Editorial
Robert Zandstra

At the last Dialogue review meeting, several staff members noted the large number of submissions with religious themes. I thought this appropriate, Calvin being a firmly Christian institution, but also wondered at it, Calvin being an institution dedicated engaging culture broadly and often exuding a “we’re beyond CCM” attitude. I certainly am one who applauds the artistic ethic of artists such as several of those who appeared at the recent Festival of Faith and Writing and Sufjan Stevens. I believe if any art is good, true, or beautiful, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, then it glorifies God. All this made me reflect on both the place of the religious or theological in art and what this meant for Dialogue, a publication that exists because of the art at Calvin. I wondered what this meant for the student artist, who takes his or her work seriously and isn’t part of a profit-oriented industry. Even a healthy engagement of culture can lead a group of people away from an equally healthy focus on spiritual growth and discipline. God calls his covenant children to participate responsively and sacramentally in creation, spiritually as well as temporally and materially, as co-creators and co-redeemers under Christ, and artists are privileged to do this in their art. (Despite the frequency that the framework Calvin impresses on its students is parodied, as it should be, I am amazed at how pervasive is its truth.) It seems to me the creation of art resolves some tension in this. Art results from acts of spiritual contemplation, whether intentional-ly or not. I applaud those artists who are engaging others by reaching deep inside themselves and taking something from their spiritual selves. Inspiration may be a reaction to society, an imaginary friend, or a still, small voice in the midst of a storm. It may be as instantaneous as the click of a shutter or the culmination of a lifetime of learning. An artist develops skills in order to create more accurately and intentionally. Some people feel that artists are off in their own worlds and art is inaccessible, (and sometimes it’s true.) But I think artistic creativity properly insulates individuals so they can remain “true to themselves,” while also expressing what is real to God to the rest of the world. For what is given is something concrete and temporal, which renews our consciousness of the presence of God, renews our sense of wonder and mystery, reminds us of our relationships, inspires us in other areas of our lives, and can construe reality to us more accurately and genuinely than is otherwise possible. The artist expresses some ideal, and whether or not the themes are explicitly religious, a Christian artist’s faith will shine through to the rest of the community. I think this is what Dialogue attempts to celebrate: each individual work in a larger context, whether it is this issue of Dialogue, the Calvin community, or the whole of creation, always looking to God. We celebrate the visual and literary arts in the journal and musical arts in the Dialogue Music CD, released in conjunction with the Spring Arts Festival. In this particular issue, we celebrate the work of particular Calvin students who have invested extra time and energy into their art: this year’s Bachelor of Fine Arts graduates and Honors English graduates working on creative projects.

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It would be fair to say that a sum of the past four years of my art making has been informed by something as simple as the medium of graphite. There is a running joke among many of my art department friends and Profs that anything I make is not complete until it is summarily covered in a thick coat of graphite and polished. What I find most interesting about graphite is its ranging qualities of surface, texture, perceived density, luminosity, and the process required for making these differences.

The subject matter of my work has changed significantly; beginning with highly figurative and emotionally evocative work, and progressing to an increasingly minimalist and conceptual quality. The work in progress shown here is an exploration of some of the formal aspects of image making that interest me. By creating dense monochromatic panels, I am both calling attention to the object’s surface, away from the illusionary pictorial plane while also creating a deep illusion of depth within its frame. With consideration of the historical precedent, I have begun to experiment by painting the recessed panel sides so that light reflects on to the wall behind it. In these works, inverted reflections add to the image as it expands beyond the conventional bounds of a painting.

In another series of graphite panels, I am drawing industrial forms in abstracted arrangements onto the surface. With a restricted pallet of materials, marks are established through variances in pressure, dilution, polishing. The resulting image is very discrete and can only be fully viewed at certain angles. I enjoy the captivating quality of this hidden information that is revealed through very close inspection.
inspiration
Kimberly Webster

inspiration.
comes, goes.
elusive creature.

seize it before it runs laughing hysterically away.

naughty thing,
inspiration.
very, very naughty.
flew the coop again
(second time this week).
harder to keep than a pet
even harder than a plant
(pets cry and mew,
plants turn brown,)

inspiration sidles silently away.

here one moment,
gone the next
in a spurt of signaling synapses.
don’t let it escape.

I have an imaginary friend. She
doesn’t visit frequently and she rarely comes
at fortunate times, let alone normal hours.
She creeps in through closed doors, latched
windows, and even covers pulled over my
head. Stealthily slinking her way around to
my back, she shakes me.

“Get up!” she hisses. “Now!”
“Go away,” I mumble, if mumble is
the right word. I don’t exactly talk when
I’m tired.

“No!” she insists, “this minute –
come!”

“Nm-nmmh,” I say, hoping she’ll
catch the distinct n of no attached to my
reply.

“I’ll go away and never come back,”
she threatens.

I moan dejectedly.
“Never, never, never!”
I turn over, pull the pillow over my
head and squeeze my already-closed eyes
completely shut.

“All right then, be that way, I know
when I’m not loved. I know when I’m not
wanted. That’s okay. I’ll just go back to my
rightful position far, far away from you and
never disturb your precious sleep ever, ever
again, no sir.”

“Mmmh,” I say, meaning “good!”
“I’m leaving. Leaving, leaving, leav­
ing and you’ll never remember me again.”
“Mmmh.”

“This is your last chance. See, you’re
already half asleep again, and then you’ll for­
get me for good for sure.”

“Uhm m m mmm,” I say,
meaning “wouldn’t that be nice.”

“Nope, here I go –”
“Wait,” I say, finding a real word.
“Whoa, what was that? Not what I
thought it is was? Surely you didn’t manage
– English?”

