

Opinions

January 26, 1995

The Blue Banner

The student newspaper of the University of North Carolina at Asheville

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Weather report provided by UNCA Department of Atmospheric Sciences

Editorial

The Snow Policy, or Rather, Lack of One

Two days ago, students woke up to find the ground covered with snow. While the initial reaction of students may have been, "Alright, no class," that hope was immediately dashed by the realization that the university has no standard snow policy.

Some commuter students braved the icy roads to get to class only to discover the class they had risked their lives to attend had been cancelled. Others had to use extreme caution just to walk from the parking lots to the buildings. One student even had an accident upon nearing campus that, fortunately for her, was not as serious as it could have been.

The fact that the university has no standard snow policy causes students, commuters in particular, to make difficult decisions: risk the ice to come to class or risk losing points for not showing up.

While some professors inform their classes of their own personal snow policy, those policies are not recognized campus-wide. Therefore, even if a student knows he or she can miss one class, that student must make the decision of whether to try to attend other classes.

Although our area no longer suffers the threat of harsh winter weather as it used to, the university should nonetheless be prepared with a policy should such an occasion arise.

The Blue Banner is the student newspaper of the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

We publish each Thursday except during summer sessions, final exam weeks and holiday breaks. Our offices are located in Carmichael Hall, room 208-A.

Our telephone numbers are (704) 251-6586 and 251-6591. Our campus e-mail address is UNCAVX::BANNER.

Nothing in our editorial or opinions sections necessarily reflects the opinion of the entire Blue Banner editorial board, the faculty advisor, or the university faculty, administration or staff.

Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of a majority of the Blue Banner editorial board.

Letters, columns, cartoons and reviews represent only the opinions of their respective authors.

The Blue Banner welcomes submissions of letters and articles for publication.

All submissions are subject to editing and are considered on the basis of interest, space, taste and timeliness.

Letters must be typed, double spaced, and must not exceed 300 words. Letters for publication must also contain the author's signature, classification, major or other relationship with UNCA.

Hope, the Humanities, and a Piece of Quartz

David D. Marshall

Columnist

Many lifetimes ago, I walked the winter grounds of Dachau and saw the ovens. The camp was quiet that day and the cold Alpenwind from the south eddied across the main assembly area as I made my way across its expanse. Lowering my head to blow a warm breath into my mittened hands, I caught sight of something on the ground. I picked up and examined the object, and as I stuck it in the pocket of my trenchcoat, I wondered at how anything could reflect light on such an overcast day.

The fundamental question driving the Humanities, explained the professor, deals with those things essentially human that differentiate us from the other species. The study of the Humanities is the quest, not for knowledge per se, but for enlightenment about our identity, our purpose, our destination.

A Mensch. That's what Bernie would have called the university lecturer. That was his word for anybody he liked. As a former professor of Literary History at Berlin's Friedrich-Wilhelms University, Bernie would have

enjoyed this lecture. Frequently, he would talk of his academic days of many years ago, before the war. He would also talk at great lengths about the shock of those first days after the war when he arrived in Panama, my native country, and how learning Spanish had been so difficult for him. Only once did Bernie talk about what had happened to him during the war.

One day when I was twelve years old, he rolled up his shirt sleeves and showed me the tattoo on his forearm. I looked up and told him that my father had one, too, on his upper arm.

"A key to understanding other cultures is understanding ourselves and our own tradition. The deeper our sense of ourselves and our tradition, the deeper is our sense of humanity. The deeper our sense of humanity, the more able we are at penetrating the superficial walls of difference that hold us like caged animals to our own spatiotemporal worlds of affectation, guilt, hate, distrust, and fear." Hans Isaac Bernstein, Ph.D.

Bernie was the local Mr. Wizard. He taught all the neighbor-

hood kids how to build radios, how to fix their bikes. He would help us with our homework. This, he would say pointing to his head, I can give you; this, he would continue, pointing excitedly to his chest, this in here you have to find yourself. He showed us how things worked. The quartz crystal, he confided to us one day, is the heart of the radio.

As scholars of the art of the Humanities, continued the orator, ours should be a process of discovery; a process that envelops us and defines our identity in terms of the search for human nobility and dignity, in our past, in our tradition, as well as in our own lives.

On my twelfth birthday he showed me his tattoo, and we were alone and I could see his struggle. I am, he said, number 429017, and I could tell from the marks on his arm that this was indeed so.

My neighbor in Germany, Herr Boehm, was an old, semi-retired farmer who had served in the German army during the World War II. Several apple trees grew around the house I rented. I would give my aging neighbor's wife as many apples as I could collect. She, in turn, would bake me apple cakes, apple fritters, and apple strudel. Herr Boehm would frequently invite me over for a powerful apple wine he made himself. Despite his thick

Bavarian drawl and my Spanish accent, our High German was coherent enough for conversation.

