The Promethean, Fall 1998

English Department

Concordia University - Portland

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From the Editor

This issue is dedicated to my fabulous *Promethean* editorial staff — Charlotte, John, Michael, Tim, and Jamie. They had a real vision of what they wanted *The Promethean* to be, and their creativity and artistry show on every page. In addition, you will find their names as bylines alongside many of the works in this issue, since they are all talented artists in their own right.

So thanks, gang, see you next semester. And best of luck to Charlotte as she graduates and goes on to new adventures. We'll miss you!

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Artwork by Nicole LaPage Schlueter

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Seed of Love

Pam VanDenBroek

my mother's bright smile
my father's gentle hug
her comforting fragrance
his protective glance
they laugh and look at one another
grin and clasp my hands
so glad they love each other so

i hear stories in my absence
they frolic in renewed youth
an empty household
daughters gone
no extra dishes
no extra laundry
little noise
perhaps a bit of loneliness

they turn to each other
strengthening their bond
i look inside myself
their love is a seed within me
i see its potential
i look up to see them
occupied in each other's eyes

i am no longer a child
but a product of love
soon to bloom
The Clock on the Wall

Charlotte Evensen

She sits staring at the clock on the wall. It is half past One. She had been here for exactly 45 minutes. Forty-five slow minutes during which she had filled forms after every form recounting her birthday, her weight, her eye color... the medical history of herself and her family. That had been the toughest part of the day, filling out the information for her family. She did not even know her mother’s birth date for goodness’ sake. Worse things could happen, she supposed. She looks around here. The people working here had tried to make this place more cheery, she observed. The wall was a calming yellow; the kind children use to describe the color of sun. She supposed the blue flowery border added a sort of enchantment.

A feeling that what she was about to do was natural. She moved her eyes from the borders to the square-shaped table in the middle of the room. All sorts of magazines piled around it. A lot having to do with health of women, some having to do with beauty, and a few nothing in particular. Just general entertainment of movie star life and other sorts of useless things. She wondered how much it cost the office to keep up all of these subscriptions. It was probably a drop in the bucket considering the cost of furnishing this place with all of this cherry wood. Still, what a waste of money.

She wondered how long it would take the medicine to work. How long would it take for her to fall asleep and stop wondering about this child she was not going to have anymore. Suddenly, the girl-woman smiled... She woke up uncertain about where she was. There was something shadowy in front of her eyes. She could not quite make out what it was, a silhouette of some kind. Her eye finally stopped to rest on the receptionist. She was indeed a beautiful woman, this girl. Almost picture-perfect in her contoured sophistication. She was wearing a lavender spotted with yellow scarf tied to the side of her throat. She probably dressed to match the décor of the office—calm-collected seemed the official theme. Her short hair-cut was curled to bounce in tight ringlets across her cheeksbones every time she turned her face even slightly. This receptionist was petite, almost to the point of nonexistence. She was indeed a beautiful decoration.

She did not realize she was staring at the receptionist until the woman spoke. “Ms. James, are you having second thoughts?”

“No, I am just wondering when I can go in to see the doctor?”

“You are next,” the girl-woman answered. “In fact, the nurse is on her way to get you. Are you ready?”

“More or Less.” She breathed uncertainly. “It is just that I have to be somewhere at six o’clock tonight and I don’t want to be late,” she added hurriedly.

“On, no problem. The entire procedure will not take more than three hours. It...”

She trailed off as the nurse walked through the door to call for the next patient.

“Sarah, Sarah James?”

“I guess that is me.” She picked up her bag. Nodded to the receptionist and followed the nurse down the wide subdued hallway.

They entered a quiet little room. It was an off-white. A discreet color, she thought. Probably a good thing too. I don’t think they want to burden the patient with the harsh reality of what might be happening.

“Ms. James, do you mind if I call you Sarah? No? Okay. Well, Sarah, we need you to put on this robe. Isn’t this a nice color? I always hate those white robes, they are so sterile. Oh and by the way, I need you to take these pills. Here is a glass of water. You can just put it by the bedside when you are finished.”

She wondered how long it would take the medicine to work. How long would it take for her to fall asleep and stop wondering about this child she was not going to have...

She woke up uncertain about where she was. There was something shadowy in front of her eyes. She could not quite make out what it was, a silhouette of some kind.

“Ms. James, Sarah? Are you awake? Can you hear me?”

She wondered if she should say something. It seemed easier somehow to keep her eyes closed and stay in this warm haze she found herself in. At least for a few minutes, it was important to hang onto this unreality before it faded away.

“Yes, I am awake. I just having a little trouble opening my eyes,” she answered quietly.

“That is okay. It should go away in a few minutes. Is there anyone on file that I should call to pick you up?”

The woman’s incessant questions were beginning to annoy her. Why couldn’t she just leave her alone so she could pull her thoughts together?

“I will take a taxi, thank you.”

John Thomas Standlee
were lonely rivers wandering down a familiar, uncertain young woman's face, oval and calm. Her walk to the window was

This picture gazing back at her was her own reflection. A

She

"Shake yourself out of it, Sarah, it is just a window." She chided herself.

something compelled her to lift the blinds. All the way and look outside to the world below. The picture gazing back at her was her own reflection. A young woman's face, oval and calm. This woman had cheekbones that were rounded and pleasant. Her mouth formed the usual arc. It was the eyes, her eyes that were unusual. They were wide black orbs with tears streaming down the sides of their lids. Her tears were lonely rivers wandering down a familiar, uncertain face.

