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**Editorial Board:**

- Mary Van Rheenen, editor
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- Kim Svoboda
"Dorothy, I brought a man home for dinner. Okay?" My father's deep voice filled the house.

"We don't have anything special," said my mother anxiously as she bustled about, carrying plates of steaming omelets, fried potatoes, and beets to the table.

"That's all right," said my father, "All he wants is a good square meal." The back door slammed loudly as my father went outside to get the man.

"Mom, where did he come from?" I began.

"Ssht!" she said loudly, glancing toward the door.

"Dorothy, this is Mr. Wilson," said my father. "Mr. Wilson, these are my children." We turned and smiled at the short, solidly-built man who stood in the doorway. He had a round, full face, marked by startling blue eyes, a knobby nose, and a large, thick-lipped mouth. His clothes were drab and rather simple but surprisingly clean. His heavy gray jacket hung partially open to reveal a green, crew-neck pullover sweater. He wore dusty brown pants and work boots. He had the air of a gentleman, a remarkable sort of dignity that made me look at him with respect. He pulled back an oak chair and carefully sat down, removing a white construction hat from his head. "Hello, ma'am," he mumbled quietly, with a slow, easy smile that stretched from ear to ear, and started his small slits of eyes twinkling. "Haven't eaten for so long I c'n see my ribs." He let out a deep, low chuckle and his eyes twinkled more than ever. He sat quietly while grace was said, then smiled again, pushing his fingers together as if embarrassed.

"Where do you live, Mr. Wilson?"

"Live? I live anywhere and everywhere. Spent las' night in the park an' this mornin' in a truck stop. A feller gets short a sleep that way. Kinda thought I'd take a nap s' afternoon. Saw a boxcar a ways down the road. Could sleep there."

He intrigued me, this strange man who followed the wind, and cared nothing for titles or money. I wondered what restless fire kept him wandering from place to place, so totally alone and yet so content. He seemed to take what little life gave him and enjoy it to the fullest. We kept asking questions, eager to know more. He answered in the slow mumbling drawl which suited him so well. He was Dutch-Irish he said. "My hair used to be red," and again a low chuckle swelled from his throat as he pointed to the patch of gray and white hair which obstinately protruded from his scalp like a bed of nails.

"Do you have any children, Mr. Wilson?"
"Children? I'm a grandfather! Haven't seen my kids since '59. Prob'ly all married by now. I was married twice, y' see." I watched him eat, hungrily but mannerly, occasionally stopping to lick his lips, or let out the low chuckle that started his piercing eyes dancing. They darted quickly to and fro, as if to take everything in at once, always revealed the sharp, wry humor that lay behind them.

"Do you miss your children?"
"No, ma'am, I s'pose I'll see them sometime. I'm always on the move. Sorta gits in your blood, y' know. I ain't got nothin' to tie me down."

He was old, how old I could not tell, for the scores of lines about his face were not the feeble wrinkles of age, but deep, strong lines, tooled by years of hard backbreaking work. He was a man of the earth, a drifter, his skin lashed by wind and rain and baked a reddish-brown by the sun.

"Have you been all over America?"
"Yes'm, been just about everyplace, 'ceptin' some of the New England states. Even been to Alaska. Did some workin' up there."

"What do you do, Mr. Wilson?"
"Do? Oh I do just about everythin'. Done some carpentry work an' some weldin', they taught me weldin' in the army. I done some farm work too. Don't like farm work. I done some railroadin'. Guess I like railroadin' best of all."

I noticed his big, strong hands with long, square fingers, the hands of a craftsman, I thought.

"I got a new cowboy hat and boots for my birthday," piped my brother.

"Cowboy hats. You looky here." He lifted up the dull gray jacket to reveal a Western belt with a huge etched silver buckle.

"See this? Got it when I was ranchin' down in Texas. I done a lot of ranchin'." He smiled, with a look of pride breaking through the humor in his eyes, as he watched my brother's delighted response.

"You like it, boy?"

"Man, that's cool!" exclaimed my brother. The old man chuckled contentedly.

