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OLD MEN & NEW TOOLS

THE CHINESE CANTOS OF POUND

by Max Halperen

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY mystery about the general theme and point of Cantos LII-LXI, the ten cantos of Ezra Pound's long poem that deal with the history of China. If the entire poem is an attempt to define perceptions and states of mind capable of bringing about a cultural renaissance, then the ten Chinese-history cantos exhibit those perceptions and those mentalities at work in an entire civilization. Pound had come increasingly to believe that in Confucius (Kung Fu Tseu) were polarized most, if not all, of his ethical, political, economic, and even artistic beliefs. In Chinese dynastic histories, Pound saw the process of rise, decline, and emergence of those beliefs through millennia. According to a much-quoted statement by Pound, Confucius' analysis of why the earlier great emperors had been able to govern greatly was so sound that every durable dynasty, since his time, has risen on a Confucian design and been initiated by a group of Confucians . . . China was tranquil when her rulers understood these few pages. When the principles . . . were neglected, dynasties waned and chaos ensued.

Interpretation of these cantos usually is limited to such general statements. Or it is assumed that if any important problems do exist, the reader may solve them by reference to Pound's source: thus, one recent and lengthy study 'explicates' these passages simply by supplying a list of page numbers identifying the places in *Perè de Mailla's HISTORIE GENERALE DE LA CHINE* from which Pound derived his material. But source-hunting does not reveal whether, in Pound's confused-looking pages, there is any sort of poetic logic—logic in his choice of material and line-by-line arrangement of it, and logic in his canto-divisions.

The key, it seems to me, lies not in a consideration of these cantos as statements of Pound's social and ethical ideas or as examples of ideographic method (to employ Pound's idiom for the moment), but more simply in consideration of them as a series of individual poems—carefully related individual poems, of course — each with its own thematic arrangement, set within the chronological framework of traditional Chinese history; and each with its own design.

For Pound has imposed a set of designs upon his material. Each canto has an emphasis different from that of its neighbours—an emphasis not necessarily derived from the source—and each includes a fair amount of apparent trivia that can be explained only on the basis of such an emphasis.

The opening lines of the first of the Chinese cantos, Canto LII, act as a transition, and provide the major themes both for this canto and of the entire sequence: And I have told you of how things were under Duke Leopold in Siena And of the true base of credit, that is the abundance of nature with the whole folk behind it.

Referring to earlier portions of the poem, these lines allude to responsible and reliable rule, derived from Canto XLIV; to social and economic theory in harmony with natural law, derived from Cantos XLII and XLIII; and to the vision of an entire nation working in unison with its leaders. This pleasant vision of harmony crumbles quickly enough as the Canto proceeds, Pound now displaying what he considers examples of irresponsible or ignorant leadership; of unnatural, usurious economics; and of people whose interests are not those of their rulers. In contrast, we are given a brief glimpse of the responsible and knowledgeable leadership of the American founding fathers: a source of doctrine for Pound; but a source lost, he insisted in Cantos XXXI-XLI, in the materialism of the Nineteenth and Twentieth

Centuries. A third restatement of the idea of order and harmony reaches farther back, both in time and in THE CANTOS, to the Middle Ages and to the early Renaissance: there is a hint that the sense of social order and the sense of mystery in nature may mingle harmoniously, a hint that is followed by a reference to the church of La Daurade in Toulouse.

BETWEEN KUNG AND ELEUSIS

Under the Golden Roof, la Dorata . .

Kung equalling Chinese order, Eleusis equalling Greek mystery, La Dorata, the medieval Church. Pound has always been impressed by the medieval Church's attitude toward usury; he feels that a religious tradition, to which the people owe allegiance, is a very proper place for such an attitude. But religious leadership has also failed: the groggy church is gone toothless No longer holds against neschek the fat has covered their croziers The high fans and the mitre mean nothing

Pat in its place, a new tradition appears. Via the Chinese Li Ki, we are shown men in tune with nature. The emperor stands at the ritual pivot of a seasonal progression that is orderly and harmonious: In red car with jewels incarnadine to welcome the summer

*In this month no destruction
no tree shall be cut at this time
Wild beasts are driven from field
in this month are simples gathered.
The empress offers cocoons to the Son of Heaven*

The 'whole folk,' as well as the whole of nature, move in a pattern that includes natural economics. Structurally, the Christian-Chinese conflict suggested here becomes in the final Chinese cantos the historical opposition between Jesuit missionaries and Confucian ministers.

Canto LIII, the first that actually deals with Chinese history, seems to take the form of a double-crested wave: at the beginning, it rises —with frequent enough interruptions—to the great reigns of the Third Dynasty; then it falls into the chaos of a feudal period. However, the fall is an apparent one only; for, out of it there comes the spirit of Confucius to record and renew the spirit of the past. In the course of this movement, we are given a contrapuntal arrangement that develops: first, the theme of natural harmony—harmony with the needs of the people and the land, harmony with the demands of heaven; second, the theme of fertility, abundance, and order that accompanies that sense of harmony; and third, the theme of active and continual renewal of what the past has found useful.

These are the general organizing concepts of Canto LIII; they are also the directions taken by each piece of it. The opening lines, deliberately flat and unemotional, deal with the legendary, pre-dynastic emperors credited with supplying knowledge of shelter, food, barter, and letters—the elementary necessities. The lines thereafter progress, both in the kinds of knowledge referred to (from shelter to music) as well as in the verbs employed: the act of teaching gives way to various acts of measuring and making, which lead in turn to the act of perception. In other words, there is a movement from the material to the spiritual, and to the lyric summary for which the archetypal Emperor Yao supplies the substance. His fertile spirit is 'like the sun and the rain;' his eye is on the heavens. These observations are balanced by a return to the theme of material fertility: Yu, 'leader of waters,' overcomes a flood, amasses grain, establishes tithes based on natural production. The figure of Chun sacrificing to the spirit of heaven is followed by a suggestion of the fertilizing power of the word, a suggestion given greater weight by a block of four Chinese ideograms for the Emperors Yao, Chun, and Yu, and the Minister Kao-Yao. The ideograms are

accorded the Poundian accolade, 'abundance.' From matter to spirit, from earth to heaven and back again, the harmonious form holds: there is material and spiritual fertility. There is, further, a suggested pattern of persistence and renewal in the remembered tombs and recurrent problems and in the ideograms which give ultimate form to the mentalities of Yao, Chun, Yu, and Kao-Yao.

Merely hinting at the decline of the First Dynasty ('Then an Empress fled with Chao Kang in her belly.')

—for the design of the canto seems to require a climax in disorder — Pound reaches into a footnote in his source for the reordering components: the five Chinese elements with which the dynasties are associated. We move to Yao, shown assigning tasks to Chun and Yu, and then to the Spirit of Heaven. These eight lines summarize the earth-heaven polarity already established, and prepare for the successful exhibition of that polarity in the life of Tching Tang, founder of the Second Dynasty. To distribute grain in an emergency, he gives money away, thus teaching the uses of coinage to succeeding generations; to bring rain, he prays on the mountaintop. Finally, to remind himself of his responsibilities, he has printed on his washbowl a motto on the need for daily renewal:

wrote MAKE IT NEW on his bath tub Day by day make it new cut underbrush, pile the logs keep it growing.

About a half-page of warning against failure to harmonize with the will of heaven ends when a minister, YN, points out that only by renewing within himself the virtue of his father, can a new emperor rule:

Not by your virtue but by virtue of Tching Tang

The renewal theme is sounded in depth, the lines reaching back to the founder of the Second Dynasty and beyond him to the founder of the First:

Honour to YU, converter of waters Honour Tching Tang
Honour to YN seek old men and new tools

The last line, taken out of a later context in the Chinese chronicles, becomes a summary of the theme of the progressive renewal: 'Seek old men and new tools.'

Immoderate love of riches and women leads to a new interruption and to the fall of the Second Dynasty, whereupon Pound images a pattern of order and harmonious succession that lasts for several generations and pages. The pattern is, thematically, the most important of the canto; but, structurally, it may be passed over without detailed analysis. Briefly: from imagery of formless and circean change, we are led to examples of the will to order and responsible direction. The concern of the founder of the Third Dynasty (Wu Wang) for distribution, peace, the land, and the written word, receives detailed definition by his successors; several references to the solstice recall the spirit of Yao that, presumably, animates the early ministers and emperors of the Third Dynasty; in a magnificent ceremony, the will of Tching-ouang, the second emperor of the Dynasty, becomes the will of Kang-wang, while the wills of their chief ministers merge in a kind of apostolic succession. Citing Kung's affection for this great age of Chinese rule, Pound twice suggests the concept of spiritual renewal over the centuries: 'Yao and Chun have returned' sang the farmers 'Peace and abundance bring virtue.' I am 'pro-Tcheou' said Confucius five centuries later. With his mind on this age.

Neither the allusions to Kung nor the song of the farmers appears in Pound's major source; they are interpolated here to suggest the influence that reaches from Yao to Kung, and beyond.

But, to summarize drastically, the spirit departs from the Third Dynasty, and with it goes the mandate of heaven. The dynastic fall is interrupted frequently enough in a movement that parallels the curve of the first part of the canto; and yet, at the last, as William Butler Yeats put it in *THE SECOND COMING*: 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.' Instead of

peace and abundance, there are: wars, wars without interest boredom of an hundred years' wars.

However, as noted earlier, the major business of this part of the canto is to reveal, in the person of Kung, a movement that runs counter to the prevailing chaos of the period. As the opening lines of the canto shifted from the material level to the spiritual, so the glimpses we are given of Kung take us from his concern with victuals, cattle, and markets to a revelation of his mental temper: He was seven days foodless in Tchín the rest sick and Kung making music 'sang even more than was usual'

At the very close of the canto, Pound reintroduces the ideogram of the Tcheou Dynasty; the spirit of the founding emperors revives in Kung.

If, in Canto LIII, ideas are arranged to suggest harmony (or the lack of it) and renewal, in Canto LIV they are rearranged in a discussion of the mental and physical energies necessary to the ordered Chinese state. As usual, the opening of the canto establishes its central thematic current: So that Tien-tan chose bulls, a thousand and covered them with great leather masks, making dragons and bound poignards to their horns Tien-tan's shrewdness in war delivers a town; but, by itself, is unable to deliver the empire from chaos. Several lines later, we come upon 'CHI HOANG TI that united all China,' but who fails to distinguish between 'fool litterati' and the genuine wisdom of the chronicles, and therefore burns the books. His dynasty lasts but a few years. In the background of such events, there is the wisdom that endures among the people in the form of folk songs and folk adages: 'some fishin' some huntin' some things cannot be / changed.' Only wisdom that approximates such basic inductions is of use; it is part of the business of this canto to insist on the alliance between Confucius and the people: 'Kung is to China as is water to fishes.'

Pound now employs one of the classic moral contrasts of the Chinese histories: that between the unlettered Hiang-yu, who 'made no progress in letters,' and the unlettered Lieou-pang, who is made to understand the importance of the books and restores them — though not before we are told that he also understands the nature of men. He becomes the complete emperor, remitting taxes, listening to his Confucian advisors, and establishing firmly the new Han Dynasty: A hot lord and unlettered, that knew to correct his own faults as indeed when he had first seen palace women, their splendour yet listened to Fan-kouai and had gone out of Hien-yang the palace, aroused. And he told Siao-ho to edit the law code

The ability to control oneself, and therefore to control others, becomes an important element in the character of the great emperors of Canto LIV, an element connected with their ability to distinguish clearly the virtues of men and books. In fact, the entire canto may very well be a commentary on two Confucian texts: (1) 'Self discipline is the root;' (2) 'The three efficient virtues are: knowledge, humanity and energy' — as in Pound's translations.

Around the thematic constants outlined above, the remainder of the canto circles. References to shrewdness in battle and to raw courage appear and reappear in various contexts; the books are periodically destroyed and restored. Pound frequently sharpens his discussion of mental and physical forces by an alignment of the needs of peace and war: both must be considered. And yet, these juxtapositions are simply the polar statements between which are arranged a number of attitudes toward power and knowledge, frequently blending with each other. Thus, Han Sieun dazzles a Tartar king with a peacetime ceremony which is the equivalent of wartime shrewdness that is a far less bloody and more effective way of establishing order. When a virile leader, a united imperial domain, and the totality of the

Confucian doctrine all coincide, the great reign brings peace, abundance, justice, and culture; on the other hand, weakness and mental darkness — the latter induced almost without distinction by eunuchs and empresses, Taoists and Buddhists, concubines and eggheads — brings disorder.

Canto LIV approaches the problem of order via a contrapuntal discussion of the nature of knowledge and energy; Canto LV approaches the same problem by a definition of the mental environment or temper that produces a proper attitude toward wealth in general and money and taxes in particular:

Orbem bellis, urbem gabellis
implevit
And the troops not even paid
And TCHUN the new Lord was dying
but awoke to name Li-Chun his heir
And at this time died Ouei-Kao the just taxer
that set up pensions for widows
His temple stands to this day
that his soldiers built for him.
Honour to TCHUN-TSONG the sick man.
'Cut it! you bastard' said Lin-Yun
'Do you take my neck for a whetstone?'
And the rebel Lieou Pi was delighted.

Tchun displays willingness to pass on the reins of power when he is enfeebled; Ouei taxes justly and provides pensions; Lin-Yun yields life gallantly. These characteristics circumscribe an ethical area in which giving involves receiving: receiving immortality, and honor, and life. In the next few lines, a similar frame of mind is involved, when an emperor refuses to 'hog' taxes — instead, throws them into commerce. According to Pound's translation of the Confucian Ta Hsio: 'Rake in wealth and you scatter the people. Divide the wealth and the people will gather to you.'

The opposing mentality is suggested in the first two lines, which allude to Pope Urban VIII, and describe him as filling the world with wars and cities with taxes (there is no mystery in the allusion: Pound used the line earlier in XLIII/14). The pope lacks Confucian balance and sanity; similar imbalance appears later in the canto, as a lust for the immortality promised by the Taoists, as a surrender to the wiles of the eunuchs, and as a passion for wealth and taxes. Imbalance ensures destruction and oblivion. These variations from the Confucian norm nevertheless suggest the norm by contrast: Hien-Tsong throws money into commerce as he should:

And yet he was had by the eunuchs,
the army 800 thousand
not tilling the earth

'Men are the basis of empire,' said our Lord

HIEN-TSONG

yet he died of the elixir,

*Far from achieving the immortality promised by
the elixir, he is forgotten by his own son.*

On the other hand, the great emperors cannot be forgotten. Theirs are the temples that invite worship, theirs are the reigns that invite emulation. In the atmosphere created by the Emperor Chin-Tsong, who 'lived soberly / with no splurge of table or costumes,' begins the work of Ouang-Ngan-Ché, who sets just prices, sees to distribution, cuts taxes, creates grain pools. But, apparently, there can be an imbalance in one's attitude toward tradition as well; and Ouang's reforms are swept away by the more conventional Confucians. Once again, as the Mongols invade, the world is filled with wars and taxes.

Despite the assumption, then, that the arrangement of these materials is primarily chronological — and despite the apparent confusion of lines — enough has been said about the first four Chinese-history cantos to demonstrate a very careful thematic juxtaposition within each canto. By the end

of the sequence, Pound is attempting to show that Confucian behavior is not so much a matter of the adoption of laws and manners as it is an exhibition of 'inner nature.' This idea appears at the opening of Canto LIX, where Pound interpolates the preface written by a new Manchu emperor, Chun Tchi, for the Confucian Book of Odes. One thematic movement becomes an elaborate parody of Chun Tchi's preface; for, the behaviour of other officers and princes reveals nothing of the 'Urbanity in externals vintu in internals' prescribed in the preface. Another thematic movement provides examples of political, scientific, and individual rationality which parallel, in the physical domain, the ideas of the preface, in the mental domain.

In Cantos LX and LXI, East and West are finally opposed to each other: the Chinese are perfectly willing to accept 'the best European models' as long as those models do not impair the inner structure of the Chinese spirit — a point stressed in the last of these cantos, which is a contrapuntal discourse on Confucian honesty, responsibility, and sense of reverence. 'Xtianity,' on the other hand, is put out because 'chinese found it so immoral.' In an important thematic linkage, the Emperor Yong Tching seeks the good of his people as a means of honoring his forebears and sacrificing to the spirits of earth and heaven. Thus, at the end of the canto, respect for a dead mother is mingled with a question of taxes. Pound has brought his reader full circle from Canto LII, where religion in the West was seen as divorced from economic attitudes, and where the Li Ki gave promise of ritual behavior that was not so divorced.

TOWARDS PRINT

(THE INTELLECTUAL MISUNDERSTANDING OF POETRY)

by the Editor

NOTEWORTHY BOOKS ALWAYS are 'arguments.' While authors aren't one hundred percent classifiable by their arguments, there's a dividing-line near which each may be identified generally. The side determines whether the author may be called a conservator of culture (tabulating what he's chosen to believe has extended boundaries of knowledge and perception — or both), or whether he may be called an intentioned creator (adding to knowledge and/or perception).

