The staff thanks all contributors for sharing themselves through their creative work. Regrettably, we could only publish a portion of these submissions. Many hours were spent in the formation and sharing of our opinions and ideas. Notwithstanding, at this time, it seems appropriate...

---

I'm so lonely
on my saddle since
my horse died.
—Mark A. Abbey

---

Editors,

Connie forgot to
put the poem in, but
she does it a whole lot
do you want any
of your stuff in your
letter, give it a 5.
—Stan

---

Editors:

M. Abbey's Poem
"Lonely On My Saddle"

13 representative of
the spiritual voices
in our lives w/ God.
This highly symbolic
work will enhance
our literary rep. as
well as drum up
some student support.
Give it a 5.
—Peter

---

I won't stand alone
 DEFINITELY NEEDS A VISUAL.

---

...
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PROMETHIA 1982

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1982 Promethia
In his short essay, "Christianity and Literature," C.S. Lewis illustrates several differences between the Christian approach to literature and that held by modern criticism with an analogy of two theatre-goers. Upon exiting the show, the modern critic freely comments about his particular seat—how the draught from the door was uncomfortably chilly and the people around him annoyingly inconsiderate. Conversely, the Christian relates what he was able to see from his particular seat (as that is what he knows best), but his attention is directed to the theatre itself, to the molding that circles the pillars and appears older on the hidden side of them. Lewis's brief sketch not only contrasts "the expressionist and the Christian attitudes towards the self or temperament," but if imaginatively extended, the analogy can be used to discover the specific tasks of a Christian writer, an issue which Lewis does not himself address. As imitators of Christ as well as writers, we are to be more than theatre-going scribes with hand-mirrors pointed towards God. In the language of the analogy, we are to stay in our assigned seats, watch the stage carefully, and develop our talents in preparation for the writing of truthful, artistic reviews.

Within the framework of the theatre sketch, our first duty is to accept our assigned seat gratefully, graciously and humbly. There should be no wishful gazing up into the box seats even if we happen to be seated in the back row of the auditorium, for that is when we run the risk of missing the show. We can also find ourselves in trouble if we are so caught up in admiring our own plush velvet chair that we cannot possibly give our attention to the drama unfolding before us. Writing concerned only with self-expression nearly always degenerates into self-deceiving egotism that cannot help but leave us with a false, joyless picture of reality. On the other hand, the Christian writer who can accept his lot in life, avoiding both covetousness and conceit, is free to revel in the bountiful world around him. Unburdened by weighty comparisons of ourselves with others, as Christian writers we are under none of the pressures of the self-expressive writers to be unique or strikingly different, for we can realize that our "seat" in life's theatre is ours and ours alone. No one else can have quite the same story to retell that our own chair affords us, and we do not need to pay the high price of obtaining self-made originality, for that was given us at the door with our reserved seat ticket.

Once we have assumed our proper place in the theatre, our next task is to actively watch the performance, which may be enacted in the adjacent seats as easily as on the stage (although we must never forget that the stage is to be our first priority; it is the reason for both the theatre and the gathered crowd). If the woman seated next to us interrupts the show with whispered questions, we should be delighted at her honest interest in the play, and if she appears hungry, it is only right that we share our popcorn. If our particular place in the theatre gives us the opportunity to help even one person to better enjoy the show, then that is worth ten imaginative retellings of it afterwards. If the small boy to our right spills his soft drink on our notepad, if he loses the only pen we had to lend him, then we must temporarily put aside the "review" we wished to write. What actually occurs at the theatre is of far greater importance than our own version of it. Lewis himself cautions us that the writing of literature,
even of great literature, is not an end in itself, for “the Christian knows from the outset that the salvation of a single soul is more important than the production or preservation of all the epics and tragedies in the world.” As a Christian and as a writer, our responsibility is to be the best “little Christs” we can be, even if that means we never get published in the Atlantic, never hired for the staff of Guideposts magazine or never able to put a single word down on paper. The Christian writer cannot lose himself in a world of introspective self-searching, but must take up the commanded life of imitative out-reaching.

Finally, if we happen to find ourselves at an intermission, with notepad, pen and a few spare minutes, then that is the time to seize the opportunity and the challenge to write. We must endeavor to retell the drama as best as we possibly can, trying with mere words to catch even the faintest echoes or resemblances of the play’s Beauty and Wisdom, of the theatre’s intricate workmanship, of the delighted giggles of the child two rows ahead, of the terrible loneliness of the woman beside us, who refused to watch the play—loneliness that we could understand, but not singlehandedly help. Paradoxically, with the effort to embody the Actual comes both humility and a deep sense of self-worth, for although everyone else was also at the theatre, in a very real sense, each of us was given a private show that no one else was privileged to see, and along with the personal view, we were each given individual talents to re-imagine the scene for others. It is the development of our personal talents that sets us apart from mindless scribes and passive spectators, for even the wealth of splendid action that unrolls before us is not enough by itself to make a literary success. No matter how closely we watch the drama from our proper places, the discipline and training that the modern school of criticism insists upon for the crafting of forceful self-expression is just as necessary for the Christian retelling of the main action of the universe. If our time and talents are not put into the expression of universal themes—if these themes are so poorly retold as to be uninteresting or unrecognizable—then is it any wonder if people settle for reading well-written accounts of individual trivialities? Lewis states his belief that “success in sacred literature depends on the same qualities of structure, suspense, variety, diction and the like which secure success in secular literature” and he warns that the “literary success or failure of a piece of Christian literature would never be the same thing as its obedience or disobedience to Christian principles.”

When Christian writers find they are able to take themselves less seriously and to take their responsibility to their audience more seriously, they will realize they are not called to share themselves, but to share universal truths, and not to merely share universal truths, but to share them in the most vivid, intelligible writing they are capable of. The tasks of the Christian writer demand every bit as much of him as do the tenets of modern criticism. In fact, more is required of the Christian writer than is required of the Christian literature that he produces. Art for art’s sake can have no place in the convictions of the Christian author, for his literature is never an end sufficient unto itself; it is preceded by the greater drama that inspired it, and followed by the personal decisions of the audience it affects with the retelling.
When we two talk

  gold enough
  and rainbows
  big ones
  smile across the sky blue
  oceans
  full of ebb and flow
  grist flow
  through singing mills
  singing
  intricate counterpoint
  our long gold songs.

—Marion Louise Camden

—Stan Coleman
Laminated Butterfly

All is evil; all is good; all is everything
Hand on the bookshelf, psychedelic boxkite
Somebody pull my string.
Empty orange coke can, half a hamburger hostess
Basketball is not my favorite sport
Cool computer cough drop, yummy yellow yapho
Tarshishah la Nineveh—abort.
Flying, flying so high, Laminated Butterfly.

Akhnaten rotten, Amon afterburner
scorched the eggs for breakfast Sunday morning
Wolf in wooly wardrobe, charismatic cougar
Pounced upon the flock without a warning
Frenzomatic freedom, existential exit
Humpty Dumpy climbing up the wall,
Cannibal convention, blasing bloody babies
Tightrope walker don’t confess the fall,
Trying, trying not to cry, Laminated Butterfly.

Anthromorphic anthem echoes through the hall
Extra-aural earlobe a little bit too small
Block out the rest with think he thinks he’s groovy
Passionate soliloquy in a silent movie
Crying, crying but don’t know why, Laminated Butterfly.

So coat me with plastic
And hang me on your wall
So there’s no way I can fly away
Or touch you at all
Or lead you away somewhere
You’ve never been before
And crush your cozy cosmos
By showing you there’s more.
Yes, you’ll have to laminate me
If my colours you adore...
Dying, dying to beautifully, Laminated Butterfly.

—Sterling Wyatt Camden IV

November 3
I throw my love in your direction,
It strikes your flesh then shatters to the floor.
—Stan Coleman

At Random
Why do stars shine so brightly?
Because I’m simply too modest.
Why are people so different?
Because spiders spin webs to catch the unwary and suck their blood.
Why are there only two positions on a light switch?
Because even when we’re really down He can always pick us up.
Why does morning always come too soon?
Because we are corporate life forms following blindly the paths of destruction.
Why does the sun continue to rise?
Because the wind seeks to know.
Why are we here?
Because the car was a Buick.
Why do I have to become what I hope to become?
Because it’s late and the cats need to be fed.
Why is the sky gray when it rains?
Because Hayakawa sleeps in the Senate.

—Freshman composition 1013
For You and/or Whoever

I want you to know love:
To cross fields of golden adventure in your life—
To come upon Merlin’s fires in the sunset—
To ride out, the blood like song in your veins,
Strong with desire
And with being desired
The bright mantle of blood-bought love warm on your shoulders,
Like the star-spangled sky draping the hills at dusk.

And I want to love you:
To know the landscape of your face;
To touch you, touch you
And again.
Until we wear the edges of our meeting smooth, in
Sweet familiarity;
To know you as the channel knows the water
As the water flows
Over it, over
and over again.

—Eve Johnson

take me to the city

Why don’t you take me to the city,
Move me away from here—
The middle of nowhere.
Then, when I have nothing to do,
Or when I’m trying to forget someone or something,
I can listen to the noises
and try to deline each one,
You know,
Not even the snow is quiet there.

—Donna L. Pape

Calm, your opulence lives with the dawn,
In the slipping of Apollo to the horizon.
The cool, silky beads of dew and quiet
Melodies floating in the air wrap comforting
arms of strength around me.

—Simm O’Dell

—Bruce Mayfield

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Metamorphosis

As the shadow of a man slowly melts into a splintered gray park bench, a world spins its way into another life.
Numbness sinks deep into consciousness. Claws tightly grasp the throat of an amber bottle.
Tired bones shift as a back fights to straighten; Brown papersack skin hangs suspended from a net of purple veins.
The "golden" years, the embalmers of men;
They come as time stands laughing.
As gray clouded eyes strain to follow the dance of a nimble child, the price for flight is paid.

—Jeff Taillon

What is a tomb
But an earth-bound womb
To which we return when the world has done with us;
It enfolds us in alabaster arms,
Soothing.
Gentling those bitter tears we shed,
As we awoke from our dreams
To live our nightmares.
It accepts us as we are in its eternal embrace,
Cradling our wearied bodies
Humming a lullaby, singing
Of rich brown soil and blankets of grass;
Growing things.
Calmed, we fall into a dreamless sleep
Settling into the lap of the earth,
Quiet unfurling.

