

# Notes from TOAD HALL

Issue #4 - 2003  
the Holiday Issue



## **P**regnant and Not Pretty

When I was pregnant with our first child I channeled unpredictable moods. Sometimes I was overcome by great love and tenderness not only for the life growing inside me but for anyone who stepped into our coffeehouse commune for talk or prayer. Our housemates, especially the young men who were very dear but easily intimidated, treated me with a gentleness I did not deserve for I was often possessed with an unapproachable fierceness no one dared argue with. When the young men played their guitars, jamming until 3 a.m., I did not ask them to please consider going to the living room rather than

sitting on the landing outside our bedroom door so I could get a few precious hours of sleep. I screeched and sent them away and the next day they still loved me.

My insolence and aggression was not even a match for the Hell's Angels who visited us one evening. They came through our large wooden front door which had a latch, not a knob and there were stories that the marks on the outside of our log house were from the arrows of the Apaches who attacked it in the late 1800's. This was Albuquerque and it was possible. Four Angels entered our large living room where the coffee pot brewed, a pinon fire snapped in the stone fireplace, someone quietly strummed a guitar, and several small groupings of people sat or lay on the floor talking, some of them with open Bibles.

This part of our house was public to anyone who stopped by, but we had placed a curtain across the stairs that led down to the kitchen and up to the bedrooms. It said: "Private. House members Only." The Angels with their leather squeaking and their chains rattling, looked around and headed straight for the stairs. Everyone who was alert and sane shrank back into the walls hoping they would just leave and not cause any trouble. No one dared confront Hell's Angels.

Having grown up in the extremely rural midwest and having gone to a most conservative university, I had never seen a Hell's Angel. I had barely heard of them. I labored up the stairs at the very moment they were coming down. When we met in the middle, because of my condition, someone was going to have to back up and I

immediately determined it was not going to be me.

My head came to the first Angel's waist. I reached up and aggressively tapped him on the stomach, bellowing, "Who do you think you are? Can't you read? This is PRIVATE? You turn around and get out of here this second! Do you understand?" There was a reassuring chorus of "Okay, mamma, it's cool, it's cool, mamma. We leavin' now!" I followed them up and closed the front door behind them, feeling

serene and restored. I turned around to face a stunned silence and then thunderous applause. I was hugged. People touched my stomach reverently, some even wanted to rest their heads on it. People laughed and said how brave I was.



**There are times when ordinary tasks like washing dishes or sorting clothes seem pointless because they must be done over and over again until permanent memory loss or death.**

But I knew I was not brave. I was only pregnant.

I thought a lot about Mary the mother of Jesus during that time. One day I was actually mistaken for her. Of course, it was because the guy was wasted on LSD. He came toward me with his hands outstretched; he saw a halo around my head and was begging me to pray for him, to help him. He was calling me Mary and I only thought he had misheard my name. Just as he was about to reach me, sensing something I didn't, my husband and one of the young men stepped to his side and grabbed his arms. At the same instant he went wild, threatening to kill me, the Mother of God. And this time the young men gave me orders, telling me to go, go.

## The Mystery of Details

I have often wondered whether Mary was really only a mild mannered virgin riding that donkey to Bethlehem or whether she, too, was gripped by some of that fierce, protective, invincible feeling for her baby. She certainly took off in a hurry for Elizabeth's after Gabriel left her. I know her visit startled Elizabeth, who was also pregnant—with John the Baptist. She yelped in surprise both at recognizing Mary as "the mother of my Lord," and that Mary would actually visit her.

Mary's response to Elizabeth's shouted blessing was to sing a song that has been remembered for 2000 years. She sang "All generations will call me blessed." Truly—for carrying Jesus nine months as a single mom, for labor and delivery, for nursing him the first time without her own mother to teach her, for doing it in the strangest of settings—we say, "Mary, you are blessed. Your obedience and willing nature brought us the greatest of blessings—Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, the Son of God."

