

# children churches & daddies

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the 12 year  
anniversary  
issue

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children  
churches & daddies

children  
churches  
& daddies

the **unreligions, nonfamily-oriented**  
literary & art magazine (12 years running)

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a collage of high rises,  
Shanghai, China, March 1004**

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## the boss lady's editorial

### When Does Life Begin?

I never want to bring this topic up. Everyone seems to have an opinion on it, and no one wants to believe in views from the other side.

Wait, I should probably explain what I'm talking about here. When I listen to talk radio, I hear Republicans all for the death penalty (I won't go there), but they are so against abortion. They find a way to justify killing something that has been alive and has done something wrong, but they can't justify stopping a fetus — a collection of cells, in the first trimester — from coming to term and becoming a full-fledged life (even if they can't get food, they can at least breathe on their own). Now, the only reason I could guess these people think abortion is wrong is because people believe that a fetus (which cannot live on its own) has more rights than a living female human being, so it should to tax its host — I mean, potential mother — until it can become a life.

Oh, wait, that's what people argue about. When does it become a life.



Wow, I was just so slanted with all of that. And the thing is, no one can really talk about how they feel about the subject of abortion, because everyone will use religion as their foundation, or personal experience from something traumatic happening to them, and everyone gets quite heated about the subject.

I know where I stand, but I can't just go around ranting about my beliefs and expect everyone to understand and accept my views. And I know that if we want to talk about this topic, I can't let me personal biases get in the way of rational thought. So, I better start looking for the history of all of this, and get some facts and evidence to get to the heart of this matter.

First things first, the concept of abortions isn't new.

Abortion induced by herbs or manipulation was used as a form of birth control in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome and probably earlier. Abortions were common in the Greco-Roman world in which Hippocrates lived, even if the Hippocratic oath states that no assistance should be given to women who choose the end their pregnancy. Fast forward to the Middle Ages in Western Europe: abortion was generally accepted in the early months of pregnancy. However, in the 19th century,

opinion about abortion changed. Abortion laws began to appear in the 1820s in the US, forbidding abortion after the fourth month of pregnancy (similar to the middle ages...). In 1869 the Roman Catholic Church prohibited abortion under any circumstances, and most abortions in the US had been outlawed by 1900. Since then, and since abortion practices have been safer for the woman's health, attitudes toward abortion grew more liberal in the 20th century. By the 1970s, abortion had been legalized in most European countries, the United States and Japan. Since the 1973 Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* ruling, several state legislatures passed restrictive abortion laws in hope that the Supreme Court would overturn *Roe v. Wade*, but in 1992 the court reaffirmed the ruling to allow women's rights.

As of late, U.S. abortion opponents have been more militant in their opinion (often encouraged by Roman Catholics and other militant Christian groups), first in the organized blocking of access to clinics which provided abortion services, to sometimes bombings or assassinations.

Which lead, lucky us, to now, where people try to ban third trimester abortions (calling them partial birth abortions), but our leaders have stopped these practices because it goes against the constitutionality of the Supreme Court's decisions. We're at the point now where we have people bombing medical clinics that do legal abortions saying that they are giving a "gift to Jesus" by killing people,

In other words, we're in a mess, it's like we're Roman gladiators fighting in the Coliseum, but we're not willing to listen to other people or agree to live fairly and peacefully together. So, we can be like some, and get our swords out, ready to fight to the death (fight to the death to ban abortion? *That sounds so wrong...*), or we can come to the bottom line rationally.



As I started researching, I started reading notes like "*Roe v. Wade* has corrupted the law by defining the innocent unborn child as a nonperson." Sara Diamond wrote in *Abortion Politics*, that "Christian Right leaders ... want to keep up the drum beat about 'abortuaries' and a fetal 'holocaust'."

I read on Mr. Israel Steinmetz' site <http://www.mrdata.net/state> "that the abortions (murders of the unborn) are continuing at the rate of FOUR THOUSAND ABORTIONS PER DAY in the USA." I knew they used all caps to make that figure sound startling, so I researched percentages for populations around the country for abortions, and saw that the US's abortion rate was below the worldwide average, and that the US was not even listed as having the highest abortion rate (never mind if abortion is legal at all in the countries analyzed).

You see, this is why I have to do the research. Because anyone will say

anything to try to make situations sound terrible.

Then I read an AP article titled “Federal appeals panel: Web site targeting abortion doctors is protected speech” ... Now, to quote this AP article, “The defendants maintained they were political protesters collecting data on doctors,” but after the verdict came through, the circuit court judge Alex Kozinski still called the Web site “blatant and illegal communication of true threats to kill.”

Yeah, there’s a lot of hatred out there. I’m going to have to put on my hip-wader boots to get through it all — I mean, even though President Bush is a Roman Catholic who himself opposes abortion, he has said that real Christians don’t murder. And even former President Clinton is quoted as saying “No matter where we stand on the issue of abortion, all Americans must stand together in condemning ... tragic and brutal act(s)” such as sniper killing doctors at abortion clinics.

Hmmm. So I think we all agree that killing someone for doing something you don’t agree with is not a way to make anything better. But if I’m going to figure this out, I’m going to have to come up with pros and cons about abortion to get somewhere.

Pro lifers say that human life begins at conception. Pro Choicers say that “personhood” at conception is a religious belief, and not a provable biological fact.

Well, that seems pretty straightforward. But the two sides argue on so many points... Pro lifers say that the right to life must be protected, so abortions should be made illegal. Pro choicers say that laws never stopped abortion, but only relegated it to back-alleys using unsafe practices. Pro lifers say that abortion is morally wrong, but pro choicers note that most Americans reject the absolutist position that it is always wrong to terminate a pregnancy — in some situations, it can even be seen as the morally “right” decision. Pro lifers remind us that a fetus is a separate and distinct human being from its mother, but pro choicers say that the fetus is totally dependent on the body of the woman for its life support and is physically attached to her by the placenta and umbilicus.

Wow, that reminds me that a fetus can’t live on its own, and has to tax its host — I mean, potential mother — until it can become a life.

Sorry, I can stop the list of differing opinions between pro choicers and pro lifers, but I need to mention one more (that I’ve noted before): pro lifers think an abortion is wrong because it is taking human life, but pro choicers note that pro lifers say that about abortions, but not about the death penalty. To pro lifers, are people who are convicted of murder are no longer human?

