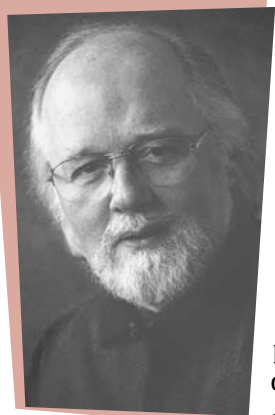


Culling books from your library is a valuable exercise for those of us who have been collecting books over many years. I confess it is something I need to consider doing, but from time to time I am the beneficiary of someone else's downsizing. Not long ago I was given a few books on themes related to religion and art. Among them was a work titled "Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature". This is a collection of essays published in 1952 from a symposium on the theme in the title. One essay I readily turned to was *Religion and the Mission of the Artist* by Denis De Rougemont. In asking what the artist does, the author turns to "the exaggerated language which we have inherited from Romanticism...". The artist *creates*, incarnates in work certain realities, and is inspired. He is quick to point out that these terms are easily used improperly and deserve more careful attention.

There has been disagreement about whether it is correct to refer to what the artist does as "creation". For many that is a term reserved for what God is able to do while mere mortals are gifted to "compose", that is rearrange things given in a novel way. De Rougemont observes that before Romanticism, we were content with to say that a musician or painter composed a work and the shift

in wording coincides with the loss in the modern time of a belief in God. The emerging autonomous individual was honoured with capacities reserved in the past only for the divine.



On the second idea that the artist incarnates reality De Rougemont is tentative. When the *continued on page 4*



Found Wanting: A Multimedia Installation Regarding Grief and Gratitude

As an artist and a storyteller I am caught somewhere between actual, real objects, and the stories connected to them. The bones I have used in this work, which were found or given to me, are real and are mostly from domestic animals we consume as 'meat' without thinking about them as animals. Though I believe all of creation is sacred and to be respected, these remains are not meant as fetishes of any kind. They are simply scavenged fragments – the evidence of death for the task of remembering life. My basic intent is to honour them and in so doing to acknowledge that, as a consumer, I have benefited from their demise. I am also implicated as a consumer in the mismanagement, poor stewardship and lack of care concerning the animals they represent.

I have been drinking the milk and eating the eggs and wearing the skins and digesting the flesh of animals all my life. I use the bones and other animal remains in *Found Wanting* as a 'reality check' against my ingratitude and to remind myself there is never a feast without a sacrifice.

... each of the bones, and all the remains of the animals that I use, carry an inherent personal story of their own, a presence outside the various contexts of definition I give them. *Found Wanting* is about giving them a voice. It is not about only facing the brutal tenderness of their dying but regarding how much our own mortality is connected to theirs. I am grateful to be part of the manifold diversity and incredible design of *continued on page 4*

News

Grant for Imago

Stronger Together 2010 is a collaboration of philanthropic organizations in Canada that wish to support creative charitable endeavours found in the Christian community. This past June Imago was pleased to learn that its proposal had been successful in obtaining a grant. The grant is to enable us to host Imago events in four urban centres in Canada. Toronto has been the primary location for Imago events in the past and this grant allows us to engage with artists and communities in four cities outside of Toronto. Plans are underway for hosting Imago evenings in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Kitchener/Waterloo and Montreal. These will take place in the first half of 2011. Dates and venues are yet to be determined but once we know more details they will be posted on the Imago website. www.imago-arts.on.ca

World Premier of *The Glory Man*

Brief excerpts of *The Glory Man* by Dennis Hassell were read aloud at Imago's annual celebration in June 2007. This work was done as part of Imago's *Green Ink Project*. On October 7, 2010 the Lamb's Players Theatre in San Diego California will host the world premiere production of Hassell's play, *The Glory Man*. This theatre company one of the 50 largest in the USA and is celebrating a 40 year history. Associate Artist Dennis Hassell (*A Divine Comedy*) gives us an epic new play filled with passion, humour, and stirring music. The production provides a glimpse into an important American story that reaches beyond the borders of the USA. This fruit comes seven years after writer Dennis Hassell's first visit to Koinonia Farm in the deep south of Georgia. The story is the true-life genesis of Habitat For Humanity birthed in a small embattled inter-racial Christian community, that stood up against both the Ku Klux Klan and southern white society. The show runs to November 14th. Perhaps there will be a Canadian production before too long. www.lambplayers.org

Arts in Mission

Two years ago Imago's Executive Director was invited to be a guest Editor for the magazine *Connections* – published by the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance. The double issue now complete will be published in October 2010 and is entirely devoted to the theme of 'arts in mission'. Senior editor William Taylor writes: "This issue of *Connections* is a glorious cornucopia of the arts in the context of worldwide mission. There is nothing like it in the world; and thankfully its lavish contents are not only available in print but free at www.weaconnections.com. There are plans to see a book published on this same topic drawing on the work done for the magazine. In a world where mission is under scrutiny and considerable suspicion this deeply Christian call may find a fresh paradigm though its engagement of the arts.