Feisty little creature. “Mm-hmm,” I
say, strained enough for one night.
“Well, English, hey, hey. That I can
work with. Wait. Profound, yes, very pro­
found.”

Clearly, she needs lessons in tact.
“All right, all right,” I ask. “What do you
want?”

She giggles. “Oh, nothing, really.
April fools,” she says, suddenly losing
courage and starting to vanish away.

“Oh, no you don’t,” I say, lunging for
her.

She giggles nervously, runs to my
computer and starts dancing in front of the
monitor. “Gotcha out of be-ed, gotcha got of
be-ed!” she sings.
"All right, I said! Just what did you have in mind?"

"Oh, nothing really. Just a little idea. You probably won't like it."

I do not get out of bed for wimpy little unlikable ideas.

"I mean, it's kind of different. Not really your style at all, come to think of it."

Uh-huh.

"Oh, okay then! It's just, well. What if you started with: 'I have an imaginary friend.'"

"An imaginary friend?" I say. "You mean one who doesn't visit frequently and rarely comes at fortunate times, let alone normal hours?"

"Yes, yes, that's it! I knew you'd understand!" she cries. "Have fun!" And she's gone.

I have an imaginary friend. Not a terrible start, I guess. Suddenly, somehow a paragraph appears. Hmm. 2:29 a.m. 2:29 a.m.! What am I doing up at this hour? I re-shut the door, re-latch the window, and re-cover my head, drifting quickly off.

"Good-night!" someone calls, poking her head under my blanket.

"Mm-mmmm!"
But it's Tea Time
Rachel S. deLange

I poured the genie into my cup
Because I thought the lamp was a teapot.
I thought dirty was just the look these days
So I made no attempt to rub it off.
I poured him out and sipped him up
After stirring in a spoonful of sugar.
Even so, it tasted quite blue which
Is why I was taken aback.
I stuck out my tongue; all painted blue
Poison control said it was harmless but
The x-rays glowed brighter than the
screen that projected them.
Now I don’t know what happens when
consequently you accidentally swallow a genie.
I don’t think it’s ever been done prior to me.
I think I might be able to fly or something of the like
But I haven’t gotten around to trying.
I think I could probably disintegrate and teleport across the sea.
I could reform myself constructed in Queen Elizabeth’s palace
But if I did she’d probably offer me more tea.

Some Dude From the Silver Derby In a Candy Shop,
Joanna de Walle
The old folk’s home was perpetually on the edge of night, but never seemed to find rest. The feeling of unease laced itself in the depressive lights which illuminated paintings of old farmhouses, birds with ruffled feathers, copper colored skies, and religious scenes of all variety. The aged inhabitants of the home certainly were not concerned with the kitsch art and unholy dimness of the buzzing lights—all the time casting a perpetual dusk on the hall. Instead, they continuously nodded their heads as if trying to stay adrift in consciousness, focused on a voiceless conversation, eyes closed, blind in prayer.

Run by the Catholic Church, the home was infested with withered nuns in black habits. The restlessness of the place could only be accentuated by the agonizing figures of Christ grimly dying on the walls, cruciform and horrible—his pain hardly a forgiving sight for those who trespass.

Moments ago Laury had written his name in a small black book: Laurel Oliver Welles, visitor. Here to see: Richard Welles, resident. Then, moving rapidly through the foyer, he nervously bobbed his head to the plump, ginger haired receptionist and offered a nervous wave and hello.

“Come to see grandma?” The receptionist called after him just before he crossed the threshold.

“Uh, granpa.” He replied, stopping and turning to her. “Rich Welles.”

“Rich is your grandpa?” She inquired. “I know Rich real well. Say hello to him for me will ya?”

“Okay, I’ll do that,” Laury called as he turned and continued through the doors, momentarily catching sight of Christ in a garden, flowers all around, birds perched on his fingers, the sun shining brightly, God smiling down. Ignoring the painting Laury moved quickly down the hall, brandishing a benevolent smile. As if trying to break the mood of the place he touched people as he maneuvered by and winked at tooth-shy old maids. He danced around the obstructions in the hallway—sidestepping and dodging left and right, his bones hollow and airy—he didn’t have time to talk to anyone and he supposed he wouldn’t cause a disturbance if he continued moving like this, his steps in a rhythm, afloat.

As he passed each room the scenes blinked by, a catalogue of the resident’s daily lives religiously regimented: spoon feedings, puckered lips submitting to pills, hollow eyes gaping, deflated souls leaning on crutches, nuns laying old men down to sleep—wrinkled behinds aglow through gaps in their robes, unresisting, unembarrassed, too tired to protest, in the darkness, moving slowly, heavy-breathed, nodding their heads, uncontrolled. Laury looked left and right. The benevolence in his grin grew tight on his face.

In a larger room the old folks positioned their wheelchairs in a circle like a wagon train. Lifting and dropping their legs they practiced a hypnotically ritualized exercise under the crucifix watch of Jesus on his lonely wooden tower—half of them closed their eyes and the others stared hard at the air in front of them, nodding. A priest was reading from the bible, his voice was loud and his eyes bright. The residence listened intently, craning their withered necks, nodding their heads. Laury quickened his pace. "Take me somewhere!" A voice cried, binding like wires around Laury’s heart and he jumped inside like a startled bird.

"Please, take me with you." The voice was frail and it poured out of the old woman...
like grain onto the cold tiled. The voice of the priest still echoed in the hall.

"I will," Laury told her sincerely. She looked up at him from her wheelchair, bent and waiting. Laury scratched at his brown feathery hair and wiped his lips where the mucus had suddenly gone dry.

"Hold on. I have to do something first. I'll be back." His voice came out earnest and nervous, but there was denial in his voice.

"Please!" She cried. "Where am I? Take me home!"