Eventually I controlled the fierce nature of my mother-love and allowed friends to hold our first baby, while I stood anxiously by, wishing they wouldn't breathe on her. I settled into caring for Baby night and day and sometimes felt buried under mountains of details. I wondered if Mary ever found her days exhausting and her daily tasks irksome. Did she need to remind herself, oh, yeah, Gabriel told me I am part of God's big story.

I no longer have babies in my bed or on my hip as I stumble down the stairs to begin yet another load of laundry. Still, there are times when ordinary tasks like washing dishes or sorting clothes seem pointless because they must be done over and over again until permanent memory loss or death. I wondered if having God at your table in his high chair eating cornbread and

chile would brighten the immediate rewards of keeping on.

In a poem I have grown to love, Kate Daniels beseeches God to speak through ordinary weary days that seem lost to the bigger stories of life. (See poem in shaded box below.)

This is a universal cry—it isn't only wives and mothers who get stuck on how to go on living. Kate Daniels speaks for anyone who's been wearied by the daily grind of a life that must be lived. The incredible beauty of this poem itself is part of her answer. She has found meaning in the crucible of her world, and a way to express what we hardly dare say—that our reasons for existence, however much we love our babies, are not entirely found in motherhood or fatherhood.

Sometimes our reasons are mysteriously formed in ordeals of

such pain they can hardly be borne. Other times we find satisfaction and joy in such ridiculously small details—that, too, is a beauty hard to bear.

### A Moment of Insight

Some incidents in Scripture at one time caused me to wonder if Jesus was unfeeling and cold toward his

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mother and thus toward all mothers. This made me sad because I didn't want to think this about Jesus, and because I know about giving to children. I've given, if not all, then many things, from the milk of my own body to the cake frosting I was saving to eat as the last, best bite. Maybe it was a desire for recognition that caused a woman in a crowd to call out to him, "Blessed

is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." It was Jesus' answer that confused me, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." (Luke 11:27)

Sure. I knew that was true, strictly speaking, but it felt like a scolding. However, I finally understand that Jesus was correcting a serious and long held misconception—one held even today—that being a wife and mother is what gives women value and a place in society. If your son finds success and acclaim then all the better. But Jesus is saying, No, your real worth doesn't come from bearing children. Not even if he is the Son of God. You are blessed and you find out who you truly are when you are in a proper relationship with God and obedient to him. Suddenly I was stunned by the love and liberation of his answer.

#### *Prayer to the Muse of Ordinary Life* by Kate Daniels

I seek it in the steamy odor of the iron pressing cotton shirts in the heat of a summer afternoon, in my daughter's ear, the warm pink cone, curling inward. I seek it in the dusty circles of the ceiling fan, the kitchen counter with its painted shells from Hilton Head, the creaking boards in the bedroom floor, the coconut cookies in the blue glass jar. The hard brown knob of nutmeg nestled in the silver grater and the lemon yogurt that awaits. I seek it not in books but in my life inscribed in two brief words—mother, wife—the life I live as mistress of an unkempt manse, volunteer at firstborn's school, alternate Wednesdays' aide at youngest's nursery, billpayer, laundress, cook, shrewd purchaser of mid-priced minivan. I seek it in the strophes of a life like this, wondering what it could be like, its narratives

drawn from the nursery and playpen, its images besmirched with vomitus and shit. The prayer I pray is this:

If you are here,  
where are you?  
If you exist,  
what are you?  
I beg you  
to reveal yourself.  
I will not judge,  
I am not fancy.  
My days are filled  
with wiping noses  
and bathing bottoms  
with boiling pots  
of cheese-filled pasta  
for toothless mouths  
while reading Rilke,  
weeping.

My life is broken  
into broken pieces.  
The fabric is rent.  
Daily, I roll  
the stone away  
but all is dark

inside, unchanged.  
The miracle has not  
happened yet.

If you are anywhere  
nearby, show me  
anything at all  
to prove you do exist:  
a poem in a small, soiled  
nightie, a lyric  
in the sandbox voices  
raised in woe.

Release a stanza  
from the sink's hot suds  
where dirty dishes glow.  
Seal a message inside:  
encourage me  
to hold on.  
Inform me  
in detail  
exactly how to do it.