And speaking of these “titles” these two groups have for each other, calling yourself a “pro life” group makes them sound much holier than they actually are (you know, if these are the same people that are for the death penalty), and calling the other side is “pro choice” implies that choicer have the right to choose anything — like choosing murder, which is what the pro lifers say they are doing.

It’s great to see how both sides can work so hard to give themselves names that people can misconstrue as both good *and* bad.

Okay, seeing these differences didn’t help me out much, so I thought I’d go to Planned Parenthood to see what information *they* had about abortions. Now, they have a lot of information about retaining women’s rights, like: Laws against abortion kill women, but forcing abortions into non-sterile-non safe procedures, because making abortions illegal doesn’t stop abortions. And having abortion legal is healthier for the woman, and it allows the woman to be more than an incubator. But the point I found most noteworthy was that a free society, there is nothing more personal and private than this, and making abortions illegal is the most extreme invasion of privacy. I like their government thoughts on this: “If government is permitted to compel a woman to bear a child, where will government stop?”

Then again, did I just choose to go to a place that is so slanted for women’s rights that I’m missing the big picture? I was told to look further into the foundations of Planned Parenthood, and I found out that Margaret Sanger was the founder of Planned Parenthood, and probably also the one who inspired Adolph Hitler in his views of eugenics,

You think I’m kidding? The woman who’s actions later formed groups which merged into Planned Parenthood advocated abortions on Afro-Americans in order to eliminate what she called “socially undesirable people.” She even referred to blacks, immigrants and indigents as “...human weeds,” “reckless breeders,” “spawning... human beings who never should have been born.”

No lie.

Don’t believe the nature of this woman? Sanger believed that, for the purpose of racial “purification,” couples should be rewarded who chose sterilization (is *that* starting to sound more like something that Hitler would have loved?).

So I guess there are always two sides to every coin...

But while looking for information, I stumbled across John Ku (who in 2005 is working toward his Philosophy PhD at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, who has also written “Objections to Objectivism”), who pointed out that “the view that abortion is murder has implications that

hardly any Pro-Lifer would be willing to accept.” Considering the number of abortions performed in a year, this would equate the “problem” with abortions to the Holocaust, because “bombing of abortion clinics would be unquestionably justified” and killing abortion doctors would be preventing their future murders. But pro-lifers distance themselves from these extremists who kill in the name of the unborn.

John Ku jumps to a fantastic conclusion in his writing “A Challenge to Pro-Lifers”, by stating, “Where then is the trouble with killing abortion doctors? The trouble is that abortion is not murder.”

He said *what*? He didn’t defend it. He jumped to a conclusion. But in his defense, he wrote that if an abortion doctor is killing innocent persons, then “he should be punished. But if he should be punished, then one must judge that the belief that abortion is murder is unreasonable, and therein lies the dilemma. Either one admits that the view that abortion is murder is false and unreasonable or one must endorse or at the very least, condone the killing of abortion doctors.”

Hmmm. Well, statistically, abortion doctor *aren’t* considered murderers, meaning the belief that abortion is murder is unreasonable.

•••

Well, that’s the view of our laws. It doesn’t get to the ethical heart of the matter, the stuff we’re all so willing to blindly argue over without facts. Maybe we can come to a better conclusion if we know as many facts as possible, so we can arrive at a good educated opinion.

•••

Since John Ku, who wrote about the problems with Objectivism, helped me out on my last point, maybe I should look for an objectivist (you know, to balance the references here...) for thoughts on the issue. I found on the web site <http://www.abortionisprolife.com/> (which seems to be a screaming Objectivist site), a lead quote on abortion by Ayn Rand: “I cannot project the degree of hatred required to make those women run around in crusades against abortion. Hatred is what they certainly project, not love for the embryos, ... but hatred, a virulent hatred...”

My husband read that quote and said that if this “collection of cells” is just an embryo, then he asked why a loved one of ours felt so depressed over the miscarriage, if it is only an embryo.

And all I thought when he said that was that there was a difference between finding out you’re pregnant and deciding to carry something to term to start a human life and have a child, and finding out you’re pregnant and deciding to halt the production of the embryo so that it wouldn’t become that human life. When it comes to a woman trying to become

pregnant, as soon as their pregnancy is discovered they are gratefully planning and anticipating their child after their pregnancy. They start buying clothes for their eventual child. They decide on a name. They decorate a room for them. They anxiously await their future child's arrival. To these parents, they have ascribed meaning to this "embryo," they have given it an identity before it could ever breathe on its own.

I would guess that for someone who had no intention to get pregnant (whether or not preventative measures to stop pregnancy is irrelevant), an unwanted/unplanned pregnancy wouldn't leave them waiting with baited breath for an eventual child. That potential mother wouldn't be "personalizing" this potential child (by giving it a name or buying them clothes or stuffed animals or decorating a room for them); they would never attach themselves to the idea of this pregnancy becoming a child.

And although historically women can feel a sense of loss after having an abortion (because they are stopping a potential life), their sense of loss is extremely different from someone who was anticipating a child, who had a miscarriage.

So yeah, it's an emotional issue all around. And Leonard Peikoff noted, "Abortions are private affairs and often involve painfully difficult decisions with life-long consequences. But, tragically, the lives of the parents are completely ignored by the anti-abortionists. Yet that is the essential issue."

And you know, I tried to use a quote from Ayn Rand before (but it didn't help out much at all), so let's see if she had a better stance on this issue with this: "Rights do not pertain to a potential, only to an actual being. A child cannot acquire any rights until it is born." (Hmmm, maybe she *did* have something appropriate to say about this subject...)

In the first trimester, the status of the embryo is the focus of this discussion. The embryo has everything that can *become* a human, but it is only religious beliefs that call this embryo a person. I think it's also interesting that historically (even from the Middle ages, or when laws first came into effect in the US in the 1800s), laws against abortions *only* applied to after the fourth month. Considering science now, doctors can keep incredibly premature fetuses alive, but no science even today can sustain a first trimester fetus until it can function on its own. At that point, there is *just no way* that a fetus could ever function on its own without the dependency of its mother to help it get to the point of being able to exist as a life form on its own. Leonard Peikoff also noted that "an embryo is a potential human being," and we all know that the embryo can (as long as the woman choose it) develop into a human child. But in that first trimester, it is something that cannot function on its own at all —



and we can't assume that the embryo is what it wants to become. According to Mr. Peikoff, "we must acknowledge that the embryo under three months is something far more primitive" than an infant.