He turned around and walked quickly away, his smile thin and sore on his face. But he hadn't gotten far before another voice shouted at him.

"You! Where are you going off to in such a damned hurry?" It was a clear, manly voice. Crisp and clipped.

Laury started with a jerk and turned to see who was speaking to him. He stopped walking and rested on one heel, uneasily. A man with a bright white crew cut stood straight and thin in a doorway. His tongue ran along his puckered lips. His skin looked like old manuscripts written with wrinkles. Laury looked at him uncertainly.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" The man barked. "I've seen you come through here and I heard what you said. I see you come through here nearly everyday. Saying the same thing. Telling people you'll do this or that. Everyday with that smarmy-ass smile on your face. Like you're doing a favor for the whole god-forsaken world by just living!" His starched black suit tremored and rasped as his voice rose with anger.

Laury didn't know what to say. He didn't say anything. He hadn't been to see his granpa in months, and he had never seen this man before in his life. He just looked at the old man, thin and wiry in the doorway, pulling at the white collar of his suit like it was strangling him.

"This is our home and you come in here and leer at us like this is some kind of zoo. Like you're a scientist!" He exclaimed. His voice was as thin and harsh as a wire, matching the blackness of his jacket. Laury turned from a youthful pink to a deep Christmas-flush. He looked down uncertainly, embarrassed.

"This is my home. It's my life. I ain't no damned museum piece!"

Laury cleared his throat. He felt hot and impudent, like he could lash out. His thin hands twisted in front of him.

"Look, I'M just—" Laury exclaimed and then stopped, managing to repress his anger. The wrinkles wrote spastic messages of rage on the old man's face, condemning him.

"Well, I wasn't—" Laury began again. He looked at the old man whose face had gone from burning red to white hot, matching the wool-white of his hair.

"I'm sorry." Laury said lamely. "I just came to see my grandfather."

The old man wiped at his face with a checked handkerchief. He stared hard at Laury and scratched his chin. Laury looked at the old man, the heat in his face pulsed. The wrinkles in the skin of the old man wove knew meaning as he hardened himself again, wiping the tears off of his face. Laury felt guilty, as if there was something he should do.

"Go to hell," he heard the man mutter as he turned around and narrowly dodged a wheelchair. The collection of pennies jangled in his pocket as he hopped to one side, bumping an old painting on the wall.

"Damn you. You don't even see what's in front of you."

"I'm sorry," Laury murmured again but kept moving.

He drifted slowly down the hall, staring at his black slip-on loafers and bare ankles as they shuffled out in front of him. His feet began to sweat. He watched the reflections of light on the tiled floor. The abruptness of the interaction left him ruffled
and he moved even more nervously until he reached the end of the hall. He paused for a second and then turned left, entering his grandfather’s room, grateful to be out of sight from the old folks prying eyes.

He entered upon holy ground. Pictures of the family were arrayed around like icons of saints and Jesus died on the wall—regardless of situation—saving them all. Rich sat in his wheelchair nodding, as if he and the dear Lord were engaged in a sacred conversation.

Laury hushed himself and stood in the doorway. He stared at the crucifix floating on Rich’s wall and dug his hands into his pockets. He stood for several minutes, staring at the tiny Christ. Dear Lord! He was so small, so thin and broken, hollow and weightless, as if he could fit in the palm of a hand and just bleed there, shivering and dying.

Laury imagined holding the tiny Christ, comforting and stroking him, all the time in fear, because he knew at any second he could crush him, splinter his fragile ribcage and leave him bleeding on the floor. He stared, arrested by the tiny, hollow-boned Christ.

Eventually, he broke his gaze and turned his attention to Rich who was still in conversation, still nodding, still listening as the dear Lord played back each event of his life—using the little time left on earth to look back at what he’d done, getting all the judging out of the way before Rich even arrived. There wasn’t any better way to spend the time.

"Granpa." Laury whispered quietly. "Hey, Granpa." He sat down across from him in a chair. There was no response, so he said it louder and this time Rich opened his rheumy eyes, shining dully like river stones. He looked at Laury and croaked, "Who are you?" feebly and vacantly, his tired vocal chords snapping across the bones in his throat, sticking dryly, lifting, and relaxing. The bird in Laury’s chest moved uncertainly.

He bobbed his head.

For the intermittent seconds that Laury made no reply granpa fell into sleep again, into conversation with the Lord, nodding his head, as if he understood the non-answer Laury had offered.

Laury stared at his old papa, at this dear man, and watched the skin that hung under his chin stretch and slacken as he nodded gently to the prompting of the Lord, as the old man and God watched a million moments limp behind Rich’s eyelids. Granpa looked up at Laury again. His eyes grey and dim.

“Hey granpa, it’s me. Laurel.” Laury said.

They looked at each other for a while without words.

“Hey.” Laury said again, quietly.

Granpa cleared his throat. “Have….” Rich began, “do you know about sparrows?” His Adams apple worked up and down. He cleared his throat painfully and tried to continue speaking.

“No.” Laury said, feeling for the pennies in his pocket. “I don’t know anything about sparrows granpa.”

Granpa shook his head. He couldn’t continue speaking. He closed his eyes and nodded. Of course Laury had heard the stories before, but he really didn’t feel as if he knew anything about sparrows at all anyway.

Laury looked at his granpa’s furrowed brow and calloused hands as they gripped at the air and released it, grasping for something, he still wore the weather from those days on his face and skin.

