

Department: The Promethean, Spring 1999

# *The Promethean*

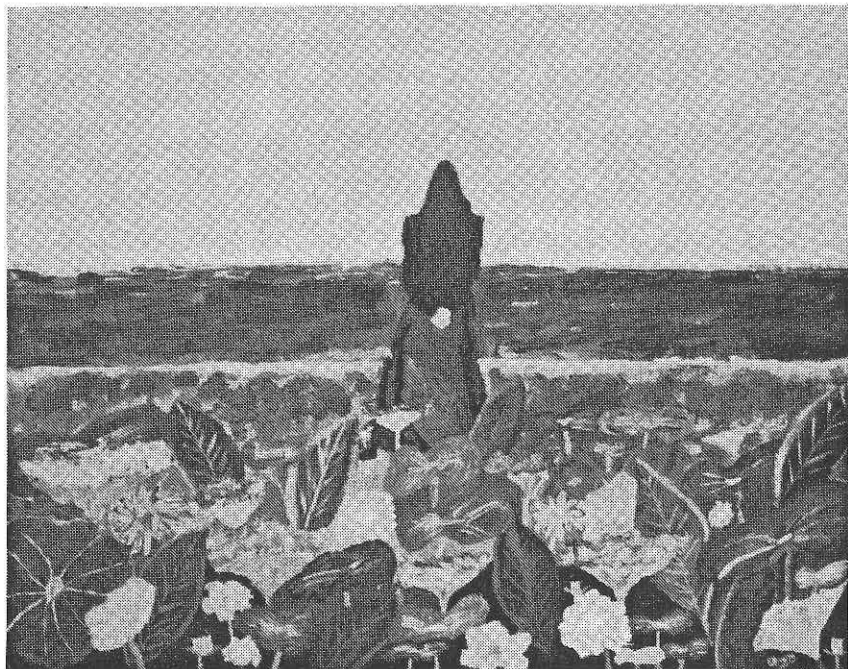


## **Spring 1999**

Concordia University

Portland, Oregon

# *The Promethean*



## Contemplation \_\_\_\_\_ *Linda Shan*

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## Death to the Conformists

**D**eath to the conformists  
the useless, narrow-minded sheep  
those who march in lines and hush their voices  
damned by similarities  
their wasteful, corrupt minds  
who frown on the untamed  
whose chins drop at abnormalities  
surviving by the guilt bestowed on them by self-image  
not one original or genuine contemplation

death to the conformists  
whose heads are turned by distinctions  
their existence creates masked deception  
selling their souls for acceptance  
to fit in the crowd of manipulation  
living by submission and false conversion  
they degrade the human race  
obtaining opinions through the glossy pages  
that mass of hypocrites  
their dogma be their wardrobe  
their bible be their garments  
robes of deceit and intoxication of the self

death to the conformists  
living by the codes of approval  
thoughts consumed by dense judgment  
they condemn the demure and denounce the diverse  
focusing on the surface, rejecting the inside

death to the conformists

---

Jillian Meredith Olsen

## Secrets of Darkness

A sixty-paced assertion lifted by vines,  
Accosted by odors left by rabid bats.  
Absence of light, utter darkness,  
Voices of ancient lives confronting  
Speaking of three millennia past.

Trembling, trepidation, possession,  
On through vales of possessed feelings.  
Corridors deepening  
Up, Up, sixty more paces  
Through caverns to revelations of living.  
The dark voices of Mayas cried!

Chosen bearer,  
A society left trusting  
Many pots with secrets hidden  
Searching for breath—expanded reason—  
The end of a civilization  
Left on a ledge suspended  
For generations coming.

That day out of hiding  
Our history,  
Maya.

---

Tim Tanner

## Empty Sockets

empty sockets eyes  
aint beautiful  
never seen no red  
orange  
yellow  
green  
blue notes never touched her  
ears  
corn  
rows  
catch the rhythm  
the rusty hinge  
limp  
wind  
touches every  
window  
four-square framin'  
her face her mothers  
ghost resides  
fathers  
face  
angry  
with tremblin' hands  
misused to abuse cuppin'  
the rain  
she swallows  
the beatin' rain  
rap - tap  
the beatin' rain  
slap  
a fountain of youth

