developed according to local species, and parking lots would be reduced in size and converted to porous paving blocks. The basketball court would be converted for ice skating during the winter. The drainage area north of Zeta Lambda would be developed back into a naturally draining marsh. A small fountain was also proposed for the courtyard between Alpha and Gamma.

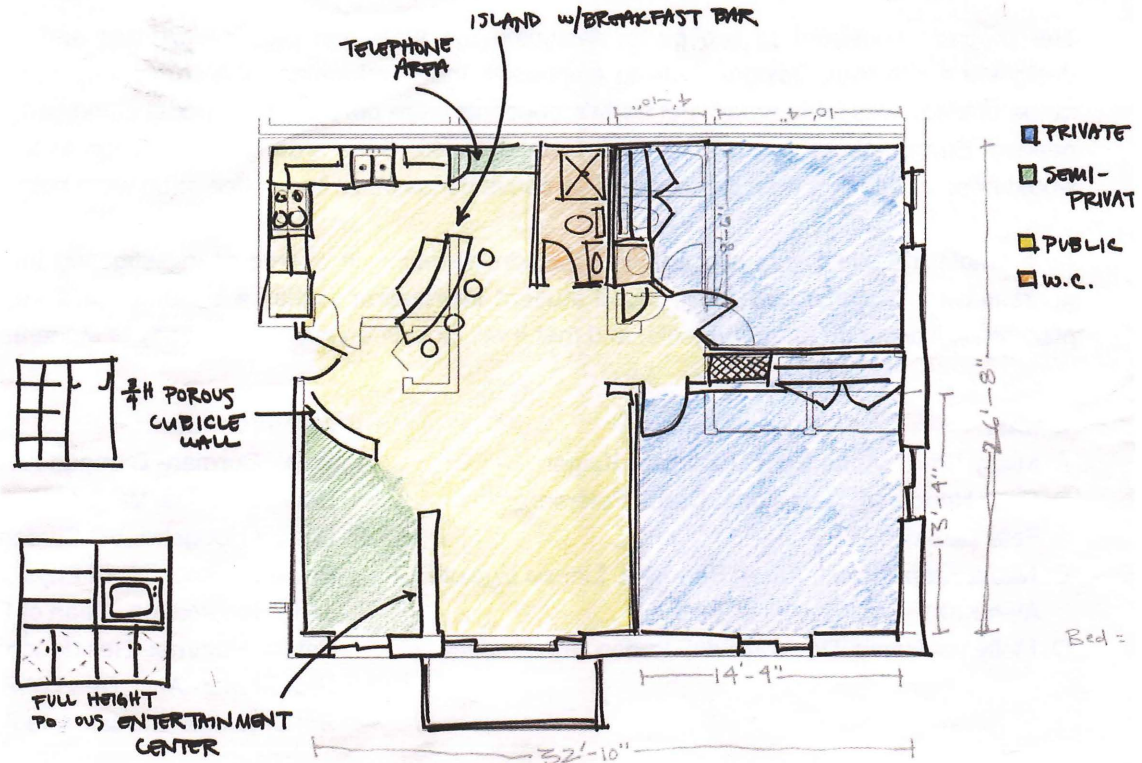


amphitheater sketch, team B

The proposed amphitheater includes a fire pit and social area. This feature was present in all site plans. The area would provide a space for both organized and unorganized activities. Groups also proposed a nearby indoor facility for the colder months. The intention was to create social spaces within the community so that students were not forced to go off campus for entertainment. These aspects are essential in the building of complete and walkable communities.

apartment plan, team C

Typical of most apartment plans, this feature a bar/table as opposed to a traditional dining space. This is thought to better suit the majority of actual usage. A common dining room could be provided to accommodate large groups. This plan also featured a telephone nook and semi-partitioned reading area. Color gradations represent levels of privacy.





