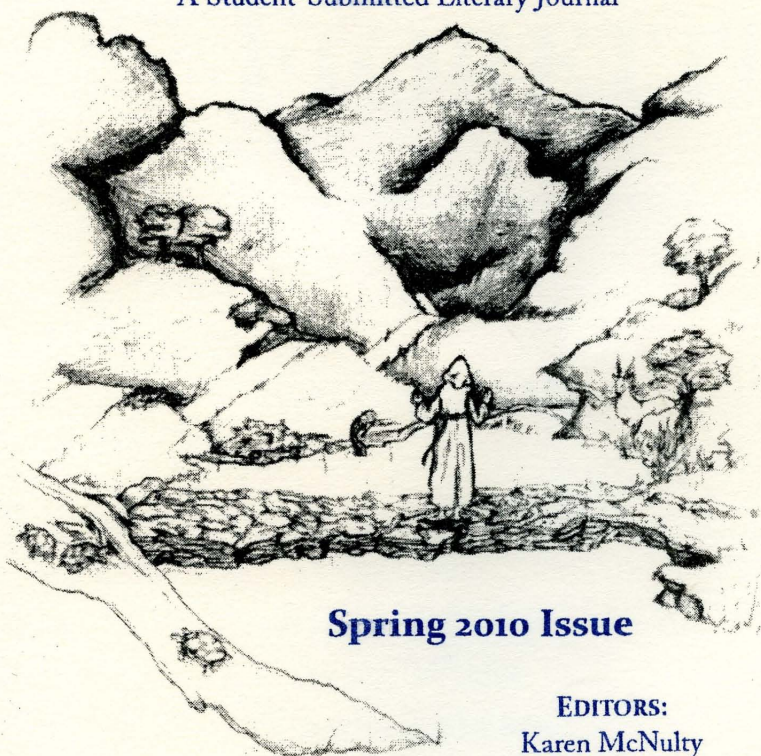


MARIAN UNIVERSITY  
Indianapolis

# THE FIORETTI

A Student-Submitted Literary Journal



Spring 2010 Issue

EDITORS:  
Karen McNulty  
Aaron Wilder  
Charles Peñalosa

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## EDITORS' NOTE:

The word *Fioretti*, translated from Italian, means "little flowers." Specifically, the *Fioretti* is a collection of little tales on the life of Saint Francis of Assisi. The idea of little flowers was the catalyst for this issue of Marian University's *Fioretti*, a student-run literary journal. Editors Charles Peñalosa, Aaron Wilder, and Karen McNulty wanted to create an atmosphere where the little flowers of Marian University could flourish and bloom. We sincerely hope you enjoy this edition of *The Fioretti* which the Marian University student body has offered.

## COVER ART

"Francis" by Katie Hedrick

Dr. Diane Prenatt, Faculty Advisor

Layout and formatting by Charles Peñalosa

Special thanks to Larry Steeb . . .

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# BIRDSONG

BY KAREN McNULTY

Sleep whisks  
me away to the golden  
meadows of Bliss.

In your arms I soar  
like a Hummingbird,  
desiring all to hear  
my Song.  
It whistles  
past the  
Sycamore trees  
shining in the mid-summer sun,  
past the Old Dirt Road  
as Billy cruises  
in the rusted red  
flat bed truck,  
soybeans flowing  
into the yellow-tinted,  
dehydrated grass  
that lines the  
dusty road,  
and finally reaches  
the ears of a young boy  
swinging out over  
the lake  
signaling his leap—  
Gasping for one last breath,

he plunges, the depths  
of the water  
cold in the early morning,  
and sinks to the bottom.  
His toes graze  
the soggy undergrowth  
as he propels himself  
towards the surface,  
arms racing as he  
regains his breath  
at the cusp of the  
rippling body of water.  
My birdsong carries  
in the wind  
around the corner of the barn,  
waking the lonesome cow  
as she cries in hunger  
to the only one  
who cares for her.

My song returns  
to you, my darling,  
as you tousle  
her dark brown locks  
between your fingertips,  
carefully caressing  
her foreign body  
as I lie alone,  
asleep in our bed.

## DANCE

BY KAREN McNULTY

Black satin  
drapes over  
her curves  
as she sways  
back and forth  
to the melody  
alone.

Back and forth . . .

Her drink  
drips  
down her dress  
as she stumbles  
over  
the past,  
each memory  
whispering  
of loss  
and pain.

Glass shatters  
between

her toes, and  
warm blood  
caresses

her black  
nail polish  
as she sways . . .  
back and forth.

# ODE TO RAMEN NOODLES

BY KAREN McNULTY

Cheap  
Quick  
Easy  
Satisfying.  
Long legs  
wind  
around  
my fork  
a  
slippery  
mess,  
and  
heat  
rises  
to my lips,  
tempting.  
Like a  
prostitute,  
you fill  
me up,  
but only  
for  
a while.  
Leave  
me  
desiring  
more.

## DRY SEASON

BY AARON WILDER

On days like this  
Brittle prairie grass  
Rubs its cricket legs.  
Earth waits,  
Dry and fanning herself.  
In the stillness  
We forget we're not  
The center; we think  
Rain waits under logs  
In beetle-softened wood.  
Grown men burn bark,  
Dance naked  
Like forgotten children—  
In case a goddess is watching.  
"Venus has blocked the sun"  
Some say. Bats clamor  
In the chimneys;  
Outside, cicadas murmur

On days like this  
We forget to breathe  
Like a rainstorm is coming;  
Deep like men, and on purpose;  
Deep like drums of clouds  
Rolling over the horizon



# MUSHU

BY AARON WILDER

Leslie pretends to sleep  
In my blue Bonneville, '99  
On the way back from the theater.  
It's dark outside and  
Only five thirty because it's December  
And that makes her tired—  
Or not tired, exactly,  
She just wants to go home;  
I stop at the Chinese takeout  
To pick up some Mushu pork  
In white origami boxes,  
But not origami exactly, like a swan,  
But folded in some way  
I haven't tried to figure out like origami;  
Leslie likes the Mushu pork best  
But I don't, so I eat  
Ravioli from a can  
Because I don't think  
Mushu is Chinese even—  
Like if you flew over to China  
And said "mushu" they would  
Shake their heads at their feet;  
Just something made up for Europeans  
But not Europeans exactly but  
Not Americans either,  
Just people in a place  
Who all come from somewhere else  
Without words like  
"Mushu" wrapped in not-origami  
Like China but not China  
Or anywhere else exactly—  
I just hate how it pretends

# GOODNIGHT

BY AARON WILDER

There's not so much laundry  
On the line.  
Grief flutters in the empty  
Spaces where your blouses used to fit.  
Not so many baskets—  
Not so many loads—  
The loads I no longer carry  
Are the heaviest.