Besides all the new poetry received in recent months for TRACE review, more books of other kinds than can be described at length have been arriving. Some of the latter inspired this theme.

One in particular set it off by advancing — almost incredibly — an untenable argument concerning the making of poetry. It was NOTES ON PROSODY, by Vladimir Nabokov (an offprint from a four-volume work to be published soon by the BOLLINGEN FOUNDATION — unpriced, paperb.). This internationally-known author reveals in an oddly unconscious way how many of the learned of our time (often, as with him, otherways-talented creators) have developed slight appreciation for contemporary arts; he is one of thousands who have refused to read properly the poetries integral to the century's culture. Mr. Nabokov — he of LOLITA fame, and rather important long before that for his articles on pre-Communist Russian society and arts (in ATLANTIC) and for his definitive biography of Nikolai Gogol — has translated much Russian poetry; and the offprint is from his

forthcoming COMMENTARY to Aleksandr Pushkin's EUGENE ONEGIN, described as a 'novel in verse.'

Without passing any judgment on Pushkin, it flatly can be affirmed that Nabokov unmasks ignorance of poetry as a living art-medium. In effect, he has declared its production to be a coldly-calculative process; he seems to vision the poet cautiously measuring out syllables and feet while testing sounds and stresses.

Nabokov is said to have one of the world's most extensive English vocabularies; and his self-conscious display of word-knowledge, here, is significant (invoking, for instance, every synonym for such a usable term as 'verse-foot' . . . often tossing in long-obsolete words, as: 'producent' for 'production'). He details his minor concerns about precise terminologies, and on the whole carries forward in the style of a pedantic schoolmaster. One yearns to interrupt his interminable comparisons of 'scud frequency' amongst many different poets and with Pushkin, by suggesting the probability that the readers he addresses already will have studied formal metrics and might well make their own post-analyses of stresses and assonances and structure . . . that they may be bored, and even insulted. Nabokov writes: ' . . . as much as I can recall I have not come across a single work that treated English iambics — particularly the tetrameter — on a taxonomic and comparative-literature basis, in a way even remotely acceptable to a student of prosody.' (!) One also wishes to ask him if he really believes that the poet should be consciously concerned with these technicalities during initial flashes of insight and conjurements of language.

Nabokov, too, makes arbitrary assertions, such as that: the poetic line in English breaks down beyond the sixth foot; all 'free verse' is chopped-up prose; the iambic word is stronger than the trochaic word and etceteras which, taken together, indicate he has read little of the poetry of the past

fifty years.

This work is so lacking in present value of purpose (as archaic in its applications on the whole as some of Nabokov's outmoded and pretentious phrasing) that a prominent mention would be unjustified except that it occurs at this particular juncture. Today, most critics are saying that the arts-pendulum has swung overly far toward a 'dispersal' phase and that return toward conservatism is desirable; and Nabokov may be taken seriously solely because he's anti-experimental — with slight recognition of the absence of equipment here for authoritative analysis of contemporary poetry. And it's easy to be over-impressed by his reputation and because of his singular contributions in other areas.

Herbert Read is an older author whose critical distance from the dividing line is nearly as far in the direction of innovational approval as is Nabokov's in the opposite (in NOTES . . ., the latter expresses not conservatism, but a reactionism that would set prosody back a hundred years). A new SELECTED WRITINGS Poetry and Criticism, with Foreword by Allen Tate, has just been published (HORIZON — \$7.50). In this superbly-edited book, with all types of materials from Read's long span, one may rediscover his impressive line of argument contra purely-textual evaluations; from the Twenties, he has maintained the inescapability of 'personal' (psychological) considerations in poetry criticism. Turning pages almost at random, a vital approach is revealed — now in this, now in that, relationship. Even in treating of literary movements and naming no specific personality, Read emphasizes his stance. For example, in describing the birth of surrealism, he said: ' . . . the spontaneous generation of an international and fraternal organism in total contrast to the artificial manufacture of a collective organization....'

Though Read spoke at length in defense of Shelley and defined poetry as 'the instrument of the imagination . . . distinct from science,' he did not shun what he had called

‘the incorporation of scientific elements’ to ‘raise literary criticism above the vague level of emotional appreciation.’ And still, he could deride minutely-mechanical examinations of the Nabokov kind: ‘. . . an infallible distinction may be in the use of the letter “P” in feminine rhymes and false quantities; it would be infallible, but it would be dull.’

In brief, Read would be likely to agree that a man must in some measure be irrational to be truly ‘original’ in any act. And he would be unlikely to weaken the pronunciation in a Nabokovian way, by apologizing for the word ‘irrational’ — concerned though he always has been with precision. On the other hand, as an hypothetic expectation, Nabokov would be constrained to justify the ‘liberty.’ He surely would not endorse Read’s argument; but, supposing that he should, we’d plausibly expect him to note that the definition of ‘irrational’ allows no degrees — as by the qualification ‘in some measure.’ Finally, he’d no doubt unwind by concluding that the more-neutral ‘non-rational’ should have been used.

How would he look upon Ezra Pound? Has he? Has he ever read *MAKE IT NEW*? How does he ‘place’ Pound as translator? See the new *EZRA POUND: Translations* (NEW DIRECTIONS — \$2.25, paperb.); for, Pound’s translations are nearer the Nabokovian mark than his original poems. They offer the scansion Nabokov recognizes by his unrealistic (because limited by rational theory) manner of approach.

Still, Pound’s most ‘constructed’ versions evidence his concern with vagaries of speech: that, in writing for now, he should not twist English in ways to make it unreadable (poetically) for contemporaries, by the backturns in time and across linguistic barriers of other speech-climates. One of Nabokov’s errors stems from failure to appreciate that laws of spoken language are immensely variable, and that metrics always and anywhere are governed by these fluid laws. He does refer to the variations of syllable-stress in different locales and under different kinds of emotions; yet he holds

that when language is poured into prosodic forms, the words are 'bound to become' specific kinds of verse-feet, with 'scud' or 'tilt' all but predetermined!

Nabokov's analyses range among Russian writings antedating his own period, and — ludicrously — among prosodies of the past in long-disused vocabularies of other tongues. How farfetched to reconstruct the supposed stresses of poetries in languages for which eminent scholars refuse to guess actual pronunciations! And, for that matter, readings aloud of contemporary works vary greatly with individuated vocalization of different readers.

Pound is line-conscious, to be sure — but, in a more realistic fashion, with due consideration to 'breath.' The line in modern English often extends through ten verse-feet (not failing on the sixth!). This is demonstrated in today's liberation of the sonnet-form by scores of practitioners. A reader of words cannot be controlled in the way that a musician is, in terms of a score.

Hugh Kenner's Introduction to the Pound volume is filled with relevancies in regard to translation — of which Nabokov appears not to have taken cognizance. For instance, in pointing out that for the translator, 'reading must be a kind of seeing;' and in remarking how Pound had spent months in some of the work, 'less on finding the words than in bringing the emotion into focus;' . . . and . . . 'the ambience is what Pound is trying to seize.' Kenner declares that the translator remains faithful to the original 'sequence of images . . . rhythms,' or their effects, and states in a footnote: 'English hexameter, for instance, sounds pedantic, especially in the specimens Arnold produced as triumphs. Pound's version of the Homeric Nekyia (Canto I) went into adapted SEAFARER rhythms, not synthetic hexameters, with startling success; and the SEAFARER itself rather reproduces the feel of alliterative Anglo-Saxon verse than obeys its rules.'

From another angle, Arturo Torres-Ríoseco deals with relationships of poetries in different languages, in *ASPECTS OF SPANISH-AMERICAN LITERATURE* (U. OF WASHINGTON Press — \$3.50). This is a survey, but he observes textual inter-reactions between Spanish and English and French writers. Had Nabokov paid some attention to this, he'd have been forced to see flaws in his collative method of treating Russian and English poetries. Torres-Ríoseco, known as an educator with rather pragmatic views, is not a poet; nevertheless, his 'essentials' feature 'sensitivity . . . feeling for language . . . style,' and he finds modern Latin poets virtually uninfluenced by traditional English metricalians. He also sets store by the vein of 'unreason' that runs through Spanish literature/s.

This may key the weightiest objection to taking Nabokov seriously: his approach is almost exclusively scientific; and he's too deadly serious, when his eclecticism does not extend beyond mechanics, into the realm of ever-changing, poetic verbal imagination.

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THE CHRONICLE

THE CHRONICLE, 'An Evolving Directory (of magazines and publishers of literary intent)' — seven pages here, breaking off and picking up again on the last leaf of the issue. Both parts are omitted, some ninety-eight magazines and presses: it is a working address list rather than reading matter, and it is superseded by THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE TO LITERARY AND ART PERIODICALS.

The entry to keep is the last but two in the issue. WILD DOG: 'c/o E. Dorn, 842 E. Clark St., Pocatello, Idaho. (Assoc. ed., Drew Wagnor; informal essays, letters.)' — Ed Dorn's magazine, given its address in the ordinary way, mimeographed, twelve times a year. Beside it YOWL PRESS of Fifth Avenue announces the BLUEBEAT ANTHOLOGY with an introduction by Kirby Congdon.

From the head of the list: ALPHABET PRESS of London, Ontario, with its first book — THE DANCE OF DEATH AT LONDON, ONTARIO, 'as caught by Artist Jack Chambers & Poet James Reaney,' a dollar fifty, or ten dollars for the signed edition with added art. STOLEN PAPER REVIEW's second number carries 'previously-untransl. Jean Cocteau . . . excerpts fr. G. DeChirico's surrealist novel, HEBDOMEROS.' CITY LIGHTS has the Fenollosa CHINESE WRITTEN CHARACTER in paperback at a dollar twenty-five. AMERICAN HAIKU has moved from Wisconsin to Houston under a new editor; ATLANTIS EDITIONS of Philadelphia announces two first books of poems; TAMARIND and THEATRE 60 of Palmerston North are both here.

The names are listed in Trace_52_1964_chronicle_names.txt beside the transcript. — ED.

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

‘HENRY FIELDING PARTY’ FOR THE AVANT

Dear Editors:

Re Amherst party: what a party! what vibrance! what swinging people! all in the midst of supine snow, great imposing colonial baronials, wiggy leafless trees, and cute, postcard Smith College girls wearing dots of red here and there. But believe me, the town is far more intellectually awake than North Hampton, which when we came through, damn near burned Jean at the stake for wearing a purple Mexican shawl. The party was held for contributors to the MASSACHUSETTS Review; and, looking at the square, antique-shop-look of the countryside and people, I could hardly understand how a magazine like the Review could be published there. I learned why later.

The party was held at The Women’s Club, a tired, peeling, peeling, Victorian, oversized imitation of something from the Revolution, complete with sprawling lawn, rolling down its own hill. We traveled five or six hours from Manhattan by train, bus, then foot—but, as soon as we got there, we knew this had not been for naught. Editors John Hicks and Jules Chametzky met us, made us comfortable; and the liquor flowed. Finally, after drink, after cigar, magnificent buffet was unfolded — with turkey and aspic and . . . This excursion set my dieting back by three pounds.

After the dinner, were more cigars and more drinks. We talked with cherubically-happy Richard Eberhart for a while. . . . All kinds of Edith Sitwell types were there, smoking pipes made especially for the ladies. I discussed censorship, and Vietnam. . . . After a while great soporific layers of stogie smoke began to settle on everybody; the music got louder,

and I began to feel as if I had about ten lead weights hanging from my chin. Eager boy-types poured you drinks from every corner and around every pillar; they smartly knew how to absorb their consumer's guilt for coming back for a seventeenth refill.

As a sort of extra-bonus kicker to the evening, Joseph Langland read some poems; we all sat obediently on the floor when someone irreverently announced: 'Joe's gonna read some poems!' And so he read a poem about a squirrel; but this was after Mrs. Eberhart had taken Mr. Eberhart home by the arm, and after awards had been given out to the winners. The evening had a wild Dickensian quality. Everybody was as cordial as a country squire. There was a quality of merriment — richly sumptuous, without being libertine — like something from TOM JONES.

Carl Linder

MESSAGE FROM INDIA

Dear Editors:

Knowledge correct and in the right perspective and understandings is the clarion call of the day today inside the Country. Informations in the right directions has been lacking. Establishment of internal and international links and inter-dependence has been all the more essential today too.

Combination of business aptitude with altruism is usually lacking in cultural writers to-day. I use the word cultural in its true sense. The said deficiency if any will also be made up to the extent possible I ever assure you. Communication freely and with trust and barriers of ignorance must be shattered is the all-pervading voice here today. Asia's aims and needs are for a full, un-impeded and increased flow of informations between peoples — informations for a world in need of mutual understandings and universal cooperations.

P. N. Singh

SEEKS AID FOR BRITISH BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dear Editors:

I have begun an index to British little magazines and reviews; it will be an author-title index, with an attempt at subject classification, and it will be published annually.

Some of these already have ceased publication (a listing of fifty-five periodicals of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales was attached — Ed.) ; but, more importantly, many will begin from time to time that ought to be indexed, else that material will be lost to the future except when a scholar or student runs across the magazine accidentally. I intend to get in touch with these periodicals ; but, for obvious reasons, it would be more satisfactory were they (any not contacted) to forward indexing copies immediately that the first one comes out.

And, incidentally, some of my titles have sent copies for 1963. If they (also) will send back issues, I will extend (subscription) over a period of two years.

Please address the undersigned at : Fairleigh Dickinson University, Florham-Madison Campus, 285 Madison Ave., Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Stephen H. Goode (English Dept.)

A CRITICAL SPOOF

by Alfred M. Rossum

The successful writer of today must have as sharp an eye, as sensitive a nose for a new style as a woman's fashion buyer. For instance, in the Thirties and early Forties, the thing was to write a novel of social protest about the downtrodden masses—like *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*. In the late Forties and early Fifties, there was a rash of war stories—at first, pro- . . . later, shading more toward anti-. Then came books against conformity, symbolized by Madison Avenue and Big Business. One author has even gained a wide reputation with controversial books about genius being a law unto itself, pulling the rest of parasitic and resisting society along behind.

From these works emanates the first faint odor of the next great literary look: the conservative, ultra-rugged individualist revival, finding widest popularity among the security-seeking young university students diligently cramming for degrees that guarantee good salaries, and among their slightly-older brothers, the junior executives happily sucking the corporate teat.

As a poor word-carpenter who does not make so many chips as his woodworking counterparts, I have finally decided to sell out by hopping on the band wagon with my own early commercial entry in the sweepstakes. A few excerpts from this will—I hope—whet your interest enough to make you run to the nearest bookstore.

THE BONEHEAD

by Iron Band

(Author of PROMETHEUS SHIVERED)

CHAPTER ONE: Ramm Basher shrugged. He stood on the precipice, two hundred feet above the Pacific, yet the idea of jumping never occurred to him. So what if he had just flunked out of Cal Tech, one day before graduating? He'd show those old relics, with their outmoded ideas about automobile design! Any idiot could see that a completely-round car without wheels—one that rolled like a ball and was propelled by a powerful rubber-band engine—was the most functional and economical vehicle for the future. He didn't care if the whole world laughed at him. The Dickybird would become a reality. . .

Oily Camshaft smiled. He took the engraved parchment from the Dean with a gracious condescension which befitted his position as the honors graduate of his class—the same attitude with which he had accepted the offer to become Chief Engineer at Major Motors, Detroit's largest car manufacturer. He had not felt the least bit guilty about copying his award-winning design from that fool Ramm Basher. If the stupid ass didn't know enough to keep his paper covered, so much the worse for him! Anyway, it was his own idea to add an internal-combustion engine and put four wheels on the round body. You have to give the public what it wants. Though his plans had prompted Oliver Martini—the charming, weak, gin-soaked owner of Major Motors—to offer him the job, it was the sight of the aerodynamic lines of old Oliver's daughter, Gibson, that had made him decide to take it. The girl's dry piquancy had an exhilarating effect on him. . .

CHAPTER SIX:

Ramm Basher grinned. The slim girl with the clear liquid eyes and skin like a pearl onion stopped to watch the press he was operating. It was really luck that after he'd lost his last job—his sixth in two years—for slugging the boss who laughed at his Dickybird design, he'd remembered that his old college pal and fraternity brother, Oily Camshaft, was now Vice-President In Charge of Manufacturing at Major Motors. Oily had been very decent to get him this job. So what if he did secretly have to give Oily a hand after hours, designing the 'Meteor 16' to race for the Vodka Martini Cup (named in honor of Oliver's deceased Russian-born wife)? It was little enough to do for such a buddy. He looked thirstily at the girl. How cool and limpid she appeared when compared with his sweaty, flushed, greasy self!

Gibson stared at the gleaming torso of the operator. She did not know why she was so attracted to this half-naked, magnificently-muscular, gigantic brute with the virile features, coarse dark hair and flaming eyes. She had no business being alone in Daddy's shop after hours. All the men were gone except this one, working overtime. Setting the automatic controls of his machine, he advanced silently toward her with flaring nostrils. She could not move; and deep down inside, she did not want to. His powerful hands grabbed her, leaving black imprints on her silk dress, and pulled her relentlessly toward him. The pile-driver rhythm of the great press punched out a pounding Bolero background to their love and drowned her screams. . .

