



Committed

Everyday, every hour, we two pass.
 Yet, we remain faceless as before.
 The common fates that touch our lives;
 The universal emotions that we share,
 Cannot dissolve away our respective cocoons.
 You are my earthly neighbor, indispensable to me.
 So, I am committed continually to strive,
 Perhaps in vain,
 Against the echoing walls
 Of your indifference.

by Claudius L. Shonitca

You say you try so hard,
 Through saddened eyes,
 To understand
 But I can see beneath
 The shallow sad,
 The pretense shade,
 To the depth that wants
 Me to feel guilty
 And to think
 You understand

by Blythe Ann Erikson

when i've got a head cold
 i feel like i've taken a
 cheap tourist trip to Africa
 (my travel agent was a
 crooked germ from
 places unknown)
 so i'm stranded in 99°
 jungles with no Mary Ann
 to bring me orange juice
 and Bayer aspirin
 how do you go home
 with a one way ticket
 in Africa

by Lucy Kercharberger

Don't let aesthetics suffocate in the plastic bag of mediocrity, support the Lowlands Reader by submitting all sorts of creative labors. Send your poems, fiction, reviews, photography and what have you to The Nebraskan, c/o Alan Boye, Nebraskan Union, 68508.

THE LOWLANDS READER

The minister, a sketch

by Murray Stafford

They will leave soon. Leave soon for Oklahoma.

The boy thought: he has been minister here for twenty nine years too, (minister for longer then he could remember since his own life, the Baptism, and later the Confirmation, had only been for sixteen of those twenty nine) but he teaches me, he knows me I am his flock.

The dog near his feet snapped at a fly and then looked at the boy before returning its head to its paws. He jumped from the bench and walked to a window in the barn. (Autumn was outside on the grass and in the bare branches of the trees.) The dog stood up and came from the bench to the boy at the window.

The boy thinks: I do not want to think of if, only when and then only what. He leans his head against the dirty glass and watches one of the cats walk up the dirt trail to the house, thinking: I followed, I obeyed, there was praying and the new church (the dog sat down and then stood up again, watching the boy) he told me and I did then there was no longer sickness there was only goodness. The

boy turned towards the door.

(The dog followed the boy outside, and they walked on the path away from the barn and the house.)

(He thought: leaving now, going. Where can there be prayer now? The afternoon was cool, there was no sunlight and the dusty grey path looked like the trees, like the sky, and like the dead leaves over the ground.) Something moved on the side of the path and the dog bounded into the underbrush scattering the dead leaves and barking as he ran. The boy did not stop walking or even turn but only said loudly, once, "Dog." In a minute the dog appeared from beneath a bush looking at the boy walking on the trail. The dog came from the bushes and continued walking behind the boy.

(The path went on over the dried leaves and the small hills. Continuous and straight, never varying in width. Over the crest of a short hill the trail ended, that is stopped, at a large rock which was covered with moss and greyness of Autumn.)

The boy sat on the rock and the dog rested close to his feet. He is thinking now:

There is no answer when there is none to help, to tell me when to pray, how to, what to when. He watched the grey trees in the forest in front of him, thinking: I will believe he is not gone, not going. I will follow in prayer. I will make him here although gone, he will be my superior still. I must do as he says now and pray, asking for . . . humble myself too, and obey. But thinking also: He will leave soon.

(In the dust below the rock where the boy sat the two silent tears turned the grey dirt to black craters surrounded by a ridge of pale dirt and dead leaves.)

The boy examined the pale grey sky and the lifeless sterile branches above him. He was not thinking. He instinctively folded his hands for a moment and mechanically bowed his head.

He was not even thinking now as he stood up and looked back up the path. (The afternoon had become darker and and filled with harsh silence) He automatically started for the house and barn, saying as he walked another short and firm, "Dog." The dog looked at the boy before he stood up and trotted behind his unformed, unvaried pace.



photographs by Dan Ladely

Politics

"Vote for me," the overstuffed hybrid candidate begged, while intermittently ejaculating eicspectoral quomutations. "Is the nature of your platform seasonal, Nominee?" "Dear friends and members of my conspituency, the conventionalschism of this nation will undoubtedly be a main issue in this campaign. I may uncoimital concerning the emasculation of powers, but as a leader I testicalize for pubick freedom and the Evopollutionary Spirit which this glorious mastoration of libertine and sovereignty was found upon. Unity is at the most imparitive in the needs of the country." All were astonished, because the bowels of one man's jurisprudence were at least emptied.

by Bob Clemmer