Reprinted by permission of LSU Press, 1998, from *Four Testimonies: Poems* by Kate Daniels. Copyright © 1998 by Kate Daniels. (See also Gift List.)



If you reread the moment on the cross, when in the midst of unspeakable suffering Jesus talked to his mom, you'll find more evidence of his stunning care. I can't begin to understand this since there are few times when I've managed to speak during real pain. Try talking after you've pounded your thumb with the hammer or are laboring to deliver a child that won't come out. During such moments my thoughts are always completely ego centric and



unprintable. I can imagine Mary: how helpless and fierce she felt as she stood, crying at the bottom of the

**You are blessed and you find out who you truly are when you are in a proper relationship with God.**

cross, watching the life drain from the body of her son. Where is the joy of her magnificat in this hour? This is the sword that pierced her soul, the one Simeon spoke to her

about when Jesus was a baby. What effort did it take for Jesus to so personally love his mother in that moment that he would think to tell her, "Dear woman, here is your son"? And to say to John, his closest friend, "Here is your mother." In this multilayered gesture, he not only thinks of his mother, he releases her to John and into a larger community. Jesus belongs to all of us; he has now become our brother and our Lord. That is the greater blessing that is still alive to me today. ✚

## Ransom Notes

### Ransom Critique Confab

Our board has talked about hosting a "Critique Confab"—a weekend conference for friends of Ransom. We'd like to bring our writers and have them walk us through the sort of discernment that lies behind the articles in our publications. We'd like discussions that give people a chance to interact with them. We have received several generous offers to host this and many inquiries. Pray with us as we move slowly ahead with plans. Before the first one, we would need enough seed money to bring in the speakers and host them.

### Coming Up

#### January 9-10, Rochester RF Annual Board Meeting.

Pray for wisdom as we meet to evaluate and plan for the future.

#### January 16 St. Louis, Borders Bookstore.

Denis will give a lecture sponsored by the Francis Schaeffer Institute. The title of his talk is: A Cry of Quiet Desperation: The Music of Radiohead.

#### January 23 St. Louis, Borders Bookstore.

Same place different topic. I am preparing a talk on tattooing since I've observed its increased appearance among Christian young people.

#### January 20-24 Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis.

Denis will take an on-campus course for his studies in theology.

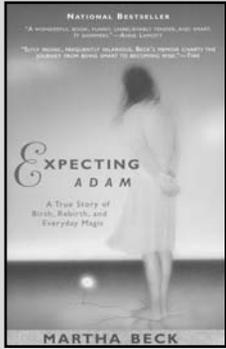
#### January 22 Covenant Seminary.

I will speak for Vignettes—a ministry lunch forum for women, an attempt to show there are a plethora of ways God can use women in His kingdom work.

#### February 6-7 L'Abri Conference, Rochester, MN.

The theme this year is "The Heart Set Free and the Christian World View." Some excellent speakers will be coming. We look forward to hearing an old (though she's not old, old) friend Nancy Pearcey. Denis will give a plenary session and workshops. Marsena and I will also give workshops. For more info, note the L'Abri conference brochure in the last issue of *Critique*.

# Christmas 2003 Gift Suggestions from Toad Hall



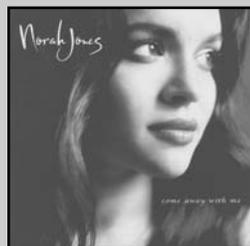
**Expecting Adam** by Martha Beck  
(memoir) I read this book in three days because I couldn't put it down. It was one of the funniest, most endearing, weirdest books I read all year. In a most secular, rational, God-not-on-the-radar universe, a young couple at Harvard have spiritual encounters that set them on an unexpected road. Both are in the midst of getting their second degrees when Martha unexpectedly becomes pregnant with their second

child. In their world, intelligent, educated people have no trouble dealing with such inconveniences. "A year and a half before *It All Went to Hell*, John missed a day of class taking me to the hospital and Lamaze-coaching me through [our first child] Katie's birth. The next day, when he went back to [school] after forty-eight hours without sleep, he received a tongue-lashing that made him wake up in a cold sweat for months afterward. It was delivered in front of the eighty-nine other students in the class by one of his professors, a world-renowned economic theorist I will call Stinky. 'You are a disgrace to this institution,' ranted Stinky... 'You will never succeed in business, scholarship, or anything else. You have set a bad example for this entire section, and I intend to hold you personally responsible for the poor performance of any student in this room.'"