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prometheus & january 1973

and ignoring the bad. I am sure that this can and does happen. But it is also true that the measure of a man is the fruit of the seed he has sown. It can be seen in his way. And the seed which Jamie Wells had sown began, in those emotionally tumultuous months of April and May, to bear its fruit within me.

The beginning was, I suppose, with the singular image of Jamie bowing his head to pray in the school cafeteria. There is a silent strength about a man in sincere prayer which, if converted into the minds and muscles of an army, could surely make an empire. But I did not notice this strength in Jamie's small, light-skinned face the day I saw him bow his head in the cafeteria, nor did I even know it as a strength. I was simply walking along a long row of tables toward the door when I saw him, and I wouldn't have thought that it would have made an impact. But after his death the memory came to me again and again, as though it were either a blessing or a curse, depending upon what I did with it. And it seems strange even now that this image, this memory of someone I barely ever noticed, could be so clear. But it was my only real memory of his face, and I cling to it passionately, studying it and passionately appreciating it, for there was something there that I wanted very much to know and understand.

V

The days of April and May were slow, careful days for me that year. Spring came, and it went on all about me in its light and breathless rush, but I did not notice. I continued on at my own pace, finishing out the year in the kind of haze in which all young men, if they are truly going to discover themselves, must someday go through. There are those who would say that Jamie's death was the chief cause of this, and I would not argue. It had forced a great change in me. But it was the kind of change that you don't notice at first; the kind that just happens gradually day after day, until finally you wake up one morning thinking different thoughts and believing different things. Perhaps those are the most permanent changes of all.

There are always going to be those persons who, because they can see a little farther into human nature than others, exploit people. But LeAnn wasn't like that. She knew that I'd been wrestling with something, weighing it and balancing it in my mind and then hiding it below the surface, but she didn't know whether to ask me about it or not. She wasn't the kind to force herself on me just because she knew something was wrong.

I guess the break in my defenses came about a week before graduation. There is a large cliff behind Clay's house, and another cliff rises to almost the same height. It had always been a favorite place for the four of us—Dave, Clay, LeAnn and I—to go and talk, especially at night. We would take Clay's jeep and just sit there for hours, looking out over the highway or up into the sky, and I don't think we ever really believed that our high school days would end. But when we all were there that night, a Monday night I think, we knew that there wasn't much time left. People tend to travel in different directions after high school, and among the four of us that had already begun to happen. We talked for about an hour without really saying anything. Darkness had not fallen yet, and no one really wanted to start in about how this was the last time we would all be together, even though that's what we were all thinking. Finally, after one of those comfortable three minute lulls among friends when no one says anything, LeAnn turned around in the front seat and looked at me.

"Something's been bothering you lately," she said. "Do you want to talk about it?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I mean you've been quiet for a long time, like you've caught up in yourself. And it's not just tonight. You've been like that for a couple of months."

"I'm sorry," I said.

"There's nothing to be sorry about. I just think there's something bothering you."

"We were all quiet again for a couple of minutes, and then LeAnn turned around more once."

"As is Jamie Wells!" she asked, and in her voice there was softness.

VI

I didn't understand that night how she knew it was Jamie, because I had never said anything about him to anyone. But I guess that night was the right time, and I found myself among the right people, because for the first time in two months I finally felt like saying what was on my mind.

"Yeah, it's Jamie," I admitted.

"I didn't think you knew Jamie," Clay said.

"I didn't... but I probably know him better now than I did when he was alive."

"What?"

"That's what has been bothering me. I just can't get him out of my head. But I don't guess that's bad. I think he's changing me."

"That sounds crazy," David said.

"No, it isn't, not if you think about it," I said. "I never spent any time with him, but I think if I had I would've found out that he was a pretty good guy... saw him praying in the cafeteria once... it takes a lot of courage to do something like that. And that time on the parking lot with Wilson, that took guts too. Steve was about twice his size... That's not his fault. He was a tiny guy but he had a strong face, like he already made a lot of hard decisions in his life. Decisions he wouldn't let himself go back on. But there was a gentleness in him too. He had to be gentle or he never would have fought Wilson. I think there must be times a gentle man will fight when a strong man won't."

"You mean gentleness isn't a strength?" David asked coyly.

"I don't know. But I just wish now that I had known him. We were silent then, and the night had grown silent around us as well, the way it does sometimes before a heavy spring rain. And it was out of this silence, out of this night of warm friendship and thought that LeAnn spoke the words I have never forgotten.

"When one rose dies," she said, "another takes its place."

Clay couldn't believe she'd say something like that, because to him it sounded cruel, and even I had trouble with it. But when David looked at her and said, "only in the spring," I couldn't let him go.

"No," I said. "Roses bloom in the summer too."

Are at the time I didn't know if it was true or not, and I had only said it because I was hurt and because it sounded good, but when I looked at LeAnn, she smiled.
great deal. At that age some young men want very much to be able to talk to a girl as though she were their best friend, and LeAnn met that need for us. She was a friend and a sister and more, all at the same time, and we revered her for it.

But there is a great problem with revering a person too much, and that is that you often come to love them too little. I am afraid that we revered LeAnn much more than we loved her, for if we truly loved her we would not have objected when she began to date Joel Simpson at the beginning of our senior year. By that time we had all begun to feel that she was ours, and we found it hard to share her with anyone else. It seems a small thing now, but it is true that our differences didn't really drive us apart, but there were more fights that year, and the four of us didn't do as many things as a group.

There is a silent strength and more, all at the same time, and date Joel Simpson much more than we loved her, for if we truly loved her we would have been as happy as anyone else. It seems a small thing now, but there were more fights that year, and the four of us didn't do as many things as a group.

It is usually at a time like that, when you're looking around and asking yourself, "are things really the way I always thought they were?", that something happens to make you wonder even more. At least I've always found it that way. What happened during that time that made me wonder so much was that Jamie Wells was killed. It's strange how the death of a person you never knew can affect your thinking so much, especially when death has never been close to you. For the first couple of days after it happened I thought I was in shock. Now I know better. It was more like the time when I was a little kid and I couldn't figure out how anyone else could live in a different town than I did.

I was that way with Jamie's death, I didn't see it happen, and so I only knew what I'd heard that he'd pulled his car in front of a truck. I never doubted that it had to be an accident, but it just seemed so hard for me to believe that a person whom I had seen at school, and who had lived and breathed for the same length that I had, was really gone. In a strong way he was like all those people in the towns I never saw. I wasn't obsessed so much with Jamie's death as I was with the fact that he had died without my knowing him. Because I had never made the effort to seem to me that I had committed some kind of awful obscenity, and obscenities I believe, even though we may become accustomed to them over a period of time, never really lose their unpleasantness.

I had heard it said that we too often idealize the dead, making saints of ordinary people by concentrating only on the good that was in them.

January 1976

Dear Kathy,

When I sit down to wright my mind wonders to Camp. Then I'll wright a sentence or two and then I'll dream again. This happens over and over, Most of the time it happens before I start to wright. As a result I don't finish many letters. Don't you think I don't think about you. It's just hard to think.

Usually it's easy for me to wright to you, but it's hard right now. I've tried so long to remember you, but now I forget. I haven't remembered what your voice is like for a long time, but now it's hard for me to remember you. I can't get that look like I get on my face, when I think of you. I haven't seen you six months, so I guess it's natural, but it still bugs me. I know that in five months when I see you, I'll love you just as much as ever, but now I love you in a different way. That's why I want so much to see you again.

I tell you, Kathy, I really feel like you do about Camp. I can't think of anything else that has given me as much to be happy about.

What's school really like for you? You've said a little bit, but not enough for me to tell. For me school is something that I don't really think about. It's a part of me, because I spend so much time there, but I'm not a part of it. I just don't fit in. I feel like all of my thoughts and ideas are so far beyond everyone, but it's because the Lord is in me. I guess I'm glad, but it's hard to be so all alone. (I have friends, but they're not Christians so our minds are on different tracks.) I don't know what I'd do if it weren't for you.

I can't wait to see you at Camp Calvary. I will pray for you. Don't you forget to pray for me.

Good-bye. I will hold you dear to me forever.

Love,

April 1979

My friend, my friend, Rebecca, my friend

You are cotton candy and a ferris wheel ride on a cold black night. You are warm sheets on a winter mattress. I like you for what you are—pretty, expressive yet understanding, and so much, much more. I like you as my friend, but with graduation only two weeks away, I feel I must speak. I like you as my friend, but I feel more than that. I have for a very long time.

I liked you as a sophomore, when my family came into the restaurant and you'd smile and say, "Have you really drank four iced teas?" I liked you then, but I didn't know it.

I liked you as a junior when you got mad at me for making fun of you in my demonstration speech. I liked you then, for I was sorry when I made you cry in the abortion debate. I didn't understand until you sobbed, "You just don't understand. It's like a cancer that's going to ruin your life unless you get rid of it." Then I understood what you were saying and how you felt, and I wanted to leave the room and cry with you, but only I couldn't. I liked you then, but I didn't know it.

Then while working at the restaurant, certainly I should have known then. I should have known why I always bussed your tables first, why I was happy to give you my training money, and why I enjoyed staying late to help you close. I should have known why Sunday night inventory was so much fun and why I got so mad if I heard the cooks make lewd remarks about you. (Though, I do admit you looked pretty nice.) I liked you then, but I didn't know it.

As a senior, I have liked you. Things would have been simple had you not become a Christian and had we not spent hours upon hours sharing the things we vowed to never share. The Tuesday night I took you home, and you sat in my car while I talked to myself, finally learned the truth, "I think it's just a release," you said, "that other Stan, the one I hate. He's not you at all." Finally, there was someone who understood me better than I thought anyone ever would. It was then I loved you, and I knew it.

I'm tempted to throw this letter away, but to destroy it would be a half-truth. I've always been honest with you, and to stop now would end that trust. Maybe now, you understand why I never dated, avoided the prom at great social peril and was never too tired or busy to spend hours listening to your boyfriend problems. I'm sorry I can't say these things to your face, but everytime we're near I choke up. All the loving thoughts I have for you turn to mud on my tongue.

Not soon, no, not for a long while, but I promise you, Rebecca, I will return. I hope you're watching out for me. I'll be wearing a white stallion and wearing glistening armour with a bright shiny shield, for I love you too much to say good-bye forever.

With much love,

Stanley

1982 Promethia 9
October 1979
Dear Kathy,

I thought of you today.

For me to think of you is not unusual. I do so from time to time. For me to think of you is not unusual, but who I think of is, for when I think of you, I think of a smile, a twinkling, and a worried look, all of which belong to an eighth grade girl on the hills of Camp Calvary.

