

LIVING LITERATURE

●
FELIX STEFANILE ON

Little Mags : An Evaluation

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JAMES BOYER MAY

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EDITOR

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Edited by JAMES BOYER MAY

A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This reading edition preserves the issue's poetry, fiction, essays, correspondence, reviews, and other literary writing in their printed order. Advertising, subscription matter, mastheads, the magazine's own contents pages, annual indexes, address lists, and the running trade directory are omitted as reference apparatus.

The text was checked against newly rendered source pages. Poetry lineation, stanza spacing, shaped indents, and hanging continuations for long lines are retained; prose continuations are joined without false paragraph indents. Conjectural readings are enclosed in square brackets, while original spelling and punctuation are otherwise kept.

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THE IMAGINATION OF THE AMATEUR

by Felix Stefanile

IN A SHORT ARTICLE DESCRIBING the Epistle, the 1960 edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica defines that form as ‘any letter to an absent person.’ It seems to me that the Little Magazine (as typified in the U.S.A. where it has flourished most prodigiously) is related to the courtesies of English epistolary literature. These two avenues of expression — the Little Magazine most often moving along the uncharted periphery of our modern publishing world, the Epistle ancient of fame and safely admitted into the traditional precincts of what we call ‘literature’ — share essential characteristics. Both conventions are distinguished by expansiveness of address, dedication to Great Individuals and Great Causes, and a confident self-consciousness that adheres to established rules of decorum. Dryden’s letters to Congreve are no more apt or deliberately celebrational than the saucy, yet desperately high-toned issue of *GOLDEN GOOSE*¹ devoted to a study and appreciation of the poems and career of William Carlos Williams.

Whether these matters refer to strategies for translating the classics or appeals to a mythical public for the support of antirhetorical verse, each effort embodies an exquisite sense of literary purpose as well as a certain exegetical windiness in regard to matters of special pleading. Particularly, each dialogue presumes — by the decorum of its context — that elaborate choosiness of confraternity which we have come to associate with both aristocrats and exiles.

If John Donne’s ‘letters’ to the Countess of Bedford were theoretically private, then they were so in the same sense that today’s Little Magazine is theoretically public. In each condition, Fame is cautiously ignored, and yet all gossip

turns around her; and though Ambition is denied, the author's humility is a flirtation of the most uncommon sort, based upon attractive ostentations of learning, care, stylistic posture, and the sharing of the secrets of civilization. Nobody seriously believes that gentlemen of the Eighteenth Century composed their epistles only for friends and patrons (and not for posterity) any more than we give serious credence to the legend that our Little Magazine editors of today are not concerned with subscriptions. Horace would have been the most disappointed man in all of Rome, had Maecenas not been the most social.

¹ GOLDEN GOOSE No. 7, April, 1954. *The Letters of William Carlos Williams*.

As for today's composer of that 'open letter to the world,' the Little Magazine, his loneliness, like Cid Corman's, editor of ORIGIN², is soothed by hundreds of friends and correspondents. This is the real reason that he is able to sell his magazine for love, and not for money. (The exclusiveness here is no easy snobbery. Commitment is involved, and demands its own rewards. I shall have to enumerate them, in time; but for the moment I am intent on drawing attention to a basic reality belittling 'appearances.') If the Corman's of our age are wandering friars, dependent on alms, then Boileau was a shepherd. History has allowed this pose, this ritual, this decorum, at least since the time of Socrates, I should guess.

Am I striving to make twins of Ferlinghetti and Ausonius, of Thomas Cole and Hugh Walpole³, in this search for resemblances between the fugitive journals of our period and the graceful epistles of another time (while looking for other things as well)? No — but I do think they are all cousins, and bear striking family marks. Men's minds being what they are, they change and are the same. In the words of James Boyer May, the Little Magazine is an expression of that 'for which no other media existed.' This expression, and the part

this expression has played in the lives of writers in every age, is the heart of my concern.

It is a matter of terrible currency today. We moderns are afloat on a great sea of communication: radio, television, the newspapers, the book trade, even the greeting-card industry. Those gimmicks of gossip, the telephone, the telegram, the tape-recorder — and soon, I have no

² ORIGIN, second series, 1961. From the editorial statement: ‘Origin is not for sale; it may be had for love, as it happens, not for money.’ The first series of this magazine, twenty issues, published the early work of Robert Creeley, Samuel French Morse, Denise Levertov, Charles Olson — to name only a few.

³ Lawrence Ferlinghetti, CITY LIGHTS BOOKS, publisher of Allen Ginsberg’s HOWL; Thomas Cole, editor and publisher of IMAGI, superb poetry journal of its day, which presented work of new poets such as Richard Wilbur, Cid Corman, James Schevill, et al.

TWIGS AS VARIED BENT — Vagrom Chap Book No. 1, The SPARROW Magazine, page 1. Perhaps the most original little magazine of the post-war period, May’s TRACE carried forward coverage of this field after demise of MATRIX, where Towards Print initiated the ‘Chronicle.’ doubt, the televoice — will assure the proverbial stranger from Mars that we are a commonwealth of tattlers. Mass education has provided us with a commonalty of literacy, an articulate society, the like of which does not exist elsewhere in the history of the world. Periclean Athens, for all its glory, was the small, impassioned miracle of a few thousand citizens out of a total population of slaves, metics, and other barbarians many times their number. In modern democracy, the monopoly of our men of good will who believe in the greatest good for the greatest number has established for us our own minorities. The dogged longevity of the American Vegetarian Party attested to the tolerance of the power-groups toward it; though the

prescriptions of Advertising, the Index prohibitorium, assure catholicity, exclusive of 'minority opinions,' in our newspapers. Our president ignores the Single-Taxer, as, for all the courtesies toward letters-in-general, Catherine of Medici ignored Montaigne. In the context of my argument, it little matters what prompts this rectitude of censors. In Montaigne's time, the diary, the journal, the essay he nourished, all provided him with the means to express that which otherwise would not have been expressed. The need for this expression is not a simple, clear-cut reaction to the prevailing rules of court and church. I am not discussing mere politics. As for the conveniences of modern science and their relation to the 'problem' of communication, we may assume that a telephone at Tomi would have been of immense consolation to Ovid in his exile; but — of what use would it have been to his art?

In a small town in California, a young poet, with the cooperation of the proprietor of a printing shop and the use of waste paper-stock, composes, prints and binds a literary journal. Issues of that journal, and chapbooks of individual works under its imprint, find their way to the big-city book stores, and are read by 'hundreds' of people: poets, students, collectors, a few brain-picking reviewers associated with the larger publication chains. They receive mention, favorable at that, in *POETRY: A Magazine of Verse*. In Cleveland, a man of modest independence buys a second-hand press and sets it up in his cellar; the magazine he dreamed of in his youth is, at this writing, thirty years old. The editor, also publisher, printer's devil, sweeper, and clerk, is now in the prime of respectable age; his 'discoveries' include Joseph Joel Keith, one of the most popular poets of the day, and that unhappy poet-novelist, Byron Herbert Reece (*BETTER A DINNER OF HERBS*). In New Rochelle, New York, the senior vice-president of a large company manufacturing pilot lights and relay systems for the electronics field, leads a double life: by day,

he is a successful businessman; evenings, he attends to the publication of a review devoted to 'modern metaphysical verse.' These charming victories I gossip about can be repeated a hundredfold. They are introduced in the simple hope that the validity of an effort almost generally unrecognized in our culture — and yet, paradoxically, typifying it — the Little Magazine (expressing what would otherwise not be expressed) may be investigated for the viability of its cause.

E. V. Griffith, editor of HEARSE and Hearse Press Chapbooks.

See my review in POETRY, June, 1960: Angels of Discombooberation.

Loring Williams, AMERICAN WEAVE.

According to George Carver, 'With the appearance of the first issue of THE TATLER on April 12, 1709, the essay as a literary type may be said to have come of age.' The essay is basically an epistle which has exchanged the ostensibly-specific address of Horace (let us say) for a more general appeal to groups of readers, while preserving individuality of tone. (In the course of literary history, the essay has developed into various rhetorical types: expository, documentary, critical.) The essay, in fact, seems to have absorbed the epistle. The consanguinity of these two modes can clearly be noted by anyone who reflects on the manner in which the early forms overlap. In the Eighteenth Century, we had an array of charming correspondents who posted their letters to the editor under such names as Euphelia (Johnson) and Mr. Village (Cowper). We make the acquaintance of Will Wimble, Isaac Bickerstaff, Sophron, Bob Short, Ralph Crotchet, and other pseudonymous authors. All the time, as the essay has moved away from the more rigid stylistic conventions of the epistle, it has moved, by way of our early periodicals, toward what has become in a few generations the modern magazine.

However, the modern magazine of busy format and heterogeneous copy has sacrificed the personality of its early progenitor. The motive idea of the periodical of the 1700's was correspondence; hence, the letter signed by a fictitious character. The newsbooks which included those 'advertisements' destined to develop in time into the *TATLER* and *SPECTATOR* of deserved fame, were mainly a gossip of peers, filled with contention. In the London coffeehouses of Johnson's era, men discussed their newsletters the way we, today, discuss baseball teams; for, along with the sudden increase in literacy at this juncture, came that amazing mixture of politics and journalism which characterized the period. Whatever our own *ATLANTIC MONTHLY*, or *LIFE*, or *NATION* provide us, it is rarely this sense of personal attention and commitment. Education and edification we may obtain — though I sometimes have my doubts — and we must not forget that Steele promised these same benefits in the pages of the *GUARDIAN*; but we no longer participate in high- (or low-) minded editor-reader dialogue. There is no 'eachness' to our national publications.

8 *James L. Weil*, *ELIZABETH*.

9 *PERIODICAL ESSAYS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY*, ed. by George Carver: *Introduction*, p. xiii.

This is precisely the point that James Boyer May made in a 1954 *TRACE* article (page 2 of No. 6, February): 'Few people nowadays carry on voluminous correspondences [but] past literary figures used to circulate multiple copies of letters with their views on the arts, sciences, and politics. Lively-minded men of learning frequently would spend years in interchanges of letters, before book publications. And certain types of diaries are part of the little-mag ancestry. Poetry which then circulated solely through correspondence is at least as important as many of those precious books and brochures, not only privately printed, but scarcely read outside personal acquaintanceships of their authors.'

This talent for eachness and correspondence is exactly what the American Little Magazine retains, and which relates it in a very real cultural sense to the newsletter and the epistle of a bygone day. (I might add in passing that contemporary editors of our own vagrant broadsheets and brochures [CRAZY HORSE, POEMS OF THE FLOATING WORLD, BEATITUDE] have even managed to seize the attention of otherwise purely business-minded proprietors in the coffeehouses in many of our cities — surely a teasing parallel! Also, that it is not uncommon, in the literary climate of our day, to ‘invent’ a magazine or pamphlet as some sort of answer to another publication: see Robert Bly’s Diatribe against the New York Times Book Review.¹ This is quite in the tradition of Swift and Defoe.) Modern lovers of poetry discuss their journals as though these were living entities. One review is lively, another dull, a third cranky or spiteful, and so it goes. Almost all of these publications contain pages devoted to notes on contributors and to chronicling literary events. Not a few editors are masters of satire and the technique of j’accuse, recalling in their impassioned fulminations the Whig and Tory contests of another epoch.

Commitment is skin-tight. The Little Magazine editor has more duties than an executive of the SATURDAY EVENING POST. He writes letters by the pound; he visits poets, and often attends on a strategic basis all sorts of literary functions; he asks for money from his readers in the most direct of terms — often outright appeals — and this is as close to the ‘subscription’ as we can get these days; he licks his own stamps and packs his own bundles. These conditions, which but barely outline his dedication for good or ill (and—we must confess—the majority of Little Magazines are hopelessly bad, as were the bulk of the newsletters of Addison’s time), are usually accompanied by the responsibilities of a full-time job often not connected with his literary interests. All of this makes for dialogue with a vengeance, one of the last refuges

of American pluralism in an age which has elevated the twin religions of Conformity and Comfort to the heights of unassailable dogma.

¹ THE SIXTIES PRESS.

In the Little Magazine field a man still is able to acquire a reputation for doing a job. Such power or influence as he wields is not hidden behind the bland anonymity of business organization where the boss is mistaken for a clerk. Instead, our editor finds himself, at the best of times, developing an independence directly related to functioning results of his commitment. Despite the suspicions of the Old Guard (I am here discussing our 'better,' monumental reviews), he is as often as not a keen literary artist. John Ciardi, commenting on Cid Corman's first book of poems, referred to him as 'the best least known poet writing today.'¹¹ The Little Magazine editor in American letters, from the uniqueness of his position (it is a kind of loneliness), develops anti-intellectual and antinomian attitudes almost automatically.

W. H. Auden, ever the European, clearly suspects the danger and warns in dulcet tones. In his foreword to William Dickey's *OF THE FESTIVITY*, he writes: 'A practicing poet is never a perfect editor: if he is young, he will be intolerant of any kinds of poetry other than the kind he is trying to write for himself; if he is middle-aged, the greater tolerance of his judgment is offset by the decline of his interest in contemporary poetry. The books which interest him most are unlikely to be books of poems, and when he does read poems for pleasure, they are likely to be of a date and style as far removed from the contemporary as possible.' Earlier, Auden states that an editor 'should be without the slightest desire to write a line of poetry himself.'

Auden's spoofing is familiar to us all, but even granting that he is merely being wistful about a set of hypothetically-perfect conditions to which the human race will not attain, and that he nonetheless remains slyly willing

to play the game of poet-editor, I wonder what he would have to say of the literally scores of poet-editors in the Little Magazine field today? As usual, he confuses good taste with gentlemanliness (it is an old notion) and the magazines we are discussing are not gentlemanly. There is good reason to believe that the Little Magazine is a vision of excellence founded upon prejudice. Out of such dedicated folly, and contrary to the canons of good tennis, have come the early, often crucial writings of Hemingway, Joyce, Faulkner, Hart Crane—to name only a few. There was nothing truth-seeking about *BLAST* or *FURIOSO*; the original snobbery of the Imagistes (who, interestingly enough, succeeded in the United States rather than in England) and T. E. Hulme's harsh words about the 'damp' poem amounted to downright bad manners.

¹¹ *Poetry review by John Ciardi of Corman's THE PRECISIONS, Vagrom Chap Book No. 3, in THE NATION, Sept. 28, 1955.*

This vision of excellence, founded upon (and often foundering upon) prejudice, places the Critic in a bad position. One does not have to be a pugilist to recognize the knock-out, nor a baseball player to judge a strike-out. But the Little Magazine editor quite often is a person who cannot see the distinction between Doing and Knowing. Auden, like all the men of his noble band, like Eliot, like Richards, is resisting the secularization of culture that has been going on in this country since the Revolution. For all our faults, we are still reeling from the Age of Reason; and we continue to command our ministers to appear before us like athletes in Yankee Stadium. Auden, like the aristocrat he is, believes that 'culture ever springs from luxury.' The pioneers long ago contradicted this notion. To make use of Daniel J. Boorstin's resounding phrase (from *THE AMERICANS*), in this country 'the learned lose their monopolies.' We have always admired the Doer; as a people, we have lived as it is said of some of us that we read: on the run.

The antidynasticism of the American character is nowhere better evidenced than in the history of our colleges, what President Ezra Stiles of Yale called ‘the College Enthusiasm.’ To quote from Boorstin’s book: ‘. . . in America the school of every sect arrogated the dignity of an ancient European university. By the time of the Revolution nearly every major Christian sect had an institution of its own: New-Side Presbyterians founded Princeton; revivalist Baptists founded Brown; Dutch Reformed revivalists founded Rutgers; a Congregationalist minister transformed an Indian missionary school into Dartmouth . . .’¹² My own upstart view is that, just as those cranky merchants, whalers, and planters of colonial America considered themselves fit makers of colleges and dispensators of degrees, their descendants of today consider themselves equally as fit to be editors, writers, and publishers — all in one. This obsession with Doing, the anticritical, antiofficial posture, is readily observable in the first issues (often the last) of Little Magazines. Hans Juergensen, in an opening statement of ORANGE STREET Poetry Journal, remarks that ‘we are of a mind . . . [with Clarence Major] who urges every poet to publish a little magazine.’ And Wayne L. Garner wrote on the founding of his publication: ‘. . . the pages of TARGETS are for the publication of poets. We want no critical articles or reviews. . . .’

¹² THE AMERICANS, *Daniel J. Boorstin*. (VINTAGE Books, p. 179.)

August Derleth, perhaps the greatest self-made editor and publisher in the country (ARKHAM HOUSE, MYCROFT & MORAN Books, HAWK & WHIPPOORWILL, etc.), writes, in a letter to me: ‘I tend to steer clear of any magazine giving over too much space to criticism; I’m capable of making my own judgments, and the opinions of others usually just tire me, particularly since so many critical articles are manifestly only springboards for the proliferation of the writer’s ego.’ To these hints of the age-old author-versus-critic struggle, we

might even add the gay hopelessness of Wallace Stevens in the face of aesthetic problems, the friendly yet surly aplomb of E. E. Cummings, whose nonlectures brashly enunciated the value of effort as opposed to lucubration in art.

We seem to be wandering far afield. Not really; we simply are trying to view our subject from all sides, and the landscape is cluttered. We shall soon find ourselves in a veritable jungle of paradox. To this terrible accusation we may fling at those who think only poets should be critics, the observation that poets are only writing for poets and that the whole culture suffers. The ready answer of the Prejudiced Man — who has founded his own independent magazine — is: ‘Every man a poet!’ Apollinaire dreamed of a thousand crazy tribes, and so do the people of the Little Magazine.

The paradox is further compounded by the fact that few of these publications have a circulation of more than three or four hundred. According to Henry Seidel Canby, *THE DIAL*, at the time Emerson suspended it, had 100 paid subscribers.¹³ The plot thickens. A great deal of pious nonsense has been written about the function of our fugitive magazines as ‘schools’ for the beginning writer. I prefer Alan Swallow’s deep remark about the Big and the Little press for poetry.¹ More verse has been presented in the pages of my own tiny *SPARROW* than in the annual output of many New York trade publishers. (This can be verified by checking at the New York Public Library or the Memorial Library of the University of Wisconsin, to cite two places where files of *SPARROW* and *VAGROM* Chap Books may be found.) Yet, we are not philanthropists; the unknown writer we print is taken up not because he is new or young or poor. Few Little Magazine editors are conscious of Doing Good. Again, we are simply looking for that which we cannot find, or cannot find often enough, in the pages of *HARPER’S* or *THE NEW YORKER*. This search brings us back to May’s definition of such magazines’ reason for being: to provide expression for that for which ‘no

other media existed.’ And so we return to commitment, and eachness, and that confraternity of peers which was the motive spirit of the epistle.

¹³ THOREAU, *by Henry Seidel Canby.*

¹ *A remark to the effect that, in terms of poetry publishing, the ‘big’ presses really are small and the ‘small’ presses really are big.*

It must be evident by now that I have no intention of downgrading the cantankerousness of American nonconformists concerning standards of measurement for works of art. There is more to their stubbornness than mere antinomianism, or the spite of some ‘Out’ group against some ‘In’ group. These often highly sophisticated individuals are not solely against the Academy, or against Explication, or against Formalism. We are dealing here with the imagination of the Amateur.

