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SPECTRUM
Northwestern College
Vol. 5, No. 1 January, 1983
Sheets

Across the yellow green door mat she pressed the lighted doorbell, translucent strangely enough, her thoughts landed on the former color of her hair, almost reddish in color, not enough vivaciousness to her particular appetite instead the shape of her shoes distracted a large portion of pain in her head to her shoulders, shivering in a way her display bag, the kind that is made out of the same vinyl they use to make cheap tennis shoes, always seemed heaviest as doors open and the door opened.

Hearing the cries, inside she pressed the large padded couch, not the springy kind, but the ones that feel good
Hearing the cries, inside she smiled and tossed her head that way, you know that way, her eyes dancing sadly toward him
Hearing her cries, inside she left the flower-pattern, not some shaggy carpet taking in the moment, for the time being, at least for now.

- Glen Bruxvoort
ON A HILL FAR AWAY....

Blood-stained stones, a mute testimony to the tragedy. A battered crossbar, evidence of a deed well done. The sky goes black as if nature herself is trying to blot out the sight. Silhouetted against an angry sky stands a lonely cross. Upon this desolate tree hangs a thing, a man who no longer seems worthy of that title.

It is the sixth hour of a day bathed in innocent blood. Speaking through shattered teeth and battered lips, the man bloodily coughs out two simple words, "I thirst." A bowl of vinegar sits at the foot of the stand and a centurion raises the hyssop up to the gory mask. This regal mask is royal no more, the eyes are blackened and the beard ripped away by a frenzied mob, a scarlet stubble is all that remains of this visage. Oozing downward from a cruel crown of thorns, the blood mixes with steaming sweat and fills the tortured eyes. Eyes that have seen God slowly glaze over in pain.

The wrists are affixed to the rough crossbar by a gore-soaked spike. The sanguine fluid freely flows from wounds in the hand and criss-crosses the disfigured arms. The single rusty spike is driven through both heels. Soles are torn open and fester in the oppressive heat. Dragging the crossbar over rubble and rocks have made them this way. The calves are nearly gone, white lightning gleams off the underlying bone. The shoulders bare and torn capture the fluid dripping from the "royal" crown.

Round about him, the crowds jeer at the sufferings, no doubt whipped into a frenzy by the grinning priests. Many of the screeching mob fail to hear the man speak once again. Spitting out a spray of juices the man softly murmurs, "Father forgive them..." Still the priests shout and spit on him, a piece of carrion set up for feasting.

Air whistles through his broken nose, drawing
bloodied sweat into dying lungs. The man tries to raise up but the legs cannot support anything. His body gurgles steaming life's blood as he strains to retain his hold on life. Suddenly his head slams back against the hard wood, the vicious thorns slide deeper into the vanishing scalp. The end is near, the fight is lost.

It is now the ninth hour, the hours of hell approach a fatal climax. It is as black as blindness, the only light comes from increasing flashes of eerie lightning. Upon the tree the man's body writhes in fiendish torment. The limbs have swelled like balloons ready to fragment. The charnel visage of the man contorts into a grotesque grin. The eyes momentarily look heavenward. Words fall from the dying tongue, "It is finished!" A large bolt of lightning strikes deep in the heart of Jerusalem.

The gore-crowned head pitches forward upon a still chest. For a few moments water and blood flow from a jagged spear wound. Bathed in caking blood, the body doesn't escape the final humiliation. The still form is battered by a sudden deluge of hailstones and needles of rain from the blackness.

Sunday morning dawns cool and beautiful. Birds sing gleefully in the nearby trees. The weekend's rain is forgotten in the fresh scent in the countryside. Golden sunbeams play like fairies on the lush hills. Nature is smiling on her golden earth. For a brief instant a random sunbeam falls on the mouth of an empty cave and fills its emptiness with its glory.

- Scott Nichols
A DAY OF WRESTLING

The ring of the alarm gives warning to the start of a brand new day. The dreaded alarm, the dreaded day! I awake and acknowledge the reality of what the day may hold. Last night, before I went to bed, I was still five pounds over my goal of the 132 pound weight class. The problem? I haven't eaten in four days, haven't had anything to drink in two days, and we have a wrestling meet tomorrow. As I remember this, fear returns. My fingernails wail at the sharpness of my teeth, and I drag myself out of bed.