As I sit here in my apartment, a police siren screams in the distance. It fades and is replaced by a silent hum and my own restless breathing. Light flows softly through the window, across the table and onto my paper. Only a trickle spills down to the floor.

I feel content, very peaceful, but also a bit lonely. My journalism studies are progressing faster than I could ever have hoped for, and Ball State University is the most wonderful place I have ever been. I'm sorry to be leaving off campus during this first year of college, but even with this, I don't know why anyone would ever go anywhere else to study. In these respects, I am happy.

Steam rises gently from my coffee. I sip the liquid slowly, savoring its comforting warmth. I think. I sip. I think. Soon the mug is empty. Its warmth fades. I place my lifeless friend upon the table, and leaning back, I think.

I breathe deeply of life and wonder how you are. I breathe deeply of life and wonder who you are. I breathe deeply of life and whisper a prayer for your well-being.

Satisfied, I sign my name.

December 1979

Dear Rebecca,

SEASON'S GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE COMING YEAR

That's all I want to say

but...

I mean it. My best wishes really are yours, for although I've known thousands of people and been friends with hundreds, very few people have impressed me as you have.

Very few people have had the love and understanding you show for others. Very few people have had the love and confidence you show for yourself. Very few people have had your ability to warm and to comfort with a laugh, with a smile, with an open ear. Very few people have smiles and eyes as deep as yours. Very, very few.

Your warmth helped me through a frightening time. For this I will always be grateful. Many other thoughts flow in your direction. They ask to be written and then mailed, but all I want to say is

SEASON'S GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE COMING YEAR.

Your friend,

P.S. Congratulations. If you send me an invitation, I'll try to be at the wedding. If not, best of luck.

May 1980

Dear Elaine,

My eyes are moody, nostolgic, filled with bleeding joy and smiles that may never have happened. Did they? I don't remember. Maybe I was asleep, or maybe I am asleep now.

I never thought we would die as we did. I never thought we would die. Were we alive? I don't remember. Maybe I was asleep.

Perhaps I spoke too harshly. You were the one who never needed tact, but still...Perhaps I fought from a corner, grasping through my bars, knowing I could be you as effortlessly as you could be me, sometimes without effort.

I'll work in the foundry, make lots of money, move to Tulsa. Maybe I'll publish, become famous, and get my farmhouse in Vermont, maybe even a resort.

In a subtle way I do not understand, we will always be friends, but then again we will never be

when roses die

by Craig Albin

I think the only class I ever had with Jamie was P.E. At least that's where I first met him. It seems funny, but there are always two kinds of people who stand out in those high school P.E. classes: the very strong and the very frail. Jamie was one of the very frail. He sort of stamped along and it looked like he never moved from the place he was running in. But no one really made fun of him, as I remember. We just laughed to ourselves.

Jamie... He was one of those people you never saw on a Friday night.

I'd like to say there were things about him that impressed me, but I don't believe there were at the time. To me, and probably to everyone else at school, he was just Jamie. I don't remember ever seeing him with a girl, or even with the same group of guys. He was usually by himself. For anyone else I would have thought that was strange, but it seemed to fit Jamie. He went to classes and, after that, I suppose he went home. He was one of those people you never saw on a Friday night.

In a way it's unusual that I didn't know him better. My friends were all popular, and we knew just about everyone, but Jamie was never really a part of it all. In fact, there was only one time in nearly four years that Jamie caused any commotion at all. I remember because I heard about it from Clayton Day, who was my best friend. We'd meet each other on the parking lot before school one morning, and he couldn't wait to tell me how Jamie had hit Steve Wilson in the face with a baseball bat.

"Come on Clay," I'd said. "You mean Jamie Wells, that little guy who always wore the cowboy boots? Wilson would've killed him." I was skeptical because Clay had a very active sense of humor, and I was never quite sure whether to believe him or not.

"O.K.," he said, "it wasn't really a fight. But Steve said something to some girl, and I guess it was pretty crude, because Jamie went after him." "But he hit him with a bat?" "Yes with a bat. He hauled the thing out of his car and hit him in the face with it." "Well what'd Wilson do?" "Nothing, he wasn't hurt much. I mean come on," he laughed, "how much damage could Jamie do, even with a bat?" We both laughed then.

I always remembered that conversation, because I thought it was funny but excited Clayton was. He always noticed people and things that no one else ever did, and Jamie had got him going. But even more I was surprised that Jamie would do anything so violent. It seemed so out of character for him. Still, I somehow understood.

Nobody made Jamie into a hero or anything, and it was forgotten pretty quickly.

Il

I suppose now is the right time to introduce David and LeAnn, because I don't think I'll ever be able to separate them from my image of Jamie. It's not that they spent very much time with him, because they didn't. They were my friends, not his. But somehow when I look back at them everything becomes a little clearer, and somehow I begin to understand a little bit more.

David and I met when we were sophomores. He'd just moved in from San Diego, and so he didn't know anyone. Usually in a situation like that a guy will try to make friends as quickly as he can, just to have someone to run around with. But David was different. He chose his friends the way really rich people choose their cars: they don't have to worry about what they can afford, and so they drive whatever they want.

David had as much talent and ability in as many different areas as anyone I knew. He could write well, he could speak well, he could think well. He was athletic, and he was good-looking. But what impressed me, despite all that, was that he had compassion. It is not a common trait at that age, and perhaps not at any age. But as so often happens to a young man blessed both with talent and compassion, the world wagered war against David's ideals. It was inevitable that his friends would hurt him, one way or another, simply because they were friends. It was inevitable that his heroes would fail him, because sooner or later he found them out as mere men. And it was inevitable that he could disappoint himself, because with all of his caring and with all of his compassion he still could not make things right.

But what impressed me, despite all that, was that he had compassion. It was not a common trait at that age, and perhaps not at any age.

LeAnn was a year younger than the three of us, but she was probably the most mature. We didn't realize it then, but we depended upon her a
Rain

The child knows the first rain of spring intimately. Why should he hesitate? He leaves his sneakers by the door, and runs his toes through the torrent while it streams over his body washing way the dust.

Of course, the child learns quickly. Someone tells him he will catch cold if he leaves his shoes off. Somebody else scolds him for getting his shirt wet. He grows ashamed of innocent abandon, and adopts that sort of fascinating reserve which becomes an adolescent. He walks nonchalantly through the showers, pretending not to notice the wetness at his back, knowing that he is above the playful pleading of raindrops on his cheek.

Sometime along the way, frivolous vanity turns into maturity and common sense. The young man can now truly ignore the rain. What a marvelous combination of plastic and rubber engulf him, repelling even the slightest dampness. He hurries through city puddles, occupying his thoughts with fantastic ambitions so much more important than the weather.

As the years pass, he establishes a place in his world. A ranch style home with cedar shingling becomes an expression of his manhood, and a security against any kind of unpleasant weather. Still the raindrops bounce off the well sealed roof drumming like a heartbeat, but the man inside is absorbed in a dry carpet, a good book, and an easy-chair.

Inevitably, he wraps up in himself and drifts into a deep sleep. After many years, he awakens at last to find the rain still petting at the window. He is so old now, he is crippled, confined to the chair, unbearably tired. Finally he is able to press his face against the window, and as he remembers his childhood heart, his useless tears stream down with the rain outside.

Jesus, Jesus, go away
Come again some other day

—Angela Zimmerman
On Sunday afternoon
the shallow nicks in the wooden arm of your rocking chair
become significant.
You pick at them with your pocket knife
as you remember wooden benches
at railway stations.
Those were the benches built to last,
With each return you could find them
pushed up against the concrete walls of the room.
And you could walk to the corner
and sit in the same place
where you sat the time before:
You could warm the same wood.

Once in a while you would find them rearranged.
The corners might be empty,
and there might be two rows in front of the wall
instead of one,
But still you could find your bench
just by walking among them,
looking for something you could not quite remember
until it caught your eye
and you knew it.
The grain of the wood would be raised
just enough under the green paint
to remind you all over again.
And you would sit and sigh.

Beyond the wooden arm of the rocking chair
you notice shifting shadows upon the floor
as the Sunday afternoon sun
shines through the trees
outside your window.
"These will be gone soon,"
you say to yourself.
"Another month, and the leaves will die and droop,
and I will burn them."
You remember the time last year:

---

"On Hypocrisy"

Cast a shadow toward the sun
And pretend
Like today is all there is,
Play until the grass has sung
Its last song.
And winter comes.
Then (holding close your folded blanket)
And find a place to hide
Where you'll never be asked to unfold
The tapestry of your
Lie.
And should someone come too close!
Hidden inside,
Alone,
You may fall headlong
Into the gaping shadow
That you've cast before
You.
Then, with no one left
To cast the shadow,
It will close above you like a womb,
Sealing you safely into the darkness
Of your own
Tragedy.
And should you there
Chance upon Lethe,
Toast my life,
And drink a draught for
Me,
Too.

—Mark Williams
It had been a Saturday late in Autumn
and you had spent the day raking leaves.
By the time you were done,
the sun had dropped below the pines
at the edge of your lot,
and the pile of leaves you had gathered
cast a shadow that stretched
all the way across your lawn
and halfway across your neighbor's.
You remember looking around quickly
to see that no one was watching.
Then, turning,
with your arms outstretched,
you fell backwards into the leaves,
hearing the swift crackle
in your ears
and feeling the delicate weight move over your stomach
and shoulders.
Quietly you removed the leaves from your face
and watched long as the sky darkened above you
and the world grew still.
Then you went inside
and slept better than you had all year.
"The dead must sleep like that,"
you said to yourself in the morning.
Then you went outside again and burned the leaves.
The smoke hung in the air for days.
And the smell stayed on your clothes
for months afterward.

On Sunday afternoon you wonder about dust,
about the dust on the table beside you—
the table that was clean only yesterday.
And it suddenly occurs to you
that your whole life has been lived
in an inescapable cloud of dust.
You wonder why it never crossed your mind before.

Water,
suspended in clouds
high above the earth,
condenses, like crystals of salt,
around particles of dust
and falls as rain.

Sunlight,
burning low
through the sky at dusk,
fractures itself
against particles of dust
and turns to brilliant color

But the dust on the table annoys and disturbs you
Like a bloody fingerprint on an ancient Jewish altar,
It whispers to your soul,
Reminding you
Of where you've been
Of where you are
And of where you could be.

