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Sprigs of Mint

Caitlin McHugh

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If we continue in present directions, I believe that the future of our identity as Lutheran colleges and universities is at significant risk. So, perhaps, as we work together in this conference, we might articulate a sixth calling: to formulate a new compact of relationship

between our schools and the ELCA. The task belongs to us, for, as Robert Bertram concluded 29 years ago, we are free [still free] to ask the question, "What does it mean to be a Lutheran college?"

Loren J. Anderson is president of Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington.

SPRIGS OF MINT

Caitlin McHugh

Three light green mint stalks are dying
in a plastic cup of water
in my window frame's
shadow. Their former brothers,
neglected, lie smashed into wasteland,
their soggy brown exteriors
polluting the liquid life force that keeps
the rest of them alive.
They're stacked, like the tainted papers
I have also neglected. Façades
of beautiful leather-bound journals,
journals rotting, like my mint,
due to lack of sunlight.
If I cleaned them out now,
watered them, placed them
in a warmer region full of illumination,
they might take root and be salvaged.
Once rooted, the journals and their
contents could sprout, branch out,
fill in, and produce good fruits,
which taste better than any I've reaped.
I could trim the rotten parts,
retain in them what might be salvaged
and let them flourish in beauty again.
All it would take is time—
all the time that is holding me back
is the time that drives me forward.

Caitlin McHugh is an English literature major and creative writing minor at Capital University.