Not so much food  
To cook—but more left over—  
Not so many forks or knives.  
An empty dishwasher makes  
The whole house feel like  
Swiss cheese.

I leave the back door  
Open at night  
To let out the quiet.  
Moths whittle  
Through the halls  
Up the stairs  
In your open door.  
I never shut out the lights  
In your room anymore.

# BUT IT'S NOT PUPPY LOVE

BY MALLORI SMITH

He knows  
love is lost.  
Rosie matters  
but little.  
It's his own pride  
that will be battered  
His mind that will pay  
the price  
He thinks of the best . . .  
For her—  
For himself.  
As one lone bead of sweat  
Rolls down his nose  
His eyes get sad  
And his nose snuffily  
like a puppy's  
As he tells her  
you are only—  
my best friend.

# THE DRAGON'S BREATH

BY MALLORI SMITH

The knight stands,  
As he is destroyed.

Young and immortal,  
Fearless, yet alone,  
He watched  
In the dark.

His head turned back:  
The town in the valley  
Reflected beads of amber,  
Tarnished lives of men.  
Flinted sparks,

None else combats  
The coal-fire that confronts them

The Dragon breathes  
On the boy's up-raised face.  
As he falls to the ground.

# UNTITLED

BY MALLORI SMITH

Look to the stars, the moon, the earth,  
Can one find happiness in earth's wide girth?

Is it humanly possible so?  
"Folks never get what they want," \* you know.

Why are the children happy still?  
Knowing one day they will feel—

The pangs of love; death's embrace,  
The Grim Reaper's sickle mace.

But then we know, I hear a call  
Isn't it better than never living at all?

---

\* *The Running of the Tide* by Esther Forbes

# WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO AFTER COLLEGE?

BY JONATHON CIANI

I'll be a drunkard, Ma.

Sleep at noon.

Deal cards at midnight.

Rent a bungalow on the beach.

Grow bananas

in my backyard.

Hop a steamboat for Japan.

Learn Samurai tricks

for two weeks or three.

Maybe drive a garbage truck.

Pound piano keys

on stuffy urban streets.

I could be a diplomat.

Some grinning Napoleon,

sign treaties with a sword.

There's always lawyer or doctor

or teacher or sheriff or

ice cream man too.

Really, Ma, I want

to drive a herd of cattle

across some unpaved land.

Ride off into

boiling horizons

and see where I end up.



## ICE-BREAKERS

By JONATHAN CIANI

1.

I plucked the Pleiades  
from their branch of space  
and wove them into  
a necklace.

If you listen,  
I'll tell you how.

2.

I learned to breathe underwater  
in Atlantis  
and came back  
to tell you.  
Aren't you interested?

3.

I've  
started  
a goat ranch  
in Ghana  
fished  
for Pike with my  
bare hands  
sprinkled  
salt on a dove's  
wings to keep it from  
flying away.  
And still  
you say we've  
nothing  
to talk about?

# CHILDHOOD

BY JULIETTE

Mickey Mouse sheets crumple  
over purple bear and brown-eyed lions.

Deafening light pours into the room  
muffling the screams outside.

Grasping tight to childhood, I lose myself.

The soothing rays cover my fragile form,  
blinding the eyes, warming a heart,  
granting the grace of peace.

Illuminated dust, assorted angelic specks  
harmonize in midair, tickling my nose  
while dancing to some inaudible symphony.  
I giggle. The door slams shut.

Broken clouds from within thrust themselves upon me,  
yet Light lingers as my last defense against the tempest.

Darkness is victorious, radiance departs  
but He whispers honey-tinged promises of return.

Amid cotton beasts, veiled under humble covers

I will cling to this bruised innocence.

The footsteps grow closer, the shadow is here.

Again, I am alone.

## READ BETWEEN THE LINES

BY ABIGAIL ROACH

I've had the same sickening taste in my mouth for ten years now. The taste of quicksand in my throat. It is the realization of the world turning in my scarred body on a bed of nails.

Sometimes I feel like Sister Blanche, always relying on the kindness of strangers. I want you to love me.

Have you ever read Catch 22? One of its most basic principles is that a crazy person would not know if they are crazy. But I am, and I know it.

The Quicksand—It rises, it falls, it spreads. I told you, I'm suffocating.

You didn't know how badly I wanted you. And how could you? It's 1:04 in the morning and I'm still wondering why—

What is that you need? Why me?

I don't ask, because I don't want you to ask too.

You told me things would be better tomorrow. I said that tomorrow always has the potential to be better; you just have to let it take shape.

You have to know that I feel responsible. You have to know that I love him, that I will always love him.

You don't know me. Someday you will forget about me, like an old birthday card collecting dust in a desk drawer.

I don't love you. I don't even really know you, but I need you to love me. It is the only thing that makes me feel real, that makes the quicksand subside.

# COLD, EMPTY SPACES

BY ABIGAIL ROACH

My mind feels heavy,  
Trying to beat out  
The weariness  
Bundled in layers,  
My fingernails  
Still hues of cold,  
I try to focus  
On their voices

Words come off  
Their tongues:  
Orthodox  
Sacraments  
Goodness  
Truth—

And I try,  
And try,  
The words shifting  
Inside me,  
But I can never  
Quite make them out—

I just want to stay warm  
And not have to think  
About what the words mean—  
When I shut my eyes,  
When I don't want to be  
For just a little while,  
When I burrito in your  
Down blanket,  
My face buried in a pillow,  
Thinking—  
It would be better if I didn't understand

## PEOPLE SIFTING

BY ABIGAIL ROACH

The human body,  
A fragile laugh  
Of lilies in  
My grandmother's garden,  
She never really  
Had a green thumb—

Mummy makes  
Earl Grey with loose-leaf,  
Warming my hands  
And after, trying to read  
The remnants in the bottom.

I don't speak to  
Gregory anymore,  
I only obey the formalities,  
There will be beer on birthdays,  
Look at all the pictures on the  
Walls—

So much could be said  
Walking to class  
With Andrew Popp,  
Our faces bitten  
I wore my thick blue socks,  
I said I needed  
The warm weather to come.

## GRASP OF CLARITY

BY PHILIP FREDERICK

From my childhood on  
Everything is connected  
Things I did that were wrong  
Problems I never corrected

What happened in school  
A life never perfected  
To live so cruel  
They are all connected

The relations I have  
I am now more affected  
They act as a salve  
For a heart so infected

And now there is hope  
For life to be directed  
I see how to cope  
For life is all connected

To rise above myself  
I know my directive  
In loving Love itself  
I gained a life giving perspective



# ROBED IN NIGHT

BY PHILIP FREDERICK

Cloaking myself in darkness  
Being one with thee  
All in mind is stalling  
In the night I can see

Floating in Your ocean  
The Bright Star shines in power  
Enveloped in Your Love  
Brought to life by the Flower

Present me not, for I will wither  
Be still, she whispers in my ear  
And the dawn comes with a breath  
Then I shed a joyous tear

# DIRECTION

BY PHILIP FREDERICK

Turning like a spinning top  
My heart feels like an icy rock  
The soul swims in an ocean of fear  
Why does the future appear so near?