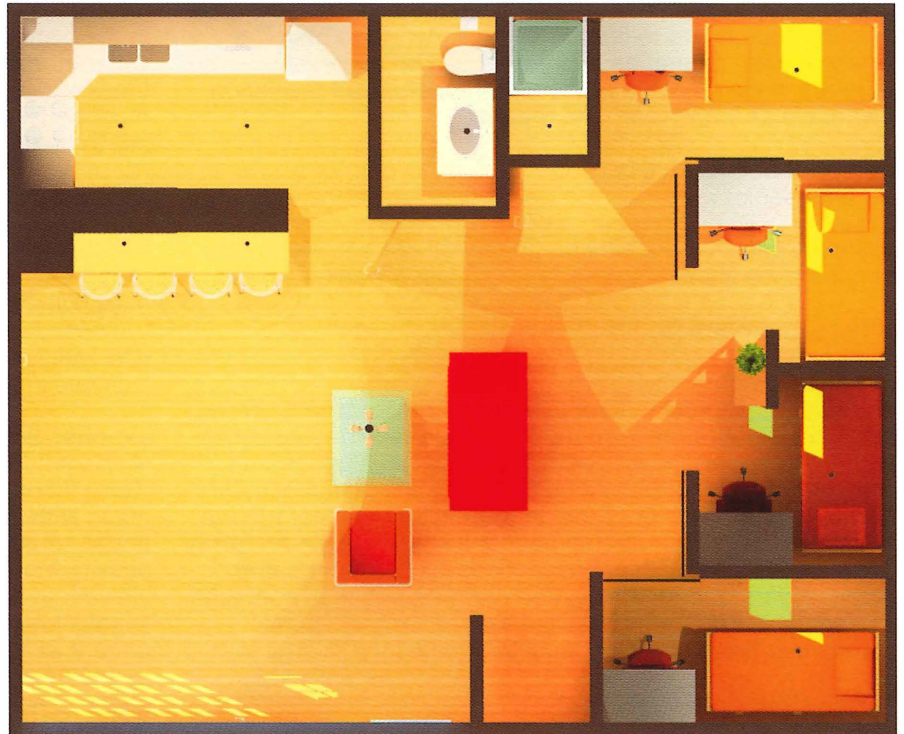
perspective view of kitchen eating space



perspective view into student alcove

Floor Plan and Renderings, Team D

This design is based on the concept of alcoves. Each person has an individual space that can be closed off, but spaces function more as nooks than separate rooms. Sliding semi-opaque panels replace doors allowing a limited amount of light to pass through. When panels are slid open, the entire space is enlarged. This allows the main room to be lit from two sides, but it also provides a link within the apartment as a whole. There is a balance of privacy and community. Divisions between kitchen and common space are also reduced in an effort to increase the feeling of size.



perspective view of alcove space, one panel closed



perspective view across common space

Dialogue Contributors

Volume 35, Issue 2, November/December 2002

Dialogue Contributor Student/Staff/Faculty

Area of Study

A short statement about their work in Dialogue, art and literature, or life in general.

Katie Alley [10]

-Student

-English and Art

-I had no idea what this object was to begin with and so it was fun to just draw all of its textures and shapes without even knowing why they were there.

T.C. Avery [9]

-Student

-English Secondary Ed.

-The piece submitted is: sarcasm meets slightly twisted creativity with a dash of hurt. Life is what passes you by while you're trying so hard to find or define it. Art is the physical hope that what cannot be expressed can be expressed. Literature is life on ecstasy; it's a no-holds-barred revelation of what we all know, fear, and dream.

noah paul borgondy [14]

-Student, senior

-English

-"there's a place where we can go / to tell our secrets to / it's everything we want / it's all we have" -Jason Harrod

zachary campbell [9, 11]

-Student

-French/secondary education

-In the poem 'cop-out', I tried to address the tension between ideas I have about the form my life should take or values that I hold to be important, and contrary ideas or values that I perceive to be projected on me from an influence outside of my own desire and motivation. In the untitled poem, I tried to look at the normal but often painful advent of people breaking up in a different light: the anonymity of the characters and equality given to them through an intentional lack of character development is intended to make the reader look at this process in a more abstract, analytical way.