"What are you going to do now, Mr. Wilson?" He had finished his meal, and was now enjoying a generous bowl of vanilla ice cream.

"I'm headin' for Rock Valley or somewhere round abouts. Saw in the paper that they're wantin' men for a constructin' job. Done some constructin' before, tarrin' roads, blacktops and other kinds."

"I hope you can get a job," I said, meaning every word. He
looked up, his eyes piercing through me, that slow friendly smile creeping across his face.

"Oh, I'll probably get somethin'. There's lotsa jobs around if you just look for 'em. You gotta be willin' to do 'em, tho'. Some of 'em jobs ain't all roses. Yeah, I'll git one. I ain't worried 'bout that. I been goin' from job to job for quite a while now. People kinda slow 'bout pickin' up folds 'round here tho'."

"There's been a murder in the town you were near. People are afraid of strangers," my mother said. We exchanged glances. "Yes'm I know. Read 'bout it in the paper in the library. Always read the papers." Leaning back, he let out a sigh, then zipped up his jacket.

"Where do you want me to take you, Mr. Wilson?" said my father. "Oh, you c'n just leave me off where you picked me up. That'll be just fine. I'm a drifter, y'know." He stood up, reached for his hat and pulled the jacket more tightly around him. "Thank you ma'am. Much obliged." With a smile and a chuckle he tipped his hat, then turned and walked out the door.

I felt a sudden urge to call him back, to tell him that he didn't have to wander anymore, that here was a home where he could find rest. But as I watched him saunter to the car, head held high, shoulders back, every inch a man, I realized that he needed to be free to follow the wind, and in a strange way, I envied him.

-Barb Weiss
Last Friday was a close friend's sixteenth birthday and I wanted it to be a special one. I had borrowed my dad's Cadillac and had made reservations at "The Chesapeake"—probably the best restaurant in town.

As we neared the building, my pace slackened. A dull gnawing pain, caused by anxiety, developed in my stomach when I observed the structure. The time-honored bricks, glowing reddish-orange from the city lights, suggested elegance and sophistication. This was not a McDonalds, nor was it a common steakhouse. My dining experiences seemed inadequate to deal with the demands of this exquisite place. I forced myself to be confident thinking that I would spoil Sue's birthday if I appeared too nervous.

A man, dressed in what I could best describe as a tux, held the door for us and we were soon greeted by an elderly woman who led us to a candle-lit table against a wall close to the far corner of the dining room. In a few minutes a younger lady, probably in her twenties, appeared with a tray from which she made our salads. Sue had a vegetable combination of chopped lettuce, sliced tomatoes, carrots and a few turnips without dressing while I decided on an ordinary salad consisting of large leaf lettuce with blue cheese dressing. The waitress then took our orders—Gulf shrimp for Sue, filet mignon for myself, and departed through a door into the kitchen. As the door swung shut, I looked around to observe the assortment of people gathered at the tables nearby. They seemed to be enjoying themselves, especially the young couples, some of them gazing at each other so intently that I wondered if they could stop long enough to eat.

When I looked up, I noticed that Sue had already begun eating her salad. I placed my napkin on my lap where it seemed awkward and heavy, so I unfolded it. It was still too thick so I shook it until it was completely unfolded, when it settled on my lap, it touched the floor on both sides of me. What an idiot! What had I done? I must have put a tablecloth on instead of a napkin. I scooted as close to the table as I could, tried to act as if nothing had happened and looked at my salad in the fancy bowl. I picked up my salad fork choosing what I thought to be a manageable piece of lettuce. The lettuce, which seemingly started out as the size of a silver dollar, grew incredibly as it left the bowl, nearly covering my face as I tried to maneuver it into my mouth. The lettuce proceeded to shower my chin as well as my legs, with its creamy blanket of blue cheese. I opened wide while trying to consume the tremendous piece of lettuce with one bite, but a tell-tale strip still hung over my lips as if waving to Sue, who sat staring...
at her placemat with a smile erupting from the corners of her tightly
drawn lips. To make things worse, when I grabbed my napkin and began
to wipe away my lumpy white beard, it created a *teppee*, the base over
my knees and coming to a point at my chin. I felt stupid and frus-
trated, I wondered why all of the people around me could enjoy their
evening while I made a fool of myself. Here I sat, being mocked by
my salad and napkin while the cool sophisticated people subtly enjoyed
my predicament. I was sure that Sue would be humiliated, but she sat
peacefully with a warm smile.