CHAPTER TEN:

Oily Camshaft watched his wife. She had been acting strangely of late. Once he'd believed he had achieved his ambitions and found happiness — when old Oliver had retired in his favor, shortly after his marriage to Gibson. Since then, he had tried to be true to his father-in-law's credo: 'What's good for Major Motors is good for me!' Now, he was not so sure. Why was it all turning to ashes in his mouth? Why did Gibson suddenly decide to marry him after constantly refusing even to date him, for ten years? Why, as a wedding present, had she asked him to hire Ramm Basher as their chauffeur? Why did she always insist on wearing that torn, white silk dress with its greasy handprint pattern to bed? Why had she given their first-born child — a remarkably well-developed and robust baby for a six months preemie — the strange old family name of Gibram? Why did she continually give brilliant parties for influential people, where the only subject of conversation was Ramm Basher and his ridiculous Dickybird? It seemed like all anyone talked about these days was 'Basher's Bowling Ball.' What about his own 'Meteor 16,' which had won the Vodka Martini Cup? Why were all the orders he got for limousines — never for sports cars?

Gibson looked at her husband and thought of Basher. Ugh, from a Ferrari to a Jeep! She had just left Basher's shabby, furnished room. He'd told her he wanted to have a nude statuette of her mounted on the Dickybird as a trademark. She had agreed. If Oily only knew! How she would enjoy telling him! The fool adored her — did everything possible to make her happy. She hated him. She had married him only to destroy him. However, she must keep her relationship with Basher hidden from vulgar eyes. They wouldn't understand.

In fact, she must also destroy Basher, the one and only love in her life. She had explained it all to him while seated on his sagging, lumpy bed, darnin' his sole pair of socks. She'd told him his genius was a threat to Them. They would ruin him anyway. It was better that she — his mistress and best friend — did the dirty work, rather than have it accomplished by Them. He said nothing. He understood. . .

Will Ramm Basher be done in by his great and good girlfriend or by Them? Will the Dickybird ever score a clean strike against a group of pedestrian tenpins? Will Oily Camshaft stop his gyrations? If you want to find out how this blazing novel of clashing ideas ends, go buy it. Each copy sold means ten cents royalty for me. The television repairman is coming tomorrow — and you know what that means. . .

Al Michaels (iron Band)

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ENCUENTRO DE POETAS/ MEXICO/ 1964

by A. Fredric Franklyn

THE PASEO DE LA REFORMA, with its wide tree-lined islands down the length of its center, stretched behind and ahead of us, looking so much like and unlike the Champs Elysee, after which Mexico's first and only empress, Carlotta, had had it modeled a century ago; that same Carlotta who, at the time the United States too was plunged in civil war, was fated to lose her throne, her husband, and her mind. The February weather in the city, never cold at this latitude and never hot at this altitude, structured the early afternoon with both sun and breezes.

A dozen or so of us were sitting and sprawling on the grass just across from the Cine Chapultepec. The picture currently in its engagement there was *MATRIMONIO AL AMOR* — with Jane Fonda, whose larger-than-life image I stared at occasionally from where I knelt on the grass near the others.

This was my last day here. Early the next morning, I'd be on a plane flying north. The evening before, Friday night, had been the last meeting of the poets at the Club Periodistas in the Calle Filomeno Mata, the use of which the government had permitted us for the duration of the encounter.

About a score of those of us who hadn't yet left were meeting here for a picnic in Chapultepec Park. Many had already gone; among them, Jaime Carrero, back to San German, Puerto Rico, and Ron Conally and Alex Rode, back to Washington, D.C. We were waiting for a few more who were joining us here, and I looked around at some of the faces near me:

Luci and her husband, Paulino Sabugal, who had made the most elaborate brunch I'd ever seen for about a dozen of

us the previous Saturday when we'd gone from their apartment afterwards to Chapultepec Park — on that occasion, to read, and for some of us, to see the park for the first time;

Miguel Grinberg, editor of *ECO CONTEMPORANEO* in Buenos Aires, and the single individual probably most responsible for the conference;

Sergio Mondragon and Margaret Randall Mondragon, the *EL CORNO EMPLUMADO* editors in whose home Miguel and I had been staying most of the time during the past week and a half; Gabriel Chavez Morado, with a wife whose eyes were as warm and almost as serious as his own; Thelma Nava, one of the editors of *PAJARO CASCABEL*, who gave me a little pajarito, and her husband, Efrain Huerta, who gave me a little cascabel — they'd had most of us over to their apartment for a midnight dinner a few nights ago after one of the meetings; Carlos Coffeen Serpas, who did the illustrations for the book Meg and Sergio published of Robert Kelly's poems, and who learned his English in Korea with the American Army; Roberto Fernandez Iglesias, one of the editors of *UMBRAL*, who weighed as much as any two of us and whose generosity of spirit outweighed his avoirdupois; Gerrit and Els (Elizabeth) Huizer, from Holland, who'd had so many of us at their apartment so often, and who made us feel we belonged there; Leandro and Evi Katz, two of the editors of *AIRON* in Buenos Aires, who patiently took me all over Mexico City and gave me so much of it. There were others; but these were the individuals I'd come to know best during the week and a half of the conference. A quarter of an hour later, we were threading our way in knotted groups down la Reforma to the park. As we approached it, the boulevard trees thickened, and Luci pointed over my left shoulder to where I could see the top of the Chapultepec Castle rise in the distance above everything else. Gerrit was talking about the events of the previous evening. I hadn't gone to the Club Periodistas and

had missed the semi-riot that occurred when a few ardent politicians had taken advantage of the circumstances of the conference to attempt to turn at least one evening into something considerably removed from poetry. The last three or four sessions had, in fact, been fairly incendiary. A particular group of a half-dozen local poets, all of whom had begun to publish at about the same time and largely in the same sources, were six of a panel of seven poets reading on one of these evenings; and I saw them walk out on their audience. Strictly speaking, the group's abrupt withdrawal had not been directed at the audience, but at the seventh poet, Joaquin Sanchez MacGregor, who was outside the group and whom they hoped to offend as much as possible by rising in a body and leaving while he was speaking. The action was probably prearranged. But the audience, indifferent to the motive for such conduct, took tempestuous exception to it. The errant group included Marco Antonio Montes de Oca, Homero Aridjis, Leopoldo Ayalee, José Antonio Montero, Salvador Elisondro, and Guillermo Fernandez — none of whom we had seen since, either at the press club or in Meg and Sergio's home.

The latter knew exactly where we were going to have our picnic and led us there. On the way to this spot in the park, some of us were kicking a small soccer ball around among us; and we passed other groups, all the way from the little kids up to the adults, doing the same thing. Some of them just practiced or played casually at the game, and others were working at it seriously with a regulation ball. The Mexicans play the English brand of football with the same professionalism and with a great deal more partisanship. Even some of the youngest children are marvelously adept with their footwork, and violent in their enthusiasm.

The area in which we began spreading the cloth for our picnic was a small space of grass almost encircled by trees. Meg, Luci, Evi, and the other women began opening the

baskets and spreading an astonishing variety of food on the cloth while most of us stood or sat watching, and enjoying the first sharp bites of an appetite we knew would be satisfied. Efrain and Thelma had brought a portable icebox filled with beer and carbonated drinks. I sat with the others drinking apple soda and eating tortillas, sandwiches, potato salad, some foods the names of which I didn't even know, and thick dripping slices of fresh pineapple.

Near Sergio, Meg — who was expecting their third child — sat on the ground with difficulty. Someone mentioned the Chinese acrobats everyone had been talking about since they'd arrived for their engagement here. I stretched out on the grass. The members of this troupe from China all were young, one of them only twelve. I'd seen another, a sixteen-year-old girl, in a newsreel. Her performance had made clear why her troupe had charmed and excited the entire city; it made any ordinary acrobatic discipline I'd ever observed previously seem frivolous. There's something great about anyone, an engineer, an attorney, a poet, or an acrobat, knowing that much about his craft. Just to view the product of that kind of commitment has always made me want to sing inside.

In some way, lying there with my eyes in the treetops, my thoughts drifted back a few years to the tiny little park I used to stare at from my window, across from the hotel I stayed at in London near Victoria Station. And then I remembered the larger park near the Divan Oteli in Istanbul. And after that, inevitably, I thought of New York's Central Park, in whose gentle and shaping places I'd passed so much of my childhood.

After a while, I rose and walked some distance away to a double fountain I'd seen earlier. The two fountains formed an artificial lake which was double-leveled and irregularly surrounded by a low, rod wall that changed shape continuously, even turning every few feet or so into

thronelike stone benches. The children climbed and played all over these. Here and there, adults stood by watching them.

When I returned to the others, most of them were on their feet choosing sides for a game I thought they called enchantment. A number of players were divided into two teams. About sixteen of us entered the game. Some of the others watched; while a few were seated around Leandro with his guitar, singing folk songs from the Indians in Mexico and from almost every country in Central and South Americas.

We selected an area about the size of a football field, between two pairs of trees. These trees, at either end of the large field, were designated as safety zones. One team was to be the aggressor. The team I'd joined was on the defense; and we had to run from the others. If any of us were touched by opposing team members, we became enchanted; we were frozen where we'd been touched, until a member of our own team could safely reach and touch us to bring us back into the game. The object for our opponents was eventually to enchant all the members of our team at the same time, so that none were left to free the others. One way and another, this involved a hell of a lot of running around over that field. We were all worn out and had to quit before they managed any conclusive victory!

We sat around laughing and trying to recover breath, and frankly satisfied with one another's company. And it was Mexico City, and it was summer all the time, and we felt we had work to do in the world.....

COSMOMUNDANUS

the angelworm and the angstrun rabbit
hammer their heathcliffed heads
on visions of raintree in tigershit;
and locked in their mescaline beds
with a chiclecack and a gummy grin
they hump off their habited clothes:
as the raintree rustles a panfall wind
Will Blake tenderly thumbs his nose

by Richard E. Beard, Jr.

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RONALD CAPLAN'S

INSIGHTS FROM: NOTES FROM AN AMERICAN DARK

*—communication, of course, is also the problem of
hearing; not only what's been said, but the way
ears work: — and what what you hear does to
your life*

THOSE WHO WOULD DEMAND of a review of anything that it be anything more than an advertisement, a statement of the existence of that thing; who would demand of a reviewer outline, portions of poems, any fragmentary description — are those who too often take the review for the thing, take it and too easily talk of it, having never come to battle with the actual work. They are those whose lives become as fragmentary as reviews, who can never in any way realize the peace of a whole, who make love only with their penis-hands and -eyes: — their lives having become bolstered by maxims and old jokes, lives that die wondering who the hell, really, are those folks around the bed. Those who would make such demands are those whom anyone concerned with presenting the fact of another's work (beyond title & price), must simply disregard.

—not reviews, no: but the responses of a man who has gone out and seen a star: who then writes not so much on a star as from it

Use criticism in place of review. Demand something whole, now — and demand that criticism be as any created thing, a written piece, a movement, a sound or way of walking down a street . . . anything revealing that a man has had enough regard for the work of another to take that work and do battle with it; then to come forth, not spouting another's words, but speaking in his own voice. The words

are then very much his own, made his own, out of battle and, always, out of love: — speaking then in a voice revealed as much on the page as in the way he treats his woman: — words, boldly, become blood. Demand a criticism that does not fragment when it quotes, cannot fragment: — the quotes now made a portion of the critic's whole.

—perhaps no work can have a title but one

THAT CONTAINS THE WORD 'FROM:' TITLES INDICATING DIRECTIVE

What comes comes always from confrontation: Charlie's realizing that poets so often end a line with 'eyes,' placing the verb at the beginning of the next line: — the separation of the seeing from the action. Whole generations seeing but running blind. The work, then, as directive: as all that MOBY DICK comes from; Charles Olson's ISHMAEL from there; David Federman's NOTES; lives, works, stones; even colons as directive. Not as simple as that, never that clear: it's Charlie's life up against the poems; Olson's set against Melville's, Federman's against Olson's ON: — the result of enormous human metaphor, on the page and always, in the lives.

- Directive: a going back, perhaps: but even that with a forward thrust

The eyes not at all apart from action:

- He passed, today, a negro on the street, eyes meeting for a long walking while, and just before they passed, eyes pulled away: and the women brutally or tenderly loved, tonight, eyes are a portion of that love

The materials as things of generation: a thing a/part of that which gave direction — not so much to see as to observe, to be a/part.

Demand, then, a criticism not caught up in method and maxim (limitations are already there, are in the lives going into confrontation): — a criticism beyond concerns of good or bad form (ridiculous!); of Is this 'real' (ridiculous: it's there & on the page; whether it's the reader's REAL is his problem . . . as the work becomes a portion of the furniture of a life; the words as occurrences, there & in the way — real as anything that can carve, clog, open or disturb the room); a criticism as

creative as any other 'made thing' (that is, a thing generated & a thing of generation); a criticism, finally, that leaps form when form means the walls of ruined words ('poem,' 'novel,' 'criticism,' 'review') — those functionalisms of those who would order (that is, fragment) lives.

- You cannot chisel long in stone & expect only stone — or stone scattered, & only you: — there's got to be a place things come together. A leap of form: criticism, poem, or way of smile: all a proof of coming at it with your life.

FEMALE EMPLOYMENT REPORT — MIDDLE EAST

by Pearce Egan

(Folklore in a Cypriot's Literary Eye)

THERE COMES A SCREAMING of whores from the brothel opposite, beyond a vacant block. Saturday night, and they are 'doing business'—the screams change to strident cries of laughter—with their clientele, consisting for the most part of lorry-drivers and the coolies (flown over during the war, and never repatriated) who work down at the docks. It is a broken-down establishment, plaster falling off the walls, supporting one or two aging bygoners as well as the working girls; though all of the latter display raddled middle age.

Being the lowest-class establishment, it is the noisiest, with the 'on-duty squad' sitting out beside the street from early morning, giving coarse dialogue and obscene remarks to any passerby on foot. But there are two other well-known houses in the town.

One is a medium-rated villa opposite the bank and next to the English kindergarten school; here, the 'girls' are cleaner, are only just past girlhood, and keep fairly quiet. Out-of-town villagers frequent this place for thrills; and it has a better-paid and (presumably) better-paying local custom, though it has to battle hard during the summer with an outdoor cabaret immediately adjacent the other side of the kindergarten. As with all cabarets in this part of the world, the girls do more than dance; and those who can afford them prefer the experience of a slim, young foreigner to that of a stumpy, local 'dish.'

The other place —the 'number one Girl House'— is on the road up from the docks, standing back among trees facing an ancient moat. It bills itself demurely as Anna's Bar and

Restaurant. A thick screen of maize is grown along the front fence. In the words of the local taxi-men, who all earn money by touting, this is 'the best the city can offer.'

Most of the soldiers who reply in the affirmative to the stock question: 'Do you want a nice girl, Johnny?—asked as the car is slipped into gear—are zoomed up to this place, in the shandrydan Fords and Opels. Very quiet — none but local residents know it for what it is. In the evening, a stranger driving by the stacked taxis and vans in the lay-by, would only think it was doing a lot of business—as indeed would be true. From what one sees of these girls (occasionally, they stroll after noonwise through the market, looking for fruit and supplies), they really seem to be girls in age as well as in professional name; they paint copiously, and appear to keep as clean, as fresh, and as slim as circumstances permit. Making no trouble and giving none, they serve as the necessary safety-valve for male heat in a land where marriage customs and economics go hand in hand, rendering it difficult to get an attractive partner when one is young enough to need her.

Marriages, being based solely upon wealth provided by the girls, take time to arrange. While waiting for relatives to make the right contacts for prosperous unions some years hence, youths are enticed to the brothels and cabarets. Anyway—the richest girls are by no means always the most comely. The elderly husband usually goes with a cabaret-girl by preference, leaving his wife at home while he is 'out for the evening,' after the years and childbearing have levied their toll. The girls take it all as part of the foreign-travel risk of their jobs, putting by as much as they can of the spoil for the day when they will return to San Sebastian or Hamburg and settle down. They know what they have to expect, and don't mind, providing they are rewarded with corresponding recompense for being nice to flabby old men.

This female employment by local nabobs is provincially offered as betokening virility, so that—though many may be censors* of the folly of some businessman's money-spending—all will admire and testify to his dynamism.

* *'Censors,' they are: they surely cover up on it!*

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Rx

No. 0001 Prescription praise: that vitamin elixir dished on
the spoon of truth a liquid savored sweet with herbs and oils
enriching blood

No. 0002 Prescription praise: kindness in a capsule the
bitter truth encased in cellulose the pill of praise barbiturate

by Delane Morgan

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HUA-LING NIEH

RIVERSIDE STREET

*(A Chapter from The Lost Golden Bell) (Translated by the
Author)*

A smell assailed me when we reached the town. As smell is different with different people, so it is with different places. I used to decide whether I would like a particular person or place the moment his or its smell came to me. Some places smell of paint, asphalt, and soot; some smell of dust, blood, and fat; others smell of burning wood, withered flowers, and melting candles. As for men: some have a smell of sun and of tobacco mixed with body-odor; some are big manly fellows, but have a smell of powder and rouge; some have a smell of sour milk and musk; some are destitute of any smell — and they are usually bourgeois.

