



W I N T E R



THE SEASON

"He disappeared in the dead of winter," wrote the great poet Wylan Hugh Auden of his fellow great poet Billy Yeats: "The brooks were frozen, the airports almost deserted, and snow disfigured the public statues..." ❄️ Winter has been hoop season on The Bluff for 112 years: the Pilot women feature their calm smiling new coach Cheryl Sorensen, and the men are led by their all-WCC (and Academic All-American) center Thomas van der Mars. See portlandpilots.com for schedules and tickets. ❄️ Winter is also volleyball season: the Pilots have a new coach, Brent Crouch, and plans to start a sand volleyball varsity program as well as the current indoor team. ❄️ Among the saints of spring: David of Wales (March 1), for whom former University president Father Dave Tyson was named; and Joseph of Nazareth, who must have been one of the great patient humble egoless men in history. A prayer for the quiet man, and for all foster fathers and stepfathers.



ARTS & LETTERS

The spring semester Schoenfeldt Writers Series visitor, February 26, 7 pm, BC Aud, free and open to all: the wonderful novelist Alice McDermott, who won the National Book Award for *Charming Billy*. See page 16. ❄️ On stage in the lovely Mago Hunt Theater: *Full Circle* by Charles Mee (February), and *Three Sisters* by Doctor Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, the greatest of short story writers, and

not a bad playwright either (April). ❄️ February 28: a concert in the chapel celebrating women of the Bible, with a brief introduction by theology professor Candace McLean. ❄️ Guests of the English department this spring: essayist Father Pat Hannon, C.S.C., February 10, reading from his newest book, *Sacrament: Personal Encounters with Memories, Wounds, Dreams, and Unruly Hearts* (Ave Maria Press); and novelist Caleb Crain, March 31. Both events are at 7:30 p.m. in BC 163 free as air. ❄️ The University annually sponsors ticket packages to musicals downtown at Portland Opera's Broadway series: this spring the events are *Guys and Dolls* (March 13), *I Love Lucy* (based on the great old show) on April 10, *Phantom of the Opera* (May 16), and *Wicked* (August 7). Information: Connie Ozyjowski, ozyjowsk@up.edu.



THE FACULTY

Joanne Warner, the University's cheerful witty passionate dean of nursing, will retire July 1, after nine years on The Bluff. During her tenure the School of Nursing started a doctoral program, launched a nationally renowned Dedicated Education Unit, and welcomed booming enrollment, among other feats; but you never met a more gracious, quietly devout, sinewy-brave, and entertaining soul. *That* will be her legacy, and enduring gift here. Best wishes, O Deanness. ❄️ Theology professor (and president, by the way) Father Mark Poorman, C.S.C., will lead a cruise for alumni and friends through the Mediterranean Sea October 7-19; the wry Father Ed Obermiller is cruise manager, obermill@up.edu, 503.943.7488 if you want to go. Venice, Naples, Greece,

Monaco, Barcelona... sigh. ❄️ Education professor Karen Eifler and theology professor Fr. Charlie Gordon, C.S.C., will host Catholic Winemakers event, featuring Columbia Valley vintners, on campus March 21. Details: Jamie Powell, 503.943.7702. ❄️ Campus composer Maureen Briare has a new record of her harp music, *Peaceful Prayer, Shores of Grace*. Email her at briare@up.edu.



THE STUDENTS

Junior Parents & Families Weekend this winter is February 20-22; the days are filled with music, meals, chances to meet with academic and career counselors, and a Sunday Mass with University president Fr. Mark Poorman, C.S.C.. Call the student activities office: 503.943.7470. ❄️ The new editor of the *Beacon* student newspaper this spring: Katie Dunn from Puyallup, marketing major and the paper's current sports editor. ❄️ Commencement Day this year: May 3. Among the honorary doctorate recipients: the terrific essayist Anne Fadiman, the great Portland cancer doctor Walter Urba of Providence, and regent Larree Renda, who started as a Safeway checkout girl and is now executive VP of the company.