--David Somers
Alice Meets the Centurion

Alan Hutchins

As Alice was becoming familiar with her new surroundings, she felt a sharp nudge and heard a loud voice say, "Come on, come on." Now Alice was getting quite tired of being told to "come on, come on." Alice would much rather sit where she was and count the leaves on the large oak tree in front of her or count the puffs on any of the airy clouds that garnished the sky. But, being the child that she was, Alice was persuaded to obey.

As she turned her head, she noted a slender beetle in khakies. His visage was that of a strong, determined man. His dress was clean and well-starched, with many pockets; he wore a belt wrapped tightly around his waist. Besides his uniform, his other single most striking feature was his many arms. Now Alice was very proud of her ability in arithmetic, but after counting eight of the many arms on the warrior, she gave up counting and she continued to study the strange creature. Several of his hands held weapons, whilst others held baskets and bushes filled with peaches. The peaches were the amber color that was common of the peaches in her dooryard, yet she noticed something very special, almost royal of these peaches. Yes, Alice knew these peaches were of a more curious sort than those within her garden. She longed to grab and bite one but thought to herself, "It wouldn't be good etiquette to grab a peach, so I shall!" (Alice had heard her mother use the word etiquette before, but wasn't sure if she had used it correctly.)

"Why are you carrying all those peaches?" asked Alice in a timid voice.

"If you were I, and I were a peach, wouldn't you hold me?" said the beetle in an irritable tone.

"I suppose so," said Alice, not quite sure whether she would do it or not. Trying to change the subject, Alice said, "My father has guns and knives like yours. Do you hunt groundhogs with them like my father?"

"Am I a heartless warrior, who uses his strength and cunning to plot against innocent groundhogs?" Alice thought she had better hide for the soldier was waving his weapons wildly in the air, and with his free hands he picked up handfuls of dust and tossed them into the air. He continued in a furious tone, "These weapons which I carry, these peaches which I pack, are meant for battle against the most corrupt beings in the world, the Pear-Pitchers!" He shuddered as he said the words, and slumped down on a rock looking thoroughly exhausted. Alice was astonished, but before she could speak; the soldier stood on his feet and began to march in time to an unheard beat. Alice, not knowing what to do, also stood and began to march in place. Then with a strong bass voice the beetle sang out,

"I took with bushel high in air
A precious load; a laissez-faire
I clutched the peach with utmost care
Content to know it wasn't a pear.

I do not know which way we went
With feet on firm ground, and elbows beat
Some to Essex
Some to Ghent
We sang of peaches as we went

We took them here
We took them there
We took them far
We took them near

With three in one hand, one on nose
We walked the long road on our toes
Our breath was bated, our pulses rose
As we beheld our evil foes...

"The beetle," Alice thought, "is having such a wonderful time, I'm so glad he's in better spirits."

For the beetle now had a large smile across his face and a tear of excitement in his eye.

Seeing how that the soldier was in a better frame of mind, Alice spoke with more boldness and asked, "Why do you hate the Pear-Pitchers so desperately?"

"Who or how or when would be more appropriate wouldn't you say?" said the beetle with his chin resting on one hand.

"Why?" asked Alice with no malice intended.

"Blat it," the beetle roared, "You insolent cur,

Friday

Grief deeply etched in war-torn faces
Tears of the wailing in shroud-covered places
Blood smeared on pavement, a parched, rock road.
Screaming, raw flesh bearing ungodly load,
Prideful contempt from sneering red jowls
Demonic dancing and hell-spawned howls
Focused on One too battered to live;
Soft as a vapor, "dear Father, forgive."

—Moche M.D. Wexler

The Quest

What ceaseless haste
that breeds such waste
of time and lives;
For what? Man strives
to gain, yet lame
With anguish, cries:
Where's light gone?
And faster still limps on.

—David C. Poteet
There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof is death. Prov. 14:12

LADY CHABLIS

Painted lady,
taste the wine. Warm, sweet syrup making time flow on by. Cares roll and bob along the course, As giggles rise to the surface and pop. Fantasyland, world of white knights and crystal moons. Skin presses skin, as dreams entwine on satin sheets. Dionysus calls you, Lady Chablis.

The vat is dry, painted lady. No more fantasyland; the dream lies shattered at your feet. Dark red slowly oozing from the slivers which have lodged in your velvety smooth skin. Where is your knight now, Lady Chablis? Dionysus has found another nymph. Raise your head, look through tear-swollen eyes; Your true Prince hangs dying on yonder black hill.

—Laura Gwinner

LIFE AS A MAGIC RABBIT

Magic men wave their wands; Rabbits seem to appear from nothing—though actually always available in a false table or phony sleeve. They sit, making rabbit motions in the dark, never disturbing the magic man who manipulates them in proper time. I wait, wondering whether I will be noticed as I wiggle my ears and wrinkle my nose into a warped feature, like a squashed sponge. I'm certain Fate's hands will "Abracadabra," and I will become the surprise as children giggle and adults "Ooh" and "Ahh" at my expected appearance. Why do I believe Fate has me up its sleeve? How can I be so sure of a Fantastic Finale? Millions have smothered in this concealing darkness before me, never materializing. Magic man, please don't forget me. I cannot live on carrots forever.

—Michael Graham

why must you be forever trying me with your rudeness?"
"Must you yell at little girls so?" Alice wept with frightened indignation. "I just want to know the reason for your hatred."
"Must there be a reason? the beetle said indifferently. "The sun need a reason to rise, does an ant need a reason to cough?"
"I suppose not," muttered Alice.
"Be that as it may," the beetle said matter-of-factly, "the mayor, whom we call Oscar, said it was proper. Why pears are such ghastly fruit anyways."
The beetle paused and then spoke again. "Oscar knows everything; when I was young, Oscar held a meeting and told us all to join up and fight those rapscallion Pear-Pitchers. I was a rebellious youth and asked why we should be fighting for no reason, so Oscar took me aside and told me this story. Once there was a sparrow who had a lucrative hot dog stand. With the money he made he started a new hot dog stand and became very rich."
"But what does that have to do with anything?" Alice burst out.
"Hush, child, you're trying my patience, as I was saying, when I heard what the mayor said, I was convinced that he was right. So I've been a valiant warrior ever since that day."
The soldier then took a knife and began sharpening it to a razor point. Alice thought of what he said, she thought how curious it would be if England and the other countries would war for no reason other than wanting to. She knew how silly war was, but the Queen always had a good reason for war.

As she was thinking, the soldier disappeared and a duck ran past screaming "follow me!" With nothing better to do, Alice was obliged to follow.

—Mike Webber
just a bad time.

There was no Christmas cantata and then to the chen. cheek and said she'd ed to the calendar and tore off the page; it was ed at the joggers went by and dodged the something; so she smiled and walked her girls on the sidewalk playing four square five the coach toward Naomi, and stopped. then,"

fumbled guiltily mother to the door. Her mother k issed her crust of the pizza .

draped a apartment and through the cold window. Two sodapop, took a drink, and put it back .

opened the door ,

jogged guiltily mother to the door. Her mother k issed her crust of the pizza .

and picked up the photographs on the white refrigerator door. She

stood in the middle of the floor and look­ed at the clean apartment. The easy-listening music had stopped before her mother left, and now the girl next door banged around in her kit­chen. She walked to the table and picked up the crust of the pizza. She ate it and stared at the photographs on the white refrigerator door. She opened the door, pulled out a bottle of sodapop, took a drink, and put it back. She turned to the calendar and tore off the page; it was a new month.

Will life always be this hard? She asked herself again.

The couch-springs squeaked under her back as she lay down. It was like the sofa at home, but it smelled like beer. Her skin felt as dry as the walls. The dull glow of the overhead lamp flickered and went out.

"Oh, God," she said absently. She was dripped up inside, too. "It's one o'clock and everything is done." She started to sob.

"Oh, God," her lips muffled the name and the heavy sobs poured out like rain. She clutch­ed a pillow and cried into it.

How did it get this bad? Why does it feel this bad? Why is it all wrong?

It doesn't matter. No, it doesn't matter. No. She started seeing a picture of Jesus in her head and it wouldn't leave. It was the one that hung on her mother's wall across the hall from the bathroom.

She remembered when she was very small never wanting to get out of the tub when her mother bathed her. Naomi would sit and play until she was red and pruny and her mother coaxed her out.

"You see Jesus over there?" Her mother pointed to the picture. "He wants you to come out of the water so you can play some more! 'Na-O-mi!' Here her mother cupped her hand over her mouth as if to throw her voice from the picture across the hall. "'Come out now! Na-O­mi!' Hear him calling?"

Then Naomi would scramble out and watch all the water wash away. As the last drop was slung down the drain, her mother would say, "There now! The dirt's all gone. Go put on your jammies now and play with the puppy before bed."

It went on and on, washing over her like a balm, a wave of stillness, sweeping her from the staleness of the apartment.

She was losing the sticky and swollen feel­ing even as the memories eased over her. She rolled off the couch onto the floor and visualiz­ed the face of Jesus across the hall from the bathroom. She watched, nose squished against the carpet, as she saw his lips form her name like she had always imagined in her view from the tub. And she heard the voice, "Na-O-mi. Na-O-mi." It was not her mother's muffled cry but closer to a masculine groan, the deep, drawn out kind of whisper from the diaphragm. It went on and on, washing over her like a balm, a wave of confidence and hurting, a wave of stillness, sweeping her from the staleness of the apartment. Then she let go of her knees and spread out on the carpet, drawing deep breaths of air as if she had been without lungs for a long, long time.

She stayed on the floor breathing until she felt satisfied, then opened her eyes and looked about her until the room came into focus. Still squinting, Naomi watched the light that lay on the floor in puddles all around her. Her hands were shining white in the rays and had little pink dents all over them from the carpet.

Getting up, she heard children calling down on the street. She went to the window. On the sidewalk three little girls leaned back calling her name. This time she recognized eleven­year-old Lisa who lived next door.

"Na-O-mi!" Lisa yelled. "We need another person for four-square! Wanna play?"

Naomi hesitated a bit. A smile smoothed on­to her face.

"Sure," she called then pulled on her shoes and a coat, rinsed her face, and started down the five flights to the street. □
Saturday Morning

Betsy McDonald

When Naomi woke up that morning the curtain was cock-eyed. Somehow the window wouldn't come clean because no one ever washed it from the outside, so the glare was hideous. It burnt her eyes this morning. She rolled over and let her eyelids float closed again although she knew by the taste in her mouth that this sleep was over. If only her body would be content to drift between life and death forever, she could always, always stay asleep.