Refugees in Canada

In an unusual opportunity Imago is partnering with the Tyndale Intercultural Ministries Centre (TIM) in a project to raise awareness of refugees in Canada. It consists of an opportunity to submit artistic accounts of the refugee experience through story, poetry, photography and drawing or painting. The submissions will be considered by a panel of artists and will be part of a creative arts celebration to honour the winners and to support three Toronto refugee homes.

Flying Bow gains charitable status

Those who have attended the June Imago events over the past few years have heard the engaging and energetic music of violinist Trevor Dick. After a lengthy process Flying Bow was delighted to be approved as a charitable project in Canada. This opens new possibilities for the fine artistry of Trevor and those who work with him at Flying Bow. Imago is pleased to have had a part in launching this new project and we wish them well as they engage a wealth of talent in the good work they do.

Twenty years of Motus O Dance Theatre

The ever energetic and inimitable dance troupe Moto O is celebrating 20 years of dance. Launched under Imago back in time – they have been a consistent source of high calibre entertaining work for audiences over their 20 year history. For upcoming shows see www.motuso.com ■

Don Amero

In the fall of 2007 Don quit his day job of hardwood floor installer and began pursuing music as a full time career. So far so good...

Growing up in the North End of Winnipeg, acoustic musician Don Amero has definitely faced his share of adversity. With poverty, gangs, drugs and violence as daily reminders of the harshness of the world, Don's life was nevertheless tempered by love, support and the knowledge that a Greater Power was intimately involved in his life. Shaped and moulded by his coming of age, his music now carries both the depth of experiencing hardship and the luminosity of experiencing hope. All who have the pleasure of listening to his music will no doubt leave with his encouraging and positive message lifting their spirits.

Don was honoured with two recent awards Aboriginal Songwriter of the Year at the 2009 Canadian Folk Music Awards and Male Artist of the Year at the 2009 Aboriginal Music Awards.

How were you first drawn to music?

DA. My parents were both musicians, my dad played bluegrass guitar and my mom sang. I think watching and hearing them play amongst their friends showed me how music could be a way to have fun and build community at the same time.

You spend a lot of time on the road performing. Do you have time to write?

DA. Not as much as I'd like. Because I'm an independent artist and manage my own career, the creative process suffers a little bit.



Photo by: Nadya Kwandibens

Month at the Met

Toronto poet Caitlin Thomson now sojourning in Brooklyn New York combined a daily trek to the Metropolitan Museum with the discipline of writing poetry. A few years ago Caitlin read some of her poems at an Imago evening. Below are two products from the recent project and her brief account of what transpired.

I decided to challenge myself as a poet. For the month of September I chose to exchange the comfortable coffee shop laptop experience for something new. Every day in September I took the subway from my Brooklyn apartment to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Uptown Manhattan, to write there for an hour. Even on Mondays when the Museum was closed I sat on the steps writing poems. I wrote in various locations in the gallery – Egyptian Art, European Paintings and in the tranquil surroundings of the Chinese Garden. As part of the challenge I posted a poem a day on my blog amonthatthemet.blogspot.com. I invited guests to join me and fifteen or so participated. I wanted to examine an environment's effect on writing, the influence and interaction of art, history and routine. Now, after a month of writing among tourists I feel my poems have shifted in their subject matter and tone now more varied than before. My sense of time has altered and it is clear that this chosen environment and the discipline of the project have had a significant impact on my writing.

Caitlin Thomson

Now it seems more like I have to allot time to be creative. However, I still find when I do sit down with Rosie, my guitar, I'm still very easily inspired to write music based on what is happening in my life.

Your move to be a full time artist was a risky one – what led you to make that move?

DA. I felt the time was finally right, I had been thinking about it for a long time and had already spent the previous four years working part time as a musician and found that it could no longer be confined to a part time job, but that if I was going to have any success, I would have to give it more time and energy. I think one of the biggest reasons was that I realized I was unhappy doing anything else and looking back on it now, I haven't regretted a thing since making the decision to go full time.

What do you want your music to do for those who listen?