THE UNIVERSITY

Campus chief chef Kirk Mustain will again host one of his unreal Chef's Tables on January 23 in the Bauccio Commons kitchen: 12 courses, the finest wines, savory desserts, hilarity. Call the alumni office to book seats (\$85 each, and worth twice that), alum-

ni@up.edu, 503.943.7328. ❄️ Awarded at the annual staff Christmas lunch in December: the employee of the year awards. The reigning administrator of the year is the ebullient director of the Freshman Resource Center, Brenda Greiner, who totally deserved it. ❄️ Retiring in February, after more than 40 years as a genius typesetter and designer on The Bluff: Sue Safve, who personally helped create this magazine for 25 years. Pithy, funny, terse, and brilliant. Sigh. ❄️

FROM THE PAST

Born January 2, 1920: the wonderful dreamer Isaac Asimov, in Russia. ❄️ January 8, 1942: another genius dreamer is born in Oxford, England: Stephen Hawking. ❄️ Among the interesting musicians born in January: David Bowie, Mozart, Schubert, Brian Wilson, Antonio Jobim, and Warren Zevon. Wow. What a band that would be... ❄️ February 4, 1902: Archbishop Alexander Christie of Portland telegraphs Father John Zahm of the Congregation of Holy Cross that he had indeed purchased 44 acres of land around Waldschmidt Hall — about a third of the present campus. ❄️ February 8, 1935: The student journal *The Columbiad* begins coming out weekly, and will later that year turn into the weekly *Beacon*, still the student newspaper. ❄️ December 29, 1937: the Irish Free State is replaced by the current Republic; the Free State had, for one day in 1922 comprised all of the island, until Northern Ireland removed itself. ❄️ February 10, 1952: Portland's Blanchet House opens, founded by University alumni; it has offered millions of meals since to the poor and homeless. *Millions*. Wow. 8 born February 11, 1799, in the village of Laigné-en-Belin in France: Basil Moreau, who would invent the Congregation of Holy Cross. Good man. Rest in peace. Prayers on your soul.



A Sense of Sacred Time and Place

"One evening a few weeks ago, shortly after school started, I walked across the campus from my office in Waldschmidt to my home. It was a warm evening and people were everywhere, sitting together on the benches under the bell tower and in front of the library, gathering near Buckley Center for a lecture, moving to and from Bauccio Commons, headed off to evening classes in Shiley and Franz halls. The lights were ablaze in Swindells, where faculty were no doubt checking on labors of love in the labs. There were frisbee players on the practice field and a constant stream of runners keeping our 24-hour-a-day vigil of jogging along Willamette Boulevard. The heavy machinery was silent where the Beauchamp Center is now rising out of the ground, but an older couple from the neighborhood was peering through the construction fence to take its measure. A crowd of students had gathered around the volleyball court in front of Fields and Schoenfeldt halls.

"Everywhere I walked, the campus was alive and was harboring and nurturing and animating people. I felt a tremendous sense of sacred time and place, and I couldn't help but think to myself: This is what we are all about, now and in the future — an intentional gathering of talent and potential and excitement and hope and community — a city on a hill, if you will — all in the name of a mission that lifts up education as intensely personal, unabashedly holistic, proudly rigorous, charged with faith, and committed to service.

"There is something that happens when people are joined and shaped by a shared purpose. Our ideals are only abstractions until we come together, until we accomplish things with one another, until we can be and become what is beyond our reach when we are alone. And here at the University of Portland we believe that when we are together the Spirit is with us, right here, in this very moment, informing our engagements and interactions and inquiries, breathing life into our mission..."

From Father Mark Poorman C.S.C.'s inauguration speech as the University's 20th president. Characteristically, he paused during Inauguration events to visit the Pilot House and take selfies with students for an hour. It was hilarious.

Save All of Yourself For the Wedding

by Heather King

"Purity strikes me as the most mysterious of the virtues, and the more I think about it the less I know about it."

- FLANNERY O'CONNOR

For years I was a barfly: the lower-down and dirtier the bar, the better. I could tell you stories. So believe me I know purity is not innocence, but it's also not some creepy snow maiden don't-touch-me weirdness. Purity has juice at the center of it or it's not purity; it's repression, it's fear, it's withholding, it's fossilizing one's "virginity" in amber, it's playing hard-to-get that's veered off to pathology.

The erotic urge behind purity is *more*, not less, intense than the erotic urge behind sex alone. Authentic purity is fueled by procreative, erotic energy that's been brought to a white-hot flame — and channeled.

I came into the Catholic Church in 1996. I've tried to remain faithful to her teachings, on sex and everything else. When I haven't, I've availed myself of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and sincerely tried to do better.

I've stumbled, I've failed, but one thing this has given me is some rough purity of heart. I go to Confession because I believe that what we do and think matters. I go because I believe someone, somewhere, needs me to be pure. Maybe it's the father of a ten-year-old girl who is contemplating molesting her. Maybe it's an adult who was abused by a priest as a kid and is about to abuse his own kid. Maybe it's the teenagers who are about to lynch Matthew Shepard.