---

Donovan Riley

## Perceive

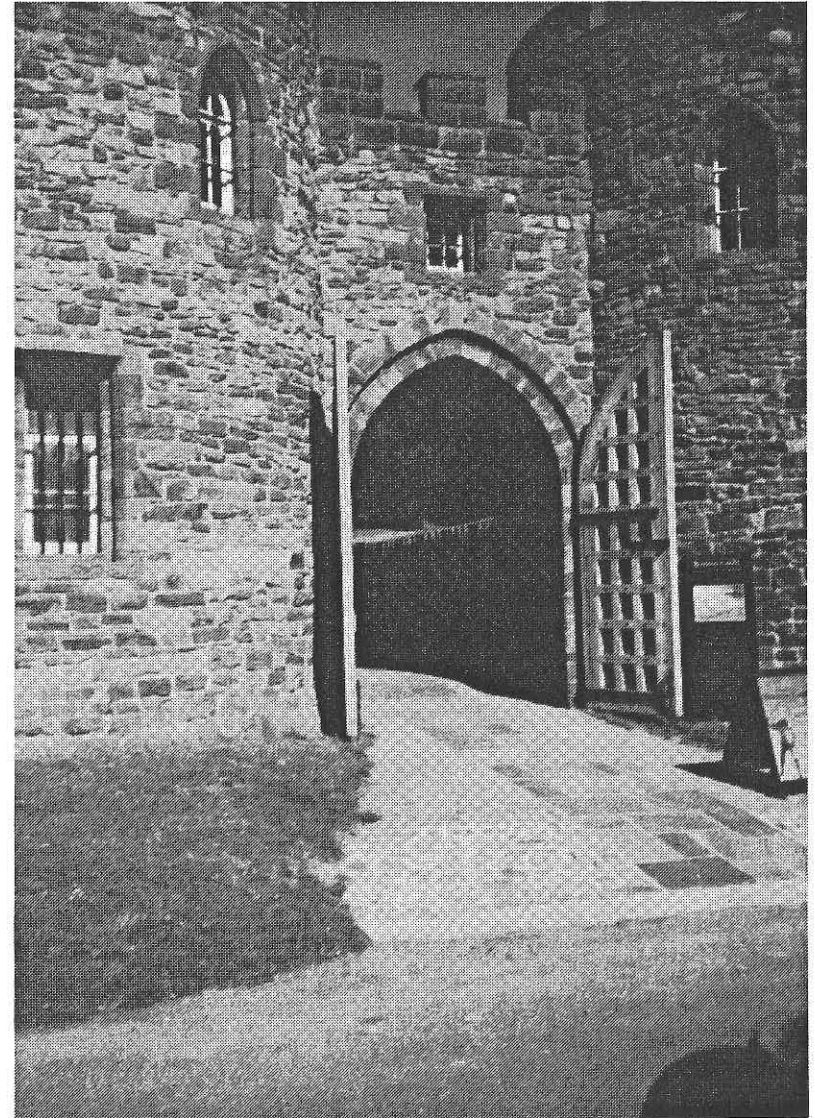
**N**ot stunning beauty  
or popularity  
But something  
luminous, living  
Something not in  
talents and successes  
But essence of an  
existent soul

Penetrating walls of  
deservedness, solitude  
Comforting with  
unspoken voice  
Declaring God's  
guiding presence

Assuredness, peculiar  
yet utterly defined  
Excitement in a  
quiet servitude  
Brilliant light  
blazing, proclaiming  
peace, eternal life

---

Kara G. Gsell



Open Gates \_\_\_\_\_ David Duvall



## Hope through an Empty Pack

**T**he world never shined its light too heavily upon his face, and the dark aspect of this earth greeted him every day with a wicked grin. There was nothing that could steer him away from the eyes of those who chose to persecute, there was no hole that was deep enough to hide in forever. So he went about his business, following his nose deeper and deeper into depravity and vice. Blurring the sharp edges of human relationships with complex chemicals and starving his core that ached for love and even the most miniscule shred of humanity. But humanity too long forgotten or denied becomes humanity lost. Continuing on his self-destructive path, the man never turned, never looked too hard for a way out of his vicious circle of pain and deceit. He got lost somewhere in the middle world between Hell and Earth, and his story was a story of pain and woe.

And maybe redemption as well, but that's up to you to decide ...

It was the second Tuesday of the month again, and waking up was always the hardest part of the day for Jacob. Instead of being reaffirmed of the value and worth of being alive for another day, gloom settled over the outskirts of his soul. He reached up onto his nightstand and grabbed for his pack of Lucky Strikes, shook it once, and, hearing nothing, reached inside. His probing fingers touched nothing but air and the sides of the box. His addiction got him to his feet, and he picked up his clothes that were strewn in a haphazard pile on the ground. After donning his gear sufficiently to go outside into the world, he opened his door and began his walk to the nearest store.

The chill biting air of a crisp September morning shocked Jacob's system, and he bundled his clothes a little bit tighter around him. He looked at the gray sky above and wondered if the sun still existed and if the day even had a right to be called such. The store was about a mile away, and the walk was a much-needed respite from the inactivity of the past evening. He had spent all evening smoking joints and watching bad TV just to deaden the realization

of the inadequacy of his life. But every morning, his life as it was stared at him straight in the eye through the mirror. Unkempt, unloved, unneeded in a world that used him like a gear in some malevolent machine. As his walk continued, his muscles grew sore from the depravations of the previous night. Drugs used to fill a void that only grew with their continued use until the void became a permanent, and all the drugs could do was dull it temporarily. He trudged on, his inner monologue a stream of discomfort and self-loathing.

He got to the store, and looking in he saw a face he had become familiar with over the countless cigarette runs that occurred in a very regular pattern. Man is a creature of habit, and habits have a strange way of becoming life. Instead of new ideas and experiences every day, there is only the repetition of old ideas and experiences, until life becomes a comfortable haze to drift through. For Jacob, life had become a pattern of comfortable and meaningless actions in a set order. Get up, throw on clothes, buy cigarettes, go to work, come home, fill his body with mind-numbing chemicals, watch television, sleep. Go through that every day, with a thousand other smaller habits and patterns thrown in, until life becomes so predictable that one can outrun the meaninglessness. That was and is the theory, and maybe it works, at least for a while. Sooner or later though, the pattern becomes the integral part of the depression and self-pity, but once one is locked in, it might be too late to change ... it might be. But sometimes the hand is forced.