The storytelling used to happen out in the garden, before granpa got too old, and Laury imagined the sparrows were the main topic of conversation between the dear Lord and his granpa today. Laury could imagine the way it happened when he was a kid, out in the garden, his granpa’s telling the story calmly between bites on vegetables and

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Benze-dream No. 4
Amy Lewis

when i become the fear itself
i catch myself Believing
the most beautiful, lost lies
your spectral brain
can craft.
and so
behaving
as if the empty sound is sane.

i wait, quiet in desperation before the bullet
hits the brain,
bending, to become charms around my neck, your lost
causes of empty comfort, counting heart-beats
like beads on a rosary.

i will be taken in two when he is gone.

wearing your initials on my sleeve
as thoughts slither serpentine, a queen
of desperation, I will not be caught the Fool.

Tom Mazanec
Adoration

I see your fingers echo –
They are the silken sling
Which holds our Earth’s ellipsing ring;
The jewels of the crown,
Supernovae, stellar streaks,
Tossed in heaps unto your feet;
Yet your skin, your soul,
They infiltrate the tiniest grain
Of sand upon a shower’s drain.

A harrowed heart beholds your turning
Clock of boundless ancient grace;
Willow tears flow from moonlight eyes
As stifled voices only hear your silent song.
BFA Spotlight: Zoe Perkins

Saturday, Zoe Perkins, silver gelatin prints

dialogue 13
I step outside into the cold, crisp air. It's a beautiful morning. The sunshine beams down in stark contrast to the chocolate pudding smog that's usually smeared across baby Beijing's chubby cheeks, but thanks to yesterday's rainfall, the sky looks more like a bowl of berry-blue jello, punctuated by the occasional jet-puffed marshmallow cloud. The sidewalks, normally glazed with a thin layer of unmentionable substances, are washed clean, with the acid rain puddles frozen into grey streaks along the side of the road. I'm wearing my long, blue-as-the-sky corduroy coat and my wool hat that hides my greasy blonde hair. No shower this morning: I turned on the faucet and brown poured out of the showerhead, onto the tile floor and, thankfully, mostly down the grate-covered drain.

Despite the chill in the air, the streets of Beijing are packed, as usual. It's like Times Square, New Years Eve, the ball is about to drop - but it's Tuesday, 7:13 am, assuming the watch I haggled down to $1.80 at the local flea market is accurate. I hope it is and stop at the not-overly-friendly neighborhood street vendor to buy breakfast. Making these fried egg and dough disks is a family affair: the father fries the dough after the mother simultaneously rolls it and takes customers' money, while the barely pubescent son cracks, beats, and slips the eggs into the half-cooked dough circles. The woman is the one to watch out for. I can tell by her sly grin that she finds great pleasure in overcharging me. It's a game, really, but I've already learned her rules the hard way. The boy hands me my breakfast; I count my change twice and continue my walk.

The cars weave in and out of traffic like ants in an overpopulated ant farm. Not cars, exactly, as what's actually on the streets is a strange conglomeration of taxis, buses, bicycles, rickshaws, camels, traveling snack shops – basically, if it could conceivably move at a reasonable pace, I've seen it mixed in the traffic here. Traffic isn't quite the right word either. Beijing has lane lines, Beijing has traffic lights, once I even heard a rumor that Beijing has traffic laws and a bureau to enforce them, but on this bright day, it looks more like our cosmic toddler has dropped his bag of shiny, oversized marbles and is taking great delight in watching them scatter haphazardly across his pavement floor. Even more amazingly, it works, somehow. I still haven't seen an accident on any street in this city.

I make this walk every day. I mindlessly pass the same greasy restaurants, the shoe store blasting Chinese pop through the same cheap speaker, the fruit stands, the supermarket, turn right, cut through the parking lot, the tea shop, the shady hair salon, and find myself reliably waiting at the bus stop, blowing on my cold hands and watching intently for the 601. It's a lucky morning: here it comes already, jadedly working its way through the tangled street. I climb aboard, hand the bus attendant my fare, and brace myself for the ride. The bus is surprisingly empty; all of the orange plastic seats are filled, but I'm standing comfortably, soothed – ironically enough – by the frantic, flashing advertisements constantly dancing on the TV installed on the back of the driver's seat.

It's not the smoothest ride in town, but the price is right, and I get a few extra minutes of people-watching in this sitcom of a city. I see a quiet girl about my age with her heavy pink backpack on her lap and her shiny black hair pulled back into a tight braid tied with a matching pink fur scrunchie. A young mother tiredly clutches her only baby, who's wearing a faded yellow, knit stocking cap. It must be a girl since the boys are proudly displayed in blue.
schoolboy silently reads his comic book while his tiny grandmother plops breakfast – already-peeled orange slices – into his expectant, gaping mouth. The shriveled, slimy seeds slip out between his grotesque lips into her shriveled, waiting hand. Next to me, two aged men passionately growl their way through an intense discussion of something; I listen incompetently, all the while cursing my two meaningless years of study and guess... the Olympics? Or did they say sea turtles? I turn my attention back, confused, to the television screen. I try making sense of the current commercial, with more success, but the product itself – a meaty, dried fish-by-the-foot snack – only puzzles me further.

Oh well. A treacherous left turn through what must be the most congested intersection on the planet and it's my stop, the subway station. The residents of the city, having reproduced like rabbits, will all be packed into comically overstuffed subway cars and whisked through the burrows they've dug underneath their metal forest of mighty skyscrapers; I'm about to join them, so I take a breath and step, vulnerable, once again into the flowing, white water rapid of a street and ride the crowd down the dingy, winding stairs to the ticket counter.

This is the Body, Broken
Ryan Weberling and Gabriel Kruis

"Deeply set within winter's womb
With fire like blades of heated glass
Drinking the Sacrament from the moon
From liquor-kiln and chisel-grass
My sin's marled flesh, roughly hewn
Will worship wild in hopeful Mass
From dust to dust and dune to dune
The blood, the bones, the scars will pass
Four times one hundred times four times six
I'm aware of the moment in which I exist"

Anti-Haiku
Tom Mazanec

Chains dropped, once warm blood
Flows free from ripped wrists – “Give us…”
I am Barabbas.