This imagination, in the Eighteenth Century, provided us with a Constitution which still works. We have only to think of Benjamin Franklin, who charmed revolutionary Paris, and in his spare time gave us the Franklin stove. We are a pragmatic people; and I cite this not as a matter of pride, but as a matter of fact. Time and again, our ‘heroes’ prove to be mechanics in the finest idiomatic sense of this word. We are a people in love with the idea of fixing things. We often try to solve even our national problems by tinkering until a solution presents itself (I am reminded of our experiments during the New Deal Era). Aren’t our idols of history usually mechanics? — not only Thomas Edison, but Lincoln, F.D.R.? Henry Seidel Canby, writing sensitively about Thoreau, mentions his steady ‘enrichment by accretion’¹⁵ throughout the years: his fooling with his journals, his Walden experiment (which he gave up as soon as he found out what he wanted to know), his nature studies, his fits and starts at writing and publishing. Thoreau, in this respect very much like Poe, thrashed about all his life trying to ‘figure out’ how

to be a writer and not something else. Rarely have our great men been experts, born to the profession.

Perhaps the Amateur actually is the most practical of men. Harold Laski writes, in *THE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY*: 'I must note, at the outset, that the last hundred and fifty years [1800-1950] almost

(Continued on page 411)

15 We might go on here to mention Melville's farming, Twain's business deals, Whitman's printing, etc. When have our writers ever been professional?

TOWARDS PRINT (FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON 'LIVING LITERATURE')

by the Editor

THEODORE ROETHKE'S NOTIONS ABOUT the kinds of poetry which may prove significant to the English tradition were similar to those held by TRACE regarding all types of writing. This is affirmed in a first collection of his prose (*ON THE POET & HIS CRAFT* — \$3.95 — UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON Press) and in another book from the same press (*THEODORE ROETHKE, Essays on the Poetry*, edited by Arnold Stein — \$5) by nine prominent figures, including Ralph J. Mills, Jr., editor of the foregoing. Though Roethke was of the Academy, he was quite independent of the written and unwritten rules thereof, and proceeded — not just in his poetry — as teacher and critic without bias favoring those with degrees or other decorations. Coincidentally, a third book relevant to the theme is out (*THE GOLIARD POETS, Medieval Latin Songs & Satires*, with verse translations by George F. Whicher — \$7.50 & \$3.25 — NEW DIRECTIONS). As Whicher points out in a fine introduction, Goliard and His Tribe, these works were not approved by the Church and 'respectable' scholars of that time.

Descriptions of these may lead readers to them — and to much that's pertinent to an editorial intention to print what appears to have purpose and to provide an outlet and a viewing stand not limited to new writers with 'political' advantages of academic connections. The TRACE aim is to publish both these and talented people who have little (perhaps no) recognition from those critics who give surplus weight to writers credited with being better equipped by formal training.

Review of Roethke along with the Goliards is by no means to suggest many parallels in the poetries themselves. Roethke was rarely remotely 'Goliardic'; he was too seriously obsessed to be lightly mocking and satirical to any degree. Yet, had he been a Twelfth Century resident, his views would have made him a Goliard apologist if not their close kin.

Of his own kind of poetry, Roethke says, in Open Letter: '... the poet, in order to be true to what is most universal in himself, should not rely on allusion; should not comment or employ many judgment words; should not meditate (or maunder). ... His language must be compelling and immediate: he must create an actuality. He must be able to telescope image and symbol. ... He works intuitively, and

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EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

Who Knows the Length of the Umbilical Knot?

Dear Editors:

Just the other side of the grave is a state more easily reached than those unsuspecting might suppose — a state, I say,

And on occasion. From thence and that conditioning I have often returned. I alone go; and am titularly titled Drone in Golgonooza, whose mistress is Oothoon. She abides. My share in her realm is to come and go and to be curtailed, my comeuppance, as oft as I return — for ego has no Place so named. And, without such, what is art and literature, so-called?

My reports are called Fancies, or writings, or art (?), and I am thus shortly heeled-in, on my return, a divot restored to our (yours and mine) generously sheared and green Dimensions. From Cyclopean, eyesore towers, set up the board in corners, issue ivory, eyefull Winds. Be so advised. My 'writings' and 'art' are Visionary — as aptly copied as is humanly possible.

Take the reachless world. Take art and literature. Idiots and Masterminds! Divide it between you! May you haggle recklessly over the price. Even now the criteria of your despair slips between your fingers into fetid pans of critique.

I thank you for listing my recent publication, *An Ancient Understanding*, and for your kindly mentioning my *Asylum For the Resumption of Art*. One alteration, please. I no longer sell. To myself I give the vanity of giving. While the store lasts, I shall honor any request for my small publications. Generous? You bet. Mightn't there be others who feel the cheeky wind and know the stop-breath aristocracy of Vision un-beleaguered?

And who knows the length of the umbilical Knot?

J. E. L. Eldridge

SEEKS MASTERY OF HUMOR, SPONTANEITY AT THE CARD-PUNCH

Dear Editors: I did not realize that Samuel Langhorne Clemens had been copying my style until I began reading the collection of his short stories recently. I notice that he has even gone to the extent of claiming that he died years ago, in order to convince people that he could not have stolen my material and ideas. I also regretfully notice that he has tremendously improved on my stuff. That is a prominent reason why I bog down so lavishly when trying to read his works. Oh, wellenheimer, I shall plod forward with little pockets of courage popping out in me every once in a peppery while. I am not afraid to scrutinize the works of the Severe Six (Gilbert Abbott a Beckett, Robert C. Benchley, Miguel de Cervantes, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Will Cuppy, and Stephen Leacock); I hesitate in case there may be something else I can do as a lame excuse. On a portable metal table, known vulgarly as a TV table, I have put: *THE COMIC BLACKSTONE* by a Beckett; *THE BENCHLEY ROUNDUP* by Nokbod Nikobodsky — no, by Benchley, I guess you could tell; and two copies of *TRACE*, Nos. 56 and 57. (Neglect the two copies of *TRACE*, for now; we will drive a wedge into that literature later.) Then whenever I feel like activating my home library, I carry the little table covered with books into the restroom, sit down at the library-posture seat, and try to read some of a Beckett or of Benchley. Naturally, like any other home library scholar of the age, I accomplish other important functions as I sit there trying to read — like any great scatologist of the age. The other functions — interconnected with digestion and such vital physiology — have always been top-notch joys for me. And they are currently exceeding the reading of a Beckett and Benchley as joys, mainly due to how depressed and frustrated I become as I see how proficient those two authors were (are). I have become so discouraged at their superiority that I have been

bogging down in early pits of their books.

Trying strenuously to fight through those three books mentioned, I do not feel up to undertaking DON QUIXOTE again. Cervantes will not mind my laggardliness. Nor do I have the strength to haul LAUGH WITH LEACOCK out onto my moveable reading stand. THE RISE AND FALL OF PRACTICALLY EVERYBODY, by one Will Cuppy, nestles threateningly in a cardboard box underneath the active books and TRACES. The TRACES are a couple of the most active of all, but we are not ready to tear into them critically viciously yet. Let me work up to it as I recall as many key words as I can for the project: calumniate, vilify, deride, castigate, libel, slander, excoriate, put down, attack, demean, thrust, assault, singe, tear apart, slap, smash, smack, debase, ridicule. There; I'm getting warmed up now. Soon I shall lash out with unmitigated feebleness.

Frankly and in truth difficult to admit, I bog down on the literature I like and go hoping for access to filmy things like LIFE and MAD to relieve myself from tackling the more highly valued works that I have aforesaid said. When those lighter hack sheets are whipped aside, remains there underneath, the same pile of challenges — or the same pile of challenges remains underneath, if you want to straighten out that structure — along with the traces of two TRACES.

I have TRACES Nos. 56 and 57, and I am entitled to Nos. 58 and 59, besides, later, am I not, O Creditor? I mean O Editor? Yes, I get two more, and four of them will make a fine stack of unprotected stuff to criticize. My polite cackling is intermingled with demented shrieks and muffled barks, as I thrash crazily around my combination bedroom and pad, contemplating the delight of four whole TRACES to lambaste. O, it will be so opportune!

Excuse me for losing my crafty composure again. Any-nice-way, I am mostly kidding, if not jesting as I josh. I like TRACE better than any magazine known (to me), with the

glaring exception of one religious magazine, which sublime journal can go unnamed herein lest you deride me cagily forever. Also, let me qualify my relative evaluation of TRACE by writing that what I regard as the best parts of MAD can vie with what I regard as the best parts of TRACE. Still, I tentatively rated TRACE above MAD, considering just what all I have read of TRACE. I shall subscribe further if I have that much money at reordering time. I do not go completely through TRACE as I do peruse every goofy word of MAD. For hilarious instance, I have not been able to manage much of your poetry. Fortunately for me, most of the poetry is isolated in its own section, so I can more easily skip over it. But maybe some day I will be able to read that poetry like a good scout. Let us just for the mumbling moment say that I am not very poetic and permit that explanation to assuage us all.

Come to scheme about it, having bounced over a few of the poems in your periodical periodical, I derangedly conceive that you might find interesting some of my spontaneous compositions at the typewriter or at the card-punch. They are nonsensical too. I shall include a few of them for your aggravated aggrandizement. As in accordance with the deal that I stated initially in this letter, you shall not be requested to reply with any approximations of how awful those spontaneous compositions are. However, if you are overcome by inner turmoil that must be expressed, you may let me have it, May, right in my criticism listening registry box.

D. McKee

Declares 'Describees' Altered by Reading Descriptions

Dear Editors:

I take issue with Mr. Thompson (TRACE No. 56, p. 32): '... human beings will be what they are regardless of mistakes in describing them.' Leaving aside the question who, by what objective authority, could ascertain a 'mistake,' I would point

out: people are in no small ways altered by reading descriptions of themselves, be they 'mistaken' descriptions or not. The describees react by becoming more or less like their descriptions; the next describer describes the altered describees who may now react again, etc.

Many examples are possible. Consider how much of the beat generation jive was influenced by descriptions thereof. There may be ultimate limits to the potentialities of human behavior; but this reminds me of Thoreau's story about the traveler who ventured out into the swamp after having been assured by his guide that there was a bottom to it. 'Hey, thought you said there was a bottom to this!' he hollered as he sank. 'There is, there is,' the boy said, 'but you haven't reached it yet.' . . .

Anyhow, the implications of Thompson's remark would be that neither psychologists nor artists can hope to influence human behavior by describing it. As regards artists, I consider this sacrilege. Hell, I've noticed people who've read my story book* have begun acting just a trifle differently in a few subtle ways.

Felix Singer

* THESE SEVENTEEN (1959).

WAITING FOR THE IMPACT

Helmer O. Oleson

Dear Editors:

I wish you well with your magazine. I have enjoyed it for years; and yet, strangely enough, I seem to be silently waiting for it to make an impact, to take a prominent position, to influence the course of our writing. I realize that Trace has a dual personality and has to exist in a kind of literary schizophrenia. That is, it is both a guide to periodicals, with reflections on same, as well as a true journal of literary opinion.

No one could be in as strategic position as Trace to detect current trends. Your coverage of writings is vast, and a real point of view could be expressed. Where you sometimes are peripheral, you could get into the Mainstream. And this is a good time. We are at the crossroad in American poetry for example, between the past and present, between the present and future. T. S. Eliot is gone. William Carlos Williams has been folded away. So has Dame Edith Sitwell. Also e. e. cummings. And Robert Frost. Who are among the advancing regiments? Trace, more than anyone, can discern the figures of the new, young, really significant writers, can build them up, encourage them.

Trace can point out the present trend of Poetry itself. Has the Glossolalia of the poetical dadaists diminished? Is Ginsburg through? Where are the Beats of yesteryear? Is Lowell — is Snodgrass — the Heir Apparent to the Great? If so, could not Trace give them a little space? The old DIAL went far because it had a stable of significant writers.

Well, so much for all of this, for which I hope I will be forgiven. As I get older, like Falstaff, I 'babble of green fields' and, with incurable optimism, feel there are great

potentialities in so many things that are not fully realized.

WANDERLUST

George Ryan

Calm blue in atoms of mist of octopus and sunfish runs
surfing on the wind's beach where palm-lined boulevard
veers round to houses and fields. . .

I have seen the Pacific look immobile in the sky part of
world and now return with shells tentacles and gulls wized
uncle's talk of whales. . .

THE CINEMATIC SHORT STORY FORMS

(A REVIEW OF KWAI DAN)

by A. Fredric Franklyn

IN A CINEMATIC AGE, WHEN THE frustrating creative density of American film producers has made the novel the chief source, even above stage vehicles, of material for screen adaptation, the short story form has been ignored so completely that its neglect is tantamount to criticism. The popularity of the novel with the artistic innocents of the motion picture industry notwithstanding, the medium is entirely inappropriate for any dramatic form of adaptation. The short story genre, on the other hand, is remarkably suited for the purpose. And the consistent failure of studio executives in the U.S.A., either to perceive its possibilities or to care about them, is annoyingly typical of their market-oriented insulation.

The four stories selected by Masaki Kobayashi for his KWAI DAN are taken from three of Lafcadio Hearn's collections: the first, THE BLACK HAIR, is taken from the 1900 collection, SHADOWINGS (reissued in 1919); both the second and third of the film's tales or episodes, YUKI-ONNA or SNOW-WOMAN (entitled THE WOMAN OF THE SNOW for the cinematic vehicle) and THE STORY OF MIMI-NASHI-HOICHI (called HOICHI-THE-EARLESS in this motion picture version) were taken from the 1904 collection, KWAI DAN, along with its title; the fourth and final of the film's stories, IN A CUP OF TEA, was selected from the 1902 collection, KOTTO: Being Japanese Curios with Sundry Cobwebs. None of the other stories in the other Hearn collections, JAPANESE Miscellany, ROMANCE OF THE MILKY WAY, and Other Studies and Stories, and SOME

CHINESE GHOSTS, has attracted Director Kobayashi's eye.

More successful in terms of completion than the original effort ten years ago to produce it, this second attempt to film the stories ran up over a million dollars in production costs for Japan's Toho Studios, coproducers. This is the equivalent of many millions of dollars in the production costs of a comparable American film, of course.

For all of that, and notwithstanding Art Director Shigemasa Toda's imaginative sets and Director of Photography Giyu Miyajima's rendering of them in color, as well as Yoko Mizuki's adaptations of them for the screen, the original tales have been fabricated from materials which do not bear too well the test of transplantation into a medium the nature of which Hearn, who died in 1904, could not have imagined. The success of the film — and it is successful after all — derives exclusively in three of the stories, and largely in HOICHI . . . , from the quality of the painstaking, even reverent production. The initial impact on the viewer is so considerable, in fact, that it is extremely difficult, at first, to analyze the film objectively.

Another incidental virtue is that the four stories have been treated by the adaptation as a group of short tales. It is a better choice than the alternative of attempting to magnify one of them into the feature length, by itself, or the idiocy of trying to isolate the juiciest of the gimmicks and situations in each and then scrambling them together to make a single feature. Any one of the stories is too thin to justify lengthening. In terms of themes, as well as story elements, the individual tales barely make the grade as episodes, but each at least has the integrity of its own identity and brevity. Their deficiencies, however, by no means are always true of cinematic adaptations of short stories to feature size. A great many short stories have more than sufficient substance to sustain this long film development. And this fictional form remains virtually an unexploited source of motion picture

material.

*

Masaki Kobayashi received his training from Keisuke Kinoshita (one of the dozen top directors in Japan, according to INTERNATIONAL FILM GUIDE, and one of the top nine, according to Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie). Kinoshita was formerly an assistant to the late Yasujiro Shimazu and, like him, a supporter of the controversial teacher-pupil method of training fresh directorial talent. Shimazu, a trainer of many fine directors, was himself trained as an assistant to Kaoru Osanai, one of the founders of the Shingeki movement (or modern style of drama) in Japanese motion pictures. Osanai had studied at the Moscow Art Theatre, worked in Max Reinhardt's Berlin theatre and, in 1913, introduced the method acting of Konstantin Sergeevich Alekseev (Stanislavski) to Japan.

Kobayashi became a full director about 1952. His 1956 supotsu-mono (or sport film) ANATA KAIMASU (I'LL BUY YOU) was an exposure of the overcommercialization of Japan's professional baseball world. Other films before KWAIDAN include: HARAKIRI/KUROI KAWA (BLACK RIVER), 1957; NINGEN NO JOKEN (THE HUMAN CONDITION), 1959; ROAD TO ETERNITY, 1960; and THE INHERITANCE, 1964.

*

Born out of wedlock in 1850, Patricio Lafcadio Tessima Carlos Hearn was the offspring of an Irish officer and surgeon in the British army and a Greek girl. His life bore many parallels to later migratory writers, like the itinerant Vachel Lindsay (who tramped through the American South in 1906 and the West in 1912, exchanging his poem, THE TREE OF LAUGHING BELLS, for bed and board); and the expatriate generation after World War I, and the beat generation after World War II.

As a fourteen-year-old child, Hearn managed to get from Santa Maura, the Greek island of his birth, to England.

Then, at nineteen, he came to the U.S.—in 1869. Here he was married for a time to a Negro girl and worked on newspapers in Ohio and Louisiana.

In Cincinnati, he worked from 1873 to 1878 on the *ENQUIRER* and the *COMMERCIAL*. In New Orleans, he worked from 1878 to 1887 on the *ITEM* and the *TIMES-DEMOCRAT*. He was also a contributor to *CENTURY MAGAZINE* and *HARPER'S WEEKLY*. The latter sent him on a commission to the island of Martinique, from 1887 to 1889, the source of his *TWO YEARS IN THE FRENCH WEST INDIES* (1890).

To compose his first ghost tales, which were set in a New Orleans background, Hearn studied the Cajun patois, a form of Canadian French spoken all through the bayou country.... He was almost blind in one eye and entirely blind in the other. He used to sign his name '—Hearn' to spoof his own erratic punctuation. He is said to have been remarkably unprepossessing, physically.

In 1890, he again expatriated himself—this time, to Japan. There he remained for the rest of his life, teaching English and ultimately becoming professor of English at Tokyo University. He married a Japanese girl, Setsuko Koizumi, who gave him several children and her own cognomen. Under the name Yakumo Koizumi, he became a Japanese citizen and renounced all ties with the Western World.

Almost unread outside academic circles in the United States, Britain, and the Continent, his name is one of the most familiar and beloved in Japanese literature. The esteem in which the Japanese hold his work, which has reflected their mythos with such marvelous sensitivity, is considerably greater than the reverence Americans have for Mark Twain or Herman Melville, or even that which the British have for Thomas Hardy or D. H. Lawrence. His other books include: *GLIMPSES OF AN UNFAMILIAR JAPAN*, 1894; *EXOTICS AND RETROSPECTIVES*, 1898; and *JAPAN, An Attempt at*

Interpretation, 1904.