He said his usual "Hello" to a somewhat attractive, middle-aged woman behind the counter; her nametag read "Sally," but Jacob called her Sal—half because it was one less syllable to utter, and half because he figured since he saw her every day he should become more personable with her. He moved to the counter, half-looked at Sal, and half-looked away from her and pointed towards the Lucky Strikes, saying "the usual" as he did so. She didn't respond and was focused—tension readily apparent in her face—on something over his right shoulder. Jacob heard quick footsteps and turned to face a man all in black, with some brand of menacing pistol clenched in his hand. Jacob heard, "Get on the floor,

now, or I swear I will shoot you! Do you believe me?" Jacob nodded but didn't drop to the ground. Instead, he said, "Go for it, kill me, do you think it really matters to me? Alive or dead is hardly a distinction anymore. Shoot me if you want to." Through his black stocking mask, the gunman's eyes widened, then narrowed to little slits. As the gunman's finger tensed on the trigger, Jacob jerked his head quickly to the side ...

# BANG!

Jacob felt a concussive force of great proportion on the left side of his forehead, waves of intense pain filled his mind, and blood flowed down into his left eye. As he dropped toward the ground, he saw the world through a red filter and heard only faintly through the roar of the pain that filled his mind. The gunman looked down at him with wide-eyed fear and then quickly pointed his gun at Sally. "Open that f\*\*\*ing cash register now, b\*\*\*h, or I'll kill you too—do you believe me? Huh, do you f\*\*\*ing believe me?!!!" Sal nodded, wide-eyed in fear and with shaking hands reached down and pushed the release button on the cash register. Pulling out wads of tens and twenties, she handed them to the gunman with as much speed as she could muster in her state of petrified shock.

Jacob looked up towards the face of Sal and felt something that he had hidden in himself, something he had buried for most of his life. He felt emotion, actually a veritable stew of emotions. At the foreground of his mind, anger burned towards this man who would threaten people with death for a small pile of green paper. From his prone position on the ground, he kicked the side of the gunman's knee with all the force he could muster. There was a small pop and a quick tearing noise as the man's knee bent inwards at an angle that it never had before. As his knee buckled, the gunman fell to the ground beside Jacob, and his gun slipped out of his hand and skidded across the floor, coming to a sudden stop against the bottom of a display case. Clutching his useless

knee, the gunman began to crawl towards it, pulling himself with his hands.

Jacob was filled with adrenaline, and his rage cast even more of a red haze to his vision. Staggering to his feet, he stood over the crawling gunman, then stomped down with all his force on the back of his outstretched neck. The gunman stopped moving, his arms and legs twitching, and blood began to spread outwards in a semi-circle from where his nose must have been. Jacob felt for a pulse and found one, albeit a weak one, and felt relief that he had not killed him. He turned to Sal and said, "You should probably call the police, then could you get me my pack of Lucky Strikes?" Sal nodded, handed him a pack and reached behind the counter and gave him a clean towel, then dialed the police.

Feeling the shape of the pack in his hands, Jacob opened it and pulled one out, squatted down, leaning against the counter and lit his cigarette, looking at the prone body in front of him. He inhaled slowly, at the same time pressing the towel against the gunshot wound across his temple and tried to get ahold of himself. He heard Sal's voice over his head and behind him, saying, "Ya know, those things'll kill ya." Jacob laughed a deep laugh, a laugh that had not been a part of his life for a long time, and said, "Yeah, they probably will." He sat down on the ground and in the most unlikely of circumstances, and in the most unlikely of times, waiting for the police to arrive, with a gunshot wound over his eye and a cigarette in his hand, and laughing, he began to feel hope.

---

Michael Schultz

## Remembered Knowledge

**W**e're all having them  
These near life experiences  
All of life is a mirror  
A shadowy conspicuous absence  
What is truth? Their faces scream  
Locked inside their hollow dream

Take your chances  
Consider the risk  
Clutch your masks  
Remember what you know ...

Tomorrow's promised?  
Foolish assumption  
Lies are guarded  
Truth discarded  
You make another notch on the log  
Could be your last  
Reach out from within your fog  
Remember what you know ...