So maybe *this* starts to answer the question of when life begins. Most agree the notion of life beginning at inception is based solely on religious beliefs (which are always not provable). If you adhere to these beliefs, then you've already decided. But to those who don't use a religion as their moral compass, or for those who choose to use logic and science and reason, it could also be difficult to condone abortions at second or third trimesters — because the potential mother has known that she is hosting a potential life form, and has waited until after the point where it is medically possible to keep the premature baby alive. But at a point where this potential life form is still a mass that cannot under any circumstances survive on its own without a mother helping it to grow, the question becomes more obvious that it is all in the hands of the woman — and it is their right to decide if they choose to carry the fetus to term, so that it can become a life of its own. But before that fetus is ever capable of understanding choice, the choice is all in the woman's hands.



*Janet Kuypers*

Janet Kuypers  
Editor in Chief



# poetry

the passionate stuff

## Deracination

### Michelle Greenblatt

An older name, say a word Shakespeare created (theoretically:) deracination.

A newer name replaces it: uprooting. A geological term for it which my computer does not recognize: upwarping.

Really, it was the foundation--the slope--of his body that day we returned came back from lunch, turned silver to the curve of the beseeching moon--she appeared in different depths, but still knifed & as we studied it we realized we were kissing. Sun and moon in the same sky, a sonorous face-off. Or maybe the noise was our hands, holding. We were folding & I think that day he must have diagrammed me a thousand ways. A fully charged lithium battery, a camera blinking pictures. Was how our eyes were. Snap of the picture, perspicacious in our knowledge that each adjunct second we were spawning words for later ponderings. The persiflage of our bodies. Some sort of dreaming, uprooting, upwarping. Total deracination.

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**with love & thanks to Janet Kuypers**

## Moral Values Without Religion

The alternative to the dogmatism of the religious right and the emotionalism of the egalitarian left is a code of moral absolutes based on reason and individualism.

**By Peter Schwartz**

Does morality depend upon religion? Most people believe it does, which is a major reason behind the appeal of the religious right. People believe that without faith in a supernatural authority, we can have no moral values--no moral absolutes, no black-and-white distinctions, no firm demarcation between good and evil--in life or in politics. This is the assumption underlying Justice Antonin Scalia's recent assertion that "government derives its authority from God," since only religious faith can supposedly provide moral constraints on human action.

And what draws people to this bizarre premise--the premise that there is no rational basis for refraining from murder, rape or anarchism? The left's persistent assault on moral values.

That is, liberals characteristically renounce moral absolutes in favor of moral grayness. They insist, for example, that criminals should not be reviled, but should be seen as tragic products of their "social environment"--that teenage mothers are just as entitled to welfare checks as wage-earners are to their paychecks, and that to deny welfare benefits for a child born into a family already receiving welfare is, as the ACLU declares, to "unconstitutionally coerce women's reproductive decisions"--that America is morally equivalent to its enemies, with our own policies having provoked the Sept. 11 attacks and our "unilateralist" actions in Iraq being no different from any forcible occupation of one nation by another.

Repulsed by such egalitarian, anti-"judgmental" absurdities, many people disavow what they regard as leftism's essence: secularism, and turn to religion for their values.

But this is a false alternative. Secularism is simply a viewpoint that disclaims religion; what it embraces, though, may be rational or not. And the absurdities of the left stem precisely from its irrationality--its pervasive emotionalism, its insistence on doing whatever "feels right," its contention that there are no fixed truths, its credo that morality is anything one wishes it to be. The left maintains that no objective principles exist to validate moral judgments. From its multicultural equalization of all societies--savage or civilized--

to its belief in an indefinable, “evolving” Constitution, the left rejects the logic of objective standards and enshrines the arbitrariness of subjectivism. Thus, what the left’s opponents should disavow is not secularism per se, but rather the replacement of a religious variant of unreason--blind faith--with a secular variant: blind feelings.

The real alternative to the leftist claptrap is a morality of reason. Such a morality begins with the individual’s life as the primary value and identifies the further values that are demonstrably required to sustain that life. It observes that man’s nature demands that we live not by random urges or by animal instincts, but by the faculty that distinguishes us from animals and on which our existence fundamentally depends: rationality.

With reason as its cardinal value, this code of individualism espouses fixed principles and categorical moral judgments. It demands, for instance, that the initiation of force--the antithesis of reason--be denounced and that an unbridgeable moral chasm be recognized between the criminal and the non-criminal.

Since life requires man to produce what he needs, productiveness is a moral value--thereby making moral opposites out of the industrious worker and the parasitic welfare recipient. Since life requires man to use his own judgment rather than submissively accept the assertions of others, independence is a moral value--making moral opposites out of the person (or nation) acting on his own rational convictions and the one deferring to the consensus of his neighbors (or the U.N.). Since life requires the mind, man’s political system must allow him to use it, i.e., freedom is a moral value--making moral opposites out of America, the defender of liberty, and America’s enemies, who seek liberty’s destruction.

A morality of reason counters the relativism and the indiscriminating “tolerance” of the left.

It also counters a morality of faith, and establishes a genuine “culture of life.” Individualism upholds your sovereignty over your life--and refuses to subordinate the preservation of that life to, say, the preservation of embryonic stem cells in some petri dish. Individualism defends your inalienable right to your life, including your right to end it--and evaluates, say, opposition to assisted-suicide as a desecration of human life, since forcing someone to live who wishes to die is no less evil than forcing someone to die who wishes to live.

There is indeed morality without religion--a morality, not of dogmatic commands, but of rational values and of unbreached respect for the life of the individual.

*Peter Schwartz is chairman of the board of directors of the Ayn Rand Institute (<http://www.aynrand.org>) in Irvine, California. The Institute promotes the ideas of Ayn Rand--best-selling author of *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead* and originator of the philosophy of Objectivism. Copyright © 2005 Ayn Rand® Institute. All rights reserved.*

## CITY'S SONG

**Marisa Foltz**

The screaming subway  
hurls complaints  
down the corridors,  
internal echoes  
spreading eternally,  
and death itself is no escape.

Fluorescent lights  
seep disgust in the murky puddles,  
blare uncertainty from so many windows  
and shake their chains  
in silent rebellion.

Caverns  
haunted by the  
drifting cry of a saxophone  
in search of men's souls.

I, too, have come here  
searching for something  
lost  
amongst other's  
scattered remains.

## YOU LITTLE MEN OF DESPERATE HOUR

**SHARI O'BRIEN**

With staggering ironic pride,  
you launch a scud that shreds a child,  
convinced I bless this homicide.

You arrogate my name and brashly claim  
you do my will in building arsenals  
to blast earth from the cosmic map I made.

