



BACHY

FOUR

1974

A READING EDITION



BACHY

FOUR · 1974

Papa Bach Paperbacks
11317 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Los Angeles, California 90025
Phone: GRUBERG

Published in the United States of America
Copyright 1974 by Papa Bach Paperbacks
All rights reserved to the authors

A READING EDITION

*No iron can stab the heart
with such force as a period
put just at the right place.*

Isaac Babel

THE MAGAZINE

PUBLISHER

Papa Bach Paperbacks

EDITORIAL

John Harris, *poetry*

Bob Mehlman, *prose*

Patricia Washington, *art*

Gary DeGalla, *photography*

Robert M. Aber, *sports*

PRODUCTION

Rick Lowitz, *design consultant*

Pam Magnuson

Scott Brastow

Larry Girardi

Jerry Fredericks

Typesetting by biographics / Beverly Hills

Printed by Gemini Graphics / Venice

Special thanks to biographics for the use of their facilities

BACHY is a semi-annual journal dedicated to the discovery of previously unpublished artists of worth. A major portion of our pages is reserved for relatively unknown contributors. We publish all kinds of material – except sentimental, academic, or metaphysical-bullshit. We are interested in all literary and graphic art easily reproducible in black and white (no color). Poetry, fiction, essays, reviews, plays, photographs, line drawings, cartoons, musical compositions, costume and set design for the theatre – all are acceptable. Payment is \$2 per page plus author's copies. Reporting date is 8 weeks. We are not responsible for return of submissions unless they are accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscription price: \$3.50 per year. Single copy price: \$2.00.

ABOUT THIS EDITION

— This is a complete reading text of the fourth issue of *Bachy*, published in 1974 by the Papa Bach Bookstore on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Los Angeles. It was made from a scan of the copy held by the UCLA Library, transcribed page by page from the page images. The page follows the magazine's own arrangement — the contents set as Papa Bach set it, the heavy display face of its section titles, its habit of spelling page numbers out in words, and its Bach device, lifted from the masthead of this very copy. The reading text departs from the original in one respect: *Bachy* was composed in Helvetica, and this edition is set in a serif, which carries verse better over a long sitting. Each poem begins on its own page.

A note on emphasis: this issue sets its emphatic words and its foreign phrases in **bold** rather than italic, and that has been followed here. Italic appears only where the magazine used it.

Words in teal brackets are editorial reconstructions — a character or word that could not be read from the scan and has been inferred from context, from the facing page, or from the magazine's own back matter. There are 50 of them. [?] marks something illegible that could not responsibly be guessed. Everything in black was read directly off the page.

The UCLA copy is tightly rebound and will not open flat, so the inner margin runs into the gutter: right-hand pages lose the first few characters of a line, left-hand pages the last few. Most were recovered by magnifying the sliver of the facing page caught at the edge of the previous photograph; the rest are marked.

Bachy was a magazine of pictures as much as poems — portfolios by Lisa John Findlater, Jerry Fredericks, Shoin Fukui, Scott McTyre and Margaret Falk ran through it — four full portfolios and a scatter of drawings. The artwork is not reproduced here. In its place, each image is described in an [*editorial note set like this*], so a reader knows what stood on the page.

Two leaves are missing from the scan this edition was made from. Printed pages 3 to 6 were not captured; the text resumes at page 7.

Printed typos, eccentric spellings and compositor's errors are kept as they were set. Beyond the bracketed reconstructions, no editorial matter appears once the text begins.

This edition was set from the UCLA Library copy in TeX Gyre Pagella, with contributors' names in Bonum after the magazine's own display type. The Bach device is the magazine's own, taken from the masthead page of this copy.

CONTENTS

William Margolis	<i>In Memoriam: Stuart Perkoff</i>	1
James Carroll	<i>Hog-Killing</i>	4
	<i>Hog-Killing II</i>	5
	<i>Before His Cancer Operation (for Don)</i>	6
	<i>Gila Bend, Arizona</i>	6
	<i>Bradley's Cat</i>	7
Patrick Leahy	<i>Dream of the Man Who Wouldn't Die</i>	8
Lawrence P. Spingarn	<i>Bonanza</i>	15
	<i>Bouillabaisse</i>	16
Leonard Gilley	<i>Thursday</i>	17
	<i>Friday</i>	17
	<i>Saturday</i>	18
	<i>Sunday</i>	18
Joel Dailey	<i>Exploring Another Leg</i>	19
Ronald Koertge	<i>The Eve of St. Agnes</i>	20
	<i>Hard Times: A Lady's Reverie</i>	22
John Findlater	<i>Photographs</i>	24
Robert Eaton Kelley	<i>Peace Is At Hand</i>	33
Gretel Ehrlich	<i>Topanga Fire</i>	41
Edward Butscher	<i>Three Poems About Silence</i>	42
William Virgil Davis	<i>Love Poem</i>	46
Michael C. Ford	<i>The Disappearance of Deanna Durbin</i>	47
	<i>To The Girl From Blue Canyon</i>	48
		49
	<i>So Far Behind Me They're All Out Of Sight</i>	50
	<i>Messages From A Blue Monday</i>	51
Jerry Fredericks	<i>Drawings</i>	52

Henry H. Roth	<i>Madeline</i>	58
James Biffle	<i>Last Speech By A German Soldier Cut-Off</i>	
	<i>In Stalingrad</i>	65
Charlie McDade	<i>Walls</i>	67
Henry Rasof	<i>By The Metro</i>	69
	<i>Genealogy</i>	70
	<i>Flower</i>	71
	<i>Pas De Deux</i>	72
	<i>Song Of The Mathematician</i>	72
Don Thompson	<i>Death March</i>	74
Carol Lewis	<i>The Suicide</i>	82
Gerald Locklin	<i>Poets Have A Deplorable</i>	83
	<i>The Shit Stain</i>	83
William Mohr	<i>Bone Hair</i>	85
Lawrence P. Spingarn	<i>Family Album: The Progress Club: 1929</i>	89
Rick Smith	<i>Driving Around In Pasadena</i>	91
	<i>Autopsy</i>	91
Greg Kuzma	<i>The Diagnosis</i>	93
	<i>Walking</i>	94
Joseph Hansen	<i>The Inhabitants Of The Moon</i>	95
	<i>My Mother Does Not Like It On The Moon</i>	96
	<i>My Father Does Not Like It On The Moon</i>	96
	<i>My Family Gets Together On The Moon</i>	97
	<i>Everybody On The Moon Will Say Hello</i>	97
Bob Webb	<i>On Stage</i>	98
John Thomas	<i>The Passionate Shepherd To His Love</i>	100
	<i>Eight Unwritten Stories</i>	101
	<i>For He Surely Waits (collage)</i>	102
	<i>Sample Problem</i>	103
Shoin Fukui	<i>Photographs</i>	104

Susan Friedman	<i>City Love</i>	113
Patricia Eakins	<i>Potato Eaters</i>	121
Lynn Shoemaker	<i>Growing Old, Growing Young</i>	122
Scott McTyre	<i>Art</i>	125
Gerald Locklin	<i>The Continuing Saga Of Bruce</i>	129
Jack Hirschman	<i>LA: The Caffè Trieste: SF</i>	135
William Sukonick	<i>Review</i>	140
Benjamin Saltman	<i>Review</i>	141
Contributor's Notes		147

THE ARTWORK

— *Bachy* was a magazine of pictures as much as poems, and none of the pictures is reproduced here. What follows is a list of the 31 images the issue carried and where each one stood, so that this reading text can be held against the object. Page numbers are the magazine's own.

- Front cover** *A coarse high-contrast line block of J. S. Bach, jowls and periwig reduced to fat black curls, filling the upper three-quarters of the sheet. Beneath it the wordmark Bachy 4 is set large in the magazine's display face.*
- Page 24** *John Findlater. His name stands alone in heavy display type at the head of an otherwise empty page, with the folio at the foot, opening the photographic portfolio.*
- Page 25** *Black-and-white photograph, printed very dark: a man stands silhouetted at a curtainless window, bottle tipped to his mouth, the sash burning white behind him. An ironing board and iron catch the only other light. Findlater. Fills most of the page.*
- Page 26** *Findlater again, in close portrait — an elderly man in a knitted cardigan bows his head over something small in his fingers, forehead deeply creased, dappled foliage behind him going soft. Photograph runs nearly to the gutter and the outer trim.*
- Page 27** *A bearded man's face fills the frame, hair blown across one squinting eye, mouth set hard against the wind; a second figure sits blurred behind his shoulder. Grainy black-and-white photograph by Findlater, printed full page.*
- Page 28** *Here an old man crouches on his heels among bare branches, forearms crossed on his knees, white hair swept back, dark coat swallowing the lower half of the picture. Findlater photograph, set as a block with wide white margins.*
- Page 29** *Photograph, tightly cropped: a bald man caught mid-speech, mouth open, brows thrown into shadow, his bare shoulder a bright wedge across the bottom corner. Nearly everything else is black. Findlater. The image runs edge to edge.*
- Page 30** *Findlater turns to architecture — a lichened stone building with Gothic-arched windows and crenellated parapet, seen past the*

	<i>heavy trunk of a tree that splits the frame. Daylight flares through the leaves at top right. Full-page photograph.</i>
Page 31	<i>Interior photograph: a turned-baluster staircase cuts diagonally across a hall lit only by a tall leaded window, its stained panels showing a beast's mask and roundels. Findlater. Fills the page; the next contributor's name shows faintly through the paper.</i>
Page 32	<i>The last of the Findlater sequence — a dark curtain, a Gothic window with a knotwork transom, bare trees dissolving beyond the glass, and on the sill below a jug of ragged chrysanthemums beside a cluttered table. Full-page photograph.</i>
Page 52	<i>Six impressions of the same pen drawing, printed in two rows of three: a bulbous long-nosed creature perched on a twiggy branch, its body all looping contour and hatched crest. Jerry Fredericks; his name heads the page in display type.</i>
Page 53	<i>Small pen drawing adrift in the lower right of an otherwise bare page — a profile head reduced to one continuous outline, its hair a stream of inked blobs along the crown, and a tiny figure clambering out along that ridge. Fredericks.</i>
Page 54	<i>Fredericks draws a pig in pure outline: two swollen ovals stacked for head and haunch, a lashed eye, a curl of tail, four toed feet planted on a dotted groundline. It sits low and right, most of the page left empty.</i>
Page 55	<i>A single wandering pen line makes a figure here — small head in profile, a long neck freckled with dots, an arm drawn out to a point at left, and a tapering trunk that hooks over into a hatched foot. Fredericks.</i>
Page 56	<i>Almost nothing on the sheet: a broken dotted line falls the length of the page, snagging twice on tiny beaded knots of ink that resolve into little heads or creatures. Fredericks at his sparest; the folio sits at lower left.</i>
Page 57	<i>Fredericks closes his portfolio with a rising diagonal of small outlined shapes, each a comma or bean growing steadily larger from the lower left corner until the last, at top right, opens into a shaded pod. Text from the facing story shows through.</i>
Page 92	<i>Brush drawing in thick black ink: one heavy sweeping stroke describes a bowed, hooded head, two short dashes serve as eyes,</i>

and a long dripping horizontal cuts beneath. Unsigned, but in the same brush idiom as the M. M. Falk drawings elsewhere in the issue.

Page 104

Shoin Fukui. The photographer's name is set in the magazine's heavy display face at the top of an otherwise blank page, folio at the foot, introducing his portfolio.

Page 105

Photograph: a woman in a halter top and white skirt stands hand on hip, bangles stacked to the wrist, an oval pendant at her throat, smiling squarely at the camera; artificial blooms and a cabinet crowd the room behind. Fukui. Set as a wide block mid-page.

Page 106

Fukui on a bleached suburban boulevard: an elderly woman in a patterned tunic and cat's-eye sunglasses advances on the lens, mouth open, holding a paper parasol whose ribs open like a wheel above her head. Small horizontal photograph, wide margins.

Page 107

An old man in shirtsleeves sits crossed-legged in a garage chair, flanked by a Monroe shock-absorber drum and a whitewall tire on a Zeta Tires stand. Fukui photograph, deadpan and frontal, printed as a horizontal block low on the page.

Page 108

Two young men lounge on a gutted car bench seat set against clapboard, one stretched out with legs crossed, the other grinning with a cup in hand, rubble and rags on the dirt. Fukui. The photograph occupies the middle third of the page.

Page 109

Outside a Thrift Shop window two heavy men in sunglasses and white shirts share a bench, one smoking, a lampshade and handbags stacked behind the glass, a 7up sign on the pier. Fukui photograph, wide format, generous white above and below.

Page 110

Four children crowd a wooden chair on a concrete stoop, house number 38 painted on the door beside them; three grin at the lens while the eldest, wrapped in a white towel, stares levelly out. Fukui. Horizontal photograph, centred.

Page 111

Three children lean over a porch wall in hard sunlight, chins near their folded hands, two in white singlets and the third silhouetted almost to a shadow. Fukui. The photograph is set high on the page, story text ghosting through beneath.

Page 112	<i>Closing the Fukui portfolio: a man in work clothes sits on a folding chair at an empty intersection, hands loose between his knees, apartment blocks and parked cars bleaching out behind him. Small horizontal photograph floating in white.</i>
Page 125	<i>Pen portrait in broken, feathery strokes — a bearded old man's face emerges from mostly blank paper, one eye finished, the beard and collar left as suggestions. Scott McTyre, whose name opens the section in display type at top right.</i>
Page 126	<i>McTyre in full Beardsley mode: a woman in profile, hair coiled tight, stands in a trailing gown patterned with small black florets, her train pooling across the foot of the page against a huge black disc and dotted arc.</i>
Page 127	<i>A brush-and-ink swirl dominates this page — a man's face, hair slicked and brows knotted, set inside a great black spiral that coils down and around itself, thin stray lines flying off. McTyre, and the boldest thing in his portfolio.</i>
Page 128	<i>McTyre's last: a young face seen through a screen of thick vertical black bars, the stripes doubling as long hair, so the features surface only in the gaps. Stencil-like ink drawing, filling most of the page.</i>
Page 146	<i>Brush drawing signed MMFALK at lower right — Margaret Falk. Five or six loaded black strokes stand in for a figure: shoulders, a spine, a long dragged vertical, with a scratchy hatched mark low at the left. Sits alone on the page.</i>

In Memoriam

SOME IMMEDIATE IMPRESSIONS OF A STUDIO POETRY READING AT KPFK September 9, 1961

(Early one morning last summer poet Stuart Zane Perkoff stopped hurting. Stopped living, the death-fat, the poisonous tissues finally overwhelming his wholesome meat. In memoriam, the editors of Bachy remember Perkoff in his most vigorous years in the following review written thirteen years ago. The opening part of the review – omitted here – refers to William Pillin who shared the microphone with Perkoff that evening.)

I am more familiar with Perkoff's work, and perhaps it is for this reason that I was able to get down on paper, while listening, more of his lines. Also, his portion of the program was longer in clock time – though also much too short – not coming at all close to the point of listening fatigue!

The beginning: an invocation to Her, the Muse, his Goddess, his "Lady." His humility before the words, Her altar, struck me – this in spite of what one might hear – the "rudeness," the shit about eccentricities of his private person. A poem then from The Suicide Room, his book, called "The Blind Girl": . . . "she does not even know her hair is black." This, from his earliest work! Another poem: ". . . what is not of the streets is lit-rer-chur . . ." (my casting of the sound.)

The joke was that he was expected to look "beat," and then – because a public reading is to him like going on the set to a musician, he always wears a suit to public readings – one might expect him to look like a professor. No. He is a Poet.

"Poets of the world, be careful!" A poem to Her, the Lady. "She is opening the doors of the bedrooms, & of the eyes . . ." Another poem,

"In Memoriam, Gary Cooper," the "Coop" poem: ". . . cancer is sure All American way to go, Coop! . . ." ". . . legs tucked tight into my feet . . ." The references, oh the references to the Hollywood Hills fire that occurred at the time of Cooper's death – so integrated into the poem. "So long, Coop. /Yup."

His reading is powerful. His voice penetratingly, but not gratingly, low. Arousing. And yet the poems do not rest upon his voice. They sing of their own. "I move America . . ." Tonality, timbre, the controlled volume, love, in the word. In the speech:

tear yr eyes from our loveliness

don't make us aware of time . . .

And oh, unquotable here because of its immensity, the variation on a letter to Jonathan Williams

Then a poem subsequently published in Mendicant No. 1:

animal, animal yr teeth

drip blood. i know it is warm

& red. what

made me think

I wd not meet you here?

And: "I have pushed myself to the edges & now they leave me more or less to my dying . . ." "Since birth I am an exile . . . never the coming home." And a poem about the cowboy hero's hat, the serial movie cowboy, the hat that never came off: ". . . too pure to be magic, & so like America . . ."

And a section from the poem, "Voices Heard in Venice": the poet's ears so evident; he has heard them, listened, being a sound-maker. The jazz, yes. The jazzmen, yes. But his ears. His knowledge of and feeling for – the sound. There is too much here to quote – or to take

the chance of misquoting – except for one sound: "No touching." And yet this, out of context, I can only pray you will know, or read and discover, for it – the touching or the impossibility of touching – is a recurrent theme of the human condition in his work.

And: ". . . the poem as, or in the nature of, a report from the front." And then the poem for the albino poet. Too much. Hard sounds echoing. The insight – and shouldn't a poet see! Yes. And he does:

you womanhooked, word addict,

hunchback, lucky piece,

hey! dont everyone

want to

rub yr open wound

& spit into the wind?

Then poems that may surprise some. Poems that prove the truth of his right to description as a traditional poet. I mean, in the Arthurian poem it is overt. And a striking assimilation of Tennyson. He knows all forms and sources that a poet living and trying to feed himself today may know.

A poem for Dylan Thomas, short, loving. Aha! The poem for Allen Ginsberg that does not ignore the saltimbanco aspects – the removal of clothing, the dirty words, the accusations of bathlessness – yet sets these for the first time I've heard it done in appropriate perspective, lets us see the Poet.

The poem "O Para, O Dox" I remember from a number of years ago

—

BRADLEY'S CAT

Had a head on him
the size of a grapefruit.

His eyes were a double vision
of the moon.

I remember this:
swallows out like shot,

his saunter heedless
towards the nests

in the barn.
Then the kill,

his whiskers hanging feathers.
Now he is dead on the road

trailing entrails the buzzards circle.
A crow sits by wrapped in black.

He's here like a relative
who doesn't like you

but at your death
will come.

A leaf is missing here. Printed pages 123 and 124 were not captured in the scan this edition was made from: the end of Blair Allen's portfolio and the opening page of the review section. The review resumes below, already in mid-argument.

Patrick Leahy

DREAM OF THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T DIE

Believe it or not, I did not see Ireland; it saw me, and I saw the it that accommodated a childhood of mine far older than the ones in that vestibule called "conscious memory", that throne in the barber-shop mirror to which I, wherever "I" am, have succeeded. Consider then the testimony of a man lapping suckers on a vicarious bender. Poetry aside, it was a must to visit the strange dark light topping across Glendalough into the gorge. Forget the concession stand a hundred yards behind, the stuffy woman glaring at your boots because it's Sunday; forget Haslam, the chemist, discussing you in Gaelic, then selling to your face "Enuff rat pizen, sir, to see their writhing carcasses!" while handing you your change in English notes. Forget where they think you are with Pan Am; forget the inaccessibility of Dublin girls, the chambermaids giggling at the corner of the hall, who can't know more than they're supposed, because while "Here's the hot-water bottle for your toes sir" it was you who shouldn't've been standing in your shorts, you who can't be Catholic. Forget buying Irish and accept the Gilbey's franchise; forget the flat. Leave Dublin. Never mind the cabby "Who takes a tax-i all the way to Newtown?" Pay attention to the road. Because how quaint, how old-world, how picturesque it is, how perfectly "Ahr-ish" at the roadblock, the policeman leaning in on double duty for the Tourist Board: "G'day sir! Now Y' don't happen t' have ten-thousand pounds on y', sir?"

"Ha ha ha! No I don't!"

"I didn't think so. Well then, g'day sir."

Just remember to get out at Newtownmountkennedy. Reach the top of

Dunran Hill. Skirt the Keelogue forest. Turn down a lift from that woman in her smoking Mercedes. Smell the furze. Admit that the wind never "hurried back to France before it closed." Take the challenge to remain civilized in your arms and hug it tightly while the situation begs you to lose control, because there will be a grave lull in the conversation about the hills, it will cue your footsteps to clomp on a celery stick, to ring against the last drop of a highball, to being watched by your own hysterical straight face.

Look up and there . . .

Eight or ten men on horseback over the rise just ahead splintering stone and shredding grass and raising dust careered straight down at me and reined up, the horses making a furious commotion of snorts and rolling their eyes wildly as they fought their bits. Two men immediately dismounted. One was slight and boyish-looking; the other was an enormous acromegalic creature in whose gaping mouth stumpy pointed teeth seemed to run with a venomous fluid like a range of tiny volcanoes. I heard this acromegalic call the little man "Colonel" in a sarcastic tone of voice, then they stepped right in front of me and the Colonel said sharply: "Who's talking about mercy, you lummo! I'm simply sick of you thinking it's your privilege to kill all of them."

"Maybe if I fire first, it is," said the acromegalic.

"Have I given you the order to kill him?"

"I thought you killed like you make love, Colonel sir."

