

LIVING LITERATURE

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YEAR'S ADDRESS LIST;
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JAMES BOYER MAY

TRACE

EDITOR

TRACE

No. 62

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Essays & Articles · Poetry · Reviews

Fall-Winter 1966

Edited by JAMES BOYER MAY

A CLEAN READING EDITION

Advertisements, subscription promotions, the front cover and blank leaves have been omitted. The poetry, fiction, essays, correspondence and reviews of the issue are given in full, in the order in which they are printed.

Where a poet uses the space of the page — indented lines, hanging steps, gaps within a line — that spacing is treated as part of the poem and kept as closely as a proportional typeface allows. Square brackets enclose conjectural readings where the scan is faded. Original spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and verse lineation are kept.

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SELECTED POEMS, Earle Birney (McCLELLAND & STEWART, Ltd. — \$5.), is a large book filled with much of the best from a major poet. Although Birney is Canadian, he has lived in many places throughout the world, and little of this volume is classifiable as regional; nor is it thematically limited — his perceptions range as widely as his travels. The work is replete with lines demanding quotation. At random — from Anglosaxon Street:	24
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In Part Two of GOAT'S MILK AND MIRRORS, subtitled Esthetics, Lewis attempts to portray the poet working in the labyrinth of modern poetic method, the 'lyric way.' This began five centuries ago among the artists of Florence when Brunelleschi discovered 'perspective': the principle of an ordered recession to create an illusion of deep space which enabled the artist to show complex forms with all their facets in the round. In the viewer, the vanishing point may induce a metaphysical giddiness: at that spot, the picture dissolves into nothing, or leads into eternity. Five centuries later, Cezanne and the cubists, under the influence of new spatial discoveries in physics and mathematics, saw the visible world broken down and reassembled in spheres, cubes, cones. Again, the viewer may wonder! Does it add up to zero or to infinity, this geometric dance of artifacts? What do Picasso's efforts to compress time and space into a single dimension mean to our culture — a clowning parody of science or the prelude to a new break-through in knowledge? Is it magic or hallucination that gives us a view of face or form from all angles? Or a new view of reality that may lead to eternal truths? 59

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BRAIN WASHING HYPNOGOGIC RECALL & AN APPROACH TO POETICS

by Gene Fowler

THAT WE HAD MOVED INTO an era in which communication would mean something quite new first became apparent to the average citizen when Americans taken prisoner during the Korean War began making strange confessions. Since that time, 'brain washing,' 'personality reconstruction,' and other such terms have become, if not household words, concepts among which every reader of paperbacks is at home.

About fifteen years having passed since the first such confessions, we might begin to anticipate the appearance of poets who, having reached adulthood and taken to the making of poems, are 'products' of the age of 'influenced people.' We might speculate as to what sort of poetry will come out of this age.

Brain washers, psychiatrists, and advertising men of the Fifties and Sixties talk quite comfortably about entering a man's mind, rearranging what they find there, removing from or adding to the collection. When we get over our initial shudder, we think of another sort of man able to do such things. Or a demi-god. Orpheus could make the trees and stones dance. With language, his lyre, he could set the objects of men's perceptions into a dance, leaving them in a form which showed the dance had taken place. In short, he rearranged the contents of men's minds.

Anthropologists tell us primitive peoples believe in what we, in our usually-unthinking mental shorthand, call 'word magic.' That is, poems and songs do not merely bring some watered-down aesthetic pleasure, but effect serious changes in the reality and psyche of the singer and listener. The

primitive singer utters a Name, and a personage, a presence, or an object is evoked in the perception of himself and his listener. A group of entities may be evoked and led in a dance, a drama that is witnessed and expected, then, to recur at other levels of experience. Here, in fact, is the birth of all magic. This is of interest to us because poetry is, in essence, a magical technique.

There is one well-known practice today which is very much like the effects ascribed to ancient song. There is a man who, like Orpheus, uses words to make trees and stones and ghosts dance in men's minds. You're less likely to find him in the pages of POETRY than, appropriately, in the Orpheum Theatre. He is the hypnotist.

The hypnotist uses mainly words, those levers of which poets regard themselves as masters. Or, more correctly, he uses the substratum of reality which makes language work, getting at it through words. Most poets, on the other hand, simply put together scrabble pieces and wonder why no one displays any special or great interest in their constructs. The hypnotist gets all the attention he wants; and his words produce results.

