Editor's Note:
The last issue of the year traditionally features the seniors graduating in Honors English and Studio Art. This allows Dialogue to truly spotlight students’ commitments and contributions to the constantly growing culture of Calvin College—beyond publishing a piece of writing or art here and there.

This year the art students designed their own layouts for their spotlight pages. Hopefully this offers one more chance to see the diversity of styles present on campus. Featuring seven graduates in art—Sara Bakker, Jill DeVries, Tracy Rose Guajardo, Eric Heerspink, Paul Miyamoto, Elizabeth Oliver, and Ruth Ribeiro—representing BA, BFA, and IDIS majors—sets a new record for Dialogue. Statements on the pages are by the artist unless otherwise noted.

Only a handful of students are graduating with Honors English this year, and of those, even fewer wrote creative projects for a senior thesis. Excerpts from Annalise Venhuizen’s thesis, which discusses narrative and music, reveal the depth and interest of even those projects which do not fall under the “creative writing” umbrella. Her words are especially apropos considering the timing of the fourth issue’s release in conjunction with the annual Dialogue CD.

Dialogue proudly features among its other entries work from other graduating seniors and also students from a variety of years and majors.

—elo

Dialogue is Calvin College’s student-run journal of commentary and the arts, published quarterly, plus a musical release in conjunction with Spring Arts Festival. Dialogue is a magazine dedicated to enhancing productive discourses, nurturing artistic growth at Calvin, and engaging culture through images, words, and ideas.

We welcome submissions of articles, reviews, essays, literature, and visual art of every sort. Submissions, questions, feedback, and all other correspondence may be addressed to the editor at dialogue@calvin.edu. Submissions will be accepted again starting in Fall 2008.

For further information about Dialogue, event calendars, and musical releases, please visit the following website: http://clubs.calvin.edu/dialogue
Dialogue
Calvin College's Journal of Commentary and the Arts
Volume Forty: Issue Four May 2008

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Rachel van Wingerden

Fire-bright wheat
Sun glazing a cresting orange wave
— the next a yellowed ball of gold
— tumbling, galloping — a lightening god
Rush barefoot through this mind-field
Burning soles of sweet remorse
— breath in sunbeams, divinely smiling
the golden rushes bounce
chuckling muted grace
Lie in, around, and about it
stalks tender with the juice of grain
dripping honey-toned melodies
Rustling winds — through this awakening, golden haze
— envelopes and swaths this body’s
soft curves, thirsting redemption’s blinding light
Heated thrushes bend as one
grazing near — tickling this restless spirit
With promise of another day’s sun-jeweled love
Toshika Takaezu, Lee Bolt
Stoneware
“Trees do not know how to stop loving.”

Robert Zandstra — Jessica Miller
[skinshedding.]
David Ellens

BUILD TRUST
it says so on my foot
i wrote it
with the tip of a jumbo permanent marker
(couldn’t use the full edge
or the letters wouldn’t fit
at least not in a way that i could still read it
without wrenching my neck)

a B is on my forearm
still
so is a U
a TR
and half of another U
fading artifacts
from a week ago
reminders that my makeshift tattoo
my secondhand credo in ink
wasn’t exactly permanent
[false advertising, marker people]

skin is shed
ink fades
is absorbed
and rubs off

another oilslicked attempt
at waterproofing
willpower

i suppose the vacationing part of me was hoping
the words would translate
into a transfusion of trust
permeating pores
and jetsetting through my veins
like caffeine
or a compliment
jumping into my bloodstream
like those kids in mary poppins
who’d count to three
and jump right through those chalkpuddle drawings
arms above their head
like i used to do at the pool in july
[cacooned in blacktopped mirage
and sno-coney
hot pretzel days]

but now i sit in segue
and something close to hope
lies just beneath my skin
like a dormant pigment

a leaflayer ready to soak in a birth of color
just waiting for a cue
to mature
while the ink is still drying
Tribute to Chopin
Katie Pruss

It Stole - Upon my Kite - Came Hope
And in abandoned - Wild
Sliced Sanity’s white slender Throat
With Innocence - Of Child
The Wind of Freedom - filled my Kite
But Failed - At Face - I knew
Alive - With Power - to Indict
This Force - I thought - Fate Slew

Glories of War
Kelly McCormick

The blossom of red
Wanders a path down his chest;
A ketchup stain waits.
The Street or "He waits patiently for their arrival but the morning will dawn with disappointment."
2008, digital c-print, 24 x 16 inches

The Window or "Confident in the knot he takes a moment to admire how fresh the breeze feels."
2008, digital c-print, 16 x 24 inches

The Camera or "In the end, curiosity got the best of him and he fatally strayed from the man's instructions."
2008, digital c-print, 16 x 24 inches

IDIS Spotlight: Paul Miyamoto
Series Title:
"Voids to Fill with Words"

Statement about the work:

This series presents images that give the appearance of belonging to a larger narrative but have been decontextualized, as their titles suggest. Each scenario is possible but unlikely, leaving an engaged viewership to provide solutions to the questions presented.