HOICHI-THE-EARLESS

The third tale, HOICHI-THE-EARLESS, is the most impressive of the four. It is the least dependent upon production mechanics, yet most adaptable to them. A prose ballad about a balladeer, it recounts the events which made an expert biwa musician famous. Mimi-Nashi-Hoichi (Katsuo Nakamura) is a novitiate in the Akama-ga-Hara temple. This is the functional monument which was built to commemorate the sea battle of Dan-no-Ura, where the Heike family was exterminated by the Genji forces. The temple priests pray for the souls of the departed Heike warriors. These are the dead who become much taken with Hoichi's rendering of their saga. One of them comes each night to the temple to persuade Hoichi to accompany him to his masters to play and sing for them.

Circumstantially, Hoichi happens to be blind. Consequently, he cannot tell that he is being summoned by the dead. The Heike become so pleased with his art that, every night, they wish to hear him chant a portion of their saga, accompanied by his own biwa instrument. Hoichi is happy to do this, imagining in the freedom of his blindness that he is performing before an admiring and distinguished audience of daimios and their retinue. He does not know that he sits alone in a graveyard among lifeless monuments of wood and stone, playing for the invisible dead. The danger lies in the peril to his soul: in this way, the dead acquire dominion over the soul of a living person. The more often he has been successfully summoned by the dead, the deeper become the ties of his bondage to them.

Learning of his danger, the temple priest (Takashi Shimura) warns Hoichi of what is happening to him and of the necessity to do as he is told if he is to be saved. The priest has an acolyte paint various sutra (aphorisms from the narrative parts of the Pali Buddhist scriptures) over every

surface inch of the young man's body. When the acolyte has finished this labor, the priest asks him if he is certain that he has missed no area of skin. The acolyte assures his priest that Hoichi's person is now completely protected by sutra. The priest cautions Hoichi then to remain motionless and silent, and to resist all efforts to lure him back to the graveyard when the shade of the Heike warrior comes for him.

That night, when the apparition of the deceased samurai appears to summon the young man to his masters, he cannot see Hoichi's body which has been rendered invisible to him by the ideographs of scripture. Circling the novitiate's position where he is seated on the temple porch, the dead warrior perceives Hoichi's ears, the only portions of his skin the acolyte had neglected to paint. The ghost of the samurai grasps the exposed ears, brutally wrenching them from the young man's head. He takes them back to his dead masters and fellows as evidence that he has done what was possible to fulfill his mission.

The aftermath is fortuitous: the dead Heike leave Hoichi alone. His soul is safe from them now. His rendering of the ballad about the doom of the Heike has become even more refined and sensitive. He acquires a reputation which brings people from all over Japan to hear him play his biwa and sing the saga of The Sea Battle of Dan-no-Ura. The temple, too, becomes enriched from the gifts which Hoichi's wealthy admirers leave. * Katsuo Nakamura, who has since appeared in Shiro Toyoda's *SHADOW ON THE WAVES* (1964), is both an actor and a personality, always an effective combination on the screen. His role as Hoichi is not a difficult one in terms of transitions. There are almost none, in fact. But the character requires absolute belief from an actor, and Nakamura has brought the necessary evidences of conviction, and probably has profited from some kind of method training. At least, his craft and his approach to the part exhibit assurance and

deliberation. He has the same technique of making the silences — especially — work for him as, say, the young Conrad Veidt. The intensely individual approach which Veidt brought to the craft was apparent even in his silent films. He also played an astonishing variety of roles in such classics as Robert Wiene's *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI* (1919), F. W. Murnau's *JANUS FACED* (1920), Richard Oswald's *LADY HAMILTON* (1921) and *CARLOS AND ELIZABETH* (1924), Paul Leni's *WAXWORKS* (1924), and Henrik Galeen's *THE STUDENT OF PRAGUE* (1926). Even at that early period, of course, Veidt was already playing older roles. But his reaction style established almost a standard, enduring after the advent of sound, for actors working within a sequence where there is no dialogue to lean upon. In much younger roles, this same facility in projecting emotion without words is the essence of Nakamura's craft. * Takashi Shimura's role as the priest is as brief as most of the parts he has recently played, in films such as Seiichiro Uchikawa's remake of Akira Kurosawa's *JUDO SAGA* (1965), Kurosawa's *RED BEARD* (1964-65), and Kihachi Okamoto's *SAMURAI ASSASSIN* (1964). But Shimura has played larger roles as the samurai leader in Kurosawa's *SEVEN SAMURAI* (1954), the attorney in his *SCANDAL* (1950), and even the lead as Kanji Watanabe in Kurosawa's *IKIRU* (*DOOMED*) (1952). He is, in my opinion, one of the best living cinema character-actors. *

BLACK HAIR

KWAI DAN'S first episode, **BLACK HAIR**, is the story of a poor samurai of Kyoto (Rentaro Mikuni) whose ambition compels him to abandon his first wife (Michio Aratama) for a second (Misako Watanabe) whom he does not love, but whose family can give him position and means. Ultimately he becomes so heartsick for the unselfish love of his first wife that he cannot get her and the happiness he has lost out of his mind. And he grows so violently unhappy with the vain and selfish woman he has married for social advancement that this consideration ceases to be strong enough to bind him to their relationship. Years have passed, but the memory of his first wife's perfect love has never dimmed. At last he breaks with his position and the woman who brought it to him, returning to Kyoto to look for his first wife.

Except for the insignificant size of the wife's role, the story might be classed either as a *kachusha-mono* (the self-sacrificing heroine drama) or the *tsuma-mono* (a wife picture). Because of the background, it is also what the Japanese call *jidai-geki* (period drama). But its lack of any point beyond the shortsighted concerns and the negligible problems of its protagonist place it more accurately in the category of *giri-ninjo* conflict, duty versus inclination, another classic pattern in the Japanese cinema. The intention, of course, is tragedy.

When the foolish samurai first returns, all seems as before. His wife is still young and beautiful. She adores him just as always, understanding and forgiving all. Exactly as he had hoped, she is as selflessly devoted as ever. They talk all night and make love between them in an atmosphere of complete intimacy and accord. But when the sun in his eyes awakens the samurai the following afternoon, his house has become a ruin, his wife's loving face, a skull, and her young

body, a skeleton. All that remains of her youth and beauty and spirit is her long black hair.

To this point, although it is difficult to dignify their personal drama by viewing it as high-order tragedy, it has been possible at least to care for the persons involved. Unfortunately, in lieu of a more organic resolution for their melodrama, Yoko Mizuki and Masaki Kobayashi have resorted to the kind of pseudo-horror and fortuitous fantasy which suggest the weaknesses of farce more nearly than they do a suitable climax. The wig begins chasing the samurai all through the ruined estate's structural bones. There is a long anticlimactic sequence in which the audience is constrained to watch the protagonist tripping over endless fallen beams and repeatedly falling through rotting planking, until at last scenarist and director have finished with the emotionally-static antics of this addendum.

*

In their definitive history and commentary, *THE JAPANESE FILM* (GROVE Press, 1960), Anderson and Richie have this to say in reference to the weaker dramatic cinema formulae, such as the *haha-mono* (home drama or mother films) and the *o-namida chodai eiga* (or tears-please films):

Japanese features as a whole are much more concerned with trivial emotionalism than with any higher tragic feeling. The usual word for tragedy in Japanese is *higeki*, and the literal meaning of this word, sad play, comes much closer to what it really is. The truth is that not only in the movies but also in every form of Japanese drama there is really no need for a word fully to describe a play that deals with, say, the subject matter of *PHEDRE* or *KING LEAR* because such emotional heights are completely missing.

We would call the genre melodrama, of course. And yet I sometimes think it is a pity that this particular word has, through arbitrary usage, acquired this pejorative onus. It seems to me that there is an urgent need in theatre for a

term to designate a great body of dramatic material which, although plays in this group cannot be classified as either comedy or tragedy, are composed of a demonstrably richer substance than kitchen drama, situational romances, sexual triangles, and tear-jerkers. At one time, the term melodrama was more appropriate and available for specific usage.

WOMAN OF THE SNOW

The second tale, *WOMAN OF THE SNOW*, irks a viewer, as it would a reader, the while it seeks to entertain with the very device which becomes troublesome to an audience. It is a fantasy and also a moral tale. The essence of this combination is that it must contain a character with whom the audience can identify; and this character must meet with a test-obstacle either in the form of a hopeless situation or of a superhuman antagonist.

The devil, in this genre of moral fantasies in our own literature, is a familiar example of the more-than-human opponent. From Stephen Vincent Benet's *THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER* to John Collier's *FANCIES AND GOODNIGHTS*, there are endless versions of what is basically a 'biter, bit' story in the form of fantasy. . . .

Fundamentally, the situation evolves out of a character who, because of his own weakness or venality, has imperiled something of a higher order of value than the gain he had hoped from the compromise he has chosen to make for it: i.e., his soul, if the devil is his antagonist. But we are all guilty, at one time or another, of bad judgment and excessive appetite. And so we identify with this poor Tchitchikov — especially when we learn the superhuman nature of his antagonist. This inequality of strength in the enemy, of course, stands for the inhuman fates which our instinctive paranoia views as arbitrarily, unjustly, and perpetually aligned against us. Man is that serious two-legged little beaver or squirrel who becomes neurotic when his own machinery does not respond at all times with the same

promptitude and reliability. We always know that any mechanical failure reflects a deliberate attempt on the part of machinery or equipment to frustrate our entirely worthy and important purposes!

Now our hero has got himself involved with our most ancient enemy. We know he probably can't win, but the ensuing struggle tags our emotions in two ways. First, we can't help hoping that just once the miraculous will intervene to save him, despite his second-hand tools and his loss of innocence. (The miracle is our symbol for an entirely unfounded notion that there is a positive force operating in the universe which, with a volition on the side of the human experience, opposes itself to the insufferable injustice of an unthinking and uncaring universe which has remained almost completely indifferent to man's purposes.) And second, if nothing saves him — neither his wit nor magic, nor any convenient spate of miracles — then there is the momentary gratification of pointing his finger at injustice aborning: he has witnessed a proof-positive instance that there are malignant designs operating against his interests, and which are demonstrably beyond his control in this great vastness. For an informed and dedicated injustice-collector, this humanoid biped with his opposing thumb and his half-assed awareness of his own nature, this is no small satisfaction!

There is no limit, in fact, to the amount of testing to which we are willing to submit. If we pass, or if our hero makes the grade for us by proxy, this is taken as evidence that we are stronger than the darkness and division irremediably awaiting us, and we can enjoy a momentary illusion of security. If he fails, then, ahah! — we knew what it was all about all along anyway: we never had a chance! We knew that. We weren't fooled for a minute, were we? Proof-positive that we were right! Somebody's after us . . . (And they're probably closing in!)

In Hearn's version of this fiction, a young lumberjack, Minokichi (Tatsuya Nakadai), goes to the woods with a friend, an old man (Jun Hamamura). A severe snow storm forces them to take refuge in an abandoned mountain hut. Inside, they fall asleep. Minokichi awakens to find the yuki-onna (snow-woman, Keiko Kishi) in the little cabin with them. He is terrified as he watches her kill his companion by freezing him to death in his sleep. When she is finished with the old man and turns to approach Minokichi, he can only stare at her in paralyzed fascination, knowing his own death is imminent.

But he happens to be a handsome woodsman. Taking pity on his youth and looks, the yuki-onna spares him. She warns him, however, that he must not tell any other person what befell him in this place and what he had seen. If he ever betrays this secret, she will return and kill him.

Minokichi returns to his home, but he is in a state of semi-shock for about a year. Eventually, he recovers and returns to work. Shortly afterward, he befriends a lovely young orphaned girl (also Keiko Kishi, as Oyuki) with whom he eventually falls in love. They marry and, as the years pass, they have children. Theirs is the happiest family in the village.

The audience, to be sure, is aware of the plot Gestalt controlling these sequences sub rosa: Oyuki is the yuki-onna. And of course Minokichi is not aware of this. The situation rigs the question: will he slip and finally betray his secret? It is a sword of Damocles hanging over his head, with the added element that he is an uninformed Damocles. He does not even know that he is being tested every minute of his life. At least, like his audience, he does not know this in a conscious way. The question is not even will he fall sooner or later and spring the trap, but when will he open his mouth and mess everything up. He's got a nice thing going for himself here. It's almost as if fortune (or some such

intervening instrument of the Fates) were disposed to favor his projects and his days. For the true injustice-collector, that kind of healthy and rewarding state of affairs is, indeed, unendurable!

Of his own volition, as it turns out, poor Minokichi never does blab anything. However, dissatisfied by his excellent behavior and his faithful silence, the wife herself finally decides to prod him; she deliberately permits him to see the resemblance, in a certain light, between herself and the yuki-onna. Her mean trick works: taken by surprise, Minokichi's reserve is shattered and he unthinkingly tells Oyuki whom she has reminded him of and recounts the experience he'd had with the yuki-onna years before. Naturally, he is under the impression that he is merely relating his story to his loving wife. But Oyuki is instantly transformed into the vengeful yuki-onna, and our protagonist has blown his cool . . . in more than one sense.

It all seems terribly unfair; but that is precisely the point of course. It's no more just than poor Oedipus' fate, or than the gratuitous abuses practiced on us by the nameless malignancies which invisibly populate the voids surrounding our maggot-lives in this awful universe.

Minokichi's personal devil is less vengeful than she might have been. She merely deserts him, with the warning that she had better never hear of any cruelty or neglect on his part with the children (whom she also is deserting). But her departure and warning, in this fashion, merely puts the resolution off and, in the classic manner, leaves our hero in another version of exactly the same dilemma. The audience is itching with the knowledge that their proxy hero is still being tested; and the new test is to last the rest of his life! The story has come full circle back to its original question: Have we got a chance? It's rough!

* *

Tatsuya Nakadai, like his actress wife, comes from the Japanese stage. He has appeared in major supporting roles in a considerable number of films. He was the villain in Akira Kurosawa's YOJIMBO (1961) and in SANJURO (1962). He played Kawanishi in Kurosawa's HIGH AND LOW (1963). And he was in Toshiro Mifune's LEGACY OF THE 500,000 (1963). Etc.

As it happens, however, Nakadai's first role was in another film directed by Kobayashi, NINGEN NO JOKEN (THE HUMAN CONDITION, 1959). His role in Kwaidan, although a lead, is a thankless one for an actor, because the character is not created but taken for granted, and requires only obedience to a pre-established image. Even within these limits, he has brought something individual to his performance of the lumberjack. There is a certain authority in his work which is not dissimilar to the atmosphere of unique personality projected also by Toshiro Mifune and Yuzo Kayama, two of his contemporaries at Toho Studios (the stars of Kurosawa's AKAI HIGE [RED BEARD], scheduled for release the first part of 1966).

The craft of all three actors suggests this same strong essence of individual force. The authority they get from it is apparent in their similar command of environment and objects, and their smallest personal gestures and physical patterns. All three are competent actors, but they are formidable personalities. So much personality limits their range somewhat, since much of the interpretation they bring to any role inevitably derives from it. Yet, the atmosphere of this personality also distinguishes the parts they play with a considerable amount of empathy which carries over from picture to picture. They are memorable actors, more memorable than their roles! That is their strength . . . and their weakness.

IN A CUP OF TEA

The final legend, IN A CUP OF TEA, is the thinnest of the four. Like the others, it lacks fully-dimensional people, and

hence, convincing relationships. Also, like them, it lacks a seaworthy purpose (i.e., an engaged theme). Unfortunately, this one is not even redeemed by the kind of psychological and entertainment gimmicks which prop up the other plots. The added complexity of a plot outside the plot, which has been tacked on the beginning and the end, far from infusing the tale with any substance, merely compounds the story's essential weakness — which is its complete lack of any point.

The inner core of the story attempts, with partial success, to get some suggestion going of an atmosphere of occult mysteries. But this arcane promise, too, piddles out because never fully explored. At the conclusion, the audience is left hanging.

A samurai (Kanyemon Nakamura) stops with his retinue at a temple for a cup of tea. (The background circumstance of the temple provides the necessary believable environment for the supernatural event.) A face appears on the surface of the tea in his cup (Noboru Nakaya). It is no one the samurai has ever seen before. He discards the cup; but the same face reappears in the next cup he selects, and continues to appear in each cup he attempts to drink from, until finally the samurai impatiently drinks from one of the cups anyway.

He has, obviously, failed THE TEST. And he will now suffer the consequences!

That neither the terms of the examination nor even the existence or purpose of it have been stated in advance is only the more annoying. But that's entirely acceptable.... The audience knows that, in a cosmological sense, they always are threatened by a state of unplanned, unreasoning, and (above all) unjust chaos, into the maw of which they anticipate they'll unwittingly stumble at any time of life. (This is the deep paranoid protest we make against our own death. And indeed there is some justification for this. We are the only species aware throughout life that we finally must die, notwithstanding any amount of physical and emotional

labors along the way. We endure the knowledge, more or less, because we have no alternative ... except death and insanity! But probably, on some level of the unconscious, each human being spends a considerable quantity of psychic energy constructing a massive subconscious protest.)

There is, or usefully could be, a craft-ethic applied to this kind of tale: some alternative behavior on the part of the protagonist — even though its possibility remains unrealized — ought to be made explicitly clear to the audience. The obvious reason for this is to make possible a meaningful obligatory scene ... involving the issue of choice (the essence of all drama for us, passionately believing, as we do, in the reality of free will).

But there is at least another reason just as structurally urgent: without that focus of a specific choice between two clearly (and dramatically) defined alternatives, both the audience's empathy for the protagonist and its willingness to suspend a normal disbelief in fantasy must die stillborn. The audience has no opportunity to make the necessary identification in terms of their own experience.

This is exactly the difficulty here. The samurai is now haunted by the dead man whose soul he drank — he belatedly discovers — when he persisted in satisfying his thirst at the temple. (Just what the devil this busybody's soul was doing floating around in teacups in the first place is never explained even in a superficial way.) In drawing a sword on the apparition which now visits him, the samurai compounds his initial 'crime' by 'wounding' his victim's shade. For this fresh insult added to the original injury, the samurai becomes haunted by three shades who represent the ghost he has twice offended.

It's as though the protagonist of Kafka's *THE TRIAL* were to incur added indictment merely because he has instinctively tried to defend himself against the unspecified charges already brought against him! There is a physically very

active, but in all other ways tedious, scene in which, badgered by these crackpot paranoid ghosts, the poor samurai is forced to chase them around a yard with his sword. With the aid of cinematic trickery, the shades can appear and disappear at will on any given spot of ground. Minus the support of quasi-super-natural powers, the panting samurai rushes here and there after them, ineffectually slashing at them with his blade. Why they remain un-injured when their master's shade was cut by this same blade is another of these little unexplained questions which persist in rising to beggar belief in all this frenetic activity.