Raleigh Chadderdon [8]

-Student

-Fine Arts and Art History

-*No Common Ground* was painted for a project for which we were to create, or rather paint, an interior space. The picture re-presented suggests multiple interiors; some inside, some out, some with, and some without. Close attention was paid to the colours in the painting; none are random. I would readily cite two texts as influential in the painting, and they are *Chromophobia* by David Batchelor, and *Emma* by Jane Austen. This re-presentation of the painting is somewhere around 10% of its original size.

Molly F. Delcamp [24]

-Student, senior

-English major, music minor

-this poem began as a series of reflections on eight years of athletic competition. i love being an athlete and i love being a woman, but it is important to keep asking questions. there is still a sense that women have been invited into the boys' club, not recognized as distinctively female in their athletic pursuits. this piece does not seek to place blame or solve any gender issues. it is, after all, a poem. but, it does seek to make us pause and think. (i also find it interesting to note

that this piece is the only written work authored by a woman in this issue of dialogue.)

Chad Engbers [6]

-Faculty

-English Department

-My grandmother died in mid-December when I was a junior at Calvin. I had just finished a paper on *kenosis* for my religion class, and the concept permeated most of my personal writing during that sad time. This essay developed out of a journal entry, and I have been revising it for years.

Ben Frederiksen [7]

-Student

-Spanish/Third World Development Studies

-Sometimes the sheer weight of life overwhelms me. We touch only a small piece of its richness and complexity in the people we meet, in the smile of a passerby on a busy street, in the glimpse of a laughing child from the blur of a car window, in the reading of tombstones in a cemetery. It is at times almost unbearable, this vastness of life. I wonder how it must be for Jesus to know each one of us in our fullness, and still to hold us in his hands.

Jessica Head [20]

-Student

-Art Education

-A night of whirling, rock-stepping and pretzling at the KE swing dance inspired this exploration of the mundane and the transcendent in social dance. These are actual dance steps (the waltz, fox-trot, swing, and cha-cha). This series illustrates my love for color and my dream of flying.

Jennifer Steensma Hoag [16]

-Assistant Professor of Art and Visual Arts

-Terra Incognita Landscape is a human construct, created as much within us as around us. I photograph land sites that are under construction or have been altered by other human activity. In these images I omit contextual information, leading viewers to believe they are viewing documents of land art or installations. While blending and contrasting commercial use of land with an artistic use, these works display the ambiguous relations between the documentary and aesthetic value of the image, the ability of the photographic image to inform and deceive, and the use of a photograph as a substitute experience or visual reminder. Terra Incognita is a work in progress.

Tiffany Leighton [19]

-Student

-History

-Surprisingly, this was taken inside a Bible factory in China. Yes, Bibles are "made in China" too.

Daniel McWhirter [21]

-Student, sophomore

-Philosophy

-The idea for this small story came after reading of a small wreath of flowers placed around the headdress of Tut-ank-Amen, found by Howard Carter when he unearthed that famous tomb. The flowers, dried and sealed for millennia, turned to dust in a matter of seconds when the coffin was unsealed, but they were noticed and recorded by the archeologists. Who placed this symbol of love around the dead king's headdress? I theorize that it was his young widow, however it could have been any one who loved or

respected him, it makes little difference to the point of the story. The image it presents is one of the most tender pictures of love I have seen- a small wreath, of far more value than the solid gold coffin of a dead pharaoh. The story behind my fictional story is beautiful, and I do not do it justice, but I tried.

Thomas B. Phulery [26]

-Faculty curmudgeon
-Laboring in obscurity to embrace the given. At work on a major study of Emily Dickinson's third lines.