She realized the reason for the brilliance of the colors around her. It made sense now, the sheen surrounding all she envisioned. She was crying. Crying for the life she had lost, the child she had rejected from her being.

He tears became scalding lines condemning her every thought, her every action. She could not stop them. Neither could she stop the constriction of her chest with every breath she took. She wondered how that being inside her had felt. Had it felt this torn apart? Was there a recognition on its part about what had been going on while she had been in blissful sleep?

"Ms. James, your taxi is here." A voice accompanied the brusque knocking on the door. She wiped her eyes attempting to ebb the tears. She opened the door, mumbled a hurried thanks as she passed the receptionist and headed outside the automatic doors and into the taxi.

"Is there any place in particular that you would like to go, young lady?" a gruff voice asked.

She wondered if he knew what she had done. She wondered what he would say if he told her to never stop driving. What would happen if she begged him to keep moving forward and never go back in any direction?

"1236 Winding Lane, and please take Interstate to get there." She knew he wondered at that comment, usually passengers tried to save money by requesting the shortest way possible.

"Yes, ma'am." She looked at the roads rushing by. She wondered at how life worked itself out in nature. She wondered how nature could allow herself to be perverted by all these unnatural things—unnatural buildings made of cold cement, unnatural roads, made specifically to contain nature into a controllable environment. She wondered about the people living along these roads. Did they feel themselves affected by how they lived? Even still, she wondered if life remained that way.

"That is 25 dollars, ma'am." "Thank you," she answered. "Thank you very much for the ride." She turned and walked into her building, rode the elevator and entered her apartment. It was much as she left it. Next, simple, unembellished. It was necessary that life remain that way.

She remembered her appointment at six o'clock. It seemed so far away. She looked up at the clock on the wall. It was time to leave.
Recipe for Nasty Little Boys

Jamie Hasenkamp

2 moldy cow pies
4 dead horse flies
6 drops of snail's goo
5 pieces of gum, already chewed
4 scrapes of smoker's plaque
1 handful of Nickelodeon Gak
1 pair of smelly sox
10 scabs from chicken pox
12 rags of fat guy's sweat
8 hairy spider's legs
2 empty beer kegs

Take all this stuff and mix it in.
Make sure it's not too thick and not too thin.

Think of all your scariest, most terrifying dreams.

POOF! You have the little boys that make young girls scream.

---

Slice of Life

Karen Thompson

I walk down to the bus, and get on.
Dark windows offer me no chance to look out to the grey sky.
Inside, dark; outside, lighter, but not light.
It's twilight.
Window's open a little, so I can see.
Focus on the light, see through the pane.
There's no pane there, no dark window to blur the vision and reflect only the inside.
See the outside, not focus in, not.
Outside, bright, cheerful lights are on the trees,
And I see people enjoying themselves.
We all watch as we go by, then watch ourselves again.
Look out the untinted window, the free air, and see life.

---

Struggle

Niecee Madrigal

I wake up every day to the nightmare that took my basketball season from me.
I struggle every day overcoming the obstacles I must face.
I sit, stand, and lie in pain, unable to wish it away.
I keep thinking that nothing could be worse than what I'm facing right now.

?How selfish can I be?
I woke up the other morning to a bright golden sunrise.
I did not struggle to see it, because God has blessed me with a pair of eyes.
I sat there later that afternoon with my hand out in front of me.
I took deep breaths of fresh air, and sprinkles of rain dropped into my hand.
Not once did I struggle to smell the air or feel the rain.
I lay in bed later that night looking out the window up at the stars.
I fell asleep to the sound of music playing on the radio. Needless to say,
I did not struggle to hear it. The next day,
I woke up in prayer thanking God for the gift of life.
I will overcome this minor setback with His help.
He will make me stronger.
The End of Childhood  
John Thomas Standley

The River flows through the valley. Birds chirp, grass grows. Somewhere upstream, a branch bends, preparing to break away from its mother tree and float down the River. Lives flow down that River. A guest of wind rises, scattering the drying leaves across the ground. And Everyman is there, on the bank of the River. The River knows not his purpose, nor does it care. It simply exists, flowing, turning, carrying away what it can as it goes.

Everyman speaks, River! River, I have come.
A soft gurgle is the River’s only reply.
I have come to visit The Father, who you took from me.
The sun sinks slowly, showering Everyman in a barrage of colors, first from the sky, then as an answer reflecting off the River. The River’s answer is blinding to him, but he was blinded long before now. Blinded by fear, by hatred. Blinded by the death of The Father.

I had a dream, River. A dream about The Father and you. I was standing here, gazing into you, when night fell. I heard a voice and called out,

“Who is there?”

“A friend,” the voice said.
And I saw a figure, here with me. I thought perhaps this was some stranger, but something about him was familiar.