She remembered the dishes in the sink from last night, and the cigarette butts and rolled up napkins lying in the ash trays. A stale odor eked in through the door from the outer room. Her mother would be over soon to clean up if she didn't do it herself. She would have stayed in bed except for that. She hated it when her mother cleaned the apartment.

If not for that she would have lain in bed and gone stale herself, but she sat up, dropped her feet on the floor, and swayed, hand to head, into the bathroom. She opened the little window in the pink wall next to the sink and felt a whoosh of cold air. Shivering, she turned on the faucet and waited a whoosh of the water to run warmer through the pipes and pour over her hands. In the process she stamped her feet and leered at the mirror, scanning her pale face from several angles. There was a red crease left under her left eye from the pillow case. Dead mascara swept from the tear duct to the left cheekbone, and on the right eye it was caked below the lashes. Her nose was austerely large, especially when the crack in the mirror cut diagonally across the reflection of her face. She parted her lips and drew a half-full breath; any more fresh air would have racked her shrunken lungs. Nearly all the Mooldrups foundation had worn off into the hair framing her face by her ears and temples. Several shocks of hair bent back and up on the right side where she had slept with her ear flat on the pillow. The left side was thick and somewhat normal-looking, but with a still rebellious cowlick at the corner of her forehead.

She brushed her teeth and drew off her nightgown in the bathroom, and she

Naomi sighed. Resignation produces endurance.

The tears out, she pulled on a pair of old jeans. They were stiff after washing but would soften up and mold to her body in five minutes or so. She walked out to the kitchen and kissed her mother. The plates and glasses were nearly all in the dishwasher, and the pots were in the rack upside-down.

Her mother expounded on the affairs of the family while Naomi ate a cold piece of pizza. A tomato sandwich would be better; she hadn't had one of those since she was about twelve.

"I know all this talk is awfully boring to you," her mother said.

"Well, no, but my mind is just on other things right now and it's hard, Mom, to really relate to you guys. You know what I mean?"

Her mother leaned back and said, "I know what you mean—or she knew and kept her vault-like brain closed to such reality. Naomi straightened up in her chair and tried to explain why she hated this whole business so much. Looking at her mother sitting there with a blue cable knit sweater and hurting eyes made her cringe and twist inside. She stood up and began talking about the pressures of the job and the frustration of living alone and the futility of the modern world. The tears built up in her mother's eyes. One trickled down her left cheek, over the bone, creasing the light foundation and lodging in a small wrinkle next to her mouth. The daughter stopped her

"Mother," she muttered to herself. "Darlin', you should keep the chain on the door, what's the matter with you?" her mother called too loudly.

Naomi began to dress. She heard the emptying of the ashtrays, the newspapers being smooshed into the loaded trash can, the refrigerator door open and shut, cupboard doors slam, and the dishes clank in the sink. She could feel the motherliness through the wall in the bathroom, and she clenched her teeth.

Not again; she leaned on the door. Not another Saturday like this, she thought. Last week I threw out my plants, then watched cartoons, football, and Hee-Haw. The phone rang once—no, twice—for Ann to borrow my car and Mother to force me to the sale at Sears. That was all.

Her mother hummed above the music. God, why is she so patient with me? Maybe it's just her stubborn nature. Mabe she doesn't want to give me up, admit my life is no longer her domain. Who cares.

"Naomi sighed."

* * *

Somewhere down there
A man lit a match and a
wind saw her clothes were torn
and gasped.

And somewhere a man touched a nerve in a dead snake
That kicked and jumped as it alive.

In the dark somewhere
A man dropped water in a pet
And next day the sprout pulled out and bloomed.

And somewhere deep down
Inside me someone
Found a forgotten child
And let her cry
And made me ashamed.

B. McDonald

20 Promethia 1982

1982 Promethia 17
Musings of An Unpublished Poet

Why did not they appreciate
Those lines of veritable surrogate
Alighieri, Sidney, and Pound,
Not understanding Truth I've found

Why did not they visualize
The visions seen behind these eyes
—“Order, Epiphany, Truth, and Law;”
These things they never saw

Why do they not comprehend
The messages that I send
—“Read, Edit, Publish, Print;”
I gave up writing over Lent

—Peter S. O'Driscoll

upon publication of
the '81 Promethia sans
any of my work

Debut

On the bare hardwood floor
a baby was born
and the lights hurt his eyes
and he cried a song.

By four
the song had been shaped into
The Farmer in the Dell
but the crowd was too big
and black.
The cheese stood alone.

Recitals at eight
were tough
even when relatives clapped politely.
For his fingers were slightly out of tune.

But now thinking, rehearsing,
dreaming
is too late.

Ropes creak and crawl
pulled taut under the weight of velvet.
Lights sizzle with gels,
Orange, Blue, Green.

Hundreds of eyes
are listening
for his first creak or sizzle.

Will his song be
damp and dewy
or crisp as fresh saltines
or chrome plated?

The spots are on.
Silence.
Curtain.

—Monica Fournier

art by Chris Andrews
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Naomi sighed. Resignation produces endurance.

The tears out, she pulled on a pair of old jeans. They were stiff after washing but would soften up and mold to her body in five minutes or so. She walked out to the kitchen and kissed her mother. The plates and glasses were nearly all in the dishwasher, and the pots were in the rack upside-down. Her mother expounded on the affairs of the family while Naomi ate a cold piece of pizza. A tomato sandwich would be better; she hadn't had one of those since she was about twelve.

"I know all this talk is awfully boring to you," her mother said.

"Well, no, but my mind is just on other things right now and it's hard, Mom, to really relate to you guys. You know what I mean?"

Her mother didn't know what she meant—or she knew and kept her valet-like brain closed to such reality. Naomi straightened up in her chair and tried to explain why she hated this whole business so much. Looking at her mother sitting there with a blue cable knit sweater and dark glasses made her cringe and twist inside. She stood up and began talking about the pressures of the job and the frustration of living alone and the futility of the modern world. The tears built up in her mother's eyes. One trickled down her left cheek, over the bone, creasing the cheek, over the bone, creasing the little small wrinkle next to her mouth. The daughter stopped her.
explains and leaned against the flowered couch by the dinette set.

"But what do you want?" her mother said. "Your father and I have talked about it. We know you're unhappy. If you want to go back to school, we figure we could loan you most of the money. Or——"

"No, Mom, it's not that," Naomi rubbed her face and pulled her hair through her fingers. She walked to the window and watched the girls on the sidewalk playing four square five flights down. The sound of their shoes clicking on the cement echoed all the way up to the apartment and through the cold window. Two joggers went by and dodged the girls. No one had ever jogged by when she played years ago. There was no glare on the glass, but tears now blunted the figures.

"Well, dear, I guess I just don't understand then," her mother said. She took up her purse and camel-colored coat, walked stiffly around the coach toward Naomi, and stopped. "If you need anything just call. We'll be home tonight, but tomorrow we go to church for the Christmas cantata and then to the football game." She squeezed Naomi's arm.

"Mom, I'm sorry I'm like this," the daughter fumbled guiltily for an appropriate remark. She really didn't find one, but she had to do something, so she smiled and walked her mother to the door. Her mother kissed her cheek and said she'd feel better later. This was just a bad time.

Just a bad time.

She stood in the middle of the floor and looked around the clean apartment. The easy-listening music had stopped before her mother left, and now the girls next door banged around in her kitchen. She walked to the table and picked up the crust of the pizza. She ate it and stared at the photographs on the white refrigerator door. She opened the door, pulled out a bottle of soda pop, took a drink, and put it back. She turned to the calendar and tore off the page; it was a new month.

Will life always be this hard? She asked herself again.

The couch-springs squeaked under her back as she lay down. It was like the sofa at home, but it smelled like beer. Her skin felt as dry as the walls. The dull glow of the overhead lamp flickered and went out.

"Oh, God," she said absently. She was dried up inside, too. "It's one o'clock and everything is done." She started to sob.

"Oh, God," her lips muttered the name and the heavy sobs poured out like rain. She clutched a pillow and cried into it.

How did it get this bad? Why does it feel this bad? Why is it all wrong?

It doesn't matter. No, it doesn't matter. No. She started seeing a picture of Jesus in her head and it wouldn't leave. It was the one that hung on her mother's wall across the hall from the bathroom.

She remembered when she was very small never wanting to get out of the tub when her mother bathed her. Naomi would sit and play until she was red and pruny and her mother coaxed her out.

"You see Jesus over there?" Her mother pointed to the picture. "He wants you to come out of the water so you can play some more! 'Na-O-mi!' Here her mother cupped her hand over her mouth as if to throw her voice from the picture across the hall. "'Come out now! Na-O-mi!' Hear him calling?"

Then Naomi would scramble out and watch all the water wash away. As the last drop was slumped down the drain, her mother would say, "'There now! The dirt's all gone. Go put on your jammies now and play with the puppy before bed.'"

It went on and on, washing over her like a balm, a wave of stillness, sweeping her from the staleness of the apartment.

She was losing the sticky and swollen feeling even as the memories eased over her. She rolled off the couch onto the floor and visualized the face of Jesus across the hall from the bathroom. She watched, nose squished against the carpet, as she saw his lips form her name like she had always imagined in her view from the tub. And she heard the voice, "Na-O-mi, Na-O-mi!" It was not her mother's muffled cry but closer to a masculine groan. The deep drawn out kind of whisper from the diaphragm. It went on and on, washing over her like a balm, a wave of confidence and hurting, a wave of stillness, sweeping her from the staleness of the apartment.

She let go of her knees and spread out on the carpet, drawing deep breaths of air as if she had been without lungs for a long, long time.

She stayed on the floor breathing until she felt satisfied, then opened her eyes and looked about her until the room came into focus. Still squinting, Naomi watched the light that lay on the floor in puddles all around her. Her hands were shining white in the rays and had little pink dents all over them from the carpet.

Getting up, she heard children calling down on the street. She went to the window. On the sidewalk three little girls leaned back calling her name. This time she recognized eleven-year-old Lisa who lived next door.

"Na-O-mi!" Lisa yelled. "We need another person for four-square! Wanna play?"

Naomi hesitated a bit. A smile smoothed on to her face.

"Sure," she called then pulled on her shoes and a coat, rinsed her face, and started down the five flights to the street.
There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof is death.

Prov. 14:12

LADY CHABLIS

Painted lady, taste the wine.
Warm, sweet syrup making time flow on by.
Cares roll and bob along the course,
As giggles rise to the surface and pop.
Fantasyland, world of white knights and crystal moons.
Skin presses skin, as dreams entwine on satin sheets.
Dionysus calls you, Lady Chablis.