"I'm quite aware what you mean by that, Muldoon. Apologize or you're out. I've had my belly full of your insolence." "Such a pit-ty!" The brute quickly placed the muzzle of his revolver to the Colonel's forehead. He said: "Think I haven't got the guts?" The Colonel's hand was resting on the butt of his revolver in his belt. He leaned a little forward, his lips beginning to form a word, and at the same time drew. The acromegalic pulled the trigger and with a calm reflex

stepped back and smiled at the sooty burn he had left encircling the small spot, oozing blood, between the Colonel's eyes. The Colonel clutched his head and his face contorted pitifully. But instead of falling dead he lurched to the side and began to stagger away! The acromegalic guffawed, stuck his gun in his belt, and as he was getting back up onto his horse laughed in great heaving sobs, staring wildly into the faces of the rest of the gang until they too burst into laughter. Then he pointed down at me and said: "Pooh pooh! He's not worth a bullet!" They all wheeled their horses and began to canter diagonally across the field, up toward the hill which had disgorged them. I waited for the volley which would finish off the Colonel but they simply rode past him, and I could hear the acromegalic shouting in his booming sepulchral voice: "Who's chief now, eh? Just tell me who the 'Colonel' is now! Ha ha ha ha!" I began to follow the Colonel. He still had his revolver dangling from his hand like a nerveless unpredictable sixth finger, so I kept my distance, stopped when he stopped, started when he started like a jackal trying to catch a waft of certain death. Somewhere at the black bottom of my heart the stagnant face of pity blubbered for the sight of itself reflected distantly on my brain, a brain exultant with the duty to see the Colonel through to his end, so that when he should fall, I would be there to shoulder the corpse to the nearest village where it could be prepared for a decent funeral. It never occurred to me that he would not eventually collapse.

Suddenly the Colonel turned and began to stare at me. He tried to

raise his revolver but it dropped out of his hand. I could see he wanted to speak, but evidently there was nothing left in his brain to speak about. He only knew instincts, the dominant one being murder. I knew he wanted very badly to kill me, as if that would ease the exquisite pain in his head. I offered him my shoulder but he made a terrible face and veered away. I continued to accompany him at a few paces behind until, half an hour or so after nightfall, we stumbled

onto a tinker's camp. The people shuffled backwards from wherever they stood, assuming their notorious mystified expression, as dumb and resentful as a pack of querulous baboons, so that you, the intruder, were supposed to deliver for dear life your apologetic manifesto in the name of the President of Mars. I could almost hear the huzza rise unanimously behind their tightened lips, welcoming us like tops clamped over their smouldering credo: "Confirm us in our stink, lash down our timidity, victimize our confusion, hamstring ourselves that we may crumple at your line of demarcation." The Colonel reeled, tottered, and fell in a heap on the well-trampled dusty grass. Immediately, as if tumbling out of a glacier, several women rushed forward wringing their hands, tearing their hair, squeezing clumps of their filthy nainsook aprons and keening – hideous, dismal howls as if in token of grief: "No!"

"It's a devil!"

"A devil!"

"A bad omen!"

"Lit it die anither place!"

This made five or six young men laugh, and the hysterical women wailed louder, reaching for the ugliest notes in their humble scale. Nevertheless the men strolled over to the straw pile and began to fix a bed near the fire. I helped them place the Colonel on it and then a sordid reverence, like a hearkening for witchery, closed every tinker's mouth and seemed to blanch their eyeballs as they watched the wounded man staring wide-eyed into the yellow movements shifting back and forth across the close misty dark. I became entranced too until I noticed that now it was me they were staring at. I had the eerie feeling that they had adopted the Colonel and me both as significant demons, and they were waiting to hear what was expected of them by way of allegiance. I sat limply on the ground and tried to remember my exhaustion, which might transmit a little sanity as I began to tell the story of the marauders and how the Colonel had miraculously

sustained this head wound. They didn't seem to give a damn about explanations. My words went right through them. I was in the midst of trying to describe Muldoon, the acromegalic, when a gaunt young woman hugging a tattered black shawl around her shoulders pushed a little girl in front of me and poked at the ragamuffin's left foot. It was wrapped up in what looked like the sleeve of a sweater and coming under my nose made me gag from its smell of putrefaction. "Tahk it uff, if it's right sir!" the woman barked, and she handed me a rusty butcher knife. I suddenly realized (because fear stood me close to my instincts) that the whole barbaric camp had taken me by the scruff of the neck, were dangling me up to a test, and I had to do something decisive. It was plain how little the child's suffering meant to the mother. They would have enjoyed the amputation not so much for the blood and screaming, but for my submission to their will.

I stuck the knife in the earth and stood straight up.

"Get me some whisky!"

"What?"

"Get it! To disinfect the wound. Then we'll use some on the Colonel's head."

I was careful to use "we".

Sprawled in the dirt the little girl began to giggle like a crazy old woman. She had the rag unravelled from her foot and was spreading the fresh pus across the scabs on her big toe. Somebody handed me a bottle of Power's. When I had finished with her the little girl fell asleep doubled up beside me, my white linen handkerchief glowing in the firelight at the end of her grimy leg. The tinkers began to pass the bottle of Power's around, using their forearms so fiercely on their chins that I almost laughed. That would have been a mistake. They ignored me until more than half of them had toppled off to sleep, and then a few kept eyeing me like beaten dogs and chanted between themselves:

"It don't seem likely!"

"Poor damn soul, be dead before mornin' "

"Look at 'is eyes!"

"What's a man with a tunnel in 'is brain?"

"The mighty IRA, ho ho!"

"Mama, lemme have 'is belt!"

"Shut up!"

"You act like you niver seen a man die before!"

Before the last man grunted his farewell to consciousness he said:

"S'all there's to ut . . . lit 'im die. Diediedie, y' god damn thing!"

In the middle of the night, when everybody was curled up asleep, including myself, a pain in my bladder woke me and just as I was about to get

up a burly young man jumped into the dying firelight, wagging his finger at me furiously. "No, sir! No you don't! Not now! I've got a better idea. You just let me handle it, sir! I know . . . I've got the right idea!" He rushed into the dark toward where the wagons stood and in a minute reappeared with his cap jammed down over his mass of curly hair and a lighted hurricane lantern hanging from the crook of his arm.

"Jim! Get up! Be quick about it!"

The man called Jim struggled from a clump of half-asleep bodies.

"Aw God! What now? What's got into you?"

"I'm takin' 'im to Wicklow Hospital! Now give 'im here. Careful now, that's it, stand 'im up, lay 'im in my arms." Jim, helping to prop the Colonel up, let him topple gently into the cradle of the young man's thickly muscled arms.

"You'll want a coat," said Jim listlessly.

"To hell with a coat! I'm off to save a man's life! I'll make a fortune!"

This enigmatic exultation had no effect upon Jim except to make him shake his head slowly and crouch like an ape as he searched for the niche between the two women against whom he had been sleeping. With a strong vigorous step the young man started to trudge off, but suddenly he stopped and turned slightly so that the Colonel's legs pendulated.

"Thank you sir!" he said to me even more enigmatically.

And then he vanished into the blackness.

I didn't know what to make of it except that he was a good-hearted soul who thought the Colonel had a chance of pulling through in a hospital with doctors to look after him. The whole night had been a giant puzzle anyhow, I lay back, irritably ashamed, but at the same time felt a great relief flood through my veins.

.

Some months later I was in Londonderry, the worse for a woman, walking along a street crowded with fashionable, buoyant people and dazzling girls - every imaginable European beauty under the sun. I was utterly enchanted and happy, possessed with a childlike blessedness, and while the succession of spectacles appeared new and strange, and while my reasoning mind conducted for me a vagrant course, I did not feel lost or at anybody's mercy; familiarity led me along as strongly as curiosity. Soon the boisterous metropolitan

fittings of the street gave into an old residential district, squeezed closely with manorial Georgian and Victorian homes, some just recently constructed in imitation of the old styles. As I passed them I picked favorites, eliminating the replicas. Then I came to one that looked uninhabited, a huge white house elevated back on a terrace and approachable by a long turning flight of wooden steps which looked none too sturdy. I began to climb up and found many steps either splintered and warped with their nails loose or missing entirely. Near the top a short footbridge spanned a rather deep concrete gutter through whose innumerable cracks weeds and tough plumes of devil grass had plunged, heaving from their tangled roots, into a vast spongy mat the way the Congo looks from an airplane. Over the old rotten boards on the bridge somebody had nailed a series of cross-ties spaced about two feet apart. I crossed this makeshift bridge and climbed the last flight of steps to the house. I knew at once that it was derelict; old dusty curtains, stained with moisture and faded with age, hung in every window. A quaint empty fastness on whose overgrown grounds I trespassed like a child expecting to meet up with a hideous old caretaker, hobbling at me with red eyes ablaze, flourishing a truncheon. And yet I was not sure, either, that he would not welcome me home. I went to the front door and tried the knob. It turned easily. I walked in and there glowering down upon me was a dark lofty room filled with the stench of mildew. Partitions jutted out from the walls on three sides, making nooks as you will commonly see in a wax museum. In fact it occurred to me instantly that the place had been just that, a wax museum. I strolled along, looking into each nook. They were empty except for little pieces of indeterminate debris, dust, and cobwebs. The place reeked like a pilfered mausoleum. Then as I turned at the end toward the left side I caught sight of something straight across the room – a horrible human object exhibited in its special nook. A weak moaning sound sprang from my throat. Was it rehearsed this word of greeting for that pair of sunken dry-scum coated eyes and the dead, yellowish, parchment-like sockets where firm wholesome cheeks had once flourished? Only the head showed in a glass case like a fish tank.

Purple velveteen drapes hung from under its chin to the floor. The clot of blood and the powder burns on the forehead remained as I had last seen them. Behind, on the wall a little to the left side, a sign read:

THIS MAN IS THE NOTORIOUS
COLONEL SULLIVAN OF THE
IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY. HE
WAS SHOT IN THE HEAD BY A
TRAITOR, AND YET SURVIVES
WITH THE BULLET IN HIS BRAIN.
HE CANNOT MOVE BY HIMSELF
BUT RESPONDS TO FOOD AND
DRINK. PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT
TO TALK TO HIM, AS HE IS
LIABLE FROM THE AGITATION
TO LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS.
THANK YOU—
THE MANAGEMENT

The management! So this was what the curly-headed tinker thought would make him his fortune, the star attraction of a private freak gallery! No doubt he had worn himself ragged in Londonderry crowds pimping for it. My eyes filled with tears. I must now notify the police and . . . yes, arrange for the Colonel's funeral and pay whatever it should cost. I had decided on that long ago. It was my duty. And while I felt the tears coursing down my cheeks and

imagined them sinking drop by drop into my coat, a blissful pride rose from my toes and tingled in my ears. At last I could be of some small service to this poor incredible man who, it seemed, had not died of his wound but of starvation. The circumstances of the funeral leaped into view. I would spare no expense in the range of decency, yet avoid ostentation. The undertaker would surely wonder what the man had been to me, but I would keep that to myself. As the minister reads his words over the grave, I thought, under the sombre drizzle which must be expected at this time of year, no mourners except myself will be present. I would thank him, hand him a fiver, and that would release in him a tender commiseration and a sudden genuine wish to cheer me up. The death's head gaped before me, but I scarcely noticed it for my tears.

Lawrence P. Spingarn

BONANZA

Here night and railroad never stopped. A lizard ruled
Whose cold blood flowed in gallons through the bars.
We suffered itching hands, pledged monstrous cups
And heard the loose boards whimper promises.
We hallowed parlors where the feathered dolls
Plucked from their easy garters green surprise
Or toasted Madame, pinched her silverware,
And egged the Marshall on to do his worst.
Outdoors the furious centipedes performed a jig.
The whiskey worked past rock to drifts and stopes.
We nursed each golden vein, we called for more.

As fiddles squealed, the nerves dissolved to dust.
Cut was the olive branch when Tombstone Jack
Wore spurs to bed and hurled his diamond studs
To crack the tinted lamps and clear the planks
Of can-can kicks and flash ten-dollar kisses
Spun from a wheel. Charity? *Her* name was Charity,
But now her pale throat gasps its alibi;
Her rouged lips etch new craters in the mud.

BOUILLABAISSE

Do not say the fish jumped in our platters.
In that bad collage, the *garçon* wore pimples
And a soiled apron, the *patron* drank *marc*,
The Wurlitzer screamed in pain. However,
Moules, praires, and Breton prawns contributed
To the orchestra of tastes, the *betteraves*
Were fresh, and the libelled Nuits St. George,
While not great, went down smoothly. Still,
We drove through dukedoms of mud and rain
And shivered in a drafty foyer underneath
Posters of Carnac and the Lascaux caverns
For this repast, only to find wide trenches
Between promise and delivery. The addition
Seemed wrong, and as we walked out, full,
Somebody jibed at our impossible accents,
But had we stayed to complain, doubtless
The canvas would have blackened completely
In smoke billowing from the clients' cigars.

Leonard Gilley

THURSDAY

i have lost my life
it has gone from me
i sit here empty and bang bang away at this electric
machine as if i were
 alive
but i am dead
the worms on my skin are an oriental design
dragonish

someone please send out for sandwiches
and tea

FRIDAY

i spilled the bloody mary into the electrical mechanism
of my typewriter so now i am working longhand

the pulpwood trucks pounding past outside shake the house

like an earthquake
you

have had too many drinks

my wife says your
world is unsteady young man
young woman i reply get your ass back into the kitchen
or undress and get your ass into bed
my world is steady enough and

to prove it
i lift the red dripping machine and send it crashing
against the wall

SATURDAY

last night i drank one mary too many
my
 wife had to
 help me to bed
tomorrow she said firmly young man
you get yourself back
 on whisky sours

SUNDAY

i held the past like a packet of dead letters.
over and over and over i read them. i knew
their

contents better than the best student
knows the declensions from a dead language.
i was like a hippopotamus listening to the birds
on its leathery back pecking insects then hide
then blood.

monday was tomorrow and the clock
would run me to work. today was sunday
and i read the past like a
packet of dead letters.

Joel Dailey

EXPLORING ANOTHER LEG

Monday it's time to get re-acquainted with
the knees, those two bobbing polar ice caps.
When they thaw the world caves in.

Tuesday we begin to sort out our lives like
seperating the socks from the underwear:
A warm chorus, a week's clean laundry.

Wednesday loneliness seeps under the door
and is chased away with a big stick. After
dark we lick each other's battle wounds.

Thursday the air is layered with gentle
souls like fishermen's bobbers, the play-
things of an easy wind and a cloudless sky.

Friday is an interval to be spent with
friends because you're links against uneven
weather, gathered in bright living rooms
comparing notes and hugging each other.

Saturday makes it stone hard to decide in
the woods: which am I, nature's lover or
her marionette? Indifferent night spiders
my wall, eight legs of stillness.

Sunday exists because you knew that this
poem would last a week. The calendar
explores another leg like a doe's warm

tracks etched into a snow falling late
and silent, covering the outskirts of a
village, trailing into the trees.

Ronald Koertge

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

january 20, 1974 los angeles, cal.

I

Porphyro, called Pork by some because he's fat and Porpoise by others because he has one benign smile called shit-eating by everybody.

He's bribed the super at El Molo Arms and has the key to Madeline's apartment. He's drunk enough to do it tonight and his friends are buying.

II

Cold. Madeline hurries home from Mass. She tells her beads as fast as she types and now her knees hurt, too. Before it was just her feet and her ass.

She takes off her clothes, stands among laundry. She wonders if the Porpoise called. The scars from bra and panty hose and surgeon mercator her like a globe. The Doggie is whining at the wrong door. He'll have to wait.

III

The Porpoise is holding his nose in the closet. If he marries this girl she'll have to have her teeth fixed and all her clothes cleaned first, that'll be part of the deal.

He spies her thick behind, the vastness of her calves.
He feels his gut, no prize himself.

She returns in pajamas less old than others. She wears
one roller in front like a horn. Before sleep she revolves
as if rotisserized. Soon she begins to snore.

IV

Pork slips out of T-shirt and jeans. Naked he squats by
the side of the bed. He has Pangsburns, chips and coke. He
puts the stuff on a table by the Mouse clock.

"Hey," he says and undoes the top button. The breast he
seeks is slung to one side. To see the nipple takes some
work. "Hey, wake up."

V

Madeline is pale in Med-O-Blem. "You scared me half to
death, Pork. Where'd you come from, anyway. I was just
dreaming about you."

He points and winks. "How about showing me the whole set?"
She reaches for the button.

"Forget it, have some candy."

Madeline chews. "If you just came to get laid, don't bother."

"I thought we could get married if you wanted."

"Why now all of a sudden?"

"Shit, Mad, why not?"

"My parents don't like you."

"Big deal. They don't like you, either."

VI

Madeline stands by the window. If anything it is colder.
The Porpoise comes up behind her. "Got time for a quickie."
"I get up at 8:00, Pork."
"Maybe I'll walk down for a beer, then. And hold the mutt
this time. He almost took my leg off before."
"I'll go part way. Tinker needs to potty."

VII

Finger to lips in the hall. The walls are full of snoops and
thin as dreams. Outside leaning against a lamppost is a drunk.
She has a comic figurine just like it, a souvenir of Las Vegas
where they will get married and perhaps, Pork said, stay on
if he gets lucky or can land a job.

HARD TIMES:

A LADY'S REVERIE

*Afternoon in the empty house. Not sitting on the
couch but lying, half lying in the broken pose of
someone who has just fallen fifteen stories.*

Eight years ago they were giving babies away at L.A. County
Adoption. Christ, they were all but out on Olympic Blvd. with the
pushcarts.

Eight years ago she got married in Las Vegas. Eighteen months
later as part of the settlement she got the news that he was sterile.

The second husband was terrified of children, acted like he'd been
shot by one. The third would probably have a silly-putty pecker.

Not that it mattered anymore, not with her trick insides: tubes that tied themselves in knots, liquid that refused to run downhill. Every 38 days or 30 or 22 or 41 she had a period, regular as a dollar clock.

She'd had more fingers in her than an ugly sophomore. Talking out of their smocks they all said the same thing:

Barren. As empty as the Carlsbad Caverns. New Mexico could charge admission. What was she supposed to do with this unnatural wonder?

At 26 she went into the hospital to have cysts taken out of her breasts. Beside her was an older woman who'd had her cyst operation 10 years ago. This time, slash. Off it came.

There were thousands of them running around Los Angeles with one rubber tit. Or two. Maybe she could organize them into a merry band, drop into surgeons' Cadillacs from overpasses and cut off the bastards' hands. She had one friend to turn to, but the friend was busy turning, too. Maybe it was all in the stars: "This is not the year to make plans or behave spontaneously. At all costs avoid relationships and isolation."

Relationships. That was the word for what she'd had lately. On the other hand, what did she want: Courting? Moonlight Bay? Canoe kisses?

She really wanted a gypsy to steal her. Gypsy love-slaves did nothing. Old crones tended the pot full of carrots and wild onions, Golden Earrings stole horses. She could hang by her knees in a stand of willows and give Marco's torpedo-sperm a fighting chance.

Substitute-teaching at pre-school: all snot and vowel trouble: "Teecha, I hut mah ahm."

"What do you say," said the man in her life, "if we get out the drum record and the candles and do something illegal to each other."

What a cutie-pie. But what if she traded him for a Porsche with a mustache. What difference would it make?

"Well?" he said.

"Well?" she replied.

Robert Eaton Kelley

PEACE IS AT HAND

Enticed by Deirdre, he fell. Never noticing the spindly legs swinging slowly, describing a lower arc as they swung between wooden crutches, swinging legs like crutches, she moved slowly. Moving skillfully from behind the fir tree, she moved into his path, moved as if onto a stage. Illumined breasts enticed him, illumined by the white-yellow glowing street lamp. Beautifully jostled, slightly rippling breasts, Deirdre's open dress revealing, enticing him. White breasts, golden hair, purple dress. She moved on her crutches, having moved for more than half her seventeen years, moved from the shadowed green grass to the sidewalk in front of him, cement scuffed gravelly lighted. He stopped. Erect, stiff, eagerly unprepared. If he noticed her spindly wooden legs perhaps their effect only enhanced the allurements of the upper white wave of her breasts, her long golden hair reaching to the small of her back. Tall. Deirdre. A vision for him. The grassy background, a valley vision, fairyland. A sudden screen before him, drive-in, Hollywood pastiche. As the soldier stopped, Samson came from behind, unseen, lifted his immensity—his hulk and his wheelchair—from the ground, thrust himself forward pushing downward on the flickering wheels exerting his massive powerful arms, propelled himself from behind the evergreen bush, propelled himself as he had done for six years, ever since puberty and mobility had coincided.

Samson caught him in the back of his legs. Crippled him.

The soldier dropped to the ground and Red pounced, sprang from behind Deirdre's tree and pounced, began pummeling the soldier with his gnarled, knotty fire-burnt fists. Eighteen years and one-hundred and thirty pounds of bony, fired, skinpatched fury pummeled the fallen soldier. Carrying out orders. Ancient task. The

moon shone brightly in the clear blue-black sky though darkness had only recently dominated. Streetlights, the ocean sounds and carnival eruptions of not too distant traffic–traffickers, shoppers, drifters. Deirdre helped with her crutches. And Silly, too. Pushed forward. Launched. More orders. Laughing, hysterical Silly, hair-cropped, skinny, running around, jumping on and off the soldier, Silly, sixteen and fastest of the ward. Otherwise perfectly normal, physically perfect. The soldier squirmed and raised his arms to protect himself, to ward off the blows. Squirmed. Shortly his arms dropped. Groaned. Honorary checked his watch, pointed to the soldier.