The bed is again soaked and I realize that my sweatsuit and four quilts have worked again. I've sweat the bed. I've lost at least a pound during the night and, with that encouragement, I proceed to the bathroom to try and lose a little more. No luck. It has been almost two days since I last had a bowel movement, and a whole day since I urinated. It's going to be close. One day to lose four pounds after I've already lost eleven in the last five days. Fear returns and I substitute some Ex-lax and chewing tobacco for my fingernails and drag my weary body up to get dressed.

I change sweatsuits and add a winter coat, stocking cap, and gloves, and begin the first work-out of the day. Since it's 6:00 a.m. I'm alone in the darkness and bitter cold of a Minnesota winter. To take my mind off the painful running, I pray and talk to God and plead that he will allow me to survive. My own breath creates moisture that freezes to my eyelids and blurs my vision. I chew and spit tobacco in rhythm with my footsteps and finally complete my four mile jog. It's 7:00 a.m. and I'm getting slower and weaker, but another pound is shaven and I reward myself by brushing my teeth and washing out my mouth. Fear returns, and I hurry down to shower and to prepare myself for school.
The school is freezing. My blood-sugar count is low so I wear heavy sweaters to keep me warm and heavy ankle weights to keep me working. School is a blur. I can't concentrate; everyone mentions how pale and drawn I look, and the pain never ceases. Why am I doing this? Hate fills me, for what I do not know, and I silently but visibly cry and try to alienate myself just a little farther from the other students.

I spend my lunch hour in the gym, weighing myself and planning out meals for when wrestling is over. I inhale the fragrance of the school lunch and allow myself a swish of water. I feel faint for a moment; my ulcer flares and doubles me over. I plead for relief and cuss under my breath and go off to start the afternoon classes.

I'm inert through most of the afternoon. The smell of lunch won't leave me and I dream of everything fattening and good. The afternoon classes go fast and practice is near. I panic and, again, off go the fingernails.

The smell of sweat, tears, and pain fill the air as I awaken to the practice room. The seemingly never-ending practice takes away every ounce of strength that I possess. Since my energy is drained from me, I slowly begin to be beaten. Yet, the coach pushes me on, sending in man after man to challenge my abilities. As practice ends, I drag myself into a small, unoccupied mini-gym and crumble to the floor. I silently weep alone. I know no why, but I cannot halt the flow of tears.

After a shower, I feel mildly refreshed and return home. It's dark out, and extremely cold. I return to a state of depression when I realize that I still have two pounds to go and that I must run before going to sleep. So I hurry home and prepare myself for the night's run.

My own breath warms me as I jog, but still the cold of the night chills me. I am unable to run more than two miles (a small amount compared to eight miles a week ago) and I am forced to
walk the rest of the way home. Frustrated, I return and ready myself for bed. The clock reads 8:00 p.m., but I am exhausted and fall into the only pleasure of the day. Sleep fills me with thoughts of food and drink and an end to this madness.

I sleep deep, unaware of the hours that pass. This day is over, but tomorrow will be worse, and the next week will parallel this one. There is little to look forward to and I wonder if it is all worth it.

- Joey Horstman
Silence dominated our conversation as we tensely walked towards her dorm. This inaudibility characterized our short evening out. As we approached the dorm, she thanked me with a low monotone voice for the movie and the dinner which followed. After reaching the door, we both stood dumbfounded for words, so I leaned over expecting a warm, loving kiss as usual, but received instead a dry peck which seemed token and cold. After pausing a few seconds, I turned around and paced towards my dorm. My thoughts became confused for I couldn't understand what was happening to the happy relationship we once had.

I formerly met her one evening while eating dinner at the cafeteria. I immediately noticed her radiance and was overwhelmed by her attractiveness which I attribute to her short blonde hair and her gleaming blue eyes. During the following two weeks I found myself yearning to take her out. This desire became more apparent, for it seemed that we continually saw each other on the way to class or in the cafeteria. One evening, convinced that I could prolong it no longer, I called her and asked her to go to a dance the following weekend. She heartily accepted.