---

Tim Winterstein

## The Stranger

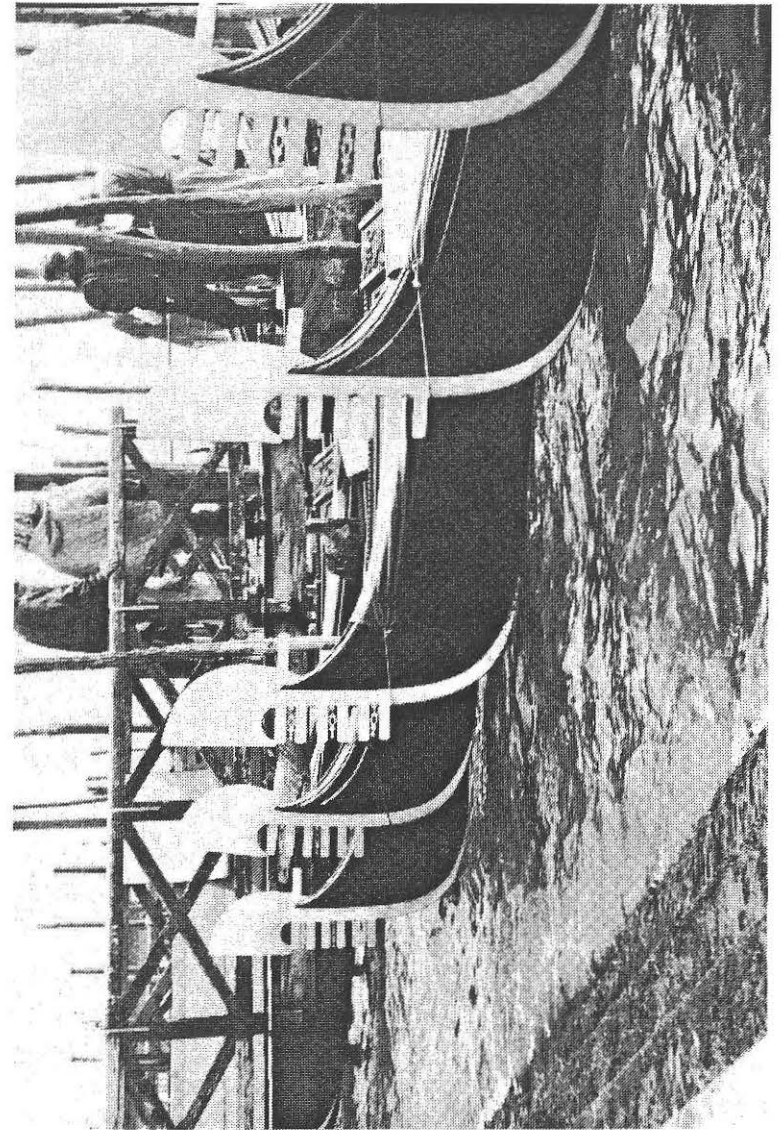
**I** am the invisible man.  
I enter and exit rooms unnoticed.  
I silently watch as others greet one another and  
Laugh and cry while personal stories are told.  
I simply sit in the corner and mind my own business.  
Nobody bothers talking to me,  
No greetings, no "how do you do's."  
I am that guy in the back of the room  
That no one cares about.  
God's love as expressed to others  
Is never expressed to me.  
How can I talk to others  
When no one shows me how it's done?  
How can "Christians" claim to love God and love others  
When no love or concern is shown to a stranger like me?  
How will I ever learn of God when all I see  
Is the inhospitality of Christians?  
Love seems to be a false front for discrimination.  
God seems to be an excuse for the way you neglect me.  
Christianity appears to be a title given to religious hypocrisy.  
Your religion teaches you to love all people without  
discrimination.  
Your God commanded you to make disciples of all  
nations.  
And here I am  
Waiting to hear the good news of Christ  
And to feel God's love for me through the concern of  
others.  
But you never see me or say hello.  
I sit in your humanities class.



I see you in the lunchroom.  
I pass by you in Luther Hall and in the quad.  
You never bother to nod your head  
Or to simply give a courteous smile as you walk by.  
Because you are too scared to talk to me,  
I will never truly learn of Christ.  
But when you neglect me  
And refuse to show kindness,  
I'm not sure I really want to know Christ.  
It is time to stop talking about the love of Christ  
And start showing it.

---

Jonathan Dressler



Grand Canal \_\_\_\_\_ Lorin Schmit Dunlop

## The Painting of Our Old Front Yard

**A**ll is as it was, the sunlight making it beautiful.  
There's the edge of the roof of the doghouse,  
where puppies were born  
that grew to doghood, had puppies of their own, and died.  
And that's the bush where a little snake once spent the  
summer,  
and my daughter let it bite her on the finger,  
such a gentle bite, a sort of "hello" of a bite.

I know that below the lower edge of the painting are  
flagstones,  
cold under bare feet on a summer morning, warm on a  
summer evening;  
that around that clump of trees is a home where a crazy  
family once lived,  
and farther on down the road another one where a crazy  
family still lives,  
and in fact, every one there was crazy, and so were we.

But the children, the puppies, the flagstones, the sun,  
the snake,  
were beautiful and good, and will always, always be good  
and beautiful;  
will always, always, be beautiful and good.

---

Stephanie Hughes

## 27<sup>th</sup> and Lombard

**S**taring at a bright red arrow  
Pointing left  
I wait for green to come

Scattered gray clouds  
Like torn tulle  
Waft gently upwards

Longings live in me,  
Unruly beasts  
Suffocating for a breath of air

Mrs. Dalloway was right:  
It is dangerous to live  
Even one day



Dangerously exciting  
Dull-sad-sweet  
To wait for this signal

---

Suzanne Smith

# **I Am (a poem in three parts)**

## *1. Contradiction*




 am ice encasing fire  
always melting never extinguished  
 i am passion afraid  
coming out to the open kills

i am fear  
and i don't care  
i am contradiction  
that never destroys

i am love  
that fears rejection  
i am indifference  
always rejecting

i am contradiction  
yet I AM  
and what I AM  
is me ...