“Walk with me, I may be able to help you,” the person said.
We walked for hours, and as of yet, I had not been able to see this stranger’s face. I grew dark, and the wind pulsed at me. The moon was full; I could see the odd shadows it cast. Suddenly, I looked around and saw that we were on a path, walking through the cosmos.
Stars swirled around our heads, and a comet flashed past, leaving us walking in its fiery wake. Our path became steep, sloping downward, and soon we came to the end. And that is what it was, the end. After that point, the path stopped. There was nothing but emptiness. I could see a forest far below us. I could see the whole world spreading out beneath us, and I wondered what would happen next.

“I know, and I wish we had been given that chance, but do not weep for me. Live your life.”

“I cannot forgive the one who took you from me—the River.”
And it was true; I could not forgive you, River. My hatred had grown beyond myself.
He spins, causing the River to spin with him. The River knows not hatred.

The Father had a message for me, which he told me just before he left. He said,

“Forgive the River, it knows nothing of death. It merely continues to flow as it has for all time. Goodbye, Everyman.”

“Father, don’t leave me here alone.”

“I have to go, but we will see each other again.”

“I love you, Father.”

The Butterfly:
A Poem for My Bible Class Children
Elsie Lillian Kumer

Each time you see this butterfly
We hope you will remember
Some of the thrilling things we learned
In class since last September.

You see, each lovely butterfly
Once crawled upon the earth,
A hairy caterpillar who
Thought life of little worth.
He squirmed along the grass and trees,
Always thinking, “Don’t squash me, please!”

And then one day he yawned and said,
“It’s time for me to go to bed
And sleep awhile;” and so he spun
A warm brown blanket all around
His hairy bod, and 

But one glad day – oh, great good news! –
A tiny slit in his cocoon
Promised excitement very soon!
And sure enough, just bit by bit,
A butterfly came through that slit!

And all who watched thought,
“God how great
That You could change a crawly thing
Into a butterfly with wings!”

Dear boys and girls, oh don’t you see?
God’s Word tells us that one day we,
Who love the Lord, will be changed, too,
With perfect bodies, all brand new!
And live forever in Heav’n with Him
Who died for us, and rose again!

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In basketball, coaches recognize the same concept. They have a term called "fundies" to describe those skills that are so fundamental to the way the game is played that players without them cannot compete. In basketball, the fundies include ball handling, passing, shooting, rebounding, and defensive footwork. Each year in practice, countless athletes are made to repeat these activities over and over again until they are perfected. This allows the team to progress to more sophisticated techniques found in complicated offensive and defensive plays. Great coaches like John Wooden, Pat Summit, and Dean Smith continually harp on this point when they present at coaching clinics.

Without mastering the fundamentals, neither basketball players nor schoolchildren will be able to successfully compete in their chosen fields of endeavor. Today I wish to propose that Concordia University continues to be a "University at Risk." We remain in danger of losing our ability to compete both as an academic institution in the field of higher education and, perhaps more importantly, as an instrument of God in battle for the souls of human beings.

To be sure, positive strides have been made to reestablish and reinforce our central core values in the form of our recently adopted Mission Statement: Concordia University is a Christian university which prepares leaders for the transformation of society. A new vigor can be observed in the chapel program by any who choose to participate with the worshipping community here. Small group ministry has begun and may blossom into a campus-wide, dynamic opportunity for spiritual growth and renewal. Many students seem dedicated to the notion that service to others is a more admirable goal in a career than self-gratification. Faculty and staff members often share the importance of their faith with students and others. Students, faculty, and staff have been involved in joint activities of service to the community.

Academically, rigorous new assessment procedures point the way to curricular improvement. Student involvement in hands-on research, creative productions, and scholarly literary endeavors have transformed the way many students view the education endeavor. No longer do they view themselves as
mere recipients of information. They have become producers of new insights and understandings, real sculptors of the shape tomorrow will take. New computer-assisted learning technologies are available to all students and faculty, as a new fiber-optic cable has bisected campus.

Yet if we are to remain a dynamic and vibrant entity in the realm of American private higher education, we must be cognizant of the very real dangers posed by a lack of focus on the fundamental values of our hallowed institution. We must also recognize the signs of malaise and indifference to those values that are a continuing threat to our visibility.

While progress has been made, our job is by no means complete. Far too many students, faculty, and staff have failed to become a true part of the Concordia community in its deepest, spiritual aspects. On a good day, perhaps only 10% of the community gather for corporate worship. Dorm devotions, once a dynamic and vibrant part of the spiritual dimension of life on campus, are relegated to a few groups working on a sporadic basis in the privacy of their rooms. The bold witness to their faith by faculty members in the classroom has sometimes been replaced by an attempt to avoid offending those in the classroom who might not want to hear about Jesus. After all, we certainly don't want to end up sounding like some televangelist. Rather than risking the possibility of giving offense, we remain silent.

In the academic arena, the risks are equally great. Increased numbers of students means larger class sizes and more papers to grade. The temptation to revert to those tried-and-true notes from past presentations rather than joining the students in the growth process can be too much to resist. The computer itself offers an opportunity to escape to the netherworld of the Internet. Surfing the Web takes precedence over scholarly research. We find it is much less stressful if we don't challenge the students to the highest levels of academic achievement. After all, who will know the difference?