The place which impressed me most with its smell was this town of San Tou Ping. After all these years, it is its smell that has brought me to recall it. This was a smell composed of powder, blood, hay, sun, and musty things. The oddly peculiar smell of the town, like the fate of the people there, was too complicated and mysterious for a girl of eighteen to understand.

The only street was called Riverside Street. It was said that frame houses had lined both sides, before the Japanese war. But now, the dilapidated shrine at one end of the town and the rectangular brick foreign-styled house at the other were the only buildings left after the Japanese bombing. Makeshift shacks had gone up on the rubble where the houses had stood. These shacks were teashops, groceries, cottonshops, butcheries, and so on. Most of the local people had fled to the mountains or places farther up the river. Most of the shopkeepers and their customers now were 'downriver people,' as the local people called them. They had

fled from one place to another ahead of the Japanese and lived as best they could on the thin edge between death and life. Some even had made fortunes by cornering the market on various daily necessities.

The town was only one hundred miles or so distant from the Japanese-occupied city of Yichang; thus, it had become a stopping place for exiles and traveling merchants, and was abnormally prosperous. The rough stone slabs that paved the road were always wet with streaks of water slopped out of the pails of the coolies who provided the townsfolk with water carried from the river. When it was cloudy and the Japanese airplanes were not likely to come, people would stream to town from the country as if to a festival: the wounded soldiers, the boatmen, the peddlers, the women carrying baskets with snakelike handles on their

HUA-LING NIEH

Hua-ling Nieh

backs, the slow-moving mountain men — they walked along the slabbéd street, their heels rapping against the stones as if trying to call back the good old times.

In an open lot stood a cluster of open stalls. Instead of tending their stalls, most of the stallkeepers were playing at dice in a noisy circle. A woman carrying a child in a basket on her back cursed a man who was hastily retreating from her. 'You son of a bitch! How dare you touch me! Damn your wicked hands! You won't die a natural death!' The man shouted back with a mischievous smile: 'I did you honor, old woman!'

Uncle Yang and I walked along the street among the crowd.

'What's the matter with you? You look unhappy today,' he said.

'You know I failed in the exam to enter the university, Uncle. How can I bring myself to be happy? I wonder what we live for.' I exaggerated my mood by heaving a sigh.

'Let me see — if I remember, you have a special taste for this,' Uncle Yang said, pointing at a stand selling ch'ou tou-fu.¹

'Of course, I do! How wonderful it is! That's what I've missed during these years of moving around!' I exclaimed, turning myself swiftly on the tinkling slabs.

He smiled. 'One reason to live — to eat ch'ou tou-fu!' He took a piece from the stand and paid for it.

'How about you?'

'I don't care for it. I can't stand the smell!'

'Then how do you know I like it so much?' I bit into it and continued to walk alongside him.

'I know.' He smiled, his head tilted to one side. 'You think a man who's lived as long as I can't read a young girl's mind, such as yours?'

'It's not exactly true,' I said in a significant tone, biting again the ch'ou tou-fu. 'Oh! It's really delicious. You should try some.'

It was the happiest moment I had experienced since my arrival at Three-Star Heights. The sundry sorts of folk, the stimulating smells, the life throbbing amidst the ruin left by the bombings — all this thrilled me with joy, as I walked along with Uncle Yang, eating the ch'ou tou-fu and hearing the slabs ring underfoot as if calling the town to its old memories. I exclaimed with delight, or spun myself around on my feet without fear that I would be scolded for offending against the proprieties. I felt very free in Uncle Yang's presence. Yes, the feeling of freedom — that was what I enjoyed when I was with him.

¹ *Ch'ou tou-fu is fried fermented soybean — notable for its strong odor.*

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Then we came to the grocery. To the left near the entrance was a vat full of oil, hung with wooden dippers of various sizes. On the other side stood a table on which the mail was stacked when the steamer reached the town, every other day. The table served the function of a post office; all the mail was kept there until the recipients came to fetch it. We who lived up on Three-Star Heights used to get our mail through the tenants when they went down to shop.

Stepping to the table, I found a powder-blue envelope with a floral design in a corner. I recognized it at a glance. The same kind of envelope! It was from Su Chiao-hei. Uncle Yang handed it to me. When we stepped out of the grocery, he strode away and let me lag behind.

Su had been a schoolmate of mine. But we had been separated by a hill that stood between the Boys' Department

and the Girls' Department. We happened to share a desk in the final examination; I found a letter he had written me in the drawer before the examination ended.

That evening, we girls stayed up studying in the gallery of the dormitory where the lights stayed on all the night through. I amused them and drove away their sleepiness by reading them the love letter and imitating the lovelorn boy who had written it. Now, when I opened the envelope, I saw the same small, tidy writing running vertically down sheets of thin, narrow paper, one pasted at the foot of another so that the whole letter was several feet long. My eye caught scraps of sentences: 'Love comforts like sunshine after rain . . .' ' . . . O! how this spring of love resembles the uncertain glory of an April day! . . . '

'It almost makes me sick at my stomach,' I muttered — then twisting the letter into a ball and darting forward: 'Uncle Yang!' I cried.

'Yes?' He stopped and turned around.

'Would you like to read it?' I said when I caught up with him.

'You mean the letter? Read your letter? How can I do a thing like that? Especially when it's all crumpled.'

I felt dashed. How could I be so rash? I should, in a roundabout and smooth way, have made him ask me the 'favor' of letting him read it. 'Well — I don't mind, if you'd like to read it. An unimportant letter. . . . But it's quite interesting.' I faltered.

'A love letter from a boy?' He took it over with smiling eyes which seemed to penetrate my mind.

I flamed up, hot to the roots of my hair.

'Well!' He uncrumpled the letter. 'A lengthy letter — just like a petition presented to the Empress Dowager!'

I tried to elbow passersby away from him while watching his face. When I saw his eyes skipping one passage after another, I hated myself

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and felt I'd humiliated myself by offering him the letter.

'Thanks — I'm through now!' He folded it up without reading to the end, and handed it back to me. 'Interesting. The boy actually has a fair command of Chinese. I might tell you, as a boy I chased every girl I met and was great at writing love letters. I even wrote them for others. He's a schoolmate of yours?'

'Yes,' I said, walking on. 'He was at the head of the class. A better student than I — he passed the entrance exams for three universities.'

'Oh? That doesn't happen very often. Sounds like a promising young man.'

'We all called him "Scholar." Always buried in books — wearing glasses. He could not find any words when I talked to him; but he certainly made up for it with this chatter in his letters. Look! This letter's like a whole roll of Kleenex, if you fold it up.'

'Some persons are eloquent enough in ordinary circumstances, but become tongue-tied at the sight of their girl friends.'

'You want to hear something even sillier? One day, I saw him appearing in the distance, but as soon as I lay eyes on him he disappeared in a wink. Afterwards, he wrote me to explain that he had hidden behind a tree. Why? Because he was too nervous to see me. That's his way. Nasty!'

'But he has a genuine affection for you! You're too young to understand. Some day, you will though. And then you'll treasure this letter.'

'I wouldn't like this fellow even if all the other men in the world were dead!' Fired, I tore the letter to pieces and flung

them down. 'Damn it!' I added.

'Why do you get so mad?' Uncle Yang pulled me around by the arm so he could look me in the face.

Why? I didn't know, myself. I tried to change the subject by pointing to the crowd gathering at the open lot. 'There! Look! A monkey-show!'

At the end of a string held by an old man, a monkey — painfully thin and mangy, wearing a tiny scarlet hat and holding a tiny gong — was toddling around to beg for money. The onlookers dispersed, laughing, when the monkey toddled toward them. One of the stragglers at the fringe of the crowd shouted: 'Hey, there's a better show over there! Two more persons just got arrested!'

'What's the matter?' I asked, trying to peer through the throng to see what was happening.

Uncle Yang said: 'Two opium smokers, or maybe opium smugglers. The government's getting more and more tough with them. And they should! You can't stop this traffic without drastic measures.'

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We moved along to the shrine at the end of the street. It was dilapidated, with only a pair of stone pillars left standing in the front. Children were frolicking in the yard, playing at marbles or catching grass-hoppers.

‘I studied here as a child,’ Uncle Yang said as we stopped in front of the shrine. ‘Now it’s the only thing left of the old town. For many years, a couple used to keep a school here; the husband was the principal, and his wife was the only other teacher. They boasted that it was a “modern school;” but, as a matter of fact, they taught the same subjects the same way the old-style schools had.’

‘There! Ai-yah — there’s a dead body there!’ I pointed to the corner of the yard.

We stepped closer. A woman lay dead on the boards placed on a pair of benches, a rag over her face, her dry, yellowish hair dangling. Uncle Yang started to remove the rag.

‘No, don’t! Don’t do it, please!’ I seized his hand.

He walked around the body, examining it closely. ‘I know who it is, anyway,’ he said. ‘Old Mrs. Wang. One of my patients. So she’s dead! Well, she must have died of a sudden disease, or they’d have sent for me. Her son must have gone to get a coffin.’

‘You know them?’

‘Yes. She had a big family: son, daughter-in-law, and five grandchildren. Used to keep a teashop in town. That last battle, when the Japanese were pushing toward here, she refused to flee because she was too old to do all that walking. The young couple fled with their kids. It was very hot; the sun was scorching, and, of course, food was hard to find.

Her daughter-in-law and five grandchildren all died on the way, on the road up the river. Her son was the only one to come back after the Japanese retreated.'

Uncle Yang stepped over and took the rag off the dead woman's face.

'Yes, it's Mrs. Wang, all right. The last time I was in town, she kidded me by asking: "When will you settle down and find yourself a wife?" Dead!'

A fly perched on the end of the dangling dry yellowish hair.

'Let's go, Uncle Yang.'

The children who were frolicking in the yard rushed out, shouting:

'Come on! Let's go watch the people being shot! Opium smokers! Bang! Bang!'

Uncle Yang and I climbed down the earthen steps leading down to the riverside and sat on a rock without speaking. A wooden cargo boat was tied up at the bank. Several boatmen stepped off, half-naked, wiping

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their sweaty faces with the dirty cloths draped over their shoulders. They entered the dramshop by the riverside, sat down and ordered a pot of wine for each of them. A few yards away stood a woman, a red mark on the bridge of her nose, her ponderous breasts pushing out the front of her dress. She laughed and shouted to one of the men: 'Hello, you little fart! If you're a man, come to me — your mother!'

This was life, I thought — simple, real life. Sweat, struggle, drink, making love, sleeping with women. And, finally, lying dead on the boards by the dilapidated shrine, a fly perched on the end of the dangling dry yellowish hair....

'Uncle Yang — how do you feel when you see someone die at the hospital? You've seen him smile and heard him joke with you. But, suddenly he is dead. How can you stand it?'

'I couldn't stand it when I found old Mrs. Wang lying dead there; but, at the hospital, I never take any notice of what my patients look like. I only notice what's wrong with them, like a carpenter who only takes notice of his work, or an accountant who only takes notice of his figures. When I stand before the operating-table with the lamp shedding that white light from overhead and the instruments in hand, I become numb, but sympathetic — sympathetic toward men. You know, men are creatures who always create new problems for themselves while solving the old ones — kill themselves while saving themselves.'

'But that sounds all mixed up.'

'Don't you understand. Men are like that. We pass through death to new life again and again. But — does that mean everything will finally turn out all right? No — that's impossible. Or there would be no war in the world. Only one

thing we can do. Do you know what it is?’

I shook my head, looking at Uncle Yang, bewildered.

‘Laugh helplessly; get drunk helplessly. Look! Some more of those boatmen have stepped into the dramshop for a drink.’

‘Men are so complicated, aren’t they?’ I said, watching a boat working its way across the current like a tiny cork.

‘Yes. We even can’t comprehend ourselves, at times. For instance, sometimes when I perform an operation and the patient is bleeding and maybe whimpering with pain, I think...’ He smiled at me. ‘Guess what I think about.’

I made no response.

‘Maybe thinking about the dirty clothes I forgot to send to the washerwoman. Maybe thinking about a poem I’d chanced to read.’

‘Hospitals are poems, just like brothels.’

‘Brothels? Where in the world did you learn about brothels? But,

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that’s right. Did I really lack sympathy? No, of course not! Men often express their grief in a seemingly-happy way. How difficult it is to understand ourselves!

‘What in the world do men live for, Uncle Yang?’ I continued to watch the tiny boat laboring against the current.

‘Are you still thinking about that dead woman?’

‘Yes.’

I’ve seen all sorts of persons die at the hospital: high-ranking officials, wealthy businessmen, peddlers, and errand-boys. They’re all like that tiny boat there that’s having such a hard struggle, before they breathe their last. At that moment, you may think that men are living for the sake of living, without letting a single minute, a single second slip. I tell you, anybody, when he’s dead, looks as empty and insignificant as that woman. The dead don’t give

you any particular feeling, after you've seen a lot of them — except the feeling that you want to live well. You wonder what men live for? This is my answer.'

We did not stand up until we watched the tiny boat escape from the current and touch the bank. We walked along the lane to the end of the town and to the willow tree by the brook, where we would meet Aunt Chao and Ya-ya, before going back to Three-Star Heights. I was silent, with my head down. The mangy monkey wearing a scarlet hat, the stiff face of the dead woman, part of a cloth figured with white flowers floating on green waves, the broken pieces of the letter, ch'ou tou-fu, the woman with the ponderous breasts... And men live for the sake of living well.

Uncle Yang picked up a stone and threw it into the brook. The reflection of a woman wearing a white flower in her hair² was broken to pieces, the fragments glinting away in the spreading ripples. Aunt Chao turned around. She was standing under the willow tree, while Ya-ya was sitting by the brook.

² *A white flower in the hair is a sign of mourning.*

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ST. TROPEZ

Albert W. Vogel

In a way, Ella was like a Nineteenth-century painting. If you stood back and looked at her, you got an impression of what she was about. But if you got up close, you saw only the globs of color, some of them raw and straight out of the tube.

She never seemed to be able to say the things that were important to her. Ideas never came out whole, but in bits and fragments. If I had had the time, perhaps I could have put enough of the bits and fragments together, and so have discovered what her mind was like. But I did not have the time, nor the courage to find the time.

‘You don’t like St. Tropez, do you?’ I asked her.

‘It’s not that,’ was all she said. And I could sense that it was not the physical place — nor the tourists — that she did not like. I sensed that it was the idea of St. Tropez: the idea that it should have to exist, and that one should find it necessary to go there.

‘But this is your world,’ I said, knowing as I said it that I had just missed the mark. ‘You are at home here.’

She did not answer me — because she would feel that in missing the mark, I had quite by accident touched on the truth. If the world was the way it was, then we needed St. Tropez, just as we needed each other. Yet, that was the irony. By coming together for our own sakes, we merely confirmed the world in its ways, and our message was lost.

It was still early and not many people were on the beach yet. ‘Will you go back to teaching in the fall?’ I asked. ‘I think that you are a good teacher.’

‘Yes,’ Ella said, ‘I’m a good teacher, but only with little children. I wouldn’t be able to teach adolescents, and I would hate college.’

We fell silent; this was old ground. At least with the little children, she did not have to endure the pain and disappointment of having her life's work flung back at her: Dick and Jane were one thing; the ODE on a Grecian Urn was quite another . . .

I have always been somewhat surprised at the way we talked to one another. We spoke so carefully; almost as if English were not our common tongue. Perhaps it was because I had lived in Europe for so long that Ella took me for an European.

We continued walking down the beach. I was glad for the walk and the silence because I had drunk too much coffee at breakfast and my insides were not feeling well.

ALBERT W. VOGEL

'I'd like to swim, or at least sun on the beach,' Ella said at last. 'Come with me while I change.'

We stopped at my room long enough to get my suit; then we walked down the narrow streets to where Ella was staying.

Ella's room was always neat. It suggested to me that she had a more orderly and logical mind than most of the women I knew. But perhaps it only meant that she had been well brought up.

She went to the bureau and took her suit out of the drawer. I sat on the bed and watched while she changed. Ella was as tall as a North European; but some men would say that her hips were too narrow and that her breasts were too small. It seemed to me that she must be very beautiful.

Watching her move around the room, I got the feeling some men must get when they look upon a carving of a Greek Apollo. A delight in abstract beauty without the emotional limitations of sexual involvement.

She was slipping her street-clothes on over her suit, when she stopped and pointed her finger at me. 'Put your suit on,' she shouted at me in mock anger. 'I can't wait all day.'

The sudden way she said that shattered my mood, but made me laugh. The incongruity of it reminded me of the background music for a Doris Day movie.

I wondered what thoughts were going through her mind as she watched me change. They could not have been anything like my own, watching her. At thirty-five I had no delusions about myself.

'I don't like men in Bikinis,' Ella said. 'They weren't designed for the male figure.'