"When men understand what each other mean, they see, for the most part, that controversy is either superfluous or hopeless." Cardinal Newman, sermon at Oxford, 1839.

On traditional German holidays Herr Boehm would always make a point of having me over for dinner with his family. One Thanksgiving Day he came over to my house and asked me if Thanksgiving was an important holiday in America. Yes, I replied, *sehr wichtig*. Very important. He said, he had thought so. They had prepared me a feast.

The night I returned from Dachau I told him about Bernie and what I had found. We both drank too much that night.

These days when I think of Bernie and Herr Boehm, of apple strudel and apple wine, of Dachau and Auschwitz, when I consider Bosnia and Chechnya, I take out that piece of quartz I found so long ago and still marvel at how it manages to shine even on overcast days.

David Marshall is a junior majoring in political science.

"my poem," by imelda sue

Erin Ryan

Columnist

MY POEM

by Imelda Sue

The pain gushes out like your
mamma's old laundry water
whoosh whoosh

Mamma comin' outside with her
print dress

and

friendship bracelet

and

orthopedic shoes

And you shout in your squirm
worm misery

"Hey, mamma, why ain't you
listenin' to me? Why
don't you care? Ain't

nothin' keepin' me

from running,

runnin' away into that

cold dark unknown -
Mamma."

But she doesn't hear.

So you run, run hard,
into the house

Tears pouring down your cheeks
like melted creamsicles

And the emptiness
fills the room as you

Pull

the trigger

and miss.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Imelda Sue (last name unknown) was born in 1979 into a small unnamed farming community in northern Arkansas. Her aptly titled "My Poem," written at only thirteen years of age, was recently compiled into a collection called "The Collected Works of Imelda Sue," and is available from Bantam Books.

Here's what the critics have to say about "The Collected Works of Imelda Sue":

"Brilliant! The world sees a remarkable new talent with the discovery of the poetry of Ms. Sue. It is haunting ..."

- The New York Times Sunday Book Review

"A remarkable achievement. Every person living owes a debt to the literary genius of Imelda Sue."

- The Atlantic Monthly

"Imelda Sue's 'Collected Works' more than makes up for being a little on the thin side with its probing sentimentality and its insight into the human condition. Ms. Sue is a visionary for our time."

- The San Francisco Chronicle

From Franz Liebshen: *The Meta-*

physics of Color: Light and Dark Imagery in the Poetry of Imelda Sue. "... it is imperative that we first examine the conflicting emotions apparent in Sue's relationship with her mother. When Sue first mentions her mother, in line 1, she chooses to present her by referring to 'mamma's old laundry water,' thus establishing a series of negative associations within the reader. In spite of this beginning, however, Sue immediately turns from the gloomy metaphor of laundry water and paints her mother in a succession of bright, colorful images, such as 'print dress' (line 3) and 'friendship bracelet' (line 5). Sue has by now thoroughly confused the reader as to the nature of her familial relationship. We no longer know whether to envision a healthy, pleasant situation or one fraught with tension. Finally, Sue makes her intentions plain with the introduction of 'orthopedic shoes,' (line 7) a foreboding construct that implies a sense of frailty or decay ..."

Spring 1995

Lit. 325 Contemporary American Poetry

Dr. Bill Weinman

SYLLABUS:

W 18 Jan Introduction

F 20 Jan Eavan Boland, "Ghost Stories" p.457

M 23 Jan Carl Dennis, "Tuesday at First Presbyterian" p.466

W 25 Jan Imelda Sue, "My Poem" (handout)*

F 27 Jan Thom Gunn, "The Man with Night Sweats" p.474

M 30 Jan Eleanor Wilner, "Bat Cave" p.488

NIGHTLINE Jan. 26, 1995:

Ted Koppel Interviews Poet Imelda Sue

TK: Wow. Every time I read this, Imelda - may I call you Imelda?

IS: I don't care.

TK: Well, every time I read this, I am absolutely bowled over. Your language ... it's just phenomenal. How, at age 13, did you ever - as the San Francisco Chronicle puts it - gain such "insight into the human condition?"

IS: I don't know.

TK: I mean, most girls your age are interested in things like (heh heh) boys, clothes, and hairspray ... but you seem already to be able to concern yourself with the deeper truths of life.

IS: I guess.

TK: You're, what ... 15 years old this year?

IS: No.

TK: Oh. Uh ... I'm sure we're all eagerly awaiting another volume of poetry. Are you working on any new writing projects?

IS: I have to go feed the hogs now.

End Interview

Erin Ryan is a junior majoring in creative writing.