This continuing risk threatens our very existence. I am therefore calling on Concordia to return to the basics. In this case, the fundamentals which I am promoting are not the three "R's" but rather then three "T's"—teaching, training, and telling. Our primary focus as an academic institution must be on the venerable profession of teaching. That is what we do. It is far too easy to become distracted with bureaucratic activities and technological gadgetry. We must dedicate ourselves anew each day to enhancing the art of teaching students and all that implies. Each time we plan our day, we must ask ourselves as faculty how it is we may improve our teaching skills. Students must determine what the best course of action is for improving their learning. The task is never complete. It demands our fullest attention. It may sound simple, but the art of teaching and appropriate learning is not accomplished without strenuous effort.

The text above calls us to a simple, naive trust in the Lord. Perhaps the words of the famous hymn put it best: "I am Jesus' Little Lamb." Singing this hymn is an admission of our absolute inability to figure out God and know Him except by trust. Of all the farm animals, the sheep is perhaps the least capable of caring for itself. And the lamb is totally dependent on the shepherd for its care and nurture. A former basketball player of mine who raised sheep at home told of the lamb her family had to take into the house in order to make sure it was properly fed and didn't get lost in the woods. Jesus is saying that in our text. Little children are similarly dependent on their parents for their direction and sustenance. And that is how we are to be with God. We are to trust. We are called to a complete unabashed recognition of our total dependence on God for everything we are and do. There is no need to get sophisticated about the idea; no need to couch it in the flowery language of theology. Trust, if it is to be fundamentally sound, must, first and foremost, be simple and child-like. As children turn over all of their cares and worries to their parents, we should do the same with our lives, turning them over completely to God's care and guidance.

Finally, the third fundamental I call for a return to is telling. Jesus directs us plainly in Matthew 10:32, "Whoever acknowledges me before me, I will ac—

knowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven." In order for us to be true to our Mission Statement and be known as a "Christian university," we must be ready to make a bold proclamation of Jesus as our Lord to all around us. This is particularly true in the recruitment process. If we do not tell prospective students in loud, strong terms who we are and, more importantly, who we are, we have no right to call ourselves a Christian university. If we do not share our personal faith with our students in plain and uncompromising terms, we should not exist as an institution, for we will have failed our mission.

Teaching, training, and telling—the three T's that can truly make us great. To proceed without due care of these fundamentals places us at great risk.

justification of noncapitalization
lenore edman
our very language is set up
to isolate
to prioritize
to capitalize
set up so
i am more important than you
not to mention
our gods
our trademarks
our brand names
how can it be known
whether i ask the question or whether it is you
i know i am not your opposite
but it might be i am your complement
it is even conceivable that you and i
we are the same
it matters not who asks
but you and i
we both
we all must seek the answers
Daisies

Jamie Hasenkamp

A daisy came through a small crack in the deserted sidewalk. Its presence was noticed by an old woman sitting on the bus stop bench. Her careening blue eyes stared at the white petals; their soft color and delicate frame brought back old memories. At six years old, her stubby fingers pulled out their satin texture one by one. "He loves me, He loves me not." The freckled face transfixed in her mind with hopes that the result would come true.

Ten years later, his freckles had diminished. All she noticed when he stood at her doorstep was his genuine smile and the fifteen daisies he grasped in his trembling hands.

She rose from the bench; her tired legs carried her to the lonely flower. Her small, delicate hands picked the daisy from its unnatural environment and lifted it to her nose. The sweet scent was that of her wedding bouquet. Their aroma reached her nose as she approached her handsome groom. His hands were still trembling, and his smile still so genuine.

A tear rolled down her sun-worn face. On the day he was buried, she placed a daisy on his still and quiet hands and imagined the smile.

A tear rolled down her sun-worn face. On the day he was buried, she placed a daisy on his still and quiet hands and imagined the smile.

The bus arrived, and she rode it home. The special flower needed a special place, and there is where I found it, in my grandmother's photo album next to their wedding picture.

A Monday Kind of Love

Stephanie Hopkins Hughes

Running my fingers through a brainful of words like a jarful of beads, seeking the words for a poem to wear like a necklace, a necklace for a King.

What kind of a king, you ask? Ah, well you may ask.

Oh, you know, King of Thieves, King of the Gypsies,

King of the Road, King Tut, King Wenceslas, King Farouk,

King Pleasure. The Sultan of Swing. The Emperor of Ice Cream.

Here, try it on, you slick lovely wonderful multifarious, salubrious, mendacious syllabub of a guy, you.

Ah, the grandiloquent transubstantiation of the hostess with the hostess.

Moonlight becomes you, Sweetheart.

Wear it for me.

More wine?

As we spin
round and round
beautiful face
Your shining eyes Dancing pierce mine
We look into the depths of each other
I love what I see
All else is a blur

Pam VanDenBroek

Artwork by Deanna Ellis
Blown Away
Stephanie Hopkins Hughes

Hiroshima was only the beginning.
Since then the bomb has been going off in us,
in all of us, all of the time.

Waking, sleeping, cooking, eating,
loving, dreaming, it's going off ...
exploding in slow motion, in very, very slow motion,
blowing away our ideas of who we are,
of where we came from, of where we are going,
blowing away the past, blowing away the future.

Something is gone in our hearts that was not gone
in the hearts of our fathers.
We no longer hear the glory in the anthem.
It merely feeds our death wish.
We swallow it in bits with our morning coffee.
Today the Italian prime minister was blown away.
Yesterday it was a piece of the president's skull.