Is there dawn upon the black skies?  
Is there light for my ravaged eyes?  
Mercy lacks in these eyes so blind  
Fear clouds my heart icily lined

## CINNAMON ROLE

BY CHARLES PEÑALOSA

Meaning and sense emerge  
one drop at a time to the coffee pot.  
One awakens the way  
pieces of toast or bagel leap from the toaster.

Initial apathy is apparent as one slaps  
chunks of cream cheese  
to the surface of an unevenly-sliced bagel  
without bothering to spread it.

Patience develops by keeping yourself  
from tapping your shoes on the floor.  
Yes, the eerie green light of the microwave  
will change one slow number at a time.

Thus, one should not forget  
that life is like floating in a bowl of cereal.  
Humility involves seeing ourselves  
as small, plain rings of Cheerios  
instead of crunchy, frosted corn flakes.  
All will be soggy after the milk is poured.

Instead, we should learn how to live  
like instant Eggo waffles. Cold and hard  
in the freezer, they nevertheless wait in hope  
for somebody to come and heat them up.

## STARGAZING

BY CHARLES PEÑALOSA

The crimson sleeping bag unfurled near the heart  
of the dim soccer field, I aim the flashlight  
at the map of the ocean above—

the borderless sea of dusts and specks  
distorted by the glare of civilization.  
She stands up, her feet planted

on the moist cushion of grass, her misty breath  
ascending like smoke signal, unsealing  
the mute, ancient fables frozen above.

First we view the heavens from the tip  
of the dipper—the key tied to the end  
of Franklin's kite. Arms stretched open,

like an unfolding of wings, we then sway  
in a waltz of azimuths and altitudes,  
surveying the firmament for the Warrior's belt.

# BONFIRE

BY CHARLES PEÑALOSA

*for my brother seminarians*

The soothing flame finally begins to seep  
through the moist logs, frail branches,  
and crumpled leaves. Warm smoke  
competes with our misty breath.

The strumming of guitar, the sound of laughter  
tease the cool breeze and entertain the flame.

The fire refines the skewered marshmallows—  
interiors soften, outer shells turn brown.

The more wood fed as fuel, the more ashes ascend,  
like fireflies fleeing to heaven. Standing up,  
my shoes stepping on the cold, wet soil  
and dead leaves, I begin to stare upwards.

New stars have formed in the sky.

# ACCEPTANCE

BY CLAIRE CALLAHAN

*He was pierced through for our transgressions,  
He was crushed for our iniquities;  
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,  
And by His scourging we are healed.*

Isaiah 53:5

He was all that was  
pure, good, and light  
Yet accepted all that was  
filthy, evil, and dark.  
This burden He bore  
without a word  
Even when He knew  
what lay in store.

*He was pierced through for my transgressions,  
He was crushed for my sins;  
The beating for my well-being fell upon Him,  
And by His scourging I am healed.*

As I have accepted Him  
my Lord and Savior  
I accept my troubles.  
His trials were greater than  
mine  
He is Perfect  
I am not.  
I must accept my  
fate  
because He is Just.  
This is why I pray without  
ceasing  
So I may  
be like Him.

## DISPATCH

BY JONATHON CIANI

*McNary, AZ—*

Scary McNary. His father and uncle chant in unison as the truck rolls past the shacks lining the highway. Broken rakes, plastic garbage bags, diapers, shredded tires like charred scales—detritus chokes along the roadside and steals his gaze away from the tall pines and the open marshes. An Indian in a baseball cap spikes a glass bottle toward the ground. Two more Indians lean together outside the dry-goods store and spit into plastic cups.

Worms? asks his uncle.

Might as well. When the truck stops, his uncle gets out and talks to the two Indians on the step. So this is McNary, boy. Not a nice place.

No. Has it always been like this?

Pretty much.

The two Indians lead his uncle over to a cooler on the side of the dry-goods store. He sees a sign traced in kindergarten-red marker that reads: Night Crawlers 5-\$.  
As I have said before, McNary is a place where the night crawlers are the only ones who are not afraid of the dark.

Like their version of a lemonade stand, his father quips.

One Indian reaches in and pulls out a round Styrofoam container.

What do they do here?

They used to have lumber mills back off the highway but those shut down. The ponds back there have pike in 'em but the Indians don't let anybody go back there and fish. Don't know that I'd want to either way.

And we're off, says his Uncle after the door slams shut.

Let me see those worms. You never know with Indians.

His uncle pulls off the lid and digs a finger into the dirt. He pulls his head up and grins. His father glances over and bursts out laughing. You gotta be kiddin' me.

The boy looks in and sees three brown night crawlers dried out like cigarette butts.

## COME RAIN SNOW OR HELLFIRE FALLING FROM THE SKY

BY JONATHON CIANI

I maintain it's my right to keep money I earned by Business. Business. Something those damn captains ain't never heard of. And if they did hear of it they only know that Business is a well-set table at which they can eat their fill while those that set the table scurry about them like spiders who ain't even deserving of names, just little stomps. They don't stomp with boots though. No. These damn captains use their thick stacks of paper smacked full of little print and lines to sign or initial but basically just to tie a man down or nail him up.

And even when a man carries four thousand dollars cash in his wallet for recreation like I do—the Government owns him. Carries the man—even a man with over two hundred college credits—me—in its pockets. Sometimes I feel I don't own even a soul after the Government finishes up with me. I remember when I could feel my soul like a pleasant weight in my pocket. Feel it honest and that I for sure owned it cause I owned my property of my own right. But they've stomped that feeling away. I can't believe it even strung up between these four cold walls and lying on this stale mattress on a damn rusted frame on which the Government ought to have no right to commission me. Me. With four thousand dollars pocket change. Scary, isn't it? And I'm a man not liable to get scared. Not even by two captains creeping on my land. I handled them. Cause scared is just another word to me.

I know some men who'd have jumped scared at a letter from the Government full of words that look big, words the captains think someone like me doesn't even know: Evasion, Arrears, Subject To Seizure. But me—with over two-hundred college credits—I've seen some pretty big words. And know how to use them. But I didn't send any words back when they didn't bother to leave a man what's his.

When the letters started coming, Lorrie, my ex-wife, a woman who never set foot in a college, started to fuss. She'd say my name slow and talk fast from there, "These taxes need. To be taken care of."



"Don't you go worrying baby."