The dance was delightful for we found that we had many things in common. Except for swimming, neither of us liked participating in sports. And we both had an immense love for the out-of-doors. After our date, I knew that we could built a rewarding relationship.

Since then a few months have passed and many dates. We have gotten to know each other quite well. However, the last week and a half she has been very quiet and reserved for reasons which I can only guess.

My reflecting ended as I entered the dorm, but my anxiety did not. Frustrated, I walked up the stairs to my floor and decided to call her.
so we could resolve our misunderstandings. "We have to talk," I found myself saying into the telephone moments later. I uneasily strolled back to her dorm, frightened as I thought of the future.

Once in her room, I felt like an inmate, pacing back and forth, not knowing what to do, think, or say. Finally I blurted out, "Don't you want to see me anymore? What's wrong?"

"No, it's not like that at all," was her reply. That calmed me somewhat, but I needed more.

"Then why have you been treating me like this?" I questioned. In what seemed like hours, the explanation I had been waiting for finally began.

"You have done nothing wrong. You've acted like a true gentleman towards me. But at this point I am very hesitant and for only one reason. I can't help but think back to a previous relationship I have had. It was beautiful, and I thought for the first time in my life that I was in love. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, he left without warning. I haven't heard from him since. I think of that day often, and I don't want that kind of a hurt to come back into my life. I care for you a lot, but I have to take it slow."

I wiped away the wetness that had formed on my cheek. Slowly, I walked to her side. We embraced. "I can understand," I whispered into a tuft of her hair. "I do understand. Let's go," I said. Arm in arm we walked for hours under the clear night sky.

- Benjamin Lee
It was a sweltering hot, humid day in Manila. The market place was crowded with people pushing in from every side, as I weaved my way through the narrow isles of confusion. I felt as though I was walking through a maze. This unfamiliar market place utterly astounded and fascinated me. Although I had no sense of direction, I recognized a pungent odor and knew I was drawing near the butcher's shop. I took short breaths so I wouldn't have to smell the meat at full strength. It had been hanging in the open air since dawn and it was now past 5:00 p.m. I passed the fruit stand and came around the corner to spot the butcher's shop. The smells grew still stronger as I drew within a few feet to survey the choice pieces of meat. I saw slender slabs of what looked like beef, hanging at the front of the small four-sided open shop. I could hear the flies' steady buzz as I watched them swarm thick around the meat. Dangling among these slabs were some thin, lifeless chickens that looked rather pale against the deep red of the cuts. The butcher sat alone on a stool at the back of his shop. His white T-shirt was blood stained as were his overalls and boots. His hair was tousled. His face was flushed. His eyes were tiny slits. He looked hot and tired, bothered by the busyness of the market place. He must have read the curiosity in my face for he didn't jump up to wait on me; he paid more attention to the scrawny, scruffy mutt that nosed his way around the shop searching for meat scraps. Getting up and throwing the mangy creature a piece of tallow, the butcher hollered some profanity which scared the dog off. Then he slumped back onto his stool. A knife which was as long as my arm lay ready on the beat-up cutting board along the front counter. It was blood-covered, and small pieces of meat and tallow clung to the side of the blade. To the left of the knife sat a pinkish-gray pig's head; it still had
ears, eyes and a snout, but the lower neck was severed from its lower body. Along the front counter to the left of the cutting board were three long rows of meat pieces: pinkish-gray pig's feet, chicken's heads and small brownish intestines. These seemed to be popular items for many shoppers came by to inspect them. A young girl came up and shyly offered the butcher a few coins for a few pigs' feet. The butcher agreed with a nod, got up from his stool and picked up the huge knife. He then chopped the feet into small cubicles with a few quick, forceful swings and scraped them into a plastic bag. On the ground, in front of the shop, stood several rusty, tin bushel baskets. Three or four of them contained large and small silver-gray fish. The smell was fishy and strong. My stomach churned at the thought of actually eating one of them. There were also three or four bushel baskets of greenish-brown, slimy shells which I guessed to be clams. The butcher got up from his stool and scowled at me as if he was trying to say, "If you don't want to buy anything, beat it!" I melted back into the flow of market goers ending my observation for the day. I continued through the maze until I found an intriguing basket shop. Hopefully, I would forget the sights and smells of the butcher's shop. Hopefully, I would regain my appetite before I returned to my host's house for dinner.