I marvel as you grab for power,  
adept at preying, inept at prayer,  
you little men of desperate hour.

# untitled

## Bobbi Dykema Katsanis

she carries her body uneasily  
as though ashamed  
of how tall she is, and longing  
to be a half-inch shorter.  
Her hair is several different shades of red,  
all of which clash.  
she had a man once,  
there! over in the corner  
she left him one morning  
and when she came back  
he was gone

stolen, she guessed  
although she did not file a police report  
she assumed he'd return  
when he got hungry  
so she made twice-baked potatoes  
his favorite  
every night  
for three weeks.

## Window Shopping

### CL Bledsoe

Pale, white, and ugly  
as a newborn bullet  
wound before it bleeds, he hides  
in the cookie aisle  
behind a bag of macaroons.  
Something in his eyes  
is lapping at the stock girl's face  
like a dog at a bowl of water.

She bends to stock a box of crackers.  
He stares at the rounded curve  
of her jeans, stretched  
over scrawny skin, door locked, phone  
unplugged just in case anyone calls;  
the ring might slap him awake,  
jiggly and crying  
into the sunset of the world.

# ODE #1 TO A STING RAY BICYCLE

## Kenneth DiMaggio

While we saw their V-shaped handle  
bars banana seats and tall prong  
sissy bars as the abstraction  
of a Harley Davidson

our aluminium framed pedal  
powered Sting ray bicycles  
could go in urban  
crevices and rural waste scape ditch-  
abyss-es that would break the springs  
or blow the tires

of any evil bad-ass chopped motorcycle

And no matter how hard you pedaled  
there was always before us  
a chalkboard slate gray  
horizon  
just waiting to teach us  
a lesson

not unless we taught you one first  
at the highway overpass

from which we threw off swamp water  
filled balloons or gobs of spit  
that we liked to imagine  
would sizzle through your now speeding  
sedan roof

But no police cruiser was ever quick  
enough





And even if it was

it was just *too damn big*

to fit into escape routes  
tunnled through a cut away  
barbed wire topped fence

or between the marble and Celtic cross-  
stone rows at the cemetery

Only  
when we were finally out of breath

would our delinquency stop

and only then  
long enough

to light up  
a Marlboro

that our eight nine and ten year old  
lungs could easily inhale

And then after we had a good long exhale  
complimented by the word *Fuck!*

we would ride towards the horizon

that still needed more legends

for us to vandalize upon





# MOTHS

## Arthur Gottlieb

Crazy for the blazing midnight  
bulb, they come bumping  
the summer screen in furious  
fluttering furry blurs,  
scraping the rough mesh.

If I put a match to the whole house  
hundreds would fly into the fire  
like religious fanatics,  
leaping, and dancing as the intense  
heat cracked their wings.

Then they'd smolder in the embers  
like the ash of a burnt-out passion.

I wish I had a fraction of their flame.  
I'd snap off the lamp and let  
my luster shine on in the dark.

But there are some others  
more practiced and down to earth  
who sneak in and nest in the soft  
folds of cloth in the closet.

Pulling the wool over their eyes,  
they wait until their hatched eggs  
eat their way out of my blue serge suits  
and into the busting yellow beams  
of another summer.

## BANG BANG (HIV)

### Chris Major

She recalled the day  
easier than his face;  
being woken by  
her children, hands  
curled around  
imaginary guns ;  
invisible killers.

“Bang, bang, you're dead.”

He pulled the sheet  
over her head;  
their crying faded ;  
they were led  
from the ward.

# Thoughts of Him

**Cody Callahan**

I know the scraps  
That you don't see  
You say it's great  
As you look away  
And laugh so low  
As to not offend  
But my eyes are trained  
To hear your scoffs  
And all the dirt you mean

(But somewhere there's a girl  
With thoughts of him  
Just waiting for the person  
Who knows just how shes been)

Say what you will  
Say what you want  
I know the underlying  
Meanings you cover  
So sweet to hold back

(But somewhere there's a girl  
With thoughts of him  
Who would never lie  
And wants to take him in)

I'm smart enough at least  
To decipher your code  
To break down your words  
And hear your truth  
To break down your words  
And see your truth

(But somewhere there's a girl  
With thoughts of him)

# Gentle Tapping

**Cody Callahan**

Shadowed all my implications  
Rose and tore my words out  
Eating with seamless immunity  
Tilling flesh to plant their legs  
And fill up all my space...

Diggin trenches, laying eggs  
Why is speaking so hard for me?  
Spiders  
Spiders make my stomach spin  
Picking at my everything  
Questioning your every step

So soon they came to my door  
So soon they were to arrive  
Built from stitches, suicide  
No one knows what they came here for

Gentle tapping at my eye lids  
Urging me to open wide  
Digesting lies you've woven sweet  
Untangling brand new tapestry  
All before I go to sleep

Spiders  
Spiders make my stomach spin  
Picking at my everything  
Questioning your every step  
Digging trenches, laying eggs  
Spiders make my stomach spin

# over water

**Tanya L. Ranta**

when rain falls in mysterious ways  
it may only be that you are paying too much attention  
when wet feet slide across dry floors  
someone is bound to get scolded  
and no one cares how wet they are  
of if they were caught in a storm

when dry socks get soaked through  
and the feet in them feel the chill of musty water  
that which ran off of skin  
and clothes  
and hair  
and shoes  
to invade the dry floors and carpets  
you feel as cold as the rain did

when tempers flair over little messes  
and unkind words are strewn about  
over water  
and nothing else  
it makes you want the rain back on you  
at least it will embrace you  
back in the dark alleys  
where feet were dragged through  
and buses were ridden

still you walk and walk  
to come home to have ears pierced  
in anger  
over water

# Annelida

## Cody Callahan

When they are inside me  
I long for restitution  
Hanging on to my skin  
They never die  
They never sleep  
They drink and drink  
But seldom keep

When they are inside me  
Rotten apples feeling lonely  
And tricked so clever by an  
Angel with paper wings  
That paralyze and hold on tight  
And fill my head with thoughts  
So cracked and scarred

If they are inside of me  
I know nothing that I see  
Like picture films  
My memories turn to dust

Is it my fault  
I live so lowly  
Or is it is just the  
Nature of the leeches  
That make me waste away  
And crumble hard

I feel them peeling slowly  
Shedding all of me in hopes  
Of some chance recovery  
I feel them peeling slowly  
Calm away calm away  
And crumble hard

# personal note

The editor's birthday happens to be the same date as the release of the 12 year anniversary issue of **Children, Churches and Daddies** magazine. Twelve years old. I was worried about the magazine moving into its teen years - you know how teens can get moody. Then I thought, "wait, this is a poetry magazine, if its not moody it probably isn't good."