The vat is dry, painted lady.
No more fantasyland; the dream lies shattered at your feet,
Dark red slowly oozing from the slivers which have lodged in your velvety smooth skin.
Where is your knight now, Lady Chablis?
Dionysus has found another nymph.
Raise your head, look through tear-swollen eyes;
your true Prince hangs dying on yonder black hill.

—Laura Gwinner

LIFE AS A MAGIC RABBIT

Magic men wave their wands;
Rabbits seem to appear from nothing—though actually always available in a false table or phony sleeve.
They sit, making rabbit motions in the dark, never disturbing the magic man who manipulates them in proper time.
I wait, wondering whether I will be noticed as I wiggle my ears and wrinkle my nose into a warped feature, like a squashed sponge.
I'm certain Fate's hands will "Abracadabra," and I will become the surprise as children giggle and adults "ohh" and "ahh" at my expected appearance.
Why do I believe Fate has me up its sleeve?
How can I be so sure of a Fantastic Finale?
Millions have smothered in this concealing darkness before me, never materializing. Magic man, please don't forget me. I cannot live on carrots forever.

—Michael Graham

22 Promethia 1982
Alice Meets the Centurion

Alan Hutchins

As Alice was becoming familiar with her new surroundings, she felt a sharp nudge and heard a loud voice say, "Come on, come on." Now Alice was getting quite tired of being told to "come on, come on." Alice would much rather sit where she was and count the leaves on the large oak tree in front of her or count the puffs on any of the airy clouds that garnished the sky. But, being the child that she was, Alice was persuaded to obey.

As she turned her head, she noted a slender beetle in khaki. His visage was that of a strong, determined man. His dress was clean and well-starched, with many pockets; he wore a belt wrapped tightly around his waist. Besides his uniform, his other single most striking feature was his many arms. Now Alice was very proud of her ability in arithmetic, but after counting eight of the many arms on the warrior, she gave up counting and she knew these peaches were of a more curious sort than those within her garden. She sat up counting and she continued to study the strange creature. Several of his hands held weapons, whilst others held baskets and bushes filled with peaches. The peaches were the amber color that was common of the peaches in her dooryard, yet she noticed something very special, almost royal about these peaches. Yes, Alice knew these peaches were of a more curious sort than those within her garden. She longed to grab and bite one but thought to herself, "It wouldn't be good etiquette to grab a peach, so I shan't." (Alice had heard her mother use the word etiquette before, but wasn't sure if she had used it correctly.)

"Why are you carrying all those peaches?" asked Alice in a timid voice.

"If you were I, and I were a peach, wouldn't you hold me?" said the beetle in an irritable tone.

"I suppose so," said Alice, not quite sure whether she would do it or not. Trying to change the subject, Alice said, "My father has guns and knives like yours. Do you hunt groundhogs with them like my father?"

"Am I a heartless warrior, who uses his strength and cunning to plot against innocent groundhogs?" Alice thought she had better hide for the soldier was waving his weapons wildly in the air, and with his free hands he picked up handfuls of dust and tossed them into the air. He continued in a furious tone, "These weapons which I carry, these peaches which I pack, are meant for battle against the most corrupt beings in the world, the Pear-Pitchers!" He shuddered as he said the words, and slumped down on a rock looking thoroughly exhausted. Alice was astonished, but before she could speak; the soldier stood on his feet and began to march in time to an unheard beat. Alice, not knowing what to do, also stood and began to march in place. Then with a strong bass voice the beetle sang out,

"I took with bushel high in air
A precious load; a laissez-faire
I clutched the peach with utmost care
Content to know it wasn't a pear.
I do not know which way we went
With feet on firm ground, and elbows beat
Some to Essex
Some to Ghent
We sang of peaches as we went

We took them here
We took them there
We took them far
We took them near
With three in one hand, one on nose
We walked the long road on our toes
Our breath was bated, our pulses rose
As we beheld our evil foes..."

"The beetle," Alice thought, "is having such a wonderful time, I'm so glad he's in better spirits."

For the beetle now had a large smile across his face and a tear of excitement in his eye. Seeing how that the soldier was in a better frame of mind, Alice spoke with more boldness and asked, "Why do you hate the Pear-Pitchers so desperately?"

"Who or how or when would be more appropriate wouldn't you say?" said the beetle with his chin resting on one hand.

"Why?" asked Alice with no malice intended.

"Blat it," the beetle roared, "You insolent cur,
It had been a Saturday late in Autumn and you had spent the day raking leaves. By the time you were done, the sun had dropped below the pines at the edge of your lot, and the pile of leaves you had gathered cast a shadow that stretched all the way across your lawn and halfway across your neighbor’s. You remember looking around quickly to see that no one was watching. Then, turning, with your arms outstretched, you fell backwards into the leaves, hearing the swift crackle in your ears and feeling the delicate weight move over your stomach and shoulders.

Quietly you removed the leaves from your face and watched long as the sky darkened above you and the world grew still. Then you went inside and slept better than you had all year.

"The dead must sleep like that," you said to yourself in the morning. Then you went outside again and burned the leaves. And the smell stayed on your clothes for months afterward.

On Sunday afternoon you wonder about dust, about the dust on the table beside you—the table that was clean only yesterday. And it suddenly occurs to you that your whole life has been lived in an inescapable cloud of dust. You wonder why it never crossed your mind before.

Water, suspended in clouds high above the earth, condenses, like crystals of salt, around particles of dust and falls as rain.

Sunlight, burning low through the sky at dusk, fractures itself against particles of dust and turns to brilliant color.

But the dust on the table annoys and disturbs you. Like a bloody fingerprint on an ancient Jewish alter, it whispers to your soul, reminding you of where you’ve been, of where you are and of where you could be.
On Sunday afternoon
the shallow nicks in the wooden arm of your rocking chair
become significant.
You pick at them with your pocket knife
as you remember wooden benches
at railway stations.
Those were the benches built to last,
With each return you could find them
pushed up against the concrete walls of the room.
And you could walk to the corner
and sit in the same place
where you sat the time before;
You could warm the same wood.

Once in a while you would find them rearranged.
The corners might be empty,
and there might be two rows in front of the wall
instead of one;
But still you could find your bench
just by walking among them,
looking for something you could not quite remember
until it caught your eye
and you knew it.
The grain of the wood would be raised
just enough under the green paint
to remind you all over again.
And you would sit and sigh.

Beyond the wooden arm of the rocking chair
you notice shifting shadows upon the floor
as the Sunday afternoon sun
shines through the trees
outside your window.
"These will be gone soon,"
you say to yourself,
"Another month, and the leaves will die and droop,
and I will burn them."
You remember the time last year:

"On Hypocrisy"

Cast a shadow toward the sun
And pretend
Like today is all there is.
Play until the grass has sung
Its last song.
And winter comes,
Then (holding close your folded blanket)
And find a place to hide
Where you'll never be asked to unfold
The tapestry of your
Life.
And should someone come too close?
Hidden inside,
Alone,
You may fall headlong
Into the gaping shadow
That you've cast before
You.
Then, with no one left
To cast the shadow,
It will close above you like a womb,
Sealing you safely into the darkness
Of your own
Tragedy.
And should you there
Chance upon Lethe,
Toast my life,
And drink a draught for
Me,
Too.

—Mark Williams
Rain

The child knows the first rain of spring intimately. Why should he hesitate? He leaves his sneakers by the door, and runs his toes through slippery hillside. He opens his arms and his mouth wide, turns his face toward the clouds and drinks in the torrent while it streams over his body washing way the dust.

Of course, the child learns quickly. Someone tells him he will catch cold if he leaves his shoes off. Somebody else scolds him for getting his shirt wet. He grows ashamed of innocent abandon, and adopts that sort of fascinating reserve which becomes an adolescent. He walks nonchalantly through the showers, pretending not to notice the wetness at his back, knowing that he is above the weather.

What a pleasure to be a child! He hurries through city puddles, occupying himself with the playfulness of raindrops on his cheek.

As the years pass, he establishes a place in his world. A ranch style home with cedar shingling becomes an expression of his manhood, and a security against any kind of unpleasant weather. Still the raindrops bounce off the well sealed roof drumming like a heartbeat, but the man inside is absorbed in a dry carpet, a good book, and an easy chair. Inevitably, he wraps up in himself and drifts into a deep sleep.

After many years, he awakens at last to find the rain still petting at the window. He is so old now, he is crippled, confined to the chair, unbearably tired. Finally he is able to press his face against the window, and as he remembers his childhood heart, his useless tears stream down with the rain outside.

Jesus, Jesus, go away
Come again some other day

—Angela Zimmerman

Evening Tide

old mockingbird plays heart-peace on the lawn
freed notes sail the eve
on the air navy-dew
like so many leaves
in a friend-easy stream
like so many thoughts
of a love—really you

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friends again. You might say one day, "I feel like hitting balls across a net on green cement." If you ask nicely, I might arrive wearing shorts and shoes and maybe even a shirt. We'd play awhile, laughing when we should, and perhaps we'd wonder when the evening came and if night time was always so dark.

Don't think I regret the last eight months. I've gained much, but it's over now. My soul has left. The hope is gone. I close this letter as I close my heart. It's over. It's gone—never to return.

From the one,
Who was to be,
Your Husband

December 1980

Elizabeth,
Village Short. Tulsa Far. Family Dear. Sorry No Call. Will Return Glass Slipper At Earliest Convenience. (i.e. summer) Have Fun At Yale.

November 1981

Dear Mother,
I'm back at school. The trip went well as could be expected. I didn't thank you for sending the money for the plane ticket, but I do appreciate it more than I can say. I didn't feel like driving. I stayed as long as I possibly could, but now it seems I gave the tests more importance than they actually deserve. A 4.0 no longer seems as exciting as it once did, and I'm sorry I placed it before you.

I don't suppose I could do much if I were there, just hug you till our lungs ached and our throats were parched from tears—the way we did at the funeral. The guys here are all great. They pray a lot, but they don't overlook it. They seem to know I need some time. They put me on the back, and the good ones sometimes hug me, but it's not the same. Only God knows how much I want your warmth, your breath, your tears mixed with mine. If I were with you, I don't think I would ever let you go.

You probably realized that I was staring at you during the funeral. I studied every detail of your appearance again and again, trying doubly hard to remember your face forever. I remember thinking that you were beautiful and that your strongest features were the tender creases and delicate folds surrounding your tear-lined eyes. I wonder why every woman didn't want them, and I wonder how many of those wrinkles were from me and of those wrinkles how many I gave you with laughter and many I've given to you with tears.