Pull him up, get him behind the tree before somebody comes. Red and Silly grabbed the soldier, dragged him onto the grass behind the same fir tree. Samson, moving with them, reached down from his wheelchair, I can lift him easily. See. extended his powerful arms, Easily. grabbed the soldier by the arm pits and pulled him into his blanketed lap, laid him face up, sprawling, on his–Samson's–blanketed though nearly nonexistent legs.

Easily.

Deep voice, broad chest, powerful arms, large head. Samson had practically no legs.

Easily.

Honorary checked his watch, directed. Honorary, ranked normal, divinity's agent in the land of no-noses, in the hospital ward. Honorary possessed the largest, larger than life nose. Twenty, oldest, leading. Stop laughing. Jesus. Damn laughing. Get his clothes off. Strip him! Strip him! Silly, giggling, removed the soldier's shoes and socks, and Red tugged off his pants. The legs looked hairless, blond. Samson–bearhugging–unbuttoned the coat and shirt, peeled the T-shirt. Deirdre watched, wearing the soldier's hat, having retrieved it, watched and shifted on her crutches, Don't like this, don't like it. . hurry, hurry. . .do we have to do it? . . hurry, hurry. . .is he waking up? . .is he awake? Moon bright, they worked furiously, stripped him,

left him nude, Samson laid him on the ground. Hairless. Deirdre watched, whimpering. They left the soldier, no longer a soldier, white-nude by the black-green fir tree. Unmilitarily a tie was left around his neck. Unintentional dog-tags. Almost guerrilla-like they moved away, scattered up the grassy slight slope of the hospital grounds. Guerrilla-like except that Silly jumped and twisted and giggled like playing house, like playing house, played house when we were eight, Deirdre, Deirdre. Guerrilla-like because fire-burnt Red pushed mighty Samson's wheelchair up the slope, pushed as if getting the wounded, the not-dead, away from the bloody assault.

They scattered, guerrilla-like.

Deirdre was sobbing, sweet Deirdre,

hate it, I hate it planted her again rubber-tipped crutches into the moist evening earth, followed behind, Honorary no-nose leading, clutched the captured uniform.

Lifted him easily, said Samson. Easily.

Lovely, Silly said, lovely Deirdre, hehahahaha...

Move! said Honorary, and Red pushed, they scattered.

To the French door of the ward, stopping, gathered, animated, Silly giggling.

Shut up, said Honorary.

Looked inside to the silent dark ward, tomb-like, rows of high steel beds, heavy, cumbersome, the rest of their always encamped comrades sleeping in the home base. They did not enter immediately. The patrolling cars, said Red, feature-less, looking back. Every night I've heard them. Look, see them. I've heard them every night, all my life. They're a danger. They're not patrolling, Samson said, they're just going home, or away. They don't know about us—did you see how easily I picked him up? Huddling, animated, they waited for

Honorary to order them into the ward, waited for him to put on the uniform, adjust his concealed urine-bag, hand-brush the dirtied uniform. Combat.

Easily, giggled Silly, hopping around.

Shut up, said Honorary, struggling, having trouble with his bag.

Talk about it, Samson, yeahh, talk about it, Red said. Better that than your bowel-movements. Your damned easy bowel-movements. Some day they'll stick that tube up your ass and you'll know what you're missing, yes sir. Just like the rest of us—right up your big fat ass. You're jealous, growled Samson, jealous, you've always been jealous. You freak, I could crush you! Easily.

I'm a freak?

Shut up, snapped Honorary, I'm ready—let's move. And be quiet.

Wait a minute.

All stopped, hesitating.

Don't forget—when the lights come on make believe you're still asleep.

Wait for the truck, wait for the truck. And wait for me. I'll give the signal and when I move, you move. Red, you and Samson get the television. We'll get the truck. We'll show'em nothing's over.

Fat ass, giggled Silly.

Shut up, said Honorary.

They moved then. Opened the door quietly and moved stealthily. As stealthily as they could—motley crew in the land of no-noses, no hands or feet, fewer everything, land of peeled burnt-skin and scalp, of free-flowing urine. Moved, anyway, led by Honorary, divinity's

agent because he possessed the largest most prominent flaring hair-sprouting nose.

Each shadow in the ward moved to a bed. After such violence they moved to their beds, for sleep. The bunched large indistinguishable moving mass reflected on the wall was Red pushing Samson to his bed though there was no longer any need for it, absurd with the recent memory of Samson moving unaided on the grass, powerfully and deadly, crushingly into the helpless unsuspecting legs of the soldier, slumped still on the grass. Red pushed Samson to his bed where Samson's powerful arms pushed again, lifted. Alongside, Red got into his. Silly was already asleep in one of the thirty beds, dreaming of the coming morning, quickly to sleep. Hulking high steel beds, four feet from the polished moon-streaked hospital floor.

The uniform didn't really fit but it was too small, not too large. Honorary would remember wearing it. He remembered now, guided by his uniform, and checked everyone in bed. But, no Deirdre. Deirdre had not glided, slipped through the large shadowed room to the empty hallway, to her room. Hadn't followed. Her own shadow, shadowed figure, he saw through the French door, outside, through the glass. Not standing tall and slim, not swinging with the crutches, but slumped. Nearer the door he heard her sound and slipped out. For Honorary, his own vision, continuing, despite the uniform. Her secret purple dress, black out of moonlight, molded her upper half, surrounded pool-like-deep her lower. She no longer wore the soldier's hat. He felt the desire, strong, that he had tried not to acknowledge. Again the uniform, the effect of the uniform to make him forget the urine-bag, make him not afraid of it, of her. Possibly. Maybe. But, still fear.

Deirdre, Deirdre.

Softly. Whimpering. Her sound.

. . .come in, Deirdre.

He stood at first saying nothing more and then knelt beside her. Long golden hair remembered, desire hidden. Purple dress that molded the upper half of her body. Breasts. Beautiful. She had used her breasts many times and it had worked with him. Honorary had long forgotten her legs in desire, saw such legs often, such breasts only with Deirdre. He wanted to reach and touch, touch. Reach out and touch. So close now, so easy to touch. So awful. Terrible. In darkness, she wouldn't see the bag, maybe remember the uniform. So close. Just reach out and touch. Do it.

But he couldn't, and grew angry.

Get up. Damn, get up. You'll blow the whole thing. It's almost time for the nurse, for Seemon. Did we hurt him, she whispered. Will he get up and walk away? He has no clothes!

Forget him. We're done with that. Come on. Tomorrow's coming. She had used her breasts. She had hated doing it though she had done it many times before, for other reasons.

My breasts, my hair. See my breasts, me, and not my legs.

He pulled her up, pulled her into the ward, angry, frustrated.

Go on.

She glided, swung slowly on her crutches, and he watched, watched her disappear into the hallway, disappear.

Silly jumped in front of him. In the darkness. Right in front of him.

Heee, heee, Deirdre, Deirdre. Why didn't you, Honorary, Honorary, touch Deirdre, Deirdre, Honorary, Deirdre. . .

Back to his bed he ran. Silly. Quickly to sleep, awake, sleep. Quickly.

Honorary went to his bed, got in and covered his uniformed self. All in bed, no sleeping save for Silly and Samson, waiting. All of them dressed, some slept, some waited, in the land of the knife.

In the encamped ward Samson bulked, filled his bed, a large burial mound. Slept soundly, contentedly, assuredly waited for the morning, the morning, for him the best time, his supreme moment. Breakfast from the truck. . .departure. . .the coming of the brigade of bed-pans. His muscular upper torso abruptly connected to his wasted legs, Samson perched like a king on a bed-pan. Easily. Each time without the flicker of a single one of his upper muscles he performed his feat while Red, Silly even Honorary—all of them were humiliated and tortured, their guts pressed and stormed by tubed water. Samson—easily. Apotheosis of a bowel-movement. He made much of it, defined himself as far into the day as possible when, of necessity, his feats of strength took over, an ambiguous time.

The coming morning, this morning, would bust his routine, bung him.

Pleasing to Red. Not sleeping. Samson's bunging would please Red. Red, named and identified by his burnt skin-transplant covering, otherwise featureless, faceless to himself. Nowhere for him to go, once more waiting for sleep, hoping for it. Listening again for the imagined weaving of the traffic, the projected sounds deceptively even, flowing, going somewhere. Not for the soldier was Red awake, for Red the forgotten soldier. Just another neighbor now, a nameless inhabitant of the ward lying under the tree waiting for an endless series of operations, for hacking and scraping, puncturing of skin, of membrane. No matter that the soldier had been spilled on the grass, that the ward had extended to the evergreen. Nothing unusual about the coming morning either. Not for Red. A natural episode, another beginning from nothing, the allurements of possible sustention. Nothing severed, a beginning, always the beginning. Dozing. Begin again, Red. You can have your skin. Destroy the television and scatter the oatmeal from the breakfast truck and you'll be safe, we'll give you

your skin. Sign here and go through the door on the left, for your bed-pan. You have to come back, yes, through the door on the right and you can't do that while sitting on the bed-pan. . .do it. . .impossible. . .try. . .

Red slept. And snored.

Honorary heard.

Arms bent at the elbows, hands under his head, his large nose pointing at the ceiling. Eyes gazing. Wavy, streaking light. There he goes again, snoring. Never sleep, he says. Won't have to hear that again, not this morning. I never sleep, he says. I can't. He always does, snores. Goes to sleep before I do. Jesus. Little bastard. Tugging. Silly again, awake. Honorary knew it was Silly tugging at his arm, wanting him to wake. Murmured, I'm awake. Get back to bed. Supposed to be sleeping for the morning, the attack.

Was a spy, wasn't he, wasn't he, wasn't he?

Yes, Silly.

How come a uniform, how come, how come?

Wasn't his, Silly. Who cares? We're doing our job. Have to follow orders, right? Somebody's got to do it. Now that they're claiming it's over. Somebody has to. Go back to bed. Damn it. Silly had already gone, come and gone without Honorary's opening his eyes.

Sleep, go to sleep.

Most of them slept, little band of sleepers, little community. Frightened little community, frightened now that the crippled and wounded were coming home, not wanting to believe the hordes were coming. Not accept that there were more coming who were unable to, like them, urinate defecate, like them, possessed three-fingered hands stumps burnt skin-transplanted bodies. There would be greater numbers afraid of touching. Little community of ordinary folk,

freakish limbs and names, having developed their own lore. Their world. Watching their own destruction, own deaths. Little guerrilla band. Monstrous. Already a community, they had shifted from stamp-collecting and Sunday picnics (hamburgershotdogspotatochipspickles) on the grassy hospital grounds, to coalescing around the nightly tales on television, tales of their own at war, of the crippled and wounded, their own. Not crippled and wounded from the war but crippled and wounded fighting the war. Watching the nightly tales and making it their own pastime, own war, their own vision of awards, adventures, movies. A flying bug, the floating in of the helicopter and the rush of stretchers – going to war, not leaving it. The crippled rightfully going to war. The connected bottle, connected to a still arm, still body on the stretcher, feeding sustenance, energy for the war not for life. Every evening they watched their comrades preparing for, leaving for, war. Honorary, Red, Samson, Silly and Deirdre, all waiting for orders. Righteous.

The ward.

In design it was a jungle. From bed to bed twisted limbs, a leg suspended to the right, an arm frozen, cast white crooked, then nothing, no arms or legs, hair or eyes, free-flowing urine. Giggling, screaming—they were stunned with the announcement of the war's end. Absurd. Something vital had been stopped, something desperately needed. The television would go out. Without reflection they realized what they had to do, knew existence depended on their acting. All humanity.

It was their morning though there was no sun, no light coming through the French doors. Their morning because the bright lights of the ward erupted, sprang. At first, blinding light and no sound, a flash from the sky, detonation of a faraway bomb. No one stirred, as if all were ducking. The gleaming steaming breakfast truck appeared, a newly minted tank complete with provisions. Then the nurse, all in white like an angel, pushing. Before she could announce the end of sleep, before she finished stirring the hot oatmeal and reached for the

first bowl stacked high, Deirdre came from behind, struck. Came from behind after slipping, gliding down the hallway. Struck the nurse solidly on the back of her head with one crutch. Weapon. Deirdre in the same purple dress appeared. Purple dress, golden hair, white ward. Purple dress, the same, Deirdre floated in. Silently the light switch had been flicked, the huge silver truck emerged, Deirdre struck. Silly bounded from his bed before Honorary screamed. Bounded from his bed and started running around the oatmeal truck and the fallen nurse. Deirdre, sobbing, Honorary screamed.

Silly!

Samson woke and, half-asleep, fell from his bed trying to get into his wheelchair. Fell four feet. Banged his head. Red, leaping from his bed, raced for the television and smashed the screen with one kick. And fell himself.

No! shrieked Honorary.

Already Silly was throwing oatmeal all over the ward,

William Virgil Davis

LOVE POEM

I have filled the dark womb
Of my wife with words I cannot write.
She groans as they enter her.
And I, spent with the strain,
Fall back, more dead than alive.
She does not speak or smile.
Her eyes are closed. She sleeps.

Months later, more beautiful than before,
She is fat and proud. The words
Swell in her belly. She puts her hands
On my head as I bow down
Before her to hear. As I listen,
The words fly together within her.
The words are alive. I can feel them breathing.

Michael C. Ford

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF DEANNA DURBIN

I can understand the way it was with you,
Deanna.

One day
Without any apparent warning
Some neighbors we knew
Without any warning
Moved to Costa Mesa
One day
Where they didnt have to watch
Everything crumble
In the soft dawn
Of our disenchantment.

Why should they?
Like you, they were smart.

We didnt wise up until much later!

What did you really do, Deanna?
Change your name?
Become a secret agent?
Do you ride the Orient Express
With the master plan in your pocket?

Are you bird of paradisising it
Like Debra Paget
All sarong'd & swooning
While she tested the intentions

Of bristling boys on the island
Or just like Joan Leslie
Are you giving somebody
Enough faith in himself
To go up against the heaviest gunslinger
On the Jubilee Trail?
Or
Do you stand on the edge
Of a cliff on foggy afternoons
Waiting for a tanker
That sank off the coast of Dover
In 1941?

Do you sit somewhere
In a sun-lit sanitarium
A beautiful & helpless amnesiac?

I bet you feel like St Louis
When the Brownies broke for Baltimore.

Maybe that's what broke your heart.

Well, Deanna, whatever you do
Wherever you went, this poem is just to say:
I'll be there in a minute.

TO THE GIRL FROM BLUE CANYON

You say: you wish I could get work. . .

shit! shit! I tell you:

these poverties

of wars

inside my burning psychic house

the fluted foundations

the last hope I had

swinging in the heavy trees

of evening

waiting for what I wish for you

in return. . .

a Sunday afternoon full of sousaphones!

a bathtub full of balloon-blown mermaids!

a life full of flowers!

I WISH I COULDA BEEN A HUMPHREY BOGART BIG SHOT

For Monica Gayle

I wish I coulda been a Humphrey Bogart big shot
With Irene Manning mixing Betty Crocker batter
In a bowl
By blaze of hearth
In a mt cabin oh 1942
We coulda turn'd blue with lust, with love
I dunno whatever
Irene, Irene, our luck ran out
On stool-pigeon feet
Where did you go?
Now in a time when I must be slow as the rest
Where are your furs & expensive print-dress?
In the snow covering yesterday's dust
Of capitulation
But I still gotta know
Why did you go
Leaving us 1970s wide-screen starlets
In Serbian sandals of no sex?

FOR MY FRIENDS WHO STAND BEHIND ME SO FAR BEHIND ME THEY'RE ALL OUT OF SIGHT

So I call'd my pals Proctor & Bergman
I sd I really need some help,
& I wonder if you could see yr way
clear . . .

I remember phoning Phil
I sd Philly honest to god,
& Pattie, Linda, Margarita, Maureen
if you could come to the poetry-reading
there's nobody here. . .there's nobody here
at all . . .

I finally phoned Fishburn
I sd Kevin I'm on the cross, man,
I mean if you could maybe. . .he sd
we only employ actors around here,
kid. . .you're a poet? fuck you,
go starve in a slum

That was about a year ago
I've been in the joint 12 wks now,
& today I talk'd with Tom Laughlin

He sd hiya, sport, how come you
can't make it. . .how come you just
can't seem to make it?

MESSAGES FROM A BLUE MONDAY

I

early afternoon birds
 floating
 over
the Bayshore Rd

& Miriam is warm in her garden

II

warmer
than cyprus papyrus
 in the arboretum
 in Golden Gate PK

warmer than standing
in grass
 in the morning
 in Rome/Oregon!

warmer than mending fences
for a Boise/Idaho newly pastured horse!

warmer, that is, than a soft explosion
 of flowers
 in Ann Morrison Memorial Pk

III

oh, because of whom we know,
we are warmer than electric trains
on Christmas morning

& AH GOD MIRIAM

has been so warm in her garden!

etc. and sort of hinted if my grades were OK, I could have a new car by Christmas. I only replied, "If I gave a party for everyone who has been nice to me this summer no one in my family would be invited."

* * * * *

Things are wilder but for the best, my life has so many cluttered scenes, it's been TV soap opera without commercials. Cliff lives up here in Ithaca, he works two jobs-at a garage and a diner near campus. But we hardly see each other anymore, he's so busy and I've met a Persian exchange student. My Persian, I call him. He has a strange Arab cock twisted like some sort of almost double edged sword, it's much smaller than Cliff's but so much more lively like a crazy rabid squirrel it never stops revolving. Cliff is happier than he's ever been, a waitress at the diner had taken a real motherly shine to him. He still can't get over my family just looking at us like wax figures and in the first weeks up here he kept asking if I wanted him to burn down the house. But we're all happy now, my grades are good, my Persian is a love slave, Cliff is making ends meet and he's stopped sweating completely and he's only said a couple of times, "The world is never ready for kids and then you grow up and you aren't ready for them either. . ."

James Biffle

LAST SPEECH BY A GERMAN SOLDIER CUT-OFF IN STALINGRAD

1.

From the Dnepr to the Don

We used our bodies as hammers
To smash their lives with ours.

My friends laid down
In their wreckage, their bodies
So full of smashed pieces
They did not gasp or weep.

We came down on Stalingrad
An army of snakes and birds;
Whatever we touched, burned.

2.

It is morning;
I can see
Through the moon.
Then something falls like an animal
Into my hands.
The captain cries out!
I look down into blossoms
Standing out from my bones.

3.

We crouch among the little mirrors

The rain has left.
In my pocket I flex
My imaginary fingers,
Feeling if I could completely forget
Their absence they would return.

At nineteen, I ran the piano
Like a machine.
They said I was too efficient
For genius.

4.

We found a house
Miraculously collapsed
Around a piano.
We dragged it like an ox
Into the street.

Kurt bends his shrunken face
Above the keys and sets
His hands to their banquet.

Listening, I see a lake
With skeletons
Of light dancing
On the bottom.
I put in my hand and feel
It lightly take hold of me.

This music levels the city
More completely than artillery.

Air melting in air, treble
And base, I feel an order

As permeable
And as indestructible as space.

My knees begin to ache.
Even as I kneel in the very street
Where the ice hardens around my missing bones,
I cannot help noticing certain imperfections in the performance.

* * * * *

Alone, fascinated by the hardship,
I sit at the piano. My simple clubs
Fumble out their dirge
I would better play with two hammers.

Charlie McDade

WALLS

I

The first time you left
I noticed a hole
in the kitchen wall
where I had thrown a fit,
a glass,
& missed you.

I bought a can of filler
like thick whipped cream
carefully filled the hole
sanded the edges smooth
& painted it over.
Then I called you
to come back.

We sat in the kitchen
having a coffee
& it was as if the hole
never existed.

II

The second time you left
I noticed a film of smoke
discolored the walls
in the living room,
turned them from white

to dull yellow-gray.

Having nothing to do
I bought aggressive paints
did the walls over
in orange, mauve

have left her, called her bluff completely. What if she were raped or had an accident with the car - what good did calling every fourth day do if she were held hostage in a nearby town, they should have come home much earlier or at least in time for Cornell- she was a wealthy orphan and poor Cliff her only saviour and friend, the only person she could reasonably invite to her party. Last week even Clara had sensed her new power and had spoken softly and all but curtseyed. I have lost weight and I have gained wisdom and I'm screwing my fool head off with a pimply dishwasher and a wonderful person. Cliff is a much better person than I am. I see that now but I don't give one shit. I'm getting wiser, incredibly wiser, the tips are doubling at the diner, everyone is more friendly with me and I've never been happier at the open manner strangers now speak and look at me. She loved to unzip Cliff and take him out and lead him all over the house and find some stupid corner of the house to make love in. She looked forward to Cliff spending the night with her -when he slept next to her she no longer heard any echoes or house noises and sometimes the alarm clock couldn't even rouse her. She wondered if she was in love. She hoped Cliff was.

* * * * *

She decided Cliff was solid and dignified and she told him so. He didn't know whether to like it. "I gave up already so that makes me dignified, the rich like you can always be kids, spoiled kids."

"You haven't given up and don't act like you hate me."