Aware that the photographic tricks and the energetic and pointless artificial respiration have not revived the audience's flagging interest, the makers allow the episode to persist deadeningly with a narrative switch in P.O.V. to the presumed 'author' of this tale. The explanation added by this complication is that the 'author' disappeared before completing the story.

As a kind of solace for thus short-changing the viewer about the conclusion, an entirely extraneous 'visitor' (he symbolizes the audience, of course) is brought to the missing author's home. The visitor can neither find his host nor any additional manuscript pages in the study. He is as frustrated as the audience he represents!

Conscious of this frustration, scenarist and director have one more gimmick in their bag of ancient time-honored cinematic clichés. In the garden now, the visitor takes a dipper and goes to the well for a drink of water. Frightened, he runs out of the garden. The camera dollies forward to the well. Peering over the edge, a by-now gimmick-fatigued and activity-drained audience discovers the missing author's image reflected on the surface of the water.

Presumably this completes some sort of plot circle. At least, it punctuates the story's long anticlimax!

*

In the cinema, as in any trade, there are certain professional terms which, while they apparently are part of a perfectly respectable specialized vocabulary, have fallen into a certain arbitrary disrepute. And even where we give the orphaned term the benefit of a lexicographic doubt, as I recommended supra for the word 'melodrama,' there always is a good reason for its estrangement from the idiom of its fellows. Another such term is 'gimmick.'

In theory, there's nothing wrong with the idea of a story gimmick, assuming that the device is contextually appropriate to begin with, and is used with discretion. Nevertheless, this word is almost invariably employed with some contempt. And true — as the contempt suggests — the device is most often either weak, itself, or used in a weak manner. The trouble is that it's too easy for an author to depend upon a gimmick which exceeds its function when he might more reliably have depended upon utility of solid characterizations and relationships, believable situations, and an arresting thematic purpose.

Merely to reproach Hearn's stories, or their screen adaptations, as gimmicky is, however, insufficiently illuminating in this context. Hearn after all was writing from the base of another culture — one for which he had acquired extraordinary sympathy and facility. Neither the culture nor the results of his explorations in their essentially-alien labyrinths can be summarily judged by our customary standards.

What does seem reasonably clear though is that these stories are not very substantial cinematic materials. Not if, like any other forms of drama, including radio, television, and the stage, the essential province of the cinematic medium is to look at the immediacies rather than at the relative eternities — to look at the human condition rather than longer-lived institutional processes, and to focus on

this humanity primarily through exploring (and exploiting) character in depth. To quote Alexander Pope: 'The proper study of mankind is man' — a generality which is a little broad, applied to every field of human activity! Yet it has been the successful basis of the work of every dramatist we reverence in Western culture: Shaw, Ibsen, Shakespeare, Arthur Miller, Chekhov, O'Neill, etc.

Neither is the weakness of these adaptations to be found in the fact that they are short stories. The form of the short story is admirably suited for transference to the plane of the screen . . . depending certainly upon the matter and quality of the stories chosen for such transformation. And the short story lends itself to adaptation either way: whether as an episode or segment of a film (like any of these tales included in *KWAI DAN*), or as the basis for complete feature-length screen plays. Surely the short story lends itself to screen treatment, in either manner, infinitely more readily than the preposterous dimensions of the novel!

The only logical reason for the marriage of two such utterly disparate media as the cinema and the novel is that such adaptations, howsoever clumsy and stupid and dull, offer a particular form of security which attracts a definite financial bias. When a producer purchases screen rights to a best seller, he knows that he can cash in on a pre-established — and widespread — acceptance.

While this makes all kinds of purely commercial sense, it has nothing to do with the artistic issue: Does or does not the novel, in most instances of adaptation (especially the popular epic novel), lend itself gracefully to cinematic interpretation? In fact, it almost never does! And again, there are solid reasons. The novel is so basically different, in terms of the type of content made possible by larger scope when realized by a fine author, that artistic interpretation is impossible in a medium which can offer the same material in perhaps as much as a tenth as much time. So,

paradoxically, the better the novel in realizing all its vaster dimensions of thematic and background complexities, the poorer it is as a source of screen fare.

The one thing the dramatic media cannot adequately treat with sufficient depth is the aforementioned matter of human institutions. Oh—as background elements, in a very superficial way, it is practicable (and often expedient) to take hit-and-run shots at things such as war, fanaticism, politics, education, etc. But only a medium with the isochronal dimension of the novel can deal with them in a depth necessary to make them the point, the central core of a story. This is, in truth, the function which the novel, having grown out of the short story form (novella), exists to serve.

The sheer convenience permitted by the circumstance that a novel is packaged in a readily- and cheaply-obtained and preservable individual container makes a twenty or thirty hour time-investment from a reader reasonably expectable; he can arrange his own pace, picking up a book and putting it down at his leisure. So far, the artists of cinema cannot realistically anticipate that kind of time-investment from an audience which, even with its insatiable greed for gregarious entertainment and distraction, has all it can do to get to the theatre and to remain seated silently in one place for two or three or, at most, four consecutive hours. And when novels like Allen Drury's *ADVISE AND CONSENT* are adapted to the screen (Otto Preminger, producer and director, screen play by Wendell Mayes—1961), with all the mindless, robotic, and unimaginative faith of their scenarists and directors, they fail egregiously to do justice to the expectations of the portion of the audience which has been brought to the theatre because they have valued the book.

Adaptations such as that of Samuel Shellabarger's *CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE* (by Lamar Trott, directed by Henry King, Twentieth Century-Fox—1947) simply beg the whole

question. They deliberately limit the screen-play version to reproducing only a portion of the novel. A sensible choice, and uncommonly intelligent—much more so than thinning out every substance in a novel to try to cram it all into a meaningless three or four hours. But, commendable as the choice is, it is a tacit admission that the screen medium cannot (at least at present) reproduce an epic novel in entirety within the time limit to permit an audience to view it at one sitting.

Nor is that time limit greatly mitigated in the more comfortable situation of the television audience, whose predictable span of attention at the most hopeful estimates represents a similar obstacle. The serial solution (episodes of a continuous drama) offers its own problems — where there is serious dramatic purpose (as opposed to soap opera and science fiction). The audience, whether comfortably before a television set at home or less comfortably in a motion picture theatre, is required to repeat its attendance indefinitely, at the convenience of sponsor and producer, as many times as may be necessary to conclude a drama which has been given the actual length of a novel.

The short story, in contrast, is peculiarly ideal. In terms of plotting, it's sufficiently abbreviated not to impose any need for overuse of materials to translate it into a cinematic structure. This relative brevity is ideally conducive to limiting the makers to the kinds of very specific choices dramatists should make — of character and situation, plot development and background, and thematic complexity.

Almost any type of short story is more suitable to the screen, either in episodic or feature form, than the most carefully restricted novel. To some extent, this is true even of Hearn's tales. And what direction, photography, and sets have done for these adaptations almost overcome their cinematic difficulties. Yet, these particular stories are not representative of kinds ideal for screen treatment. Above all,

short stories involving perhaps only two or maybe three powerful characterizations and a single primary relationship seem the most suitable sources for motion pictures.

Thus far — and certainly in comparison with the novel — the short-story form has not influenced the cinema at all. But the reverse, curiously enough, is not true; the most ordinary commercial magazine writing has improved measurably in the last decade, in terms of thematic content as well as craft. Though there are other reasons, the renaissance of world cinema and the increasing popularity of film societies, art films, and foreign films in the United States, obviously have in some part been influences.

As general appreciation of them becomes more widespread, it may not be singular to anticipate that Japanese films, particularly, will affect the style of the short story in occidental countries. Japanese cinema makes extensive use of the kind of poetic imagery which also has informed and deepened the scope of fiction. To quote Anderson and Richie again:

This kind of montage is, to be sure, not unknown in the West, but it is very common in Japan and so uncommon elsewhere that almost every book in English on film aesthetics can find no better example than the scene in Basi Wright's *THE SONG OF CEYLON* where the sound of a bell startles a bird and the camera follows its flight as the sound of the bell dies away. Alistair Cooke has called this 'one of

the loveliest visual metaphors I have ever seen on any screen,' and so it may be. The point, however, is that this kind of thing is very rare in the West and yet so common in Japan that even the duller of the period thrillers make constant use of it. * * * * On a grass and weed-tapestried hill just outside our large back window, a single avacado tree, dripping random patterns of light and leaf, frames a rising sun. In this simplicity, the morning comes to us. It is

perpetually renewed.

THE CHRONICLE • An Evolving Directory (of magazines and publishers of literary intent)

Contents key: C=criticism; F=fiction; X=articles; P=poetry; At=all types of writings; G=graphic art; ?=unknown.

Format key: LP=letterpress; O=offset; D=mimeo/dupl.; ?=unseen.

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To be used with preceding Directories and with Address List herein (refers to all still-existing projects noted during 1965). The last complete address coverage is in TRACE No. 51 — intervening 1964 updating, in TRACE No. 55.

ACADEMUS, Apartado Postal 281, Jalapa, Ver., Mex. (Universidad Vera-cruzana publ., in Spanish.) AT; LP ; 6. Unpr.; '64.

ADAJ Press, 21 Hathaway Circle, Arlington, Mass. (REBIRTH, Edward Oster — \$1 — poetry, cover by Norman Gross.)

ALAN SWALLOW Publ., 2679 S. York St., Denver 10, Colo. (For review: THE BLACK PRESIDENT and other plays, James Schevill — \$2.50 & \$5.75. Also: LOVE ALWAYS, Vi Gale — \$3 — poetry; NOTES FOR A GUIDEBOOK, Lucien Stryk — \$2 — No. 32 in New Poetry Series.)

SCAN PP. 40-42, 116-124, 132-141

THE CHRONICLE

CHRISTOPHER PERRET

SUNSET

Now it is time we lay down here the two of us
on this stone bench and locked our arms our
fingers hearts and linked our legs — as if
nothing no one no sunset nor rising
of the moon no parties at variance no old
religions to speak of mattered
Can it be fright which whispers
words of uncertain courage one mouth filling
the other mouth with premonition?
Through rusty clouds the sun comes out its one
last wink loosening our yoke which is uncertain
if forever sworn — The clouds break then
gathered shuttle their knickerbockers through
the sky and close the fiery censorious eye
to daylight — the breath sucked in
the elemental breadth slammed
shut with suddenness — the only light there is
within us two gleams best if small
its thread of flashlight beam groping feeling
its way when that vast light surrounding us
smelling of paraffin the wick snuffed out
shows us against the sky this silhouette of
arbitrary love against all reason — Now it is
time we stood and promised sun-up once again

(Lydden/Kent — Dec. '62)

CHRISTOPHER PERRET

BIRD (FOR ANNE)

Gull Kite Lark
Spark Raven and Quail
Wherever you sleep and rub your eyes to wake
neither striking in one direction
nor another
you are winged
you are the fluttering
your hair sifting the pollened wind is the thread binding
the rainbows
You are Bird
bird yellow as sun bright with forever
star flying backwards
the ageless plumed
shaft born of its pennants of light
round as orange
still as seven o'clock
You are Bird
and a globe revolving on its axis of sweat
a sky full of salt
and a hand brim with twinkles and clams
an eye turning on a windblown branch
a blush tilted from the sunburnt lemon
bitter with truth
lovely as sin naked veiled in a skin mantilla of sea

CHRISTOPHER PERRET

YOU ARE AS BEAUTIFULLY EMPTY AS YESTERDAY

when the sun winks at evening
and the sails of homing boats dip
where the stillness sinks into our curving backbone
and you bend in my arms like a bow
and tremble on the flashing arrow of me
and the sea swells with the breath of our kiss
driving its schools of darts kneedeep into our spines
shuddering for now
promising forever
our intertwined hands full of insects' wings and the
scales of fish
and night careening its hosanna of speed and of sound
descending
gathering our bodies in a deathlike cry
I love you
My hand is open
Fly

(Deya — Feb. '65)

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CHRISTOPHER PERRET

TOMORROW SUPPLANTS THE PISTOL

(for Magdalena)

Prisyptkin: No, I was just scratching myself.

(from Mayakovsky's THE BEDBUG)

The nameless frost of yesterday snuggled tight against the cold sings out its balling chant of drunkenness through factorystreet's blood-memory: for me its filth is scrawled on film of violence winding tight reels of banishment shattered from wealth offspring of yours in cunning stealth

We lift our faces we drink the sun from goblets play with the moon and call the stars by nickname: The audience acknowledges our bread is heart

Take me by hand to bed's embracing to sheltered kiss where pink of wall and green of glass fly out from steeples gothic mass and preening peacock's fall: Then let the faceless look through eyeless keyholes

Invisible in love make of me black and white and red mixed in one flag rolled up against the past: When now we walk let us keep silent anyhow

No need of purple messages on printed skies of social cries strangling the threatened breath of bone and brake with miasma's lies: And as we one day die why not take life by throat and force its laugh with threat of gold

ISSUE P. 353 · SCAN P. 47

JOANNE DE LONGCHAMPS

WRITING THE POEM

Vanitas, vanitas
when a poem takes theme
from the slights of Time.
As I write
my left arm must unbend
and flare this crooked hand
that wears its twenty years of rings
like a bright duet between
a cross-hatched score of gesturings.
Flesh, my clock, my hearth and wall,
Time throws a noose around the bone.
The web at knuckle, elbow, throat,
informs the poem.
And woman is her body,
undone, richer for invasion.
Poem as necessity,
nervosity, clearinghouse
for a surplus of suspense;
hates, tics, tensions of remorse
and attentions of love,
an intercourse with gods?
Poem as person, body's speech
reaching beyond these to itself?

ISSUE P. 354 · SCAN P. 48

JOANNE DE LONGCHAMPS

NAMES FOR THINGS!

The marvel of naming words, nuance and number of nouns

— Take one bird:

TURNSTONE : Sea Dotterel; Sea Quail;
Sand-runner; Stone-pecker; Horsefoot
Snipe; Brant-bird; Bead-bird; Checkered
Snipe; Red-legs; Red-legged Plover;
Chicken; Chicken Plover; Chicken-bird;
Calico-back; Calico Bird; Calico-jacket;
Sparked-back; Streaked-back; Chuckatuck;
Creddock; Jinny; Bishop Plover.

A nine-inch Sisyphus of shore, chestnut-checkered wing,
a bill for a wedge to force and fling. And Turnstone I in a
gravelly gyre — Under what stone an answer to hunger,
under what pebble a poem?

ISSUE P. 354 · SCAN P. 48

MATHEMATICS OF IMAGINATION, A MEASURE OF MEMORY —

Words, air, for ruler and square, form for the formless and
warm —

Persiflage, mirror, mirage —

Theorems of discontent,

or simply which way I went —

JOANNE DE LONGCHAMPS

**UNCOMMON SENSE OF EXPERIENCE, OR
CONJUGATION OF SENSES — SEARCHING AND
MAKING, BEAUTY AS BREAKING — MYTH-EATEN,
MYSTERY-MONGERING — A VESSEL, A VICE OR A
CHISEL TO CARVE THE COLD AS ONE CLEAR
CRYSTAL? 6 NOT STRAIGHTLY BUT ASKANCE TO
LOVE, TO THE POEM, MOVE IN OBLIQUE
BRILLIANCE — A RACING DANCE, A FLASH-FIRE
GRACE. I KNOW IT IS BY INDIRECTION THAT I
GO. 7 WORDS, MY FLESH, MY CAGE AND WALL
FLARE FROM THE CROSS-HATCHED PAGE. THE
HAND FALLS IN A RAGING NET — LET THE POEM
STAND.**

ISSUE P. 356 · SCAN P. 50

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

DIANA . . .

*Meine Herren, meine Mutter prägte
Auf mich einst ein schlimmes Wort:
Ich würde enden im Schauhaus
Oder an einem noch schlimmern Ort.
Ja, so ein Wort, das ist leicht gesagt.
Aber ich sage euch: Daraus wird nichts!
Das könnt ihr nicht machen mit mir!
Was aus mir wird, das werden wir schon sehen!
Ein Mensch ist kein Tier!
. . . WIE MAN SICH BETTET / Bertolt Brecht*

Not the rain nor yet the hour have stopped your face or your
hands. Your surprises repeat in tides.

Your voice ascends
this flight of eyes —
a color of worlds.
Your legs solicit
in my ears
with feet which trespass
on green waters —
dawn's grass.

You are every brave act that the morning was meant to
save. Recalled by afternoons, imprisoned in another's nights,
you live many times.

Your meaning is reluctant
in these swimming vocabularies,

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

floating on the surface
of this pool of reference
like wet flies —
a part of all of it
and something more —

the moon's old argument adrift
among stellar lights.
All the seasons are renewed.
They remember your going.
Know too
how quickly your violence
made vacuums and atmospheres.
Your questions —
evergreen now —
hide in forests,
in shades of meaning,
suggesting rivers;
arise
as eagles
below whose wings
mountains
rush into the earth . . .
Your music
exists
outside of days
where thought's trunks
leap from the planet's crust
spreading arms
on the way to suns.
I am the stupid fragments
of a single, meaningful view
which your going
tore into pieces.
How good
of time
to have left me odors
and spoiled my pattern.

ISSUE P. 358 · SCAN P. 52

JORY SHERMAN

THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG STRUGGLE

Wild among the winds and with
a scare fullblown and aching in
an inside of me, I am with
a mountain and a man afraid
Of dream, and smoke and mist
I see the listen cities take on
faces, and little trembling flowers,
and I see them fume with life with deaths.
The cities with their peoples,
their names like john like snow,
and me among them all like brume
I have to tremble I have to think.
Among them smoky, with a wind
to waft me away in fright for
today or worse tomorrow with its
mountain wrapped in lethal cloud:
I have to cope with winds with
frights, those wooden scarecrow
figures of straw and recent suits,
who wave bereft of mind and thought
about my bloomed and foaming fields.

JORY SHERMAN

A FAIR AFTERMATH

Morning, the chalk-ghost riser
among damp ferns, moans a cold and hollow
trumpet where the distance brings in
its thick and deathly mists to my breath.
The black was cut to shreds, hung in
thin blood-strips, tacked with pink, marked
in its passing by the scalpel of the moon.
Between our legs, then, this solitary limbo.
The ice-plants near the sea writhe,
pushing the sand away from roots
with arthritic fingers, and
a red star shrivels its baking nerves
on the hot land deserted by the tide.
The dead are huddled in blankets, two,
lying on a heath of fog, you and I,
between lines of silence, wet with
only what was left of love.

ERIK KIVIÄT

MYTH OF SLEEP

My name changes in a street like dark orphans.
From the temple of winds, swift angels ride
to synchronize my fingers. Darkness
never falls, but lowers itself about me,
a vaguedark trance of albatross.
Nor does snow fall but burrow downward,
thru shards of alien air. In this dark street,
the silence is indefinite,
like the wavering throng of winter.
Thru this house of foreign minstrels,
november angels pass. They do not hear me.
I speak with a stretching of angular wings.
Along causeways of dusk, mute angels rise,
and ride to question the drooping trees
that stir in sacrificial whisper.