The Television or "She suddenly discovers the will to speak with each person she sees below.”
2008, digital c-print, 16 x 24 inches

The Balloon or "Maybe if they are on the other side they will see it rise and come running.”
2008, digital c-print, 24 x 16 inches
Broken porcelain eggshells, shimmering golden surfaces, coiling telephone cord, translucent lace curtains—these material fragments suggest fragments of stories, as if we’ve been dropped into the middle of a narrative, a hatching, a lost or found treasure, the ambivalent end of a phone call. Ruth Ribeiro’s installations and photography may at first glance appear unfinished, open-ended. Did she forget something?

Her work reminds me in a weird way of a delicate, precious Claes Oldenburg, who said in 1967 that he stood for an art that extends and drips and takes its lines from life itself. The pieces she leaves for us, on the floor, in a box, in a shadowy photograph, are more contingent than coherent, giving us neither their past nor their future, but existing only in their material present. Oldenburg’s point was to cross between art and life, engaging a terrain between the work and the viewer’s space. Ruth Ribeiro’s work is more sad, sweet, and serious than his puffy vinyl sculptures ever were, but that is in part because her work takes its lines from the particularities of her life, extending from there, through her love of materials, into your space.

—Lisa Van Arragon
Nighttime Necessity
Calah Schlabach

Flecks of light reflect off the glass lampshade,
Trickling down, pooling around
My scribbling hand.
Blue lines stretch back obligingly
Meeting pen tip, urging it tirelessly
Forward to explore the vacant page.
Black windows observe the silent stage as
Soft snores signal the sleeping world
Beyond the shadows lurking in the corners,
That creep calmly in,
Muting harsh black and white distinctions
To delicate gray intricacy.

My bed waits,
Colorful quilt and flannel sheets thrown back in haste,
Creating a welcoming dent
For my body, spent,
Yearning to crawl toward murky den.
My mind races instead, and so does my pen.
Longing to loose elaborate thoughts,
My mind spews them onto the clean sheet.
Blue lines strain
To create order of this mess,
To make neat and compact
Complex concoctions of a disordered mind
Filled with far fetched fears and deluded dreams,
Brought to the page in the comfort of night
When bright light is powerless to illuminate and
Throw hope haphazardly away.

The lines are white now, and
Curve around a red expanse of track.
Scents of grass and rubber—spring is back.
Track season is ready to further attack
Already mixed emotions.
A small red bag, half packed,
Anticipates action.
In the dim corner,
Its contents cascade to the clean carpet.
Silky red folds of uniform lie
Prepared to accept sweat and
Small sharp spikes sparkle in shoes,
Eager to bite rubber.

They are ready, I should be too.
One more reluctant glance at the smattered page and
I switch off the light.
Darkness closes instantly.
Pulling covers close around me
I faintly glimpse the notebook,
Resting indistinctly on the desk,
More willing to absorb tears and triumphs
Than my best friend.
It lingers expectantly until dusk draws me
Gently into its safe fold again
Tomorrow.
you might be my favorite
though earlier I circled you like a drain
you make me think of rabbits, anyway
so that’s something.
I couldn’t eat a bite before leaving you

after thirty hours with my fellow nomads
dinner and anonymous commands
I’ll leave you to the sleepless, upstairs
the one who got out shook our hands
one more thing: air conditioning is best in moderation.

you informed me it was a Bank Holiday
my vocabulary failed me in the end
plus one magazine and one chocolate twist
declared purpose with students of another school
the world on boxes

billboards with Sasha Pivovarova staring out
I may have given a false address
spent my last coin on breakfast
you’ve got some style, can’t argue
we parted ways under the ground

a new skill: “merci” as a verb
clean white and alone
you didn’t mind the vending machine can I had in one go
my dear general Gaulle
and tomorrow you’ll be a phantom place like all of the others.
Beyond the Hills
Dan Knapper

He sat alone with his back against an uneven stone looking out across the hills and valleys that rose in the distance. The sky was gray and darkening quickly and he already felt drops of water touching the bare skin of his forearms. He was high up and it was cold and there was no sun to warm his body. There was a steady wind that blew dried leaves past him over the edge of the steep cliff ahead of him and it chilled him even greater. Barren trees and rough yellow grasses surrounded him. Nothing else moved and he continued to wait.

The landscape before him was dead. Behind him and to his right were mountains of green and light brown with fir trees covering their sides; but in front of him were lower hills of dark brown mixed with white from the snows that had not yet melted. There were some trees that lined the tops of the hills but these were difficult to see because of the darkness and only their outlines were visible, jagged and ugly. Beyond the hills there were flatlands barely visible and he could see the sky growing lighter and bluer as it expanded away from him.