"I hate other rich kids like you. Maybe if I met them I'd like them too, shit, let me hate them!"

"Don't talk like that, it doesn't make sense, it's jerky."

"Poor dummies unless they're very smart or very lucky, stay in the same hole. They got no chance of getting higher, believe me."

* * * * *

"I don't know why you have to pay, Cliff."

"I like to pay."

"We could go Dutch."

Cliff looked like he might punch her. Madeline liked that, she was beginning to be surprised at what else she liked this summer. "Did you really start a fire this summer?"

"Yes."

"I don't believe."

"I'll start another one."

"No don't," but she loved the idea and she loved the idea of being hit and spanked. And lying in the gutter vomiting. ●

* * * * * And Madeline Maddy Mad she wrote all three names down in her diary and then she added, how long have I known Cliff? Since July Fourth weekend at the diner when he squeezed my breasts accidentally and then next time in the kitchen when he grabbed my breasts and that was not an accident and I was shocked that I really didn't mind. I haven't read one book since the fourth of August, we've been fucking since the third of August. Whenever I think about the diner I can only conjure up positions to fuck. When he stays over and we just talk or just sleep or watch TV I mean it, just watch TV, that's nice too. I haven't read a book or newspaper or even heard the news in weeks. It's nice to be a fucking vegetable, a screwing vegetable. It's almost the end of August and we don't talk about time much. Last week we fell asleep really holding one another, I held his cock, his

joint, his tool, his terrific thing in my hands all night, Cliff and I, and it slept together, it was a little like a little baby or kitten until we woke it in the morning. Don't miss my family except Daddy once in awhile. . . The nicest thing today Cliff offered to go with me to college and we'll share the driving and then he'll bus back down for work next day, that was the nicest gesture anyone ever made for me, Daddy included. . . Daddy is driving me up to college. I don't have my car anymore, they didn't take it back from me but it got totalled. They must have felt guilty having so much fun on the Riviera or maybe the weather was rotten and the fucks came home four days earlier than scheduled. And they found Cliff and me in the master bedroom and we couldn't cover ourselves for the longest time. See, we had stripped downstairs, then we ran up and took a shower and then dried off on Mommy and Daddy's bed and then we fell asleep and next thing I know Mommy, Antonia, Anthony and Daddy were watching and asking us to get up and explain ourselves. They waited around for us to explain or cry or say something stupid. We remained silent and they voyeured some more. I introduced Cliff, who couldn't shake down his hard-on, suddenly Daddy and Mommy ushered giggling Anthony and Antonia out. Daddy said matter of factly we should meet downstairs. Daddy really blew it, our damn clothes were downstairs and Cliff'd be just as bareassed down there, so I handed Cliff my car keys and suggested he cut out and come back tomorrow for lunch. So Cliff, stark naked, still erect as a stud, slid down the roof and out. But in his haste to run away undetected, he neglected to put on the car lights and drove away hoping for the best, which was he wasn't killed, but the car knocked down a beautiful beech tree and utility pole and ended up instant junk sculpture. So Daddy drove me up to Cornell and repeated "it was all learning experience" all of us can learn from this experience etc. and sort of hinted if my grades were OK, I could have a new car by Christmas. I only replied, "If I gave a party for everyone who has been nice to me this summer no one in my family would be invited."

* * * * *

Things are wilder but for the best, my life has so many cluttered scenes, it's been TV soap opera without commercials. Cliff lives up here in Ithaca, he works two jobs-at a garage and a diner near campus. But we hardly see each other anymore, he's so busy and I've met a Persian exchange student. My Persian, I call him. He has a strange Arab cock twisted like some sort of almost double edged sword, it's much smaller than Cliff's but so much more lively like a crazy rabid squirrel it never stops revolving. Cliff is happier than he's ever been, a waitress at the diner had taken a real motherly shine to him. He still can't get over my family just looking at us like wax figures and in the first weeks up here he kept asking if I wanted him to burn down the house. But we're all happy now, my grades are good, my Persian is a love slave, Cliff is making ends meet and he's stopped sweating completely and he's only said a couple of times, "The world is never ready for kids and then you grow up and you aren't ready for them either. . ."

James Biffle

LAST SPEECH BY A GERMAN SOLDIER CUT-OFF IN STALINGRAD

1.

From the Dnepr to the Don
We used our bodies as hammers
To smash their lives with ours.

My friends laid down
In their wreckage, their bodies
So full of smashed pieces
They did not gasp or weep.

We came down on Stalingrad

An army of snakes and birds;
Whatever we touched, burned.

2.

It is morning;
I can see
Through the moon.
Then something falls like an animal
Into my hands.
The captain cries out!
I look down into blossoms
Standing out from my bones.

3.

We crouch among the little mirrors
The rain has left.
In my pocket I flex
My imaginary fingers,
Feeling if I could completely forget
Their absence they would return.

At nineteen, I ran the piano
Like a machine.
They said I was too efficient
For genius.

4.

We found a house
Miraculously collapsed
Around a piano.
We dragged it like an ox
Into the street.

Kurt bends his shrunken face

Above the keys and sets
His hands to their banquet.

Listening, I see a lake
With skeletons
Of light dancing
On the bottom.
I put in my hand and feel
It lightly take hold of me.

This music levels the city
More completely than artillery.

Air melting in air, treble
And base, I feel an order
As permeable
And as indestructible as space.

My knees begin to ache.
Even as I kneel in the very street
Where the ice hardens around my missing bones,
I cannot help noticing certain imperfections in the performance.

* * * * *

Alone, fascinated by the hardship,
I sit at the piano. My simple clubs
Fumble out their dirge
I would better play with two hammers.
Charlie McDade

WALLS

I

The first time you left
I noticed a hole
in the kitchen wall
where I had thrown a fit,
a glass,
& missed you.

I bought a can of filler
like thick whipped cream
carefully filled the hole
sanded the edges smooth
& painted it over.
Then I called you
to come back.

We sat in the kitchen
having a coffee
& it was as if the hole
never existed.

II

The second time you left
I noticed a film of smoke
discolored the walls
in the living room,
turned them from white
to dull yellow-gray.

Having nothing to do
I bought aggressive paints
did the walls over
in orange, mauve
 & citron yellow-green.
It was better than television
 & the stereo was broken.

When you came
to pick up your clothes
the colors
held you prisoner.

III

The last time you left
I had no money & no desire
to do anything to the walls
so I called a friend
in the construction business
& he is coming on Saturday
with a ball & derrick.

Henry Rasof

by the metro

rose thorns fulminate in my eyes
I give what I might become away
and some kids in the park by the metro in naples
fight for the seeds with the stinking wind

the pain in my eyeballs sucks the sun from my fingertips
i vomit my dreams in a litre of two hundred lire chianti
and some kids in the park by the metro in naples
fight for the wine with the cockroaches and black ants

the sun fights through clouds of garbage
i feel it reach through my ribs and squeeze the rose
and some kids in the park by the metro in naples
suck its heat and light from my fingertips

the sun squeezes my rose and my eyesockets freeze
i fulminate in a burst of bloody rain
and some kids
mistake the rain for wine and die of the cholera

in the park by the metro in naples
my rose reaches through my ribs
alights the wind
takes my dreams what
i might be the
sun and the cholera
away

and some ants in the park by the metro

get drunk on the red sun in naples

genealogy

aroma of clove gaslight
bokkharian textures evaporate
from an ivory pipe

i watch my ancestors float
over mediaeval canals
dark thick coils of hair
necks smooth like ice
sun dyed breasts sleek midriffs
persian thighs and calves

the rest as i would have wished
alive hallucinating swarthy

aroma of clove gaslight
my ancestors evolved on
mediaeval canals

women with flaming copper breasts
men with burning blue-black pupils

aroma of aether arc light
dawn dehydrates my dream

i watch my blood
scatter with the piazza san marco mob
like streaks of opium smoke

when the henna's mixed i
hear oboes howl
in thick coils of memory

aroma of cinnamon-clove canal-light

i blend my mind with water

my life with mediaeval death

in death-mask still and tasteless

sun-light dries my copper skin

in the night gone liquid

dream-powder blue-black seeds

aroma of clove gaslight

flower

there's black crust
between my scapulae
burning waves of fluid

year after year
the marrow stiffens
my head a tomato
on a wheat stalk
a stinking burnt tomato

my spine is dead
there's white mold
between the blades

year after year
the black crust
stiffens my wings
burning
spinal fluid molds my head
in summer sun

in the summer sun
tomato flowers crack
open and their scent
rises

pas de deux

i light a candle you
close your eyes i
go to sleep you
drink your tea with milk i
mine with cinnamon your
orgasm was sunday mine
monday we
take turns having colds

i light your eyes you
drink my sleep i
spice your monday we
take turns closing cups
and cooling sundays

SONG OF THE MATHEMATICIAN

with my right index finger only i finger you
have two faces no one can tell
when you will have an orgasm

you are a woman who knows herself her age the scent of my
mouth which
month i cut my fingernails
(no one knows where her shadow is)

your clitoris oscillates like a wet pink piezoelectric crystal
my finger is a bolt of lightning that shapes your dance
you are a twelve year old girl who has never masturbated
i have two heads

am i really an old woman from your birthplace in pakistan
am i a greek philosopher who throws dice
am i a third face that never grew between your two identical
mouths

am i fingers that jack off young girls in soft beds
a month is the age of your cunt
a month is the wine of your heart
a month is the flower of your asshole's longing
a month is the yellow of your urine
a month is the flavor of your finger's history

does it matter if my fame sleeps when we fuck
that you never know when i am awake
that i sometimes prefer my left hand to your right
or that your mouth stinks in the morning

my right finger shivers in your cunt
your body stiff as my cock when you rape it with your month

i see two faces roll over each other
like dice made from eyeballs a pair of twos

identical ears
hard buttocks
hairy nipples
short little-fingers
eyes brown-green like mine
nostrils never full of snot
two fingers up your cunt my mouth on your tongue the shape of your
teeth

i don't know where your shadow is
my mathematics tells me nothing

Don Thompson

DEATH MARCH

The schoolmaster woke reluctantly from dreams of home, sat up in the glaring light and looked out over the bay—a gesture as routine as tasting his mouth for last night's local wine. The siege had not been lifted while he slept; ships spread across the water, insolent and bright yellow, as if the enemy were so confident he felt no need for camouflage. His room was large enough for a cot, a trunk (padlocked) for personal belongings, and a table at which he corrected papers and planned lessons when he had deceived himself that those little bastards might sit still and not sabotage his presentation, becoming obsessed with some trivial point, or with a new necktie which they would recognize as a gift from his girl at the waterfront. Once dreams had been abandoned, he got up and shaved, faithfully, always wondering if the vague and mushy soap or the water, which made lather impossible, was responsible for the film on his skin that could not be towed off and reacted chemically with afternoon sunlight to sting and sizzle. Then he brewed his morning tea: bitter as the smiles of his students when he opened the door into the classroom, rumped but clean-shaven, still clutching the heavy mug in a hand not quite trembling. After classes he spent an hour or two in his room, trying not to scratch his cheeks raw while he sorted papers which contained more than one student's work so that he was forced - for his own peace of mind, if nothing else - to cut them up and reassemble the pieces in sequence. Then he took his evening meal at some student's home, never quite sure what he was eating and occasionally sick as he walked back to the schoolhouse or down to the waterfront. There were virtually no streets along the way, just steps laid between lime-white buildings. On the day he arrived, the occasional doors made him think of exits on the stairway of a skyscraper turned inside-out. He had climbed up through town to

inspect the ramshackle school set some distance beyond the last houses. He ran his fingers over the rough wooden walls, gazed up at the brass bell in the rafters (without a pullrope for it had no tongue), wandered in and out of the spidery rooms before turning back toward the sea to observe not his own ship pulling away, but the enemy fleet stretched brightly across the harbor.

He received no welcome, let alone an explanation of the siege. Life there was austere and he soon realized that the rarest commodity was information. He was absorbed into the ongoing role of schoolmaster as if interchangeable, indistinguishable from both predecessors and those who would replace him. No officials contacted him and, almost at once, he began losing contact with himself, with only a vague nostalgia for reference. After climbing the hill that first afternoon and looking down on the blockade, he wiped his brow with a large pliant leaf from a tree in the schoolyard. It was his first physical encounter with that country and it left him aching with separation from home - from himself, for the scent of the leaf mingled with his own sweat to create a third fragrance, not merely strange but an alienation of his familiar body odors as shocking as if he had suddenly found himself inside another's skin. Next morning his students appeared and in the evening one of them led him away to the first awkward meal. His subsequent attempts at conversation, while never failing to draw eager responses from their parents, only embarrassed the students (who would not help out though they were fluent in both languages.) The adults were alert and expressive, but whatever they said made no sense to him. Only when he asked about the siege were they reticent. Then they merely nodded, frowning, which confused and troubled him until he considered that people living in earthquake country or along an unpredictable river never brood over the danger, neither expecting nor doubting inevitable disaster. Perhaps it was only natural that they refused to discuss the siege and made no preparations for invasion.

None.

And so it went: a routine so dull and inflexible that he could not shake it even when it was finally broken. For after the invasion and his capture, as he straggled along the road among the surviving partisans, the pattern of his life, the death march of daily living, would repeat endlessly in his mind - just as an onerous task, once completed, can become the subject of your dreams and force you to work at it all night long. But in those early months, all his dreams were of home. Life went on smoothly until he stopped asking about the ships, until he could wake and look out over the bay without thinking about it, accepting the siege as no more threatening than waking itself.

2

As he hurried through the village, he stepped into a deep trench that had not been there the night before. Heart pounding, he lay gazing up from the blackness of the excavation with its sweet-and-sour odor of fresh-turned earth. Then he swore. Not his own but local curses.

No one at the tavern knew anything, of course, but afterwards he began noticing other trenches, foxholes on the beach, windows broken out and sandbagged. And finally, the partisans themselves: scruffy, smelly and bearded, silently ignored by everyone. All were armed, occasionally with legitimate weapons but more often with improvisations such as tools sharpened beyond the requirements of their tasks or kitchen knives viciously honed. The partisans were few, drawn from the lunatic fringes and the unemployed, the malingerers. The earliest came down from the hills and began, sullenly and without comment, to fortify the town. Others soon joined them. The butcher shoved his cleaver in his belt and walked off; next day his wife and children were wrestling carcasses up onto the hooks. The schoolmaster believed he was witnessing a variation of dance madness which released political rather than moral inhibitions. The condition was socially contagious, obviously, but he suspected a virus to be the ultimate cause. Therefore, he avoided everyone. Always

reluctant to touch them (and grateful that they neither shook hands nor embraced), he now actively shied away from the people, even avoiding their glances as if the virus were passed by eye contact. By this time he had stopped going to the waterfront, had finally broken with the girl, so he did not observe the changes among the tavern whores, who were transformed more slowly. It was just restlessness at first: a girl would pace a lot and fidget while sitting. She grew impatient in bed, satisfying re-quests with gestures too abrupt, too thorough, dispensing with her usual restraint and contrived delicacy not only because she had given up the pretense of inhibitions, but because she wanted to be done with it. Soon she lost weight, hardened and rejected the fleshy-handful quality favored by her customers. Ultimately, she would reject those men altogether, turning to the partisans who so rarely wanted sex and, when they did, wanted it without frills.

3

Not really at ease, but almost faking it, he lay on his back with his hands behind his head, locked his jaws and squinted to deny everything within his field of vision-everything except the lizard poised just above his belly, shimmering in and out of focus as if blurred by heat waves. He had never seen anything like it at home. The red eyes were tiny and precise; the slender blue-green body tapered to a long tail, unexpectedly divided as if to balance the design, for the two ends curved up along each side and met again between the forks of a blue tongue. Motionless, it clung to the stone-smooth flesh of the girl who rocked back-and-forth above him, her own tongue protruding slightly, almost as blue as the tongue of the lizard tattooed on her thigh. He knew she was staring down at him, working to break his composure. Her efforts were determined, but restrained. She took her time (as usual), moving experimentally as if putting together a puzzle: the jigsaw of his face, which remained calm and therefore incorrect, requiring further rearrangement into something with more tension, sweat. And he could see by his

reflection in her eyes that she was getting it the way she wanted now. Again, he had not kept his attention focused on the tattoo, as he had planned.

She smiled.

He fought back, gritting his teeth.

Then her tongue lolled all the way out and from deep inside him a moan, a sob, a shout took shape and rose into his throat, which constricted so that what finally emerged was a violent mingling of all three.

"You win," he said, when he could speak.

And she repeated the words, tenderly, perhaps imagining them to be an endearment in his language. . . . He did not want to come back, but knew he would, needing her again and searching for her pudgy features among the others, virtually identical, who waited in the dim tavern. They always made love in silence. She seemed unable to learn his language and he was unwilling to speak hers, for he wanted no more of the ridicule he took from his students. So it was by gesture that they communicated-that she guided him, actually, while he tried to remain indifferent. But in time and the course of passion he occasionally gave in, performing, awkwardly. If there is a language of the body, he made love with an accent which she could barely decipher at first, but eventually found charming, even appealing. Afterwards, as they sat in her room drinking local wine, she still controlled him, forcing him to accept her touches, whether playful or intimate. The schoolmaster felt no afterglow and resented the prolonged contact which only renewed tensions that had just been eased, for it was these gestures and glances rather than the sex that brought him back night after night. Allowing her to muss his hair or run a fingernail lightly across his chest or caress him when he felt no desire intrigued him far more than her sexual skills. In the end, permitting that alien and unknowable girl to be so open with him became the truly sexual aspect of their relationship and provided the

content of his erotic fantasies as he lay on the cot at the schoolhouse. He realized that if and when he returned home he would speak openly, even boast of the sex, but could never mention the shared glass, the cheroot passed between them. Eventually the tension became so great between his familiar self and the person she was creating during those long evenings that one or the other had to give way. And it was, of course, the weaker, emerging self that failed. But even though he no longer went to her, she remained a continual distraction, a presence just beyond his peripheral vision. In fact, he was so used to her haunting him that he was not surprised to see her, even so much thinner, crouched amid the broken glass on the schoolhouse floor. No students had come that morning and rather than worry about it, he had shrugged, set the hot mug on his desk and gone back to bed. When he woke the second time, woke from what he mistook for a dream of shattering glass, he sat up and looked out over the bay as usual. Some part of his mind must have recorded that the ships were not there because, during the hard days of the forced march, he often closed his eyes for a moment to rest them (though afraid of stumbling, falling) and pictured the bay as it would look without the enemy fleet. But his perceptual habits were too strong that morning and an after-image of the ships filled his eyes. He got up again, already dressed and shaved, but without the tea which had gone tepid on his desk, and walked into the classroom. The girl was down amid broken glass peering through the window with a rifle across her knees. He recognized her first by the tip of her tongue working between clenched teeth, characteristically, evidence that she was concentrating on something out there—this time something other than his own vague features, his resistance.

"Down," she said, in her own language.

"What?"

"Get down!" She crouched even lower as if to pantomime what she wanted him to do. His confusion lasted only a moment before he came fully awake and understood. Her leanness, the shattered glass,

the rifle, the already questionable recollection of what he had or had not seen only a minute earlier when he woke and looked out the window: everything fit together at once and he dropped to the floor, not only because of her command but because his legs would not support him.

"Over here."

Obviously wanting him to understand, she spoke clearly, precise as the language records he had studied (half-heartedly) before leaving home. He crawled over beside her and responded to her nod by gazing down toward the village. Figures moved quickly between buildings, some bright yellow. Puffs of smoke were followed by vague sounds like hands clapping. He turned back to the girl. She reached out and patted the schoolmaster's belly, giggling.

"You win," she said.

Then she lifted her rifle, took aim. The yellow uniform turned red above the heart and a soldier, who had appeared suddenly, dropped. He had not heard the shot, not understood what she said as she glanced briefly at him before taking aim again. He did not even hear the shot that pierced the wall, leaving a small hole splintered along the grain. An hour later she had not yet died and he had not moved to help her. On hands and knees, he watched as she lay rolling from side to side. Her arms were not clutching her belly, where she had been hit, but were wrapped around her shoulders as if she were embracing herself. Knees jammed into breasts and her toes curled tightly. It had been some time since he believed her eyes could actually see him. At first, the brown pupils had filled the whites and then, as time passed, as pain replaced surprise, her eyes seemed to shrink down into the shadows of her nose, trying to vanish beneath the brow. Now there were no pupils at all, just a black spot on the cloudy white. Sweat beaded on her forehead, but would not run. Even as she tossed back-and-forth, the drops of moisture did not flow so much as break off

like bits of glass and fall to the floor among the shards of windowpane.

She was silent the whole time.

He heard only the sound of her body rolling on the glass and the hiss of his own breathing as he remained beside her, not even trembling. Useless as the bell hanging somewhere above his head. Stunned. And yet he was amazed at himself. He could not believe that this was how people acted in such circumstances. No, it was not the event, but he himself: not helpless, neither in shock nor hysterical, but cut off from what was happening, feeling nothing. One part of him struggled to move, to reach out and touch her; the other considered how strange it was that he could not. He wanted to talk to someone about this though he knew no one would sympathize. Besides, there was only the girl to talk to and now she was dead. The schoolmaster got to his feet, aching. He looked out the window for the first time since she had been hit and saw the dead soldier. The battle had not ceased down in the village. The yellow ships were beached.