She just couldn't let it drop, as scared as she was by those big words, "But you need to pay them. We have responsibilities to be good—"

"Good what? I am a good American Lorrie and you better get that straight. These captains don't know Business. Or this land. What I gotta pay taxes for? You know Grandfather bought this land before the captains crisscrossed every acre of these rolling hills with their fences and codes and other technical bowties that serve no other purpose than to ring a man's neck at their pretty beck and call. I own it. And I won't pay rent to a soul or even captains who wouldn't know a soul if one exploded through their eyes. I own it, hear?"

"But—"

"I won't—can't—let them take from a pocket weighed down by four thousand dollars. Earned through hard work."

"You didn't work for it and I hate when you say you did. All you did was sell out—"

How could I let her speak to me like that?

"I—I'm bleeding." On the floor where she'd landed she held her head in a crooked arm. Little sickening tears bumbled out of her eyelids.

"If you talk tough you better get tough little girl. I didn't earn all my money to listen to you. So I'll say I earned it cause I did."

She ran off after that. Not strong enough to stand up to the Government. And not long after she ran, the captains started pestering.

And everything was their fault. Don't listen to the papers. The way they called it a pattern of destructive behavior when all a man did was defend his property. Those two little punks. Up to no good. I know how these punks are.

Anyway, I was taking a walk with my shotgun—just in case—when these two punks start waving from a little hilltop on my land. Where the Government's stabs into it. "What you punks want on my land?"

"Well, sir, our car broke down and we're just waiting for the tow-truck. Not a problem is it?"

"And that gives you the right to scout my land, eh?"

"Scout your land?"

"I know you punks."

When the sheriff came to the house, he told it different. Said I took pot shots. Damn sheriff would believe two punks. He's a captain too so I shouldn't be surprised. Told me he'd be keeping an eye on me and now he tells the papers that he shoulda known about my destructive tendencies. Then maybe those two captains—

But what does a sheriff know? I don't owe the Government the money I earned damn whatever Lorrie says. It's not my fault Grandfather didn't go to Business school. Or that Dad didn't know the Constitution and how our very Government violates it by taking what a man's earned, drilling it out of him with some string of words like property taxes. I just secured what's mine.

And the captains couldn't tolerate it. That's what drove them out to my place. They shoulda known a man would defend his land. They drove right up my gravel drive and scared dust into the air. I watched them through the window. The way they got out and looked around, hungry for what they couldn't have because it was mine.

When they knocked I didn't answer. I brought the whiskey down out of the kitchen cabinet and took a pull. They knocked again and I walked into the hallway to the big cedar cabinet and unlocked it. The third time they knocked, they started calling out my name.

For a split I thought maybe, just maybe the fancy Government dispatched its agents to apologize. After all, I am a man who carries four thousand dollars pocket change, a man who has over two hundred college credits, and owns fifty-five acres.

So I opened the door and the two men, in nice pressed suits, that never did carry four thousand dollars in their pockets, these two captains asked to sit down.

"Why don't you just go ahead and put your feet up on the table, too."

They didn't know how to take me: Their eyes started to bounce like pin balls: looking at each other, then back to me. Them at the table, me next to the cedar cabinet that I'd just unlocked.

"Go right ahead sirs and get on with the apology. I've got plenty of land to enjoy without you two straightjackets."

"Excuse me?" asked one of them, with a serious look that almost made me burst out laughing like the night I came home from the casino and read Lorrie's three line note about leaving me.

"The apology you owe me." He kept that serious face and my hand itched toward the cabinet latch. "The apology for all of the letters. The apology for the fact you've tried to steal my land and even my soul. My land and me a man who carries four thousand dollars—"

"We're here to collect what you owe."

He killed himself by saying it. I hauled the shotgun out of the cabinet and pulled the trigger to pulp the captain's head and chest. The other one dove for cover, but I tugged on that trigger again and the buckshot pulped him where he groveled scared on the ground. Blood decanted from both bodies and stained a drunken circle on my fine marble tile.

Even dead I didn't want any captains on my land so I lugged their pulped bodies into the bed of my truck and drove out to the highway -and dumped them in the ditch on the other side of my land. Someone found 'em soon enough and the next time the captains swarmed my place there were too many of them to shoot and they got me quick before I could even unlock the cabinet. They started laying into me with their big words: Murder, First Degree, Rational Intent, Violent Recluse, Wacko. They pounded all these nonsense words into the sharpest sickle the world ever did see.

I'm sure they've found a way to get my land now. Not out of respect for law but just to satisfy their appetite to see a man who could flash four thousand dollars out of his wallet, a man like that, strung up and butchered, nailed here in this jail cell to do nothing but wonder when they'll go ahead and capitalize his—my—punishment. To wonder why he even needs a body anymore after they ripped his soul out of his pockets.

# FLEUR DE LIS

BY CHIARA BELLADOCE

On the nights when it is most difficult to fall asleep, I look for the little dancers on the ceiling. They glide, leaving trails of shadows along the walls and disappear across the pane of glass that separates me from heaven. They dance as if they are free, yet they can only twirl when the lights go dim and my eyelids are weak but somehow are wide open to watch. Angels somehow depend on my movement in those last moments of wakefulness, my readiness to stay with them and imagination to guess at what their houses must look like. Thank God I found reason to keep all three.

Those nights I usually think of how I might surprise Daddy with a new art project. Maybe a sculpture, a paper-maché mask or fleet of origami boats. I make them to see how he puts things in their special place: in flocks upon the shelves lining the ceiling of his workshop.

Then I think of the things that he builds. He lets me help him or hand him his carving knife, saw blades, or scrap pieces. No other carpenter in the county has used the so-called scrap for such things as Dad. The biggest pieces, he stacks on two slats along the side of his shop for future furniture and the next largest he collects and stores in an open plywood box. The smallest pieces and sawdust he also sweeps together, for any spills. No portion is forgotten or left to the wind if he can help it. None laid to waste. Tiny dancers still dance and stand apart from the growing darkness.

Sleeping just across the hall, the carpenter snores in his still slumber and my eyes, wide open to a movement larger than understanding, do not allow me to turn away from the tiny dancers in their most feminine gowns and their most graceful trot. Unexplainable and most beautiful, no one else sees them. Therefore, I conclude they must dance just for me.

The same window that gives the dancers a place for playful vanishing powers invited light in to wake a child's sight in the morning. Pushing back

the comforter awakens me with the aroma of dryer sheet scent and Daddy's natural handsome smell.

"Harrison's shelves today, LayLay," he states, looking up from his sandpaper in the shop. Reaching behind him and back again, he hands me a matching square. "Yours."

There he had left another piece, one he brought out of the scrap box. The shape was odd, uneven, and its use altogether ambiguous. "See what is under the roughness," he said, looking back at his task. "I think there is more to that one than I saw at first, when I cut the piece from Lee's end table."

Even at times when I saw nothing promising about the scraps he would hand me, I never could bring myself to doubt the significance of his judgment.