Jenny Scott [25]

-Student, senior, still single, call 949-0258
-Area of study: in front of TV while watching football...he he
-As the light changed from red to green to yellow and back to red again, I sat there thinking about life. Was it nothing more than a bunch of honking and yelling? Sometimes it seemed that way." -Jack Handey "You should buy some red hair dye" anonymous.

Rachael Stevenson [5]

-Student
-IDIS, Political Science, History, Third World Studies minor
-Make beauty out of trash, wear your insides on the outside.

Andy Stob [22]

-Student
-Art and Philosophy
-My roommate and I found these glasses at Goodwill. As a matter of fact we found two of them. Pairs I mean, of glasses, not four. I made this picture for Photography 256.

Nathan Sytsma [12]

-Student
-English
-School routines and pressures tend to produce in me a kind of escapism, but is escapism always a bad thing? Maybe, as Neruda suggests, a healthy escapism would be to lose oneself, if even for a moment, in focusing on something Other, something at rest.

Ari Tenyenhuis [4]

-Student
-Art education
-This self portrait is the first painting for class involving orientation with the media. Self portraits are often intense in self-reflection; there is much discovery for the artist and those interested in viewing.

Noah M. Thomas [23]

-Student

-CAS major--Theatre Concentration

-I submitted some work to Dialogue my freshman year here. I thought it was really great. None of it got in. So I stopped writing poetry and ignored Dialogue. Now I'm a junior and I've started writing poetry again. I'd like to thank professor Timmerman for teaching my ENGL 320 class and renewing a love of poetry in me. This poem is supposed to be funny. The last words are the most important: "change please." I want people to change how they look at things...and poems.

Andrew Vanden Heuvel [13]

-Student
-Physics and Astronomy
-Art is pretty things. I try to make pretty pictures.

Abram Van Engen [18]

-Student
-English and Philosophy
-I have just tried to capture a few of those moments when we feel at home in a place not our own, and what may lie behind or compose those experiences. They are beautiful and often unexpected.

Michelle Vondiziano [19]

-Student
-Art History/ Studio Art
-Chris and Nina, my good friends. I had been taking a lot of pictures of them, some together, some separate. In this case the images were separate but I overlaid them to create a composed final image. There is a lot of space between them, both being at opposite ends of the picture. Their relationship remains ambiguous. Nina is mysteriously represented as a sweated shoulder while Chris exists in isolation. A candle points towards Chris while an unidentifiable sun reflection scatters across the darkness to his face. Nina shines on him, bringing them together. Visually he does not seem affected, yet we remain oblivious to what is happening outside of the frame.

Andrew White [24]

-Student
-English
-This was a poem that I wrote after reading the last issue of Dialogue. It isn't meant to be condemning or inflammatory. Rather, I give it as a commentary and a call to action for fellow poets at Calvin to aim for higher poetic quality. It seemed to me (and still does) that most of the poems in the last issue were good at expression of emotion but lacked any real meaning or form. Of course, this does not apply to all of the poems. Indeed, I found some to be thrilling. My poem's form is a loose alliterative verse in which I was having fun with some word play.

Dialogue Co-Editors

Meagan Luhrs and Ryan Thompson

Dialogue Staff

Anne Brown, Kevin Buist, Melissa Keeley, Kelli Klaasen, Suzanne Smalligan, Perry Trolard, Elaine Vander Wal, Mike Van Eerden, Abram Van Engen.

Mentor TBA

Dialogue is a student-run arts and literary journal that publishes faculty and student work (e.g. poetry, short stories, essays, plays, scripts, diary entries, sermons, recipes, memoirs, paintings, drawings, sketches, photographs, sculptures, video stills, installations, etcetera.) The editors and staff of Dialogue wish to nurture artistic growth at Calvin, as well as engage contemporary culture through images and words. We wish to thank all those who submitted work for the second issue. Thank you also to our readers. We welcome submissions and feedback at any time. dialogue@calvin.edu - 957-7079.

