5-1-1993

The Window

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Recommended Citation
Available at: http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean/vol1/iss3/8

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I look at my window. It shows me the same scene it has for nearly three years. That's what my logical mind tells me, anyway, that nothing has changed. There is the green grass blanketing the front yard. It has been growing there for nearly half a century. Beyond the grass is the blackness of the street. Then more grass surrounding another row of houses.

In the distance looms the school, the students no doubt protected within its great walls of learning. I have seen this sight before. I know this sight. You must be the thing you see. I look again at what is before me, this time more closely. Beyond the grass and the houses sits the school, gray and somber. It appears to be like many other schools. It is a large gray building with a well equipped playground. Beyond the playground is a large field—more grass. It appears the same as it would any other day. Gray and boring. But something catches my eye. Contrasting the old, oxidized gray paint of the school is a vivid collage. This is new. Over the night, somebody has painted graffiti on the side of the gymnasium. It's not the work of a careless delinquent, just a name, a set of initials or a gang insignia, but a full mosaic involving many colours, and covering an area the size of a Volkswagen. The bright colours are visually pleasing, yet this scene is discomforting. It deviates from the norm with which I am comfortable. It is the result of defiance. You must be the thing you see. Again, the words taunt my mind. What are you? Who put you there? I ask of the graffiti. In that painting, I see the results of a restrained creative soul. What does this mean? What are you trying to say? I can see the frustration and anguish of the artist. The art work itself is very abstract and colourful, yet its meaning not readily apparent. It's true purpose eludes me. You must be the thing you see. I step back and view my handiwork—a small mural of the various images that have been present in my mind. The frustration I felt at the world is temporarily suppressed. In a simple display of defiance, I have expressed all that I have felt. My identity is right there on that drab, gray wall: my fears, my pain, my struggling, my hope, my wonder, my own perception of the mysteries of life. Tomorrow it will be gone, whitewashed discreetly by the school custodian while the rest of the school, including myself, goes about the routine of life, pretending to be happy. Such is my life: my hopes and desires displayed in full colour one day, only to be washed away the next.

Whoever made that beautiful piece of work come to life, although a delinquent in the eyes of the custodian who is now applying a fresh coat of plain gray paint, is a true artist, a true thinker. He (or she for that matter) has come to terms with himself and recognized his true identity. He is able to display his inner self in a way that few others have the courage (defiance) to do.