- Linda Wilterdink
I'm often amazed,
when life is tough,
of some people,
who don't give up.

My son is one,
trials he's had,
and bears them all.
He's never sad.

Things we hope for,
things we want.
If we don't get them,
We seem distraught.

How then is it,
that we have so much,
while most of them seem
happy, while I despair.

It will go, I tell myself.
You will be happy,
just like them.
And when you are,
you will see,
what sadness really is.

But is that happiness
they all have?
Or are their smiles masking
their thoughts and feelings and faces,
of true despair.

- Tim Ipema
My mind was racing: "Things are so dreary here, so plain. What keeps these people happy? How can they laugh and smile when they're surrounded by all of this concrete? I just know this is going to be depressing; it's like a morgue here. My gosh, people actually die in places like this, I've got to get this over as quickly as possible!"

Thus began my visit of obligation.

Hesitantly I knocked on the numbered door. "Come in, dear, come in," her wrinkled voice beckoned me. Expectantly they had waited for me, she in a rocker near the bedstand, he "parked" near the window, gazing out intently. She wore her white polyester house dress with traces of breakfast on the front. Her skinny legs protruded from the bottom of the dress like twigs that would snap with the least bit of wind. He sat in his wheelchair in nothing but his tied-and-opened "regulation" pajamas. All the residents must wear them.

"Welcome, Daddy's been sick lately, but I'd like to visit with you today." With that her crinkly hand touched mine. So soft was her skin, like her smile. How could she smile in that place?

She motioned for me to sit down near her on a grey steel stool. "Good morning, it's so nice of you to let me come visit with you today." I had recited the line perfectly. "Unfortunately, I won't be able to stay long."

As if ignoring my last statement, she reached over to the bedstand and withdrew from a brown box a tattered notebook. "There's something I want to show you from my book." At that, my thoughts began again: "If she wants to go through that whole book, I'll never get out of this stale-airied, fluorescent lighted place."

She paged slowly through the yellowed pages silently. She didn't speak until she reached a page full of newspaper clippings, most of them in
a language I didn't understand. In the center of the page was a photo of a very distinguished looking man. The folded corners and wrinkled edges revealed that this photograph was often looked upon and the man in it admired.

"This is my father. He was a good man, a very good man. He died in 1941 here in America." Her eyes filled with a warmth and longing happiness that I had seen in the eyes of so many of the residents.

"He came to America from the Old Country in 1902, I was just a little one then. Things were bad there; we couldn't afford to live anymore, so my father sold everything and bought tickets to America.

"He was a printer at Home, and his hands were always soft, never dirty or full of ink. Remember that I told you his hands were clean and soft, because there's a time when they weren't." I nodded, thinking: "Perhaps I can stay a while longer."

"Mother was sick every day on the boat. Father took care of me; we got to be very good friends then. Oh, I love him so much.

"When we got to America, he couldn't speak this language very good, Mother couldn't talk like us at all.

"We moved to Iowa to live with my uncles, but they didn't treat us nice. They spent Father's money and said he was useless because he couldn't raise crops or pigs. He worked hard, and his hands started to get calloused and rough. He tried to be a farmer, but my uncles were bad to him." Her face tensed with anger and hurt, as if they had mistreated her as well.

"We moved to the Valley and got a little house--two rooms above a shop. Father worked on a railroad, but he didn't like it. He was a printer. His hands got dirty on the railroad, and sore--sometimes they bled at night.

"Father wanted to be an American. He wanted
to dress like the Americans, and speak like the Americans, and he wanted to read and be an American printer.

"He would sit under the lamp at night and look at an American newspaper. He found someone to tell him what the words were on the paper, then he sat and looked at them. When I was almost six years old, Father taught some words to me. He wanted me to be smart, like an American."

Her husband coughed loudly from his chest, "There's five of them out there now. Yep, she's got five out there."