Our children pray for it as they chant the magic mantra,
"by the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air ..."
We wish it would hurry up,
end the hunger, end the injustice,
back to zero, return to Go.
Bang. Boom.

Perhaps the bomb is the riddle of the Sphinx,
the great test, the four swords flashing at the gates of Paradise,
the dragons of prehistory, the face of the Medusa
(look at it and you turn to bone),
the plagues of the Middle Ages
(ring a ring of rosies, pocket full of posies ...),
the thunderbolt of Zeus, the Minotaur, devouring youths and maidens.
We protect ourselves by refusing to believe in it.
We shield ourselves with ignorance.
Click, we change the channel.

Shiva, Shiva, all fall down.

to you ...
Tim Winterstein

All the thoughts I want to get down
Sometimes it feels like I could drown in them
Do you know what I mean?
Have you felt the way I feel?

The blandness of it all
Sometimes it gets to me
The cruelty of it all
Sometimes I just don't see

Did I mention I love you?
You could probably tell
Did I mention I hate you?
This little taste of hell

The sickness of it all
It makes me want to cry
The blindness of it all
Why do I even try?

And then I realize the truth

You aren't the original
You're just a fake
You never were
I always knew

You say it's depraved
I know it's true
It's a good thing we don't look forward ... to the Present.
Friend
Charlotte Evenson

Clear words sung in a tune
as sweet as the songs of lonely sirens
catched the wanderings of my mind.
I thought of you
then
As the words poured over me being
washing me clean of my emptiness,
I saw your image
rising from
hungering mists of my questing heart
a mere suggestion of possibility.

Aching desire spoken in verse
as daring as the poems of artful masters
reflecting the flutters of my imagination.
I thought of you
then
As my passion rose beyond my control
overwhelming my reasoned logic
I remembered your face
dancing upon
suppressed memories of my daydreams.

Comrade
Beth Ann Amerson

Comrade,
We have been through the battle together;
Back to back,
Fighting for position:
Your heel has braced my lunge.
My arm has lent yours strength;
Each hoarse throat has cried warning
of unexpected blows.

Comrade,
We are through the battle alive—
Me, and you,
Soldiers of good fortune:
We lock hands in a pact,
A covenant of brothers;
Our spirits have been melded in
the crucible of war.

Spectator Sport
Jeff Koehler

In surreal blue glow
of Wyoming winter evening, 1969,
a supersurreal blues
plays across cathode ray-set—
basso profundo Cronkite
and the dancing generals
telling the word to nine-year-old me.
Flickering napalm horrors,
interpretive dance of juggernauts,
crushing weight of Glory
counted out in bodies
87 lost on our team
324 on theirs—whoever they
are—dispossessed in their own land.
My land is TV-land, where
2+2=5. Cheering our side,
I ate the bait with TV dinner.
In the wings,
Goebbels laughing his ass off.

Photography by Ayako Watanabe
S o, why “healthy”? When in search of a world view, shouldn’t the criteria be “realistic”? Well, it would seem that “realistic” doesn’t do too much for us. The Russians who played ball with Stalin were being “realistic.” The Jews who didn’t organize and fight back when the Nazis began rounding them up were being “realistic.” The Hollywood screenwriters who played ball with Senator McCarthy in the 50s were being “realistic.” The legislators in our own state who are pressing for new prisons are being “realistic.” If we watch or listen to the news every day, we get more than enough “realism”: the Oklahoma City bombing, the Unabomber, the mass graves in Bosnia, the gold hoarded by the Nazis in Switzerland; the latest victims of violence in Belfast and Hebron, plus all the rapes, murders, and horrific vehicle accidents within a three­state area. Do we really need to know more about war, about terrorism and genocide, about Hitler, Stalin, or Slobodan Milosevic, than we already know?

There is a level of horror that, when reached, can’t be topped. When people reach that level, they must find relief somehow—through denial (by denying the Holocaust has become a major issue) or through escape—by changing the subject, changing the channel, or through drink, drugs, or violence of their own. Yet in spite of denial and escape, the stuff still sticks. The sounds of explosions, of sobbing, of screams: “…at first it was unbearable. Then you got used to it”; the scenarios of execution, of rape, of torture, these adhere to the psyche and cannot be erased; and they linger, to rise up again and confront precious moments of sweetness: the embrace of a child; the pleasures of good company; as if every day on television and in the newspapers. The com­mand cannot be erased; and they linger, to rise up again and escape, the stuff still sticks. The sounds of explo­sion are still there. If only we could escape from the memory of war, from the memory of the pain, the sorr­row of war, and the hopelessness of war.

There is a level of horror to which war is a return, a return that is becoming perhaps a permanent one. What earthly good does it do us to come to class to learn that humanity has been violent for a long time; that evil sits at the crossroads of power; and, worst of all, that there is no end in sight? What are the students of Humanities 351 supposed to do with this information? 

1. commit suicide 
2. blame the Jews 
3. increase their intake of alcohol on the weekends 
4. stop watching the news altogether 
5. none of the above

And if “none of the above,” then what are we supposed to do with this overload, this avalanche, of fright­ening, paralyzing, deadly information, once we’re handed it in our quiz and gone home?