We do not know the mercy of God. As we must, we make rules — because to have a free-for-all makes for a way worse bondage than rules — but at the end of the day we will be judged on love. For all the ways we've fallen short, aimed for pleasure divorced from joy, thought of ourselves instead of the whole world, we'll be judged on one thing: how we treated the least of these.

We'll be judged on whether we've woken up to the fact that the whole

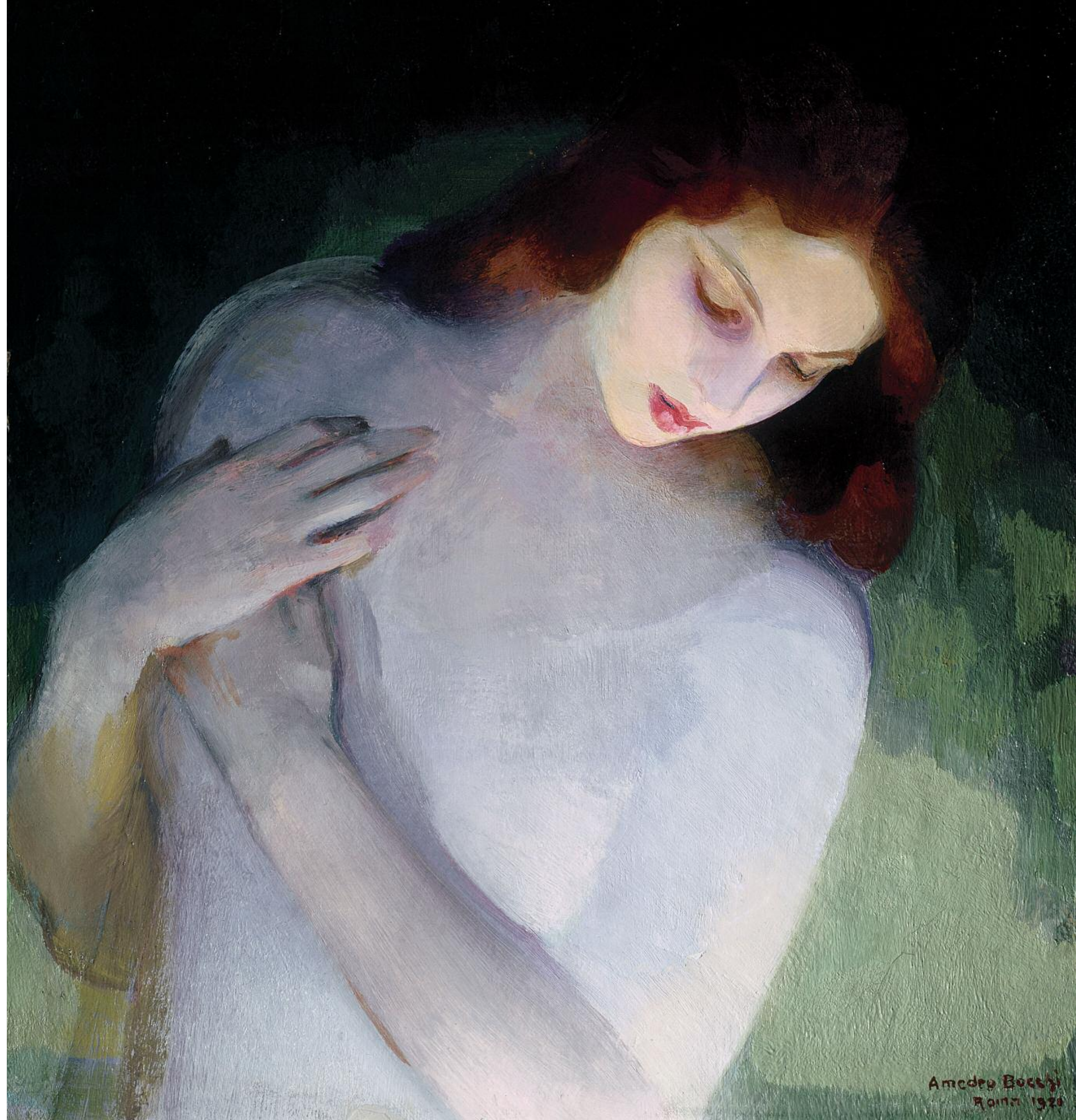
joy of life is admitting our brokenness, falling to our knees in gratitude, moving our chair a little to make way so the person beside us can sit at the table, too. We've already been forgiven; are forgiven even as we're falling short. I wonder if Confession isn't so that we can forgive ourselves.

To strive for purity in this culture, even privately, is to feel oneself a laughingstock, grotesquely out-of-step, a freak. But as Catholic novelist François Mauriac observed, "We do not know the worth of one single drop of blood, one single tear." We don't know the worth of entering into a kind of voluntary exile out of love. We don't know the worth of the simple bodily presence of someone who lives by a creed that costs.