4

He began with the obvious: there was nothing he could have done, not being a doctor and having no access to one. This did not work of course, for it did not justify his failure even to attempt to comfort the dying girl, to hold her in his arms (as she had so often held him) so that she would not have rolled about in the sharp glass. He had not even placed his palm on her forehead, had failed to make that simple, almost intuitive human gesture. On the other hand, he argued that anyone would have been helpless in his position, jarred from sleep by something we need all our inner resources to face. And besides, there was really nothing he could have done

The schoolmaster's guilt was as much physical as emotional. His muscles ached as if deprived of blood and his joints stiffened, his head throbbed. He had to do something to get moving again, to ease the pain somehow. Still unwilling to touch her, he dragged her

outside by the collar, leaving a deep mark on her throat which he tried to ignore. She was not heavy, but he was so weakened that the effort exhausted him. As he sat down to catch his breath, he realized that he could not bury her (which he had decided would set things right) because he had no shovel and even if he had, he could not dig a grave in that schoolyard tramped hard as concrete by generations of bare feet. Unreasonably, he could not shake the notion that, as schoolmaster, he was responsible for the condition of the soil, that he should have foreseen such a need and made preparations—roped off an area or soaked the earth or something.

Something.

But surely there were corpses everywhere by now and one more could not matter. And what about the soldier she had shot? Should he be buried too? Finally, he went back to his room, took the blanket from his cot and covered her. He felt better. But there was still the blood and broken glass on the floor, still his guilt. He stood looking down at the spot where she had died, unable to avoid the truth: she had suffered and he did nothing to help.

It was that simple.

She had tossed the rifle to one side when she fell. Clear of the death area, clean and unrelated to what had happened, it seemed no more involved than the desks, the mug of tea, the sticks of chalk at the blackboard, bullet-sized. He lifted the weapon, startled by how natural it felt in his grasp, swung it to his shoulder and pressed his cheek against its coolness, squinting, certain of his gestures; indeed, feeling no doubts at all as he sighted through the shattered windowpane and drew a bead on an unbloodied patch of yellow cloth.

The world has been dismantled, he thought.

All his expectations and habits, so threatened by his experiences in that country, were now destroyed and he knew that his senses would have to start over from scratch, forced to perceive without preconception. Trees lay along the road, stripped, as if the branches had been unfastened. There were dead animals like rusted machinery. Even the green mountains in the distance, when he glimpsed them through the dust, seemed lower each time—not because he and the others were climbing toward them, but because the mountains were sinking and would eventually vanish leaving a flat landscape, barren and pounded to a fine dust through which they would shuffle forever, dust which rose from them like smoke from a ghost fire and settled again until they were covered with it. He did not know how long they had been walking. Apparently, he had been lost in his thoughts since they set out. His mind seemed to race back into time, turn, charge forward again in contrast to the unbroken plodding of his body. And when he occasionally focused on the present, he was certain of only one thing: he must not fall; if he did, he would be shot. It occurred to him that he might be dreaming and for once he would have preferred to be awake, even if it meant being back in the classroom facing those students. But now, as dust choked him and his body refused to collapse no matter how much it hurt or how he wanted to let go and die, now he could not be sure that the classroom was more real than the dreams of home which had been his escape from it. Nor could he be sure of those ships lined up across the bay like a yellow-toothed grin. Or the girl's eyes. Nothing was real but dust and the threat of death; only this scene, this impossible situation, the most preposterous and hallucinatory of his whole life, was convincing.

He had to laugh. . . .

And laughter cleared his mind, instantly, the way a yawn can make your ears pop. He kept walking, a bit faster it seemed, for he began to pass the others as if buoyed up by the rush and clarity of his thoughts. Prophetic clarity. He visualized the invaders back in town, taking over the abandoned shops, making arrangements with

widows. He saw uniforms fade like an elapsed-time film of flowers wilting rather than blooming. Then he turned and walked backwards for a while, grinning idiotically. No uniforms in sight. Dust might have hidden them, he could not be sure, but there were no rifles above the marchers, no bayonets glinting.

The schoolmaster shouted.

Nothing happened.

So he shouted again and laughed, jabbered fluently to the others who began to listen, coughing the dust from their own voices, amazed, as they hurried along the road trying to keep up with him.

Carol Lewis

THE SUICIDE

The screen's smashed in the street
The window wrenched open
Four floors up, the curtains sag
She lies under the policeman's tarp
One claw protrudes
Unclenched from the need to hold on
God, it was a beautiful June morning
The scent of lilac greening
Even this rusted notch
Where fire escapes clang
Up the sides of prison brick
And trains jump the windows all hours

We enter the apartment, the
Chairs and tables shoved
Against the wall, unwilling witnesses
A fly lazes over dishes thickened in grease
Wrung daily in dishwater, rattled to the bone
She gave up, flung her bird body out
The two bleached children ride
The couch like an open boat
Hair scratched in white chalk, they stare
At the litter of strange feet, scuffing the
carpet's roses
The June morning fiddles in the broken window
Whistling of robins and a cool stretch of lawn.

Gerald Locklin

poets have a deplorable

tendency to raise *montes veneris*
into veritable matterhorns,
so
here's the pome you asked for,
donna.

the shit stain

last night i dreamed again.
i dreamed i had gotten up to take a shit
and had performed the customary ablutions,
and had returned to bed, naked as usual.

suddenly i was awakened
by sirens, gongs, and whistles!
the police were crowded into the bedroom,
also the national guard, the boy scouts,

and mayor yorty. the spotlights
were on me, and the t.v. cameras
and you were saying:
LOOK AT THE SHIT STAIN!

**ON MY CLEAN WHITE SHEETS!
WHY CAN'T THE FAT SLOB
EITHER LEARN TO WIPE HIMSELF
OR AT LEAST WEAR P-J'S???**

now listen, love, we both know
that i have never left a shit stain on your sheets
because you don't even put sheets on the bed.
the point is that you are making me anal-compulsive.

for instance, the peanut skins yesterday:
you bitched at me
because i missed the wastebasket with 3 skins –
not the shells, mind you, just the skins.

while, a few feet away, the floor is littered
with the obscene mess your cats make
eating sea-nip dinner. i hate your fucking cats,
but do i bitch about their table manners?

you do the dishes once a month.
you do the laundry every six weeks.
you mop the floor if you're expecting your parents.
i don't complain because i am a mere guest.

so treat me as a guest.
or at least as well as your cats.
(no one mentions to a guest about 3 peanut skins –
not shells, mind you, just skins!)

i don't want anymore dreams about shit stains.
my mother would be mortified.
i have been constipated fourteen hours.

is nothing sacred?

William Mohr

BONE HAIR

1

Anniversary flowers
on my parents' table.
Fingering petals:

Thorn, thorn, a seal,
his nose above the surface,
my face at the birth-hole,
cracking the stem.
Thorn, an infant skull,
flesh out again:
where is your nose, your navel?

2

Child in a quonset hut,
gasping for air
Two asthma shots a week
for a dozen years.

3

Asthmatic masturbation.
No matter how long I rub
my thighs, my sperm snags
at the tip. I shudder
as I guess a woman often must,

without release.

If I were a woman next to me,
I'd wrap my legs
around this ridiculous prick
and make this fucker work.

4

A woman, naked
in the next room.

My body stretches
like a desperate vegetable.

5

A friend sleeps next to me.
A hair, two inches long,
curls in my palm.
I slap it on her hips
until it sticks. She rises,
a towel across her lap,
and pulls it out.

I wake:

drops of sweat
hovering on my brow
as if my body could completely thaw.
Like an ear of corn, my prick,
tasseled with sperm.

6

Not a single bone
in my cock.
But in the back of my hand,
hundreds.

Once there were bones:
Ice age.
Perhaps the last deposits
of calcium, and quartz,
dissolved in my father's prick.

7

Starting at your knees
I want to push my arms
through your skin
and hook my fingers
to your ribcage.

Leave my cock out of this.
Limp. Pure.
How can a woman want
this in her body?
What if there's room for it?

Your cunt, tar pits.
The skeletons of predators
and scavengers.

My arms can't sink.

8

I scratch my balls for hours.

They don't switch sides. I trim
my pubic hair. Sperm
on the scissors. My fingers skim
the cropped groin.
I often wish to cut
my scrotum open,
to clip my balls out
and plant them in a woman.
Effortless release:
balancing blood and heat.

9

Walking on a dirt road,
I stop and piss on a fence.
A man on the other side
pulls out a knife, leans over,
and splashes it back in my face.

I keep aiming at the knife.
It unfolds along the edge.
At last I see the pricks of my ancestors.

They rose more slowly
with each generation.
And coming: fifteen, twenty-five, forty-five minutes,
scraping, scraping.

Let my balls multiply
and may my ribs fill
with sperm, a submarine
gorging its tanks with water to submerge

10

You can't you can't you can't
come if you don't
breathe. Let your lungs
hang at the corners of my clitoris
as the twins of your balls.

I kiss your cunt,
an oxygen tent.

Lawrence P. Spingarn

FAMILY ALBUM

The Progress Club: 1929

In his tuxedo among the other portly, greying clubmen, Father looks only five pounds thinner, but tonight nobody measures him, for this is the justly celebrated stag banquet. With the card tables placed end to end down the center of the ballroom and a discreet band temporizing behind green curtains on stage, the conspiratorial atmosphere shimmers toward adventure.

The members have dined and wine prodigiously, deployed next to "hostesses" in formal gowns who are reasonable enough facsimiles of daughters or childhood sweethearts. Tents of smoke cover many types of folly. The cigarette girls, navigating between Scylla and Charybdis, admit familiars to their corsetted ripe bottoms and black-stockinged thighs. As the saccharine waltz begins, Abe Rapfvoegel gazes hungrily into the cash-green eyes of an underage hamadryad. Soon he is leading her in an awkward Viennese gallop. Champagne does the final trick. Decorum vanishes with buttons surreptitiously undone and belts painfully loosened. When the anaglyphic redhead consents to swing upon the golden bars above the floral centerpiece and Jake Edelman toasts the general health from her satin pump, the ice melts. As she drops like fruit into his lap, her companion nymphs peel to the buff with coy shrieks and mindless giggles.

A tango better suits this frenetic mood, though not all are dancing. Kleinwaks the Furrier, who buried his wife scarcely a month ago, has already thrust his aggressive nose into a blond muff of pubic hair. State Senator J. Pierpont Posner is playing "Snap" with an errant pair of French garters. Clarence Jackson, a peddler of low grade securities from his phone booth headquarters in the Rector Street BMT station,

urinates into a vase of chrysanthemums. The waiters look bored and superior.

As the lamps are dimmed and couples lurch toward the upper floors, Father swallows his daily glycerine tablet and glances at the brunette assigned to him. Neither is smiling; challenge gaps from her rouged lips and powdered breasts. To his moot question she answers "Connie." He is somewhat reassured. He still believes in the amenities, in the sanctity of a name. But as an added guarantee, he takes the brown powder that the Chink herbalist sold him and dissolves it in his glass of water before he plunges.

Already he's changed from tame New Jersey realtor to rampant New York condottiero. Still, he cannot forget how the ticker-tape ran late that very October morning in Cousin Leopold's panelled office. He weighs every risk yet sweeps them into dusty corners of experience. It is time to prove his valor. Resting his hand momentarily on his heart, he seizes Connie's arm, leaves the ballroom, and climbs the Italianate marble staircase. In Bedroom 33, he sets his watch gingerly on the nightstand, counts the notes in his wallet, removes his dentures. Even in his elevated condition, he'd feel ashamed to bite such tender meat. Connie has douched herself, rolled between the sheets, and optimistically spread her legs in the dark hose. She coos, she purrs, she hiccups gently. Now she is hot for the game, and Father is as warm as he'll ever be again. But not far off the tom-toms of deflation sound. The machines are regurgitating dividends. A false dawn inflames the sulphurous horizon.

Rick Smith

DRIVING AROUND IN PASADENA

Everyday

I coast in the draft of a Silver Schwinn,
watching a 12 year old on her
way home.

I hope for a light east wind to
part, for a moment, the blue felt
of her school uniform.

Pasadena, the orange blossoms,
the late afternoon, the slow ride home.

AUTOPSY

You can sell your body to science
for \$300. They put a tiny star
on your heel and
they know you're theirs
no matter where.
When it happens,
they take you in
and put you on a table
And when they cut,
you rush open like a white
steamed dumpling under their
prying fork fingers.

Greg Kuzma

THE DIAGNOSIS

To advise you I will need an hour

give me something to eat and then
I will advise you let me have a few
bucks I must run to the drugstore
to fill this prescription I have
some rare thing wrong with my liver.
I am always fresh out of the hospital,
your call came through at a bad time,
I am only half dressed, my wife has
noticed how I pick my nose, she hates
me. I have never abandoned anything
without some semblance of a fight
although I am a coward at the heart.
Now what is the matter, tell me. Tell me.
Move closer, lift up your dress, tell
me a bedtime story, I actually fear the
dark, and dogs surround me every night
in my dreams. What is the cure for
dogs. What is the cure for anything.
There is car death, there is ice death,
there is death that creeps. There is
the unknown smile that kills, we call
it success in our business. Now what
is the matter, tell me, tell me.
I will send you the bill in the morning.
Mix it with water and eat it. Everything
aids the digestion but real meat.
Roll out the carpets, call in the band,
my diagnosis teeters on its brink, my

cold hands long for the chromium knob
of professional help. Take these blue
candy pills, and leave them in your
glove compartment. Smile for the good
doctor now, there baby, sleep, sleep,
sleep.

WALKING

Today I walked among my kind,
kept walking straight ahead,
bumped into people,
smelled the perfume swooping past,
heard shoes clatter, the silver
change in pockets, the swoosh
of jacket sleeves against the hips.
And I was lonely, as I am every day,
and no one caught my eye, and I
don't think a single person looked at me.
Which is all right, there are no
promises I'm waiting to be kept.
Which is all right, it was warm outside,
and dear, you know how badly dear
I need the exercise.

Joseph Hansen

THE INHABITANTS OF THE MOON

The inhabitants of the moon
are transparent and weightless
and though they talk
what they say is inaudible
which spares them
the burden of forgetting

when they choose to dance
all the millions on the moon
in a mad whirl
in imitation of the clouds of earth
which they so much admire
they stir the dust a little
almost imperceptibly
and silently cough

the eruption of a volcano
on the moon can cause havoc
but dancing takes the heaviest toll
and the glassy corpses
of moon persons lie after a dance
in drifts at the feet of cliffs
and in the vast craters of the moon
and the survivors walk among them
crushing them to dust
and silently coughing

MY MOTHER DOES NOT LIKE IT ON THE MOON

My mother does not like it on the moon
because the neighbors are invisible
inaudible and use no floor wax
of any brand whatever never go
to church she imagines that the brittle
chime they make in moving has to do
with drinking at all hours and she wishes
she were back home alive on earth again

But the moon is where the good spend time
when time has opened all the round glass doors
on all the faces of the world's dead clocks
and gone elsewhere to spend eternity
apart from those who used to measure time
the moon is where the good at last wake up

MY FATHER DOES NOT LIKE IT ON THE MOON

My father does not like it on the moon
because there are no gas stations there
my mother does not like it on the moon
because the neighbors are invisible
my sister does not like it on the moon
because there's nowhere private to get drunk
my brother does not like it on the moon
because it does no good to sing there

I like it on the moon because the neighbors
are invisible there are no gas stations
there's nowhere private to get drunk
and it does no good to sing there
I like it on the moon because the earth
like my old self in sleep never stops turning

MY FAMILY GETS TOGETHER ON THE MOON

My family gets together on the moon
and finds they've left the picnic basket home
in the kitchen where the dog will eat
the mustard pickles and be sick all over
the front room rug before they can get back
and wonders at the shotgun pellets flying
on forever round and round the moon
and the glass pheasants flying on forever

My family kneels to worship on the moon
between the plastic stars and stripes forever
the steady pulsing of the stranded sender
and hears Christ changing razor blades
and hears God grunt from bending over
to trim his toenails for the Sunday service

EVERYBODY ON THE MOON WILL SAY HELLO

This you can count on everybody on
the moon will say hello and smile at you
and if they don't you'll never know it
so you might as well believe it's happening
there's so much room for paranoia on
the moon since no one talks and no one looks
and no one listens there's no use at all
in paranoia or in megalomania either

They never had a president on the moon
or a senator or an investigation
or even a question let alone an answer
it's quiet on the moon even when it's noisy
and you can play the radio all night
and never hear a thing to wake you up

Bob Webb

ON STAGE

Inside Friday night the four of them make the walk to the stage beneath the lights and Guy can see nothing, Allen nothing behind the brilliant easter egg gels, beyond the red smoke that rises from impatient cigarettes when the white spots are off. It's the applause they rally to, merciless applause that suckers them in and there are chicks at the front table who giggle at Fitch, lanky blonde Fitch until he picks his favorite and winks at her, the white spot on again, spilling off A.G.'s old blue shirt, shining off the bell of Fitch's trumpet and A.G.'s old beat guitar. There's enough reflection to light faces but A.G.'s finally involved, embroiled inside his lyrics, past the point where errors bother him, not flustered, digging for the elusive thing inside the words, slipped between the wood pulp where they're written, oblivious to the light echoing from ash trays, wine bottles, silver platforms strapped on the ankles of foxes and reflections from the faces of older men, insurance agents who once wrote poetry in high school classrooms. Guy watches, hears A.G. pause, stalls notes and splits across his fingerboard to catch them, filling them with resonant thumps from the bass, remainders of symphonies, plucked suggestions of dark well bottoms and moss water steeping, defiant against the pull of earth below its artisan vats. Playing in a whorehouse band. The Heritage Inn, darkened, things are happening across the stage, past the microphones, past the new gels smoking in the ceiling, things happening ignorant of the dusty, colorless stage, the rubber non-slip ripped at the edges, the rug torn under Allen's chair, so much dust that if Guy kicked it he could blind, smoke screen, obliterate.

The high school girls who come listening to the new music sit down front and smile at dreams of rainbow colors changing on the breasts of their heroes. If they don't dare be there alone they inveigle

girlfriends who cream later and feminine, musky, flowing into the beards of guitar players, songwriters, subsidized poets wandering on these ticketed, billeted roads. Guy wanders back into the music, hearing new holes between horn and Allen's guitar lead, pushing A.G., shoving, the bass too soft in his reverie, slightly off the tempo, standing alone, the two guitars, horn, bass, pleading, stumbling for a mix, the success that's waiting somewhere nearby, right through like that to the closing tune, the emotional strip, the G-string, A.G.'s G-string slung off to the patrons in the balconies, a quick crotch shot, reflections of Fitch's horn on a thin young secretary in a green skirt and a suit top holding her glasses against the tops of her cheekbones, straining into lives she can't comprehend. They call for encores, A.G.'s off, re-considering, back on ahead of the spot bank pale orange now. The teenagers, would-be groupies at the front table grab Allen's arm as he steps off stage afterwards, asking about the horn player.

"Your trumpet player is outasight! What's his name?"

"Fitch," Allen yells. The audience is talking noisily now, reprieved after the set and he can hardly hear himself.

"He's cute!" one says.

"He's really something else!" another adds. Off by the kitchen door a little bunny brunette with long hair parted center straight pulls alongside A.G.

"Wow, are you guys fantastic! Where are you staying?"

"We have a motel in Arlington," A.G. says.

"Oh, wow! If you get tired of all that hotel cooking, why don't you come over to my place. I'll fix you a real home cooked meal!"

Allen's there, beside A.G., playing the road manager, pushing to open the invitation for the band but it's apparently chick on Tom one on one, and maybe after supper Tom on chick. She wants something, her eyes glisten and her teeth are so big they seem to Allen like a necklace in ecstasy. A.G. gets her phone number, Christy is her name.

Fitch moves in, picking up the interrogation where A.G. can't remember. He is mesmerized from the stage.

"What kind of food do you like to cook?" Fitch asks. "Maybe I'll come, too." Christy takes a little time to survey the hornman close up. A.G. looks short by comparison, he slumps a little at the shoulders and seems lost somewhere. Fitch's big smile and the long moustache open something. Baggy trousers, Fitzgerald style with big cuffs and a new set of platforms bought at a shoe outfit in Georgetown. Thin, flat stomach. Ready and willing, Christy adds, keeping score. A.G.'s faded blues are par for his style and his hair is uncombed as usual. He looks like a gang president after a rumble, only sweeter. He doesn't even patch the holes.

"I cook great spaghetti and meat balls," she says.

"Spaghetti," Fitch groans. "I haven't seen spaghetti for weeks."

"I'm Christy, let's get together."