Carrying a normal baby to term was bad enough, but a Down Syndrome baby was unthinkable. This book is Martha's account of the strange and unexplainable spiritual beings that forced them "to unlearn virtually everything Harvard taught [her] about what is precious and what is garbage." An excellent book for small group discussion as it raises many questions.

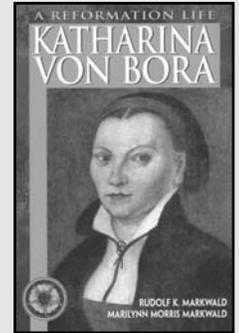
**Norah Jones**, *Come Away With Me*  
(CD) I know. I know. This has been a favorite this year even though she's been high on the charts (she won five Grammy Awards. Among them: Best New Artist, Best Album, and Best Single for "Come Away With Me")

and in spite of hearing her playing in Barnes & Noble nearly every time I walked in. Here's why I like her. 1) she has an unusual breathy kind of voice and sings with beautiful finesse, 2) her sound is utterly soothing and in this life I need to be soothed a lot, 3) she's great on jazz piano, 4) the sound tracks are pure and not over-produced and, 5) sometimes I can get my husband to slow dance to it. Any one of these reasons is enough to give it or get it, don't you think?



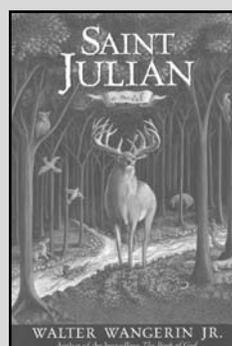
**Katharina von Bora : A Reformation Life** by Rudolf & Marilynn Markwald

(biography) In this rich, well-written biography, the Markwalds trace the life of Martin Luther's wife, Katharina von Bora. From her childhood and early adult years as a nun, to her marriage to Martin, through the raising of children and until the death of her husband, we see a woman who was steadfast to Christ in all things. She seems just the partner Luther needed, feisty and full of wit, knowledgeable, loyal and supportive. She was acquainted with tragedy and grief—they lost two beloved daughters and were often in physical danger from opponents. Katharina had to run a large household filled with students who came to be mentored by Luther and a steady flow of visitors to see him. In his generosity, Luther often gave their money and belongings to the poor, leaving Katharina to deal with the shortages. During his famous depressions she was his best counsel, and once when nothing she said helped, she put on a black dress. Luther noticed it and asked, "Are you going to a funeral?" "No," Kate replied, "but since you act as though God is dead, I wanted to join you in your mourning." Luther got the message and recovered. That they loved each other there is no doubt. In the hundreds of letters Luther wrote to her (few of hers remain) he variously addressed her as: Doctorissa, Most Holy Mrs. Doctor, Kathe von Bora the Morning Star of Wittenberg, Lady of the Pig Market, My Friendly Dear Kate, a beer brewer and judge. He said of her: "my wife can coax me as often as she wants; she has the entire dominion in her hand, and I yield to it."



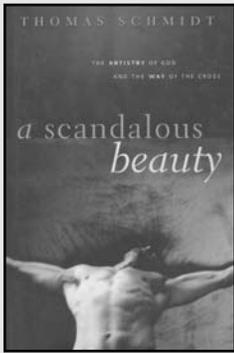
**St. Julian** by Walter Wangerin (fiction)

Walter Wangerin is a story-teller so skilled I was mesmerized by this medieval tale: "Saint Julian is the Saint of every ordinary mortal. He is, moreover, the Saint of them that have sinned uncommonly, whether by heart or by hand, and whose peculiar penitence grants them to know a most uncommon grace." The reader knows what is coming—the perfect Eden-like setting precedes the fall into murderous unjustifiable sin.