With each motion taking away a thin layer of knotted callous, my thoughts return to the previous night when the light danced above my head. I wondered if Dad ever saw them before he sawed his logs. The wood was firm, yet forgiving in my hands. Based on the size of the amorphous shape, somehow I assumed that its greatness would be more than exquisite but that it would be more demanding than any other. Sure, the signs of pattern peaked where the roughness was not so severe, creviced, and increasingly stubborn. There was no telling what the block might ask of me.

Hands hung on the wall indicated that I had been working for three hours when Dad stood to stretch. His sanding the shelves had brought him to the point where he could stop for a break to scratch his blades against the door jam: a signal for noon lunch. There was no need to say a thing. I glanced at the clock to see for myself: yes, the scrap kept me occupied, more than engaged somehow, and one end of the oblong-bow protruded from one end. Progress. He stood in front of his stool and then strode to the door. In hearing his heel stop at the hinges with a slight smile, I took my cue.

Chilled cola sweat dripped down my fists, each holding a glass bottle. As I retrieve bottles, Thomas, the boy from down the street, parks his bike under the kitchen window.

Thomas was one who never caught the sacredness of Saturdays, but Dad and I did not mind. Not too much. Today I could do without you. I flinch

before facing his approaching step. "Do you like Coke or Dr. Pepper, Mr. Elpersman?" she implored.

"Well, hello, Elena." His tone and expression are both self-absorbed.

"Hello, Thomas. What has Saturday brought you?"

"A flat tire and a lost argument."

"Your mom?"

"Who else? Hey, Dr. Pepper will do me."

He dawdled in the door of the icebox, waiting for me to notice his flirtatious yet preoccupied pose, hip leaning against the jamb with head bowed as if in contemplation. When will I be able to take you seriously, Mr. Thomas?

Handing him his can meant that he would eat with us, too. We all sat down, Thomas in my miserable spot. "How's ol' Miss Finch hanging in there these days?" Thomas commented on her pale transparent yellow curtains pulled away from the window with a tip of his chin. Who is he to ask after her without actually caring to know the real answer? I wished to know where the splendor of Thomas came from. Dad was apparently dreaming.

"She does not come out much unless she has to," I respond, not trying to hide my irritation; Miss Finch just happened to be one of the most crotchety, white-perm old women that my hands ever helped. Since before Dad brought me home from the delivery room, ol' Miss Finch ordinarily kept to her folding chair to the right of her front door, watching to see when I would next come by her chain-linked fence.

Her favorite line directed at me upon my running along the fence in the grass, gloriously barefooted: "No shoes means cold feet. You know what cold feet will do for ya! WHERE do you think you're going?" Or, in the summer when I would offer the flowerbeds a sip she'd tell me, "Don't you be spraying that hose in my yard! I can hardly keep up with the grass growing as it is."

Not to say that I owned her, Dad seemed to have the same sense of possession and shows it by changing the subject. Thomas's question does not merit a full answer.

"She's been slowing down, son," Dad replies, not needing to glance to find if she was staked out on her porch or not. I soon realized he already knew she was inside, not in her usual pose in her porch. Not skipping a beat he continues, "What has your mother got for you today, Tom?"

Thomas came over more often when his mother worked a double and drank to make it a triple. "Oh, she's . . . she just needs to be alone for a while." Looking up from his hand fiddling the aluminum tab, he abruptly took the top sandwich and devoured it. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught Miss Finch's fingertips ever so slightly brushing the windowsill from inside. She'd left a flower pot there, holding a mound of loose, dark earth.

We finished our lunch soon after that, and Dad sent Thomas on his way. My eyes meant a scold, but Dad would not receive my silent retaliation. I went back to my sanding before Thomas climbed back on his seat to depart. I kept my eyes fixed on the project resting in my palm, trying to decipher the grooves as if they held the meaning of my life.

"It's time that you go and see Miss Finch, Elena." I dropped the sandpaper and looked him in the face. He sometimes suggested I go to help other mothers in the neighborhood if they needed an hour to buy groceries or to chat with someone old enough to say and spell "Mississippi," but never had he told me to go to Miss Finch. She clucked her tongue, shook her horrid wrinkles, and demanded full upright attention. The last woman I thought to visit would be her. She found grounds for disappointment rather than any affirmation of grace. My head commanded that I refuse the request, but my heart moved with pity somewhere down deep.

Must I go? It was then that I realized she'd never invited me in.

"She would never be the one who would ask," Dad whispered, almost to himself.

That night the angels did not dance. I imagined them congregating in their iridescent gowns; glorious in their attire and expression, waiting in the wings ready and anticipating a grand debut. But they never came for me. Nor for many nights after that and I wondered if I had lost something, that is, lost something that would attract them to where I live. After they did not visit for



over a week; I was convinced I needed to invite them back, if only I knew how to relay the message.

Every one of those days, Dad and I worked on our projects, but mostly on Saturday. One of the days, which I can not rightly remember, Miss Finch accosted me. I did not have to go to her, as Dad intended. She came to me. I was on my way to the shop to check on the project whose end still remained a mystery to me. Her eyes had become greener, sadder, and paler than I remembered.

"Have you and your Daddy been building?"

"Yes." I rattled off his list of projects.

"And you?" Showing any interest in my work perked my ears.

"I am not sure what mine is." Something brought me to want to show her. "Want to see it?"

A faint glimmer in her eye said yes. I ran to the workbench and retrieved it, letting it gently rest in the palm of my hand. Returning to the fence, I produced the seemingly misshaped wood for her inspection.

She took it from my hand, turning it over and around in her own palms as she leaned over the top of the fence. "Perfect."

My look must have given away my unsaid thoughts because she returned the piece to my own possession quickly, forcibly, and hobbled back to her porch and inside. Abruptly she stooped to the sill where her pot sat with no evident sprout. Picking it up, she shoved it out of sight to the far corner of her porch. It shattered. The dirt lay everywhere. *Probably to release some of her tension from wearing those elastic-band, tablecloth cotton pants.* I never went to see her that summer and the dancers did not come to see me.

Once school started again, the fall months kept me bundled up. Saturdays meant ballgames and cookouts, science projects and new pedestals. I only spied Miss Finch once when I was raking the leaves beside the shed. Dad was in the shed, piddling around with his tools and toys. Happy for the colors but not the extra layers of shirt and scarf, I heard her porch door open and looked up to find her approaching my waist-deep pile. Time had passed it seemed as I stood above her now. She slumped, her hair falling out of its curl.



She looked to have lost several inches in height but by looking at me, I knew something in her was more alive than anything in me.

She was holding a pot, green in hue, matching the last soft summer grass and somehow her eyes, too. I crossed the yard and around the fence to meet her.

She lifted the pot into my hands, and motioned toward the card attached by an evergreen ribbon wrapped around the lip of the pot. Nodding to show that I understood, she hobbled back to her rocker, now with an extended back and wide seat, one far too big for her to fill. She stared across the street and into a nothingness, not at me.