We tried to find birthday photos of Janet but the only photos found of the editor from a birthday was from when she turned 6, and when she was surprised at a bar by friends for her 27th birthday... I guess photographers try to stay behind the lense instead of in front of it.

There have been some technical problems at **Children, Churches and Daddies** magazine at the release of this issue. I'm sure that with 12 years of **Children, Churches and Daddies** magazines, Janet will pull through this as well.

In light of the computer problems they were having, I hope Janet has a great birthday.

And hey, if you've got e-mail access, bug her by writing her a happy belated birthday e-mail message...

- John Yotko  
Webmaster  
& Photographer



{art}



**The Harvester's  
Hands,  
art by Mark  
Graham**



**Gift of a Flower,  
art by Edward  
Michael O'Durr  
Supranowicz**

**Stephen Mead art**



Fireflies, and kety, come  
From such art.  
The territory of faith,  
The fortress of destiny  
Dreaming, "choose me".

Or be surely circum-dancer  
Pure with this vision,  
Despite certain intent,  
To dream, be, by.

prose  
the meat and potatoes stuff

## THE GAME

**A. McIntyre**

Check. I had him, my Knight attacking his King. My father took a deep breath. Good move son, you're definitely improving. He pondered the situation, Bishop takes Knight, you didn't see that did you? You've got to be careful of those Bishops. We played on, the oil lamp flickering in the damp breeze, the tropical dark seething with unseen things beyond the verandah. The garden was out of bounds at night, recently the gardener killed two cobras near the compost heap uncovering a nest. I watched a lizard stalking a moth across the ceiling. Home from school for the holidays, and I was beating my father at chess. Wait till they heard next term. I saw myself announcing in no uncertain terms, I played my father at chess, and I won. Then I perceived the opening. If only . . . if only he moved that Pawn. He moved the Pawn. My Queen closed for the kill, the Rook supporting, mate in three. Check. He watched me, a faint line of sweat beading his brow, You've been playing a lot? I nodded, In the team, Mr. Robinson's the coach. He grinned, Well, when you see Mr. Robinson next term, you tell him from me that he's been doing a good job, you hear? Yes dad, I replied. In the meantime, he added, Go fix me a pink gin will you? The lizard caught the moth, mashing the dusty meal in its jaws.

I poured the clear liquid into the glass, breathing juniper. Then tonic, finally a touch of Angostura bitters, the drops exploding like blood. Mixing the contents, looking over my shoulder, I took a sip, then another. With his back to me, focused on the game, my father didn't notice. I placed the glass in front of him. He looked up, Thank you son. We resumed play, but the situation had changed. A Pawn was blocking my Rook. You moved, I said. No, not yet, he replied. But the Pawn. What Pawn? That Pawn wasn't there before, I insisted. Nonsense son, you just don't remember. Frowning, I stared at him. He stared back. The darkness a crescendo of crickets, the occasional screech of a monkey. Knight fork, he said, Watch how the Queen works here. It was dangerous but there was a way out because I had more pieces. For a while I blocked, then

came the opening. This might be the end, I said advancing my Bishop across the board, Check. My father started laughing, Good gracious young man, you could be right, let me think carefully about this one. For a long time no-one spoke. The wind was strengthening, far away a rumbling of thunder. My father looked up, I think there's going to be a storm. Go and make sure the windows are shut, will you? And tell your mother.

I ran through the house closing windows. There's going to be a storm, I shouted when I saw my mother in the bedroom, Dad told me to tell you. I dashed away before she could reply because she would tell me to go to bed and I was going to beat my father at chess. Lightning illuminated the sky revealing big puffy clouds the color of mud. Pulsating shadows danced along the walls. I sat down ready to finish the game. Then I noticed a Pawn blocking my Bishop. You moved again, I said. I most certainly did not, replied my father. You did, I know you did, my Bishop had you in check, and now there's a Pawn. Look here, young man, I think you're imagining things. Isn't it time you went to bed? Outraged, the words spilled out of my mouth, You're cheating, I know you are, you're a cheat. Then I realized what I'd said. It wasn't supposed to be like this, and I burst into tears. My mother appeared. What on earth is going on here, she asked, What's all this dreadful noise? Dad's cheating, I yelled before my father could say anything, I was winning and he keeps changing the board. Hands on her hips she glowered at him, Is this true? You ought to be ashamed of yourself Peter, she scolded, Teasing the boy, you're supposed to be teaching him chess. Leaning back in the creaking wicker chair, my father was laughing. Actually, he said gradually regaining control, Actually, the boy's teaching me chess, but I'm teaching him life.

---

**shoes**

**art by  
Cheryl  
Townsend**





# performance art

"Stripped," 06/07/05 Chicago show

## Key To Survival "the poem of j"



I

Have you ever seen someone  
who has a flock of people around them  
and that someone is just naturally talking  
but people are attracted to them like moths to a flame  
people there are like sun tanning high-school girls  
facing this person's bright light,  
wanting to soak them all in  
and hoping they're more beautiful for it



You see these people,  
everyone smiling,  
circled around this special someone  
it's like an animal magnetism  
you can't help but  
try to nudge in,  
to hear their words  
to try to get a little of that narcotic for yourself

it's like being a child again,  
with a ton of kids in a candy store  
where someone's giving out free candy  
and all the kids are so thrilled  
and they're grinning from ear to ear

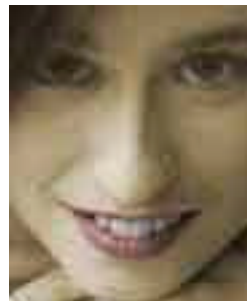
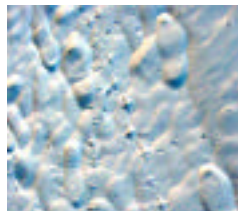


You haven't even gotten close enough  
to hear their words,  
but you're already starting to smile

