

# It's a compromising situation...

*by* Jim Conway

## **It's a compromising situation...**

The would be Bride of Christ begins perspiring  
before the crowd.

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring echoes through the antique church  
just one more time,  
a little loud.

With every added verse and every flickering vigil flame  
the organist begins to falter.

My indifferent, unwed brother Mort begins to twitch and snicker.  
"Jilted at the altar."

He is sick.

The doctors say he suffers  
from a case of spiritual despair.

He jokes and throws his yoke like  
arm around my neck.

"I don't care!

It can't cause acne or make me lose my hair."

He is sick. He knows it.

He is sick and he is dying.

And, with all my human faculty to feel such things,  
I know that secretly he's crying.

"We lack an object of adoration..."

my father said to me in the final moments of his death bed  
melodrama.

And, as we wait for the second coming,  
I ruminate to my brother's quiet dirge like humming  
of an advertiser's jingle.  
"...And in our nation  
we spend our lives, pitched and  
sinking,  
like lonely pennies in a wishing well..."  
I start to twitch and feel my sleeping soul begin to tingle.

Hark!  
The horns are sounded  
and o'er head the marble clouds are parted.

Behold, the Angel of the Age is come!

Suddenly, my brother's brooding soul appears before me,  
a stranger at the door  
aching like a severed limb,  
in guise these eyes have not seen before.

And lo!  
He is writhen and enraged,  
and in his fury questions why  
God dares to stand up his bride?  
"While I," he shouts, "I, His bastard son  
have never been engaged!"

"Indeed!"  
The august and gray haired guests  
begin to hem and haw,  
for they do not appreciate  
such strange behavior.  
"It's like a man upon a street corner,"  
they sputter to themselves,  
in a well conditioned responsorial guffaugh,

“who opens up his trench coat  
and vents his naked spleen to passers by...”  
They adjust the collars and the cuffs of their Sunday go to meetin'  
clothes,  
and return to sleep  
to continue waiting for their savior.

“Each generation of our race,”  
or so my father said,  
“must forever seek The Buddha  
only in the end to slay him...  
We must forever steal the flickering flame of the gods  
again.”

But in despair  
and a brand new pair of fashionable Air Jordan's,  
emblazoned like a pagan god,  
my brother's angel wanders down the isle,  
and through a land of shopping malls  
like Hebrews in the desert  
seeking love not from above  
but Nike's victorious trademark smile.

“Can't you see?”  
My father struck a frail fist  
and shook his bald and uncrowned head.  
“Remove the veil from your eyes!  
You must become that restless thief within the night,  
And yourself be bridegroom to the bride.”  
And in the fevered moments before he died  
he rubbed his wrinkled hands and licked his lips.  
“Go on! Take her by surprise  
and rape her in the fallen candle light  
and, in so doing  
replant the seed...”

refill the grail..."

But still we wait for a twist of fate and the coming of the groom  
as the organist plays on and on in the ever closing gloom.

Now the wedding guests begin to snore and sputter  
to my brother's soothing dirge like humming  
while the minister, concerned about his payment,  
insists repeatedly that the bridegroom will be coming.

And, all the while I wear a knowing smile...  
even though my soul is numbing.