Not sure when it actually dawned on me, but that woman was mine in all of her aggravation, droopy wrinkles, and feeble step. I brought the pot of dirt into the shop and opened the note. There she had written gracefully in her ornamental calligraphy:

*The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given  
to a people that will produce its fruit.*

Laying the note next to the pot on the workbench, I turned to face Dad later. "Why is it that she can be so angry, yet stop and show some sort of interest in what I am doing or making. Why would she say these things? Why should she care?" A second later, Thomas's head walked past the window and Dad moved to the door to greet him. We would continue this later, his silence said.

Exchanging pleasantries, Thomas's expression spelled urgency, expectation, and approximation. He tries to read me, but never completes the correct calculation. I had slipped into a daydream and Dad had left, catching me off-guard in the shop with Thomas. "I came to ask you to the fall dance." His gaze bore through my being. I could not accept his offer. He should have known it.

"I cannot," was all that I knew to say. He hesitated as if to check for confirmation that I was sincere, that there was nothing left to read. He turned to leave.

"Thomas knows his poverty but forgets that he is a beggar. Miss Finch becomes weary of her poverty but kneels." Dad had slipped back into my sight. Somehow I knew he had not left. He took a step into the shop and opened a drawer of his largest chest. He pulled out a velvet pull string bag, one that once held expensive jewelry. He pulled the contents out of the bag, oddly shaped but with definite grooves; a distinctly saintly shape. No longer a block of misshapen wood, two curls extended to the left and right of a band and a diamond rose up between them.

"This is called a fleur de lis. It means a number of things for many people. For some it is a symbol of royalty or saintliness, life and prosperity. Since you have been occupied, I recognized the vague shadow of the flower a couple of weeks ago and carved where the roughness concealed its life." Handing me the piece, I took in its sharpness and simplicity, simplicity polished with a rich stain. "Put it in a special place."

I buried Miss Finch in early April when the rains wash the good earth. Few came to see the burial, but I decided it did not make me much of a difference. I decided that I would leave the fleur de lis with her, an emblem of new life and happy beginnings for a woman so few really sought to know.

With the heavy grey pouring over us, washing us, I met the green pot where it sat by the shop stoop once we got home. A stem reached as if going past the raindrops, bending but not breaking under the weight of the tears from the heavens.

There a fleur de lis erupted for me in red, dancing in the thunder. I stopped in my tracks and Daddy saw too. "All for little *you*."

# CONSTANT, LIFE-GIVING WORK

BY CHARLES PEÑALOSA

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the word “liturgy” refers to “the participation of the People of God in ‘the Work of God.’”<sup>1</sup> Today, work is generally viewed as a burden only done in order to gain money or to reach a desired result. However, work becomes more than grudging actions when imbued with love. It is in this context that we have the liturgy as the highest form of prayer to God, specifically through the Eucharist, or the Mass.<sup>2</sup> The Acts of the Apostles provides the earliest account of the Eucharistic liturgy for early Christians. A century later, Church writers such as St. Justin Martyr continued to describe the same structure of the liturgy. The liturgy then received elaboration with the standardization of the Mass during the Counter-Reformation and adaptations made during the Second Vatican Council. Instituted by Christ Himself, the Eucharist has been a continuous source of inspiration and strength for Christians, its spirit unchanged as it evolved organically over centuries of Christian worship. The continuity of the liturgy reflects the growth of the Church as the Body of Christ.

Early Christian accounts show evidence that the Eucharistic liturgy has remained unchanged throughout the ages. By the aftermath of Christ's Ascension, we already see in the Bible that the early Christians placed great importance on the celebration of the Eucharist. In the book of Acts, we read, “Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the

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<sup>1</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference Publishing Services, 1992, section 1069.

<sup>2</sup> Wuerl, Donald. *The Catholic Way: Faith for Living Today*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 2001, p. 146.

people" (2:46-47).<sup>3</sup> This became the model for what we now call the Mass, or the Eucharist, which is divided into two parts: the gathering to read Scriptures (Liturgy of the Word) and the "breaking of bread" (Liturgy of the Eucharist).

From the time the book of Acts was written, the liturgy continued to evolve in an organic way. This growth is described by the writings of early Christians, such as St. Justin Martyr. In his letter to the pagan Emperor Antoninus Pius, Justin describes the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy in its second century form:

The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits. When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.... When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the 'eucharisted' bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.<sup>4</sup>

Based from this account we can see that the structure of the Eucharistic celebration has remained the same over several centuries, since the Mass still consists of listening to the writings by apostles and prophets (readings), admonition by the presider (homily), thanksgiving (Eucharistic Prayer), and the giving of the "eucharisted' bread, wine, and water" (communion).

The Mass was then further elaborated in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, during the Counter-Reformation, as the Church was guarding her orthodoxy against schismatic Protestants. In 1545, Pope Paul III called a general Church council to gather in Trent, a northern Italian city. One of the concerns discussed was the standardization and reform of the liturgy. According to pastor and historian Fr. Thomas Bokenkotter, this reform was embodied in the formation of the *Missale Romanum*, or the *Revised Roman Missal*, in 1570. Because of the *Missale Romanum*, the reformed liturgy, or the "Tridentine Mass" as it has been called, became a "pedagogical tool for instilling the Catholic sense of

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<sup>3</sup> Scripture quotations are taken from the *New American Bible*.

<sup>4</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 1345.

tradition, emphasizing the clarity, stability, and universality of Catholic doctrine.”<sup>5</sup> However, the term “reform” of the Liturgy is misleading since the word implies substantial change. The Council of Trent did not establish revolutionary amendments to the structure of the Mass, but merely confirmed and enriched the meaning of the liturgy. The *Revised Roman Missal* paved way for stricter instructions for priests when celebrating the Mass, thus ensuring unity in the whole Catholic Church.

