

MEMORIAL
A Letter to the Editor

To the editor...

Dear Sir:

I don't know what I'm about to say.

I do not usually act this way, writing like this to a total stranger.

But I'm, I'm flabigasted...flabbergasted....

(Now don't you laugh, nobody ever gets that word out right.)

I am knocked right off my horse.

Just when I thought folks couldn't get more stupid

I read (present tense "reed") these "experts" of yours
complaining about the memorial.

A memorial to duty.

God forbid that these educated experts of yours
ever come to know the meaning of duty,

of loss.

The cost.

I am writing about the memorial plaque

proposed in honor of all those workers,
those road workers who died, killed in duty.

The memorial plaque that is supposed to be paid for
by the Department of Transportation.

Then along comes these educated empty-headed experts
and their lawyers.

They don't scare me.

God is watching.

God will judge them.

Oh, now I get it, you are all saying:

She is a nut.

Sane enough lady when it comes to bringing
tuna casseroles to Communion lunch, maybe.

But put a pencil in her hands and bang!

She's totally bonkers!

Or at best, naive.

Naive.

I plead guilty to being naive.

I gladly plead guilty.

Saint Paul got knocked off his horse, too.

And when he faced the Roman judges
the only thing he boasted about was what he lost.

It's just like these Federal judges

telling us our Pledge of Allegiance is wrong.

We need to get rid of the words "Under God".
Now it's unAmerican to be under God?
How unChristian is that?
Very!!

It makes me furious!
It makes me nauseated.
Nauseous.
It makes me sick to my soul.

When the President took the oath of office,
what did he place his hand upon?
The Bible, the word of God.
When the President took the oath of office,
(Right there in front of all the cameras, on live TV.)
to whom did he swear?
To God, God, God
GOD in public, outloud and official for all to hear.
And don't even get me started on the Ten Commandments!

I am no good at writing letters.
There was only one boy I was ever any good at writing to.
But he is gone.
And even then a single page would take a dozen tries.
Every sheet of paper would end up wrong,
my thoughts all botched and twisted
till I crumpled the paper in a ball
and tossed it to my little cat to play with.
Let me tell you my little cat
enjoys all my attempts at writing.
He bats around the balled up pages.
My mistakes become his toys.

He was a stray, a fallen cat,
and I coaxed him into my house with cans of tuna and promises.
And now he is so fat he can not remember
his former life as wild cat,
running around, who did what cats ought not to do.

Sometimes I think God is like that.
We're running round wild.
And He opens a door.
But we're too skitzy to go inside.
So used to being wild that we mistrust a loving act instinctively.
So we cower away from the door.
And for each of us He must do something more
and find that, that, that tempting can of tuna
that sets the trap and leads us through the door.

You see?
I told you.
I am no good at writing letters.
But now I feel myself so motivated that the words just flow.
And the Holy Spirit of God comes upon me and tells me what to say.
Everyone is running after their own desire.
They run off to the city.
They smoke.
They drink.
They meet men they should never know.
Unspeakable, unthinkable uses of their body.
And call it love.

It would be different if God wasn't watching.
Seeing everything we do.
Then everyone could do whatever they wanted,
whatever they dreamed and never be convicted.

But your experts say we can't mention religion on a memorial plaque
to be paid for by the Department of Transportation.
All those workers who died in the line of duty.
And not just those big fat swaggering hogs
you always see lumbering around a construction site.
Men with no fear of God
and not many salads in their diet.
But young lovely teenage boys,
so young they are not yet old enough
to run off to the city, so innocent they wouldn't even understand
if temptation whispered to them from a passing car.
So naive.

And there are girls now too working in hard hats
clutching at equality, holding up the stop sign
at the construction zone never knowing
that a drunk barreling past the barricade would snuff out their life.

God forbid we should mention God
for the young girl who was only doing her duty
but died without knowing that Saving Love.
And now hellfire licks her.
What good is a kiss to that poor soul now?
She should have been told about Jesus.

The problem is I never knew what I needed most.
Something I didn't have, something I didn't know.
Something I still would not understand
if it stared into my face as I drove past.
The love I never knew enough to know
that it stood just outside the door.

Husbands are common as dirt.
But to become a bride of the love of Jesus Christ.
Oh! when Jesus took me it was a rapture.
All the time me saying no, no, no, no, no!
until his love covered me completely.
I felt like I was eloping with the King of the World.

I don't know why I remembered the girl
when I saw her picture in the obituaries.
I'm sure I barely saw her more than twice her whole earthly life.
The first time I saw her she stood there
holding the stop sign wearing a hard hat
working for the Department of Transportation.
And my car was stopped right next to her.
So close I could have rolled down my window
and touched her face.
Now her face looks out from the obituaries.
She is mourned by her mother and her father and her brother.

She left behind a brother.
I once had a brother.
I used to write to him.
But he is gone.
He had a certain kind of charm.
He ran off to the city and met men he should not have known.
He should never have been so public.
He should never have loved out loud.
I did not attend the funeral.
That was my duty.
What was the cost?
I could forgive the sin.
I could not forgive my brother.

I am writing about the memorial plaque.

In my dreams I keep seeing her,
that young woman, in the construction zone flagging cars to stop.
And sometimes her face is my brother's.
In my dream, my car is stopped right beside her.
I roll down my window and look at her and say
"Jesus loves you."

And she turns to me
and smiles and says
"I love you, too."

In my dreams I see them.

It would be different if God wasn't.
But He is watching.
Watching.