Not the lighter works in this course, films such as My Sweet Village, or novels such as Life Water for Chocolate, mitigate the overall messages of horror. Indeed, on the level where all things are equal, they can only make them more real and more absurd by contrast. For just as Buried by the Sun frames its fearful betrayal with the sweet­est kind of familial love, we would feel no surprise at all if the two members of the Soviet construction crew that go dancing off together at the end of My Sweet Village, are blown to kingdom come just before the credits; or, conversely, if the film director in After the Rain were to rise from the ground, strip off his bloody shirt, and join his township in some ancient festival dance.

We have become numb by a media wherein real­ity and fiction, tragedy and comedy, are blended by film editors into an undifferentiated continuum of the absurdly horrific, the horrifically absurd.

It was good to read Vlaclav Havel’s book, Disturbing the Peace, and better still to hear his story, to know that this message was the real fruit of a real struggle; to meet, at least once during the semester, another brand of real­ism—a real hero, although Havel himself says that there are no heroes. Because Havel is good and brave and true to what he believes, we can believe that there are others who are good and true and brave. The Havel of this world is the antithesis to the Hitlers, the Stalins, and the Milosevics.

But alas, why only one? Why, out of all the books and movies and lectures, does only this one hero emerge? Why do we study Hitler and Stalin, and not Raoul Wallenberg or the Jews who organized the Warsaw ghetto? (I asked, and was told, “Because they failed.”)

Was Hitler, then, a success?) Why do we focus on the villains of history, and not the heroes? Where are the busts of Thomas Jefferson or Abraham Lincoln, the stat­ues of Joan of Arc, which used to decorate our public buildings? Why so much “realism”? Why so little “hero­ism”?

It is true that our culture is in a state of shock from events of the past hundred years or so, and that after the loss of faith in the “eternal” verities which followed the two world wars, we mumbled followed Kafka, Hemingway, Becket, Camus, Kerouac, Didian, et al., into a sort of miserable prison­yard of existentialism, in which such notions as heroism are food for sarcastic jokes, in which the heroes of the past are seen as hypocrites, self­serving cynics (drunks, neurotics, libertines), or, Heaven help us, failures!

Are we really willing to pursue this existential nightmare into the final “realism,” a Twilight of the Gods with no fish left in the oceans, where beaches mean skin cancer, and what wilderness there is left has become a place where the government maintains its secret munitions factories?

It is time for the intellectual establishment of the west to wake up, shake off its existential megrims, and get the inspiration of the heroes who have transformed so­ciety in the past, and whom we have to thank for what is good, just and hopeful in our lives today.

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Heroes are not saints, why deny them their true status because they are not perfect is not only foolish, it is dan­gerous, as our sickening slide into the black hole of total cynicism and hopelessness so manifestly demonstrates.

There is a level of horror that when reached can’t be escape, the stuff still sticks. The sounds of explo­sion are still there. If only we could escape from the memory of war, from the memory of the pain, the sorr­row of war, and the hopelessness of war.

Can we do this? Of course we can! Humans can do anything they must; anything they will set their minds to; as history clearly shows, if we only choose to read it in this light.

We have made progress! We no longer boil people in oil—after cutting off their private parts and stuffing them in their mouths—for not being in perfect agreement with us; we no longer cut off people’s ears—for not saying the right thing. But there are still those who are held in light esteem today because they are not perfect is not only foolish, it is dan­gerous, as our sickening slide into the black hole of total cynicism and hopelessness so manifestly demonstrates.

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Schools should be the natural spawning grounds of the sorts of heroes we need so desperately now; thinkers and writers, poets and artists, who can create for us images of a future filled with clean air and water; afford­able and non­polluting energy (even now ready and wait­ing to be implemented by a government no longer un­der the thumb of the fossil fuel industry); sensible popu­lation management policies elected by methods that leave them with no allegiance to venal interest groups; and an international government based on democratic principles tested by two hundred years of experience with a government of, and for the people; an interna­tion­al government with sufficient police powers to con­trol violence when it bursts out along national and ethnic boundaries; and with effective programs to heal the emotional wounds that both are caused by, and that in turn cause, these outbreaks; wounds that have been festering untouched for centuries.
Famous in Russia
Julian Meredith Olsen

On March 30, 1997, I embarked on a journey to another country to host an English Camp. I taught in classrooms and spread the word of God to people who had never been exposed to the writings or teachings of Jesus Christ. The months of learning a religious performance and various words and phrases in Russian did not nearly prepare me for the effect that trip had on my faith, my outlook on life, and my heart. I realized how spreading the word of God should be done through actions, not only by using words. I realized that sacrificing my time and anything I can is so worthwhile. I watched the faces of those who had not yet come to Christ soften and change while watching our play and listening to our testimonies. I realized how sacrifices should be made without looking for gratitude. All of my experiences were important and meaningful, but the ones I have chosen to write about are the ones that stand out in my mind.

Within our own time, we never thought the public would awaken to the truth about the Vietnam War; we never thought the world would awaken to the dangers of the arms race; we thought we'd never see an end to the Cold War; we never thought to see South Africa find a workable political balance; we never thought we'd see the Berlin Wall come down. But all these things have happened; and although not all have happened in a perfect way; and although the balance has shifted towards the dark side in some ways, in some very important ways the balance has shifted towards the light.