So many things crowd my thoughts. So many things I could say, but my mind is tired of sorting these shadows that won't be sorted. If I were younger, I'd probably fall in love about now. One of the disappointments of maturity, however, has been understanding my motives. It was a sad day when I realized that love would never be perfect. At this time, the relationship I want is with Jesus. Unfortunately, he requires more attention that the girls I have loved. But in his defense I must say that he has stayed with me the longest. Dear mother, I love you.

I wish there was a stronger word than love. Maybe if I hadn't abused it so long, maybe if I had saved it, locked it away as a sacred treasure, maybe now it would have some value. If I had thought to protect the word, I would have, if I had only known what I would feel for you now. If love were so special that I would only use it once, I'd use it now. I love you, mother. God knows that I write from my heart, and he knows my heart is true, for He dwells in me. Perhaps this is a key.

Perhaps if we pray, God who lives within us might contract the part that lives in me and the part that lives in you until the distance no longer matters, and I can hold you just the same as when I was home. If this is possible, then this is my prayer, and if not, I'll see you at Christmas. Don't bake too many sweets. Eight dozen cookies and four or five pies is all I'll have room for in my car. Besides, I mustn't get fat.

I'll write again soon. You said once that a letter was better than a phone call, because you could review it as often as you wished, and there was more of me enclosed. I hope this is true, for as always, my heart stands open, both for you and for all those who will hear.

Until next time, good-bye.

Love, your son,
Promethia 1982

**October 1979**

Dear Kathy,

I thought of you today.

For me to think of you is not unusual. I do so from time to time. For me to think of you is not unusual, but who I think of is, for when I think of you, I think of a smile, a twinkle, and a worried sigh, all of which belong to an eighth grade girl on the hills of Camp Calvary.

As I sit here in my apartment, a police siren screams in the distance. It fades and is replaced by a silent hum and my own restless breathing. Light flows softly through the window, across the table and onto this paper. Only a trickle spills down to the floor.

I feel content, very peaceful, but also a bit lonely. My journalism studies are progressing faster than I could ever have hoped for, and Ball State University is the most wonderful place I have ever been. I'm sorry to be leaving off campus during my first year of college, but even with this, I don't know why anyone would ever go anywhere else to study. In these respects, I am happy.

Steam rises gently from my coffee. I sip the liquid slowly, savoring its comforting warmth. I think of you. I think of you, dear Kathy. Soon the mug is empty. Its warmth fades. I place my lifeless friend upon the table, and leaning back, I think.

I breath deeply of life and wonder how you are. I breath deeply of life and wonder who you are. I place my lifeless friend upon the table, and leaning back, I think.

I thought of you today. I thought of you today. I thought of you today.

Satisfied, I sign my name.

**December 1979**

Dear Rebecca,

SEASON'S GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE COMING YEAR

That's all I want to say

I mean it. My best wishes really are yours, for although I know thousands of people and been friends with hundreds, very few people have impressed me as you have.

Very few people have had the love and understanding you show for others. Very few people have had the love and confidence you show for yourself. Very few people have had your ability to warm and to comfort with a laugh, with a smile, with an open ear. Very few people have smiles and eyes as deep as yours. Very, very few.

Your warmth helped me through a frightening time. For this I will always be grateful. Many other thoughts flow in your direction. They ask to be written and then mailed, but all I want to say is

SEASON'S GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE COMING YEAR.

Your friend, [Signature]

P.S. Congratulations. If you send me an invitation, I'll try to be at the wedding. If not, best of luck.

**May 1980**

Dear Elaine,

My eyes are muddy, nostalgic, filled with bleeding joy and smiles that may never have happened. Did they? I don't remember. Maybe I was asleep, or maybe I am asleep now.

I never thought we would die as we did. I never thought we would die. Weere we alive? I don't remember. Maybe I was asleep. Perhaps I spoke too harshly. You were the one who never needed tact, but still... Perhaps I fought from a corner, grasping through my bars, knowing I could be you as effortlessly as you could be me, sometimes without effort.

I'll work in the foundry, make lots of money, move to Tulsa. Maybe I'll publish, become famous, and get my farmhouse in Vermont, maybe even a real tiller.

In a subtle way I do not understand, we will always be friends, but then again we will never be

when roses die

by Craig Albin

I think the only class I ever had with Jamie was P.E. At least that's where I first met him. It seems funny, but there are always two kinds of people who stand out in those high school P.E. classes: the very strong and the very frail. Jamie was one of the very frail. He sort of looked like he never moved from the place he was running in. But no one really made fun of him, as I remember. We just laughed to ourselves.

Jamie... He was one of those people you never saw on a Friday night.

I'd like to say there were things about him that impressed me, but I don't believe there were at the time. To me, and probably to everyone else at school, he was just Jamie. I don't remember ever seeing him with a girl, or even with the same group of guys. He was usually by himself. For anyone else I would have thought that was strange, but it seemed to fit Jamie. He went to classes and, after that, I suppose he went home. He was one of those people you never saw on a Friday night.

In a way it's unusual that I didn't know him better. My friends were all popular, and we knew just about everyone, but Jamie was never really a part of it all. In fact, there was only one time in nearly four years that Jamie caused any commotion at all. I remember because I heard about it from Clayton Day, who was my best friend. We'd met each other on the parking lot before school one morning, and he couldn't wait to tell me how Jamie had hit Steve Wilson in the face with a baseball bat.

"Come on Clay," I'd said. "You mean Jamie Wells, that little guy who always wears the cowboy boots? Wilson would've killed him."

I was skeptical because Clay had a very active sense of humor, and I was never quite sure whether to believe him or not.

"O.K.?" he said, "it wasn't really a fight. But Steve said something to some girl, and I guess it was pretty crude, because Jamie went after him."

"But he hit him with a bat?"

"Yes with a bat. He hauled the thing out of his car and hit him in the face with it."

"Well what'd Wilson do?"

"Nothing, he wasn't hurt much. I mean come on," he laughed, "how much damage could Jamie do, even with a bat?" We both laughed then.

I always remembered that conversation, because I thought it was funny. I thought it was funny. I thought it was funny.

As I remember. We just laughed to ourselves.

I always remembered that conversation, because I thought it was funny. I thought it was funny. I thought it was funny.

Jamie was one of those people who stand out in those high schools: the very strong and the very frail. He sort of stamped and the very frail. He sort of stamped... Jamie was one of those people who stand out in those high schools: the very strong and the very frail. Jamie was one of those people who stand out in those high schools: the very strong and the very frail.

I suppose now is the right time to introduce David and LeAnn, because I don't think I'll ever be able to separate them from my image of Jamie. It's not that they spent very much time with him, because they didn't. They were his friends, not his. But somehow when I look back at them everything becomes a little clearer, and somehow I begin to understand a little bit more.

But what impressed me, despite all that, was that he had compassion. It was not a common trait at that age, and perhaps not at any age. But as so often happens to a young man blessed both with talent and compassion, the world was waged against David's ideals. It was inevitable that his friends would hurt him, one way or another, simply because they were friends. It was inevitable that his heroes would fail him, because sooner or later he found them out as mere men. And it was inevitable that his heroes would fail him, because sooner or later he found them out as mere men.

David had as much talent and ability in as many different areas as anyone I knew. He could write well, he could speak well, he could think well. He was athletic, and he was good-looking. But what impressed me, despite all that, was that he had compassion. It is not a common trait at that age, and perhaps not at any age. But as so often happens to a young man blessed both with talent and compassion, the world was waged against David's ideals. It was inevitable that his heroes would fail him, one way or another, simply because they were friends. It was inevitable that his heroes would fail him, because sooner or later he found them out as mere men. And it was inevitable that his heroes would fail him, because sooner or later he found them out as mere men. And it was inevitable that his heroes would fail him, because sooner or later he found them out as mere men.
great deal. At that age some young men want very much to be able to talk to a girl as though she were their best friend, and LeAnn met that need for us. She was a friend and a sister and more, all at the same time, and we revered her for it.

But there is a great problem with revering a person too much, and that is that you often come to love them too little. I am afraid that we revered LeAnn much more than we loved her, for if we truly loved her we would not have objected when she began to date Joel Simpson at the beginning of our senior year. By that time we had all begun to feel that she was ours, and we found it hard to share her with anyone else. It seems a small thing now, and it is true that our differences didn't really drive us apart, but there were more fights that year, and the four of us didn't do as many things as a group.

III

It is usually at a time like that, when you're looking around and asking yourself, "are things really the way I always thought they were?", that something happens to make you wonder even more. At least I've always found it that way. What happened during that time that made me wonder so much was that Jamie Wells was killed. It's strange how the death of a person you never knew can affect your thinking so much, especially when death has never been close to you. For the first couple of days after it happened I thought I was in shock. Now I know better. It was more like the time when I was a little kid and I couldn't figure out how anyone else could live in a different town than I did.

I was that way with Jamie's death. I didn't see it happen, and so I only knew what I'd heard that he'd pulled his car in front of a truck. I never doubted that it had to be an accident, but it just seemed so hard for me to believe that a person whom I had seen at school, and who had lived and breathed for the same length that I had, was really gone. In a strong way he was like all those people in the towns I never saw. I wasn't obsessed so much with Jamie's death as I was with the fact that he had died without my knowing him. Because I had never made the effort it seemed to me that I had committed some kind of awful omission, and obsequies I believe, even though we may become accustomed to them over a period of time, never really lose their unpleasantness.

IV

I had heard it said that we too often idealize the dead, making saints of ordinary people by concentrating only on the good that was in them,
October 1967
Dear Roxanne P.

I still worry about you. If you do anything to me, I'll just sit there and think you'd be happier on my team, and then I'll just sit there and think you'd be happier on my team. I don't think letters in pencil are stupid. I'm sorry I can't fold this letter into a tight little triangle the way you and all the other girls do. I just can't seem to get the hang of how to do it. I guess I just got to be me.

Stanley C.

January 1973
Dear Pam,

Right before home room I asked you if Joe said anything about you being on his team. I asked because he just told me that you and Shawn were on his team. Did you girls say anything that made him think that? If no you may have a real problem. I think you'd be happier on our team. And I think I'd better explain something. I don't really think you're sitting at that table. It's just I can't kiss when my mom might show up. I don't know what she might do to me.

If that sounds weird to you, that's tough! I guess if you can't live with that better just ask for my ring back right now and then you can go and be on Joe's team and you won't have anything to worry about. I still love you and all, but I can just as well give my ring to Judy. I don't want to, but if you make me then I'll have to.