ERIK KIVIÄT

THE SOFT MUSIC

Where the music walks, the stone passageways,
melting in a midnight clamor of extinguished harps,
clothed in the electric & dancing air
that sings, that chords, that listens
to itself, when the light to read by
no longer vanishes in passionless statues.
Ah the soft music comes, like swallows of winter
from faroff lands. It swells, the intramural casement
of the soft dance; the dance of flesh on flesh that
chants itself upright to the music of the skin flute.
The soft music like soft slow rains, oozing clouds,
languidly electric rains in a libriated husk.
And the shattered light of moon that soothes
the skeletal wallways, each stone
that had been a mirror in a higher life.
Ah the soft music and skin dance, detained
in the parting arms of a liquified artemis.

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ERIK KIVIÄT

SCIENCE OF THE PATHFINDER:

EMPATHY, SYMPATHY, & PSYCHOPATHY

The silence we kept in blind notes
trickles out of our old skull.
Fear but not chill in boschian fantasy
. . . this may be the epic of transparent
fruit. This may be tomorrow's second hand.
Daylight fastens me to an inexplicable
mistress. This is the blues
that leans on a cane and cries for light.
Back under the spiral staircase;
the skull sits glowing like a dusty jewel.
Music from her mouth like the plumes
of wavering incense smoke, held me
in that nameless land of inconcrete eyes.
A lost music and transitory of the skulls
that lay en-face in the quiet gloom.

ERIK KIVIÄT

OURSELF

This is a day of marvelous glass deaths
the color of old brick and green lichen.
The air assails the faces of passersby,
the hour slides quiet and restitute . . .
Dark streets numb and shattered, reform
in secret amoeboid corners. The sweet
lingering heavenly snatch smiles under its breath,
hairy and fallow in the cometbreath afternoon.
This is a day of fabulous brick lichens,
fantasmagoric molecular streaming life
from the pulsating gates of the olympic castle,

where the muraldwelling creatures slip
among one another in their narrow fluid culture.
A lubricous tactile mission. Timorous secretion
where pigments coalesce and harmonize. Boschian
demigods writing poems with their tongues
on the insides of each others eyelids.
A scene of timestopped warm lunar passage;
syncopated heartbeat and liquescent afterimage;
the insular inside mocking the brittle afternoon,
playing its actualized music, epithelial rhythms,
endless molten flute slipping into dreams.

ISSUE P. 364 · SCAN P. 58

JOHN HIDEYO HAMAMURA

ONE SEAL

When at last he slept, it was a sleep with a bottled dream rocking channel current of sound washing in and out of his ears: wind chime on his porch — old rain torn, hesitant; tires of the highway trucks whistling under the arches of the fog horn. And then early mornings, he woke to the shouting and laughing and singing seals, warm and whiskered as their noses, curiously probing in and around the contours of his sleep.

One night, he walked north along the surf line, past the rock arm of singing seals. But it was late, and the seals had worn out their drunken songs and drifted in a sleep swayed by the whispering of the highway trucks and the tinkling of floating beer bottles against their rock bed. And scratching gently against the base of their whiskers was the damp crush of his tennis shoes.

JOHN HIDEYO HAMAMURA

THEN, A LONE SEAL

began to sing. Not from the breakwater of stone and
sleeping seals,
but from the jumble of colored wood and colored glass
known as Fisherman's Wharf. It was the lone seal
in the wire-fenced aquarium tank.
He stopped walking
and looked back. Carnival colored lights
fell flat and slid across the easy water to where he stood
listening as a man shouted:
'Shut up, damn you!'
And a door slammed hard against the night.
The seal and he
floated without motion or sound in the shallow swing

and pull of the night current
around their ears :
the hushing of the highway trucks
and the bobbing chimes of the beer bottles
and the cold dogs barking like startled rain falling on
the hills
beyond the town
and the cold dogs barking like lost seals . . .
far away, across the town.
Then the lone seal started singing
his song again, and he sang to himself
all night long like the last poet singing alone.

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HEYWOOD HAUT

STANDARD TUNES

Our names (like madness)
inside walls — covering . . .
angels must be passing
as they do whenever
legs dangle into time
— the color is green —
but love
(yes, love)
'i loved you — and almost left —
but heard you singing.'
(words make incisions on my body)
matter — nothing occurs
blankets are taken
from the mattress
on the floor
seeing what i can
(there you stand —
i see your imprints
but they are moving
in circles
The Chair Is Empty
seeing it as darkness
i can't touch it
i have heard that death is quiet

H. M. GORDY

BEACH SUNDAY

i have heard
the morning
is a stone.
squeezed between buildings,
i have contracted at 7 A.M.
to decent dimensions
yet, the winter/ sung
on the dawn beach: SUNDAY
has brought old men
drawing them
from warm subways
into a sun of ice
sitting like benches,
they smoke pipes
stuffed with cheap tobacco
the smoke is not
one second more
than the wind cares

MICHAEL SCHULDINER

TIME-CHILD

O forever gentleness,
The Kaiser comes with his soldiers.
Leaves like dragons roar the fall
(They come armed as crimson bugles).
No mind of time, we breathe too long,
With its siege of mechanical horses.
Children tear as petals torn
(They have let the blood of roses)
O Lilac swim in softness, touch of dew —
Lilac close my eyes, I love you.

MICHAEL SCHULDINER

GENIUS

When Peter died
we killed the last
dozen gray hares
and broke fast with
their lean white meat,
spitting out a
portion for the
earth, for Peter.
Time is a cannibal —
and history, her toothpick.

STAN STEINER

WHERE ARE THE DAUGHTERS OF GERONIMO?

Gently on grass
I lay
her, but
no one wears grass
anymore. No one
is earthy.
Earth is
but,
no one who is anyone
has dirty genitals
anymore, or
a body of salt.
I,
was alone
on earth
untouched
by human dirt.
Ai, the Apache
sang:
No one
else embraces the knees of young
trees, the tacit

fingertips of cacti,
the teats of bud.

STAN STEINER

I SANG:

She,
wore a cellophane bikini,
ears of Arpege,
sweat of Creme de Menthe,
and pissed perfume.
She,
lying her Mystic Body
on my earth
reflected nothing
in her Ph.D.:
The Acculturated Plato.
She,
voted G.O.P.
Ai, the Apache
sang:
Where are the daughters of Geronimo?
Where are the daughters of Geronimo?

BERNICE WINTERS

THE UNMENDABLES

The invalid sits on barrels of anti-
cillin
and the capillary action from
ass to artery
astounds that part of him already
dead.
His once-wonderful
wets and wets
until his almost-widow wants to
wring it off,

press the severed
stem
between the dry covers of their
cranky lives
beside her first prom
rose. In-
stead, she gears for geriatrics
and will not float one Ave Maria
while tubes gurgle,
pumps pump
and terminals writhe warm and
winking.
Unmendable,
they shall outlive each other.

BERNICE WINTERS

8/6/45*

And all the while the sky was falling:
Hiroshima
s p r e a d - e a g l e d in surprise
screamed 'Kutsuu!'
and people and peonies
fused to stone.
How many toen/ails to a keg?
How many eyeballs make a gall/on?
We smote the cherry trees
ditto'd the children;
ripped thru ribcage of clouds
to tar/nish sun,
a blue baroque pearl burning.
Then history, (
holiest when evil),
turned its dirty collar around.

**8/6/65 — An anniversary poem*

HANS JUERGENSEN

COMMENTARY

the difficulty
is
one likes things:
tactility
which bruises
flesh
or iris or
tympanum.
what one responds
to
seems more than his
business
less than
totality
thus (maybe) a slightness of
tongue,
a bravery yet to be shared.
still this makes
one's way:
buckets of words
cranked up from
the well
their heaviness
weaving a bit
spilling some
symbols.
the dust buries
them quickly.
no matter.
most of the monads
are safe
poured into
measured
transparencies . . .

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WILLIAM TILLSON

THE MUSHROOM HUNTERS

*Medieval Dark Gropers of a Hunger Groin Deep
and Perennial*

I. The woods steam humid and delicate as traceries of sound announce the mushroom hunters, deliberate as spring dawn, eternal as mayapple shoots.

They start across the valley in pairs with paper bags and single off into glades known but not remembered, led by no outward or visible signs — yet certain in groping and probings. Beneath a moldering screen of red oak leaves the sponges prong the hand's careful grip and pull. (Mysterious plants to reform from loving break, move their spores annually for year's increase of harvest.)

Indian paintbrush and marsh marigolds illumine and disguise the blacktop pushing up the mossy ferns as a browned old gardener carefully steps up the bog and spreads his weight, the years of wisdom. The patch yields up its plenty, he can stand awhile and read the sycamore engulfed in time, green whispers overhead: 'See now. See now. Senile never now again.' The wife of his bed with apron spread and full calls for a sack in a clear voice. 'Step easy. Reckon there's more'n I see, fry a mess and can the rest.'

WILLIAM TILLSON

II.

A hound busies himself in snuffing through the trees a livelier game. 'Git out you! Git!' he doubles back and bawls and runs right through up hill and gone. Master with a cane and bag stops to listen, to ask the elders how many. 'Very few,' and squashed the take. 'Too cold. Ground not thawed through. How about you?' 'A few,' he lied with his spread

palm as dog flopped back to check his course, man and master follow instinct's pull. 'So long' Then back to where they were, man to ferns, wife to the swamp.

III.

In a clearing of orchard grass along the fence beside a rotting shed, a boy whoops out: 'Look at 'em. Lookit!' and sets off echoes to mom and dad and sis. Five together and big, but not one more no matter where they look. 'Damn, boy. Act like you never seen a musharune,' but pleased as when first rabbit crumpled in a furry surprise from the old 20-gauge. Mom puffs a huff of generous 42 on a mud sled, kicks up the sixth then tenth and squeals a little girl's delight while sis cautiously picks off Sweet William to come out right. 'He loves me,' and blows her bubble gum.

WILLIAM TILLSON

IV.

In a crease of hills a couple comes down the slope, hand-in-hand, then arm-in-arm and lip-to-ear. She throws a shopping bag to air and runs to yellow violet bed and sprawls. With all delicacy he picks a bunch and hands them to her with a kiss. She accepts them as her due and waves him gone. He moves from yellow to white to gentian with yellow eyes where dotted by a rotting log a mushroom springs. He laughs but will not tell her why he does and picks the musky fruit whose vine pulls at the slender navel cord of one and all. Coquettishly she improves her lie on moss and fern, a redbud set in dogwood scene, romantic woodwing stage. He knows his role instinctively and guards the greensward, yet will not take the bloom . . . just yet awhile. The beagle bells hare to lair.

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V.

‘RUNE! RUNE RUNE’

She squats as small girls will, chin to knee, eye on cap.
Her mother smiles from back doorstep and brings a
pan.

‘Why, you’re a wonder —’ ‘Rune rune,’ another and
another,
never toadstool, never puffball, never lichen — a beady
eye
all delicate in browns, a mushroom all her own.

WILLIAM TILLSON

VI.

‘Jim had this dog could smell ’em out, a heinz, would lift his
laig and hold the point till he come and picked her.’
Convulsed in both the telling and the hearing, the men
walked right on without leave, or hindrance. A house to them
in their own woods, now or squirrel season, was but slight
intrusion. They traveled fast and poked with sticks, picked
and left the miles behind. Their pictures were seen beside
the haul, their faces everywhere.

VII.

And now the rain the god of this kingdom came and
scattered the casual, or occasional. The girl screamed to the
car, ‘My hair! My hair!’ The hound chopped faster, clearer on
the trail, his keeper home ‘Hey Tobe: You Tobe!’ whistles,
clapped his hands, and played him on.

A truck chugged down the lane where kith and kin
dripped under shed and argued some, the boy too young but
proud to drive the pickup. Two men asked could they ride in

back. 'Why sure. Hop in.' A little tike pressed hot nose to steaming glass and looked far out. 'Runers' and mother, 'What say?' and looked but couldn't see.

The brown and calico moved on into the sapling grove beside the spring. And there along the watercress and pennyroyal the mushrooms bloomed.

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SAM A. EISENSTEIN

JEZEBEL AND JOSEPH

In the center of a baked field cleared of broken weeds, Joseph braced himself against the surge of water that pulled at his feet and then disappeared down deep cracks. A tube sucked water and mud from the earth. On one bank of the spreading pool, Israel beckoned to Joseph. The sons yelled. Joseph paid no attention. The brothers grinned uneasily at each other, while mud and water spread over the dust.

Israel's white beard flew in the wind like ashes as his mouth worked at Joseph. A dull black pool separated them and, as silt grew into an isthmus at Joseph's feet, water covered his ankles.

Joseph sat at the feet of old Indian Bildad whenever she wove the serape. He asked: 'Is it for me?'

She adjusted one of the bars of the loom, pushing another bright thread through the woof. One hand moved in and out of the weave like part of the pattern, and with the other she tightened the stitch. When the thread was woven, it could never have been anywhere else. But Joseph knew that the thread came from a bundle in Bildad's basket, and that the yarn was dyed with colored sands and bark, ground on a rock and sifted in the wind. Powdered bits filtered over Joseph's head and dyed his hair. They got into the flecked pupils of his eyes.

'Who is it for?'

No one knew her pattern. The sky was a thin flat disk, and her hand and thread were one snake biting at the serape, which did not shrink, but grew with a bewildering pattern of endless colors.

People came by and noticed without curiosity Bildad with Joseph at her feet. People said that she had been Israel's mistress. No one had ever seen the father of Bildad's old son,

who worked in silence on Israel's ranch. Sometimes he watched his old mother and Joseph, when the dye chaff hung in the air like a curtain over Joseph.

Joseph himself was only Israel's son. With two heads, he would still be the son. Rachel was long dead. Busy workers passed, stirring little clouds. Squatting in the dust, Joseph burned with resentment. He felt frozen. What if the loom stopped and the pattern were frozen? If Joseph and the serape were trapped and frozen inside those empty eyes in the heads of the passing workers, never to have the chance to become what they would be, Joseph and the serape.

'Why don't they leave us alone!' he cried.

'They don't hurt nobody.'

'They always stick their nose in.' He resented her not taking offense.

SAM A. EISENSTEIN

'When are you going to be done? Will it be a rebozo or a serape?' The sky took the thread's color. 'When it be done, you see what it is.' 'It is for me!' 'It is to be put on you,' she said. 'I knew it!' Joseph cried, 'because I can always tell what you're going to put in next.' 'No,' she said. Joseph thought so. When she put yarn in, he knew that it was right and belonged. 'Well, I know what you're doing, anyway.' 'No,' she said. If he ran a different way each time, he would be entirely different from every other thing, and nothing would be lost. Joseph leaped to the lowest limbs of the loom-tree, flung his legs and jumped. He fell wrong, and his ankle hurt. A mistake: pain is useful in unnecessary parts of the body, to keep guard against forgetting. After every other light was out and Leah opened his door to let the sharp hall pierce the warm body of his room, Joseph rolled the dark into a ball. In limitless space, he revolved; and the ball became a hole down which he fell smothered in gauze that closed up the cavities of nose and mouth. With agony, he began to fight back from the pit. Often he expected the descent and waited for it, deciding to descend to the end, even if his lungs frothed and exploded before he broke surface. He always woke before the limit — a bitter thing. He could summon people by pressing his eyes until the colors leaped; a branch became a snake became a cane became a chimney. . . . Some distance from the main house, a sagging canvas trailer-house squatted. In it lived the man Moak, his wife, and their daughter Vashti J. They were itinerant tinkers. The man mended tools and hammered at a portable forge; the woman canned in season. For Joseph, it was the year of Vashti J. Moak. Had she come year after year? There seemed always to be three of them, but was the third Vashti? Joseph stood outside the trailer and listened to the mutter of their voices and heard the creaking and saw the rocking of the trailer when they moved around inside. Vashti burst through the flap in a muffled

explosion of words, her withered mother under the yellow-insect light whimpering: 'Vashti. Vashti, you come right on back here, Vashti.'

SAM A. EISENSTEIN

As though he were the Indian woman's son, Joseph dropped silently from the loom-tree. Vashti never stopped, jumping the widest parts of irrigation ditches and gullies. In the full of a moon, they leaped a moon-bleached ditch and reached the other side together, so that it seemed that they reached earth from an incredible distance.

She spoke with a regrettable twang, but not very often; yet, once she said: 'The J. is for Jezebel.' Of course it was not; it was probably for Jennie, or Joanne; Joseph was no fool. When the moon did not come out, they ran faster with eyes closed, away from the canvas flap where Vashti J's mother stood weakly calling.

Vashti crouched and flung her head so that her long hair of uncertain nighttime color covered her face. Joseph filled both his hands with her hair and put his hands around her neck and kissed her mouth. He felt her neck throb. She clung so hard that his shoulders stung. When did the kiss end? Joseph was relieved that Vashti suddenly turned to one side to let tears gush from her eyes. She still gripped him painfully. She wiped her passionate tears with her own hair, jerking it out of his hands.

As often as he tried, he could not weep too. When she cried, he learned to sigh and shovel masses of her hair into her face. She cried and cried that year. He embraced her hair and tried to fix stars in orbit, but he could never remember whether the Big Dipper was over the moonless sycamore tree, the night Vashti pulled open his ancient dog-bite wound, or whether they had stood under the sycamore when the moon was out and the Big Dipper gone.

He would force Israel and the brothers to watch from start to finish. They stole his image. He was a fragment that never

reflected, nor did they even compare images. He was enraged.

He stood and made them wait. Silvery black sand glittered in the hair of his thigh. The black water could rise until the picture was complete. He would not let them take him. Something held them back. The well was like the glossy slopes of a mountain with Joseph the apex.

Israel was helpless, much as with Joseph's mother when he bit his beard, waiting to see what she would have. Would she flee with him or stay with her father? He waited. He waited while she died; Joseph had learned the words he spoke to his god: 'It is all prearranged; I may not struggle!' Israel ever waited on the invariable season. Joseph would not; he would not sit upon the one mound and watch the universe as it escaped him. Thus he stood and forced them all to take note that on such-and-such a day, when the gouged and bitten earth spat out its bile, Joseph disappeared and demonstrated that he possessed his own beginning and his own end in his own hands, not 'prearranged.'

SAM A. EISENSTEIN

Joseph contrived with the Negro boy that it must be fulfilled behind the bakery, with one condition: they must be alone.

The Negro boy came at him, flat-nosed with huge fists; but Joseph was able to sidestep and take it on the arm. The ancient dog-bite spoke, and Joseph leaped in the only grip he knew, a throat lock. They both fell. Joseph pressed his knees into the armpits and tried to smother him. The smell of sweet bread and their sweet brackish sweat locked in Joseph's mind. Then the boy threw Joseph off and gripped his left arm so that Joseph knew he could never fight loose; he kicked and buckled the other's legs, and they fell again, Joseph's head buried in the black chest and squeezing hard at the belly, that the life would roll out. Their faces were so close that there was no air left to breathe. The sky winked and went out.