One-lunged and long-eye gazing
He left this trembling litany on his lips
The criminal was poured into me by a criminal
And myrrh-dripping fingers traced the veins
Over my ribcage—like skeleton key spines
They fit to the deadbolt of the locked left lung
And I knew then: in removing this thick rope of scars
We become only marbled statues
Dead in our perfection
Lost on the negative edge between justice and quietus
As my work has evolved and the breath of my artistic knowledge and involvement has increased I have repeatedly felt the need to explore new ideas and concepts while improving and expounding on my interests. Currently, I am interested in the relationship between painting as art and mass media imagery and the place where there is a tension in my work beyond the imagery.

The relationship between artist and society is important to me. I can identify the purpose of my art as social criticism. The relationships shared among race, politics, humor, and fear are all sources and subjects of my work. The evolution of my work is rooted in my cultural heritage and upbringing overseas. I have lived in Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, England, Kenya and Spain and I soaked in those places. For the past five years I have lived in the United States. My understanding of social structures and relationships has been shaped my experiences. I have witnessed terrorism in three different cultures, and I have watched as these cultures have reacted and indeed, interacted. In Nairobi I heard the bombs, which destroyed the American Embassy, in America I watched airplanes smash into the towers, live on television, and in Spain I woke up to the destruction of the subway system I rode everyday. I have watched intently the reactions to these events and others, and have seen the continuation and evolution through the mass media of a culture of fear in America.

My work is based on my skepticism of the mainstream American narrative. A narrative defined by a confusion of the American Dream and America's role as last remaining superpower. While I mine mass media sources for subject matter I recognize that I am following Warhol, the Independent Group, and other artists of the sixties in such an engagement of the mass media and mass culture. Pop Art long ago borrowed from the mass media, but their task was never completed. I agree with critic Lawrence Alloway who describes the consequence of mass media as it "gives perpetual lessons in assimilation, instruction in role-taking, the use of new objects, and the definition of changing relationships" (716). Further, I agree with Alloway that the role of art is "is to be one of the possible forms of communication in an expanding framework that also includes that mass arts" (716). The role of the contemporary artist then is tied to mass media, as consumer and as contributor.

www.josephpost.com
Our culture is fast-paced and demanding as well as brand new for refugee families, and they may easily feel overwhelmed and alone in their difficulties. Nonprofit organizations such as World Relief, as well as local churches, provide many services and resources for refugees to learn about transportation, jobs, school, and English as a second language. But upon investigation, I became dissatisfied with the current refugee literature. Much of it was verbose and irrelevant to a refugee striving to master a new language and culture. It is my aim to begin to fill in the gap and provide relevant information in understandable language for refugees in an ESL situation. They have a limited vocabulary, but a very great need. Because refugees need assistance and support, my refugee literature -- the guidelines and two stories -- provide a kind of first aid kit for the immediate needs of refugee families in the areas of cultural guidance and emotional understanding within an appropriate linguistic context. I have provided a portion of one of two children’s stories and a piece from a set of guidelines written for adults.

Living in the United States

Time is important in the United States

- Time is very important in the United States. There are clocks in every place.
- You should not be late for work or for school. Be ready on time. People do not like to wait for you.
- It will help you to have a clock in your home or to wear a watch on your wrist so that you can tell the time.

Values you bring

- People in the United States are free to enjoy their culture. You do not have to be like everybody here.
- You can make the food your family likes to eat. You can dress how you like to dress and you can speak your language in your home.
- Many people will want to hear about your culture and will ask questions.

From “Mama’s Eyes”

I sit on the floor next to the table where Eli is laying. My tears are still wet. Mama is gone. I want to feel her arms around me. She never left me when we were home. Things are different in this cold place. I sit in silence. The other children don’t notice me for a long time. I hold my crayon tight in my fingers and begin to move it on the paper. It puts lines on the page. I begin with big lines and then make little ones.

A boy comes up to me to see what I am drawing. He looks different from me and his skin is not as dark as mine. He looks over my shoulder.

“I lived in a house like that,” he says.

I smile at him and draw Mama into my picture. I want to draw the sunrise too but that is too many different colors.

Later in the afternoon, Mama comes back to get us. She is here! My eyes light up when I see her walk inside. I hug her legs and then run to get Eli, but I stop. The woman already has Eli ready to go in his blankets. He slept through the morning while I was drawing. She hands him to Mama and I take Mama’s hand. I wonder if I even had to worry. Mama brings us back through the cold night on the bus.

When we get inside I pull out my picture. Her eyes, tired and dark, get big and wide as they cross my paper. A smile comes on her lips, just like I smiled at the boy. I look at her hard and her eyes get wet again but she is still smiling. I can see the
sun in her eyes when she looks at me like that. I put my fingers on her lips and she kisses them. She brings me close to her and I sit on her lap.

She wraps me in a blanket she brought from home. I smile. I am Mama’s sunrise. As I fall asleep in Mama’s arms, I wonder if that boy has a Mama too. I’ll ask him tomorrow.

John 4
Daina Carr

Teresa told me at lunch today that I was glowing.

Maybe it has something to do with the yellow and purple flowers in front of the white cross-panes of my window. Or the flame to the right of them, struggling to burn away the long wick. This tall candle stands within a cylindrical glass jar making it difficult to light the candle without also lighting my own hand, which barely fits through the narrow opening. Once lit, the flame must fight through pools of melted wax threatening to drown it. The off-centered wick never burns away the wax evenly and so remaining gobs create tall round walls, a turret of wax.