Julian's terrible fate is inescapable, and yet, and yet, it is only when he can sink no further that the fantastical possibility of transformation breaks through like a thunderbolt to gather up his broken life. So very like Greek tragedy, yet so unlike, for in this tale, there is the possibility of redemption and escape from destiny. I would give this book to most anyone (including a teenager) who enjoys a good story.

# Christmas 2003 Gift Suggestions from Toad Hall



## *A Scandalous Beauty: The Artistry of God and the Way of the Cross* by Thomas Schmidt

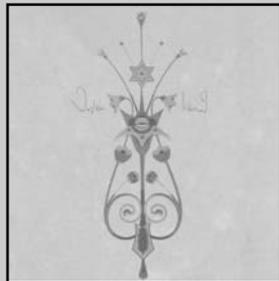
“We’d like God to be [a preacher or professor]. Heaven forbid that God should turn out to be an artist. But there it is. The ratio of poetry to pure doctrine in the Bible is at least fifty to one, and most of the rest, including the life and teaching of Jesus, consist of stories and parables.” This book is

a collection of essays that caught my heart by surprise, even trapped it several times. I wasn’t prepared to see myself in a driver who is annoyed, caught behind a slow truck of Hispanics. In this imaginative retelling, Haysoos, the driver, stops at fields along the way to give a lift to migrant workers. Schmidt is in the car following as “Anglo In A Big Hurry Right Behind.” How much of God do I miss because of my impatience and darkened eyes?

We need tough, lasting stories that carry us all the way to the end of life. As he writes, “The chaos of this life, the flood waters, have closed over my head. Yet I choose against despair. I believe that death will die one day, that the love of God will prevail. In the meantime, even if the rest of my path lies in shadow, I will follow the Lamb in trust and in hope until I see Susanna again.” This is good nourishing food for hungry people who need to hear words and stories that make them wise.

## David Eugene Edwards, *Woven Hand* (CD)

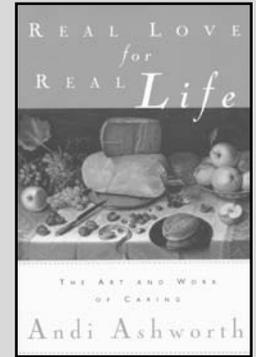
We keep a few copies on hand as gifts for our younger, more discerning friends, and I think you should buy one for every young person on your gift list. Edwards has been far more popular in Europe where dark apocalyptic music is loved, and is a Christian, but don’t let that stop you. He has a remarkable ability for composing music that matches the content and mood of his lyrics. He captures the sorrowful sound of lament which sometimes unmakes me. On certain tracks there is a riveting power to the music, as if the very sounds convey the mysterious descent of the Holy Ghost into our lives. As uncertainties grow everywhere in the world, we need, we want to be totally captured by God. Edwards helps us find words for it. “Hide me in your hand with the mother of my children, where the land sinks deep in its color. Bless the ground where we kneel, safe in your woven creel, we follow, for you speak as no other.” Beautiful in rhythm and harmony, I have grown to love his multi-layered music.



## *Real Love for Real Life* by Andi Ashworth

Caring for people means we embody Christ’s love to real people in real places—and that place is often the shelter of our home. In this book (the same genre as Edith Schaeffer’s unfortunately titled *The Hidden Art of Homemaking*), Ashworth helps us see caregiving as a lifestyle—

where the base of operations is found in the warmth and creativity of home. Andi writes from the authenticity of her own life of helping ordinary people with broken hearts and bodies, who long for a place of safety where wounds can be healed. In our product driven age, caring for people is enormously inefficient, and sometimes the fruits aren’t seen for years—if they’re seen at all. In giving care, we must face human limitations, hospitality that needs limits, and times when those who give care need it themselves. Andi encourages us to practice a more Biblical view of rest and to see that along the way God feeds his caregivers what they need just when they need it. Knowing that our work of caring is a calling that doesn’t “refer to just one job or one task”, but “it encompasses the whole shape of our life: the web of relationships and diversity or work that God gives to each Christian” gives us a wide and rich context in which to practice “The Art and Work of Caring.”