He was getting nauseous from loss of blood. His pack lay next to him and he reached for the water bottle inside and drank. The stream water tasted bitter from the iodine tablets but it cleared his head and he splashed some in his eyes to stay awake. He looked down at his leg. It lay stretched above the ground, supported underneath by another pack with a rolled ground pad buckled to it. Above the patella his long sleeve shirt was knotted tightly to hide the destruction. It was damp from the blood that would not coagulate. He needed to change it but could not spare any more clothing. The Ozarks were normally warm during these months but he now wore all he had brought to keep away the freezing air. He could not have changed it anyway. The pain would cause him to lose consciousness and that would bring quicker what the flowing blood was already bringing. He glanced to his right down the sloped and rocky path where his partner had left for the trailhead over a day earlier.

Down below it was warming. They were three days out when the snows came hard and unexpected and nearly eight inches had covered the ground when they had first made camp. Now life returned to the lower regions. Deep mists rose from the valleys in the morning; it was beautiful to see in the early light but it made breathing difficult. Their climbing was hard until they were above the clouds where they stopped again to rest and breathe the mountain air. It was there he sat now, resting and breathing and bleeding.

He ate some raw jerky to work his body and drank more water to clear the taste. He did not have much water left but he could not risk vomiting. He boiled what water he had to wash the cruel gash that dug deep into his thigh. There was still-splintered wood lodged inside the wound and he could feel it touching the lower part of his femur. A few times he had tried removing it with his knife but the pain had overwhelmed him. His eyes went dark and that scared him so he quit.

He looked out again to keep his mind occupied. The terrain was still and it seemed to him like it waited for something unavoidable. It had seen this before and now it watched patiently as a new animal struggled. To hell with it, he thought. It can wait a little longer.

The sound of the wind covered his uneven breathing. The only other noise was the low burning of his stove on the ground. The flame was weak and he knew it would soon die. He had not planned on crippling his leg and had brought only half a can of fuel. When the water finally steamed he soaked a sock and pressed it against his leg. Blood oozed from the hole because of the pressure and he now realized his situation.

I can wait. Why not? I’ll probably lose the leg. But I’ve learned. At least I cannot forget the radio next time. He’ll return and what a bloody mess they’ll see but I’ll smile like it’s nothing. It’s nothing. I’ll last. The worst is already over. There is no one here to watch except those hills and now I can do this alone. It’s easier this way. That damn fall almost got me.

The more he thought about it the less he believed himself. He tried to stop thinking but could do nothing about it now. It sat next to him, shivering and waiting like everything else. It pressed the sock against his leg, worried and panicked. It blew across the sky and played with the dead leaves. He looked to his right again and he saw it climbing the path. He vomited.

He leaned over on his side and closed his eyelids. The darkness was comfortable but he could not

continued on page 18
The human body is the source material for much of my recent work. I love how the different systems and functions of our bodies are compiled of individual organs that must work together. These parts can be quite gross, even with moments of repulsion, and at the same time, they can be very beautiful. My fascination with these internal parts is coupled with a love of exploration of materials. What happens when something industrial like steel is paired up with the fragility of thread and fabric? How does that piece dialogue with something even more delicate, like hand cut paper? Thread, paper, felt, steel, rickrack, fabric and trinkets can all be seen within this body of work. But I think that the condition of the body would not be satisfied with just one media. Often I approach my work with a sense of wonder and curiosity, perhaps with an almost child-like inquiry. The internal body is a wonderful vehicle for this exploration. Here I can give parts new life through enlargement, embellishment or humour. This light-hearted approach to the body is observational, a questioning-discovery about our insides, about materials, and about a love for creating.
Honey, I Have Something
I Need to Tell You
Mixed media
(detail)

Kidney Specimens 1 & 2
Paper

Urine Nation
Paper

dialogue 17
“You know, it’s something I’m just learning to accept,” he tells her. “You’re not so much a friend as a shooting star... Can’t count on you being around, but when you do show up, it’s flippin awesome.”

She never thought that comparison could be so hurtful. She’d always liked the cliché analogy of being a star: sparkly, shining, loved. She’s fantastic, they tell her. Addictive. Too cute for her own good. They just can’t get enough. They just can’t get—

She’s here for a moment, then flitting to the next table. The next galaxy. If you didn’t know better you’d think she’s a waitress. Taking orders, giving people what they want, but on her own schedule all along. Oh, she has her own agenda. Don’t be fooled by the smile and the wink and the southern twang: “Now how can I help YOU today, honey?”

It’s all for the tip. It’s all for the face. For the talk, the glowing reports. What more is there, after all?

One day spills into the next like coffee from yesterday’s brew. Some come back for more. A shooting star, an unpredictable amusement. They just can’t get enough. She’s so talented, so clever, witty, enthusiastic... she’s got it all. She’s crying on her floor. She’s staring blank-eyed at the mirror. She’s curled up on her bed, blanket and bear, but she won’t sleep. Have you ever seen her really smile? Have you ever seen her at rest and content? Will she ever sit down and just be? ...and just be okay?