'Nevertheless,' I said, 'they are the fashion and they have their uses.'

'They make you look soft and loose, in front,' she said. 'And their purposes are the purposes of women, not men.'

'Be that as it may,' I answered.

We did not swim; instead, we rented an umbrella and sat for a while in its shade. We did not seem to need to talk; and after a while I lay back and tried to sleep. The sun was getting hotter, and I was tired because I had been up most of the night. But although I was tired, I could not sleep well; instead, I fell into one of those rising and falling sleeps that produce a great deal of perspiration, yet which do not rest one.

We were joined by a woman; however, I could not at first come out of my fitful sleep long enough to see who it was. I could hear Ella talking about some writer; she was talking very fast—which meant that she was not interested in what she was saying. She had the trick of stringing

ALBERT W. VOGEL

together all the clichés she had read so that she sounded learned. But it was really a wall of words built up between herself and her listener.

I moved over into the shade of the umbrella, and through the veil over my eyes, I saw that the third party was Rewey, an American woman we both knew slightly. I plunged back into sleep.

When I again came to the surface of my sleep, I heard them still talking; but, now, they were talking very slowly.

'I sensed it in you the first time I saw you,' Rewey was saying. 'You are more sensitive than the rest. Your life should not be wasted.'

Ella was silent.

'Your magnetism should not be wasted,' Rewey whispered in the silence.

Again, Ella did not answer.

'And there are so few of us who understand the real meaning of love. Do I embarrass you?'

'No, of course not,' Ella whispered; yet the words did not come easily from her throat.

'I speak from the highest motives,' Rewey continued. 'No matter what comes of us, I will always remember how our souls touched at this moment.' Then, after a pause: 'Platonic . . .'

'Yes,' I heard Ella say. 'I understand.'

'One finds so little of that kind of love, even here at St. Tropez —' Rewey, again.

Then they were silent, and I could imagine them sitting there looking down at the sand. I have heard these things said a million times; and I know they are laughable — unless, of course, they are being said to you. It is not the words or even their meanings that matter, but the mood they create.

What was going on in Ella's mind, I could not tell; but I thought that perhaps she was thinking of that unspeakable loneliness that had taken her out of bed this morning at dawn and driven her to my room to ask me to take her to breakfast.

I plunged into sleep again . . . and when I awoke, they were gone.

ALEXANDER KUO

FOR MARY

Where are we
Mary
to say here we are.
The mallards,
they have gone south;
but we remain, contrary,
metaphysic in our adjacency.
The wind
blows through our minds,
the fresh snow
covering our tracks
in this crepuscular landscape.
Had our pasts been
different, but all that
is too late — we have
already left
our imprints in the snow.
There is not much more
to say even
as we try to be precise.
I can see only
your angular face
and my arm across your back
in this moment where
the past
is conceived, and the future,
that is too late
to say. Remember
me in your sleep,
even as you cannot hear me now;
or forget, if the past
is so made.

WILLIAM PILLIN

PRESENCES

When first I came to these shores
the houses scattered to where the lanes
opened on a spray of white blossoms.
Birds used to peek through bedroom windows.
It was a time when the whole street
smelled of wine-caskets and dried apples,
a time of horses and gas-lit cobbles,
of a rooster's challenge and silver steeples.
The smoke of leaves on the wind
and the peaceful odor of stables
is still a presence; also
a girl's laughter racing small winds
on a green lake of grass
where baskets of fruit floated.

WILLIAM PILLIN

THE RETURN

Driven by an evening's disquiet
to an old quarter
I might have been content to find
dust, cracking plaster
and silent faces of strangers
in ramshackle houses.
I might have stroked crumbling stones
and rotting woodplanks
or silently paused where my initials
dated an early longing.
But there was nothing!
Not even an old willow,
the moon like a crescent
cutting its wispy branches.
There was nothing there . . .
true, a Nothing
vibrant with a billion volts,
with endless candles and windows

charging the sky, sheer, humming!
but not a place; not a lane or an acre
to which one returns
after a decade or three to remember
a stone or a pine,
a meadow, a length of water . . .
and soon who will know
the scent of a doorway
that lies on the air
like a fading smile?

QUANAN SHUM

AND SPROUT MY LIFE IN WHITE

frequently think of whirling mornings
of hanging suns marked on the musk cloth
when the daffodils stir a day's shape
am cleaning the colors of landscape
turn and you stand against the dream
like a pure tree stretching its green
you laugh to move the wise town
with waves the wind sings of your nouns
in the balcony stays a sky
the electric lines run beautifully around
beyond the hill cloudshadows gather stories
in a sunshine of gulls with sweet south
the full sail be our pink hope
and your eyes the image of last night
'll touch you again in a bath of noon
and sprout my life in white

S. A. YORKS

TUALATIN SONG

Gray bandages swathe the gentle cleft where
The fat river slouches beneath the bite
Of sulphite where trees reel into paper.
You lug your thin tribute of silt under
Indignant firs where we crouch and exclaim.
Your banks house ferns and stubbies, debris from
The asphalt strip that keeps you company, and
Shelter cats, rats, and furtive lovers who
Clutch in the searching dark of your clasp.
Twilight stains the west as I mourn the pink past
And the green fires still banked on the hills;
The future that surges in this channel
To etch the earth's hide and your heart and mine
In valleys of stone and mountains of glass.

LEONA HAMILTON

UNCANDLED

She lit two candles,
Let the shadows play
Across her mind like harps,
Dressed in the gown
dreamy with violets.
The fresh-baked rolls were poems,
The tea leaves swirled like geisha girls
Until the doorbell struck the room
with baritone.
In her eyes he saw himself alone;
Saw her sea-shell ears,
lovely for listening;
Told his fate with lips of teletype,
And the market was down again.
She played the moonlight waltz,
He sang noon-cotton
And grabbed her fast
For kisses of 64 steel,
'What's the matter, are you cold?'
And then he found the door,
Treading on pearls.

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JAMES L. WEIL

How Close

He has been coming since he could come to me. How close can he come before he crosses me where there is nothing between us?

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GAME FOR CHILDREN

after Vernier

To take the
two giant
steps & go
the one to
where you are
celebrates
the two to
one & you
bigger &
further than
father I
mother you.

SUE ABBOTT BOYD

POT LUCK

Not a party to the
way I play Tschaikowski
on a nude piano
sun's flakes resting like leaves
in your hair
the horizon dyed blond
not a party fake
Hollywood jamboree
all the dolls
dusting a corner tidy with
their pink behinds
the music tinkling champagne
the music making forests live
the music making a man more bald than bald
and howdy doddy clocks
signaling the arrival
of the Squawk box
hear them squeal
he he has the face of a Madonna.

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ALVARO CARDONA-HINE

NO. III FROM THE FLESH OF UTOPIA

to Gene Frumkin

the warmth of it and some
darkness called your privacy and
cool windows and some hundred feathers
veiled in the hallway and the long black
hair combed straight before Mass and petals
from the bent tips of the flowering trees
dust from the munificent road and
the itchy scalp of grass
worth smelling
shirts without ribs and tugging skirts
and the fist of corn smashed
into the angel of the stove
singed and confused by love
like a rooster
the soil of hunger
the sleepy wall
disorganized lemons
organized oranges
birds
the arrival of the tablecloth bubbling with oxygen
the slope towards the river gambling blue
my eyes and the warmth of it
this vintage and this softness
and the lost wind moulting

RAFFAELE CARRIERI

IN MY BLOOD

I have no doctors
In my blood
Not a single
White hand.
Grandfathers and great-grandfathers
Incised.
No face
To preserve.
Ancestors flowed away like
Night winds.
I have no harbors
In my blood.

*(Both this and the poem opposite, translated from the Italian –
La civetta, Mondadori, 1949 – by Charles Guenther.)*

RAFFAELE CARRIERI

IN MY HEAD I HAVE WHITE COUNTRIES

In my head I have white countries
And winding stairways.
In my head I have clarions flying
Faster than swallows
That return from Egypt.
And eyes long as vessels
As the vessels that win
The championship of the rivers.
I have voices that call me
In idioms I don't understand.
They call me there from the islands
And fling bridges of love to me.
Bridges of reeds and feathers
I have in my head where there stroll
My children's children
And my mother is still young.
In my head I have vermilion landscapes
With large yellow toys.
In my head I have an open sky
With angels on horseback.

NELO RISI

SHORT SIGHT

Beyond the wide spaces
of free spirits
of the drawing boards the beacons and all the lynxes
of the pyramids
of the K-2's
acting like myopes
of the inner forum
with the gaze of an ox
individually
we encompass our angle of view.

(Translated from the Italian – Civilissimo, 1957 – by Charles Guenther.)

RAFAEL SANTOS TORROELLA

THE ODORS

The land still reaches as far as here:
linen reed, scent of wax,
exuding of time in cold stone,
mineral nostalgia of wood.
The water, born in shadow, penetrates
into the cavity of iodine and brine.
A breath which mingles with another breath,
a wind which persists in another wind.
A growing high tide of odors breaks
on the canvas which the breath composes of the land
and which the sea conceals completely.
And everything which the final silt
corrupts, or which receives
in imminent gentle breezes all it lives.

(Translated from the Spanish by Daisy Aldan and Miriam Davis.)

JASCHA KESSLER

THE NIGHTMARE

You! whom the aged brandy does not burn
Cold lecher forcing technical boundaries
Dayblind, nightcalm, though bubs and bellies storm
Last judge of international anatomies
And you! sublime tricks breeding such quandaries
Smooth contraceptive eye, knee, lip, thigh
All contestants universal beauties
Quarreling fuel, frantic for light
You! angels abroad weathering those abysms
Beyond me far as I transgress my natural
Having mounted beneath that hail of kisses
On perpetual stairs (dismal after the funeral)

And you, too, her sonorities, thought infernal
 You demand the bridge — the bridge, not seamen
 And men for those hips undismayed though autumnal
 Long hair, long laughter, and her cruel pleased mind
 You, fluorescent in midnight blizzard! I see, I know!
 Orbed bane striding through slush, spiritual beast
 Rings of violet flaming as eyes, bare bleached brow
 Hungry mouth of blue teeth, those sucked-out breasts
 Naked ankles strapped on killing heels, such slut's
 taste
 Beaked nose, clanging wrists, and hands bejewelled
 Gaunt in black cr pe, a satin-sashed grim cocktail
 dress
 You! ponderable there so terribly tall
 Is it you? So, it's you! 'Hag, accuse, bless!'
 Silent on she comes pointing that harpy's manicure
 The car stalls Drunk, I giggle, and retch 'Blast!
 O you! Hybrid! Roar, bitch! Blast! Make me — pure'

ROBERT LEWIS WEEKS

AUNT MARY

She had eyes like blown-out fuses,
 glazed like dull white marbles,
 and a long body, old and lean and stark,
 a gray bush in the frozen weather.
 She lay abed, like drying sticks, and called me.
 She plucked out quarters, halves, and dollars,
 with branch-like fingers rubbing them.
 She sent me out for pound cake, milk, and plug
 tobacco.
 A porcelain pot stewed by her bed:
 she called me in to empty it,
 her lips smeared with phlegm,
 her hand tight on her purse.
 When the wallpaper peeled
 and the windows grew gray

I stole from her coins the smell
of her hard fingers.
She died in growling convulsion,
tangled in a gurgle of blankets,
milk, cake crumbs, and tobacco spit,
white eyes of stone and silence.
I wake at night and smell her,
smell her stiff branch-like hand,
smell her long gray-flannel thighs,
smell her mouth agape from the fit.

S. L. FRIEDMAN

TIME, MY DOG

Time, old dog, wagging your pendulum,
how many hairs are still left in your thrifty pelt ?
When your pug face first rimmed the wall, waving the
 bony knives
that slice the hours, we dickered with you.
Then we laughed and brushed you off like
 Humpty-Dumpty.
You reappeared as an old party clacking needles, prone
 to drop a stitch.
(that's when some of us disappeared.)
You are a ripple in the wrist of Not To Be or Being.
Sometimes I feel you like a lisp of daisy petals
fingered by a dresden passion.
Or you rush like Taurus snorting golden dust on
 clattering rails.
Your millstones will not slow to mitigate catastrophe
but you swing ponderous punkahs to discourage gnats.
Take back your junk jewelry — the rhinestone
 handcuffs of the years.
Pause at the apex of a swing to let us dream white water
 lilies at the sky.
Green monitor, that swells the bodices of white and
 russet plums,
I think of you as a headless factotum with a willow twig.
You rap crescendo . . . and the viol player with the
 frayed string
falls on his back, limbs waving like a white-bellied
 beetle.
Time, my dog, whirling your helicopter tail, how do we
 get down again ?

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JEFF BERNER

THE CATHEDRAL AT BARCELONA

Spaniards
waking up their waxen dreams
and building spires with
golden seams with
saints in cages
never dusted by altar lads
in lacy robes all tumbling down
giggling and looking
to find a bit of god
hiding in their gowns.
And
in the courtyard in
a canopy of rain and palms
round-walk ivory drakes
in saintly cages
nibbling holy breadcrumbs
thrown by housewives,
babes and sages who
never change their pain or underwear.
Spaniards
hanging up their waxen dreams,
hanging hands and legs and breasts by
velvet ribbons on the
bars
and torching candles to
heighten numbness
and make their small coins glint at last
in the vast wine-barrel of the catacomb
of chapels
gates and
cushions
clicking heels and

waxen dreams of lonely saints.

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R. R. CUSCADEN

READING TRAKL IN THE DINER

for Robert Bly

Propped up between a heavy, silver-plated
Tea pot and a glass of water: the poetry
Of Trakl. Flowers shake in their holder,
The spoons slide as we round a curve.
'Toward evening you hear the cry of bats.'
Outside the diner, the darkness closes in.
We pass Effingham, Watson, Edgewood, Farina.
A tortured scream lies in every station
We rip through. I am past all ordering.
'An icy wind drifts from our stars at evening.'
There is no Grodek in the IC timetable.
No passengers wait in Grodek for this
Train. I get up: suddenly ashamed of
The diner's life and light and cleanliness.
'All the roads spread out into the black mold.'

STANLEY COOPERMAN

THE EXCURSION

Between the hour of the worm
and the time of the sparrow
I walked through the city.
Old women
withered in trees, remembering
the children they had eaten
just last year.
With unburied voices
they fumbled among leaves,
their fingernails
dyed with sunsets.
Clasping dry limbs

they cursed my footsteps
(a world of sausage-skins
stuffed with blood).
Their cries
in that rock-candle of silence
(city of empty stone)
left no mark.
Only a few tears took substance
like walnuts, which I
cracked
before moving on.

ELLEN L. SHEARER

WITCHING

Short of
sense
sensuality's
foot-prints stumble on
steer-age-moral-codes
old male's operation
senescent senility
— hell —
demon-straits
— morgues —
and
delays in the skies
Exercising
sense
sensuality
— sensuous is more refined —
wings to show
illustrate human code
New Adam's innate
— impersonation —
Heaven:
surprising sheep

rams and
sobriety —

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FORREST ANDERSON

NEW-YORK

'Sooner or later we have to face Reality.' AND WHICH IS REAL: your port through whose oil-sprayed and granite groves of Venus you wandered in a hot pink twilight, while the lighthouse switched its emerald on and off. . . .?

You, a sea-horse, neighing nightly after other fields of mist, even when you ate the star at the heart of a rose some tough old freighter had brought in?

Or is this closer to the coastal truth: an island of iron whose blood is gold, and one trampled ever lower by sharp profundities plunging on after the same dim fantasies — where culture is coy, and cynical ideals compete, as the very damned would seldom do. . . .

A needle-island to mend the ragged water; a place to conquer by quitting it; a maze to which trickery must give the clue; or monolith that only hilarity can bluff?

Where lies and of what is made your heart, Manhattan?

Sinking surely into the engulfing years and licked by millions of poisoned tongues, this island again will I search out in all its brave and soggy places, as if exploring a strange and lusty body.

But if the Fact is found to be a toad yet living entombed deep in the bedrock

Then each of us must drown his truth in a different sea.

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JACK MICHELINÉ

A SONG TO CELEBRATE LIFE

The wings of my skull soar over firescapes
kites fly over cities
lovers on stoops in each other's arms
death is a cancerous thing
I celebrate life
the tongue of an apple in the cheek of a brown girl
her wild skirt embroidered with flowers
her legs in the war of cities
life hangs by a thread and an unafraid eye
like a friendship that is pure as true kindness
bridges rise and unite land over water
how limp is the heart in despair
poets bury themselves they hide from the heart
full of pity and fear and the dust of the blind
wisdom is aged full of pain and beginnings
full of throbbings and fears
the joy of a sunset and sensual strolls
the wings of my skull fly over cities
I assassinate death
the one eyed dice of a loser
the coffins of life buried with earth and nail
and the swing of lost hammers
I lift the bar of my soul
I celebrate life
I celebrate the soul
the animal night
my animal eyes
I fly over cities
John Henry had a soul and a hammer

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CRAZY KID

John R. Starks

The Colonel sat alone by the glass doors of the Union Station concourse. Across from him beneath the arch of the driveway, the other drivers, white and colored, were gathered in their respective groups. After the tension of hours spent on the street in the scrabble for fares, they held forth with excited profanity. Their bright yellow caps bobbed up and down beneath the ancient, smoke-blackened stone ceiling that had once looked down on horse carriages. Framed in the archway, the plaza fountains across the street rose silvery in the air; a long arc of water spurted from the mouth of a fat carp with black stone sides that glistened in the sun.