A few minutes later the food came and with it came a confidence
that the night might end up rather enjoyably. But this confidence was
short-lived. The steak was delicious although there was no ketchup
but next to Sue's plate sat a small dish of red paste. Since she
wasn't using it, I asked her if I could have some. I smeared it thickly
across my filet mignon. As I chewed my first bite, my face took on the
coloring of the paste- I had smeared my steak with shrimp sauce. How
many awkward situations could a person put himself into in one night?
I looked at my plate and decided to eat the green beans. They were,
I thought, least capable of causing more embarrassment. I carefully
selected a few small segments and pursued the difficult task of feeding
myself. In a show of blatant disrespect, a green bean dived gaily from
the fork and landed safely inside my collar. I felt it inching down
my chest and I wondered if Sue could see the small bulge creeping down
to gloat with the salad dressing on my lap. I was confused and upset,
my main concern was to give Sue a great birthday, but I was sure that
she was totally ashamed to be with me. We finished eating which I man-
aged to do without any additional upsets.

I walked Sue to the car. When we got in she asked, "Do you mind
if I tell you something?"
"Go ahead," I mumbled.
"Last week, I went out with a guy to a formal banquet. He was
really socially graceful, he knew exactly what to do and what to say;
but..."
"But what, are you trying to rub it in?"
"No, I was going to say that I had a better time with you!"
"Why?"
"Because I could tell that you cared how I felt. You were trying
to make my birthday special but all that he was trying to do was
impress me. I appreciated tonight, thanks!"

-Jim Unekis
DID YOU KNOW?

Oh, your hands, like mine, so small,
toes wiggling,
laughing, without a care.

Did you know?

At 9, you were so thoughtful, and deep.
I remember running in fields of gold with you.
Catching harmless butterflies.
Setting them free because freedom was important to you.

Did you know?

At age 12, you astonished our elders, our priests.
I didn't understand, but you did.
And yet--though you were smart and so much nicer than I--
You still loved me, and wanted me for a friend.

Did you know?  

When we were teen-agers, I drifted away from you.
Our peers said you were different--
so I ignored you.
I know that it hurt.

Did you know?

We finally grew up.
You taught me not to worry about what others thought of me--
or of you.
And--you forgave me.

Did you know?

I watched you work with wood, deeply immersed in thought.
I watched you grow uneasy and dissatisfied with your work.
You talked to your God--you called him Father.

Did you know?
At 30, you started a ministry.
You picked 12 men to help you.
I wasn't chosen-
You knew I loved you as a friend.
You knew I couldn't comprehend your mission.

Did you know?

Did you know that people would hate you--
and that three years later they would kill you?
You died--I cried!

Did you know?

Later, I heard rumors that you rose from the dead.
I wanted to believe, but I didn't.
And then--I saw you--
my same old friend--but somehow different--
somehow glorified.

Did you know?

I believed you were the Son of God, then.
Oh, you are the Son--my lifelong friend.
I'll always remember you--
and I'll tell others, too.

I'll tell them of the shop,
about the temple, the butterfly,
and about you as a baby with those
tiny hands and fingers, your perfectly shaped feet--
that were to be crushed when you grew up--
And I will tell them that

You did know.

And you did it anyway,
For all of us, because you loved us all.

Thank-you Jesus.

-Cindy Blake
MAYBE TOMORROW

God said,
"Let there be light."
Satan said,
"Let darkness prevail."
Man said,
"Eve, the sky is cloudy today,
Stay inside the cave."