A shooting star. See its light for a moment and then it is gone.
hills looked fine in the true light. Behind him the trail rose into the dark hills of Eagle Rock.

The sound of his running was harsh in the forest. Loose stones slid under his feet and had caused him to turn his ankle once. He continued jogging until the pain was gone but he knew it would return if he stopped working it. He had cuts on his arms and legs from branches and green thorn patches that blocked the trail and some bled a little. There was a dangerous one near his eye that could have blinded him but he had been lucky. He breathed heavily from the long struggle that began over a day ago now but he felt good and knew he could last.

There was no wind in the valley and the humidity caused him to sweat mildly. As he went he could feel his moist shirt cling to his body. A large dark stain covered the backside of his shirt beneath the stuff sack that hung from his back. His stained clothes made it hard to run properly; his breaths were short now and his chest hurt but he did not want to stop. He would come to the river soon and it would be better to rest there.

An hour later and he knew the river was close. He knew it was close because he heard the low rush that he feared. He jogged slowly on the level ground, delaying what he knew was coming. The low rush grew louder and the trees spaced. The ground was wet so that he had to step near the bases of the trees to find solid earth.

There was the river, rushing fast and wide and cold. Soft light that now came from the sky shone through the trees onto the water and thousands of small crests of water were visible as they moved together. Low branches with brown leaves hung over the water from the banks; a few dipped into the water and were pulled by the current. Sharp rocks came up near the middle of the river. They gleamed wet and slick in the rays of light that came through the clouds. There was a group of them further down and they formed rapids.

He removed the stuff sack from his back, opened it, and took his water bottle to the river to fill. He drank. It tasted cool and fresh like fallen snow. He washed his arms and face and then sat down and thought.

You knew it. You goddamn knew it and you kept coming. No, you didn’t know it. How could you? It doesn’t snow here during these months. And what else was there? His leg looked pretty bad when I left. His face was so pale it looked transparent. I hope he didn’t vomit. God, I wonder.

He stared at the rushing water. It passed on without staring back. He knew the trail well enough; there was no crossing. The river was too high like he knew it would be.

There was movement near the far bank and he looked. Two deer stood near the water looking to the other side. Their bodies were motionless except for their short tails, which darted back and forth erratically, and their large dark eyes did not blink as they stared at the moving water. As he watched them, three younger fauns came from behind slowly and stood near the water. One stooped its head and drank while the other two stood unmoving looking at the water.

A short time passed and he was still watching the deer idle near the edge when he heard the distant rolling sound. Three white planes moved across the sky overhead. He watched them fly north towards the hills until he lost sight of them because of the trees. Even when they were gone he could still hear the engines echoing through the expanse and he followed the trails of cloud they left behind. A strange feeling filled the deep part of his stomach and throat. He looked back across the river but the deer had gone.

He stood and stretched. It was getting late. His ankle was stiff so he walked back and forth to warm it. There was a fallen branch away from the bank and he picked it up. He broke the extensions off so that it was like a staff and leaned on it. Then he moved to the water, removed his shoes and socks and stepped in. The water was icy and quickly numbed his feet; the current pulled on his body but he stood firm. Slowly he raised the wooden staff above his head and brought it down into the riverbed again. There was no change as the water continued on out of sight.

I couldn’t have known. It never snows during these months. I guess he won’t make it though. The snow is gone. It’s gone now as if it never came. But it did its work marvelously and who could have seen it coming. I wonder if it will come again.

He stepped out of the river onto the moist earth. He let his feet dry and then put his shoes and socks on and picked up the stuff sack. When he was ready, he glanced at the river once more and threw the staff into the water and watched it drift away; when it was gone, he turned and began climbing back through the trees and up the trail without looking back.

This body of work pursues a sensibility that acknowledges the dark underbelly of nature. Plants are sex organs. Fruit rots and molds and putrefies.

Paint reveals the messy, complex beauty of organic cycles. Smears of oil or acrylic or once-living matter on the paper may cause an unpleasant visceral reaction, but intricate line drawings entice a closer look. Compelling mystery lurks in the paint like in the dark recesses of rotting trees.

The work references scientific investigation, drawing from natural history sketches and preserved specimen. Life, however, avoids simple classification and rarely looks how we find it in textbooks—a vitality I strive to emulate.

A study of Zen Buddhism and Daoism also informs this work—finding magnificence in the mundane, celebrating the moment before or after the climax, honoring the natural cycle, uplifting the female nature of the earth. I recommend reading Okakura Kakuzo’s *The Book of Tea.*

20 dialogue
Asterion
Kristofer Nivens

Ugly as a body parted
bone from bone —

flesh eating flesh,
as the ancient father
consumed his own.