It may be that the world will simply always be half dark/half light, half good/half evil, and that our purpose here is to differentiate between the two, and then to choose the light, and to fight for it, knowing that dark will always follow in our wake. When Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," what did he mean? Was it, perhaps, I cannot eliminate you from the world, Satan, but I can choose not to make you my focus. I can choose hope over despair, good over evil, heroes over villains. Get thee behind me, Satan. Get thee behind us, Hitler, Stalin, Slobovian Milosevic. As the old spiritual says, "I ain't gonna study war no more."

And now, Vaclav Havel, Raoul Wallenberg, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Joan of Arc, Elizabeth Fry, get thee where I can see you, know you, be inspired by you, believe once again in the human race, believe in myself, believe that life is meant to be beautiful, and that it is not absurd, but, on the contrary, rich with meaning and with promise.

Jillian Meredith Olsen

Another Stubby Bomar
Christine Weiler

My hands are wide at the bottom
And narrow at the top.
"Musically inclined" is what my palmtistry book says.
But small, chubby hands
That barely span the octave
And short, stubby fingers
Not willing to move through Mozart's trills
Make me wonder.

After thirteen years, the left hand (traitor)
Still refuses to play viola with vibrato
Or shift to third position with any grace
And the fingers will not reach
Across the guitar's five strings.
My mother must have known.
She taught me to sing.

Over and Under
Michael Schultz

Over the lips, under the table,
I'm not able,
To speak a decent sentence,
To be a fool's apprentice,
I just lie here in a stupor,
Feeling kind of super,
Feeling kind of low.
Under the table, up in the sky,
Don't know why ...
I feel like I'm small
Am I here at all?
Am I the tail of a comet,
Or someone soaked in vomit?
I just don't know.
Half a Man
Tim Winterstein

A grief-ridden man, gun on his back
His struggles so heavy he could nearly crack
The book he holds of holy writ;
He must continue, he cannot quit
His ragged jacket, his preacher's collar
A former man of the cloth
Now rejected and hollow
Leaving the flames of chastisement behind
His wild hair, his skinny frame
Loaded down with scorn and blame
Yet, he will survive ...

Twice a Man
A grief-ridden man, Tree on his back
His burden—more than a man can bear
A gap in his side, holes in his hands
He must continue going, he can't give in
His callused hands, his Preacher's face
A man of more than commonplace
Now rejected and forsaken
He leaves the flames of humanity behind
His razored crown, his hardened frame
Loaded down under scorn and blame
And yet, deserving not ...

The Cross
John Murray

Born into a life of suffering and pain
This is the lot that I was given
But not just me, don't get me wrong
For each of you receives the same.

This isn't from some prejudgment
Where God looks down and says,
"This one is funny."
Nor is it just because there is no God
To give good to few and evil to many.

No, sin is evil and ever-present,
Starting with Adam and ending in Heaven.
Its talons take hold from the instant you're made
From that first second the evil is placed.

"So, where is God?" is the question you pose
As little kids die before they are ten years old.
"How can you presume to say there's a God
When evil is ruling, and victory is against the odds?"

It is easy to overlook the presence of God
And even easier to throw in the towel.
What's the point of trying to fight
When there seems to be no end in sight?

Day to day I face these questions
Whether in my mind or from some other direction.
I sit and ponder, think and pray.
Hoping beyond hope to have the answer some day.

And yet I overlook the simple fact
That Jesus faced this question in his life's task.
He came not only to salvage the sinner,
But also to show us the presence of God when we suffer.

So now when I suffer what seems in vain
Or go through seemingly unnecessary pain.
I know that Christ did much more in one day
That I could ever understand or explain.

All I know is the love that is expressed
Through the actions of a God, who knew my distress.
And decided in mercy, grace and love
To sacrifice himself, God descended from above.

The Cross

We always, as people, tend to look at the sky
And say God I'm suffering, why oh why
Haven't you saved me and made my life easier,
Taken away the pain, made my work much simpler.

It is then that He looks at us, not
from on high
But nailed to the cross, sentenced to die.
"Look at me now, I suffer
while you do,
But more importantly, I suffer for you.

"You suffer pain and death in
everyday life
I suffer pain and die today that you
might have life.
The price I pay is the one you cannot,
The debt I claim is the one you must not.

"For you see suffering, and you see pain,
Why you have no hope, I cannot explain.
I hang on the cross to bring you life
But also to suffer with you through your life."

So now when I suffer what seems in vain
Or go through seemingly unnecessary pain.
I know that Christ did much more in one day
That I could ever understand or explain.

All I know is the love that is expressed
Through the actions of a God, who knew my distress.
And decided in mercy, grace and love
To sacrifice himself, God descended from above.
Of Hope  
Tim Winterstein

My frustration always continuing  
It overturns all of the peace I seek  
Stress continually extenuating  
It tends to make everything seem bleak  

In the blindness of the darkest mid-night  
When all is naught and the skies seem empty  
Total depravity is what I fight  
Hope and faith become insufficiency  

One lives to steal the peace I long for.  
To steal my eyes and cut out my tongue  
These burdens kill me; my back is so sore  
The pieces of my mind are so far-flung  

But as long as I keep my eyes on You  
I'll never lose sight of my narrow path  
As long as my gaze is focused on You  
I will always have a reason to laugh
About the Contributors

Belfy Ann Amerson is a transfer student enrolled in the Secondary Education program. Literature is her passion!