## *2. Purpose*




 am fire  
 who is running out of fuel  
 a lover  
who has none to love

i am many  
in the mind of one  
each its part  
and part of each

i am remorseless  
i feel no pain nor pity  
i am tenderness  
who cries at a friend's sorrow

i am a hider  
hiding from the pain  
the sorrow the misery  
but i am a bottle about to shatter

## *3. Faces*

 am a child  
 in the body of age  
 i grew too fast  
and want to reclaim the past

i am wise  
yet from what i absorb  
i am a sponge  
soaking in the essence of surroundings

i am rebellion  
tired of authority  
wanting to run  
but held to stay

I AM me  
a collection of wholes  
I AM me  
a contradiction of all I AM

---

Phoenix

## Lady at the Park

**L**ady at the Park  
I see you so often  
Walking tenderly  
Your quick, light step  
Once so beautiful  
You lost your cares  
Did someone hurt you too?  
What do you live for?  
Who do you wait for?

Lady at the Park  
Your face so solemn  
That searching glance  
With fear behind your eyes  
That peculiar stare  
Who are you?  
You intrigue me  
I want to know your name

Lady at the Park  
Though I don't even know you  
I long to understand  
I need to know about you  
And shake your soft, sweet hand

Lady at the Park

---

Jillian Meredith Olsen

## Portland Woman, 74, Dies After Being Hit in Crosswalk

News headlines.  
Succinct  
Precise.

Essence of an article.  
But do these  
Nine words capture ...

The beauty  
Of ruby-red  
Fingernails.

The taste of  
Fresh-baked rolls,  
Freezer jam,  
And fudge.

The joy in playing  
Putt-putt and  
Feeding  
Squirrels.

The fit of  
Carefully-crafted,  
Hip new  
Barbie outfits.

Cheers and  
Support  
At ball games  
And recitals.

The box of  
Imagination and  
Dress-up clothes.

Rainy afternoons  
With Nancy Drew  
And The Bobbsey Twins.

Longing for  
Reubens  
And  
Roses.

The never-ceasing  
Flash of the camera—

Snap-shots of a vibrant heart,  
Pulsating in time  
Spent with

Lillian Zelinka.  
Portland Woman.  
74.

Alive in me—  
Koty Zelinka.  
Granddaughter.  
23.

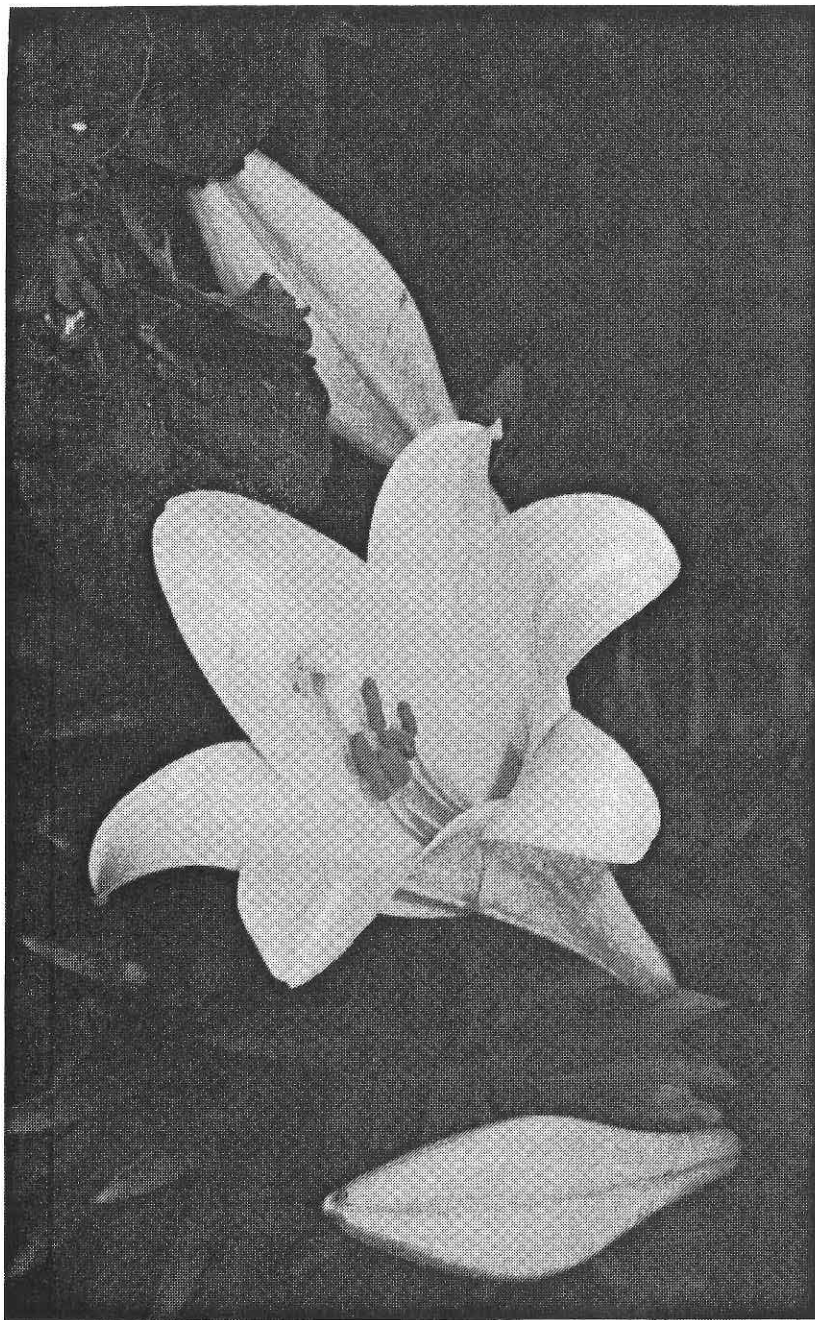
Third-grade reading level.  
Split-second attention spans.