From above, my candle looks like a cistern, drawing up the flame of fire out of the narrow well of wax. The ancient Israelites used the Hebrew word maqor to mean well or cistern of living water. They believed every woman had a maqor inside of her, a well of life to offer the unborn child in her womb. This is because at the moment of giving birth, they observed a woman’s water bursting. God is also named for having a maqor within him, as a woman does, as I do. Somewhere within my womanly body and girlish spirit, I hold a living maqor of water.

Yesterday at church I broke down. I’m not even sure how it happened. Generally, this is unaccepted by surrounding spectators; it puts them in an awkward situation. I would like to think church is a different place, a home, a community; but I covered my face. I used my hands to keep the water in. I pressed as hard as I could, but my eyes kept flowing. I resorted to using the back of my sleeve to absorb the water of the maqor bursting out of me, a break in the well, trying to patch the hole, to catch the living water as it ran out of me. I was hiding behind my hands, hiding the life flowing out of me, because it felt like a mess. It was a mess. Tears are salty and wet, sticking to my hands, leaving water stains on my shirt, and drowning my eyes.

Jesus loved a woman whose life was a mess. Divorced or widowed five times in one life, and then left to live with a man who wouldn’t even claim her as a wife. Fittingly, they met at a well. He made her an offer, her salty water for his fresh water, her tears for his life. She left her empty water jug. I met a man who told me everything I had done. She returned to her village glowing.
passing _ _ _, Nikki Stusick

20 dialogue
On Retellings:

Stories are shape-changers, shifting with the generations and cultures, finding endless ways to speak to us, to entertain or inspire. Retellings are necessary in keeping these stories alive and active, passing into new hands. The stories bear the marks of the fingers that touch it time and again. Retellers can invent and adapt, always finding new ways to get at the essence of the original tale. They are re-seeing, changing the flesh as it fits the old skeleton, like a poet fills the sonnet form with new words, new images. The story’s heart is the same. Its voice is new.

The Greek story of Perseus and Andromeda is thousands of years old—told in countless ways by countless people.... How do I presume to enter the chain of tellers who have passed on this story? ... Beyond the exotic setting, the royal life, the other aspects I can’t relate to, I see a family—two brothers, a proud woman, a daughter.... There is arrogance, pride, fear, loss, jealousy—things not so far removed from my world.... I even pity Cassiopeia—longing for more than she can have. I’ve found that an old story still lives today, and that I, too, have a voice that tells.

From “Near the Cliffs: A Retelling of Perseus and Andromeda” Excerpted from the second story of a trilogy: “The Queen”

This scene shows the unforgivable defiance that leads to the punishment of Andromeda, Cassiopeia’s daughter.

The tallest among them walked toward the queen’s party. She was like a woman and yet unlike anyone Cassiopeia had seen. Her eyes shone a light, cold like the moon. Her face was ageless. Had she seemed old, Cassiopeia would have thought the hair grey. It was long and tangled, float-
drags on Pall Mall cigarettes.

"Used to have to pop the heads off of them sparrows," he’d begin, flicking the wheel of his lighter violently, as if to illustrate, then he’d light his cigarette and continue.

"Go down to the river and swim for a while, naked as the noontime sun, diving for river rocks. Then I’d bring the rocks up to Killjoy’s farm. Spend the rest of the day whipping rocks at sparrows. Whack!" Granpa would shout, to startle Laury, who’d jump pretty high and show his embarrassment.

"Dear Lord!" He’d drawl, "Sometimes I’d chuck up a rock in the air and knock ‘em down. Three in a shot, used to be so many of ‘em. By the end of the day I could most often get at least five sparrow heads in each pocket. Depending on how small they were," then he’d pick up a stone as illustration, toss it from hand to hand and look at Laury who just sat and listened. Must’ve only had to throw the rock about three times if that was the case. Must’ve not been that hard to get ten sparrows, that way. Laury remembered thinking. But he never said anything.

"Dear Lord!" Granpa would exclaim, a cigarette clamped in the corner of his lips. "I’d carry them sparrow heads around all day and those heads’d bleed and leak to the outside of my pants, straight through my pockets!"

"Dicky!" Granpa’d bark and Laury’d jump and get embarrassed again. "That’s what they used to call me when I was younger." He would explain "Dicky!‘ they’d yell, ‘Damnit Dicky, why you always gotta bring those things ‘round here? Don’t you know they’re all covered with dirt and filth?’ ‘They’d ask that, but what did they expect? Course, I knew all about the filth. Knew all about the sparrows. I was the one who killed ‘em. I was the one who got the money. Was the one who brought it home to daddy. Course I knew about the filth.

“It was mamma who’d yell at me the most, though. Would tell me that I should better take my pants off and get ‘em washed. ‘Should take better care. Period!’ Said ‘that’s why I give you brown paper bags, so that you can carry them heads.’

Then granpa would look up at Laury and pull on his cigarette, “Course I couldn’t let that go.” He’d say, exhal­ing. “She didn’t understand. I’d lost a lot of sparrow heads that way. Bags couldn’t be trusted. ‘Gotta keep them in my pocket where they’ll be safe.’ I’d tell her.

“And she’d shout ‘you’d better not talk back to your momma!’ And that was the end of it usually.” Granpa’d chuckle a little, then continue with a straight face, “After momma had done yelling at me, daddy would pat me gently on the head and ask me quietly for the money. At the end of the day all of the heads I’d collected could be turned into money over at Killjoy’s farm. Killjoy wanted ‘em dead so he’d pay two pennies a head. Must’ve been damn rich. That Killjoy.” Granpa would say, his eyes like river stones. His face hard against the sun, out in the garden. Granpa would spit in the soil, and rub his hands together.

