

Student opts for short fiction

Timothy Schaffert, a senior English major, will attend the University of Arizona graduate program in fine arts. Schaffert is from Aurora.

An excerpt from *Tumbling After*, a story set in a small Midwestern town in 1947.

The minister was nervous and inexperienced. He had been reading his notes from recipe cards as he spoke softly, almost conversationally, to the family of the deceased. The previous minister, with his old ideas and methods, might have taken advantage of the facts of the death—Whitey McKeelen's drunkenness that led to the car turning over and killing him and the prostitute at his side. The old man would have shaken the pulpit, screaming of Misspent Youth. But the new minister, with his lightly stubbled chin and crooked tie, spoke quietly of sad irony—how sad it was that Whitey, after surviving the jungles and swamps of the South Pacific, should die on an old back road he had traveled hundreds of times in his twenty-some years.

The old woman, her pin curls drooping and loosening in the sweat of her forehead, stood from the pew and collapsed in the aisle. "I think I'll be sick," she told her husband, and she brought a handkerchief to her mouth as he led her from the front.

The church wasn't full. The people there were the same ones that went to all the funerals. The only family members of Whitey

McKeelen were five people who had been seated in the front row, and the parents had just stumbled out. The reverend cleared his throat and addressed his comfort to the sister and the brother and the brother's wife.

It had been turning spring and the days were hot, the nights cold, and everyone had difficulty adjusting. During the service, women would take their straw hats wired with flowers from their damp twisted hair. The men would reach up and pluck at their shirts that stuck to patches of sweat at their chests and beneath their arms. The air was tiredly pushed about by hand-held paper fans, some with oriental designs, others with violets and pink breasted birds.

Shortly after the minister had started in again about the tragedy of it all, the sister stood, her hands at her stomach, and she, too, left. The minister cleared his throat and looked toward the brother and the wife, only to watch them rise, looking more bored than distressed or sick, and go after the rest of the family. An awkward silence fell, and when the minister started speaking again, he stuttered and his voice cracked and he dropped his recipe cards. The organist, her back usually to the congregation, the clasps of her corset visible through her thin dress, helped him to collect his sermon. Once everything was together again, he redirected his words from the empty family pew to the rest of the funeral-goers.

The sermon, dull to begin with, was made worse by the reverend's

flat, nasal-twanged voice. The turning of the thin pages of a hymn book sent a light wisping and snapping sound through the church. The sermon ended when the minister lost his train of thought. Then one of Bea Tooley's many ugly children stood to sing *The Old Rugged Cross* in a voice as harsh and slashing as an eighty-year-old woman's. But she did sing loudly, and she enunciated.

Evan Peevy usually avoided church. The drifting scent of altar-strewn flowers mixing with the thick smells of old lady perfume and pipe-smoke infested suit coats made his stomach churn. But he attended Whitey McKeelen's funeral hoping to relieve himself of a recent, somewhat burdening, pre-occupation with death.

Evan was nearly ten years older than Whitey, so he hadn't known him well, just from the poolhall. But the news of the death had still been upsetting. There had been many nights that Evan had driven

See SHORT on 11

Aloha Nail Salon



FREE*

Full set of nails or fill-in.

Call for details on how to qualify.

423-2134

*Certain restrictions apply.

★ **Easy Street** ★

Sat., April 20
8:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m.
at

Starlite Ballroom

3 1/2 miles west of
★ **Wahoo, Nebraska** ★
Country, Soft Rock, Polka

★
Sunday, April 21
Earnie Kucera

6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
★



plump tomato pizza co.

On Campus . In the ReUnion
Open until 12:00 AM - 7 days a week

477-6122 FREE DELIVERY (\$4.00 min.)

Large 16" Cheese Pizza. **COME TAKE A STUDY BREAK!**
Single slice of pizza,
garlic roll-up & reg. drink

\$7.99

each, and topping .75¢

\$2.49

LAWLOR'S SPORTING GOODS

VISIT OUR NEWLY EXPANDED WATER SPORTS DEPARTMENT!

For the ultimate selection of water skis, kneeboards, wetsuits, swimwear, vests and the latest water toys at mail order prices.

•HO TECH SERIES

•STRAIGHT LINE

•O'BRIEN/LaPOINT

•CLINCHER

•NIKE AQUA GEAR

•SPEEDO

•HYDROSLIDE

•CASAD

•CONNELLY

•EAGLE

•SKURFER

•O'NEIL

•KIDDER

AND MORE!

SALES - SERVICE - RENTALS

LINCOLN

1118 "O" Street
(402)477-4477

Gateway Shopping Center
164 Gallery Mall
(402)466-1941

We're Great Sports!

LAWLOR'S
SPORTING GOODS

OMAHA

Westroads Shopping Center
1000 California Street
(402)399-8809

140th & West Center
(402)330-1077



Michelle Paulman/Daily Nebraskan

Stacy Collingham, a senior art major, works on her latest painting in Richards Hall. Another of her works, "Stephanie," sits in the background. Collingham is the 1991 recipient of the Francis William Vreeland Award in art.