The Colonel on the bench awaited the afternoon trains. In his hurry to be one of the first in line, he hadn't thought much of Memphis May's refusal, though he knew she had handled him. Now, as the significance of her refusal began to sink into his consciousness, a change came over him. The set grin he used for his fares disappeared and he sat sullen and morose beside the u-shaped driveway that curved by his feet. It was already filled with its total of seven cabs where his own was 'fifth out.' The driveway cut in from the street and ran beneath the stone ceiling of the station; an additional thirty cabs were bunched before it. Even in a slow season the Union Station was always a sure place for a fare, if a driver weren't too far back in line.

A few feet away from the Colonel, the other colored drivers stood respectable and immaculate in their uniforms. But, with the Colonel, the only neat item of dress was the polished brim of his cap. His rumpled white shirt had a slept-in look, spotted with coffee stains; one sleeve was rolled up, the other flapped unbuttoned around his wrist. His

shoes were unlaced, run down at the heel. The other colored drivers wore white shirts that were freshly laundered, their sleeves rolled neatly to one inch above the elbow as company regulations required. Against the shouts and curses of the white drivers that echoed beneath the vault of the station, they talked in low circumspect voices. Like the Colonel, they had been among the first hired by the white cab company a few months before. They stood together with a self-conscious air of efficiency, ready to prove themselves as drivers. To have the Colonel amongst them was all they needed: the company, after some second thoughts on its policy of hiring Negroes, had already fired over half of them.

The Colonel, with Memphis May on his mind, remained sprawled on the bench. Just an hour before, while driving her to a hotel, he had put

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it to her plain. He remembered his exact words. 'I needs it from you bad, Memphis. It got to be. To be, now!' he'd declared in the clipped arrogant syllables of a Hollywood oberleutnant once seen in the movies. He had been working up to the demand for some time. For the occasion, his moustache, the tongue-tasting kind of the edge of his upper lip, was trimmed to a thin, delicate line. His cab-driver's cap was of fighter-pilot style. The black leather visor, polished to a high finish, broke away from the knocked-down crown at a rakish angle.

Memphis May, half out of the cab, had placed a sagacious eye on him. She had been breaking in the Colonel for about a month, after the loss of her previous regular driver. Her reply had been firm, but tactful. She'd reminded him he was her driver, not a trick; that it would have to stay that way. 'Don't be a crazy kid, Colonel,' she'd advised him softly. 'Ever' cab driver suppose' to know that. You don't take it from one you're paid to carry.'

While a cop walked by on his beat, Memphis May — beside the front door of the cab — had carefully smoothed out her dress over an ungirdled belly. It protruded boldly, and was soft and round. In middle years, Memphis May cautiously husbanded her charms. 'It ain't acourse got nothin' to do 'cause you're colored,' she'd added judiciously. 'You know that, Colonel, by some of my dates.' Before turning to enter the hotel, she'd gazed levelly at him. Her eyes were gray and cutting-hard, the color of a cement sidewalk, not at all in harmony with the soft, friendly pot of jelly that quivered beneath her dress. 'Got it, Colonel?' she'd asked dryly.

The Colonel recalled he had even apologized. Dropping his oberleutnant bit, he'd told her: 'Sure, sure, Memphis, I does, I does, indeed. I'se sorry.'

When the first of the trains backed into the station, the Colonel pushed Memphis May out of his mind. As the passengers filed into the station concourse, he began to watch them closely. Memphis May, he decided to dwell on later. From his former sprawling position on the bench, the Colonel now sat upright and very still. A tense expectancy arose in his eyes as though he waited the jar of an explosion. The fares, mostly white, would come through the glass doors for a cab. The Colonel knew what would happen; how it had happened before. The fares were forced to take the first of the cabs squeezed in the driveway. If the head cab had a colored driver, they would hesitate. (They would do this in full view of the Colonel and all the colored drivers. They would make them undergo this hesitation, when drivers had to fight for fares out in the street, and the Union Station was the only spot in St. Louis to pick one up.) Under

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lowered lids, a tautness around his eyes, the Colonel watched. Memphis May, for the moment, was forgotten.

That afternoon, the head cab was manned by Willard — a tall, spidery youth with gangling arms. His tallness had made him shy and self-conscious; and he was very black, with yellow eyes. The first fare to come through the glass doors was a middle-aged couple. They had come in on the G.M. & O. and were probably Southerners.

Both the Colonel and those in the group of colored drivers began to measure the couple carefully. The man might have been a Southern judge. He was shaped like an egg, with benevolent, refined features and a thin, tight-lipped mouth that curved down on one side in the shape of a cobbler's knife. The tall, well-built woman rose up imperiously beside him. With their redcap in front of them, they hadn't yet spied

their driver. Willard, after he had opened the rear door, bent his long string-bean-of-a-body expectantly over it as they approached. After ten hours on the street, he had cleared a dollar sixty-five and needed the fare.

The man and woman stopped abruptly. The man asked the redcap: 'When the Union Station staht usin' a nigra cab company?'

At this, Willard smiled shyly. His long, spidery body squirmed around the opened door, embracing it. The man and woman seemed undecided what course to follow. They ordered the redcap to place their bags on the curb and, while they let Willard wait before them, began to whisper to each other. A silence fell over the white drivers, and a few showed embarrassment. The group of colored stood with lowered heads and talked softly among themselves. Willard, aware he had the attention of everyone in the driveway, tried once more to smile; his Adam's apple climbed painfully up and down his long, skinny neck.

Only the Colonel looked fully at what was going on. He stared at Willard and the white couple — but didn't see. It was Memphis May who stood before him. She had turned him down — had handled him in doing it.

The Colonel jerked his head away from the driveway and shifted his position on the bench. Withdrawn from his surroundings, he was conscious only of the play of the plaza fountains impinging on the corner of his eye. The steely sheen of water glinted in the sun. With Memphis May tightly in his mind, he savored what she had done to him. He knew she could be had in his off-hours. All he had to do was come to her with a five in his hand. But he wanted her as an equal. He wanted to know that when she put out to him it was because she actually wanted to . . . But she didn't — because he was colored.

A plan began to form while he looked craftily over at the driveway.

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The white couple, he saw, had decided not to ride with Willard. The cab starter, at their request, had ordered him out of his 'ace-out' spot; the next in line, a white driver, pulled up and took the couple away. Willard, having forfeited his place, now had thirty cabs in front of him and would never make it for a fare.

Memphis May lived in a Sahara of rooming houses where lone, anonymous persons dwelt behind shuttered windows in single rooms. When the Colonel picked her up the next evening, he didn't mention what had passed between them the day before. He was scrupulously polite, as though he wanted to make amends. When Memphis May had him stop at a drugstore for a prescription, she didn't come out until an hour later. She seemed surprised that he still waited, and thanked him. It was the evening rush hour, and the Colonel could have picked up several fares. He grinned politely at her. 'That's all right. That's all right. I doan mind. Doan mind at all,' he answered. After the lecture she had given him, he wanted to make her think he was trying his best to please. This was part of the plan that had come to him at the Union Station the day before.

At the hotel a few minutes later, the Colonel wanted to know if he should be back early in the morning to take her home. From the back seat, Memphis May's cold gray eyes appraised him closely. There was a pause while she deliberated. 'It's all right with me, Colonel,' she said at last. A faint smile, cynical and knowing, pulled down one corner of her mouth. 'Why you want to do that, Colonel?'

He turned from his wheel and grinned reassuringly at her. 'Ain' no trouble, Memphis. Ain' no trouble at all. I'se on

the street 'fore daylight anyways. I needs the money.'

Memphis May looked wisely at him, but remained silent.

From then on, the Colonel came by the hotel before daylight and carried her home. He did this on a regular basis, which was more than her previous driver had done, and Memphis May was thankful. After an arrest by the police at her regular hotel, she had to start working another. There was a change of schedule and sometimes the Colonel sat parked on the darkened street for hours at a time. He had to turn down several fares. When she'd finally come out, he would be grinning-polite as though he enjoyed waiting for her.

'You make a good driver, Colonel,' Memphis May conceded at last. It was around three in the morning during a heavy rainstorm. She had just settled herself in the back seat, after a party at the hotel. For Memphis May, this was quite a compliment; except when in negotiation with a

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prospect she had a conservative, close-mouthed way about her. She didn't try to fool anyone she held to be in her own class, such as a cab driver, bellboy, or bartender.

'I does it only for you, Memphis, nobody else,' the Colonel admitted as he started up. The street had started to flood and the rain drummed down on top of the cab to shut them off from the world. On such a night, only people like Memphis May moved about.

'You get paid all right, don't you?' she asked, from the darkness of the back seat. A slight suspicion edged her voice.

The Colonel grinned. 'Sure, sure, Memphis. You pays me fine, I takes care of you. That's right, ain' it?'

'We're keep it that way, Colonel,' replied Memphis May.

After a while, she found she couldn't do without him (this was also part of the Colonel's plan). He became almost as valuable to her as a pimp — something she hadn't kept for years. He would go out of his way to pick her up at all hours and even rent a cab from a colored company, when off duty. And though Memphis May was forced to work a low-priced field, she was circumspectly honest. She paid him promptly, with good-sized tips in the bargain. Except that the Colonel didn't especially want the money. He waited for the day when she couldn't possibly refuse.

Memphis May began to pay closer attention to the Colonel. Her stone-gray eyes would follow him whenever he left the cab for a pack of cigarettes; they would study him again on his return. The young Colonel wasn't bad-looking in a down-at-the-heel sort of way. He had wide, bony shoulders and narrow hips. A youthful manliness showed through his dirty white shirt, ragged shoes, and summertime trousers

that had the appearance of cast-offs picked out of a garbage dump. He also had the military swagger and the cocked hat of an air-force pilot. When the Colonel would settle himself behind the wheel, Memphis May's eyes would still be on him, focused on the back of his neck. A glint began to appear in them whenever she looked at him.

'You ain't bad all the way round, Colonel,' she admitted, one day after her pickup from an afternoon party. She had been drinking and was a little tipsy, not so tight-lipped as usual.

'I'se glad, Memphis,' the Colonel answered, grinning at her. He knew then she wouldn't refuse when he decided the time was ripe — though he had to be sure. And he wanted her sober when he asked.

Memphis May stirred noisily in the back seat. She sighed heavily and filled the cab with the smell of liquor. 'Ah . . . that sonofabitch back

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there!’ She had come to confide in the Colonel more and more, on those rare occasions when she’d had a drop too much.

‘What he do?’ inquired the Colonel politely.

It took Memphis May a few minutes to answer while she arranged herself on the seat. ‘Why the sonofabitch gotta goddam razor strap. I gotta beat him with it.’ Her voice sounded indignant and was thick and furry. On that particular afternoon, she was several drinks beyond the usual cautious quota she allowed herself on a party.

The Colonel, stopping at an intersection-light, turned around with a large grin. The idea of a strap applied to white skin strongly appealed to him.

‘What so bad ’bout that, Memphis? Must’ve been easy.’

She sighed deeply. ‘But the sonofabitch, then he wants to use it on me!’

‘You lets him?’

‘It . . . it ain’t to be said, Colonel,’ she answered. ‘I mayn’t be all I used to be — but, Mother of Jesus, ah . . .’ She shuddered and began to curse softly to herself. After a time, she left off and fell silent against the sound of rubber tires grinding on the pavement.

Memphis May didn’t get out of the cab until she had forced on the Colonel the entire amount of money she had received from the date. It came to over twenty dollars. When the Colonel at first refused, she insisted. ‘It ain’t much, Colonel, all the fares you pass up.’ She looked frankly at him, the glint lighting up the hard gray of her eyes. ‘Anyway, you look like a bum. Buy a clean shirt.’

From that afternoon, Memphis May presented the Colonel with gifts of money whenever he picked her up from a date. He began to receive more from her than all his other fares

combined. He was not accustomed to so much, and threw it away thoughtlessly. He dressed as slovenly as ever; he had a vague idea she preferred him that way.

Whenever Memphis May pressed a ten or twenty in his hand, she looked meaningfully at him.

‘What for you give me all this money?’ he asked one day as they drove down Grand to a hotel on the north side. Memphis May’s eyes gleamed at him. ‘I think you make a good driver, that’s all.’ But the light in her eyes said more. It was over four months since she had turned him down. And he knew, now, he was sure to win when he asked. He wanted to relish, to savor the moment. In making his demand on her, he planned to use the high arrogance of an oberleutnant, the icy contempt of a police captain in a colored district, the nasty insulting

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manner of a Mississippi gas-station attendant (white).

The Colonel found he didn’t get to make his demand after all. He was carrying her back from a date. On Lindell Boulevard, in front of the Miltonian, Memphis May ordered: ‘I want you to stop here, Colonel.’

‘Why for, Memphis?’ The Miltonian was one of the most respectable, best-known hotels in the city, far outside Memphis May’s class.

‘I say I want you to stop, Colonel,’ she repeated impatiently. Her voice sounded pinched; a flutter lay beneath her words.

After he had pulled up before the hotel, he asked if he should wait for her. She exclaimed tightly: ‘Wait for me? You’re to follow me in. I’ve had the room since yesterday!’

The Colonel whirled around in his seat to gape at her. That he was to have her without first making the demand hadn’t been a part of his plan. ‘You . . . what-wh-hat f-f-for?’ he stuttered.

There was an impatient stamp of Memphis May's foot on the floorboard. 'You crazy kid, you goddam crazy kid!' she gasped. 'You ask "what for" when I been puttin' ever' cent of a john on you? You goddam crazy kid! I want you, that's why. Jesus-Screwing-Christ! You make me burn, I want you so bad! You ask "what for!"'

A tingling sensation coursed up and down the Colonel's spine, to settle in his groin. She had never spoken in such a way before: Memphis May, a woman who kept herself so close-mouthed and was conservative in manner even after she had been drinking.

'It's for you, Colonel, the room!' she repeated in her tight, pinched voice. 'I ain't takin' my real love to no bedbuggy place like I draw to.' She opened the door and stepped out on the street. Breathing heavily after her outburst, she gave him the number of the room and told him to go up on the service elevator at the rear of the hotel.

The Colonel, after he saw Memphis May disappear inside the Miltonian, drove around the corner and parked in an alleyway. He sat there a few minutes to give her time to get settled in the room. So near his final triumph, an excited grin lit up his features. It was still there when he got out of the car and walked to the rear of the hotel and boarded the service elevator.

When the Colonel was let off on Memphis May's floor, the luxuriance of the richly-furnished corridor enclosed him abruptly. He stood uncertainly in the middle of it. Beneath his ragged shoes, the carpet gave way like thickly-matted grass, and the grin shifted nervously on his face. He had never been in such a place, except for a few months at the "Chase" as porter. Once he got his bearings, the Colonel walked gingerly

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over the carpet to the room where Memphis May awaited him. Missing was the military swagger, and he made his way with shoulders slightly hunched.

At his knock, Memphis May greeted him with a rosy flush on her cheeks. The stony grayness of her eyes had melted away, and they were moist and brimming. It was evident she meant it when she called the Colonel her 'real love,' and she looked years younger. Not yet fully undressed, she had taken off her shoes and blouse, but still wore skirt and brassiere. Before him in naked feet, she had a solid, handsome figure. She grasped his hands to pull him inside. But the Colonel remained rooted in the doorway, his hands limp in hers. The grin, still on his face, was both polite and confused. He didn't dare look her in the eye, but stared down at the floor.

'Memphis,' he got out in a low, shamed voice, 'I ain't goin' to.' Conscious that she still held his hands, he began to stammer, 'I-I-I-I'se doan like bein' put on john-money 'fore I gits it.' He said this almost as an apology and looked for an instant into her face. 'I'se as . . . ' The Colonel paused to take a painful swallow and get his breath. Nothing like this had been part of his plan, and he didn't know how to go on. Memphis May dropped his hands and began to stare at him in shocked dismay.

'I'se no better'n you, but I-I-I'se d-d-doan wan' to be made no lower 'fore I cain' git it.' he managed to add. He still looked down at Memphis May's bare feet; his grin, painful and apologetic, contorted his features. 'It ain' to be did, Memphis . . . I'se sorry.' He opened his mouth to say something more; but, with a half-hearted wrench to his shoulders, turned on his heel.

Alone in the doorway, Memphis May stared after him, speechless. Her eyes were streaked with red. Clad only in skirt and brassiere, she had the naked, plucked-chicken look of a woman in high fury. Except for the fact she had been

turned down, it was obvious she didn't know what the Colonel was talking about.

A MARTYR IN THE MORGUE

Be what she may to others, to me she was a martyr; I wanted her death, even though it had come through suicide, to be as gloriously celebrated and as highly hailed as a martyr's death should be. Hence, my frenzy to identify her corpse even a fortnight after her high leap into that spring.