“Funny thing about that was, was that the money would inevitably make it back to the Killjoy farm. Cause that’s where your great granpa got his moonshine.” Then granpa would pause for a long time. Almost smoke his whole cigarette before he continued, “He was a quiet man, your great granpa. Never laid a hand on me except for to pat my head. And that was gentle too.” Laury could hear the tender sadness in his voice as he’d slowly move to light another cigarette. “I can’t think of a time he ever hurt me. Though I deserved it more than once, and mamma probably would’ve had it different. The rascal that I was. No daddy Rich wasn’t ever abusive, the alcohol never turned him that way. Not like it did other men. He was just sad.” Then granpa would spit dryly on the ground, creating scabs of mud in the
“And it made sense too, it being the great depression and all. But I never understood it, about the sparrows, never understood that a world like this could be so poorly used. Just did it everyday because that’s what I was supposed to do, and when the day was done I did it so I could get a pat on my head from my daddy.”

Laury’s old man would say with a wan unshaven smile.

“Couldn’t understand it, cause I’d heard in the bible school, which my mother made me go to, this verse about how ‘are not two sparrows sold for a penny?’ But no, ‘one sparrow was sold for two pennies,’ I’d thought. Maybe the bible’s wrong, or could be times were worse. I couldn’t see them getting any worse.

“Besides, that wasn’t the main problem either, the verse continues that not one of them sparrows will fall to the ground apart from the will of your father, and truth though that may have been,” Laury’s old papa would say to him between drags, “didn’t make any damned sense to me, why God allowed those poor sparrows to feed my daddy’s need for alcohol, and why it was my job to kill the sparrows and my daddy watched......., if he ever watched at all,......., if he ever saw those poor little sparrows in the palm of my hand, just bleeding and shivering. Sometimes I’d stroke them. Try to comfort them. But I knew I had to kill them in the end.”

Laury couldn’t understand it either. Maybe he was too young then, but he still thought about it, and he couldn’t understand it now. He just sat and stared at his old man, trying to figure out what the dear Lord could be saying to him.

After a while Richard stopped his nodding and looked up at Laury. He’d come all the way down here to be with granpa and finally the dear Lord was done with him, but he didn’t know what to say. He was tired. “Hey granpa,” Laury sighed. Rich looked at him, waiting. But he couldn’t think the words to say so he asked dully, “granpa Rich, you tired?”

Granpa didn’t reply for several seconds, but he began to nod again, “You tired?” Laury asked, this time louder, and his old man continued to nod. If this answer was good enough for the dear Lord, it was good enough for Laury.

He got up from his chair, moving stiffly, his wiry little frame taut with memories. He probed gently under his granpa’s arms, felt the muscle, still hard and bulbous underneath his loose skin.

Laury placed his arms under granpa’s armpits. Up to the elbows and gripped his dear man’s back. He had become so small. Laury heaved and lifted him from the chair and the thin-yellowed oxygen tubes came loose. Laury pivoted uncertainly. He turned around and granpa’s feet dragged along the tiles. Laury looked down into his heavy river-stone eyes. The weight was a lot to bear and granpa had begun to whimper. His eyes were wide. Laury could feel his panic rising. The bird in his chest beat wildly and he clutched granpa closer, clawing to get a grip. He heard Rich whimper and he began to sweat as he jostled his knee between granpa’s legs, searching for position, trying to lift, sweat ran down his nose and formed on his upper lip, his face turned a deep Christmas-flush and he wanted to wipe it away, the sweat, but he couldn’t let go of his old papa. Knee jostling between fragile legs granpa began to grunt but he made no effort to support himself and Laury started to shake uncontrollably. A collection of pennies jangled in his pocket. Shaking heavily, he pinned Rich against the bed with his knee and gripped him tightly around the chest, heaving, moving the body up onto the bed, slowly, grappling with granpa’s waist he pulled again, his muscles trembled violently and he gave another grunting heave, lifting again, resting granpa awkwardly on the bed. Staring hard at the air in front of him,

Continued on Page 27
For my honours thesis, the last thing I wanted to do was write a research paper. I decided to write creative nonfiction essays, which turned into memoirs, really. There ended up being four essays, each taking place in a different city. The essays are about place, about where we are and where we’re going.

I learned so much about writing this semester, about the hands-on details as well as the concept work. I learned that I write better on Saturdays, when I have the whole day to work. I also prefer my own computer. I found out for certain that, if I want to write poetry, I need to read poetry. If I want to write memoir, I need to read memoirs. I also learned about the process of writing memoirs. To begin, you take a memory in your hand, hold it up to the light, and turn it around to see its sides and back. Then you go to the mirror. You hold the memory up beside yourself and figure out how you felt at the time and how you feel now. Lastly, you take that memory and set it down beside other memories. You see what happens when they talk.

When you’re done, you’ve learned more about yourself, your memories, and the people and places in them than you thought you ever could.

From “Southgate, London”

I go out often to walk the layers upon layers of field behind the manor house. I look out my dorm window first and see flat, small green like a Rothko in an art book. When I come close to them, as with Rothko’s fields, they grow and consume me, and their colours turn deep and textured. Green starts at the bottom of a blade, dark and sleeping, and stretches up to light, awake green. Every blade reaches for a green that’s lighter, or stronger, or deeper. I never knew there were so many greens. Maybe there aren’t. Maybe it’s a dream. I sit down and lay back in the dream, in the tossing field outside a manor house in London. I stare up at a sky that may soon blow from blue to grey.