Curse my mother,
crouching beyond her wits,
stricken with lust and wild —
and curse my father,
king beyond the king,
foam-white, whole and virile.

Such a creature you made her, craftsman,
such a form we were given —
a triple knot in the shining cord of life.

Bind me with halls of marble,
craftsman, build above my back
this palatial dark.
Though I crouch and lick
myself, a hideous mongrel,
I am star-like enough.

But feed me, father, feed me
the tender shoot and blossom
of my more terrible root.

A vow of peace for the blood
of these parted ones —

I grant a gift I cannot know,
though I shroud my brow
in slumber like a black sail.
As a ceramist, BFA major Eric Heerspink challenges himself by balancing utilitarian and conceptual traditions within the medium of ceramics. Through his conceptual work Eric explores how individuals construct their own senses of identity and self-awareness. Self-identity has been a significant theme in his work. He grapples with these ideas further in the context of youth and education. For Eric, being an art educator as well as a ceramist provides a crucial link to his understanding of his own constructed identity. Eric explores his place as a ceramic artist through his functional pieces as well, drawing from a strong history of functional artistic works.

—Jo-Ann Van Reeuwyk
Yellow Tea Pot
Glazed stoneware

Green Lidded Jar
Glazed stoneware

Communities
Oil and spray paint
Rising, Easter Morning, 2008
Robert Zandstra

A long yawn, my jaws embrace the final syllable of the song I was dreaming. No alarm.

Still immersed in darkness, I struggle with my comforter to stretch out my arms.

A light like dawn seeps under my eyelids, pries them open. Shoulders tighten like the first layer of water freezing in a plastic bag, my chest filled with water to my neck. I hear nostrils. Wind in my ears.

"Excuse me," habit forces me to ask. "Bless you," a response. Sunlight floods my mouth and throat.

With a yawn, I exhume and exhale the last remains of a Sunday morning sleep.

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The Word
Rebecca Van Dijk

'Twas the Word, that awesome Word That brought to life the world In brilliant color, light and dark, Flung out the heavens, spread the earth Formed His children to live and love Great God and one another.

'Twas the words, those hideous words That twisted, broke the world Ripped a gaping bloody gash In the trembling heart of humankind Torn from God, by their own hands Through Satan’s slithering lies.

'Twas the Word, that blessed Word That raised up again the world Descended down into agony’s depths, To heal our wounded aching souls Paid the awful price, His blood, He gave for us, uttering “It is finished.”

'Tis the words, these joyful words We raise in exultation Lift up our voices, sing aloud In unison with the angels, Till the day He brings us home To sing forever, “Hallelujah, Praise the Lord.”
Untitled, Jon Speyers
Black and White 35 mm film
My trip to Cleveland, Ohio, was more about the politics of people in tight places than politics of the United States of America—though I went with hopes of catching sight of the 2008 Democratic candidates. I traveled across the state of Michigan and rode in the personal space of many people, from a young woman named Hilda and her year-old son Daniel, who was born in Jesus’s hometown, to a middle-aged woman with three children, inch-long black and white spotted fingernails, and a fur coat to match. Personally, I was dressed as if I were going to meet the President of the United States.

ACORN, Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, is a community organization that petitions for social justice. It’s a real “for the people, by the people” kind of organization, and their main concern that day was the housing crisis (or I should say “our” main concern once I donned a bright red ACORN shirt). We picked up people who had been directly affected by foreclosures as our bus fought through a snowstorm and made stops to pick up members of the low-income population of Lansing, Flint, and Detroit. By the time we got to Detroit there was room for fourteen more on the bus and about thirty who wanted to go waiting outside in the blizzard, numbered in order of arrival. The maximum capacity squeezed on and the rest piled into cars to follow us there. I thought about getting off to explore Detroit for a day but American flags, future history books, and the face of Barack Obama flashed through my mind.

I drifted into daydreams like this, sometimes into sleep and back out again when someone passed me my choice of packed lunchmeat-turkey or chicken sandwich. I opted for the peanut-butter and banana sandwiches Tory and I packed. A Costco-sized box of potato chips surfed over my head and wound slowly to the back. The mother with the fingernails beside me had two narrow seats to fit her larger frame, her three children, the suitcase and five-pound bag of oranges she brought; the kids laid splayed out over her lap and one another, eating their chips. She opened her cell phone with her chin as her fingertips could not reach past their faux extensions. She wore a visor over a bandana, and kept pretty quiet except to suggest cheers to get us pumped up when we were almost there. A few attempts were made but it only really caught on with the front half of the bus. I half-heartedly cheered—I felt a bit like an imposter since I researched the cause only the night before. But I had really started to feel an affinity with those around me.

The highlight of the ride was holding chubby baby Daniel while Hilda talked to us and emptied a water syringe full of baby food into his mouth. He seemed happy with the tidiness of the arrangement as well. We exchanged phone numbers at her request and when Tory said he might be in Flint soon, she insisted, “You have to bring Rachel; I don’t meet men alone.” I liked her a lot.