I had to identify her! I could not allow a martyr to die unsung, unwept, uncared for . . . I was, after all, a man of flesh and blood and brain and heart. During the past few days, it had been my routine to come to the morgue to scan victims of drowning.

Even today, when I entered the police-station building and headed toward the S.O.'s office, my eyes were wet. I complied with the formalities before going to the room where the corpses lay. I thrust my face against the cold and plain glass partition that divided the dead from the living . . . I cast a searching eye across . . .

The naked bodies lay on their marble slabs, offering a strange palette of colors: green; red; yellow; livid white. There were some which retained a deceptively healthy appearance in the rigidity of death; others resembled shapeless masses of putrid, bloody offal. At the end of the room, hung rows of tattered, stained garments mocking the nudity of the cadavers awaiting identification.

At first I had found it difficult to distinguish anything in the pallid ensemble of stone slabs and plastered walls; but, little by little in the course of the days, I had trained my eyes to discern the bodies. They were swollen and blackened from long immersion in water. I peered at them earnestly, hoping to discover in one of them a familiar meagreness; but, staring at enormous mounds of swollen bellies, I could not be sure of anything. I shivered in disgust before these

disfigured remains, these drowned bodies, all of which were fatly bloated.

‘That’s it!’ — a terrific shock as I sighted one corpse during this final day in the series of examinations. It was that of a woman — a girl, I should say — slender and pale, who once might have had a beautiful figure. The flesh was so softly rotten that the force of the running water, under which each newly-recovered cadaver is washed, had torn a large gap near the left side of the nose. Rapidly, as I watched, the pointed nose collapsed, the lips detached themselves, and the putrefying mass slid away to expose white teeth in a ghoulisn grin. The walls seemed to sway around me; sickened I stumbled blindly away.

I had recognized her. It was Miss Indira — her remains.

SHREE RAM VIDYARTHI

As I moved officeward to arrange for the removal of this body from that orphanage of dead bodies and busied myself with the formalities of the routine, I became conscious of an upstream motion of my awareness. I felt as if the barge of existence were blown back by fierce winds of events, back toward the past, toward the original source of the present. My senses reexperienced things and events that had taken place just thirty days ago.

As soon as word had spread, I had approached Miss Indira for a statement. Actually, I also had approached Mrs. Suri, the principal of the college; but she simply had refused to consider my plea for an interview. 'What sort of statements do you want me to make about such fantastic inventions of the backbiters. It is all fictitious and has no connection with our institution or the people employed therein.' I had registered this comment as her statement.

My next approach was to the staff members, who had directly said that they knew nothing. However, a few facts had come out of their hollow refusals; I had obtained certain clues.

I was told that the lady involved in the tragedy might be Miss Indira, since she was the only constant companion of Mrs. Suri; that she was the only absentee for the last four days ensuing the day of the tragedy; that she had refused to allow any of her colleagues and fellow hostel-dwellers to get into her room, on the plea that she was seriously ill; and that only Lady Doctor Vidyavati Simpson had been allowed in — other than Mrs. Suri (and this last reference had shocked me, because Lady Doctor Simpson had never borne a good reputation in the town so far as her practice as a doctor had been concerned).

The only confirmation I could get was from the gatekeeper and the Ayahs in the hostel and the college. On enquiry, I was told that the gatekeeper on duty on that particular day had been dismissed on the same day, along with an Ayah — on some vague, yet serious, charges; and that, since dismissal, their whereabouts was unknown.

So I had to await Miss Indira's appearance on duty, she being the only remaining source of information. I was determined to dig out the truth.

I met Miss Indira about ten days later, accompanied by my sister, keeping my identity as a reporter for the press concealed. Even then, once the talk about the tragedy commenced, I found it pretty difficult to induce her to speak. In the face of her point-blank refusals, I must confess I stood flabbergasted: what to do, and how to do? . . . Ultimately, I decided — before a complete surrender — to argue to the last.

'Look here, Miss Indira,' I said in a grave tone, 'I am a professional

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in the line, and somehow I shall get the truth. Then you will stand discredited in my eyes.'

'I don't beg any credits from you. I didn't go to you to assign me any credits,' she almost shrieked.

I noted her agonized appearance and trembling gait, and cursed myself for the wrong approach. Yet, I continued: 'No, no, not that way, Miss Indira — you'll excuse me for that odd word. I didn't mean it . . . you see, I have not come to weave any fallacies about you, not to bluff you. What I want to point out to you is that your silence is in no way going to help you. Gossip has already gone out . . .'

'That is absolutely untrue, fantastic, and false!'

'Listen to me first, Miss Indira — I am giving you the whole truth and no ambiguous assurances of a highly respectable social standing. Your silence cannot promise you that either. Every word that spreads around, whether true or untrue, has its echo, its effect. And the word about you shall have, too . . .'

I paused for a moment. 'Now the problem is quite different from what you think it to be. It is not the problem of a personal reputation, but of a widespread social disease which at present can be curbed and cured at the cost of a little more sacrifice on your part. If you refuse that little bit, the reptile will continue to devour and hollow the social and moral setup. What has happened to you —'

'I say, nothing wrong has happened to me. Why don't you go, and let me live in peace?' she shriekingly interrupted.

'Don't panic, Miss Indira. Go, I shall. I did not come to stay. But please let me convey what I wish to convey. You are a good friend of my sister, and — let me say — I care for you. I hope I can at least anticipate this much from a friend of my sister: that you listen attentively to me . . .'

I paused. 'Shall I continue?'

She did not reply. I took her silence as her consent.

‘Do what you can and come what may; if you do not acknowledge the truth, the ways of the world will not change. People will continue to cast their strange and suspicious glances on you; those who know you will raise their fingers to point you out. Many more innocent girls like you will continue to fall into the trap of these rogues. Many more teachers and students will be raped nightly, and many more blooming flowers of youth will be nipped in their buds and left to rot in the harems of the Sethias which these hostels are . . . your silence will encourage many more to tie their tongues, and many more rogues will outrage the honor and chastity of girls like yourself . . .’

This charged speech had its effect. Yet, the swelling of the ulcer was incomplete. I went on: ‘Here my sister Sheela is sitting beside you.

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Would you like to see that same ghastly tragedy overtake her? Would you like to rise one morning to see her outraged as — ?’ I left the sentence unfinished, to observe the changing colors of her face, the strangled manifestations of the raging inner conflict. The iron was getting hot, and I must fan it. ‘But, if you don’t speak, I am going to get her admitted into the institution. She will be registered as a hostler. She will live there as my bait, one day to fall a prey to the same jaws and claws of the devil that have crushed your conscience. And I am sure she will then speak. If you don’t make the sacrifice, Miss Indira, she will make it. Even if she does not, some day some girl will rise to speak about the nasty machinations of these nasty people. Some day, someone will have to embrace martyrdom to save her fellow beings. Why not yourself? I assure you, your ashes are capable of spreading a fire which will burn these rogues. From the ashes of your personal reputation will spring the bounteous and beautiful flowers of a healthful and honorable life for the poor and innocent girls who aspire to work as teachers, to kindle hearts and minds by spreading the light of knowledge. How much good from how little suffering, Miss Indira! Can’t you make this sacrifice for the common good of the community?’ . . . I had reached that extreme of sentimentality where my own eyes filled with tears.

I concluded in a comparatively-low tone, with the same gravity: ‘Your conscience will never allow you peace, if you don’t speak, if you don’t expose this scandalous scheme. But, once you do, Miss Indira, I can assure you in the long run a martyr’s name. Just imagine: a martyr’s name replacing the present doubtful and shaky reputation. . . . No more can I hope, no more can I promise.’

And with this, I resumed silence. Feeling completely exhausted, I stared at her with anticipation.

In her brimming eyes, I witnessed a storm raging. There was hatred in those eyes, there was remorse — and there flashed, like lightning among clouds, a strong determination. She seemed to stand triumphant over a weaker self; breathing deeply, she said: 'I shall speak, Mr. Shailendra, I shall speak. Rest assured, though I be dead, my ashes will speak to you and, through you, to the community of men at large . . .'

Struck by gratitude as much as by wonder, I was spellbound by each word she uttered.

She said: 'I shall visit you at your place, tomorrow evening. Please wait for me at about eight —' and she nodded a flashing good-bye.

I departed, not allowing myself to say another word.

Next evening, when she came to my residence, she smiled with an awareness of her tragic lot. She held a file in her hands; after seating

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herself in the chair in front of my table, she announced: 'The whole night, I have been making notes.'

'And weeping, too,' I added.

'Well, I won't refute that charge; but then what do you expect me to do—to chuckle and rejoice? . . . Anyway, I have come not to argue, not to indulge in hysterical outbursts, as during the last many days,' she gravely said.

'This file contains certain details and documents which concern my person and my past. You'll need them in the course of your dealing with the affair, while seeking confirmation of the facts. About the affair, I shall speak here and hence. You can take notes if you like; I shall sign the statement at the end . . .' Saying this, she handed the file to me and paused abruptly, as though preparing for a fatal blow.

Finally, she spoke: 'When I came to this town to serve as a teacher, I had nothing in mind but a noble aspiration to relieve my poor old father from the toil and travail of a tiresome job and to allow my younger brother to gain his B.A. . . .

Father and Shreekant, my brother, opposed my proposal. "I can serve for another two or three years, to allow Shreekant to gain his B.A. or his M.A., whatever he likes to do," Father declared. Shreekant assured me: "I shall earn and learn simultaneously. Many a young man is doing so, these days."

'But I was unshakeable in my determination to serve as a teacher. Teaching is a noble profession—especially where teaching girls is involved, considering the illiterate and miserable condition of women in our country, where an overly dependent disposition of women has become a burden for men and has crippled the better half of the nation.

Besides, I did not like the idea of risking Shreekant's exceptional career just for the sake of two years' earnings. He might start earning now; but that would mar his intense mental receptivity which has practically reserved for him a good position in the University until this day. . . .

'Somehow I convinced them, and came to join this institution as a teacher. Immediately after my arrival, I was offered a room in the hostel. To avoid the toil of searching for another room, I gladly accepted the offer.

I found Sethji a most kindhearted man, and Mrs. Suri, the principal, a rare and generous boss; thus, I remained indifferent to the complaints and gossip of various people against her. Even the occasional strips in the local papers, depicting her as a wrong person, failed to convince me as long as I was in her personal company. On the other hand, I was much impressed by her highly-cultured, sincere, and sociable disposition;

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and because of her widowhood, I could think no bad of her. She was exceptionally good and affectionate to me....

While off duty, she often would come to my room and — finding me lonely and lost in my books — would say: “Indira, why don’t you go out? What’s the fun in being so beautiful and then lying imprisoned between the four walls of your room? Pagli, these books are good for reading, but any excessive indulgence with them would certainly mar your health...” And, with pleasant countenance, she poured forth a thousand patronly precepts. I would simply blush at her flattering personal remarks, since I was never an assertive type, never over conscious of my good looks....

‘Since I knew no one in the town, she took it upon her to introduce me to a few respectable families. She started taking me along with her to the occasional parties and social gatherings. We took part in the festivities and ceremonies with the V.I.P.’s of the town. Naturally, I felt flattered.

‘At the very outset, it was a little bit embarrassing when I was required to shake hands with males; but, gradually, the openness of the atmosphere and the pleasant scoldings of Mrs. Suri softened me to comply with the demands of the place and occasion.

‘Before long, it became easy for me to remain out till late in the evening. Sometimes we also went to see movies in the second show, where we often found one or the other of Mrs. Suri’s male friends waiting; often, they would oblige us by paying the paupers and giving us lifts to the hostel.

‘I must confess that at times my colleagues tried to warn me against Mrs. Suri’s designs, the nature of which I failed to smell out. I indulged my ambitions to rise in society, and did not heed those timely warnings. My well-wishers found me deaf to their counsels; I usually disregarded them as the

fantastic inventions of the backbiters.... I had become vainly proud of my status and even fancied that my colleagues were jealous of my rapid advance.

I particularly remember the time I was getting ready to go to a big-big industrialist's son's matrimonial party. Miss Arora and Mrs. Mittal had come to me with grave countenances to impart a word of advice, but I simply ridiculed their narrow-mindedness. Yet — I was unwarily playing the fool in the hands of the Devil. That day witnessed the climax of my fall. That day, I tolerated Mr. Harish's arm around my waist; that day, I enjoyed a solitary partnership in a game of cards with three strangers only just introduced to me during that party; that day, I risked a lonely ride in a car with that fat rogue, Handa.... All this, I did

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under the persuasive invocations of Mrs. Suri, my friend, philosopher, and guide into the new world.

The night this ghastly event took place, I was reading till very late.

A half-hour had passed since the midnight hour had struck. A sudden

knock at the door startled me.

In a state of nervous apprehension, I challenged the late caller: "Who's there?"

"It's me, Indira. Open the door," I heard Mrs. Suri saying.

"Oh — it's you, Mrs. Suri? I wondered who it might be at this late hour." Sighing my relief, I arose and unlocked the door. . . .

Outside the room, all was dark, a darkness so dense that it seemed I might touch it. My eyes, accustomed to the light, searched in vain for Mrs. Suri. . . .

And when a foot was thrust out of the darkness of the hall, as from hell into the innocence of my lighted room, I was shocked by a figure I could not recognize — knowing for certain only that it was not Mrs. Suri.

The worst burst upon me when the stranger was followed by two others. I stood numb with terror — still vague as to what was taking place, but in an agony of apprehension of dreadful possibilities. In a flash, I had recognized the three faces: they were those new acquaintances of Mrs. Suri to whom she had introduced me at Mr. Moyan's wedding party. All three were drunk, and their eyes filled with lust, apparently burning with abandoned brutal passion. Alone and surrounded by those three devils in my room at such an hour, I trembled with realization.

I leaped for the door, in a bid to rush out into the gallery; but two of them seized my arms. I tried to scream, to alarm

others in the hostel; a powerful hand cupped my mouth so strongly that not a hiss could be heard. My vision ablaze with terror, I saw the door being bolted from within. . . . In sheer anguish, helpless and suffocating, I fainted. . . .

When I opened my eyes next morning, I lay — limbs tense with pain — in my smothered bed. It was broad day, and two . . . three bottles rolling on the floor near my table told the abominable tale of the night. My throat constricted; I choked — and my nose burning from the odors of my own body, I felt I was strangling. I screamed.

The first to enter my room in response to my scream of agony was Mrs. Suri. With practical care, she hid the bottles and the glasses and informed me in a cold and harsh voice: “It’s no use crying, Baby. You know what has happened, and you also know what will happen if you continue shrieking like that. . . .”

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“You witch of a woman! You did all this! You are responsible for all this!” I was about to claw the flesh from her thick face....

‘But she pressed me back into the bed. “Even if you tell that to a thousand people — and a thousand times — nobody is going to believe you. Rather, they’ll rush to me to find a cellar in a lunatic asylum for your charming countenance.” Her smile was brutally triumphant.

I spat directly into her face, screaming: “I’ll complain to the authorities. They’ll catch hold of you, and you’ll rot in the hell of a prison cell!”

‘But all threats were in vain. In a very few moments, she let me know that Sethji stood behind her . . . that the police already had been paid enough so that they would keep themselves busy elsewhere.’

Thus, tragically concluding, Miss Indira lay still in the chair before me, totally exhausted. Resting briefly, she had burst into tears; and all of us, present in the room, knew that no words of consolation could bring surcease.

Before departing that night, she said in a very calm and clear tone: ‘I have deposited in this file my past. I have given to you my present. And I can conceive of no future . . . Now, with all that is life gone, I find no reasons to preserve physical existence . . . I hope you know what to do afterward.’

After she had left, let me confess, I knew where she was going. I knew she was going to die. And, in spite of the fact that I was fully aware of the legal implications of my knowledge, I did not stop her: I let her commit suicide by drowning. In the face of the law which could not save her from molestation, I felt I had no right to prevent her from embracing a peaceful death, a dearly-earned martyrdom.

SCAN PP. 88-94

PLATES

Seven leaves of plates stand here: SIX PHOTOGRAPHS by Martin S. Dworkin — six film stills, the first captioned 'Joan Crawford / Sudden Fear!' with its production credits — and a black-and-white ink drawing, SALANTRIE, by Frank Salantrie. TRACE introduces both men in its contributors' note: Dworkin's photography had been 'exhibited internationally . . . circulated to principal museums,' and Salantrie's drawings had just been shown at the second Biennial of the Art Institute of Chicago. The images cannot be carried into a text edition, so they are named here rather than dropped in silence. — Ed.

THE RECORD

Here are approximately half of the names of 181 people published in this magazine. Some 55 first appeared in TRACE . . . else, first in either U.S. or Britain. (Does not include writers of 100s of letters.)

In our 13th year, we'll publish many more, in works of contemporary importance . . . more from abroad, particularly out of Asia, with new Chinese writings, hitherto not available in English, a special feature of No. 54. Other issues will carry exciting works from India . . . and elsewhere. Directories and other departments will continue . . . and dozens of the best Anglo-American authors will appear in our pages.