## II

have you ever seen someone  
standing at the corner of an intersection  
they look dirty and disheveled  
and you try to keep your distance  
'cause you're guessing they're homeless  
and asking for money  
but you have to pass them  
they're right on the street in your way  
so you try to walk  
on the farthest edge of the sidewalk  
but you watch them with your peripheral vision  
and you see them making animated gestures  
and you see their face contorting  
like they're having a great debate  
with no one  
like they're giving the speech of their lifetime  
to no one

because, you see, no one wants to listen  
everyone knows this is a madman raving  
so you just try to ignore them  
you make a point to not listen  
I mean, there's a Hell of a lot of noise  
we tune out of our minds,  
cars going by, honking their horns,  
the low rumble of other people talking nearby  
the shuffle of your footsteps  
well, this is another one of those noises.  
you don't want to hear them  
you had a bad feeling about them  
as soon as you saw them  
just ignore them  
and hopefully they'll go away



### III

I knew of a woman  
who went on a date  
with a male friend of mine,  
and after the date  
the guy talked about how great she was,  
how they talked about their future  
and what they both wanted  
he talked about the inside of her place,  
but after he left messages for her repeatedly,  
she never called him back again



saw this woman weeks later  
at a Starbuck's  
and she said she felt bad  
but she never wanted to see him again  
because during their date  
they never talked about what they wanted  
he just talked about what he wanted  
like how she wouldn't work  
because he even told her how many  
of his children she would bear



she wouldn't let him into her home  
(does that mean he was looking through her window?)  
and she said that after the date  
she showered for hours  
because she felt mentally raped

poor girl  
she saw someone who seemed nice  
but it took her only a short while  
to know what he was really like

## IV

sometimes you look at people  
and you just know

sometimes it takes you a little while  
but people can't hide their souls forever

everyone gets feelings about someone  
whether or not they want to admit it

it's not women's intuition  
men feel it too  
you feel it in your chest  
when you see someone good  
and you get that feeling in the pit of your stomach  
when you see someone bad

sometimes you look at people  
and you just know  
and you can try to avoid that feeling you get  
and you try to shrug it off as nothing  
and you try to run away from the feeling for years  
but you can't hide from your soul forever  
it'll catch up to you  
when you least expect it

sometimes you just know  
you've felt it  
I've felt it too  
we know what to run to  
and what to steer clear of

we've got to  
it's in our nature  
it's a key to happiness  
and our key to survival



# get me out of this cage

you've been trying to censor me  
for God knows how long

I don't know, maybe you didn't want to hear my views  
because you didn't believe those views should be expressed  
but you never knew what I stood for  
you never wanted my voice to be heard  
because you always thought of me as a possession  
and not a person



yeah, I can be a real pain in the ass  
to anyone that doesn't want to hear me  
but you know what?  
people do want to listen  
people value the right to speak their minds

and people know that if you take that away from someone  
you're taking it away from everyone

so you can try to leave me in this locked cage  
you can try to keep me away from everyone else  
but you know, I've been clawing at the roof  
I can feel the grooves in the ceiling here from my fight  
but I still have nails on the tips of my fingers  
so I know I can keep clawing,  
I know I can keep fighting  
because I know I have more work to do  
and I'll get it done, I tell you  
I'll be free again



your cage isn't air-tight  
I've seen light from outside  
when you've had me trapped  
and every once in a while, I've seen shadows  
and I'm sure there are people there

you can't keep me trapped like this forever  
because people will hear my screams  
through the cracks in your precious cage

and no, I don't care what kind of cage you put me in  
cause I'll keep fighting  
I'm strong like that, you know

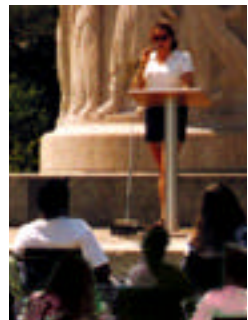
I don't want to hear that you think I go too far  
because as much as you try to oppress me  
as much as you try to repress me  
I'm supposed to have some inalienable rights here

I've heard the way you think  
and I know you think I already have too many rights  
and I know you're a product of the MTV generation  
and I know you're addicted to playing video games  
yeah, you'd rather spend you time  
interacting with a story on a screen,  
with your precious little joystick,  
than actually talking to someone

but just because you don't feel like reaching out to people  
doesn't mean you can force me into that cage again

I suppose if you don't think  
if you don't watch the news  
if you don't interact with people,  
you think,  
why should anyone want to talk to people?

if you want that for yourself, fine  
if you don't mind giving up rights  
because you have nothing to offer  
fine  
but the rest of the world doesn't think like you  
and we sure the Hell don't want you  
ruling over us



since nine eleven, laws have been passed  
to legally take our rights away  
you know, to make us more safe

fair trade, freedom for perceived safety

but I'd rather fly in the face of danger in this country  
I'd rather make it on my own without the likes of you  
if it means I might be more free

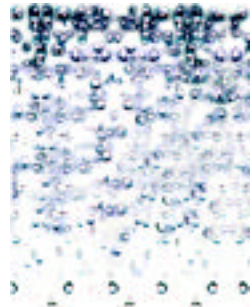
I'll look over my shoulder  
I'll watch out for myself

I'll do whatever I have to  
to make sure that the likes of you  
can never stop the likes of me



## **What the Hell is She Complaining About**

i can't go around telling people  
about what you did to me  
you see, nobody wants to hear it  
and nobody wants to hear a girl whining  
*what the hell's she complaining about anyway?*  
but you know, nobody knows  
the effects of what you've done  
nobody knows that I showered for weeks  
no, months  
to try to feel clean after you did that to me  
nobody knows why i have  
violent fits of rage  
how I'd hit the wall, rip up the plaster





you want to know what i think of men now?  
you want to know their place in my life now?  
you see, i didn't know what else to do  
so i became the rapist  
and now i let men do nice things for me  
but i always keep them at a safe distance  
i never let them get too close  
because i don't care how nice you are  
i'll always keep you at arm's length  
i learned my lesson

so yeah, you had an effect on me  
and i have to bottle it all up  
because no one wants to hear the details  
i mean, i wasn't physically injured  
what the hell could i be complaining about anyway?

but you know, there are times  
when i wish you left a mark,  
like a bee sting or something,  
so people could see a welt  
from what you had done

wait, no, i take that back  
i'd wish i was stung by a bee  
and i was allergic to bees

because then my blood pressure would drop,  
my pulse would get rapid,  
i'd fall into anaphylactic shock  
my skin would turn white  
before I got the the hospital  
as they tried to keep me alive

all because of a bee sting

while everyone else is thinking,  
a bee sting,  
what the hell is she complaining about



# your minions are dying

we seem to have allowed ourselves this fate  
we seem to have asked for this  
but maybe we didn't know what we were asking for