All in all, it took about eight hours to arrive in Cleveland, Ohio. We congregated with Ohio ACORNs who fed us pizza and pop in a nearby church. Re-energized, we rallied outside the debate center with and against other Obama and Clinton supporters. ACORN had just endorsed Barack Obama, so I was glad add to the Obama numbers. I held a sign that said, “Housing is a Right,” which allowed me to meet even more people who inquired about the sign. I met Elizabeth Kucinich, whom I have adopted as my role model, and a black teenage guy rallying, intent on electing his first black president. But it became increasingly clear that there was no avenue for us to see the candidates. The leaders started talking about leaving at eight; the debate didn’t start until nine so there was no hope for the promised “live-feed screen across the street” either.

During our half-hour of hype, police patrolled the roads in and around the debate site and warned us that we would receive fines if we didn’t stay on the sidewalk. After a whirlwind of makeshift signs, ACORN flags, and heavy snowfall intermixed with “O-BA-MA, OH EIGHT! Be a part of something GREAT!” we retreated back to the church for hot chocolate. It was difficult to make it through throngs of excited protesters and bureaucratic roadblocks, but somehow we made it back. We listened to several Cleveland community board members speak and heard real-life stories of the effects of the foreclosure crisis, and then they opened the floor to other
 ¡ISLAS DE CONDENADOS!

Soldados de las Fuerzas Argentinas

...completamente a solas. Desde su patria
no recibo ayuda. Están Vds. condenados a
la soledad y a la desola. Frente a un
invierno cruel y despiadado,
Vds. tanto necesitan. Sus familias viven
por que nunca los volverán a ver. rescata
Vds., os la patria ve.

Cuales son las razones por las cuales
encuentran Vds. en esta situación
CALAMITOSA?

SOLDADOS!! HAN CUMPLIDO VOS LOS POD
QUE LA PATRIA LES PUEDE ABRIR.

HICAMENTE SON LOS GENERALES
MEN-N.

Lo es justo que con sus vidas
VOS.

LAS TORTUOSAS AMBICIONES DE
LA PATRIA.

ESTA LOCA A
UNDO

Las Islas Malvinas
1982

DESIRE THE RIGHT.
"If you see one, there are probably a dozen more."

This is something my dad told me about spotting a coyote. From the time I was a little girl, I have been fascinated with animals, partly because of their mystery in our shared habitat of suburbia. Coyotes keep a low profile, yet several packs exist along the outskirts of development in my hometown in Northwest Indiana. Knowing they're there evokes a strange and ambivalent feeling, causing butterflies (...or possibly honeybees?) in my stomach.

Upon sighting animals and insects, I've had an intense fascination, exhilaration, and fear of the unknown. When ants began marching along the cat's food dish, it meant my mom putting traps near the wall where they squeezed their way into our home each summer. And after finding several bees in our basement we discovered a hive nearby.
My current work is a visual interpretation of my limited interactions with those creatures. I continually find natural and symbolic layers and connections which I then react to expressively through layered paintings. Using watered-down acrylics and gouache, I’ve combined printmaking techniques with additive and subtractive layering of paint, resulting in visceral compositions that incite mystery and curiosity.
When I hear Don McLean’s “American Pie,” I immediately regress into an awkward ninth grade version of myself with a mouth full of metal and a head full of teenage dreams. I can still remember how that music used to make me smile, a smile big enough that the sun could have been using my braces for a second source of radiance and real enough that I wouldn’t have noticed or cared. Even if my eyes would have been open, I still would have been looking through rose-colored glasses. Rose like the pink carnation from a pickup-truck-driving high school senior, rose because I had stopped to smell and to ponder it too long, rose because I was too innocent to understand the previous line. I memorized every word of the nine-minute song because of the one line that somehow tied it to me, and I wondered who saw whom dancing in the gym because then I would know who was in love with whom. Though the music still lives on, eventually the carnation died (then I hair sprayed it, dried it, and kept it in a vase for three years).

Since it hit the shelves of once-sacred stores in 1971, “American Pie” has undoubtedly undergone many such interpretations. The most invested listeners offered line-by-line commentary on the meaning behind McLean’s cryptic lyrics; the casual and culturally-ignorant listeners, myself included, applied meaning from personal experience. The former labored to keep true to the authorial intentions; the latter stretched the text to mean things Mr. Allusive Symbolic himself never could have imagined. Others like my father, who was one of them good old boys who first sang this song, combined historical information with personal experience to bring meaning to the lyrics. In all cases, the interpretations of the song were informed by and informed narrative.