"Daddy, I'm busy visiting with this girl, you finish watching for those birds." She looked at me with patience in her eyes and explained once again, "Daddy's been sick lately but I'll visit with you."

"Father's hands were getting hard, and rough, and sore, and they bled almost every night when he tried to wash off the black from them.

"Then we moved again, and Father got a job at a paper. This paper was written all in Dutch, so it was just like the place he worked in the Old Country. Mother thought this was perfect for him but Father said, 'This is America; we will be Americans; we will talk and write and print like Americans.' So Father printed an American paper. Some people didn't want to have an American paper, they wanted the Dutch paper back. They didn't like Father. I liked Father. I like to be an American.

"Father's hands started to heal, and when they were soft and clean and smooth he got involved in politics in America. He worked with the Party until he died.

"I met Daddy through the paper and the party. He is just like my Father. Daddy worked, like my Father, until they put us here."

"It's not so bad here, our hands stay soft like Father's." She laughed at this, her crinkled cackle resounded throughout the pale green room,
causing even Daddy to grin toothlessly.

I wanted to know more, "Turn the page, please. Unfold another memory for me."

Before I was able to state my thought, the nurse came to the door and coldly reminded me that my promise to visit only "a few minutes" had stretched into several hours. I didn't want to leave this fascinating woman with so many smiles and so many memories. She captured my heart.

I bent down to the beautiful woman sitting near the bedstand, and kissed the cheek, and touched the smooth, soft hands, and then smiled at the wonderful, very alive person that had been willing to give up her morning to share a tiny bit of her life and herself with me.

- Natalie Nordby
Falling through the floor

Because gray creases flourish before our eyes
In ways we never...
Faceless dreams of the other life
Bounding from meadow to meadow
and rainbows?
I came to a sloped curve cluttered
with green bushes, an occasional plum tree,
not too many beer cans
I wanted to slow down
and I did
only to find the horror
within the beauty...

Back at the cafe he sits
the checked table cloth is
with him, at least
he notices the cigarette burns on it.
He looks up only to see the window
and himself
Even the coffee is cold now
Or it seems that way we're not really sure

At dawn the red warmth of stained glass
colors risky intentions a different shade of fair
I've heard of independence.
He passes through the entrance gate
each step landing on his heart
Stones and more stones jutting in and out
countless times... he knew the way

He found her still the same
Everything always felt so good here, so much peace
He knew who he was here
and he remembered

Thumbing through the aged photo album he
hears the kettle whistling from the kitchen
and rises from his chair to turn off the burner
the coffee is hot

- Glen Bruxvoort
When I was a little girl--maybe six or seven--my Mama and Papa and I traveled out west to see my Grampa in Iowa. I had never seen Iowa before--or my Grampa. I knew he was my Grampa because he had such bright blue eyes with crinkles around them like the crinkles that the wind leaves in sand. Grampa's cheeks were brown and crinkled too. His glasses were silver around the edges but they did not sparkle as much as his blue eyes when he picked me out of the car and hugged me. That was how I knew he was my Grampa and nobody else's.

Grampa and I made best friends and he showed me all about corn, and pigs and plants and pictures of Mama when she was a little girl like me. Grampa told me stories about when he was little and still lived on the same farm and slept in the bed I was sleeping in. He even sometimes told me stories about his Papa who lived in the bottom of a windmill in a place called Holland where everybody talks Dutch and the ocean is higher up than the land. Grampa talked Dutch to me sometimes and even taught me some.

One day Grampa took me to visit the old school out on the prairie. The whole school was just one room with two rows of desks that two people could sit in, windows down both sides, and a funny round stove in the exact middle. Grampa showed me what school was like when he went there and I thought that it was lots more fun than it is now, but Grampa said, "Being a child is the same, in general, whoever, wherever, or whenever you are. Mostly children think that they know better than their Mamas and Papas when they start getting a little older'n you." Grampa's eyes crinkled--and he told me this story:

"When I was about fifteen years old I thought I was all grown up and I was right proud of myself about it. Well, I figured that, being a grown up
man, I ought to have myself a gun so I went out and bought myself a little pistol. My Papa told me that he didn't think that I should have it—but I thought I was so much wiser than my old Papa that I went ahead and kept it and used it anyhow.