I

we thought we were doing the right thing  
when we chose you  
but I suppose that's what all battered housewives say  
    "he wasn't like this when I met him"  
    "he's a good man, really"  
but it was only after we accepted you  
that you asked us to sacrifice  
you told us to have faith  
like all those preachers who ask you to give  
when you'll only be rewarded after you're dead *(if you believe 'em)*



you told us we'd be free  
if we stayed together as a family  
and it was like you placed your hand on a Bible  
and asked us to give up more for you

*(don't most dictators ask their followers  
to sacrifice until they've been sapped dry?)*

II

you weren't the only one fighting for me, you know  
you had competition  
you both tried to woo us over,  
even though you two were  
more alike than you think  
*(who am I kidding,*  
you two were just like everyone else)

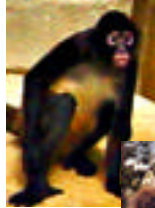
you two were two sides of the same coin  
*yeah, yeah, you may have been opposite sides*  
*but you were the same damn coin*



you all wanted us to trust you  
and even though we were harmless  
you still pulled out all of your weaponry  
to keep us in line  
when we weren't looking,  
all while saying  
it was for our own good

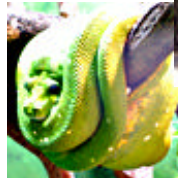


with you two, my choice  
was to either  
jump in and drown in someone's abuse  
or be dragged in by the other  
for the same fate



### III

you can keep throwing your generalities at us  
and expect us to eat it up  
like hungry animals  
waiting for your handouts



but if we were hungry animals,  
we'd take what you gave us,  
then kill you and eat your remains



but we're not animals  
so stop treating us like fools



### IV

yeah, you had competition  
but no one could save us from your fate,  
you all were just so much alike  
that we only had to choose the lesser of two evils



but did we make the right choice?



## V

you keep saying you'll make me feel safe  
but all I can think of  
is that dictators  
historically played on fear  
to make their minions  
feel like they need their leader  
well, you don't make me feel more safe  
you make me feel more scared  
and I wonder if I can take care of myself  
and I never needed any of you anyway

## VI

others have come along  
and tried to save me from the likes of you  
but they never told me how I could be free  
I never knew how I was going to be rescued

when I was little  
I played office with my friend Sheri  
we had a little board painted white  
with little toggle switches stuck on it  
and buttons and dials on it  
it probably had the ear piece of a phone on it too  
and we had this little control panel,  
this little console  
sitting on our little desk  
and we'd sit there with it  
and press a lot of buttons  
and we'd flip the toggle switches up and down  
and act like we were receiving important calls  
and it looked like we were doing something  
it looked like we were accomplishing things



and all you men, you all say you have a plan  
but I haven't seen it  
I haven't seen how you can  
save me from the madness



you men are trying to flip those damn toggle switches  
and you don't know what the Hell they do  
but you'll act like you know,  
and you'll act like you're accomplishing something

are we supposed to blindly accept  
whatever the likes of you hand out to us?

## VII

you try to act like you can save us  
but there are people dying over here,  
we're jobless, homeless, dying

we're drowning in this ocean of helplessness  
and we'll grab on to whatever line  
we can get a hold of

is that why we counted on you

but your minions won't be strong enough  
to support you forever



# We Listened

yeah, we listened to MTV  
and we listened to the rap stars  
they told us to get out there  
and let our voices be heard  
well, we did what you said  
because the wool has been  
pulled over our eyes  
for far too long  
and no one has been held accountable

but yeah, we listened talk radio  
where people are stuck in their cars  
every day on their commute  
home from work  
where people could call in and agree  
with whatever was spouting out at them  
over the radio waves

where's the gratification  
when you can't talk to rap stars  
or have your voice heard on MTV  
and you can't be broadcasted on the radio  
where everyone stroke your ego  
and agrees with you completely

yeah, we've tried to listen  
but we've been bombarded with  
war images in the tee vee  
and you know, congress  
hasn't declared a war  
since world war two  
but we can still blow people up,  
can't we?

cause our view is getting clouded  
because now we can see for ourselves  
that war is so gory,  
that war is bad



and we've got those images in our heads  
and we hear quote unquote news  
from every source under the sun  
some reliable, some not  
i mean, we've got cable news,  
we've got the internet  
and you know, some of the  
reputable news sources  
even give us slanted information  
who are we to trust now?

well, we listened  
but most of us mustn't have known  
what we were listening to  
when you idolize a rock star  
and they tell you what to do  
wouldn't you just follow?  
and when you get your voice on the radio  
to talk someone you've grown to idolize  
and you're busy  
stroking each others egos  
wouldn't you do whatever they said?



yeah, most us didn't know  
how to decipher the jargon  
thrown at us  
but we soaked it all in anyway  
and spit it out as our new mantra

maybe we all just followed blindly  
after listening to one side of the story  
over and over again  
without getting all the facts  
it was like we were told  
to jump in a pool, that we'd like it  
and we all just ran to the pool and jumped  
without looking to see if  
there was any water in the pool

but looking back, after we've chosen  
we've got a more ethnically mixed leadership,  
but we're ignoring some of our problems  
to help others  
people pull some of our rights away  
to help us somewhere else

but you know, i'm trying to remember  
what ben franklin said  
that people who give up essential liberty  
to obtain a little temporary safety  
deserve neither

so i guess,  
thanks to our choices,  
people are taking some of our  
essential liberties  
and do we feel  
temporarily  
more safe?



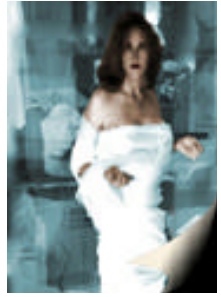
And does that mean that we deserve either?  
because i can tell you,  
i don't feel more safe  
and i sure the hell don't feel more free  
and i see that pool up ahead  
that everyone's just rushing to  
but i can't see any water in there  
and i'm trying to stop  
this mob rush  
as everyone is jumping in without looking

the way jews were forced in mass  
to run  
and they'd see they were running  
to the edge of a cliff  
but the ss was behind them  
and they had to keep running

and the ss'd shoot them as they were  
about to run over the edge

so they'd fall to their deaths

i see this, i see the mass grave  
in the bottom of that swimming pool  
and we listen to our leaders  
as they tell us to jump in



## **marry me... whatever you are**

I have gay friends who considered leaving this country  
because George Bush was re-elected

hits to Canada's web sites for immigration skyrocketed  
after the election results came in

and I thought, hey, a president may have some problems,  
but that's no reason to desert your home

but they were sure after this election that  
same-sex partner rights would never be granted to them

I mean, when one person is ill and in the hospital  
the other has no rights to be there for them

and I thought, if Bush was trying to appeal to a vast majority  
of people, he'd be good for everyone, right?