Newspapers keep it short.  
I prefer the details ...

*In memory of my Gramma Lillian.  
Here's your poem.*

---

Koty Zelinka



Lily \_\_\_\_\_ Ayako Watanabe

## Born Anew

**T**he Lone tree rises before me, its branches forever pointing eastward as if proclaiming that no matter how often the sun sets it will rise once more. The green grass of the meadow sways gently, coaxed into motion by a gentle midday breeze. Alone, out of place and yet at the same time more belonging than anything else, stands a steel drum, old and weathered. Burning from within is a fire that proclaims its own beauty, burning vigorously and fueled by something my eyes cannot see, yet my spirit knows of its presence. Its golden glow radiates warmly and brightly from holes that have developed in the sides of the drum, as if the fire were trying to break out of the container and brighten the whole meadow. I sit up against the tree, confused by the sight before me, trying to comprehend this eternal flame that burns from no source my eyes can see. For days, I have kept vigilant watch over this anomaly, afraid to approach and somehow knowing that fear was unnecessary.

Then one day the clouds come, and I think to myself, "If it rains, surely the fire will be put out and all my questions left unanswered." And it does begin to rain, but to my surprise the fire does not go out. The rains come and come, and the fire burns and burns, and without shelter my clothes are drenched and a chill enters my bones. No longer fearing the fire but deciding to seek out warmth, my body moves slowly toward the flame, struggling against aching knees and sore feet, and muscles that want to collapse—warmth is the priority. So I trudge forward, and as I do, I notice how the rain increases and shifts so as to come directly into my eyes, blinding me and keeping me from the warmth that will save me. No longer able to go on my own, I collapse and weep, knowing the death that now awaits me.

Out of nowhere, a hand comes forth, beckoning me to take hold. I cannot see the face of him who owns the hand, yet love radiates from him who beckons, a love I've never known and always have known, and without hesitation I reach for the hand. Grabbing onto it, my strength fades, and I no longer hold myself up, but the



owner of this hand, which gentleness fails to describe, gives me my strength. I allow myself to be carried, not knowing where I am going but trusting this person to take me to the warmth that my bones now cry out for.

Suddenly the rain ceases, and I find myself in the presence of a warmth that removes all chills from my body. I open my eyes and find myself staring into the face of a man who shines with an indescribable beauty, and I have no need to ask his name, because his name is that which is inscribed in all like the mark of a maker. I fall on my knees and bury my face in the grass, afraid to kiss even that because of my unworthiness.

This, though, the man does not allow to continue, but instead picks me up, producing a bowl with perfect water, and begins to wash me clean. He then takes me to the fire and guides me into it: I am unafraid because I can do nothing but trust this man. As I enter the fire, only warmth consumes me; not anything is burned on me, not a hair on my head is burned. I can feel the warmth seep inside of me, and I invite it, call out for it, and am overjoyed for it.

Then my rescuer, my savior, speaks to me. "Why do you continue to carry that burden on your back? Is it not enough that you battle the rain, that you should continue to carry that bag?"

I look, and there upon my back is a bag of such immensity that I know not what to do with it.

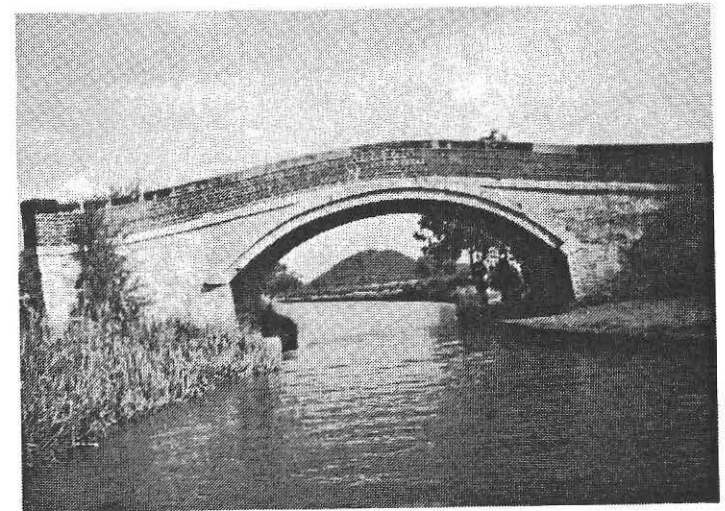
"Give it to me," the man says, and I hand it over. He opens it, and inside is all of my dirtiness, and I find myself unable to be in the man's presence any longer, so I begin to turn in shame. But before I can, his hand stops me, and looking into his face I am again perplexed, because I find him smiling on me in warmth. Still smiling, he turns, and there on his back is the same bag as the one I was wearing, filled with the same dirt. Before I can ask, I notice that coming up from underneath the bag is a wooden cross, and upon it many other bags, some of which I recognize, many of which I do not. And there upon his hands I notice two holes the size of stakes, and in his side another hole. He turns back to me, smiling, and everything disappears again, to be replaced by the face of beauty