–Ron Van Dyke
The red light bulb glowed in the small left backstage area. Each actor, in his own way, was preparing himself for the 4th performance of *Man of La Mancha*. Tim Staal rolled up his bullwhip; Timm Dalman checked his armor; some people were jostling each other around trying to relieve some of the tension and tame the excitement. Others found their own space and stood alone—eyes closed and concentrating. The overture began and I could feel the tautness of my body preparing me to play "Aldonza". The lights on stage slowly dimmed as the overture was ending. The actors jumped to take their places in the blackness of the stage. Since my entrance came later, I was alone in the darkness.

I waited until the eerie music began before I found my stool at the end of the stage. The director allowed me to peer around a wall during the opening scene. I carefully searched the faces of my friends on stage—familiar faces, yet now the faces of strangers. I listened to the lines that I had heard so many times in rehearsal. The words drew me into the dungeon; the dark, dusty world of the prisoners enveloped me and I found myself totally lost in the fantasy. The magic was broken by a tap on my shoulder. It was time for me to get ready for my entrance.

Somewhere in the quick business of the scene change, an unidentified person but my bowls and tray into my arms and propelled me toward the light. Pure human bewilderment and sheer fear clutched at my stomach as I took my appointed spot. But then, my breathing became slower and deeper, the tremors lessened. I took a few steps forward; I was on stage.

The mental commands sped through my head. "Remember, be loose or you'll hurt yourself when the guys throw you around. Be mean. Your character is supposed to be spiteful. I know you can do better." The pace of my speech was speeding up. Pain shot through my arm as Tim dug his fingers into my flesh. Panic, stricken, my mind sent up a silent prayer for my song to begin before Tim tore my arm off.

The song whizzed by. I made a quick exit into what seemed to be an entirely different world. It was dark. There was no excitement in the air. People whispered the latest gossip, sipped pop, and repeated their lines in the shadows. Ready to make my next entrance, I gathered my shawl and bowl, and peeped out of the curtains. Just as the curtains parted, Arlyn Coalter goosed me!

But the goose was soon forgotten. Tension hit me from the stage like a cold blast of winter wind. It was still, as though the
audience was suspended in time, or not present at all. No coughing, no shuffling feet, no programs rustling—nothing. A sudden burst of laughter broke the tautness of the moment. A welcome warmth returned to the stage.

Passing from one scene to the next, I was caught up in a whirlwind. Was time really going this fast? I bounced from one emotional high to another, but in the middle of the high came the low. My "lord, Don Quixote" was dying. It seemed so real to me. Tears came. I moved away. Shivers set in. I heard a lady from the audience sob, then only the Latin mass. Slowly, ever so slowly, the fairy tale was coming to an end. "No, please, not yet," I pleaded silently. More sniffs from the audience. "Please, stop the tears!"

I heard the first notes of the finale begin softly and grow stronger. A voice started to sing; it was my voice. One by one others joined in. The music swelled. More tears welled up in my eyes. Then the applause snapped me back into reality.

The actors left the theatre quietly, but exhausted, each touched in a very special way by the performance. Behind them they left piles of Kleenex covered with make-up. And the Kleenex and sundry articles of clothing: socks, shirts, and shoes left in the dressing room were the only evidence that the actors had been in the theatre.

The auditorium was quiet and empty. I gazed at the dark stage and desperately tried to recreate my favorite scenes.... to recapture the feeling.... but it didn't work. The magic was gone. Only the snap of lightswitch and the click of footsteps remained........

-Denise Knudsen
No muffler stilled the roar of the small orange tractor whose seat was shared by a farmer and his young son. Cultivating two rows at a time, they worked their way back and forth across a field of corn. The boy turned to gaze over the field, and bright sunlight mirrored into his eyes off the plants' rippling leaves. Against the background of freshly churned black soil their green color couldn't have been deeper. Turning forward, he watched the hills of corn pass neatly between the cultivator sweeps. He was awed at the skill his father possessed; never plowing out the hills, only the weeds. The boy watched the corn pass below. Each hill could be seen clearly—being replaced by the next as the tractor steadily moved forward. Gradually the effect became hypnotic and the hills blurred together. The engine's roar dulled and became soothing while its warmth brushed his face. Closing his eyes, he leaned against his father and fell asleep. At the end of the field, the man lifted his son from the seat. Love rushed over him as he gently laid the boy in the end rows; then climbed back on the tractor and started again across the field.