Three distinguishable layers of narrative intersect to inform interpretation. The first layer, “meta-narrative,” describes narrative as a system of meaning for making sense of human life in general. Understanding the world according to any meta-narrative provides a basis for formulating a coherent explanation of the present in terms of the storied past and the foretold future. Ideally, the meta-narrative speaks to and makes sense of every aspect of existence and reality. Secondly, “personal narrative” indicates the ongoing sequence of events each of us personally experiences. Finally, the materialization of stories humans tell are the third layer, termed “textual narratives.” By this definition, written and spoken stories, news articles, pieces of art, and popular and Christian music all qualify as textual narratives.

Studying how young adults interpret popular and Christian music especially highlights how the interpretation is informed by meta-narratives, personal narratives, and textual narratives. Interpretation of these types of music employ meta-narratives of popular culture and religious worldview, appeal to personal narratives of general experience, and allude to other textual narratives. For example, my nearly-freshman interpretation of “American Pie” mentioned in the introduction was informed by all three levels of narrative. The allusion to the Trinity taking a train to the coast created a negative feeling because my religious worldview labeled it blasphemous. The pink carnation and the pickup truck triggered certain pieces of my personal narrative. Finally, an explanation of how the music died, afforded by my mom, and some background information on the song, afforded by speculating line-by-line analyses, are textual narratives I now bring to the piece as well. Combining the pieces of information afforded by these three levels of narrative makes up an interpretation of the song.
allows and guides young adults to interpret the lyrics through emotionally identifying with the introspective narrator speaking in the present tense. A present tense narration indicates that “the events are not contained in the past but rather continue to invade a narrator’s current consciousness” (Ochs and Capps 25), and therefore allows a linguistic intersection between the textual narrative and readers’ ongoing personal narratives.

The interpretative act, in which readers match their experiences to the narrator’s lyrical mediation of emotional incidents and thus actively write the text, is often a selective process. A college student explained her interaction with song texts: “Depending on what I’m going through or what my mind’s thinking about when I listen to a song, I’m going to pick out different things, and I’m going to think that’s what they’re saying.” An interpretation of popular or Christian music, therefore, does not necessitate an experience identical to that of the narrator. In fact, the experience of the young adult may differ significantly from that of the narrator, yet through co-authoring the “writerly text” the young adult may ignore or adapt irrelevant lines or details to cause the text to cohere with their personal narratives.

The song reaches out to the reader with incidents and expressions to which the reader connects experiences and emotions. The first-person narration invites the reader to join along, to co-author the textual narrative with her own experiences, to color the textual narrative with his own voice.

Using song, humans can articulate their thoughts in the moment of listening or in future situations to which the lyrics relate. My father has a song, it seems, for every occasion. Following suit, I often find myself using song to express my feelings, even in subtle ways by alluding to a song to say without saying. Song often becomes a topic of casual or formal conversation, discussed between friends or in groups.

Many young adults tie songs to experiences with others. Almost all of the interviewees pinpointed songs they have “shared” with friends or significant others. One highschooler said he and a friend shared the song “Numb” by Linkin Park, which “we both knew and used to annoy teachers.” Sharing then can also result from a deliberate choice and then be used to inform experience, as is the case when many couples choose "our song.” These examples show how young adults’ interpretation of music becomes part of their personal narratives as they use song “to resist authority at all levels, assert their personalities, develop peer relationships and romantic entanglements” (Lull 152).

The numerous uses of song testifies that the textual narrative of song constantly intersects with and informs personal narrative.

By virtue of daily living, humans become prolific and accomplished authors of the most gorgeously complex narratives. Being “ceaselessly intertwined with narrative,” human lives provide threads of experience that require a weaving together. These threads are given color as humans weave them together with expectations, experience, and expertise, becoming part of an ever-changing story whose skillful plaiting continues throughout life. Though all humans produce textiles, some materialize these personal, intellectual authorings into textual narratives and offer them to others. In considering, selecting, tailoring, and trying on these texts, the others bring expectations of meta-narratives, past or present or possible experiences of personal narratives, and expertise provided by textual narratives. The result of the interaction is an individual, personalized text the interpreter wears and carries as an expression of the self.
b.a. spotlight: jill devries
The night's stillness cannot be broken, not now, not tonight. A rustling, then footsteps, my whole body tenses waiting. I squeeze my eyes tight shut, but the scream echoes and re-echoes in my head. Then all I can hear is his heavy, ragged breathing. Her whimpers are done at least for tonight. Footsteps stop, but then continue past my door. He washes the blood from his hands and returns to sleep contentedly. She is lying motionless on the floor.

His voice slices the darkness, “Leave her, Dee, she deserved it this time.” I hide back under the covers, “Yes, Daddy.” My friends’ mothers never “fall.” I wish I was deaf, so I could believe her every morning, after I hear sounds in the night.
Auto Portrait avec un Coeur Brisé, Adam Bock
Water-based oil on wood panel
Comments

Robert Zandstra [07]
This piece is a response to Jessica Miller’s piece *Heartwood* in this year’s third issue of *Dialogue*. It also owes much to Wendell Berry’s poems about trees. I am interested in the relationship between language and the natural world. The form itself raises many questions about this particular tree and the text that forms it. By writing a poem in the form of tree rings, where each line corresponds to a year of growth, I wanted to see what would happen in a poem that expands out, rather than down, where the last (inner) line happens first chronologically. I also wanted to explore memory and identity in a personal being that has no perception beyond itself.