Passed by the river current, on one bank of which rested Joseph's foot, they lay dusted with earth until they became a hummock on which grew grass and herbs. Inside the hummock, Joseph and the Negro were one—and that one so withered that a worm gathered the remnant together to spin a web. Spun into a cocoon, the seed within grew an immensely-complex thing, expanded so that the hummock trembled and rocked.

They shook hands. Joseph was glad his did not tremble. They went into the bakery and bought a broken, smoking loaf.

When he saw the slit all woven together at the edges, Joseph was happy. He knew for sure it was a serape, and not a rebozo such as the women wear—that it was for him, and that it was nearly finished.

'When . . .' Joseph trailed off. A thing was happening. Where he sat, since the last time there had appeared a tiny

hole in the earth from which issued a stream of red ants. If he looked down, it was not a stream, but separate ants intent on a particular destination. They carried things, they picked up and dropped huge burdens and carried dead companions, for feet, up back into the hole. Around the little mound, the earth was animate with them: a liquid red stream. But Joseph resolved his eye upon the chunks, the particles—and finally, upon the single red ant. This event would lock forever in place, the moment of the completion of the serape.

Then they were all over him, living on him. They were on his skin, his hair, under his arms, his legs. He jerked, but they clung to his body, now their earth, their universe. They protested and bit him, not to be thrown off.

‘What good is my serape,’ Joseph cried, ‘if they eat me alive?’ He rolled on the ground.

Bildad plucked his clothes away and rolled him in dust and in the dyes

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that fell as he threshed about. She gave him a blanket to wrap himself. No one had seen, and he was not ashamed.

‘Don’t sit in an ant hill next time,’ Bildad said.

‘Come out of there, you damn fool,’ Israel shouted, holding Rubin back.

Joseph knew why Israel would not save him or his mother. Joseph had to be here at the navel of the world, where black blood poured like Rachel’s flow. He would have to hold it back or all would shrivel. The truth brought a numbness to his shoulders and dried his final child’s tears.

‘But what good is it that I remain alone to drown in all this dirty oil?’

On the shore, old Bildad beckoned with the serape. Rubin ducked under his father’s arm and cut the disk of oil to Joseph’s place and hauled him to the feet of the woman.

Joseph held up his arms and she dropped the serape over his head. 'I am the first,' he cried. 'I am the first of my kind.'

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CAROL STAGER

C'EST LA GUERRE

Mary Zelda's father readjusted his cushioned bottom to the gold-leafed orange crate and once more dribbled beet juice over the side of the coconut shell, spotting his raw silk tie, clasped with jeweled Kiwanis, Masonic, Rotary and Moose emblems. His bulky legs fairly hid the brash black letters spelling SARTRE SAVES.

Meanwhile, his wife, whom he affectionately called Roxie, dragged a chinchilla car coat through the first floor of her daughter's house, being careful to hit each pile of dirt head on. Roxie, or Mama Love, as she was known to many, had a delightful devil-may-care attitude and was often heard to murmur: 'C'est la guerre.'

'C'est la guerre. Mary Zelda. This is sure a swell place. I was just saying to your Daddy, on the plane: Daddy, I said, imagine our own little Mary Zelda married to a University Man with a diploma. Imagine her living with a cultivated mind in her own house and cooking and washing and doing all those fulfilling things that women are born to do. Imagine her being married one whole year and not telling us. And do you know what your wise old Daddy said? He said: "Imagine, Roxie." Isn't that wonderful? So simple and direct. He didn't mention the hurt. He didn't hint at the knife in his heart, nor did he question why you, his beloved first-born, should withhold this most sacred of all sacraments from your simple and direct father. Well, c'est la guerre. Let's take a gander upstairs.'

Mary Zelda Wilson placed the lizard in its cage and straightened her shoulders in an effort to be on even ground with her mother. 'We can't go upstairs,' she said simply.

The two women were at that moment re-entering the sitting room. That is to say, the only room in the Wilson's

bohemianly decorated house equipped with sturdy boxes. The mother slapped her thigh and shouted: 'Do you hear that, Daddy? Little Mary Zelda says we can't go upstairs. You think a few broken steps can stop a couple of old swingers like us? Look — because we have money, doesn't mean we aren't regular sports. We're just people, like anyone else, real live blood and flesh.'

The father smiled at being reminded of his condition and reflected: 'Your Mama and I haven't changed one cubic since that day I found oil on our land.'

'Whose land?' growled the mother.

'Your land, Roxie. As I was saying, we're still the same plain folks we

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were that day they found oil on your Mama's land. Close to the soil, and mighty proud of it. Now, let's join hands and go up those stairs, the three of us together, like olden times.'

'Gunther's up there and can't be disturbed. Let me explain . . .'

'Explain hell! Can you mean to infer that your Daddy and I came all the way from Acapulco to meet your nice young Gunther, and that he is at this moment in this house, and that we are not being greeted by him? Has it occurred to your husband that even the rich are entitled to common courtesy?'

'Mama Love, Daddy—Gunther is special. He is quite an extraordinary human being; for, you see, he is creative. I wouldn't know whether or not you have come upon a creative soul during your varied travels; but they are of a different temperament than we. They are sensitive and must be encouraged and protected. They are our salvation. Gunther is, in other words, an artistic saint.'

'Splendid, dear, splendid. Roxie, I always knew in my heart our Mary Zelda would marry well. I believe in God and Country, and therefore, in saints. But, daughter, your

mother and I had the idea he was a poet.'

'That he is. But, in addition, he is currently engaged in something remarkable. An experiment of sorts. For, alas—Gunther the Poet suffered acute alienation.'

The father winced and spoke with empathy. 'Oh, too bad, Is it anything like arthritis? I have those dreadful pains in my elbow and consequently know the true meaning of suffering. Like I always tell the gardeners: "Money can't buy elbows." I say: "Go, young men. Go home with your painless elbows and enjoy the simplicities of life." Or, like your Mama and I said about Mexico: Those happy, gay peasants. All the dollars in the world can't buy a carefree peasant.'

'C'est la guerre, Daddy. Now tell us, Mary Zelda, about this alienation.'

The daughter stretched out next to her mother on the chinchilla coat which had been casually spread in the middle of the bare floor. The father moved his numb body to a felt-decorated plum carton, thus allowing him to rest his head against the larger totem pole.

'My Gunther was lost, so to speak. He was unable to create—which may not seem bad to you, dear parents, but which to a person of his stature, is horrendous. He was laden with guilt, other people's of course. He was weighed down with responsibilities. Again, responsibilities not of his choosing. Shoved on him, they were, shoved and piled. All of history's mistakes balanced on his delicate perceptive shoulders. Well, I just said: "Gunther Wilson, you must find yourself." I'm no slouch when it comes to reading, and I had come across this idea several times in the better

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Carol Stager

women's magazines. And I thought to myself, if simple housewives and secretaries need to find themselves, how much more a free spirit like Gunther. So that's what he's doing.'

The mother took a slow drink of turnip nectar from the hollowed gourd and, staring straight ahead, said: 'What in the hell are you talking about, Mary Zelda? Do you think because we happen to have a few millions that you can't converse with us in English? Because you're set up for life with a fat trust fund, you needn't make sense? Have you coincidentally noticed your father's callouses? Let me remind you that clipping coupons is not an enjoyable way of providing for an ungrateful daughter. Now, what's he doing up there, and when will he be down?'

'Mama Love, Gunther is reliving history. Just him. He has become original man. There is just him in his universe. Isn't it too exciting? He began unlearning only six months ago, and has completely uncluttered his head of other people's silly notions. He'll emerge a PURE EXISTENTIALIST and be free of sin and guilt. And I, Mary Zelda, conceived of you, am an integral part of this adventure. Don't you see? He will be free of forced conditioning, free to be himself and create out of himself.'

The mother hissed at her enormous diamond ring and polished it on the fur. 'If he's so hot at creating, why aren't you pregnant?'

'Some people are doers, some thinkers. My Gunther happens to be a thinker. You'll see when you meet him. He's so bright, like a giant lamp in this dark world. Would you believe it? — he discovered fire last week. And after only six

months. What is more, although he hasn't mentioned it, I suspect he is working on the wheel as a surprise for my birthday. Shhhhhh, I hear him now. Would you please stand until he sits? And allow him to speak first.'

The three struggled to their feet as Gunther Wilson walked into the room. He carried a lighted torch, wore an aqua and pink dish towel as a loin cloth, and had rubber zoris on his feet. He bowed to the mother, then the father; and, stopping before his wife, said: 'A stitch in time saves nine.'

'Bravo, darling, bravo! I shall hurry and write that down. Grand originality! Brilliant rhythm! Dear, I want you to meet my family, Daddy and Mama Love. Then, too, there's my little sister who isn't here. By the way, how is she, Daddy?'

The father beamed. 'Your sister Schweitzer sends her spirit. She said in her own words: "Tell Mary Zelda and her poet — may my spirit descend upon them."'

'We're really damned proud of her, kids,' the mother added. 'Only last week, she had a trumpet solo in PUT DOWN THE BOTTLE AND SIN NO MORE. At the Washington Street Mission. At least, that's what she wrote

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us; and I see no reason why she should lie about it. Imagine, our own little Schweitzer in the throes of serenity. It's all so holy. C'est la guerre.'

There was a semi-awkward silence as Gunther bowed once more to his guests and seated himself in the most remote corner of the room. His voice came huskily. 'Mary Zelda, I have something to tell you. I had guilt feelings, this morning. No . . . don't say a word until I finish. I had allowed the fire to go out, through pure carelessness — on top of which, nothing creative was coming out of me. It was then I realized that I not only suffered an inordinate amount of guilt, but also slight tinges of fear. Upon further meditation, and not a few vibrations, I came to know that I am possibly

incapable of loving. I could not at that moment love the natural-bristled hairbrush, nor even the acrylic-fibered rug. Ah, but there is more. My dear, I don't believe I love you. Oh, I like you all right —but not love. Not overwhelming shuddering love. And how shall I attain myself without feeling tingling, shuddering love?

'Gunther, my poor truth-seeker, calm yourself. Daddy — what is our income?'

'Why, about fifteen thousand, I think. Why?'

'There you are, my tortured husband. You're progressing beautifully. It's the middle-class man who worries about being able to love. The lower classes are concerned with impotency. We are middle class — aren't we? That is, fifteen thousand wouldn't be lower, would it, Daddy?'

'One shouldn't think so, Mary Zelda.'

The father scratched his head, then turned to the figure in the corner. 'Hello there, son. I'm Daddy and in stocks. I happen to believe in God and Country and am beginning to believe in creativity. One is never too old to learn, no matter how wealthy he is. Come, let me hold your fire while you tell me how it is, back there in history without people or money.'

But the Fates had not willed that Gunther and the father should communicate (and thus grow) at that particular time; for, no sooner had the older man got a firm grip on the torch than the Indian wind chimes announced a caller.

Mary Zelda rushed to answer, finding there a large man dressed in an expensive suit, and with fingernails indicating a recent, and above average manicure.

'Hello, I'm Bob Grant. I wonder if this is the home of the Gunther Wilson who attended Rugby Hill Boy's Preparatory School?'

The wife smiled hospitably. 'You're a Negro,' she said with certainty.

'Who is it?' called Gunther, adjusting his loin cloth.

'A Negro, dear.'

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‘A Negro!’ chorused the mother and father, hurrying to the door for a look.

‘C’est la guerre. So it is,’ said the mother.

The father, who was inclined toward levelheadedness, spoke with noticeable charity. ‘Roxie, Mary Zelda, let us be slower in our judgment. Perhaps he’s an African. How about that, fellow?’

‘A what, sir?’

‘An African. Over there, in that country across the sea. Where the safaris are. A truly courageous nation, afraid of nothing. I saw all about your exciting way of life on the Jack Parr show. Let me say, I admire your people.’

‘Well, I don’t know? My people are from Kansas City. However, I have a sister here in Pittsburgh. Serena Kawalski? I’m president of the Big Oaks From Little Acorns Grow National Bank, and we’re starting a branch in this area. I remember reading that Gunther Wilson lives here; and, as we were once fast friends at Rugby — and especially, considering we are fellow poets, creative brothers — I came to offer him a job as Loans and Securities Agent. My skin is colored.’

Bob Grant held out his hands in order that the three inside the door might have a better look at his colored skin. Gunther, who had been occupied examining his own hands, sprang from the corner and accused: ‘You hate me, large Negro man, I can feel it.’

Mary Zelda began sobbing. ‘Gunther Wilson,’ she gasped, ‘you have been cheating on me. After your vows, you’ve been reading books. A woman can tell when she’s been denied. You’ve been reading books by James Baldwin.’

She turned to the door and, addressing the intruder, said: ‘It’s your fault. My uncompromising husband needs peace.

He must avoid the kind of conflict you and your people are forcing upon us. We are existentialists, and therefore in no way responsible for providing you special favors. My Gunther is finding himself, and could under no stretch of the imagination be expected to consider your needs. First, you want to destroy — yes, I say destroy, an aesthetic by offering him some mundane bank position. Then, you ask to be recognized as a former friend. The nerve! Leave us alone!’

‘M’ame, I’m not good at destruction. Nor recognition. Frankly, all you whites look alike to me. I’m terribly sorry about this; but I don’t hate your husband. I scarcely know him any more. How could I hate someone I don’t know?’

‘Obviously, you haven’t read James Baldwin.’

‘On the contrary, I once browsed through his *STORY OF SIEGFRIED*.’

‘Well?’

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‘Well, what M’ame?’

‘Well, what have you to say?’

‘I say, perhaps he’s African.’

‘Ha! Do you hear that, Mama Love, Daddy, Gunther? Trying to ignore one of his own. The Africans wouldn’t have him. Those courageous hunting safariests. Good day, Bob Grant. You have upset my parents, confused my husband, and incurred my wrath.’

As the colored man walked down the front steps, Mary Zelda screamed: ‘Just because you have rhythm, you needn’t think you can go around being equal!’

She slammed the door and kicked at the stuffed ocelot. Her husband sat marble-eyed, presumably receiving voices, while the father and mother seated themselves, individually.

The father was first to speak. ‘Believing in God and Country and Creativity, I feel the need to state that the preceding incident was not in the spirit of Schweitzer. Let us, then, have a moment of silence as we contemplate her

blessed holiness. Let us, at one and the same time, attempt to think our way to misguided James Who-ever.'

The wrathful daughter plopped on a tomato carton, saying rebelliously: 'I will not think on the same wave as that man. I refuse to dirty up my mind. Furthermore, as unadulterated existentialists, Gunther and I will not be involved in community meditation, conformist think-alongs.'

The mother observed the scene in her typically-casual way. 'You're all damned fools,' she said. 'Send him a check for fifty grand, and he won't write another word. C'est la guerre.'

Gunther slid across the floor on his knees and stopped at the feet of his wife. 'Mary Zelda, the-woman-whom-I-don't-think-I-love, but who-obviously-loves-me-enough-for-both-of-us, I would like to take the job as Loans and Securities Agent. We could continue our experiment on weekends. My vibrations hint that I might well find myself, among people. They torture me with the thought that I could write poetry out there, among those ignorant, but well-meaning nonentities.'

The wife clasped her bosom and raised her eyes to heaven. 'Oh, selfish darling — how blind you are! You would deprive the world of your gift? You would pander your individuality? For shame, for shame.' She rubbed one index finger over the top of the other, a gesture indicating for shame.

The body at her feet bowed its head in humility. It spoke again in a pleading whine. 'How can I be an individual, if there is but one of me? I should love to rebel on occasion. Forgive me, but I would. Besides, T. S. Eliot was a bank clerk . . . perhaps the same experience . . .'

'Gunther, your reasoning has been affected by the strenuous events of the day. If individuality cannot stand alone, it is not an absolute. Would

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you deny scientific proof of an absolute? As to the job, Swinburne suffered from an excessive amount of electric vitality. Why not work toward that?

The father brightened. 'Is an excessive amount of electric vitality anything like arthritis? I have this terrible pain in my elbow; and consequently, I know the true meaning of suffering.'

'C'est la guerre, stupid. No wonder the arthritis stays around, with all the attention it's given. If you'd spend half as much concern on your callouses, you'd divide the pain and stop this endless suffering.'

Gunther rose from his corner. His speech had another-worldliness about it. 'I think I'm going to be profound,' he confessed.

The three waited eagerly. His voice came as though it had welled up from inside him. It had a definite ethereal quality. 'Through suffering, we learn,' he spilled.

'Bravo, bravo! I shall write that down immediately. Oh excelsior, my love! Gloria in excelsus! Now then, my adventurous one has had enough escapades for this day. Go back to your land and rest. I shall carry your supper to you later. Always remember that your Mary Zelda was made to serve, sacrifice and serve, with only now and then a crumb of love. Together, we will blaze the trail for all mankind. You in your way, I in mine. Humble though it be.'

'As usual, you're right, my helpmate. I suspect the germ of a poem festering from within. It concerns the great red balance on the ledger in the sky. Do you fully understand that? A bank balance? Red means deficit, and sky means me. Parents of the one-I-don't-think-I-love, but who-obviously-loves-me-enough-for-the-both-of-us, I trust I will be fortunate enough to give you more of my time before you leave. I've several large projects going, one of which should advance transportation beyond your wildest

imagination. Good night.'

Later that evening, as the daughter and her parents sat in the sitting room, the father looked up from his splendidly-bound copy of *THE TROPIC OF CANCER*. He chided his wife: 'Roxie, I do wish you would refrain from those dirty bathroom words. Consider the spirit of Schweitzer.'

The mother continued her crass language in a manner which would make it appear to the innocent bystander that she was intentionally irritating her husband.

Being virtuous (possibly the result of continued suffering), the father feigned exhaustion and retired with a thought for the day, as was his custom. 'Believing in God and Country and Creativity, I am now considering individualism. It may well be the answer to our world's plight. I sincerely think all of us individuals should band together. Perhaps

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organize an International Society of United Individualists.'

The mother was indignant. 'What the hell do you mean — all you individuals? Who the hell do you think we are? You and your damned "in" groups. Have you never noticed my unorthodox language?'

'Roxie, may I say that two "hells" and a "damn" do not make an individual. Good night, dear. Good night, Mary Zelda. May the spirit of Schweitzer be with us all through the night, and on into the morning.'

No sooner had the father left the room than the two women slipped down to the chinchilla coat on the floor. They began to giggle, then to laugh. Each time one of them attempted to speak, the hilarity began anew. Finally, the mother was able to express herself verbally.

'Honey, you're wonderful. Just beautiful. Imagine, keeping him upstairs! Beautiful!'

'Mama Love, it was quite easy. Honestly, almost too easy. Have you heard of conditioning? Pavlov?'

'No. I can't say I have. But some smart aleck is forever horning in on our little tricks. Hell, I've been around a long time, and I tell you they may never catch up. Say — how did you get him to marry you?'

The daughter smiled as she reached for the HAVE YOU FOUND EMERSON pillow. She placed the satin-fringed square under her head and proceeded with the sit-ups. Her manner was matter of fact. 'We aren't married.'

'Aren't married? But, your name?'

'I changed it legally.'

'Isn't it dangerous this way?'