Because of the standardization of the Mass, the Eucharistic liturgy remained stable and practically unchanged for four centuries.<sup>6</sup> By the mid-1900s, however, Pope John XXIII, felt the need to call a general council to be held in Vatican City. Historian Chester Gillis tells us that the pope “emphasized that the Council was to be an *aggiornamento*—an opening of the windows to let a fresh breeze blow the cobwebs out of the church’s many nooks and crannies.”<sup>7</sup> This “fresh breeze” was manifested in the change in the view of God. According to Gillis, “[a] shift from classical culture to modernity occurred accompanied by a greater appreciation for the immanence of God instead of the transcendence that pre-Vatican II theology emphasized.”<sup>8</sup>

The liturgy was then affected because of this shift in view. The former stress on the transcendence of God implied a great separation between God and His people, since God is eternal and immaterial. The new focus on the immanence of God resulted in a feeling of proximity between God and His people, since He manifests Himself through His creations. Thus, the Mass was allowed to be celebrated in the vernacular, or language of the people, while before Vatican II, Latin, the universal language of the Church, was used. The

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<sup>5</sup> Bokenkotter, Thomas. *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc. 2005, p. 244.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Gillis, Chester. *Roman Catholicism in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 88.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 87.

altar, which formerly stood against the sanctuary wall, was brought forward and the priest celebrant now faces the congregation in offering the Eucharistic sacrifice. Due to these changes, scholars today contend that a wall separating the clergy from the laity was torn down, since there is now a greater sense of participation for the laity.<sup>9</sup>

Although some modern-day scholars see the Vatican II changes of the liturgy as an improvement, it is important not to dwell on just one of God's attributes. The Church's view about places of worship embodies the official, unchanging perception of God: "The church building is a sign and reminder of the immanence *and* transcendence of God—who chose to dwell among us and whose presence cannot be contained or limited to any single place"<sup>10</sup> (emphasis added). In a sense, there was not really a comprehensive, 180 degree change, but a slight shift in consciousness of how God is worshipped.

This shift can be likened to the physical growth of human beings, where each body part continuously changes, but still remains the same. After 20 years, a 10 year-old boy will become a 30 year-old man, reaching the prime of his life, yet he is still the same person he was before. In the same way, although there are minute "reforms" in the Eucharistic liturgy of the Church, these changes in form are merely adaptations, the way one's body is affected by day-to-day circumstances. Ultimately, however, these elaborations are just a part of an ongoing organic growth of the Church, which is the Body of Christ (cf. Col 1:24; 1 Cor 12:12).

The endurance of the Eucharistic liturgy thus embodies the natural growth of the Church as the Body of Christ on earth. Even during the wake of Christ's Ascension, we see in the Book of Acts that the early Christian congregation already celebrated a form of the Mass. In the second century, St. Justin Martyr described the same structure of the liturgy. With the

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<sup>9</sup> Gillis, p. 90.

<sup>10</sup> *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship (Fifth Printing)*. Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007, p. 20.

standardization of the *Roman Missal* in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the spirit and meaning of the liturgy was emphasized. Three centuries later, the Second Vatican Council brought the liturgy into further maturity, taking into account the long-standing experience of the Church. The Body of Christ on earth then continues to grow, nourished by the saving flesh and blood of her Savior. This communion with Jesus Christ and participation in His eternal sacrifice defines the essence of the constant "work" or liturgy that Christians throughout the ages have been clinging to for strength and inspiration. Thus, this "work" is the ultimate bond that unites Christ, the Head, with His Body, the Church.



# **DIVISIVE RHETORIC OF BARACK OBAMA: THE NOTRE DAME COMMENCEMENT SPEECH**

BY CORRINE PURVIS

President Barack Obama presented the Notre Dame commencement speech to the graduating class of 2009. The visit to Notre Dame sparked much controversy due to the fact that Obama's pro-choice views differ from the pro-life stance of the Roman Catholic Church. His presidential campaign stressed unity in diversity and it included considerably explicit religious rhetoric. The Notre Dame speech put the Obama campaign to the test: how would his appeals for unity address the culture wars over the sanctity of life? Obama met that challenge by calling for an open dialogue. The dialogue he envisions, however, is a false hope. The common ground he proposed in the speech only engendered more division.

Barack Obama has deployed religious rhetoric before and during his campaign for presidency. Obama has peppered his speeches with references to his faith and Scripture. At the Notre Dame commencement as well as in his church, the United Church of Christ, Obama describes his faith journey as a secular community organizer until he knelt before the cross and became a Christian. Obama's background helps one to understand his civil religious rhetoric.

The particular church a person attends influences their political ideologies and beliefs. With all the controversy leading up to the commencement, protesters assembled to rally and petitions were signed in order to prohibit Obama's visit to Notre Dame for the commencement speech. Father John Jenkins, Notre Dame's President, held to his promise to invite the president to the commencement. Father Jenkins told EWTN on March 23, 2009, that "Presidents from both parties have come to Notre Dame speaking on issues such as international affairs, human rights, and service." Father Jenkins realized that much controversy followed such an invitation because of Obama's stance on issues such as abortion, yet he maintains that Notre Dame is not ignoring



sanctity of life, but that one of the reasons for inviting Obama was because Notre Dame cares so much about this issue. Father Jenkins argues that, "We cannot change the world by ostracizing those we want to influence." One should be open to diverse views in order make a difference.

The speech at Notre Dame addressed students, friends and family of students, and faculty. Father Jenkins expresses boldly that, "We also foster and celebrate a distinctive mission to be a Catholic university, inspired and guided by a great spiritual tradition." Notre Dame intently expresses their identity and mission to hold to the Catholic tradition. The speech created controversy between various religious groups, specifically Catholics and other Christian traditions, because the sanctity and dignity of life is a large concern for these groups. Obama's pro-choice attitude regarding life issues such as abortion and embryonic stem cell research allowed some people to think that when he spoke, he would disregard these essential values, specifically the value of life on their campus.

Robert Bellah, one of the founders of the concept of civil religion, characterizes civil religious rhetoric in his article, "Civil Religion in America," as "not a form of self-worship but as the subordination of the nation to ethical principles that transcend it in terms of which it should be judged." Others have shown that the concept of civil religion is more complicated than just that.

Robert Wuthnow reveals in his article "Divided We Fall: America's Two Civil Religions," that, "The civil religion to which we so blithely pay homage has, however, become deeply divided. Like the fractures communities found in our churches, our civil religion no longer unites on common ideals" (1). For civil religion, there are no more common values, but rather a cultural divide between the left and right. Wuthnow coins the term, "Religious Liberal" to express the ideas of the left side of civil religion. This liberal view can be applied to Obama's civil religious rhetoric at Notre Dame.

The liberal view focuses on universal values instead of specifically American values, more on the needs of humanity in general. This view sees that, "America has a vital role to play in world affairs not because it is the home of a chosen people but because it has vast resources, has caused many of the problems facing

the world, and simply as part of the community of nations has a responsibility to help alleviate the world's problem" (Wuthnow 5). These arguments that the liberal religious make center on basic human rights and common problems of humanity. There is a special emphasis on peace and justice showing that it is a basic aspect of the Christian faith. America should serve as an example of justice to all by "conserving the world's scarce resources and reducing disparities between poor and wealthy" (5). The liberal religious embrace cultural diversity emphasizing the unity of all people. Their civil religious goal is to establish social and economic justice for all of "God's children."

Obama's style and themes are more exclusive than they appear. Even though he attempted to encompass the entire country under one religious canopy and non-denominational viewpoint, the speech appeared to have much liberal religious rhetoric.