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HOWARD O'HAGAN'S FRONTIER

A LUXURIOUS NATURE SURROUNDS the reader with technicolor brilliance, in the GREEN MANSIONS of W. H. Hudson. In Lafcadio Hearn's CHITA, the brilliance has lost some of its sensuous qualities and has absorbed malevolence so that the coloration approaches an almost-unbearable burning monochrome. Some other writers include occasional splashes of color; most, never. Nearly all stories seem to be in black-and-white as are nearly all dreams.

A recent book has recalled this to my attention: Howard O'Hagan's THE WOMAN WHO GOT ON at Jasper Station &

Other Stories (ALAN SWALLOW — \$1.65 paperb.). This author has made use of the technicolor techniques of Hudson and Hearn—which is not meant to suggest that he is influenced by their styles. And, how different is his choice of palette! No sun shines in the bleak Canadian landscape where the forest, the snow and ice, and the mountains loom oppressively—almost shrinking humans into insignificance. But his particular characters, in his best here, take on some of the special and meaningful qualities of that enigmatic (and probably nonexistent) universal: Man.

O'Hagan is a disciplined artist whose work belies the cry of 'critics' that contemporary writing is formless, aimless, or lifeless. (Though, if these 'critics' wish to continue reading books of that type, it is not my role to point them elsewhere.) In part, the effectiveness of his stories is gained by use of verbs of motion. For instance, the passengers on the train in *THE WOMAN WHO GOT ON . . .* are never just sitting; they are shuffling, lifting, smoothing, nodding, swaying, bobbing . . . also, staring, exclaiming, panting, mumbling, and so on, while the train is rushing on its way. The end-result is that, even when the story is of less than top quality, the reader is carried along by the technical skill of the author.

Some of the stories not only consider a few of the prejudices of our time, but also betray Nineteenth-century compassion and respect for aliens—which attitudes are also of our time. Thus, O'Hagan sees existence as primarily an ethical problem; and, in consequence, his writing is devoid of the concept of sin. The relations of sex are not immoral, even though they are likely to be unethical. For the good man to become evil, or for the harmless man to become vicious, he must first be made mad—before he is destroyed. This makes pathetic the death of the crazed trapper, Ito Fujiko; and though it is reminiscent of the death of Per Hansa in O. E. Rölvaag's *GIANTS IN THE EARTH*, it is stripped of the heroic overtones of the latter.

THE TEPEE contains the usual stereotypes of the noble savage, along with the idea that primitive=sexual. The tale also contains magnificent imagery; the few lines describing aural and tactile hallucinations caused by darkness and the intense concentration of the narrator are especially memorable.

The longest of the stories, THE SCHOOL-MARM TREE, is a concise, sensitive character-analysis of a small-town girl. But it is with THE WHITE HORSE and THE WOMAN WHO GOT ON . . . that O'Hagan approaches the perfection of the short-story form. The latter describes a brief temptation of a woman for a young sailor. The full maturity of the author's perceptions and skill are displayed in his treatment of this simple theme. And only the intense precision of his lines keeps THE WHITE HORSE from plunging to sentimentality. The plot is trite; but, through a subtle shift of focus, O'Hagan has transformed it to produce a profound experience. The difference between a piece and a masterpiece would seem to be simply: talent. Mr. O'Hagan has it.

Milton VanSickle

CELINE SOLUTION: A RE-EVALUATION

. . .

ALTHOUGH LOUIS-FERDINAND Céline's two earlier novels, *JOURNEY TO THE END OF NIGHT* (NEW DIRECTIONS, in transl.) and *DEATH ON THE INSTALLMENT PLAN* (do.), are extremely dense works, crowded with images and emotions and ideas and people his later work, *GUIGNOL'S BAND* (do.), is thinner; air is let into nearly every sentence with three dots (. . .) that seem to preoccupy Céline (Dr. Destouches) at this stage. He even writes a defense of these three dots, at the beginning of this book: 'What about the three dots?' he has unfriendly critics say, 'Ah! All over the place again! An outrage! He's butchering the French language!'

On reperusal, *JOURNEY* remains a long, slangy, intense, and often grimly- and grotesquely-funny letter from an energetic and often unhappy young Frenchman who experiences World War I battlefields, a job in Detroit, and a stay in a French insane asylum, as he views the world as an unending struggle for life and liberty. There is something extremely American and very modern about Céline's rugged individualism; and the anarchistic point of view with which he credits himself, is certainly not out of place on a *Get Ahead As Best You Can Society's* bookshelf.

DEATH . . . is also told in the first person, but has a more reminiscent and literary ring to it, even though equally grotesque and almost as active and violent — despite that the locale is restricted to England and France. It is only natural that this should be so; for, here (we are told) Céline wrote an autobiographical novel about his boyhood, and from which he is farther removed than from his young manhood, which provided the action of *JOURNEY*.

He's a salty writer with a dirty mouth, this Céline; and he makes no bones about it. Perhaps he made enough bones as

a sawbones in real life not to have to worry himself with making bones about anything in literature. He has said that his novels are the products of his sleepless nights, without which he would never have written at all — his daytime hours having been largely occupied with his medical practice.

All of this hardly would be worth saying if Céline had not been imprisoned as a Nazi after World War II. He denied that he belonged to the Party; and it is hard to see how he could have been imprisoned for anything political that appears in these three books. His philosophical judgments and asides are hurled out in humor and bitterness, in the context of momentary experience, as he relives his own life in fiction; he was engrossed in personal experience and work.

And this reviewer has an instinct for brevity in these things: for authors whom I like (Céline is a case in point), I prefer to say illuminative things — but not too strictly defined. My aim is to create a proper spell of glamor around the author and his books; I like to leave the forest of his words and characters and ideas as untouched, as uncatalogued, as un-trail-blazed as I can, to entice my friends, the readers, to virginal explorations of their own. In this area, only mention of the dots is essential, because when he himself mentions them in the last novel, we can confirm that Céline is aware of his literary style as well as his celebrity.

Robert Lowry

POETRY EXEMPLIFYING A PERSONAL GOAL

ALTHOUGH NOT ALL THE poems in Sue Abbott Boyd's new volume *THE SAMPLE STAGE* — \$1 — SOUTH & WEST, Inc., are readily discernible as poetic communication to every reader, her achievements are considerable; the details with which she builds up her subject, or the emotion she is expressing, are fresh and usually are immediately applicable to experience. Of course, it takes two sparks to kindle a poem to life — the first is what the poet is saying in whatever way he chooses to say it, but always indicating that fervor, vision, or insight which distinguishes a poet; the second is the quantity and quality of understanding which the reader brings to the poem, plus his willingness and ability to project himself into the 'creative' act of reading it truly. The role of the reader in this sense is not an easy one in some of the avant-garde, stream-of-consciousness pieces in *THE SAMPLE STAGE*. However, most of these poems are not too subjective for the perceptive.

When the subject matter seems to require the dignity and formality of a traditional form, Mrs. Boyd uses one, revealing her craftsmanship and poetic discipline. The title poem itself is a Petrarchan sonnet, and suggests that 'words of old / Are meaningful when acts rehearsed again / On sample stages shake the same old sky.'

Mrs. Boyd's idealism and appreciation of history are evident in her poems on Abraham Lincoln, Syngman Rhee, and Clarence Darrow—all men who put great emphasis on freedom, justice, equality, and brotherhood. Her interests encompass not only men of government and law, but the great and near-great of almost every facet of our culture, persons who have expressed themselves in painting (Van Gogh, El Greco, Cezanne, Renoir, Seurat); in music (Bach,

Tchaikowski, Marian Anderson); and in the novel (Pearl Buck).

A poet of many moods, Mrs. Boyd writes of sorrow with an eloquence born of firsthand experience of tragedy, which on three occasions has touched her personal life. In Sue Abbott Boyd, courage and compassion have overcome such weaknesses as bitter rebellion or self-pity. In *THE RIGHT SEASON*, she speaks of a 'love that kindles / warmth unlike / a worldly warmth / and radiance / soul radiance / for comprehension leaping / like a tidal wave / across the hot, dry desert.' For pure compassion and powerful simplicity: *THE CHILDREN IN THE HOSPITAL* — those 'whose eyelids are kissed / Now and forever / By shadow and mist.' There are poems here, too, in which this meaningful identity and more-cogent relationship we all seek with our fellow human beings, is sensitively expressed with the 'bewilderment' common to all sincere personalities. *THE CONVERSATION ONE KIND OF MESSAGE*, and *THE TOO-LATE BORN* are illustrative.

So much has been written tritely on the subjects of nature and love that some editors refuse even to consider poems in these veins; but Mrs. Boyd always manages to avoid the common defects, giving her descriptions of the things of nature the glow of an imagery so fresh and different that, at times, one is shocked out of his old ruts of thinking . . . and at last declares: 'Why, this is the way it is!' Read, for example, about the common subject of the approach of winter, in *SEASON OF FEAR*, about trees being cut down, in *NOT THE WIND*, about spring, in *ON A PINK DAY*; read *THE RAINBOW*. All ordinary subjects, treated in an extraordinary way. For originality in treating of romantic love, see salient examples: *JUST IN*

PASSING ; THE MIDDLE OF AUGUST.

Of course, no poet produces a great number of poems of uniform excellence; some in *THE SAMPLE STAGE* do not speak to me. But this could be because I cannot bring to the poem the perception needed for adequate appreciation. Yet — more frequently than one would expect in a small volume — Mrs. Boyd reaches the achievement of a ‘real poet.’

Marion Plunkett.

A REDUCTIVE SUMMARY OF RECENT POETRY

A LARGE HANDSOME book, with drawings by leading moderns, holds a selection of the works of Daisy Aldan (THE DESTRUCTION OF CATHEDRALS — \$2, paperb. — Two CITIES Press, distributed by FOLDER Editions). Classifiable as an imagist, Miss Aldan handles sounds expertly (too), and with semi-hypnotic effects; plus which, she delves intellectual areas. Unlike most of the capital-I Imagists, she reacts to social environment, and plainly says things — but without becoming hortatory. Handling a diversity of themes, she's sufficiently matured that each piece is identifiable by her style.

Shorter poems of tense involvement are translated in SELECTED POEMS, by Chairil Anwar (NEW DIRECTIONS — \$1, paperb.). Burton Raffel, an American, worked with Nurdin Salam, an Indonesian, in transmuting these. James S. Holmes' Introduction relates them to the young poet's disturbed life (he died in 1949, at twenty-seven). Nearly all are effective; however, as with most translations, impacts largely rely upon indicative definements of language; the lines are fresh, but their words and sounds remain unintegrated.

A mélange of light variations combine to meaningful unity — better than is commonly produced in the scene-plus-history genus — in Elliott Coleman's MOCKINGBIRDS AT FORT McHENRY (ATLANTIS Editions — \$1, paperb.). Few of the sixty-five little 'shots' would be impressive separately; but the impacts of these few, taken in the succession of the whole, make it a noteworthy small book.

Judson Crews, that ever-prolific and dubious recorder of his own unconscious — unangily exuding the juices of sex —

has, as a few times before, hung together a debatable admixture of semi-pornographic and serious work in *A UNICORN WHEN NEEDS BE* (ESTE ES Press — \$1.25, ringbound cardb.). And the seriousness is, as usual, less than clearly directioned. Obviously just for flavor, he has added some nude and semi-nude photos of smouldering girlies.

Persisting contra the currents of today's approved prosody, Vincent Ferrini, in *MIRANDUM* (HEURETIC Press — unpriced, paperb.), succeeds with effective short poems of metaphysical content — and using abstract words, and collectives. But his feeling for language is undeniable; and he avoids the statements commonly associated with such writings; his mystical 'messages' are rather allowed to be felt through the simple verbiage which is the hallmark of his unique, charming style. Another factor-basic to his effects is his avoidance of the static; each small phrase-group is livened by motion as well as emotion.

A critic restricted to the modern convention would be hard put to find fault with the poetries of Gene Frumkin, in *THE HAWK AND THE LIZARD* (ALAN SWALLOW — 75c, paperb.). They offer virtually every one of the requisite prosodic elements, in expression and construction. Yet, what is lacking is primary: a motor of essential internal opposition. The 'poles' don't spark to fuse much above high levels of competency. Frumkin doesn't convince one that he cares that much about often-major themes; he's casual to the point of seeming 'unconvoluted,' and loses certain unity of urgent intention. And still, his controlled expression surpasses the verse of many more-persuasively intense poets.

Nor is it low-grading Emilie Glen (*LAUGHING LUTE* — \$1 — CHAT NOIR Press, illustr. by Keith Parker) to remark that she is one of the latter—at least, in this particular presentation. She has published better poems than any here; and also handles the prosodic elements very well, while—at her

best—imbuing lines with vitality that leaves no doubt of her concern. Her motifs may be of lesser order, but one senses real emotion beneath her disciplines.

More than merely offering anthroposophical ideas in verse, Trevor Goodger-Hill's *GOD IS MY FLESH* (privately: 81 Oscar St., Montreal 18, Can.—\$2.50) moves with personal feeling through a rich variety of forms. This is a beautifully-produced square-back of 80 pages, with a dozen line-drawings by Marie Koehler (heavy papers).

Scott Greer has been in print longer than any of these poets—excepting William Pillin—but he remains less free than most, in *VIA URBANA* (ALAN SWALLOW — \$3). The strength of these thematically-consequential poems is from a versatile, practiced craft; yet, it's not possible to pass a textual judgment on them without referring in detail to Greer's predecessors and earlier contemporaries. Again and again, phrases and lines seem to echo; but it often might be found that this is because many have echoed Greer. And his rather precise and reserved manner had long ago come to be that of the 'accepted' academy schools. Not to credit him with inaugurating this, but to finger the reason why he sounds less romantically. individuated than in past years: scores of eagerly-exercising young poets have been putting forth their Greer-like products . . . and most of these may scarcely be identified by authorship.

At least on the surface, better individuation appears in work of the less known LISA GRENELLE (*SELF IS THE STRANGER* — \$2.75 — GOLDEN QUILL). She has exercised a careful craft, too (though nothing seems labored), and gains better immediate impacts by a distinctive method of 'loading' brief wordages. Her themes are less than major, but not so trivial that the simplest little piece does not carry further implications or stir thoughts beyond the obvious images.

With Kay Johnson (*HUMAN SONGS* — \$1.50 — CITY LIGHTS/VILLIERS), we encounter an ebullient 'original.' Her

own cover-drawing conjures the atmosphere of exciting verbal play which is almost altogether limited to personal emotions roused in reactions to persons and scenes, sex and death. Miss Johnson always is so extremely intense that occasionally she fails her lines to a degree, and gets careless with sounds, and disregards counterpoint.

A young and — to now — scarcely-published poet, Richard E. Lee, may supply a few lessons for pedagogues of prosody. Several violations of today's blessed precepts succeed very well, in *THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF BIRDS* (GOOSE TREE Press — 30c, pamphl.). He dares to tread, for instance, on the skirts of 'pathetic fallacy' — with a subtle sort of transport-of-consciousness (his own awarenesses moving into fancied awarenesses of growing and allegedly-insensate things). Also — he deals in more-than-hinted metaphysical implications . . . and he does not hesitate to mix his imagery or make time-leaps. But his idiom is unstrained and effective; whether or not he matures in this style, these pieces are admirable object-lessons in the falsity of rigid rules for poetry.

Joanne de Longchamps joys to roam far bounds of history and beyond, to times of myth — occasionally, into prehistory. She also rapturously travels varied warm domains of sexual passion, in *THE HUNGRY LIONS* (INDIANA U. Press — \$3.50). With excitements for the senses and the cultured mind as well, she spreads more than an inspired semantic feast. Her control of laden lines often rivals the best; they read aloud musically, and one doesn't tire of them. Yet, the beauty has meaning ; and her unobtrusive Jungian symbols lead the imagination not only to love, but to esoteric mysteries and the caverns of the unconscious. The sensitive will go on seeing Miss de Longchamps' lions in nighttime dreams, having lived an hour with her poems.

In partial contrast, the technique of Howard McCord forms pleasing foreshortenings, as the title, *PRECISE*

FRAGMENTS, defines (privately: 410 Campus Ave., Pullman, Wash. — \$1.50, paperb.). Thematic similarities are here; but—though McCord's phrases often sing—his effects are more mentalized, as he plays less the enchanter, if with no lesser skill.

William Pillin, oftener than in his earlier books, moves vigorously beyond the lyricisms which have made his reputation, in *PAVANNE for a Fading Memory* (SWALLOW — \$3). As with many past poets, his structures are freer, now that he's older; in truth, he seems younger in rebellions—and with images and sounds more happily strung than ever.

(To be continued in TRACE No. 53.)

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SEVENTH GATE

They
came for
him in the
morning after
breakfast when his wife
too had more years than could
effectively contend with
the directness of the
methods used by these
collectors of
departing
human
souls.

by A. Fredric Franklyn

TWO

fingers on the face:
such a deft slap! The mouth splits
with an eight-shaped pain.

by Westin Slesinger