John Thomas

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

O if I had bunions & grey hairs sprouting from my ears
& your breasts were down limp near your waist
if you had liver spots & carried odds & ends in a knitting bag
all over town, muttering to yourself with bare gums

O if we lived on Social Security in a furnished room
cooking Cream-of-Wheat on a gas burner
if there were a Sacred Heart calendar on the nasty yellow wall
& the buffet full of rusty tools & rent receipts

if we got a letter once a month from some daughter
named Sister Mary Francis in a Kansas City convent
& one night a week you went to bingo at St. Ambrose Social Hall
& I played pinochle with the Golden Age Club

O my light o' love, then I would have secrets from you
I would receive sex magazines in plain envelopes
& hide them in the back of the radio
I would take the bus downtown, secretly
to the Gayety Burlesk where I would
play with my limp old self under my hat

yes, I may as well be honest now
that's just what I would do
I'll write you a pretty poem tomorrow, love
tonight I feel the need to write an honest one
about what will surely never happen to us

I'll never have a great hernia bulging my pantsleg

but if I did let's tell the truth--I would
curse feebly with my teeth clicking
& load my Postum with saccharin

you'll never walk twenty blocks in your rubber orthopedic
stockings
to see the homeopath for cancer pills, but if you did
then truly you would spend your evenings
sipping sassafras tea & reading the death notices

I'll write you a pretty poem tomorrow, Sweetheart-elf
tonight I must rattle my bonebag & speak oracles
in an unreasonable spirit of fair play

EIGHT UNWRITTEN STORIES

1. He swims deep
and practices holding his breath--
this small white whale
in a world full of Ahabs
2. Incredibly, none of us heard
when our towering Jinkerson crashed to earth;
but there he lies, on a windfall of tall philosophers,
in Bishop Berkeley's forest.
3. Concetta strolled among us,
loving each of us in turn,
like the cholera.
4. Every day is Custer's Last Stand,
with dead horses and screaming Blackfeet,
and here comes Rain-in-the-Face with a
knife--he swore he'd
cut your heart out personal!
5. Although for years she has been faithful, performing
all the rites and daily offering generous sacrifice,
the priestess still awaits her first oracle or sign
from this pedestaled marble Priapus.
6. Brody was one of the rare ones:
no ladies' man in the usual sense,
but a tough professional, fearless and crafty,
a very Hannibal of the pubic wars!
7. Swept off his feet by her innocence,
he has nothing left to rage against.

8. "Go west, young man,"
quoth the raven.

[A collage of text fragments: a left-hand strand runs down the page at the main margin, interrupted by two other strands set in from it — a deeply indented voice in quotation marks (the speaker's monologue) and a slightly indented one. Reading order follows the page top to bottom, block by block.]

FOR HE SURELY WAITS

the cacodemon,
his presence revealed by

patchouly, an exotic
fragrance) "Why, even
as a boy," says he, "and a bitter
sort of knowledge that was, for
a boy to have." (picaroon!
shipwrecker! Oh, regard

this jaunty Greek
apparently relaxing--here he
sits, smoking a fat segar, resting his elbows
among the dessert plates, watching, a

plunderer, confident of luring) ". . .lost,
and like as not, to die,
choking and shivering under some bridge,
and no one to shed a tear!" says he.

(the perfume, the patchouly, by which

one knows him

and the line
of his kipper jaw) ". . .yes, even
at that early age. A dirty death, see?"

(he
is a capsule
of space he
waits

frozen, a stiff
notation

being empty he
happens to everyone

[A matching quiz set in two columns: numbered items 1-13 at left,
lettered
items a-l at right, aligned across the page. No ruled lines join them.

Item 11
and item c. are left blank in the original. Read across, left column then
right.]

SAMPLE PROBLEM

1. by controlled immersion a. stole the answers to all the
in experience koans
2. a squadron of b. pressure-proof, meaningless
Japanophiles assertions
3. Men call me c.
4. if Spanish apes ate all d. & 3d. for a collar for the lord
the grapes Abbot's greyhound Sturdy
5. how to shape the poem e. Drop it!
6. broadsword fights, f. figure - colossal; attitude -
cakewalks musing and melancholy
7. Captain Eugene F. Ware g. 1 pt. oysters, ½ lb. butter,
paper napkins
8. and then I sez to her
h. making the cries and noises of
9. Mad Maudlin a beast
10. Helen, thy beauty is i. Help yourself!
to me
- j. after a life of sin and ghastly
11. crimes
12. all phenomena, in the k. a sunbaked toad, tormentil
final analysis and smarag
13. Shelta Thari l. just a cheap trick, like tearing
telephone books in half

Susan J. Friedman

CITY LOVE

"A dessert without cheese is like a woman with only one eye."

Brillat-Savarin

The trees along the Massachusetts Turnpike displeased her. Blight had bleached pine after pine to red, and the black tracts of naked trunks looked like sparse hair on a radiated skull. There was snow. Here and there was a red barn and white farmhouse, smoke curling out the chimney: nature imitating art, a postcard.

Dear Jack,

Wish you were here. You'd hate it. Life imitating art.

Whereas in the city they are indistinguishable.

See you in only four tollbooths.

Love,

M.

Once back to the scruffy red of Connecticut she relaxed. The snow had disappeared, and the sides of the road were staunched with wire fences and moonscape housing projects. The grass was dirty, etiolated almost to straw. On a clearest city day only seventy-five per cent of the available sunlight filtered through. She was safe in a city.

P.S. I'll talk and you keep your eye on the skylight. Okay?

Don't forget to bring in the milk and let out the cat

and sort the socks and separate the life and the work.

Leave the whites in a covered jar and pour water on the yolks. I will finish it when I get there.

M.

The city is just people now, safe but for heart and lungs and cauled in miasma. The giant green dragon has been slain, flash-frozen, and packaged in butter sauce. In the very center a careful park with trails and quite specific trees; at the north end a kneeling girl nursing at her lover's open pants; at the south, near the weather station, a young fellow in long skirts and spangled wand roller-skating; even doormen laughed. Curb your unicorn. It is the raw nature of the country that is too fierce, with those hills like balding skulls of dying women and full sunlight. The country is only for the strong. The brave, the free, the wild and fearless in his L.L. Bean blizzard shirt, the good, and the fine, and the true. The Marlboro man, Moshe Dayan, and Jack with black hair on his wrists. At Christmas, just before she'd left, Jack had tried to light a cheery fire. For tinder, he wadded the Sunday Times under three damp borrowed logs, and when he had used up every single page, he sat for an hour holding a propane torch to them. Which also failed. He used to say that everyone in Manhattan should take a deep breath and run to New Jersey and exhale. She went straight to sleep when she got in, just barely greeted Sally and decided to wait to call Jack in the morning. She had the ocean dream again. From the high porch of the white summer cottage at Bass Rocks she saw the tidal wave build, suck back on itself, and roll with a gray thunder over the rocks and the street and then the house itself, hurling her through the vortex. In the curl of the wave were flying lobsters and bass and old rubber boots.

Dear Herr Doktor Professor:

It is my considered opinion that the ocean is for the pure of heart and the mighty of spirit and the righteous of soul.

Make it as a sign upon thy doorposts.

Verily,

M.

Awake, she loved the ocean, and revered it as an enemy to respect. The ocean gave and withheld, undulated to the moon. As a little girl in the summer cottage she would lie in the hot bed and practice the hula, fanning her fingers like seaweed while the ocean beat the rocks. At two she had learned how to float, supported under one shoulder by her father who kept saying, "You can do it, baby, we won't let you go. The salt water makes you buoyant," and under the other by Dosey, the gravel-voiced swimming teacher who said, "Don't be afraid, ducky," and died that winter. Then they had flipped her over and she'd learned the deadman's float.

Excuse me. But here in my notes it says, and I quote,

"Virginia Woolf would have adored the electron microscope."

Uh, excuse me, sir, but I was just looking through some old notes and noticed that you'd said that Virginia Woolf would

have adored the electron microscope. I don't see how you can say that. Yes. Yes, I know she had rocks in her pockets. The anachronism does make me angry. Yes the rocks held her down until she drowned.

Listen, you son of a scabrous whore, will that be on the exam?

The refrigerator door slammed. She got up, unpacked, and called Jack.

He said to come over.

"I have an exam tomorrow."

"I don't care. Just get over here."

So she brought her books with her and left them on the table. Jack hugged her so hard that she cried out. He just smiled. He opened the cabinet under the sink to get some food and snorted, "Roachtracks!" She leaned her head against the wall; once he took a picture of her like that. While he made a package of Brussels sprouts he put a record on which he'd given her for her birthday; it suited her. The song was about the Cuyahoga River catching on fire: "Burn on big river, burn on." They ate from the pan. The wet logs were still in the fireplace. One was scorched black from the propane torch but still damp in the middle. Jack, indigenous to the city, wondered how long it would take to dry out. She suggested next winter. "C'mere, my woodsman," she said, and they lay down next to each other on the couch, talking, playing with their arms in the air. Everytime she spotted the books on the table she was scared again.

This dress I am wearing? That I have worn every day?

When I have a closet of clothes that I never touch and waste all
that money and what is wrong with me these days?

It started when I succumbed to the smell of a cheese
Danish.

Just two days before, Jack and I had walked the five miles to
Houston Street and I'd worn my tight jeans. (There are the
pictures
to prove it.) I felt virtuous, cold, and chafed, and the \$5 bill had
fallen out of my back pocket by the time we got there. We
barely

had money for the train.

This induced strong feelings of deprivation.

So, when two days later, on a Tuesday which was Yom Kippur, I happened to go into the bakery to buy some Danish to take to Jack's because he was not fasting, I couldn't stand it any longer and ate one myself. I felt very guilty.

And I thought, well, I am shot to hell. So I ate and ate on twenty pounds and that is why always this green dress, this tent, this cover, this potlid, this hand-me-up from my once little sister which my mother bought for two zuzim.

An only kid; an only kid; it would have been enough.

"What exam is it?"

"Tomorrow? Shakespeare. Then Bloomsbury."

"C'mon, you know it already."

"Uh uh. I absolutely do not understand him at all. If the whole exam is on Taming of the Shrew I'll be okay. And not only does my compulsive self want to pass, but I feel a certain moral obligation as an English major to understand him."

"You always worry and you always do fine."

"You know you sound like my mother. I'd have five exams the next day and be gagging over supper and she'd say, 'What's wrong, dear? Has the water got bones in it?' So I'd say I was nervous about all the tests, and she'd say, 'Oh Missy, my little Missy, you always worry and you always do well.' My father would wipe his lips and say, 'Don't

sweat it.' He knew the expression 'hang ten' before I did and wouldn't tell me where he learned it.

Dayenu!

And I want to say, "did someone sneeze?" But instead I
laugh and hook my head in the air.

"Sorry."

"That's okay," and they latched hands above their heads.

Excuse me, about these notes. Um, the text at hand, so far
as I can tell, was *Principia Ethica*. And you were saying
something

about a homosexual culture which wasn't necessarily erotic.

Well if you can't remember, how do you expect us to? Could
you give me a contemporary parallel? Then just tell me if it's
going

to be on the exam, you screaming closet queen, you singing
closet

queen, you mumbling queen of my closet.

Jack had a squishy penis. But she didn't think he would find that funny, so she didn't say so. He was asleep anyway, and she was pretty close, although she was nervous. She fell asleep as the light was creeping across the ceiling, listening for roachtracks. She dreamed that she was sitting next to the professor on a yellow schoolbus. They were waiting for the children to get out of Sunday School. He had a textbook open in his lap and she noticed that he was learning the verb *wek*:

wek

wettus

wex *wexus*

wet *went*

Definition: I love you: it won't do much good.

She knew he had got to be a professor by studying on schoolbusses. She knew she ought to also and fished for her book, but her mother came running down the aisle and said that would make her carsick. When the alarm went off, she shut it off quickly and went into the living room to dress. Her feet felt dirty. She ran some water on her face and combed her hair with her fingers. She leaned over Jack's head and said, "See you around noontime." He reached up and hugged her out of his sleep, grunting with pleasure. Jack weighed over two hundred pounds and she felt safe with him anywhere, even above 125th street. She tried to read on the uptown bus but couldn't. She wondered why she wasn't panicking. In the lobby she picked up a Spectator and went to the third floor, stopped at the bubbler and took a few No-Doz, went inside and took a chair as far away from the blind girl with the clacking Braille typewriter as she could. But she needn't have worried; the professor walked her out of the room right after the exam started. They must have done it orally. When she was younger, every exam had produced in her a rather adaptive clear-eyed terror, but now she had begun feeling the terror dully sliding into boredom. She wrote a bluebook and a half in miniscule hand, and from her apathy she knew it was all bullshit, which was demeaning. It would be worse in two weeks when the postcard with her A- arrived in the mail. She believed teachers had a moral obligation to smell out bullshit. Maybe they did it with boys, but with women they expected so little that if you wrote four consecutive sentences on something other than Ways With Meat they found it remarkable and exciting. By now she had broken the covenant, had learned to turn the trick with consummate skill. And this was a good college. The only teacher who had ever found her out and made her really work was a Spanish teacher in high school. A woman.

Dear Mrs. S.,

I had had only five days of Spanish when you made me do extra work. We read the Spanish *Readers' Digest* together in your

office. You knew the words for acorn and squirrel. You made me

learn fishpond and eyelash.

I thank you.

Hasta pronto,

M.

Jack was conducting his wake-up ritual in the bathroom, saying "hello? hello?" to the mirror in his croak of a voice when she came back. He said he did it because he was afraid his voice would disappear some night. He sat down on the toilet. Jack always shat with the door wide open even though he was Jewish.

"How do you think you did?"

"Whenever I think I did well I always do rotten, and when I think I did rotten I get an A. So don't ask."

"Okay. You did good. You want some lunch? I've got some meat."

"Ways with Meat."

"Ways with meat?" He flushed the toilet.

"Yup. You got it."

Jack laughed and came through the doorway settling himself into his pants. He said he wanted to take her to the winter dance where he taught so she could see Valerie, the twelve year-old nymphet he lusted

after. He had often described her little white breasts and her little behind.

"Okay Humbert, I'll go. Can we dance or must you act professorial?"

"No, we can dance. And I'm going to dance with Valerie and lay her right there on the floor." He said "her" so it sounded like "huh" because he came from Far Rockaway. "Humbert humps babe on boards. Faculty furious. Parents panicked. Valerie violated. Humbert happy." "You know it," he said and stretched until a smile came over his face and his eyes were closed to slits. "I love you for not being ashamed." He said nothing, just looked over at her. "How about I make lunch this time? Then I've got to go back and sleep off the No-Doz." Jack went down with her. There was a beautiful little marble statue of a nude woman in the lobby. He patted it on the breast and said, "Hi, Valerie." She carressed its hips and said, "That's not Valerie. That's me." It had started to snow. Across and up. In the country it snows down. Her the flakes are like feathers in an updraft. She threw her books on the table and watched as her roommate stuck her finger in the wall socket, galvanized rigid by the shock. She tried to pull away, but her feet hung off her body as if suspended on laces, and she was clumsy. Sally was lame; her feet flopped when she walked. She had no control. Her face was blown up into a puffy ball from Cortisone. But she also couldn't control her mouth, and she ate, on diet days, twelve glazed doughnuts for breakfast which she sneaked to her bedroom under her shirt. Sally's father is a doctor in New Hampshire, and she has trouble with the city. She hasn't decided yet whether to charge it or to present her rump in submissive gestures. On the first Saturday night of freshman year, she screwed five boys out behind the library. She said she didn't want to be a virgin anymore. She wasn't pregnant because later she left a bloody tampon on the sink next to the toothbrushes. Sally said, "The snow looks like powdered sugar." She would want to eat again in a few minutes. But the refrigerator had nothing but ketchup and six bottles of diet salad

dressings and some limp scallions. Sally was afraid she'd eat everything, so the refrigerator had to stay empty. Once, at two in the morning, she stuck a wet finger into a packet of eggnog beads from some previous tenant and ate them like grubs on a stick. The roaches hid between the pans in the sink. She walked into her room to sleep. Sally was still fooling with the toaster-oven.

Dear Field Marshall Ironring:

On the evening of the 20th inst. I gathered the babies into the living room when I first heard the approaching bombers. When

I realized that we would not be safe in the house, I gathered the babies up one by one, bundled each of them under my shirt and

ran with them up the hill behind the house where I hid them in a

grove of pines.

When I returned, expecting to find the house empty, I found a man in the kitchen burning the eggs on the stove. He said his name was Mr. Cooke-Burns although he looked rather seedy. I was disappointed at his ineptitude, especially in light of my previous bravery.

The babies all survived and are fat as bunnies. I think I deserve the Order of Merit.

Please advise.

Yrs,

M.

She came out of her room ravenous and listened to Sally watching "The Newlyweds Game" while the soup heated. Her grandfather called from the office to tell her he was sending her to Chile for a graduation present so start planning. Sally said with real enthusiasm, "Now you'll get to see real poverty." Jack said the exact same thing and promised to miss her. She said, "Thanks, but don't start yet, Humbert." The flight from Boston took twenty-four hours including stops up and down the earth: Miami with swarms of panhandling deaf-mutes, Lima smelling of fish at midnight and breakfast at pink dawn in the desert of Antofagasta waiting for the president to leave the country. She had never seen such purple mountains' majesty, but the quake-cracked, boxy stucco houses looked like jails. The real poverty was unexotic and made of oil drums with squawking roosters.

Dear Jack,

I easily got the vials of oxytocin through Customs because the doctor had delivered the inspector's ten children all for nothing.

The little girl watching me unpack calls Tampax "cigarros."

They take their windshield wipers off at night because of thieves. The earthquakes sound like subways. Shall I send you a suitcase full of water or a doughnut three feet long? Keep in touch.

Love,

M.

Jack wrote only twice which was just as well. Letters traveled two weeks and arrived unequivocal. The postman had to be tipped for each one or else he threw them away. Santiago had its crazies in the streets and dead horses stiff in the gutter, and sometimes she thought north about the summer house or Jack or the drought up there with the little stickers from the city saying Please Conserve Water. Argentina was getting monsoons, and the snow was metastasizing on the Andes, but Santiago had become a cocoon. Rung by mountains, in the middle of winter in July, and North America dissolved into a map, New England to an abstraction. She thought maybe it was because she'd left too abruptly. The men played with her hair, and the women asked why she was not married already, but nothing ever permeated her solid knowledge: no one can get me here.

Dear Mrs. S.,

I write to you from the house of the mother of the doctor.

We have eaten tonight kid and a fruit called chirimoya so delicious

that I think it caused the Fall.

Here they think I am mexicana from your teaching. Do you know how many thanks I send?

Besos,

M.

In August, Jack's second letter came in the afternoon before she was to leave for the mountains. He was getting married and moving to Hershey, Pennsylvania and did she remember Middy German from her class? No. God shed his grace on thee, drifters. No one gets together, we're all just dumb seaweed. The little girl called out. There is a bad avalanche and the roads are closed to all vehicles without chains and a shovel. She lay down on the bed until siesta was over.

Only the rooster across the street was awake in the city. In Santiago, she never dreamed.

Nana:

The teacher unrolled the map on the classroom wall. It made a flapping noise, and he said there would be a test. I started the engine and drove through the Northeast, from Massachusetts on

west to Detroit. There I took a left and sped faster and faster along the map through the Carolinas until, at Georgia, the Fiat began skidding. Through Florida the margins ran by the windows,

and I saw through the windshield the bottom curl of the paper. Then the car careened into the Everglades, rolled over, and was lost in the eel grass. The green dress was soaked with mucky water, but I walked away unharmed.

The teacher gave us a surprise quiz. I didn't know the boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase and only got a 53. That's a flunk.

Please have carrot sticks for my eyesight when I come home.
Thanks, Nan.

Your,

M.

Patricia Eakins

POTATO EATERS

The farmers eat their meal as moths,
around-by habit or need-the light.
Their shoes are tired,
prayers in fingers breaking bread:

Grace for these is not in faith,
and God who gave them old potatoes,
full of blinded eyes, for bread,
gave them faces like their dinner,
faces like potatoes, waiting.

The candle fails to light the room,
but saves its strength, as old ones
save themselves for stairs,
to be the center-what they ring-
to be for them the brightest thing.

From where they are the darkened room
surrounds them all, a hungry tomb.
Forgive them. No, they do not sing;
potato eyes see more potato,
life looks on itself as daily bread.
The song is left for us to sing.

From here where we are, looking in,
the candle's glow is making soft
the furrows plowed in faces, yes,
from here where we are, light transcends
and makes of earth a star.

Lynn Shoemaker

GROWING OLD, GROWING YOUNG

1. Boat

I slept near the front
where the boat first cuts the river,
and the water
talks back from its wounds.

My father steered.
His hands whispered
to the eight-stroked wheel,
to the snags and open
places,
and to himself.

A small open deck.
No railings,
bells. Even my sleep
could've pushed me
over.

You quieted the waters.

2. Fragments

Yankton.
Right arm in the fields, left
in the Missouri.
Sucked down like a half-forgotten message.

Cup.

We lived in a basement house
like raw thumbs
pushed into the ground.
Knee in my stomach.
Crazed. His had came down hard,
chopping my breath off,
as if he were axing his boat.

I peed all over myself.
Didn't cry.

He left. "You're the only
man in this house now," you said.

3. Waiting

Woven-cane rocker.
Each yawn the end of my father.
Your hair full of work,
bitter.

You never mentioned his name.

I grew up fat. Beefy.
A tough hide.

His name grew up with me.
Spilled over my life.
Scared inside.
Air.

4. My Advice

Marry a farmer.
Dirt. Grease on his wrists.
A slow driver.
Cursed by everyone on the road.
He would take me with him
when he went out to check the fields.
He would touch you and worry
about the rain.

5. Growing Old Growing Young

Flying off to Spain. Finally
another man.
You twist his name around your finger
like a blade of grass.
The news of my wife and me does not
touch your voice.
An artist.
He lost an arm in the war.
"Divorced," you say, "but he still loves
his children."