Love,

S.C.

P.S. No, I don't think letters in pencil are stupid. P.S. P.S. I'm going to hold this letter into a tight little triangle the way you and all the other girls do. I just can't seem to get the hang of how to do it. I guess I just got to be me.

Love,

S.C.

8 Promethia 1982
Metamorphosis

As the shadow of a man slowly melts into a splintered gray park bench, a world spins its way into another life.

Numbness sinks deep into consciousness. Claws tightly grasp the throat of an amber bottle.

Tired bones shift as a back fights to straighten; Brown papersack skin hangs suspended from a net of purple veins.

The "golden" years, the embalmers of men;
They come as time stands laughing.

As gray clouded eyes strain to follow the dance of a nimble child, the price for flight is paid.

— Jeff Taillon

What is a tomb
But an earth-bound womb
To which we return when the world has done with us;
It enfolds us in alabaster arms,
Soothing,
Gentling those bitter tears we shed,
As we awoke from our dreams
To live our nightmares.
It accepts us as we are in its eternal embrace,
Cradling our wearied bodies
Humming a lullaby, singing
Of rich brown soil and blankets of grass;
Growing things.
Calmed, we fall into a dreamless sleep
Settling into the lap of the earth,
Quiet unfurling.

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Behind the melancholy... is aching.
Come, come, my friend
(laugh) hard and long
those precious sounds
Laughter fills the warp of my threadbareness.

— Kris Brocher
Calm, your opulence lives with the dawn,
In the slipping of Apollo to the horizon.
The cool, silky beads of dew and quiet
Melodies floating in the air wrap comforting
arms of strength around me.

-Simm O'Dell

For You and/or Whoever

I want you to know love:
To cross fields of golden adventure in your life—
To come upon Merlin's fires in the sunset—
To ride out, the blood like song in your veins,
Strong with desire
And with being desired
The bright mantle of blood-bought love warm on your shoulders,
Like the star-spangled sky draping the hills at dusk.

And I want to love you:
To know the landscape of your face;
To touch you, touch you
And again,
Until we wear the edges of our meeting smooth, in
Sweet familiarity;
To know you as the channel knows the water
As the water flows
Over it, over
And over again.

—Eve Johnson

take me to the city

Why don't you take me to the city,
Move me away from here—
The middle of nowhere.
Then, when I have nothing to do,
Or when I'm trying to forget someone
or something,
I can listen to the noises
and try to define each one.
You know,
Not even the snow is quiet there.

—Donna L. Pape1

Calm, your opulence lives with the dawn,
In the slipping of Apollo to the horizon.
The cool, silky beads of dew and quiet
Melodies floating in the air wrap comforting
arms of strength around me.

—Simm O'Dell

—Bruce Mayfield
Laminated Butterfly

All is evil; all is good; all is everything
Hand on the bookshelf, psychedelic boxkite
Somebody pull my string,
Empty orange coke can, half a hamburger hostess
Basketball is not my favorite sport
Cool computer cough drop, yummy yellow yapho
Tarshishah la Nineveh—abort.
Flying, flying so high, Laminated Butterfly.

Akhnaten rotten, Amon afterburner
scorched the eggs for breakfast Sunday morning
Wolf in wooly wardrobe, charismatic cougar
Pounced upon the flock without a warning
Frenzogmatic freedom, existential exit
Humpty Dumpty climbing up the wall,
Cannibal convention, blasting bloody babies
Tightrope walker don’t confess the fall,
Trying, trying not to cry, Laminated Butterfly.

Anthromorphic anthem echoes through the hall
Extra-aural earlobe a little bit too small
Block out the rest with think he thinks he’s groovy
Passionate soliloquy in a silent movie
Crying, crying but don’t know why,
Laminated Butterfly.

So coat me with plastic
And hang me on your wall
So there’s no way I can fly away
Or touch you at all
Or lead you away somewhere
You’ve never been before
And crush your cozy cosmos
By showing you there’s more.
Yes, you’ll have to laminate me
If my colours you adore...
Dying, dying to beautify,
Laminated Butterfly.

—Sterling Wyatt Camden IV

November 3

I throw my love in your direction,
It strikes your flesh then shatters to the floor.

—Stan Coleman

At Random

Why do stars shine so brightly?
Because I’m simply too modest.
Why are people so different?
Because spiders spin webs to catch the unwary and suck their blood.
Why are there only two positions on a light switch?
Because even when we’re really down He can always pick us up.
Why does morning always come too soon?
Because we are corporate life forms following blindly the paths of destruction.
Why does the sun continue to rise?
Because the wind seeks to know.
Why are we here?
Because the car was a Buick.
Why do I have to become what I hope to become?
Because it’s late and the cats need to be fed.
Why is the sky gray when it rains?
Because Hayakawa sleeps in the Senate.

—Freshman composition 1013
When we two talk
gold enough
and rainbows
big ones
smile across the sky blue
oceans
full of ebb and flow
grist flow
through singing mills
singing
intricate counterpoint
our long gold songs.

—Marion Louise Camden

—Stan Coleman
even of great literature, is not an end in itself, for “the Christian knows from the outset that the salvation of a single soul is more important than the production or preservation of all the epics and tragedies in the world.” As a Christian and as a writer, our responsibility is to be the best “little Christs” we can be, even if that means that we never get published in the Atlantic, never hired for the staff of Guideposts magazine or never able to put a single word down on paper. The Christian writer cannot lose himself in a world of introspective self-searching, but must take up the commanded life of imitative out-reaching.

Finally, if we happen to find ourselves at an intermission, with notepad, pen and a few spare minutes, then that is the time to seize the opportunity and the challenge to write. We must endeavor to retell the drama as best as we possibly can, trying with mere words to catch even the faintest echoes or resemblances of the play’s Beauty and Wisdom, of the theatre’s intricate workmanship, of the delighted giggles of the child two rows ahead, of the terrible loneliness of the woman beside us, who refused to watch the play—loneliness that we could understand, but not singlehandedly help. Paradoxically, with the effort to embody the Actual comes both humility and a deep sense of self-worth, for although everyone else was also at the theatre, in a very real sense, each of us was given a private show that no one else was privileged to see, and along with the personal view, we were each given individual talents to re-imagine the scene for others. It is the development of our personal talents that sets us apart from mindless scribes and passive spectators, for even the wealth of splendid action that unrolls before us is not enough by itself to make a literary success. No matter how closely we watch the drama from our proper places, the discipline and training that the modern school of criticism insists upon for the crafting of forceful self-expression is just as necessary for the Christian retelling of the main action of the universe. If our time and talents are not put into the expression of universal themes—if these themes are so poorly retold as to be uninteresting or unrecognizable—then is it any wonder if people settle for reading well-written accounts of individual trivialities? Lewis states his belief that “success in sacred literature depends on the same qualities of structure, suspense, variety, diction and the like which secure success in secular literature” and he warns that the “literary success or failure of a piece of Christian literature would never be the same thing as its obedience or disobedience to Christian principles.”

When Christian writers find they are able to take themselves less seriously and to take their responsibility to their audience more seriously, they will realize they are not called to share themselves, but to share universal truths, and not to merely share universal truths, but to share them in the most vivid, intelligible writing they are capable of. The tasks of the Christian writer demand every bit as much of him as do the tenets of modern criticism. In fact, more is required of the Christian writer than is required of the Christian literature that he produces. Art for art’s sake can have no place in the convictions of the Christian author, for his literature is never an end sufficient unto itself; it is preceded by the greater drama that inspired it, and followed by the personal decisions of the audience it affects with the retelling.
In his short essay, "Christianity and Literature," C.S. Lewis illustrates several differences between the Christian approach to literature and that held by modern criticism with an analogy of two theatre-goers. Upon exiting the show, the modern critic freely comments about his particular seat—how the draught from the door was uncomfortably chilly and the people around him annoyingly inconsiderate. Conversely, the Christian relates what he was able to see from his particular seat (as that is what he knows best), but his attention is directed to the theatre itself, to the molding that circles the pillars and appears older on the hidden side of them. Lewis's brief sketch not only contrasts "the ex-press-ionisti and the Christian attitudes toward the self or temperament," but if imaginatively extended, the analogy can be used to discover the specific tasks of a Christian writer, an issue which Lewis does not himself address. As imitators of Christ as well as writers, we are to be more than theatre-going scribes with hand-mirrors pointed towards God. In the language of the analogy, we are to stay in our assigned seats, watch the stage carefully, and develop our talents in preparation for the writing of truthful, artistic reviews.

Within the framework of the theatre sketch, our first duty is to accept our assigned seat gratefully, graciously and humbly. There should be no wishful gazing up into the box seats even if we happen to be seated in the back row of the auditorium, for that is when we run the risk of missing the show. We can also find ourselves in trouble if we are so caught up in admiring our own plush velvet chair that we cannot possibly give our attention to the drama unfolding before us. Writing concerned only with self-expression nearly always degenerates into self-deceiving egotism that cannot help but leave us with a false, joyless picture of reality. On the other hand, the Christian writer who can accept his lot in life avoiding both covetousness and conceit, is free to revel in the bountiful world around him. Unburdened by weighty comparisons of ourselves with others, as Christian writers we are under none of the pressures of the self-expressive writers to be unique or strikingly different, for we can realize that our "seat" in life's theatre is ours and ours alone. No one else can have quite the same story to retell that our own chair affords us, and we do not need to pay the high price of obtaining self-made originality, for that was given us at the door with our reserved seat ticket.

Once we have assumed our proper place in the theatre, our next task is to actively watch the performance, which may be enacted in the adjacent seats as easily as on the stage (although we must never forget that the stage is to be our first priority; it is the reason for both the theatre and the gathered crowd). If the woman seated next to us interrupts the show with whispered questions, we should be delighted at her honest interest in the play, and if she appears hungry, it is only right that we share our popcorn. If our particular place in the theatre gives us the opportunity to help even one person to better enjoy the show, then that is worth ten imaginative retellings of it afterwards. If the small boy to our right spills his soft drink on our notepad, if he loses the only pen we had to lend him, then we must temporarily put aside the "review" we wished to write. What actually occurs at the theatre is of far greater importance than our own version of it. Lewis himself cautions us that the writing of literature,
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The staff thanks all contributors for sharing themselves through their creative work. Regrettably, we could only publish a portion of these submissions. Many hours were spent in the formation and sharing of our opinions and ideas. Nevertheless, at this time, it seems appropriate...