that had first appeared to me. "What you have seen is what I have already gone through that you might not, that you might become a new creation through the fire and the water. I have already borne upon my back your bag and the bags of all others so that they too may receive the same gift as you. So I call you to go and tell this to all others that they may also feel as you do. And when you see others straying, go to them and lead them back, knowing that not you but I am doing the work. This day you have been born anew—remember this place when you need to see me."

And before me another marvelous sight—my bag, with all its dirt, thrown by the man into the fire, where it is consumed in a blue fire of holiness. And as it burns, I hear the cry of the loser, the one destined to lose, and I look at the man in fear, knowing that the loser would once again attempt to give me bags of dirt. As I look at the man, he smiles at me and takes my hand in his. "No, you will not ever have to walk on step of this alone." Off we walk, following the pointing branches of the tree, searching for those the rain continues to pour on—those who have not yet been warmed by the fire.

---

John Murray



Bridge

David Duvall

## Fall Consciousness

**1** Giving thanks and Christmastime  
Holding hands and letting time pass us by  
Let's take a walk just you and I  
And watch the oranges and browns and yellows  
conquering the green  
As the leaves settle beneath our feet  
Forget the world; lose sight of worries  
We can just walk and talk and sit awhile  
And not do anything but watch  
That kind of freedom is hard to catch

But we don't even have to talk  
Sit and be; disremember the clock  
A wooden bench in a quiet park  
The leaves fallen but one or two  
It's a good chill, snow is coming  
Ruby'd cheeks and mittened hands  
Lovers walk by lost with each other  
Strange if we were the only two  
Left in the world

All I want from you  
Is to hold my hand  
And be lost with me  
Inside my fall consciousness  
Fall with me

**2** Have you seen the clouds rolling in?  
Thick and dark and menacing?  
The wind blows down  
It's cold but I don't care  
I'm warmed by you  
There's something about the way the rain comes  
On us like a blanket of liquid sunshine  
Straight from the Hand of God  
His promises span the sky  
You lean against me and you sigh  
I am silent but you know I listen  
The raindrops like tiny shards of glass glisten  
And gleam, dancing on my eyes

Autumnal sounds give way to iciclicity  
Iciclicity delays  
Time passes us by  
The fall consciousness decays  
Sings you an autumnal lullaby

That look in your eyes  
The warmth of your glance  
Kisses my heart undulates and oscillates  
This fall consciousness soonly dies  
Once again upon the bench