'Of course not. That's the point. Divorce is simple. Right? But how can a man leave a woman who gives him complete freedom, who expects nothing in return? Get It? If Gunther can't live with me, humble, servile me, who knows he is the most artistic man alive, how could he possibly hope to get on with anyone else? I weaken him with freedom.'

'Mary Zelda, you're so damned creative.' The mother snickered and kicked off her shoes. 'Is this method catching on?'

'My, yes. It works well with children, they say.'

'With children? Who would have thought? Beautiful. But, honey — what if he should find himself?'

'Gunther? He couldn't stand the responsibility.'

The older woman sat upright. Her face reflected a puzzlement. 'Wait a minute. What if he dies? I mean, with no exercise nor outside contact, I don't suppose he'll last long.'

Mary Zelda smirked and continued her leg-lifts. 'If that should happen, I will publish my book entitled MY CROSS FOR CREATIVITY. I may become known as Mama Sans. After a proper mourning period, I'll take off for St. Moritz and see what can be found there. Gunther's been a

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barrel of laughs, but I had expected more resistance. That's the trouble with most of those intellectuals. They're so fair.' She stretched her legs in front of her and began touching the respective toes. Her voice came in short puffs. 'Say, how's Schweitzer really doing?' 'Marvelously. She has all those derelicts falling at her feet, repenting and all. They refer to her as "the angel with a trumpet." Being so holy, they don't seem to notice her split lip. What the hell are you doing, Mary Zelda?' 'Getting in shape. Those ski pants aren't easy to wear.' 'Child, first generation of mine, how happy you've made me.' 'I'm glad you're proud, Mama Love, but it all seems dishonest. So simple as to be unfair.' 'Damnit, Mary Zelda! Don't talk that way! It's like your dear Grandma Love would have said: "If you didn't exist, Gunther would have created you." So, c'est la guerre, darling, c'est la guerre.'

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DOROTHY GRAVAGE

THREE PARAGRAPH STORY

David Garcia

In a subway apartment on east one hundred and seventy-fifth street on the upper left side lived a jazz musician, and his wife sang riffs. When he was beetley, beetley, bum, bum, pa, she was reetley, rifflety, rum, tum, ta. They rhymed you see. And that was why they married. At the time, it was terribly important.

Then, one day, sadly, Jazzebo met a folk strummer, female, of course. Jazzebo met Balledo, and the duo didn't beetley . . . they didn't even bum. That is, they didn't bum in the larger sense, only in the literal.

They were halfway across Kansas when Reetley, Rifflety coincided with their stop at a railroad yard. By that time, she was almost ready to tango off with a tuba player, but she couldn't quite forget the rhyme, and she tried to adapt. The riffs couldn't ripple on the stock-bridge, and together the two mediums couldn't move. Jazzebo, ear-jarred by the dissonance, dropped Balledo, and Rifflety dropped Jazzebo. He went straight, and gained the rep of being Carnegie's social solo. Reetley? Reetley still sings riffs. There's more than tango in tuba.

HE-HE

a play

HE1: I want to change the name.

HE2: Change the name?

HE1: Yes, change the name. (pause) Devos-Beinfiel.

HE2: What?

HE1: Devos-Beinfiel. Devos-Beinfiel.

HE2: Does it mean anything? Devos-Beinfiel?

HE1: (pause) Does what mean anything?

HE2: Devos-Beinfel? Devos-Beinfel?

HE1: I know the name. You don't have to repeat it. After all, didn't I make it up?

HE2: Make what up?

HE1: (exasperated) The name! The name!

HE2: Now who's repeating?

HE1: Listen, it doesn't matter if I repeat. In fact, it's good that I do. You wouldn't be able to understand unless I did. It's very important.

HE2: What?

HE1: Devos-Beinfel, for instance.

HE2: What else?

HE1: You.

HE2: And . . .

HE1: I suppose.

HE2: You're HE1.

HE1: Now, that's important.

HE2: And I'm HE2.

HE1: You're getting warm.

HE2: Where do you think you'll go from here?

HE1: That's not important.

HE2: I know. You changed your name. (whispers) Devos-Beinfel. It would sound lovely on a ship. Names on

DAVID GARCIA

ships are important.

HE1: That's right.

HE2: Names on trains aren't so important.

HE1: Most trains.

HE2: You have a good name.

HE1: Thank you.

HE2: Do you like my name?

HE1: Yes.

HE2: Thank you. (pause) What did it used to be?

HE1: What did what used to be?

HE2: The name, before you changed the name?

HE1: I've forgotten.

HE2: It's not important.

HE1: No.

HE2: Different intensities of light make me want to change names. . . . And I have a day name and a night name for almost everything. I think winter names are much nicer than summer names, but I like summer best — don't you?

HE1: NO. Devos-Beinfel is a winter name.

HE2: I thought it was.

HE1: Besides, most names don't have seasons — just special names do.

HE2: Like Devos-Beinfel?

HE1: Like Devos-Beinfel.

HE2: What's more important — Devos-Beinfel or winter?

HE1: Neither.

HE2: I think winter is more important because it never changes.

HE1: You can think that I suppose.

HE2: I do, I do.

HE1: Well, it's time to tell you a secret.

HE2: Good!

HE1: Shall I whisper it?

HE2: No, I don't like whispering.

HE1: All right. The secret is this . . .

HE2: Yes, yes.

HE1: . . . I changed the name. . . .
the end

THOMAS BLEDSOE

DEATH OF A HERO

The Ides of March came late this year.
Great Caesar's Ghost,
airborne from wherewhen to make the scene,
found the Forum empty.
But downstairs, in the Unworld of Makework,
the hive swarmed earnestly,
mounting Good Grey Generals on deadwhite rotundas,
committing textbooks,
publishing fornications and other impieties,
securely castled in a blazing cobalt ring.

STAN STEINER

COWBOY I

dingdong
ing
down Main Street
jaycees in hipboots
yipee! yai!
day is dunned
come
let us all pray; catapult
the acrobat
of that act
and Run, boy, Run;
the horse is canned;
foals shot
holy of holes;
who rode in Rodeos?
drinker of dirt
& bull's milk;
your steer is stoned;
bed tongued
in chromed mouths
clanging;
who sold

branding irons on chintz curtains;
Oh Say
who will bury the hot doggie
on the cement prairie —

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G. W. SHERMAN

LYSISTRATA

The Missile Corporation's preferred employees, with its permission, staged Aristophanes Lysistrata, Missile president Mr. Hearst having consulted with Missiles psychologist Dr. Verst.

'Hilarious Thespians,' wrote Polarifact, (a week after the strike and government contract), praising plant foreman Fred's wife, Lily Burton, taking orchids from Bill (shopsteward) at the curtain.

The banquet glittered with many a champagne bottle, while Pres. Hearst quizzed Dr. Verst on Aristotle. All went home cleansed as by a requiem, and next day made more missiles for Missiles of Bethlehem.

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JAMES HINER

THE MODERN POETS : AN ANTHOLOGY

This ones lives with wife and two small dangles in a Cistercian Abbatoir; And there's who's lectured in four Eastern girls' schools and a Tibetan seminary; Here's who was born with Ralph Waldo and lives with Zapata Vargas and two piranha fish near the mouth of the Meuse; Collects sea shells and Chinese coins, a four-in-hand, pin-stripe suits; In 1947 this one went to Heaven and that one to a job on the Thursday Review. Associate professor, or eastern-western diction-thresher, some married, some de-horsed, sere verse writer or mere poet, We are free and they are forced.

WALTER DARRING

THE SUPER

The Super (Ladies) -market smiles marked-down
bananas,
sausage at a sacrifice hubby will adore
One-a-penny, two-a-penny, frozen buns for mummy's
children,
frozen children, mummy's buns hubby will adore
The Super Sub (Ladies) -urban -market smiles its A
& P's on patrons trailing matrons in the aisle
Jackie Spratt at Polly gaping, groomed in syrup dreams
and maybe may bananas smile
The Super -forgotten moments of (Ladies) nights
his pink cheeks cuddled tears -spectacular
Sale on white tissue and lobster tail -natural visions
of equinox -men in vernacular
Postures, hibernating dreams of ice cream -highways
home -market offers (Ladies) you
What Man has always thought impossible,
this dream of modern man come true.

DAISY ALDAN

NOT A CEMETERY IN THE SNOW

I circle the revolving cauldron where fire is of glass
chips and tinsel; blaring corpses of streets that blink
red and green
glossy eyes, aligning the long funeral procession, borne
on the face-belt of black rubber avenues bearing the
heartless
mourners nowhere. I veer over the vertical glass coffins
where costumed maggots crawl to a savage dirge,
and I swerve in search of the fathomless voice of ravines
where the balanced virginal poem (not non-poem)
surges;
the thickets of beech and birch, breathing hymns of a
healing wind,
where the undulating charm of gold-finches wind
toward the thistles; or where tides pulsate with
constellations;
there where I can wake with 500 million earthworms.

DAISY ALDAN

NO LONGER WILL I CLOSE AN OPAQUE DOOR

I have seen spread wings of an Archangel, without
thunder,
render an opaque door through a city transparent,
paling the early neons, the cold light that kills;
and pierce the dusty tapestries of old battles,
reviving dead words, making their shrouds superfluous,
the mirror an oracle; smashing a blood-stained wall
and revealing, at its heart. The Number.

(No! He is not a chess player, an indifferent
abstract, nor a demoniac clown. Sun does not founder:
it curves into a dawn, en folding individuals
who do not pin and measure butterflies in sealed
rectangles.)

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the final form . . . must be imaginatively right.'

And still, although this verdict is nowhere put down in so many words in the volume of essays — favorable or unfavorable to Roethke — a qualified answer rises to the question of his place in the body of literature. For all the elements in his work deserving of praise, he will not be looked back upon as a major voice of the Twentieth Century. He dwelt almost exclusively on personal themes, providing no wide view or revelation of the world of his day. Psychological problems notwithstanding, he was a larger man than he was a poet — if not large enough to make his high talent an instrument for comprehensive transmission of all facets of his milieu. He dealt with major themes only from an underside. His importance lies in lesser areas of technical achievement and unique explorations of his own states of mind.

Roethke's lectures and criticisms in the volume edited by Mills reveal him to have been as much a romantic philosophical anarchist as the 'metaphysical' he's commonly described. The mystical side of him is stressed by Louis L. Martz and by Mills, in the other book. Roethke supplies no direct explanation for the contradiction between his admiration for hortatory 'protest' poems of others and producing none, himself. John Wain (with Frederick J. Hoffman, one of the better essayists), without mentioning this, feels that the absence of outer-world elements prevents the poetry from conveying 'a sense of total participation in life.' Yet, Roethke's prose indicates deep interest in other persons and in different worlds of other poets, and that he did step out of self and project forcefully in the outer world. Some of this prose is masterful — high peak being *Last Class*.

Despite what he said about broader matters, he remains chiefly identifiable in the unusual and intimate objectives of the poetry. And although his self-probings here were

ceaseless, he was fairly detached in his psychological endeavors via the ‘intuitions’ of his body — as Wain analyzes it. Yet still, while he may be found a bit clinical in self-treatment, his prose evinces considerable human concern with actual individuals. This suggests that his quest for deeper knowledge of his own identity was, in larger measure than the poems indicate, through efforts to externalize through other personalities (in addition to nature: animals, plants, and miniscule living things). Maybe the two facts, that he continued a ‘lonely’ and that he espoused no causes, are less related than most assume. Is there any basis for guessing that espousals of causes would have helped him become any less afraid and lonely? He often noted his own symptoms in other people and spoke in their terms, too, of the danger of sinking over-deep in the dark well of the unconscious. But he assumed a mask, aware developed a persona — if one which few would adopt — and died of the ensuing conflict as surely as have any of the several obvious examples that might be cited.

It’s significant that Roethke says (*The Teaching Poet*) that no one can ‘make poets,’ and that the teaching of one another, including the teacher, by ‘doing’ is ideal. Also, his teaching policy emphasized what could be commended rather than what was unpraiseworthy. And in *How to Write Like Somebody Else*, he finds nothing wrong in trying to do what the title says, calling the practice good. The test, he says, is the resulting degree of writing success; and: ‘... the support of tradition, or an older writer, will enable him [the new writer] to be more himself — or more than himself.’

In the face of such statements (perhaps he’d not read them), Stephen Spender denied him credit for interest in other persons. One of the essayists who had personal acquaintance with his subject, he seems to allow this to prevent him from looking at the poems and forgetting the man (on the other hand, Hoffman, reporting pleasant

personal reaction to Roethke, provides a well-balanced commentary). 'A perpetual beginner,' says Spender, basing much negative criticism on the evidences of influences from William Butler Yeats and others — though Roethke had candidly acknowledged these (W. D. Snodgrass gives like unfavorable treatment on these grounds). The findings of Martz and Hoffman are the opposite. Martz says: 'Roethke's echoes ... are, I think, nearly always deliberate and functional.' An interesting feature — that five essayists (Spender, Martz, William Meredith, Wain, and Snodgrass) use an unusual number of identical or overlapping poetry quotations, often with conflicting and contradictory ideas about them.

Wain looks on Roethke as an 'evangelical writer' seeking salvation through discovery of self; but, unlike Spender, he does not call this limiting — rather: '... the question that underlies all art.' And, with Hoffman, he underlines sexual interpretations which Martz feels were less Roethke's intention. Hoffman utilizes many more references to other critics than do any, an aid to him in presenting the most comprehensive coverage of all. For that matter, the only ones quoting other critics to any extent are himself and Mills. Denis Donoghue's treatment is conservative to the point that he scarcely can be said to have risked an estimation; and he offers virtually no textual criticism. But Roy Harvey Pearce concludes the book strongly, delving into language and structure and employing several quotations from Roethke's prose writings about himself and his work to unify an essay upon the title phrase: '... Power of Sympathy.'

(Continued on page 430) (Continued from page 325)

divide themselves into equal parts. There is a period, up to some such time as the foundation of Johns Hopkins University, in which the outstanding type is the amateur, like Prescott or Bancroft, or Parkman, a man of means who represents in America the same high endeavor as Grote

represented in England before the Fifties, and Lord Acton after them. In the late Seventies the amateur begins to give way to the professional.¹

There can be no doubt in our minds that the emergence of the United States as a world power occurred at the time of the Civil War, or thereabouts. At that time, our nation was 'organized' in terms of contemporary reference: a continental railroad system, a mammoth steel industry, an imposing navy, and a titanic economy capable of absorbing, in one generation (1870 to 1900), over 12,000,000 immigrants. (Later, we were to admit, for over a decade, more than a million a year.) This miracle was crucially connected with the growth of our monopolies as we understand them today, and coincided with the physical decline of our frontier. Is it too much for me to wonder whether the decline of the amateur as the outstanding type of our country did not occur during this same period, a period of 'robber barons' and national strikes, of steel magnates and the metropolitanization of the East?

I am of course grinding my own axe; but the heft feels true, and there still are clearings to be made in the jungle of paradox. We recall that Thoreau had some very sarcastic things to say about the building of the railroads; and my view is that, though Americans do not think of him much these days and he is out of sight (except perhaps in the *Little Magazine*), he is not out of mind. Thoreau would have understood one basic element of my childhood, baseball, and its present nationwide officialization into 'major' and 'minor' leagues, in much the same way he understood what the expansion of the railroads was to mean in his own day. Progress, and professionalism, is upon us. The amateur has been banished from the scene. But the imagination of the amateur is still with us: we cannot lose the fault.

When I begin to realize, always with awe, wonder, and maybe a little fear, that this vast landscape of ours, of forest

and desert, of grass and concrete, stretches east and west for thousands of miles and is populated by the richest, busiest society ever to appear on the earth . . . when I consider the scope and rivalry of our churches, the number of our schools, the massive commonwealth of offices and factories ruling our daily lives, the ceaseless concourse of our rivers and streams and of our automobile traffic — it grows apparent to me that our people are as variegated as the states they inhabit. If the amateur is alienated from the empire-sized supermarket he lives in, like Ginsberg dreaming of Whitman, he may still — like Thoreau — go off somewhere and grow his beans. We are not a political people, to call our ulcers by the name of philosophy; but those among us who aspire to be themselves, to find themselves, and to discover themselves to themselves, have room enough to bring off the experiment. We move from state to state, we change jobs, we change our names — all made possible by the length, the breadth, the variability and the prosperity of our country.

¹ THE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, *Harold Laski*. (Viking Press, 1948. Page 414.)

We are conformists; this I shall not deny. But America has always made room for the Utopian eccentric, the Owenite, the dabbler, the Amateur. Even in the darkest days of our Depression during the Thirties, our physical greatness was a protection, and Route 66 became a highway for the sad, uprooted, and peaceful armies of the poor — Okies and Arkies riding to some dream in their tin lizzies. America is the true China of the soul; in Spain, in Italy, in France, the armies of the poor shed blood in their tight little hells.

The ‘money-players’ of my childhood, when baseball was still a natural habit of youth that did not wait upon recognition from Commissioners (or the cozy control of Little League coaches), boys with an eye for a buck and at the same time a true vision of fame, used to rouse themselves

early on Sunday mornings to grab a playing-field or a park before the teams from the other streets got there. Who is to say how many Babe Ruths and Joe Di Maggios we should have had, had it not been for the brazen curriculum of these sand-lot pirates? Is there a school in your town without its newspaper? Do we have parishes without bulletins? As well imagine a church steeple without pigeons. Can it be that today our children no longer scribble out their own street gazettes; that they no longer, some unpredictable afternoon in the sun, take to the yards and the alleys, pestering neighbors, mailmen and cops, invading garages and cellars for news, and counting the very birds in the trees for a gossip? I was the class cartoonist of 5B3; I have had lesser victories since that day.

The habit of speaking is natural to us; it is not for nothing that we have more good poets than intelligent politicians. There is a difference between conversation and talk. The habit of conforming is also natural to us, as deTocqueville so clearly reported when we were still babes in the wood. Is it any wonder then, given this tension between protest and conformity, the conflict between the self and society in a vast democratic arena — perhaps the result of that head-on collision an age ago between the Enlightenment and Puritanism — that the Little Magazine stands, in this angry, busy country of ours, as one of the neatest resolutions of that confrontation?

I have written about amateurs. I do not mean hobbyists. This is not to be a sermon on the pleasures of relaxation and vacation. The true amateur in our midst vacates nothing. He is a lover, and often a lever, but never a leaver. To the consternation of our critical elite, who really should know better, he is sometimes a Fulbright scholar (Corman), a Guggenheim Fellow (Derleth), a Visiting Lecturer (Abbe, Ginsberg, any number of others), a full-time businessman (Weil); but the curse of Anne Bradstreet is upon him: he

writes poems in the wilderness. He is tainted by Luther, and obsessed with the grudges of Dante. Lest I appeal to the wrong type of snobbery — I refuse to be mistaken for either a Democrat or a Republican — he is also a mechanic, an old maid, a retired minister, a grocer, a pants-presser, a vagrant, a writer of mystery stories for a living. At his hot best (Corman, Eckman, Swallow¹) he is mad to dream his nightmare true, like Blake or Pound; and — the very dream of America! — Blake was a good ‘mechanic’ and Pound a good cook. Protocol means nothing to him when the chips are down, because for all his credits, whether good or bad, he is the peasant in our suburbs and a hot potato indeed.

