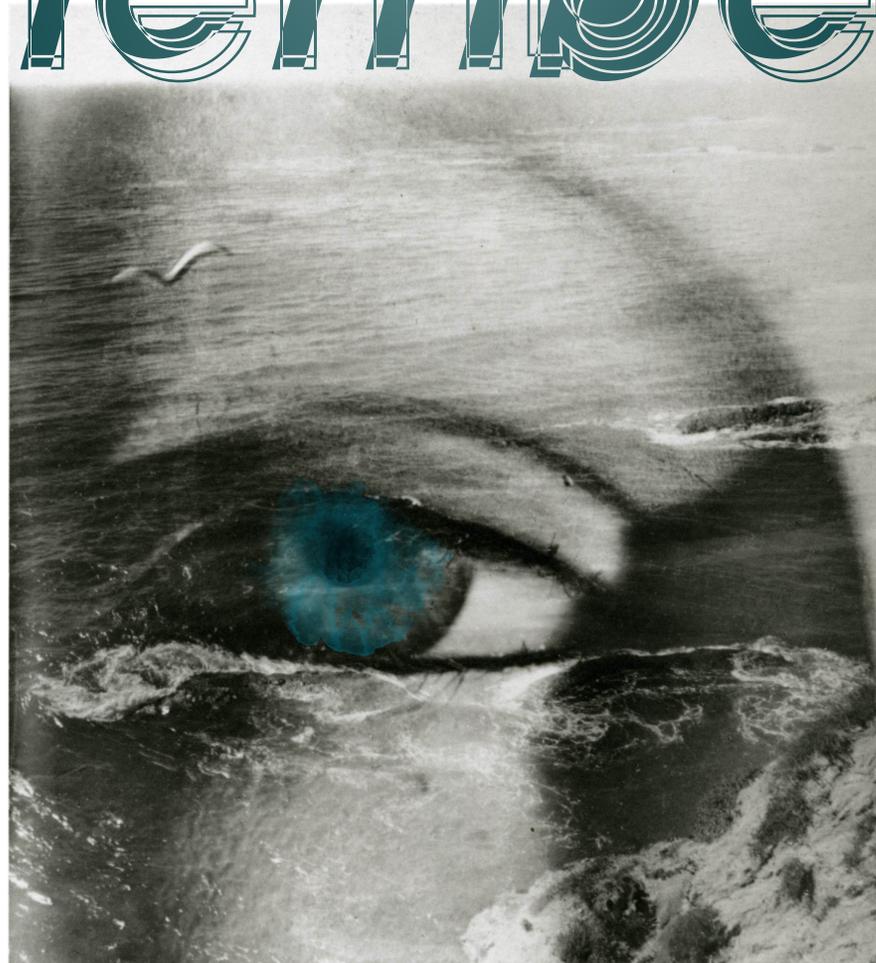


Indeed, *while following* the way of Your judgments, O Lord,
We have waited for You eagerly;
Your name, even Your memory, is the desire of *our* souls.

Isaiah 26:8

Remembering



Maurice Tabard, 1938 (modified)

WHEN I SHIPPED OVERSEAS during the Vietnam War, my most prized possession was a pocket-sized copy of my fiancé's senior picture. Whenever the hardness of my situation overwhelmed, I would gaze upon that lovely face to be reminded not only of the one I loved, but that there was a softer world back home in the States—a world without guns, without metal walls and floors, and without the coarse behavior of sailors stuck together in the middle of the sea.

There was not a chance that while I was overseas I was going to literally forget my fiancé. If for no other reason, my yearning for her would not let that happen. But there was a chance that circumstances would conspire to dull my connection to her.

Loneliness can play tricks on the mind. That which is within reach can start to look better than that which is even momentarily beyond our reach. A healthy young man caught in the lunacy of war a long way from home can make poor choices based on the immediate availability of something of inferior worth. A sailor on liberty in a foreign port is like a kid in a candy shop: so many sweet enticements that seem good, but that will actually rot the teeth.

In that moment, the best way for me to remember that what was waiting for me back home was far superior to what was before me, was to keep looking at that picture.



The spirit may be willing, and have only the best of intentions, but the flesh is weak. Because we can forget, we need reminders. Chances are very good that the Christian will not literally forget about Jesus. Even if the feeble gray cells of the human brain should fail, the believer always retains the persistent Spirit—that gracious Nagger. He is the permanent brand that marks each believer as belonging to Christ, and forever links our spirit to His.

But just as the war-lonely sailor can find solace in the arms of an inferior substitute for the sweetheart left behind, the Christian can gravitate toward more familiar and immediate temporal com-

forts, thus blunting the connecting work of the Spirit. After all, we are still people made of flesh, for whom “seeing is believing,” and to those of us still treading this muddy plane God the Father, Son and Spirit remain invisible.

Faith is strong, but in the flesh-born believer it is an uphill climb for it to compete with whatever is here before our eyes and within our grasp.



We may love Jesus Christ, but our attentions can easily be distracted from Him. In a time of instant media and instantaneous connection, the things of Christ can seem rather organically quaint. Today life is made of chromium and plastic; it moves forward at a blinding pace, and few people choose to slow down long enough to remember and contemplate someone who walked the earth two millennia ago. It is history, it is religion—neither of which excite the modern mind.

Yet the modern believer owes everything he is and has to this One who graciously taps at the door, waiting for an invitation inside for sweet communion. It is an insult of the lowest order to forget about Him. Jesus is the heart and soul of who we are; no other faith, no matter how noble or base, has such a Lord. He is the foundation of our standing, and the pinnacle of our aspirations. He is Lord! and it is at our peril that we diminish Him in our lack of remembering. Let the world fly by; it holds no attraction for the one whose heart is fixed on Jesus. It is vapor. It is made of crumbling dust. It is already dying.

But one who did die—once, but rose never to die again—longs to be remembered. He longs to spend time with the children He died to save. Blessed Lord, forgive us our ennui, our lazy transgressions against Your Spirit, against Your memory, against Your selfless sacrifice—against You.