## *Fine Gardening* (magazine)

If you, or someone you know, loves the earth, its soil, flowers, plants, vegetables—if you love what God brought forth on the third day of creation and like to work it, look at it, eat it, or roll in it, then consider this magazine. It’s the only gardening magazine I ever get. And it’s practically the only magazine I read cover to cover. The past few years I haven’t been able to garden as much as I would like. (Some would observe that even when I could, I was only a wanna-be.) but getting this bi-monthly publication has been almost as much enjoyment as actually getting filthy fingernails from pulling weeds. It is full of practical help, regional reports and suggestions, beautiful photographs, and fascinating articles. Many of us know gardeners, from arm chair to serious, so if you don’t know what to get that person, consider a subscription, or at least look at the website and find a really good quality pruning tool that doesn’t torque or break the second you cut anything thicker than a dandelion stem.

# Christmas 2003 Gift Suggestions from Toad Hall



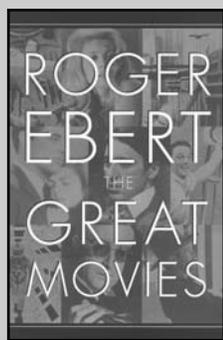
## **Four Testimonies** by Kate Daniels

(poetry) As a poet, Daniels speaks for us, excising pain, affliction, and joy in a way that forces us to intimately examine how we live, love, and die in a world where the possibility of tragedy is never more than a micro second away. Daniels' poetry touches me in a very tender spot. One set of poems is instantly accessible as in—"Portrait of the Artist as Mother." I easily relate to "Love Pig," her

description of baby flesh—"fat, bejeweled with dried spit, old food, gray gyres of tears and sweat,"—and our incomprehensible love of it. She articulates what I felt but couldn't find the language to tell even myself. Some of her poetry requires thoughtful reflection to gain insight, like the ones on the life and philosophy of Simone Weil. Another set titled "In the Marvelous Dimension" gives us the heart-crushing voices of three survivors rescued from their cars after the 1989 earthquake in San Francisco collapsed the upper deck of the Nimitz Freeway. We often do all we can to forget suffering, but Daniels takes us to the heart of it in just a few words. There is an important reason why we should allow her to take us there: suffering is an integral part of our walk as Christians. This poetry, like the Psalms, cries out to acknowledge affliction and that is the first step in being radically transformed by the spiritual experience of suffering.

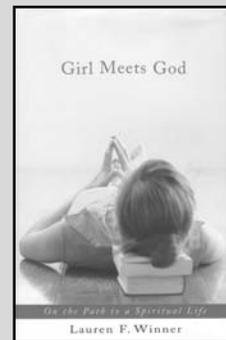
## **The Great Movies** by Roger Ebert

People often ask Denis and I for lists of movies we like or recommend for discussion. (See our website for many of them.) Here's a book that features one hundred movies worth seeing and it tells you why. For years, movie critic, Roger Ebert has been writing biweekly essays for a feature called "The Great Movies," in which he gives us a fresh appreciation for this popular form of art. He includes a bit of history, some analysis, and genuine love that has sent us looking for old movies, current ones we missed, and favorites we watch with fresh eyes. His selections range wildly from the magic of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in *Swing Time* to the perfect pitch Woody Allen achieves in *Manhattan*. *The Great Movies* includes: The Marx brothers in *Duck Soup*, *Hoop Dreams*, *Fargo*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Raging Bull*, *Some Like it Hot* and many more. I found Ebert's book fascinating, and although it is a bit pricey, it would make a great gift for anyone with an interest in the cinema.