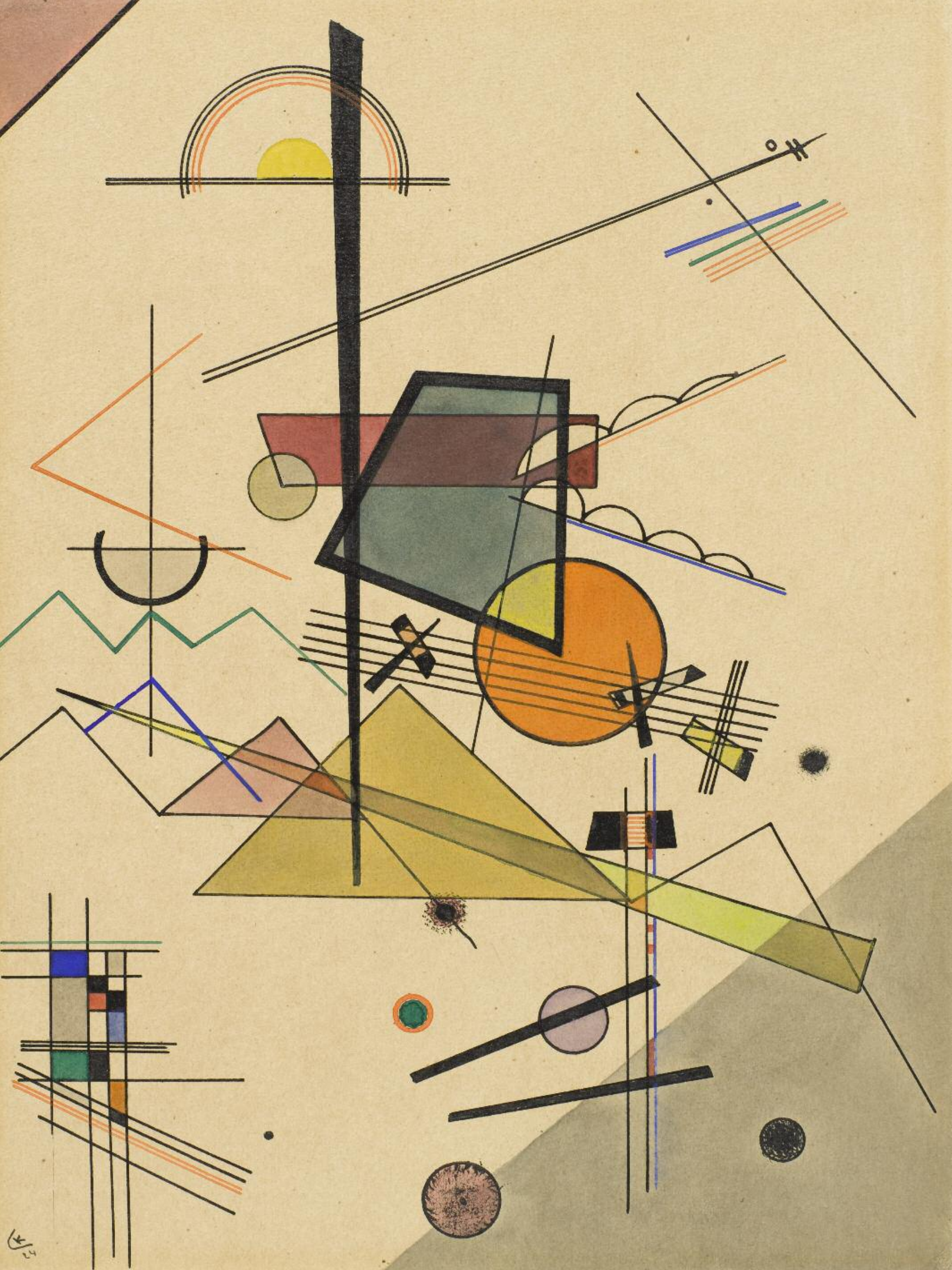
Purity is the conviction that we are all pearls of great price: not to be violated, tampered with, used loosely, or given away for less than we're worth or to someone who's incapable of understanding our value. Christianity is all invitation and all gift. To offer up my body also gives me a way not to die of the sorrow of the world; not to be crushed by my inadequacy, my seeming meagerness, my inability to "help."