DA. I've always said, "I hope my music inspires and encourages people to do good things for themselves and for the world around them." I've also found, over the past couple of years I get a lot of responses from people who've found comfort and healing in my music, which is easy to understand as most of my songs come from sensitive

continued on page 4

At Sailors Delight, Take Warning

We bear these days of red skies, try to search for clues
realign bodies, the lack of rain stretching out weeks. Long sleeve
shirts, jeans, hats piled on; we strip at night,
reveal bodies brown as peach pits. Nothing keeps
the sun out, still the earth is no warmer than it was.
I chart it nightly. My father searches books
for explanations, combs footnotes for skeleton keys.

In the valley he strings oranges from trees, lights fires
underneath, shifts the oranges axis every day or two,
records the browning spots. My sons burnt
their clothes last week and spend hours blending
into trees, deer hunting. They smile more now,
teeth a shocking white.

House

I am governed by an empty sky;
the gray of dust, texture of chalk.
Home, would I recognize you now,
wood, tile, siding, stucco, knee, back bone?
I have grown accustomed to words
for shelter. Punctuation
a variable foundation.
The elements are here,
and I welcome the winds.



Betty Spackman in her studio at the Cantina Bar of her installation *Found Wanting*.
Photo by Marion Franklin.

Found Wanting

continued from page one

creation and mourn the loss of our sense of wonder about it and connection to it, as much as I mourn the loss of endangerment of species. But the work is not a protest. It is a lament. It is a story, a song, about grief, but a grief filled with hope; knowing if the right choices and the right sacrifices are made, the end of our stories can change.

Betty Spackman, from the Artist Statement in the *Found Wanting* catalogue.

This work is a major installation piece taking up several hundred square feet. The image here is on the cover of the catalogue. Now on at the Penticton Gallery BC until November 7, 2010. It will be at the Reach Gallery, in Abbotsford BC, January 27 to March 27, 2011. *Found Wanting* is an Imago project. ■

Culling books

continued from page one

artist makes a work of art it is a matter of “signifying” what would not have been perceptible otherwise. Rather than saying the artist incarnates a reality – De Rougemont prefers the idea that the artist “renders a reality intelligible, legible, audible by physical means”. In saying this he wishes to keep the meaning and the form of the work intimately connected.

Finally there is the matter of inspiration. It is hard to deny that art comes by way of inspiration but what is meant by inspiration and what source or nature inspiration has is a difficult question. It is worth noting here that this is an issue not just for the artist but for the scientist, the craftsman as well. In part it is a question of whether the one inspired has generated the inspiration from within or received a call from without. On this matter I am inclined to believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in some way – but just how or what way is still unresolved for me.

De Rougemont is convinced “that Christian meditation on the act and the work of the artist can deepen, inform and instruct itself within the framework of a meditation on the ... mystery of the Trinity”. He concludes with these words: *Art is an exercise of the*

whole being of man, not to compete with God, but to coincide better with the order of Creation, to love it better, and to re-establish ourselves in it. Thus art would appear to be like an invocation (more often than not unconscious) to the lost harmony, like a prayer (more often than not confused), corresponding to the second petition of the Lord’s prayer – ‘Thy Kingdom come’.

I find this line of thinking appealing. For some time now I have been drawn to the idea that art – of whatever sort or content – holds an eschatological thread. It expresses a longing for something more, a reaching – born of a mixture of knowledge and mystery.

It was a delight to stumble upon this essay penned some fifty years ago and have it open afresh themes and questions with which we still grapple.

John.

John Franklin, *Executive Director*
133 Southvale Drive, Toronto, ON M4G 1G6
416-421-8745 imago@rogers.com
www.imago-arts.on.ca

Don Amero

continued from page three

or challenging issues that can be hard to deal with, and I can imagine it’s nice to have some music on your ipod that is encouraging.

What is your view about the connections between art and matters of justice?

DA. I think that art is a persons way to express their feelings towards justice. Also, through art, people can be inspired to do the right thing and I guess, for that matter, they can also sometimes be inspired to do the wrong thing... I definitely believe that art has power.

How does your faith influence your art?

DA. My faith is integral to every area of my life, and when it comes down to it, my core beliefs – love, respect, truth, honesty and encouragement are what I try to pass on through my music whether it’s heard from festivals, to churches to bars. I love that fact that I can play a song in a church on Sunday morning and play the same song in a pub the next week with a great response from both audiences. My heart has always been to take what I’ve been given and use that in any situation to stir up a fire in people to do whatever it is that they love to do. ■