Toni Christensen is a senior Social Work major who likes people and Dave Matthews.

Lenore Edman is on staff at Concordia. She is also an Interdisciplinary Studies major looking toward studying linguistics.

Deanna Ellis has always wanted to work with marine mammals as a career, but art is also something she enjoys a great deal. As a result, her parents always thought she should draw marine mammals for a living.

Charlotte Evensen is an English major who will graduate in December and plans to serve in mission work.

Jamie Hasenkamp is a Secondary Education/Language Arts major from Scappoose, Oregon. She likes riding unicycles and speaking Swahili in her spare time.

Stephanie Hopkins Hughes is studying Humanities and Literature at Concordia. She is the editor of The Oxfordian.

Jeff Kochler grew up in Wyoming and Nebraska, living in numerous small towns in several states before graduating high school. He attended Valparaiso University and Ball State University before starting a teaching position in Arizona. He currently resides in Portland, teaches writing, and plays music.

Charles J. Kunert is Dean of Concordia University's College of Arts and Sciences.

Elsie Lillian Kunert is the mother of Charles Kunert. She still enjoys poetry at the age of 87.
Contributors

Nicce-Adrigal plays basketball for the Concordia Cavaliers. She is an elementary education major from Oxnard, California.

John Murray is a Pre-Seminary major with a video game addiction.

Jillian Mercedez Olsen is a freshman English major who aspires to a career in journalism.

Nicole La Page Schluter is an Education major from Olympia, Washington.

Michael Schultz is the poetry editor for The Promethean. He spends his free time chasing squirrels and generally making a nuisance of himself.

John Thomas Stanley is a sophomore English major and new father. You can e-mail him at stratman@internetcds.com.

Karen Thompson is a junior in the Elementary Education program. She is from Vancouver, Washington, and has been writing poems, songs, and essays since she was in third grade. One of her poems, "Knowing," has been published in Morning Song by the National Library of Poetry.

Pam Van Den Broek was born and raised in Cordova, Alaska. She is pursuing a Secondary Education/Biology degree and plays basketball for the Concordia Cavaliers.

Ayako Watanabe is a sophomore Psychology major and a regular contributor to The Promethean with her photography.

Christine Weiler would love to play piano, but she feels constantly thwarted by short fingers. She is a junior studying Secondary Education/Language Arts.

Tim Winterstein is 19 years old. He is on the Apostolic track of the Pre-Seminary program. "There are only two kinds of people in the end: Those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'"

Announcements

The Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics 1999 Essay Contest

Suggested Themes

- Discuss ethics based on a personal experience
- Why are we here? How are we to meet our ethical obligations?
- Reflect on an ethical aspect of a literary text or public policy issue

Eligibility: Full-Time Junior and Senior Undergraduates

Deadline: January 22, 1999

No more than three (3) essays from the same college, university or campus will be considered in any one contest year. Essays must be accompanied by a letter on school stationery verifying eligibility according to our guidelines.

First Prize: $5,000 Second Prize: $2,500 Third Prize: $1,500 Two Honorable Mentions: $500 Each

Entry Forms and Further Information

Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope by December 18, 1998 to:

The Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics
The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity
450 Lexington Avenue, Suite 1920
New York, NY 10017

This information is also available online through FastWEB (Financial Aid Search Through the WEB) at www.fastweb.com.

Excellent Extra Income Now!

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Free Details: SASE to

International Inc.
1375 Coney Island Ave.
Brooklyn, New York 11230
Walking Blues

If you’re under 21 and you get caught driving with any alcohol in your blood, you’ll be relying on your walking shoes to get around.

Blow over .00 on a breath test and you’ll automatically lose your license, if you’re under 21. And then you’ll be walking it off — for a long time. So don’t drink and drive.

Drive Sober. The Way to Go.
Oregon Department of Transportation

Graduation Announcements!

These were a popular feature in our last spring issue, so we are again offering the opportunity for you to place a Graduation Announcement in the Spring 1999 Promethean. This is the only campus publication currently being produced, so make your grads happy and get their names in print! You will receive a complimentary copy. If you wish to place an announcement for your spring graduate, please fill out the following form completely. Fill out a separate form for each announcement (you may make a single payment to cover multiple announcements). You may contact me at (503) 280-8680 or e-mail to dhotz@cu-portland.edu. Thank you — Dove Hotz, Editor.

Price is $15 for a 1/8-page ad. Please fill out a separate form for each announcement.

Mail completed form to:
Dove Hotz
Concordia University
2811 NE Holman
Portland, OR 97211

Your Name:
Mailing Address:

Your Phone Number (including area code):

Amount enclosed ($15.00 per ad times total number of ads): (check or money order only, payable to Concordia University; no cash or credit cards)

Graduate’s Name:

Your Message (80 letters maximum):

Font choices. Check one font only, but you may mix bold, underline, and italic, except where noted. Indicate formatting with your message: We will make the writing as large as possible to fill the space.

☐ “Times Roman.” The classic.
☐ “Impact.” Strong look. No bold or italics.
☐ “RubyScript.” Elegant. No italics.

Symbol choices (circle one symbol only):

Deadline: April 6!