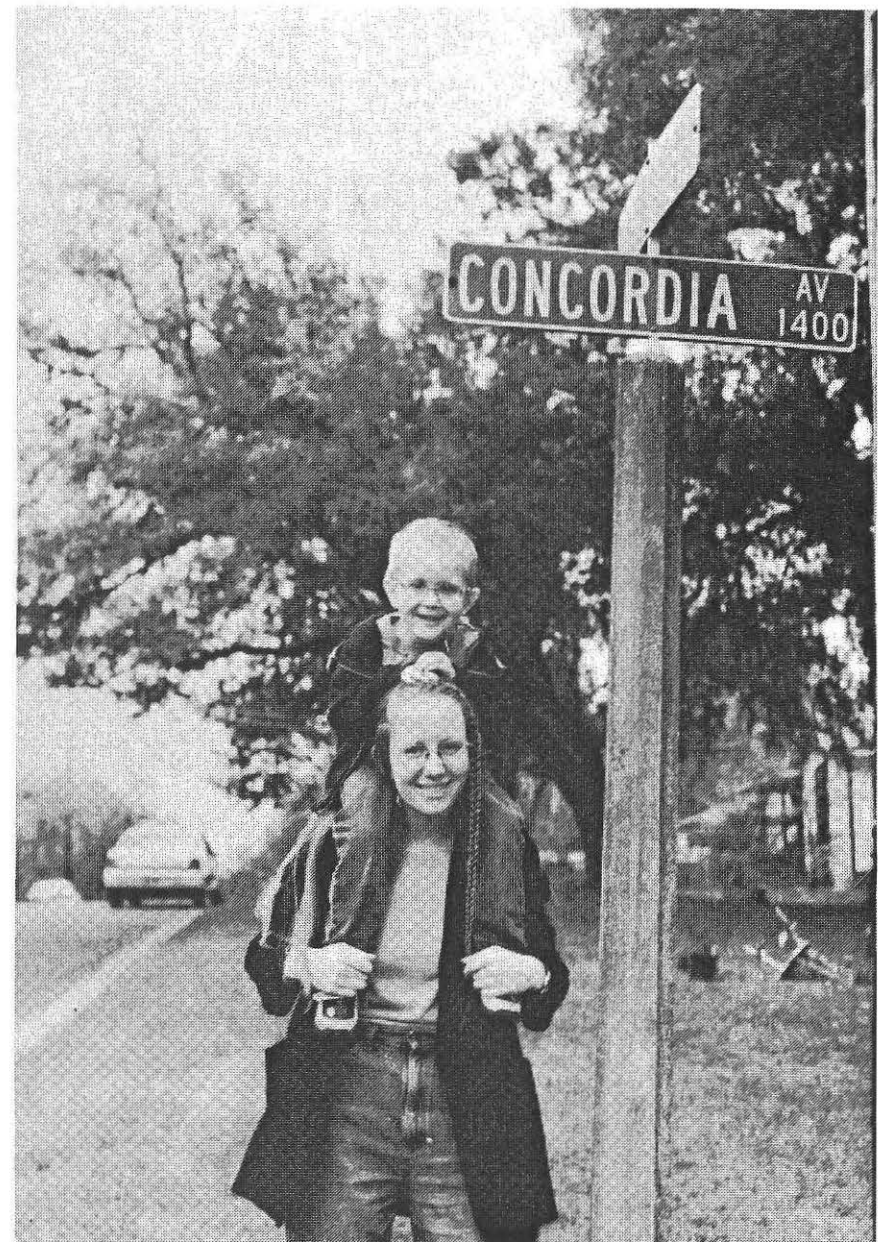
3 Once again upon the bench  
Frozen with approaching Winter  
Cold as fists clenched  
Around an absence  
Myself alone now  
You have gone  
And left me under a single cloud

A single snowflake falls and dies  
Upon the harsh wet ground  
Another solitary descends on me  
I hold it in my hand without a sound  
And then the stone-gray sheet above me is opened  
Tens of millions of tiny crystals kissing my face and  
hands  
I watch them fall through the neon of the closest  
streetlight  
I look up and I'm flying through space  
I remember you in my fall consciousness now gone  
I'll be waiting for your kiss upon my face

I keep your whisper next to my keys  
It's as soft as the summer breeze  
Coming to melt the snow and bring you back  
Springing my fall consciousness upon me again

---

Tim Winterstein



Home away from Home: Austin, Texas

---

Windell Oskay

## About the Contributors

**Jonathan Dressler** is a sophomore in Elementary Education/ Professional Church Work. He is from Fair Oaks, California.

**Lorin Schmit Dunlop** has traveled the world admiring its art and architecture, which is the focus of her photography.

**David Duvall** is a Biology major at Concordia and is also on the staff of The Promethean.

**Kara G. Gsell** plans to become a high school language arts teacher. It is her desire to use her passion for writing and literature in order to reach her students.

**Stephanie Hughes** is studying Humanities and Literature at Concordia. She is the editor of The Oxfordian.

**John Murray** is a pre-seminary major. His short story is dedicated to the Lord and to Jennelle, his two greatest inspirations.

**Jillian Olsen** thanks her mom and dad for never condemning her expression and letting it blossom.

**Windell Oskay** is a graduate student in the Department of Physics at the University of Texas at Austin. Windell has published, performed and dabbled in various artistic, musical and literary endeavors. His connections to Concordia vary from his proximity to the Austin campus to the subjects of his photography. Finally, it would not do to mention Windell without at least a passing reference to coffee.

**Phoenix** is the nom de plume of a Concordia student.

**Donovan Riley** is a pre-seminary student preparing for entrance into the seminary this summer. He hopes to work in the inner city and prepare for missionary service in the U.S. and abroad.

**Nicole LaPage Schluter** is a liberal arts major from Olympia, Washington, who works as an aspiring artist.

**Michael Schultz** spends his free time chasing squirrels and generally making a nuisance of himself. He has been a regular contributor to The Promethean.

**Linda Shan** is a Biology major from Seaside, Oregon. This is her first effort at painting.

**Suzanne Smith** is a senior English major who loves playing piano, riding trains in Great Britain, and doing anything with her twin sister.

**Tim Tanner** spent the last 30 years in Belize, Central America. Six years were spent as a tiger hunter, the rest as a missionary. He is now working on his English degree at Concordia.

**Ayako Watanabe** is a junior Psychology major and a regular contributor to The Promethean with her photography.

**Tim Winterstein** is on the Apostolic Ministries track of the Pre-Seminary program at Concordia. He was recently seen in "Romeo and Juliet." Job 19:25-27.

**Koty Zelinka** is a 1998 graduate of Concordia in Secondary Education-Language Arts. She is currently working in admissions as a counselor and seeking a teaching job for next year. Koty has had essays and poems published in past issues of The Promethean, and she greatly enjoys writing both poetry and prose in her spare time. She eventually hopes to pursue a Master's in English Literature, focusing on minority and women's genres.