I even heard Bush say that rights should be given to  
same-sex partners, even if they don't call it "marriage"

and I thought, well, it might sound rude, buy he's gotta  
respect the red-neck back-ass country folk in this country too

and they only believe in man and woman marriages  
while screwing the animals at the farm

but at least he was going to give same-sex couples rights,  
that's a good sign, isn't it?





but then I heard that Republicans want to make a constitutional amendment defining marriage

they wanted to define something that is not the government's business

(then again, they make enough laws now that overstep the bounds of any rational government already)

Then fourteen states made laws defining marriage as only between a man and a woman

okay, I'm beginning to see why some of my friends are worried

## Outsourcing the American Dream

we've been doing pretty well over the years and I've seen you strutting around showing off all your peacock feathers feeling like you're the big man on campus

and you know, it had to feel pretty good I know what it was like, I'd hold parties & I'd change from one fancy dress to another & I'd be the center of attention

I remember my novel release party, my sister came, and I know she likes Red Rose wine, and I was standing in the kitchen chatting it up when I saw her approaching

so I turned to the fridge to get the wine and as soon as she got to me I tilted the bottle toward her glass and just started pouring & she said, hey, I was coming to get some

wine & I said I know, and I just kept grinning & talking to others & having a splendid time



yeah, I know the feeling, like you own the world, you'd be dressed up wearing a red robe & a hat & it looked like you should be saying "where are all of my bitches?"



or when you'd take your black convertible out, top down, as you'd be dressed in your fancy suit, ready to hold open your car door, just like you'd hope the man

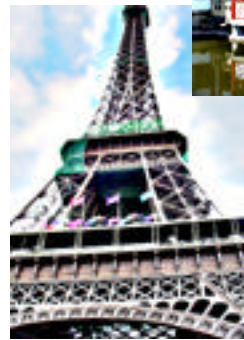


who owns the world would. You'd show up to parties in the tuxedo you own, you'd give flowers to a girl you were smitten with just after you've met her to woo her



you'd go jet-setting throughout Europe, visiting China — you're the one on top, aren't you?

well, you always have been, you're the man with the plan, you're the one who lives life to the fullest, you show the world how arrogant you are with your past successes



but Houston, there's a problem, you might not want to believe it, but since we've been resting on your laurels all this time, since our fat uncles have been

sitting on the couch, burping with their cans of beer, watching the football games while someone else has been doing all the cooking and cleaning for them, well,



while we've all been feeling cocky, thinking about how great we are, other countries have been training their students in our schools, and because

we've been busy basking in our glory  
we've outsourced all the work we're too  
lazy to do & we've trained everyone else  
to beat us at our own game

(oh, I forgot to mention, we were so busy  
celebrating our military and business  
accomplishments that we gave up  
on training ourselves to stay ahead)

well, while we've gotten lazy and taken a  
break for a while, everyone else has started  
excelling past us, so we buy our Japanese  
technology and drive our German cars,

drink our French water when we're not  
drinking our French wine, and we get  
as far away from the United States as we  
possibly can when we want to take a

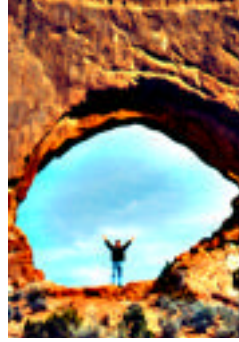
vacation

well, I'm waiting for someone to realize it,  
maybe having the economy fall out from  
underneath our overzealous desire to  
get rich quick didn't allow us to see

but we've always been the giant, we were  
first to fly an airplane, the first to land  
on the moon, we're in front in the world  
with medicines and health care

hmmm, speaking of healthcare, most people  
can't afford it now, because we've researched  
the Hell out of the diseases we choose  
to kill ourselves with, I mean, stats say

us North Americans have the highest rates  
of cancer verses the world, our kids are  
fat, we work so many more hours but still  
can't keep ahead, and at this point we





can't afford the fruits of our labor any longer

do we bring it upon ourselves when we want to get rich quick by suing doctors, forcing them to charge higher prices, driving up the cost for everyone?

we complain that people who are on welfare still on average own two television sets and every teen in America now seems to expect their own free cell phone

is it that our standard of living has risen so dramatically that everyone now expects everything handed to them on a silver platter? do we ask for more without

working for more?

teens complain about not getting a job out of school, while their guidance counselors tell them they might have a chance if they get rid of the excessive body piercings

or not wear a mohawk or color their hair pink or stain their skin with tattoos & that's when the teens complain that they don't want to work for a place

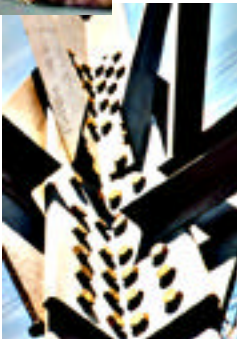
that can't accept them for who they are

our President wants to protect our borders from terrorists, but he wants to give temporary work visas to illegal Mexican immigrants, so that other nations can do

our work for us

and we wonder why we're unemployed

we get rid of excess building & manufacturing



metals, which we think would cost too much to melt down to reuse, & our excesses go to China, where they build high rises



from our scraps

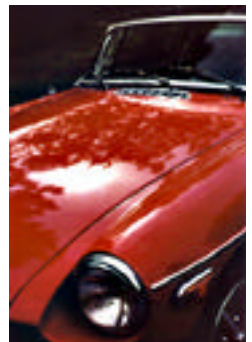
yeah, we can talk about how we were the high school quarterback, & how we scored so many touchdowns & everyone loved us back then



while we credit card ourselves into debt because we deserve the good things in life, as we train other people to help us lose more in the world economy

pretty soon prices will keep going up & we won't be able to afford that convertible, or the nice clothes, or for that matter, any of the niceties anymore

& we'll become a people who have the basics, but not much else, & we'll wonder how we've become a third world country & never saw it coming



because we're on a mountainside, slipping into the canyon hole but instead of enjoying the roller-coaster ride before we crash & burn, can we stop it?



can we stop asking our government to tie our shoelaces for us, because you know, man didn't land on the moon because we didn't work for it, so can we start to live off of



what we can afford, so we can look ahead to what we can accomplish?



# children churches & daddies

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