First, Obama emphasized the ideas of peace and justice throughout his speech. In his first paragraph of religious discourse, he mentions that we need to "save God's creation from a changing climate that threatens to destroy it." Obama also instructs us to, "seek peace at a time when there are those who will stop at nothing to do us harm, and when weapons in the hands of the few can destroy the many." The liberal viewpoint leads us to seek solutions to the arms race while empowering the peace movement and making it a religious issue.

One of the main ideas that Obama wanted to get across in his civil religious rhetoric was that he wished to unite people of different cultures; Obama attempts to unite all cultures and aspects of religion under one canopy. For instance, he says that, "We should try to live together as one human family." The word "one," suggests togetherness and "family," love and respect. Obama seeks peace not only between differences in cultures around the world, but also between religious differences and political groups in America. He specifically mentions that groups of "Catholic and Protestant churches, Jewish and African-American organizers, working-class black and white and Hispanic residents," all with differences, should work side-by-side to improve our neighborhoods. Obama finds commonalities among these groups of people in an effort to unite all individuals.

Furthermore, Obama's rhetoric calls people to act for the greater good rather than for their own self-interest. Obama says that as Americans "we seek advantage over others. We cling to outworn prejudice and fear those who are unfamiliar. Too many of us view life only through the lens of immediate self-interest and crass materialism." These sentences suggest America has caused many problems of the world and it's our duty to alleviate some of them. Obama critiques American culture creating another controversial subject because his ideals express much bigger political differences, such as consumerism, capitalism, and economic policies. As Obama puts it, "The strong too often dominate the weak, and too many of those with wealth and with power find all manner of justification for their own privilege in the face of poverty and injustice." The rich should give of their possessions just as the gospel explained.

At one point in Obama's speech, he presents a scenario tackling the differences between conservatism and liberalism. Obama mentions that both a gay activist and evangelical pastor may deplore AIDS, but never unite in their efforts. He continues with life issues indicating that, "those who speak out against stem cell research may be rooted in admirable conviction about the sacredness of life, but so are the parents of children with juvenile diabetes who are convinced that their son's or daughter's hardships can be relieved." These few sentences cause controversy because they challenge conservatives' views of life. Obama's speech never appeals to our nation's founders, who deeply influenced a lasting conviction on our country, addressing our long thread of Judeo-Christian history and values, and America's efforts to be a leader for other nations by spreading God's good news.

Moreover, when Obama says, "When we open our hearts and our minds to those who may not think like we do or believe what we do - that's when we discover at least the possibility of common ground," he attempts to unite the audience. These statements coax the audience into believing that this rhetoric attempts to not change or control the audience, but to sincerely reach a middle ground. Obama's targeting of the issue of abortion in his speech does not allow for open discussion of various views, just his view on the subject matter. Just mentioning the topic of abortion in mixtures of conservative and liberal

audiences creates an undialogic atmosphere, especially when both sides may not be expressed.

Obama brought up the controversy on the platform addressing many of the controversial life issues. He confronted them directly, saying, "We're not going to shy away from things that are uncomfortable sometimes." Obama attempted to become more dialogic on the issue of abortion and other life issues in order to reach a shared understanding. He used phrases to canopy all people, such as "live together as one human family" and "solidarity binds us together as human beings sharing a common destiny under God." He used religious terminology to justify his actions for dialogue; yet at the same time, he addressed the issue by targeting the other side, challenging their view.

By speaking at a religious institution, Obama may have felt obligated to use religious language to appeal to such an audience. He names universal religious values while advocating partisan policies. This religious rhetoric, though, may just be a continuation of his civil religious rhetoric from his campaign because he uses religious rhetoric alongside political life issues. Through this religious rhetoric, he attempts to encompass the entire country under both one religious canopy and non-denominational viewpoints in order to gain unity among all members of religious and political stances.

Obama's commencement speech at Notre Dame intended to speak to all individuals and become more bipartisan. By discussing specifically controversial issues such as abortion, the tension between the liberal religious and conservative religious arose. Obama stresses unity in diversity, but fails to accomplish such a dialogue through the religious rhetoric he employs. He attempts unity, but that cannot be possible because the liberal religious rhetoric that he resorts to further divides the masses.

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## CONTRIBUTORS

**CHIARA BELLADOCE** is an English major who graduates from Marian in May 2010. She looks forward to picking the flowers of Francis's homeland and wishes to grow in understanding, to say only things of consequence. She most enjoys writing of life's sugars and spices and finding value in the ugliest.

**CLAIRE A. CALLAHAN** is a freshman and exploratory major. Reading, drawing, painting, and writing poetry are her passions, so she'll probably become a starving artist. She recently visited the tomb of Queen Elizabeth I, one of her role models. Religion plays a large role in her life. "Acceptance" is her first publication.

**JONATHON K. CIANI**, an English and Philosophy major, will graduate in May. He plans to start a rabbit farm in Southern Arizona. Someday, God willing, he'll get serious and go to law school.

**PHILIP FREDERICK** is a freshman majoring in Catholic studies. This is the first time he has had his poetry published. He enjoys hiking, walking in downtown Indy with friends, and drinking Shamrock Shakes, when in season, from McDonalds.

**KATIE HEDRICK** is a double major in Fine Arts and Art History and will graduate this May. She will be attending American University next fall in order to pursue an M.A. in Art History.

**JULIE LASHER** studies English literature at Marian and is in the graduating class of 2010. Thereafter, she will work on her Master's of Catholic Studies at St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. She likes her grandpa's strawberry ice cream best, and prefers to stay up late and to wake up at dawn.

**JULIETTE** is a Marian University student and a poet.

**KAREN McNULTY**, an English major, will be at Marian for two more years. She enjoys manufacturing facts with her colleagues at the writing center. And she always puts salt on her ice cream.

**CHARLES A. PEÑALOSA** double-majors in Catholic Studies and History. He loves to eat, read, write poems, and design. His favorite topics to write about are food and people. Two of the three poems published in this issue ("Cinnamon Role" and "Bonfire") are about his experiences at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary.

**CORRINE PURVIS**, a Communication and Theology major, will graduate in May 2011. She plans to attend law school after graduation.

**ABIGAIL ROACH** is an obscure, hermit-like writer who has dreams of owning a barracuda ranch someday. She mostly spends her time listening to *Madame Butterfly* and dressing her cats up like dead presidents. Her favorite is the calico Stubby as FDR. Her next venture is to fulfill McCarthy's vision of exposing Communists like the Girl Scouts of America.

**MALLORI SMITH** is a sophomore English major.

**TYLER R. TENBARGE** is a Catholic Studies major and will graduate in May 2012. A seminarian at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, he is following a call to the Catholic priesthood. Tyler's love of art was instilled as a child and remains an important way for him to capture a message or belief, particularly one concerning his faith.

**AARON WILDER** is a junior English major from Decatur IN. He has published two prose poems in Toaster-cheese.com.





"Lived," by Tyler Tenbarger

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