Tell me how it is.
The earth shakes my footsteps off.
My daughter will forget my name.
These words. Unwanted
water

Gerald Locklin

the continuing saga of bruce

"why does he ring that bell?" joan asks.

"i think," i say, "it's probably to call the waitress from the beanery in back."

"oh no," she says, "i'm sure there's something more romantic to it."

"you may be right," i say. "perhaps he was an altar boy once well
nigh

to a score of years ago. perhaps he's never quite forgot the roar of the
in-

cense and the smell of the monsignor."

"oh no," she says, "i think there's something more mysterious behind
it.

tell me what you're holding back from me!"

"joan, joan, you're forcing me to betray those secrets which, once
told,

may cost me the inviolable flower of my second adolescence."

"please, tell me, furd. please tell me why he rings the bell."

"all right, he rings the bell because he once, way back before the
world

was young, picked up a healthy paycheck as the hunchback of notre
dame."

"but he doesn't have a hump!"

"he has more hump than he knows what to do with. but the truth is
that his hunch was taken from him when he was demoted, a sort of
strip-

ping of the epaulets."

"and why was he demoted, the poor fallen angel?"

"he got caught playing peeping tom above the carapaces of le sacre
coeur."

"my god!"

"mon dieu, is the way he put it. you see he used to swing out on his
bellrope past the barren cell of sister rex regina of the floating
tabernacle
every night a quarter hour after matins, the exact time she
commenced her
douching from a humble scum-encrusted wash basin."
"then he's a real live . . ."
"voyeur! yes, i'm afraid, joan, that the world we live in is . . ."
"no, no, he's a celebrity! how neat!"
"oh, joan, i love you more than der bingle loved der bergman in der
bells of der notre dame."

"why really does he ring the bells?" she asks.
"to call the waitress from the beanery in back."
"to call her for what?"
"either because the cocktails that she ordered are prepared, or
because
some customer here at the bar has placed an order for a bowl of beans
with oyster crackers."
"no, no, i think that he's in love with her."
"in truth, joan, he is scornful of her but she is in love with him."
"how awful."
"actually it is her greatest glory. back at home in the most wretched
quarter of marseilles, she would have spent her life in hacking onions
for
the friday bouillabaisse. but here the tenor of her love has raised her
to a
pinnacle of transcendent emotions equal in dichotomous perplexity to
the
finest compositions at the grand ol' opry."
"and she'll never be with any other man!"
"that's true."
"she'd lick his boots!"

"that's true."

"she wastes the best years of her life and all she gets is. . ."

"muscles in her calves!"

"oh furd! and does he ever notice her?"

"of course not, for his thoughts are always on. . ."

"fair rosalind, the spoiled and spiteful princess of. . ."

"not quite. as a matter of fact his thoughts are always on rock bagel."

"on what?"

"not what. . .whom! bruce has been balling the famous movie star,
rock

bagel!"

"a celebrity!"

"that's right."

"but that means bruce is. . ."

"alas, alack. that's why he never notices the waitress. except for
when

a bar customer orders a bowl of beans with oyster crackers. then he
rings

the bell for her."

"say did i tell you that i've been invited to a three dog night party?"

"no, joan, you didn't."

"isn't that just boss?"

"it may be. . .but what is it?"

"don't you even know who three dog night are?"

"yes, joan, but. . ."

"a three dog night party is a party that the three dog night are at.
now

isn't that just outasight?"

"i'm sure it is."

"what are you grinning at?"

"i'm sorry, joan, i just had visions of a crowd of people going at it
dog-

style for three nights."

"dog-style?"

"sure, you know."

"no, i don't."

"well, look, you know the way that dogs. . .have intercourse."

"of course."

"well, that's all that i meant."

"but why would people want to do it that way?"

"ohh. . .look, who invited you?"

"one of the guys at work."

"i should have known."

"he used to play the organ with this group that cut a record and
they

wanted me to be their vocalist."

"but you decided that you'd rather have a college education."

"no, my mother wouldn't let me. i'd just turned seventeen and their
first gig was in new york."

"do you feel bad about that?"

"no, i don't think that that would be a good way to find the right
kind of guy to marry."

"his name is bruce."

"how do you know?"

"i heard the waitress call him bruce."

"bruce what, i wonder?"

"i don't know. i wonder?"

"how about bruce proust?"

"that sounds like christmas."

"maybe it's bruce puce."

"but that sounds awfully gay. i think he's really very virile and his
real
name is bruce moose."

"don't kid yourself. at best he is a part-time journalist and his name
is
bruce booth luce."

"furd?"

"yes?"

"perhaps he's anti-war: bruce truce!"

"now, thar ya go. . ."

"what do you really think his name is, gerry?"

"i think it's bruce bovary."

"did you hear about the pope?"

"no, what about him?"

"they tried to assassinate him."

"who did?"

"a fanatic bolivian surrealist."

"a bean, huh? well, shucks, i always said the only good bean is a
refrie[d]

bean."

"furd, you don't mean that."

"and the only good pope is a dooper pope."

"and you don't mean that either."

"then what do i mean?"

"you don't mean anything. you never mean anything."

"thar ya go."

"joan?"

"yes?"

"we'll go out friday night again?"

"i'm sorry, furd; i'm working friday night."

"and afterwards?"

"i'm sorry."

"well, i should have known. and saturday?"

"i'm sorry."

"yeah, i should have known."

"what's wrong with sunday?"

"joan, you know i can't get out on sunday."

"you mean that candi will be back."

"you know that."

"monday."

"joan, you know. . ."

"it's not my fault then."

"joan, how can i take a chance when you've got so damn many men that. . ."

"the point is that it's not my fault."

"gerry?"

"yes?"

"write it all down for me about bruce sometime."

"i plan to."

"and let me read it."

"no."

"but why not?"

"can't help it. just the way i am."

"she studied nineteen years at juilliard."

"how can you tell?"

"her fingertips retain the callouses."

"and then?"

"she met him in a walk-down checkered-table-cloth italian restaurant."

"where he was working his way through art school as a flamenco guitarist."

"au contraire. he was sucking the toes of the puerto rican
dishwasher."

"she gave up everything for him."

"that's right, joan."

"just like you want me to give up everything for you."

"well, now. . ."

"you want me to quit going with the guys to race my firebird at
orange
county fairgrounds."

"i would prefer. . ."

"you want me to quit scuba diving off of catalina with big morry
yiehl."

"you must admit that. . ."

"you want me to quit talking to the guys in the back row of your
dull
stuffy class. . ."

"but, joan, i try to. . ."

"and you even let it bother you because i have maintained a
perfectly
platonic friendship with the boy next door."

"he tried to rape you, joan."

"he hasn't tried in weeks."

"why does he honk that horn?"

"because it's closing time."

"oh no, i'm sure that it's because. . ."

"he honks the goddam horn because it's ten to two."

envoi: dear joan, here's the continuing saga of bruce, which i promised to write for you. you will realize that it has as little relationship to reality as have the paintings of the man who tried to kill the pope. i feel a strange kinship to that man. he may get a knife into the old fart yet. preferably a scimitar up the behind at deo gratias. and i may yet get into you.

p.s. bruce never talks to anyone because of a childhood operation which left him with the voice of donald duck.

p.p.s. the most beautiful sentence i can think of: look at bruce's granny-glasses!

Jack Hirschman

LA: THE CAFFE TRIESTE :SF

1

The opera of the forms of ourselves bislaving
on the poem ship all partake of the
given music as if all languages dropped
into this cafe is a poem like your
body multilingual tongues have found
roots of their etymologies in as many
I insist this way clear of what we
discovered how long ago was drug
like this raven's blood warm and
mellow yellow flutterby of per-
mutations for the poor

of heart

and mind this rainswept spring of
mutatis mutandi as we concoct
another moment in the tree of
blood of wine of death by fire
and water

2

Rampant and wild they streak they
permute and frisson they cycle and
drink in the night buds they rain
on the snow over the snow they gain
the admirables and the frets work
suddenly again
Alone while others speak to the alone

**of us all the cafes tremble to think
the ruffs are coming down from
the hills the storming blood of water
and in the wood the same night
smiling**

3

To work breath to be brethren of

that then Dot Datta Dayadhvam
again in ski in Inri Ski Sure
Sir Realism at death point of the
blank gun of a page aiming at
the white emptiness of even
the uppermost uppermoist mind
obliterating it into crusts of bread
for poor minds broken bones of
remembrance the transformation
of the voices of the bees in-
visible honey dusk under the eyes
shades of the mind hoarse en-
tities of the horse that's run its
races that's broken the fur
longs again

4

If five then five also you are
my stuck-to hand blue foodstamp
of the ESSEF of San Fran Cisco
kid they oughtta start importing
yiddish cigarets for the best
actors on the boards of this bored
old world

5

Inscrits of couples of couples of
colors of blue mao caps spackness
of the spunk chittering trills
of diplodocus farengyleta
a minor disease a major
league of women voters for
Robin and Batman in the
Flood of the ark shoved crazy
with permutations

6

A way of walking slouching as dumb
as a sweet thud of joy is as
a life lived for the straight
shot of the vodka of NO shit
dov is a Dove always will be
and pink us and red in the
jade veined blackness we
share

7

Everywater everywhichway Sara
of the Seronyddian heart of the
Welsh rare bits of performing
hearts fragile essence who birds
me into fugueflight of the
fingers mellifluously accordian
to the people if italian you be
oh sweet shit consumed by
me in the arrondismenting mo-
ment and joymany's child and
rushinka through the steppes

with your cry "I'm mud, I'm
only mud" or "I'm no body
Rien nada" and I in the
Koran of the kabbala of
this beginning over and
and over again pen under-
stand what we've done
will be done again till what
is learned by heart's way by
soft shocks by bum kings
and queens princes and princesses
up and down the state of
Our Toe still petalling desolating
fragiling magiacking out-
loving these hands with
such gloves again and again
Gaspara Stampa at the
heart's pine crossed by the
brother's of the random score

8

The black orphic darkness of hotel
cat-piss smells of love's having
been there who what where when
why should there be Stars and Studs
together yet for the Red Barons
of the air and the baronin of
screams and the clear and
house suffering this so long
at last relived to be relieved

9

Impostures of the heart's woven
music till breath becomes com-

plettest form in the core of its
being pined for as sehnsucht
as yen of the ens of Boehme
and the worlds of the Zohar
dream of the essence of the
poor Dream of the cataclysm
of the marrow of the hearse-
drawn carriage full of the
sorrow of such things as
were wonderworked to borrow
a master from his wood and
play the world till he could
rest again

10

Where did they go then why
when the dense modulations
left us lefter than left
did night come slowing and
growing imperfectly its
concordance with breath

11

Till the sad springhurt is
healed no mending of the way
our wits worked together
our eyes in heather turned the
apples rainbow colored or the
clues to a mystery and tu
tu beautiful as dancers
in the wind the poem
mixed and minxed vamped
planted budding and risen
sun in the moon the

star visage

12

A fine wine that sadness seen glittering
in the neige of its dream no longer
to touch ground always now to
be flying

Review

ENTRAPMENTS AND ESCAPES

GINKGO, by Felix Pollak, Elizabeth Press, 1973 78p. \$16: pap. \$8.00

There is laughter and whimsy in this book and also toughness and pathos. One of the reasons that Felix Pollak is such a fine poet is that he edits his poems -not himself. Everything is 'for real' and one really gets to know the poet through his book.

There is also sadness of echoes and distances, of seats suddenly empty, of faces and places dimming in memory. There is, above all, an awareness of life's irony and precariousness, an intimation that existence itself may be ultimately absurd:

These fossils - sperm in rock -once bled.

Why should I wind my watch?

Still, this disenchanted man finds no lack of enchantments. Love may pass but its joys are not repudiated - or forgotten. All things are transient - but that the poet arrests the death-bound moment is in itself an affirmation, a triumph.

There is frequently an ironic juxtaposition between mortal entrapment and mortal joy:

Kite caught in branches:

the struggle, the brief

soarings!

or:

Loud sings the nightingale

as if she didn't see

the bars of her cage.

The feeling of entrapment is evident also in a poem such as *Mohl*, a name engraved on a tombstone which the poet passes daily on his way to work. Coming or going, he cannot get away from Mohl,

since he is

fully aware

that I was coming close

in spite of my going a

way . . .

There are several remarkable poems that suggest the theme of entrapment -by our mortality, by society, by the impersonal stride of vast events: *Cinderella Revisited*, *A Matter of History*, *Speaking The Hero*. *Ginko*, the title poem, is on the other hand, a celebration of the few things that persist, symbolized by a tree in India that for milleniums continues to yield its tasty fruit, yellow leaves and a somewhat pervasive scent.

Although some of the poems evoke a chuckle, none are 'light verse' in the conventional sense. Their significance transcends a merely humorous intention. *Mus-ings Of Late*, which is a very funny poem, is almost as sad as it is funny.

A good part of the book is devoted to brief poems. Many of these, often only two or three lines, are evocative and expressive far beyond their brief dimensions:

Old man at the window

memorizing

snowflakes

or:

Dusk. The dog in front
of the house slowly
becomes a bush.

Such poems can stand comparison with Matsuo Basho and other great masters of the short form.

This is Mr. Pollak's fourth collection of verse, continuous in style and fulfilling the promise of his *The Castle and The Flaw* (Elizabeth Press, 1963) which has gone into several editions and *Say When* (Juniper Books, 1969), an outstanding collection of love poems.

The volume is beautifully printed and outstanding in the design of its format. In all, *Ginkgo* is one of the best books of poetry I've come across in a long time.

William Sukonick

Review

(With this issue BACHY begins a series of

articles, each dealing comprehensively with a single West Coast independant press, literary periodical or poet. Benjamin Saltman teaches at California State University at Northridge and has published poetry in many magazines.)

INVISIBLE MIRACLES: A REVIEW OF THE RED HILL PRESS

by Benjamin Saltman

The discovery of good poets is not, nor has it ever been, the job of the major presses. The famous stories about Scribners' Max Perkins or about Alfred Knopf are not about unearthing major poetic talents, nor do the adventures of James Laughlin of New Directions-though he published and publishes Ezra Pound-include finding Ezra Pound. On the contrary, poets have risen from the small presses, the little magazines. Robert Creeley is a good example: *The Whip* was published by Migrant Books in 1957; *A Form of Women* was published by Jargon/Corinth Books in 1959; and finally when Creeley's reputation was established and the Black Mountain poets surfaced in the wave of attention given the Beat Movement, Scribners generally published *For Love* in 1962. We are not deceived when Norton publishes Richard Hugo, or Harper and Row publishes Robert Bly, or Philip Whalen is published in a huge collection by Harcourt Brace. In an author's note Whalen writes with candor: "I must mention my great debts to the 'underground' press: the little magazines where most of this material first appeared, and the individual publishers and printers who had to scrimp and borrow their way into money enough to print my first books." And Whalen proceeds to mention Totem Press, Auerhahn Press, Toad Press, and Coyote Books.

In short the small presses play a major role in the discovery and development of our best and, I suppose, worst poets. And yet because they cannot solve the enormous problems of distribution and sales,

these presses are treated by many poets as a compromise and are deserted as soon as Norton or New Directions waves a contract. The poets are not to be blamed; they make little money anyway. But what is wrong is that the small presses and their publications do not get the attention they merit in spite of recent efforts by the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines and other groups. Even among poets the conversation usually goes like this: "I've got a new book coming out," says poet A. "Where?" asks B. "Stone Wall Press, in Iowa," says A.

Pause. "It's a pretty good press," says A. Pause. "They published Michael Ryan," says A. "Who?" says B. "Michael Ryan. The new Yale Younger Poet."

And so on. But realistically the small presses have nothing to apologize for. The large number of small presses in this country attests to the health of American poetry, in spite of muddy, reactionary, and slavish establishment presses. It is useful, therefore, to review a small press, one with its own taste and vision, and to try to capture through one example the qualities of this important aspect of American creative life.

The Red Hill Press, with offices in Fairfax and Los Angeles, California, edited by John McBride and Paul Vangelisti, is still young and growing. I suppose that what is most impressive about a small press like Red Hill is that it has a life of its own, it is organic, it has a perceptible shape and development. Guided from the beginning in 1969 by McBride and Vangelisti, Red Hill fundamentally reflects the pressures and tastes of these two men. Like *Kayak* and Kayak Books, or *Lillabulero* and Lillabulero Press, Red Hill publishes a magazine which is its center and real direction, *Invisible City*. The collaboration between McBride and Vangelisti began with printing of an early version of a long poem by Vangelisti, *Communion*, as part of a University of Southern California student magazine. *Aspley Guise* by Peter Clothier appeared in 1970, but it was the first issue of *Invisible City* in February,

1971, which set the tone of the press. The

tabloid sized magazine on good stock, with a luxuriance of white paper obviously in contrast to the parsimony of the paperbacks, starts out impressively though awkwardly. Translations of Guillevic, Ungaretti, Pasolini, Sereni, and others; original poems by Charles Bukowski, Mark McClosky, and others. This together with a cover manifesto, in the best manifesto tradition, in which Vangelisti explains why he is a socialist: Vangelisti believes in the "radical questioning" of

American political life. Although this hardly comes as an overwhelming shock to the reader, what is evident and more interesting is that *Invisible City* is a forum for its editors, for the freedom of Vangelisti and McBride to de-tail their vision their way. There is distinctiveness to Red Hill as there is to other small presses; Red Hill combines beliefs in discipline and in human values, a cool rational esthetic borrowed from recent Italian poets and a mystical, rich, sometimes turgid faith in the life of the people. The tone is set immediately in Vangelisti's socialist manifesto: "Soon as you start shouting 'I'm a Communist' or 'I'm a Maoist' in the United States, it's like shouting 'I can fuck forever' in the middle of a supermarket." *Invisible City* does not care either for mere slogans. Through September, 1974, Red Hill has produced fourteen numbers of *Invisible City* and fifteen books and pamphlets. The books have included translations of Italian, French, Brazilian, and Spanish poets, and original verse as well, and have on the whole grown in quality as the editors have matured and attracted poets to their press. But *Invisible City* is the tree; the books and pamphlets are the branches. Because of Vangelisti's interests as editor and translator, the magazine is slanted in the direction of Italian poetry. Hardly an issue goes by without something by Pasolini, Pavese, Palazzeschi, Porta, Sereni. One feels the sunlit rationality of these Italians, their precision, their literary sophistication. It is fascinating to watch the development of *Invisible City*, and quite different from reading an individual issue. You can observe, for example, the first appearance in no. 2 of Jack Hirschman, in a poem called "Soledad for Jose Luis Gonzales,"

a poem which reads too much like a confluence of Ginsberg and Lorca; followed by two short poems in no. 3, then in no. 4 by a translation of Mallarme's "The Pipe." From no. 4 until the present, however, the impact of Hirschman's translations shapes in a major way the spirit of *Invisible City*. His translations of Artaud, Desnos, Eluard, Alberti, Cortazar, and others appear in issue after issue; and since his interest is in mystical, surrealist, orphic poets, he adds a wild quality to the magazine. An entire issue of *Invisible City* is taken

by Hirschman's translations of Antonin Artaud, and is the most brilliant single issue of a magazine I have seen since the "pataphysics" issue of *Evergreen Review* in the early sixties. Extraordinary collages on the front and back cover combine with a magnificent choice of poems, sketches and letters to give a convincing and moving Artaud anthology. Here is the reek of Artaud's paranoia, his ritualistic effort to avoid destructive hate. An example is "Song":

And the slutbird which is
everywhere, and the rest
who've already gotten fucked
and who speak
never have been either what it is
or where it is

YO MERTIN

DI

BARTARELDA

TI MATRA

etc. Thus we have Artaud's magic effort to defend against evil. And then Hirschman later includes a letter from Artaud to Camus in which Artaud's struggle to avoid being crushed by mass consciousness surfaces as an attack on the French masses: "the erotic mass of profiteers, the hysterical creeps" who have been stifling the "resistance." Artaud continues: "I never stop hearing the lousy consciousness of the masses telling me: Give up, Artaud, and kill yourself publically, openly and universally; for if you don't stop, we'll stop you." A portrait of Artaud emerges from this collection in *Invisible City* in which one sees clearly how Artaud was fighting desperately for the survival of individual consciousness.

An embittered, agonized, haunted poet is rendered unforgettable in twenty tabloid-size pages.

So Hirschman must be included in any estimate of *Invisible City* and of The Red Hill Press as it has so far developed. What we get is a combination of Vangelisti's enthusiasm, McBride's clarity, and Hirschman's inspired madness. The name *Invisible City* occurred, McBride writes me, when Vangelisti was driving to San Francisco, approaching the city from the East by way of Route 580, and realized that from that side San Francisco was an invisible city. But to me, without any encouragement from the editors, *Invisible City* means more; it means the city of values and imagination and communion which must coexist behind any city if we are to survive. The Red Hill Press does speak for these qualities. The magazine does speak for human rights. A marvelous address by a black writer translated from the French by Hirschman speaks to "The Intellectual Revolutionary and His Responsibility Toward the Third World." The writer, Rene Depestre, in arguing for black revolution, argues not only for the expulsion of whites who dominate black countries but for the overthrow of the exploiting black bourgeoisie of Africa and America. *Invisible City* speaks also to the question of modern literary theory, in the work, for example, of the Italian Corrado Costa who tries to define "The Territory at Our Backs," an essay on the importance of the background of images: "A poetic work that presupposes truth is not possible; the only space in poetry is that which appears in the background of the image, and it is this space that all reality occupies."