## **Girl Meets God: On the Path to a Spiritual Life** by Lauren Winner

(memoir) In this fascinating memoir of a young woman, highly educated and articulate, Winner writes: "Evangelical friends of mine are always trying to trim the corners and smooth the rough edges of what they call My Witness in order to shove it into a tidy, born-again conversion narrative....My story doesn't fit very well with this conversion arch-type." She's right. From a lapsed Baptist mother and a non-practicing Jewish father, she traces a strange journey. She studied to become an Orthodox Jew but was increasingly drawn toward Christianity until through a series of unusual dreams and events she converted to Jesus. In her book we learn as much about Jewish regulations and celebrations as we do about the Christian year, from Advent to Holy Week. Her authenticity and desire to find the one true God, to serve and worship him, shine through this work. Don't let the title make you think it is a girly-girl book. It's not—it's an all person book.



## **Paste Magazine**

Trust me on this. Nothing could be more welcome to a young person, or even discerning older folks, than a subscription to *Paste* magazine. (See *Critique #4* - 2003 for a longer review.) New on the market this last year, Denis has met the editors and they are thoughtful, discerning Christians, and we are impressed with their efforts to put a wide variety of music,— "somewhat concentrated in what 'the industry' calls adult-alternative (Triple A), Americana, and indie rock."—in front of as many people as they can. For articles and reviews, they carefully select each artist, promoting those that "deserve to be heard, and that you'll be glad to discover." But here is what kills: each issue includes a CD sampler with up to 25 tracks, easily the cost of any issue. This has caused some of our friends to complain bitterly about busting their budgets over so many CDs they didn't know they had to go out and buy. But we've never advocated anything other than moderation in life.



# Ransom Notes

## Ransom Assistant Needed

Next spring we will need to hire a replacement for Katie Mohler nee Snyder who has been our assistant this year. Sadly, she will be leaving as her husband Jacob will be going to graduate school. Until now our assistant has worked about ten hours a week and been responsible for (among other things) bookkeeping, overseas mailings, maintaining the mailing list, and filling requests that come via the website or mail. We hope to expand both hours and responsibilities. Pray that we find the right person who might enjoy working with us. Contact us for more details. ¶

## Final Notes

### Children's Books That Will Never Be Written

When we moved to Minnesota from New Mexico, our son, Jerem, was five years old and very nervous about what was happening to our lives as all normalcy and structure disappeared into boxes and bins. Not thinking about this, one night after he fell asleep, I quietly packed his entire room. In the morning we woke to screams of distress. He thought we had forgotten him and left town. We felt terrible, but not so bad we couldn't see a future use for such a threat. I promise you, we never used it, but we did laugh—after we reassured and comforted him.

This deviant sense of humor is perhaps why this caught my eye in *Image A Journal of the Arts and Religion* (#38). In an interview Andrew Hudgins talks about light verse and an idea he's working on now which he calls, "You Had It Coming: Poems for Wicked children." He said he was enchanted (enchanted?! ) by an internet joke list of "children's books that will never be written." Things like "Daddy Drinks Because You Cry" and "Strangers Have the Best Candy."

This can't be much worse than telling your errant child if he doesn't behave he will get elf poop in his stocking at Christmas. I know some of you have done this. I haven't. However, having done many other things I won't mention at this time, it does fill me with wonder that God bothers to comfort us at all or give us moments of celebration and great happiness.

During this Advent, I pray your portion will be sweet. That's it from Toad Hall.

Warmly,

Margie  
Margie



Toad Hall is the name of our home, christened by our children. It is from the book *The Wind in the Willows*, a favorite of ours. In it Mole, a shy yet daring character, and Ratty, who is much nicer and more sensible than his name would imply, have many adventures along the river. One of their friends is Toad of Toad Hall. Toad is something of an aristocrat and lives in a mansion. Otherwise, he has very little to commend him and really doesn't deserve friends since he is a callous liar, lacks common sense and, well, he lives for the pleasure of the moment—which brings him no end of trouble.

When we moved to Minnesota in 1981, our children had rarely seen such tall homes with their imposing three stories. They were used to one-story adobes which rambled along in the hot New Mexico sun. So, to our children, a midwestern Gothic four-square looked amazingly like a mansion. Possibly even as great a house as Toad Hall.

Marsena Konkle  
Managing Editor

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