Jennifer Waid [08]
Experimenting with different ways to print in the lab, I shot black and white film and processed it. I then took my multiple sharpies and colored these negatives (making sure of course that I was using the opposite color of what I truly wanted). Finally I printed on color paper.

Julia Van Wingerden [09]
“Sun-Jeweled” expresses a variety of thoughts and feelings through its words, imagery, and shape. Sometimes a person needs a magical and carefree escape from his or her life. “Sun-Jeweled” was such an “escape” for me one evening this past month; I wanted to face my churning thoughts and “Rush barefoot through this mind-field/burning soles of sweet remorse.”

Amy Hoisington [10]
The title refers to the International Air Transport Association airport code. ORD, LAX, LHR, AMS, and CDG refer respectively to O'Hare, Chicago; Los Angeles International Airport; Heathrow, London; Schiphol, Amsterdam; and Charles de Gaulle International Airport, Paris. Times are my best estimates. Airports are quite fun, though you typically would want to spend roughly two to four hours in one (for example, I wouldn't recommend thirty hours in LAX).

Katie Pruss [11]
This was a written response to Kate Chopin’s *The Story of an Hour*. If the poem is striking, the author suggests reading the story. It is similar to dynamite—stunning.

Kelly McCormick [12]
I intended “Glories of War” as a poem with a surprising finish, leading readers one way and finishing another. The inspiration for the piece comes from my younger brother, the sloppy eater of our house.

Dave Ellens [16]
“Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.” —Frederick Buechner

Kristofer Nivens [24]
Human sacrifice is so much more interesting when it involves angsty semi-cannibalism performed for political purposes by an unwanted bastard bull-child languishing in a massive subterranean maze.

miranda brouwer [25]
my images are a secret narrative in which you may attempt to guess correlation and meaning.

Rebecca Van Dijk [29]
God created the entire universe with His Word. I wanted to demonstrate the importance of words, and God's awesome power, through this poem about the history of the Word in the world.

Jon Speyers [30]
My interest with urban landscapes began with filming a documentary detailing the lives of those intimately connected with the streets of Grand Rapids. Almost a year later, I returned to these streets to again capture their raw essence, this time through 35 mm film. During the development process, the images were letterboxed as an allusion to the documentary.

Michael Rodriguez [31]
Las Islas Malvinas: identity in an island.

jill devries [36]
“grace finds beauty in everything.” -U2

Julia A. Garvelink [38]
This is dedicated to anyone who has ever been abused or who knows someone who has been abused. Although I have no personal experience with abuse, this poem is to honor those who do.
Editorial
Elizabeth Oliver

In this, my last issue as editor, I would like to thank the many people who offered their support and friendship during this endeavor. I used Dialogue as a more experimental medium this year, partly in recognition of the growing awareness on campus of the complex relationship between text and images. This year Calvin offered at least four classes exploring that relationship. Other events on campus reveal this growing interest in the nature of printed material as well: Hekman Library inaugurated a new graphic novel section, the Center Art Gallery featured two exhibits of illustrators, and graphic novelist Kevin Huizenga ('99) spoke at the Festival of Faith and Writing.

Such attention to printed media comes at an interesting time. Life daily moves more digital via things like Facebook, online news and commentary periodicals, and the new portable reader system (handheld digital book) released this year. The changing cultural attitude has affected Calvin’s Prism, which is struggling to reevaluate itself as interest in a printed yearbook wanes. Dialogue itself has responded to the trend by adding a website, which will likely continue to grow and develop in the coming years.

Increased awareness of printed media in the midst of rapid digitization reveals a new direction, in which the artistry of text and images receives more appreciation. Discourse on the impact of juxtaposing these two elements adds to fullness of visual experience since we are, after all, living in an extremely visual culture. The printed word means something different than the spoken word; printed words on a page next to some blank space means something different than words next to a picture; a printed reproduction of a work of art means something different than the work itself. When all these elements combine in a publication, the relationship between all the elements becomes increasingly complex.

The purely utilitarian purpose of printed text may slowly be waning, but in its place we, through publications like Dialogue, can embrace art on paper in a new and revitalized way.

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*Images on pages 8, 22, 23, 25, 26, 32, and 39, and select images on pages 14, 18, 19, 27, and 33 photographed by Lee Bolt.

Thanks to all those who submitted their work, and thanks also to our readers. Special thanks to Visual Arts Guild. Have an excellent summer. “Greatness in the smallest incidents of life.”

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