"Well, one fall day my Mama and Papa went to town to put up the winter supplies—'cause you never can tell when a prairie blizzard will hit—'an, by golly, them storms can last for sometimes a week!

"Well, my cousin came to visit me while my parents were away and we took that pistol out back and shot at mice in the haystacks for a good long while. When we went back into the house we decided to clean that old gun. Well, we was working away at it with a nice oiled rag and part of the rag got caught inside the pistol. So my cousin helped me take that gun all to pieces and then put it back together again good as new.

"Well, my cousin wasn't too sure we'd done the job right, so he told me to load up and see if the chamber would turn like it was sposed to. Well, yep, it did!

"That bullet skinned past my cousin's chest—right through the cloth of his coat—clean through his left arm and hit the old cast-iron stove. My cousin fainted dead away!" Grampa chuckled, crinkling.

"Well, I thought for sure he was dead. I high-tailed it for the barn. We had this old car then that had to be jacked up before you could start it—well, just to show ya what you can do when you need—I never jacked that car up!

"I drove that car near forty miles an hour into town with my cousin still in a dead faint. Well, I took him into the old Doc's office, the first thing the old Doc said was "You dam' kids!"—he was a terrible man to swear.

"Well, the Doctor had to go and stick some cleaning stuff in that hole in my cousin's arm and I 'most fainted that time when the little stick
went all the way through to the other side! Well, my cousin had to go the week with his arm all bent up and in a sling with people always asking him how he was feeling—but, by golly, if I wasn't the one who was hurt the worst—I was so scared!

"Well, so I learned an important lesson: about playing like I was a man and about listening to my Papa when he talked! Remember that when you get to be older and start thinking you know better than your own Papa.

"Usually Papas are very smart people—very wise. I will never forget my Papa one day. He was almost the first in the town to have a car and that first day he had it we all went for a drive. Many people in our town were just come here from Holland and had never seen such a machine before.

"Well, as we were driving along in the car we came upon an old Dutchman and my father stopped the car to speak with him. The old man was in such awe of us that he removed his hat from his head as they do in Holland when they are with people who are much superior to them. I will never forget my Papa stepping down from the car and saying, "No, no, my friend, we do not do that Here."

Grampa smiled and rose from the school-bench. "I hope you remember to listen to your Papa," he said, "In generality they are very wise, wherever, wherever, or whenever you are."

I guess maybe that's why they get to be Grampas.

- Carla Bennett
KARLA BENNETT is a freshman theater major. Milford, MA is her hometown. She has no definite career plans.

GLEN BRUXVOORT is a junior from Orange City. He is a social work major, but has no definite career plans yet.

JOEY EARL HORSTMAN is from Fairmont, MN and is a freshman. He has not declared a major, but says he wouldn't mind teaching.

TIM IPEMA is a former Northwestern student, now working in Chicago.

SCOTT NICHOLS is from Waterloo, IA and is a freshman. Though he has no definite major, he is considering pre-seminary and possibly going into the ministry.

NATALIE NORDBY is a theater and speech major. She is a freshman, and her hometown is Wahpeton, MN. Her plans for the future are unsure, but she says that she has four years of college for God to show her what to do.

LINDA WILTERDINK is a senior from Sheboygan Falls, WI. She has a double major in business-economics and sociology. She plans to work in business personnel.
SOMETHING ABOUT THIS ISSUE'S ARTISTS...

RICHARD CRAVEN is a junior from Calumet, IA. While majoring in Art, Richard plans to find his occupation in a television studio.

SARI PILLARAINEN is a sophomore from Oulu, Finland. Sari is an Art and Education major and she plans a career teaching art.

LAURI SYMENS is a junior from Kenyon, MN. Lauri is an Art and Education major and plans to enter a career in Art Education.

JOHN VANDER STELT is a senior from Maurice, IA. John is majoring in Art and is looking for an art-related career.

JOANNE VERROS commutes from Hawarden, IA. Joanne is a sophomore and while she is majoring in Art, she has not made any definite career plans.

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