The weather here is schizophrenic. It never settles for long. If you wake up and pull back your curtains to sun and warmth, that is no promise of a good hair day. Don’t bother with a blow dryer; the clouds will roll in, the rain will come down, and your hair will curl and frizz in pure spite for your optimism. But a day that begins dark and hiding won’t bring hours of board games or bad hair all day. The clouds will clear before you’re done with class, and you’ll walk through the back field in a spotlight of sun. You learn to accept the weather in London, to hold fast to its gracious hours and wait for the rougher moments to pass, because they do.

Standing up, I move further into the field. Walking in the grass this spring, when they’ve decided not to have cows graze the field, is hard work. I lift my legs like I’m climbing stairs, knees raised high to make it over the grass’s surface. Every moment, I choose whether to stay out or go back in. The clouds may be kind; they may let the sun out and keep the green field bright. Or the rain may come quickly, soaking the field through. If only I knew what was coming, I could prepare myself. But the winds change too quickly here, and I must make a choice based not on what the weather will do, but on what I will do in the midst of it.
My Mother, Gregory Grutman
Dragon Drawing (from magazine clip), Liz Senefeld
granpa lay curled up on the bed, hand halfway lifted to his chin, whimpering.

Laury shook nervously. His body tingled. He was breathing hard and sweating too. He looked at granpa for a while—his sweaty hands clutching the pennies in his pocket.

In the hall the dim lights went dark, signaling the end of visiting hours. Laury moved around the bed and lay himself down beside his old papa. Jesus hung above them, dying no matter what.

They rested next to each for quite some time, matching breath for breath, fragile and ending, curled up in a nest of blankets. Laury felt the pennies in his pocket slide onto the bed. A strange lullaby, uncertain and tremulous, issued from the room across the hall, “Dear Lord you know I have no friend like you,” the beginning song from the home’s nightly hymn-sing trembled into the room, “If heaven’s not my home, oh Lord what will I do?” Thick and chaotic the song ran cold along the tiled floor, and Rich lay with his grandson, unlistening, his whimpering quiet and his nodding ceased. “Angels beckon me to heaven's open door and I can't feel at home in this world anymore.” No voices matched for melody or harmony and no single note held with another—causing the hollow tension in Laury’s chest to deepen as he lay, eyes closed, and fell into sleep.
My work focuses on tensions between order and chaos, specifically: history vs. mythology, logic vs. intuition, and narrative clarity vs. ambiguity. Pieces frequently appropriate elements from a variety of sources: wildlife guidebooks, clothing catalogues, comic books, etc. The preexisting connotations of the source material are exploited. A collaged image of a snake speaks of its original scientific context, its cultural meanings, and its new place within the narrative of the work. Like the source material, these images function as pages of a larger narrative text. Unlike the source material, however, I do not intend these pieces to divulge a cohesive narrative or an accurate catalogue of information. By deleting, adding, and abstracting I seek to build ambiguous pseudo-narratives pieced together from bits of existing texts.

Paintings shift between depictions of epic events, explanatory charts, and pure abstraction. Particular interest is paid to creation myths, cataclysm, and the fear and fascination associated with the unknowable.

Much of the work also focuses on characterization and signifiers used to create identity. Animals, colors, and patterns function as insignias, bestowing their perceived attributes on those who identify with them.

In short, I am interested in juxtaposing existing imagery with abstract mark making in loosely narrative forms to create an ambiguous hybrid-mythology.

*this page left:* untitled, 34x54 inches, collage, gouache, acrylic on canvas
*this page right:* untitled, 11x7.5 inches, collage, ink, acrylic on paper
*facing page:* Porcupine, 8x10 inches, gouache, photocopy transfer on paper
Glaciarium

danny aren

Now: your fingers like ice skaters
gently brush my back. On my bed,
in the night - they dance delicate,
distinctly...emerson, hawthorne,
thoreau, when they were seen
on the river together
each marching to his drummer's beck
playing on the frozen water.
like iceskaters full of poetry
never falling into the cold, deep
abyss beneath their art.

Untitled

danny aren

the rain roaring drop by drop,
splashing up like small communion cups
(the ones that hold a dram
of welches grape juice - you
set them in the back of the pew)
Contributors

Bob Bosscher [01]
This painting is an exploration of surface/depth contradiction.

Kimberly Webster [06]
It really was 2:29 a.m., and I really had to finish a take-home final, and I was almost really seeing things. I was supposed to, as a writer, say something significant about the craft of writing. Who knows what would have happened if I'd waited until 3:29 a.m.?

Melanie A. VanderWal [07]

Rachel S. deLange [08]
Let's exude.

Joanna de Walle [08]
Next time can you select my print of Ricky Miles from the Physical Plant?

Gabriel J. Kruis [09]
It is a story.

Amy Lewis [12]
experimenting with cut-and-paste techniques and the idea that the "true poems" are found in the margins. Yes, I am a Burroughs junkie.

Tom Mazanec [12]
Infinite Praise to the Ineffable Lord of All.

Lisa Szumiak [14]
Oh, how I miss the righteous squirrel eggplant and the late-night train rides.

Ryan Weberling and Gabriel Kruis [15]
For Tyler Gaul, who was so violently taken from us before his time, whose penitence is greater than his crime. We took those perfect marble stones, and carved them to mark his broken bones. We who remain are bereft of a dearest friend.

Tom Mazanec [15]
"Above all, a haiku must be very simple and free of all poetic trickery and make a little picture and yet be as airy and and graceful as a Vivaldi pastorella." -Jack Kerouac

Daina Carr [19]
She was not a prostitute.

Nikki Stusick [20]
currently accepting direction

Gregory Grutman [25]

Liz Senefeld [26]
I believe that art gives people a space to dream (and sometimes to be singed).

danny arens [30]
"she, then, like snow in a dark night..."

Hannah Elizabeth Piedt [30]
The first move is always the hardest to make.

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Letters to the Editor can be sent to dialogue@calvin.edu