The translations of foreign essays and poems which form a major part of *Invisible City* vary considerably in quality. I have compared translations of Miklos Radnoti and of Brecht with other translations and with literal translations, and have found Radnoti's "Postcards from Yugoslavia" as rendered by Mario Fenyo and R.A. Davies in *Invisible City*, no. 10, quite inadequate; but Brecht's often translated "On the

"Drowned Girl" done by one R.H. Kaeleitzsh in no. 9, clumsy and useless. But frankly I am satisfied by most of the translations and think most readers will be who are not fanatics, for the translators bring to *Invisible City* much that is fresh and thought-provoking, and in the case of frequent contributors like Hirschman and Vangelisti, much that seems to my non-expert ear to catch the spirit of the originals. From Corrado Costa's "One Implies the Other," translated by Vangelisti, comes:

everything has been taken
is not convenient to look inside
within the transparent
there is continually outside
to look that
has been taken
we stay
outside
face down under the void that
lies face down
they have
taken
nothing
and you are afraid they will do him wrong

When it comes to the poems in English in *Invisible City*, poems largely by West Coast poets, a similar range exists from very bad to the excellent. But one is inclined to be less tolerant, to expect more

than mere exercises, mere vulgarity. Witness A.D. Winans: "I saw just the rise of your breasts sticking/out of your bridal gown and i had this crazy/ notion to write a poem across your ass..." Most of us have had crazy notions about asses, but writing poems across them must rank near the bottom (ho-ho) of the scale. Worst of the poems are a few long pretentious ones which *look* as if they ought to be good. An example is "The Chaos Triad" by J. Rutherford Willems (could this be parody?) in no. 12.

I am in the pocket of a sandwich

A stadium of flesh

whose organs

inner to outer

are a symmetry

is one sample of this silly apostrophe to the human body. Another:

YOU

Barque of Flesh

an ocean washes its love

against your rotten planks

And yet I would like to defend, not these poems, but the vision of the editors. And their defense appeals to more than their dependency upon submissions for the content of the magazine. The selections are unusually wide and experimental (I don't mean quirky experimental), the magazine is refreshingly unpredictable, and strangely enough the bad poems add texture and total balance to the whole of *Invisible City*, in which the good poems shine all the more brightly. Thus I discover a poet , so far unknown to me, in no. 11, his

name Thomas Johnson, and his poem "For a Girl Bicycling in the Rain."

Your back to me.

Calves

Pumping like pistons of glass

In the rain's ungovernable

Engine.

You are like no letter of my language.

Only the silence

Comes out to meet you

With its

Shirtfront

Of gray wool.

It is your face

I cannot imagine

Though I have lived in the house

Of its vanishing

All my life.

Perhaps a few of the lines are short o[n] purpose. But what a marvelous little po[em!] This kind of discovery takes place a[ll the time] in the pages of *Invisible City*, not on[ly in] the encounter with new poets, but i[n the] meeting with poets of established re[puta-]tions. Charles Bukowski, William P[?] and Robert Peters contribute some o[f their] best work, it seems to me, whereas [?] poets like

Vangelisti and Carolyn St[oloff] continue to develop. The result is [that] finally a number of issues of *Invisi[ble City]* are treasures: no. 6, the Artaud issu[e; no.] 8, with an extraordinary photo of [Ezra] Pound on the cover, and poems and translations by Hirschman, Bukowski, St[?] Alvaro Cardona-Hine, Kenneth Re[xroth,] Rene Despestre, Vangelisti, Octavio [Paz,] Shirley Kaufman, and others, together[r with] a broadside supplement, Vangelisti['s] poem "Air"; no. 10, with an ex[?] Italian poet Adriano Spatola, translat[ed by] Vangelisti, and a fine selection of Dep[estre] translated by Hirschman, and inclu[ding] poems by Cesare Pavese, Attila Jo[zsef,] Fayad Jamis (trans. by John Piurek), [and] others; and nos. 11 and 12, each ri[ch in] fascinating quotations, translations, po[ems,] essays-Enzenberger, Mohammed Dib, Corrado Costa, Robert Peters, Alvaro Cardona-Hine, Stuart Perkoff, Pavese; a[nd] photos, excellent design: extraordi[nary] magazine!

The Red Hill Press also publishes b[ooks] of poetry, both originals and translat[ions,] and although these have developed [?] slowly they are also remarkable. Of a[bout] fifteen volumes, five are translat[ions of] French Symbolists, Vittorio Sereni, V[alle-] jo, Depestre, Luisa Pasamanik. Intere[sting] volumes, small, well-designed, with H[irschman's] translations of Depestre [and] Pasamanik carrying the most authority [and] excitement. I have a theory about Hi[rsch-] man which holds that given pre-exi[sting] forms, finished poems by foreign p[oets,] Hirschman can work at his best; but [?] in English, struggling with his own [wild-] ness, he cannot control his material a[nd is] consequently less effective. Whateve[r the] reason, the translations are impressive[, and] I suspect that his new work for Red [Hill,] the translation into English for the [first] time of a late work of Louis Aragon, will be equally impressive.

Of the original poems in English, four books in my estimation have the highest quality: *John Thomas* by John Thomas (1972); *Alphabet* by Stuart Perkoff (1973); *Words on Paper* by Alvaro Cardona-Hine (1974); and *Holy Cow* by Robert Peters (1974). Whereas the format of *Invisible*

City has been relatively stable, the volumes from the press vary in sensitive reaction to the contents of the poems. Cardona-Hine's book, with illustrations by the poet, is one of the most beautiful books I have ever seen, the line drawings, the clean type, a gray cover modulated toward beige, the resonant poems subtly influenced by Zen; in fact the whole production is a success which can be shared by Cardona-Hine with the editors. The Red Hill Press has the distinct virtue of having an artistic consciousness which at the same time does not overwhelm the contents of the work. Too many bookmakers are so infatuated with fine paper, fine binding, fine printing, that the poems seem merely an excuse for the printer. This is a perversion of the bookmaker's art, but fortunately Vangelisti and McBride are literate enough to make the job of printing a supplement to the poems, not a substitute or rival for them.

I cannot go on to review separately the books I have singled out for praise. John Thomas, Pound-struck, a curiously American streak of erudite country boy, muscular, self-important:

plenty of deer droppings along here
& the wads that owls barf up
made of fur & mouse bones
& sometimes if you look in among
the blackberry brambles you'll startle
turtles
beaks smeared with berry juice
looking surprised exasperated &
unrepentant

("Nine Stages of a Journey from Caledonia to Harpers Ferry")

Stuart Perkoff, whose *Alphabet* is an impressive total book, intriguing Hebrew letters, kaballistic meanings, sensitive res-

ponses to the physical dimensions and sounds of the letters themselves. Or Alvaro Cardona-Hine's *Words on Paper*, humane, in love with the art of art, full of ironic good cheer:

Herr Gorgonzola and I

share nostrils in

Frau Grunnewald's

roominghouse each

morning it's

good morning

Gorg

good morning

Pestilence

("Serenade for Two Seasons")

Or Robert Peter's *Holy Cow* and his genius for cadence and rime, his eye for the exact gory detail. No, readers should get hold of the books themselves from the distributors of The Red Hill Press, Serendipity Books Distribution, 1790 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, Ca. 94709, or should harass their bookstores until those stores take more chances on the little presses.

But if something can be successful without being numerous, if quality is important apart from notoriety, then The Red Hill Press and *Invisible City* are great successes so far, and promise even greater success. I have not yet examined the new double issue of *Invisible City*, nos. 13 and 14, nor seen the books by Mohammed Dib, Louis Aragon, Stuart Perkoff (collected poems), and four Italian poets translated by

Vangelisti and others-all of which are forthcoming at the time of this writing. I have no reason to believe that these volumes are in any way inferior to what has gone before, and consequently I have good reason to believe that the Press is flourishing. But economic conditions and artistic taste being what they are, I recommend that anyone interested get hold immediately of the work of The Red Hill Press. Otherwise, next time you look it may be gone along with *Blast*, *Hound and Horn*, *Lillabulero*, *Interim*, *Black Mountain Review*, etc. But so far it continues and remains, thanks to Vangelisti and McBride, a delight.

Contributors

JAMES C. BIFFLE supplies the following data: "7-14, pitcher; 14-18, virgin pimple farmer; 18-22, O! A Poet!; 22-27, Jesus, momma, how did I ever end up teaching philosophy in a nowhere junior college?; presently, writer/photographer for United Farm workers newspaper *El Malcriado*. Amazing job. Aesthetic: I would like to be the kind of poet who is trying to do more important things than write poetry."

EDWARD BUTSCHER reports: "I have promised Continuum Books the critical biography, *Sylvia Plath: Method and Madness*, so that they can bring it out in Spring, 1975, and they have agreed to publish my feline saga, *And Thus Spake Godfrey* (sequence of poems that actually has a vague narrative thread here and there, though the beast rejects anything less than epic status) . . . I sweat in Briarwood, a Queens enclave of brick shoulders and plate-glass eyes, and refuse to have an exterior life . . . after all, materiel is too precious to waste."

JAMES CARROLL writes: "I work as a laborer at a public golf course in the Maryland countryside until 2:30 pm when I become a some-time part-time landscape gardener . . . right now I'm chin deep in bluegrass and flower beds . . . I'm 30, married, love to eat and work it off, love cats and birds-all wildlife . . . I believe deeply in experience as the grain of poems . . . I discovered the lives of flowers before I discovered Roethke . . . the greenhouse poems I

read again and again . . . I've been writing about 4 years but never felt good enough or ambitious enough to submit until now-too much junk in the market already!" These are his first published poems.

JOEL DAILEY is joint editor of *Sotto Voce* with Phil Jenkins and is presently studying at the University of Nottingham where he is completing his junior year.

WILLIAM VIRGIL DAVIS reports: "I've published poetry, fiction and criticism and teach English at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle. My poems have appeared in numerous places including *Poetry*, *The Nation*, *Perspective*, *North American Review*, *Epoch*, *Chelsea*, *Pebble*, *Hearse*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Shenandoah*, *The Carlton Miscellany*, *Trace*, *Fuse*-I could go on and on-and of course *Bachy 1*."

PATRICIA EAKINS writes: "I'm a freelance writer/editor by trade. Rewriting textbooks, promotional copy, articles on art and artists. I am also one of the founding editors of *Box 749*, a quarterly magazine of the printable arts. (It hasn't managed to come out quarterly yet but we have high hopes.) I haven't been very widely published in little magazines: *Box 749*, *Bravado*, *Unicorn*. I'd rather you didn't mention any commercial credits, because they have nothing to do with this kind of writing. In fact, it's questionable whether rewriting textbooks is writing at all, although I am called 'the professional writer on the project' and things like that. I don't mind if you say I earn my living as a hack writer, though. It's the damn truth." GRETTEL EHRLICH, who appeared in *Bachy 3*, recently gave a poetry reading at Papa Bach's with John Thomas. Other poets in this issue who have read there include Michael C. Ford, Joseph Hansen, Jack Hirschman, Ronald Koertge, Carol Lewis, Gerald Locklin, William J. Margolis, William Mohr, Henry Rasof, Benjamin Saltman and Lynn Shoemaker.

MARGARET FALK has done graphics for assorted small magazines in Minneapolis and L.A.; her publishing concern,

Animal Press, occasionally brings out a slim volume by an outstanding poet. She lives, draws, paints, does 3-dimensional pieces in Venice.

JOHN FINDLATER is an actor-photographer. He works in commercial photography from his studio in Malibu. The pictures he makes for himself are a very personal experience, consequently this is his first publication.

MICHAEL C. FORD's long awaited collection is soon coming out of Snowville, mostly because of Visiting Poet status during Utah Nirvana Fallout-also periods of residence at schools in Idaho. His recently published books include *I Love. You Mrs. Muncrefe* (Rancid House) *Shoot-Out At Shoshone Flats* (Cowboy Lust Publications) *Toothpaste Telegram & Other Poems* (Greed-Head Sparrow Press) and *Marilyn Monroe Was The Kiss That Marked The End Of Childhood* (New Dissections). The poet reports, "I am never invited anywhere socially because being only 9 inches tall I'm continually barking my forehead on coffee tables."

JERRY FREDERICKS writes: "'Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe,' were the first thoughts out of my mouth. They became the truth of my childhood. 'All mimsey were the borogoves and the mome raths outgrabe' were later impressions that carried me through adolescence. Presently there is Krishnamurti and The Grasshopper. It is."

SUSAN J. FRIEDMAN taught high-school English for a while "until the town's politics grew oppressive above and beyond the call of duty." She now works at a publishing house, "concocting glossaries and worrying about other people's punctuation." She lives in New Haven, Connecticut, and has had a few publications in local magazines.

SHOIN FUKUI is a freelance photographer in Los Angeles. He was born in China and educated in Japan, where he has had several

exhibitions and extensive advertising experience. He is currently attending The Art Center College of Design.

LEONARD GILLEY provides these notes: "Leonard Gilley lives and writes in Farmington, Maine. Whenever the moon is full, he howls . . . Leonard Gilley is a name, but no person to whom it belongs can be located . . . Leonard Gilley on Sunday walks the RFD with his golden retriever and Welsh Pembroke corgi. 'Three of a kind' remark the Sunday morning poker players just turning out the Saturday night lights and heading for bed." He teaches poetry and fiction writing at the University of Maine, and his work has appeared in a variety of publications including: *New York Times*, *Southwest Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Literary Review*, *Cimarron Review* and *Granite*. JOSEPH HANSEN, who has appeared previously in Bachy, is now in England on a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship. His third Dave Brandstetter novel will be published in 1975 by Harper & Row in its Joan Kahn mystery series.

JACK HIRSCHMAN reports: "I'm writing and painting in a SF hotel and in cafes, as politic-street-human body-imagination agit prop because I am a communist, very complicatedly simple, not a machine. My translation of Louis Aragon's *Elegy for Pablo Neruda* will be out shortly. So also my own books, continuing. For *Elle* my sister communists from Venice and SF and the rest of the ensembling poets, painters, gypsy spirits of song and bop. Blue butter in-between. Fragile but fierce duration. KS and JAH. Mayartaud pour les jours intercontinentales."

ROBERT EATON KELLEY was born in Maine and lives in the Bronx. He has finished two novels, *Mr. Duck or Into the Millenium* and *Long Time Dying*, and is working on a third, currently being called *Sing a Song for Timothy, Sing Songs: Erotic Night*. The first chapter of his first novel appeared in *Bachy 2*, and an excerpt from his second will be published soon in *Beyond Baroque*.

RONALD KOERTGE is 34 years old and feels three times that. He teaches at the city college in Pasadena. He recently gave up on a

novel that he has been giving up on every couple of years. His books include *Meat*, *The Father Poems*, *My Summer Vacation* and another-as yet unnamed-from John Kay's Mag Press.

GREG KUZMA edits *Pebble* and the Best Cellar Press series of poetry pamphlets. He has new poems forthcoming in *Poetry*, *Poetry Northwest*, *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review* and several other leading literary magazines. Viking Press published his *Good News* in June of 1973. The Basilisk Press will publish another full-length collection, *The Buffalo Shoot*, some time this year, and the Cummington Press will publish another collection, *The Misery Room* in the near future.

PATRICK LEAHY is 36 years old and lives in Santa Cruz, California. He has lived in Ireland, attended Sophia University in Tokyo and worked as a tutor to children with special reading difficulties, among other occupations. *Dream of the Man Who Wouldn't Die* is his first published story. "By way of perhaps uncalled-for explanation, I tried to invest the story with the realistic assumptions and plausibility with which the dreamer accepts his distorted conversions of emotional records, taking structure in faithfully tracing the length of a motive, and seeing things in a natural light as the dreamer sees them while dreaming rather than 'excused' by grotesqueries and phantasmagoria, the surrealistic assurances in conscious backtracking one tends to vitiate and flout the 'real life' of a dream with."

CAROL LEWIS was born and raised in Chicago. She began writing poetry at the University of Chicago. After a massive writer's block lasting twenty years she started again last year. She lives in Santa Monica with her husband, teen-age son and three slightly demented cats.

GERALD LOCKLIN teaches English at California State University at Long Beach. His books in print include *Poop*, *Son of Poop*, *Toad's Europe* and *Locked In*. CHARLIE McDADE writes: "I was born in Trenton N.J. in 1943, married in 1967, and am currently working on

a Ph.D. in English Literature at CUNY Graduate Center. Before taking a BA at CUNY, I attended two other colleges, dropping out to play bass guitar in a couple of rock & blues bands. At the current time I have poems published or to be published in a number of magazines, including *Street*, *Mustang Review*, *Baby John*, *Quixote*, *The Fault* and *Shore Review*.

SCOTT McTYRE is an artist who divides his talents between the artistic and commercial worlds. He works for personal satisfaction with ink, water colors, oils, smoke . . . doing fine art, sketches, cartoons, way-out expressionism, even needlepoint designs. He supports his 6'8", 22 year old body freelancing at ad agencies, graphic houses, etc. With his father a writer, one brother in television and another working in the legitimate theatre he says, "Maybe I became an artist because it was the only area someone else in the family hadn't staked out!"

WILLIAM MOHR writes: "I was born in Norfolk, Virginia, was raised there as well as in Hawaii and San Diego. I came to Los Angeles in 1968 and was a playwriting major at UCLA. I acted for three years with several companies after graduating in 1970. Sections of my long poem "The Resurrection" have appeared in *The Lamp in the Spine* and will appear in *Invisible City*. The past year and a half I have concentrated on writing long poems around core images. This growth started when I read a statement by Whitman that poets should write about living in this country which is in a geological formation state." He was a founding editor of *Bachy* and now edits *Momentum*.

HENRY RASOF's ROYAL typewriter provides this note: ". . . to reunite music and words . . . eventually poetry that slices guts like a scalpel . . . never get into ruts, be dogmatic or say 'This is the Truth', rather . . . 'this tries to reach' . . . to be lyrical . . . and poetry that does all this . . . now it mostly doesn't . . . let people think, re-examine themselves . . . be free and always evolving . . .

repetition=death . . . death= repetition (reincarnation) . . . to reunite . . ."

HENRY H. ROTH has published stories in *Modern Occasions*, *New American Review*, *Transatlantic Review*, *Triquarterly*, *Bachy* and many other magazines. Recent work will appear in *Remington Review*, *New Voices*, *New Story*, *The Little Magazine* and *Ploughshares*. Five of his delightful Cruz Stories (at last count there were 17) were published in a chapbook recently by Lillabulero Press.

LYNN SHOEMAKER writes: "I grew up in South Dakota. The Missouri River. Farmland. I was half-ignorant and half-afraid of both. But something from the land followed me as I went off to Harvard, taught, worked in the movement (mainly in Los Angeles), married, became a father, separated, wrote. Something from the land followed me. Inside. And from the river, too . . . I'm now teaching in an alternate elementary school and in the poets-in-the-schools program. I'm surrounded by kids. They climb around inside as if I were a play-gym. Loosening me up." His collection *Coming Home* was published in 1973 by Ithaca House.

RICK SMITH is a blues harmonica player living in Pasadena. His first book, *Exhibition Game* appeared late in 1973. Presently, he conducts a writer's workshop for women narcotics offenders at Chino. He graduated from Bard College and spent time at the University of Iowa Writers Workshop.

LAWRENCE P. SPINGARN has had five books of poetry published since 1947 and his work has appeared in many magazines. He is the director of Perivale Press in Van Nuys, California, for which he is editing the forthcoming anthology *Poets West*.

WILLIAM SUKONICK is the pseudonym of a famous west coast writer.

JOHN THOMAS writes: "About material on me for 'Contributors' Notes' in *Bachy 4*: I can understand, I think, your interest in such

disjecta, but I must say that I don't like to supply it. Just a personal crotchet, but a strong one. 'The poem should have to stand alone'-you know, that sort of bias. If you're set on having a note on me, let Paul Vangelisti write it in my place. Anything he should think to say will be acceptable to me, sight unseen, be it true or sheerest twaddle. If you don't like that bit of whimsy, simply write: 'John Thomas prefers no note'".

DON THOMPSON was born and raised in Bakersfield, California, where he now lives. He has published poetry, fiction and translations of Latin American Poetry in *Seneca Review*, *Mundius Artium*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Fiction International*, *Dragonfly*, *Lamp In The Spine* and elsewhere. He is married, has three children and works for the county library.

BOB WEBB, a native of the Los Angeles area, is a professional musician (The True and Trembling String Band) who is trying to make it as a writer. His poems have appeared in *The Sunset Palms Hotel* and he has published a journal article on the history of the banjo. "On Stage" is from a novel-in-progress about the pop music business tentatively titled "Gigging".

welcomes

artists
cartoonists
composers
critics
essayists
humorists
journalists
photographers
playwrights
poets
storytellers

and

subscribers

To: BACHY

c/o Papa Bach Paperbacks

11317 Santa Monica Boulevard

West Los Angeles, California 90025

I enclose _____ \$3.50 for a subscription (2 issues)

_____ \$2.00 for a single copy

_____ \$4.00 for a copy of BACHY 2

_____ \$4.00 for a copy of BACHY 3

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ zip _____

[the word *Bachy* set very large in serif type, turned 90 degrees and running down the left of the list]



Bachy 4, 1974. Published by Papa Bach Paperbacks, West Los Angeles.