I was the boy left sleeping in those end rows. My father seldom refused my determination to accompany him, and when I tired, I napped in fields, wagons, or salebarns. As I grew older I shared in the farm work. The animals whose home was our old barn became special to me, and they played an important part in shaping my character. While milking on winter mornings, we shared warmth as I'd lean my head into their flanks. In their company many of my problems were thought through and I dreamed of the future. When dad and I did the chores together few words were spoken. It wasn't that we preferred the company of the cobweb covered radio to that of each other; each of us just knew what had to be done and did it. Mutual respect grew between a father and son who enjoyed their work and knew the other was doing the best job possible. Occasionally, the routine was disrupted. When I was fourteen one of our animals needed help. Aiding it was one of the instances which brought my father and me closer.

Trying to give birth to her second calf, a Holstein cow nervously watched dad and me standing nearby. Usually if there was trouble with calving it came with first calf heifers, but we kept watch over each cow when she came due. This one was having difficulty.

When a calf is born, both of its front hooves should appear first.
Its head will come next resting on its forelegs. Once the head has passed the rest of the body follows quite easily, trailed by the hind legs stretched straight back. But only one small hoof protruded from the vulva of this cow. We drove the animal into a stanchion and secured her head. There was only one way to find the trouble, and I knew dad didn't relish the idea. With the exuberance of youth, I took off my coat, handed it to him, and said, "I'll do it." I rolled up my right shirt sleeve. Bringing my thumb and fingertips together I inserted my hand into the cow's vulva pushing the leg back until I could push past it to feel the head and body of the calf.

"The left leg is folded back instead of straight ahead."

"Are you able to reach it?" asked dad, trying to calm the cow by rubbing her side.

"I'll try."

Now the mother's contractions were frequent and there was great pressure against the calf as she tried to expel it. She bellowed, and in that dimly lit barn I imagined all the pain in the world to be pressing against my hand. Finally—for a few seconds—the pressure relaxed. I pushed the calf back until my entire arm was inside the cow. As I grabbed for it, the misplaced leg sped from my grasp. Once more my fingertips touched it, coaxed it nearer and nearer. Until taking hold just above the hoof where the leg thickened I brought it alongside the other leg and pulled out my arm. One more push by the mother and her calf was born.

Bright purple hide shone through the black and white markings of the baby. No breathing. It had taken her too long to arrive. Quickly dad laid her on her side. Repeatedly, he gently pressed on her belly with his foot. Pulling open her mouth he blew forcibly into it several times, then returned to prodding her. A twitch crossed the soggy body. One eyelid weakly lifted. She took her first deep breath and rolled onto her belly. Mother and baby were doing fine.

"She's a nice little calf," dad remarked. I only smiled and nodded agreement.

Turned loose, the cow licked her baby dry. In less than an hour the calf struggled mightily. Resembling a fingertip push up, she raised herself, quivering higher and higher, until her legs were straight under her. One of the most precious scenes in my memory were her huge limpid eyes gazing up at us.

-Larry Van Donslear
SOMETHING ABOUT THIS ISSUE'S WRITERS...

CINDY BLAKE is a junior from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She is a religion/psychology major.

BARB DRAKE received her BA from Northwestern in 1976. She is a business administration major and now lives in Lake Mills, Iowa.

DENISE KNUDSEN, a theater/speech major, comes from Moville, Iowa. Though she is a senior this year, she will be on campus next fall to complete her student teaching.

ROBIN McINTYRE plans to major in theater and art. He is a freshman from Nappanee, Indiana.

JIM UNEKIS, a freshman, is thinking about majoring in biology. He comes from Baltimore, Maryland.

LARRY VAN DONSLEAR is a junior biology major. He commutes from Archer, Iowa.

RON VAN DYKE is a 1977 graduate from Northwestern with an English major. He now resides in Orange City and is enrolled in a few college courses.

BARB WEISS, a junior from Orange City, is a fine arts/humanities major.