So this chastity — in my case actually, celibacy — which believe me, has not been entirely voluntary, nor always joyfully, wholeheartedly embraced, is a great mystery. I have often felt like a loser, an aging outcast, an exile. I have worried that I am incapable of giving and receiving love. I have of course wondered whether I've embraced the teachings of the Church or whether I've parlayed the fact that guys haven't exactly been knocking down my door into some kind of crackpot "holiness." Pop psychology encourages me to view my situation as "sexual anorexia" but I know that's wrong be-

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Amadeo Boccia
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Writing SONGS

The impossible
joy of catching songs
that were never
in the world before.

By Jennifer Crow '03

Last year I lived in Galway, Ireland, and one day a local music shop owner who knew I was working on some songs said I could come in and use one of the baby grand pianos any time I wanted. So I'd go in there every now and again to hear the new songs a bit better. I usually used headphones, so I wouldn't disturb any shoppers. But on one day, the headphones weren't working properly, so I took them off, and played quietly, singing lightly singing over the piano, trying to fit the words to the line, when I noticed a small boy, maybe eight years old, peeking around the corner. I kept playing as he stood there for a few seconds, and then vanished. But a minute later, I heard him exclaiming to his mom: "Mammy, I thought that was the radio!"

Which made me all the more inspired to write songs.

"All you need is something to hang an idea on and you're off," said the fine songwriter Phil Collins. Yes, that's right, Phil Collins. And yes, I see you sneering, but I don't care — that man can *write songs*. I used to dream about singing a duet with him, headphones on one ear, "We Are the World" style. Well, him and Steve Perry. And Peter Cetera. And I love Ella Fitzgerald... Anyway, see what Phil Collins does with the antonyms *on* and *off*? That's where songwriters live.

Woke up this morning with a melody *and* words in my head! Nine syllables, fused with notes. Both together! I *love* it when that happens. I could hear it, sure, but it's as if all my senses were at play...this thing was soft, and I could see the arch and shape of the line. It had a kind of sad hope to it, and almost conjured up an image of snow. I felt it was the last line of a phrase, like I could hear a comma before it. But then my alarm went off, and I lost it. It was dust in the air. I tried to get it back, a fast cat out the front door. And by thinking hard, I was yelling and chasing it down the street in my pajamas. That, not shockingly, doesn't often work. So I tried to stay in the mood of my head, tried to focus on being quiet. Then a few minutes later, while brushing my teeth, I started to hear it again. Sometimes you have to chase it down by being still. I got to the piano, toothbrush in my mouth, and found its key: E flat. It doesn't always happen this way, but some days it does. You have no momentary plan to write a song, but the song reshuffles your plans for you.

Sometimes a whole song flows out of

an idea. One thing leads to another, circles back, and nudges you in the right direction until you're at the last line of the last verse. Then other times, you have to roll up your sleeves and find the counterpart. Maybe you have the chorus and you need the verse, or you have a somersaulting motif, but you have to break it in order to return. You search for two sounds in dialogue — like a spouse, maybe. Sometimes you stay in the key, sometimes you look around outside of it. In these cases, I play what I hear over and over, usually with a nondescript feeling in mind, but not the notes. Then I hit the right chord, key, combination of something, and I've *found* it. It's often surprising. Once I have two good shapes for each other, I get it down and usually walk away. I'll go back later, because I'm just too close to it at first. I'm too proud of it. Too satisfied to be objective. The feeling? Like remembering the name of an actor in a movie, the one you were struggling to recall during a whole conversation. And when you get it, finally, you want to sit back in your chair with a grin on your face and let your brain breathe happily.

I usually write in two parts — a creative child and an adult revisionist. There's often a kind of frenzy, taking notes on the sounds, mumbling words until I hear some I like. I scrape it up as best I can, jotting on torn pieces of paper, glad there's tape left in the cassette recorder. I make what I can, a kid mixing paints. Sometimes hours, sometimes days later, I see what we've got. Then, this grown-up version of myself does some Musician Thinking — editing and expanding, hearing it with fresh ears. It's a kind of like collaborating with myself.

I have lyric notes and half-songs everywhere — the bottoms of purses, inside folders of travel brochures, on pub coasters from Ireland, in the margins of my day planner, and it's all very unsettling. Drives me crazy, actually. I long for simple, orderly, contained, clean creativity. But that doesn't seem to be my reality. When a lyric or a melody flutters in front of your face while you're driving, or baking cookies, or brushing your teeth, you grab for what you can to tack that idea down. It's an imperfect process. It takes me much too long to clean off my desk, just in case I wrote half a line on the ripped envelope of a random medical bill. Sometimes you can combine the stand-alone lyrics with each other, like the remnants of sugar cookie dough — weird shapes to be squished

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