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Editor's Comments

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Editor's Comments

The Fall 1997 issue of *Grand Valley Review* is not a “single theme” issue. Nevertheless, there are some distinct motifs that emerge, and perhaps the overriding theme is the topic of community.

President Lubbers’ remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony for GVSU’s DeVos Center as part of the Seidman Business School and International Trade Center recount some of Grand Valley’s history and, most notably, single out important figures in the community of people who made the successive stages of GVSU possible. Barry Castro’s article “Polis and Polis” is adapted from a talk he gave to the Grand Valley Classical Forum. Barry applies economic methodology to an examination of cities. In troubled times, what makes a community hold together? What contributes to its falling apart?

Laurie Macdiarmid’s story “Exodus” describes the journey of a family as they move cross-country to Mexico. The mother and three children will reunite with the father in Mexico, but the fifteen-year-old daughter who narrates the story wonders whether this geographical “cure” will solve family tensions.

Catherine Frerichs’ article is a personal examination of how a teaching philosophy changes and evolves. Her desire for a participatory community in the classroom is embodied in practice — in classroom discussions where students “solve” dissent and reach understanding.

The natural world and the ecological community are the focus of two articles: Karel Roger’s opinion piece “The Truth about Global Warming” and Nancy Shontz’s satire “Another (Even More) Modest Proposal.” Paleoclimate is Roger’s field and she makes a strong argument for paying attention to science’s warnings now. In Nancy Shontz’s view, community at GVSU must include the wildlife of our woods and marshes, as well as the red-winged blackbirds and songbirds of our fields.

Poems by Linda Chown honor family and personal connections with others, while poems by Hsi Murong (in translations by Sufen Sophia Lai) use metaphors from science to reach an emotional point. The natural world is beautifully evoked in Murong’s poem “A Mountain Road” — as it is later, as well, in Helen Petter Westra’s poem “Sounds of Eve.”

“The Tourism Paradox,” by Richard King, argues for a broader, more comprehensive curriculum and more global understanding of the tourism industry. Economically important, it is vital to understand tourism as a complex subject far from being merely “leisure travel to other countries.”

Finally, Bill Osborn’s story concerns a zoo and a very wily hippopotamus who attempts to decode various signs that either deliberately or haphazardly enter its world. Are these messages of great significance or not? The artificial community of the zoo may be a stranger place than we have thought.

A word of thanks to faculty members I have consulted about design changes made for this issue of the Review. Thanks, especially, to Paul Wittenbraker and Ed Wong-Ligda in the Art Department and to Dan Royer in the English Department.

— P.C.