Of course we need such people. T. S. Eliot, Allen Tate, John Ciardi, even J. Donald Adams of the NEW YORK TIMES, hasten to admit this, though they more often than not look upon our Little Magazines as a sort of R. O. T. C. proving ground for literary cadets. Again a paradox is involved. It just is not true that the Little Magazine’s main function is to provide a springboard for the ‘beginning’ writer. The big publishers do not make trends, but follow them. Publishing history throughout the years gives a clear indication of this. Allen Ginsberg’s notoriety and the newsworthiness of the Beats in general followed after, and did not precede, the publication of HOWL. In a very real factual sense, this booklet, put out by a then almost completely unknown poet and publisher (Lawrence Ferlinghetti of CITY LIGHTS), created a publishing revolution in our country; and it wasn’t long before TIME, TV, and a dozen trade houses began to capitalize on the interest and shock generated by this strange and wonderful poem. The fashionable currency, for a considerable period, of Paul Bowles, first picked up in any effective sense by ZERO, is another example among many. The Little Magazine’s main function is quite simply to print what its editor believes is worthy literature out of the conviction that it would otherwise not be printed! In

MAGAZINES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS Press, 1956) Theodore Peterson states (p. 390): ‘ . . . for a high proportion of magazine short stories, as James T. Farrell once noted, “the ideal of life is success,” and the fruits of that success were a mate and a home equipped with all the gadgets advertised on the surrounding pages.’ All of us are familiar with the propaganda of ‘good living’ which fills the pages of the slick magazines. As a historical commentary, Peterson elsewhere goes on to say: ‘ . . . the contributions of commercial magazines to serious literature were moderate at best.’ In *THE LITTLE MAGAZINE, A History and a Bibliography*, Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich (PRINCETON University Press, 1946), the editors say of these ‘unsung periodicals,’ the Little Magazines, that they sponsored about eighty percent of the important novelists, poets, and critics who began writing after 1912. I am sure that in the case of poets the figure is closer to ninety-five percent. I can do no better than to quote James Playsted Wood from his *MAGAZINES IN THE UNITED STATES* (THE RONALD Press, 1956):

¹ *Corman, editor of ORIGIN; Eckman, coeditor with Richard Wirtz Emerson of THE GOLDEN GOOSE; Swallow, of original EXPERIMENT group, editor of PS, pamphlets of his own press, etc.*

Poetry has little or no commercial value. The larger magazines want little or none of it. It is probably not too much of an exaggeration to say that the renaissance of poetry in the United States after the close of World War I couldn't have occurred without the help of the little magazines. The reputations of Robert Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Carl Sandburg, Vachel Lindsay, and John Gould Fletcher were established in part through acceptance of their verse in the little magazines. The little magazines published many of the poets whose work is now recognized as some of the best of our poetic production in the Twentieth Century at the time when these writers were being ignored by the larger literary monthlies, such as HARPER'S, and the ATLANTIC, which might have been expected to encourage them. Novelists such as Erskine Caldwell, Albert Halper, and James Farrell, all used the little magazines to get started on their careers. The DOUBLE DEALER in New Orleans gave early publication to Hart Crane and introduced Ernest Hemingway, probably the most successful commercially of any of the novelists to emerge from the little magazine movement, in 1922. The same DOUBLE DEALER printed the early work of Edmund Wilson and of the prize-winning novelist Robert Penn Warren, whose verse is still published in little magazines, as is the work of William Carlos Williams.

Such statements, excerpted at random, can offer no solace to the dynasties among us who persist in telling their readers that the Little Magazine is at best a prep school for the bright young boys from the better families, and at its frequent worst a hang-out in the cheap part of town, where the not-nice people go. These statements, all affirmations of verifiable facts, also add a proper substance to James Boyer

May's definition of the Little Magazine as providing a medium which would not otherwise exist. So much for 'professionalism.'

The nub of the matter is our prejudice about taste; and this brings us back to the amateur's anticritical posture, the personality of his commitment where schedules of quality and value are concerned. No Little Magazine editor worth his salt cares about accepted, or acceptable notions. It is probably true that much inferior writing gets published on the basis of his personal taste. (The same holds for the LADIES HOME JOURNAL, GOOD HOUSEKEEPING, and a host of other 'national' magazines.) There really is no defending the Little Magazine editor's self-confidence except in terms of its results — some of which we have cited.

That some critics realize the problem of taste in the sense I am using the word is evident in the following autobiographical comments from Van Wyck Brooks' SCENES AND PORTRAITS:

According to Coleridge, the possession in youth of anything like perfect taste is a virtual proof of the absence of genuine talent, and the cultivation of taste at Harvard was not only occasionally mistaken for talent but sometimes went far to stultify it. The atmosphere of Cambridge proved often to be sterilizing, but this was perhaps the necessary price it paid for being literary as no other atmosphere has ever been in this country.

Be that as it may, the outsiders of Culture whom I have been discussing, the Little Magazine editor and writer (statistically, they are a 'young' group), distrust dynasty. Our lack of any real centers of power and prestige in the literary world probably contributes a great deal to this kind of independence and self-reliance. Something similar to this happened a long time ago to our doctors and lawyers, whose hierarchies have developed along different lines than what might have been prescribed by the Inns and by the Royal

Societies of the mother-country in the Eighteenth Century. I suspect that if we were to become, by some Petrarchan sorcery, a nation of sonnet-writers, a journal would soon spring up out of some small town in Texas or some apartment in New York City, called the Anti-Sonnet. Not only is it in our tradition to behave in this manner, but such conduct is even easy for us. Our freedom, imperfect as it is, is our true prosperity, and we flourish. Writers in the U.S. do not ordinarily have to foist their strategies on the public in organized bands the way Tristan Tzara, Morris Ernst, and Emilio Marinetti had to. A particular appeal of all American art is our lack of cliques or coteries. Cocktail parties, yes; committees, no. As a people, we have historically been willing to leave aristocracy in letters up to the professor; and in the university review is precisely where such organization as we do have exists. The rest of the literary world is wide open.

Unfortunately, money enters into the problem as well. Aside from the popular American confusion of success with money (of which Alfred North Whitehead has written so wittily), the dollar has gone far toward environmentalizing art here; and no one is so desperately aware of this intrusive factor upon taste as the poet. The two-by-four modular poem, the poem written slot-size for the filler column, set up for print so as to be readily interchangeable in terms of format, literally unhinged from one section and clapped on to another section as the need may arise. Accepted as much for size as for sense, this 'industrialized' modern poem (I insist we call the process by no other name) is a manufactured commodity serving the same needs esthetically as the paper cup—to be used once, and then thrown away. This probably has had as much to do with the popular aversion to real poetic skill as any conspiracy of secondary-school teachers to teaching Longfellow or 'tough-guy' scientists communicating Communication.

The modern magazine is an erector-set, as surely as is the modern anthology; and very often, even our books. But this is not taught in the schools. We are given concepts about Taste, as something which is 'objective,' traditional, and to be understood in terms of logic and aesthetics. No disagreement here on my part regarding what has been included, but regarding what has been left out. At best, we are told, within the Eliot Canon, that the absence of the long poem and the epic in modern times may have something to do with modern man's lack of faith. But we are not told about the lack of space in modern periodicals. Imagine a Whitman poem printed in the middle columns of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST! Better yet, imagine the POST devoting whole pages to a Whitman poem—no photographs, no ads, no color impacts. In terms of modern journalism, such a thing isn't financially possible (but we shall get to that later). We are not told that in some countries of the world water is sold at a penny a glass or a bottle and that in those countries the people do not take baths, and their poets compose editorial and un-objective poems and dream of fine revenges. In some countries, the poem is still a secret language for special occasions, and obeys the ritual:¹⁸ this system has nothing to do with Brooks and Warren. The Little Magazine editor is not so much delinquent in his attitude toward a 'propriety' as he is obsessed with the mechanical and economic fooleries that have put the poem in danger of disappearing from history.

¹⁸ The Illiterate Poets of Somalia, Jeanne Contini (THE REPORTER, Mar. 4, 1963). I have now said something about history, something about men, and something about magazines. I have done my best to insist on the utility of paradox as a gauge of some kind in the discussion of American culture, and I have risked some rather nasty statements about Taste, that trap for all system-makers from Taine onward. It is best, for the uses of my own pragmatic

strategy, to introduce what I consider to be a major theme in American writing, perhaps the driving force in our literary culture, especially detectable since about the time of the Civil War. As usual, I shall try to maneuver my abstract concept using concrete terms. I call my theme Dichotomy. American culture is visibly cut in two; and I think we can seriously fix the branching of the American ambivalence as having occurred around the time Laski mentions, 1870. (We are forced to fool with dates for the sake of a system!) The dichotomy I write of is associated with the rise of Money, the rise of Education, and the rise of Literacy. The ramifications of American 'organization,' propelled by these three forces, which both unite and divide us, are nowhere better illustrated than in comparing modern journalism and the Little Magazine.

The difficulty of judging the Little Magazine on the basis of standard journalistic criteria becomes apparent as soon as we try to bring some of those measurements to bear. The Little Magazine is not an adjunct of the country's marketing system, as are our successful commercial publications. Again, the paradox (and the split): the commercial magazine of large national coverage does not depend, as does the Little Magazine, upon the single sales and subscriptions for profit, but upon advertising fees. Hence, the circulation and ad-rate arrangement. In a very real sense, the Little Magazine is not a 'business' at all, though I have no doubt that some reviews show a modest solvency. The slick magazine is geared to mass consumption; the Little Magazine thrives on partisanship, the loyalty of its readers. The amateur aspect of the latter group is most strongly demonstrated by the timehonored policy of payment to authors in contributor copies, not hard cash (and sometimes plenty of it — as with *PLAYBOY* or *THE NEW YORKER*). That well-known writers, and able ones at that, contribute their work, often their very best, to the small reviews despite lack of payment in real terms,

indicates an acceptance by them impossible of achievement in the editor-writer relationship of the mammoth national weeklies and monthlies.

If inexpensiveness is a viable commercial indicator, again the Little Magazine is a failure; these brochures, often the size and wingspread of a healthy butterfly, are priced in most instances far above what the average consumer will pay. It is not uncommon for a sixteen-page poetry journal to be sold at seventy-five cents or a dollar. Compare, on the other hand, the paperback novel which sells for thirty-five cents at the local drugstore. I cite these conditions not as complaints, but as facts. A standard charge, of course (a version of the old 'poets writing for poets' attack), is that these magazines can't be very good, or people would buy them. Really, the premise is awry. The Little Magazines are not selling entertainment; the big magazines are. The Little Magazines are not selling refrigerators and new cars; the big magazines have to in order to stay in business. All the rest is incident and format. Here we have a veritable jungle to clear before we can lay claim to what Taste really is; as well to try adding apples and oranges. And when we get out of the woods, we shall probably spy a unicorn dancing his horn.

Let me reinforce my point of view by two quotations from a book already mentioned, Theodore Peterson's *MAGAZINES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*; for what we are really talking about is the happy marriage of Business and Culture:

The low-priced popular magazine of national circulation was born in the late Nineteenth Century as America made the transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy. It emerged as changes in the distribution of consumer goods brought about a growing volume of advertising. By joining the magazine with the system of marketing, national advertising affected many aspects of the magazine industry. As the volume of advertising increased, magazines grew in numbers and in circulation. . . .

The magazine was widened by a rise in population and by such fruits of democracy and industrialization as an increase in leisure time, an increase in the general level of education, and a redistribution of income. . . .

Thus we are able to distinguish two levels of culture operating side by side in America: one dedicated to Entertainment and to readers-as-shoppers; the other dedicated to Expression, and seeking readers on an almost individual basis, a correspondence. GOOD HOUSEKEEPING reaches millions; SPARROW reaches hundreds. The popular magazine is a marvel of the printing industry, with dozens of typefaces, variegated qualities of fine paper, multi-color designs and illustrations, cartoons, and all the trappings of expensive topicality . . . articles on politics, travel commentaries, up-to-date short stories reflecting the current national interest — love on the moon this year, love in conquered Italy twenty years ago. The SPARROW is a miracle of poverty, the economy format of the job-holder as editor and publisher: mimeographed issues, waste-stock paper, and gang-press run; no drawings, no photographs, no ads, and no steady calendar of issue.

The split is definite; but the arrangement is pragmatic, and a further proof of the American as a mechanic.

Some 'nationally' known authors who appear regularly in both the large and the little maga-

zines are Lawrence Lipton, George Abbe, William Carlos Williams, Allen Tate, Denise Levertov, George P. Elliott, Kenneth Rexroth. The list is literally endless. We are obliged to conclude that American writers take their environment as it is, much like their pioneer forebears, and proceed to make the best of it. The best is as often good as none too good.

This arrangement, the whole context of the American dichotomy, is not in and of itself a special property of the Western Hemisphere. We have reason to believe that this condition operates throughout Europe and South America as well. Modern Italian poetry received essential impetus from a small group of young men publishing a Little Magazine, *VOCE*. The Futurist manifesto appeared originally in the Paris newspaper *LE FIGARO*. England for centuries (since getting the idea from France, which may have gotten it from Germany) nurtured the local, the crank, and the intellectual newspaper and magazine.

However, the intensity with which Americans have pursued their urge to expression, the success with which their efforts have been rewarded, the democratic milieu (with all its faults and its three magnificent props of Money, Education, and Literacy) which has permitted us to function as artists, makes of the American condition a cause without parallel in history. It is with this in mind that we mention, not without awe, James Boyer May's remark in a recent letter to me, that there are about 600 little reviews being published today, the overwhelming majority of them in the U.S.A. And Lilith Lorraine, another experienced editor in the field (*DIFFERENT*, *FLAME*, and *AVALON*), unhesitatingly estimates that there are three million poets in our country! I am not prepared to hold her to her count, but I am ready to conjecture that poets talking to poets form a great party indeed.

We have no Pope, expending the Vatican treasury on pagan works of art. As a society, we have not as yet evolved a set of status symbols, in the manner of the Republic of Florence, for profitable use by poets and painters. (In place of the Medici secretary, our museums have their 'business managers.')

For very good historical reasons, we do not have a cultured class, conscious of itself, made up of marauding barons and beautiful women, such as existed at the court of Ferrara. It is interesting to note that ours is the first powerful nation not to restrict citizenship as a means of acquiring power. To some extent, Rome tried the same thing and had to fight a civil war in the process; but the civic establishment is more apparent than real. Athens was an elite society. In Florence, only the really wealthy functioned as voters, and the town was constantly set against the country. Russia closes its doors to foreigners.

As a country, we are not at all precious about Art — only about Doing — and our aristocrats are always of the working kind. Perhaps that is why so many of our presidents are millionaires who don't really have to work. It is the snobbery of the working class and the pioneer. And it is the refusal of the amateur to abdicate from history.

We confuse art with entertainment; and the result is the slick magazine, the Broadway musical. Our intellectuals are paid for the latter and are obsessed by the former. In a sense, we are exiles all — or we are all caught in a happy prison, even the prize-winners among us who must be content with a teaching job at the university (full-time, more likely than not — along with an occasional fee or stipend for an infrequent lecture or reading). We have only to follow the magazine career of Poe to realize how long ago the present condition of American letters had been anticipated; and Poe, who was able to please so few editors, knew how to please his subscribers!¹ What is Thoreau's *WALDEN*, that letter to a friend in a 'distant' land, but a one-man Little Magazine, the

author's way of trying to figure out with lists and schedules how to lead the life of a man of letters in a country filled with mechanics? Thoreau's account of his expenditures is the key to the American paradox, the budget of an unemployed man. And what of Melville's soul-searching during the period he was thinking of moving away from his situation as the man who had lived among the cannibals, and to write *MOBY DICK*?

I have not been begging specious comparisons. Who can doubt the value of those essential symbols of our age, the popular magazine and the daily newspaper? They give us instruction, entertainment, even education. They remind us of the times — a benefit and a disadvantage not pertinent to our present article. The 'muckrakers' were a newspaper phenomenon. The Profile, especially as practiced in *THE NEW YORKER*, amounts to a new art form, serving the needs of both history and edification. (And reminiscent, in its more mannered characteristics, of such Eighteenth-century studies in depth as the De Coverley papers.) Our advances in photography, we probably owe as much to the requirements of advertising as to any single factor. There are other proofs. Few readers, however, will deny my contention that separation is also involved: the reporter is an expert, a monopolist. He has a press pass; his expense account takes him to Cairo and to Timbuctoo; he has at his disposal all the glittering, stainless-steel paraphernalia of modern industry (computers, undersea cables, radio-tape pictures, secretaries, cards of introduction to both the Mayor and the condemned prisoner). But he has little access to our hearts; he cannot speak to us as an enemy and a lover; he is not talking to us as individuals, but as a community of organized citizens. We read him as we vote, en masse, a democratic rite.

¹ *POE: Journalism, and the theory of poetry*, William Charvat — from *ASPECTS OF MODERN POETRY*, ed. by Richard M. Ludwig (OHIO State University Press). A fascinating comment on Poe's conflicts as writer and editor. He points out — correctly, I believe — Poe's

attempts to popularize his work, and his obsession with the magazine as a medium for literary expression. Also noted is his Philosophy of Composition, as a how-to-do-it-yourself essay aimed at a public. Too, as an example of the poet as mechanic, Poe's insistence on brevity, reading at one sitting, the popular desire for a moral, and the appeal to sentimentality in the common reader by use of a melancholy theme. I might remind us here of the practice of not too many years ago of informing the reader of the 'reading time' required to complete a magazine story or article.

The right of the Little Magazine editor, the poet as reader or writer or both, is otherwise. He is obsessed with his own attitude toward language, which makes him at one and the same time the proprietor of a secret temple and the waster of other gods. He appeals, he seeks; his small review is a private letter. When we hear him, we hear a voice — a wrong one even, but always a real one — for he has translated the liberty of expression into functioning speech. His very 'poverty' is a luxury. Believing, by his very actions, in his right to be heard, it never occurs to him to listen to the exhortations of superiors. Forced like the Puritans to submit dogma to practicality, he becomes the poet-mechanic: when he lacks money, he suspends publication until such time as his funds are sufficient. He tinkers with the magazine if he has to — reducing pages, cutting calendar, returning manuscripts, going back to work, moonlighting to make up for lost causes. Mimeograph machine, ditto, holograph limited editions — it's all the same to him. The Businessman can no more put him out of business than he could a beggar. Which makes the editor of a Little Magazine rather a success — as the literary history of some generations now demonstrates, a very special kind of entrepreneur.

The written fates of the modern age are two: Literacy and Literature. The former is apt and handy and ripe in her proportions, promising us the rewards of the just and a tribe of millionaires. The latter is retiring and shy and a bit confused for the passion, with the face of that farthest star,

our own aspiration. As usual, the poet tells us which of two beautiful women to love.