The substratum of reality which underlies language is sensory and behavioral recall — an autonomous response-system that keeps the universe apparently solid and right side up for the individual and enables him to ascribe meaning to events. Some of those events are phrases, made up of phonemes, morphemes, and words accumulating into lines or sentences.

Polygraph operators, personnel managers, psycho-linguists, and some police officers know that every word evokes a tiny autonomous set of reactions. The hypnotist will cultivate stronger responses by calling for, encouraging, and feeding back into the system these autonomous responses. Finally, through what is known in the trade as a 'conviction spiral,' he will be able to direct the

perceptual processes in his 'listener.'

It is possible for someone with a bit of patience and perhaps a bit of masochism to think back to a toothache, nurse the memory, and — suddenly and unpleasantly — 'feel again' the original toothache. This is sensory recall, from which we are, fortunately, usually protected by a well-trained 'forgetter.' A man suddenly exposed to his whole past with full immediacy would lose all sense of space-time orientation — then, all ordering systems. He would finally become insane or, if reticular controls went, die. The experiments with sensory deprivation have uncovered some aspects of this particular sort of fate.

For the most part, we are overprotected. We usually call it being 'insensitive.' Some few poets and fewer readers will cultivate a heightened sensitivity — more often than not in an undisciplined way and with rather saccharine results.

The writers of advertising copy have tried to use words in a manner somewhat between that of the poet and that of the hypnotist. They assume an audience of near-zero sensitivity, then try to pry loose what there might be. Any sensitivity in the viewer of an advertisement will be a slight capacity for erotic response or for reacting with fear to a threatened loss of security. So, most ads have to do with sex or security. Key phrases of the cruder sort, like 'be loved,' or even a picture of one's erotic fantasies as she or he actually occurs in some divine individual (with the help of a crew of technicians), will be thrown at one.

When some emotionally-realized (made real) images are evoked in the viewer's mind (assuming there is one), they are made to dance. The dance is usually very simple. There is metamorphosis. The mythic guide, be it bestower of security or beautiful girl, tends to 'become' the product. They merge, exchange properties, become one.

The hypnotist, of course, does much more. He can people his listener's world with snakes, girls, Martians, or what

have you, and bring him to believe particular things about snakes, girls, and Martians. The poet, as Master-of-Names, should wish to do no less.

There is some indication that, in this era of hypnotists, psychiatrists, and brain washers, poetic souls do want to hold this old Orphic power again. We hear radio shows called *You are There* and *This is Your Life*, see movies with Robert Montgomery in which the camera behaves as a set of eyes in the head of someone present—and other such entertainments. Critics of poetry begin looking enthusiastically for ‘immediacy’ and ‘inevitability,’ without being able to define just what it is they are seeking. And so forth.

It seems that poets are beginning to feel the inarticulate stirring of a desire to reach in and modulate the listener-reader’s consciousness. Even the recent shouting about ‘honesty’ and ‘truth’ (‘truth’ comes from the past participle of *trauen*: to believe strongly) is evidence of such a desire; for ‘truth’ is popularly thought to be that which convinces absolutely.

The younger poets, the poets to appear in the last ten years or so—and I include myself in this group—have, indeed, been trying to get back to a word magic. We feel frustrated by the usual insensitivity to words in the reader or listener. We gravitate toward the public reading of poetry — where we can get the timbre of our voices behind the poem, where we can get closer to the listener. We tend toward spare lean poems, getting rid of rhetoric and syntactic words which remind the reader-listener it is poetry and not actuality by which he is confronted. We tend toward a kind of filmic imagism, toward nouns and verbs, the names of things and actions, toward the cuts and turns that are like the movements of living minds.

All this is a conscious or unconscious effort to work word magic through our poems. I find myself writing passages like

i find pebbles
in the wet sand
dark agates

**VEINED IN WHITE DULL BLOODSTONES BLUE-GREEN
BITS OF FOSSILIZED SEA**

so solid you can almost feel the sand and the pebbles. Yet, when it is done, I feel suspicious of it — the word order being an echo of language, of a speaker, of the secondhand nature of the experience. I want, finally, to be a hypnotist, leaning over my listener, tearing each phrase loose from the poem, placing it into the setting of the listener's consciousness, working him to fit and accommodate it . . . then, the next one — until he has lived my poem.

I want my poem to be more real than usual reality. And, of course, as my listeners do not accept or open themselves to word magic, my every poem is a failure.

Robert Duncan recently (in *PASSAGES*) and Pound earlier (in *CANTOS*) tried to get to the singular power of the ideogram by presenting lattices of words. It doesn't seem to work very well. Phrases, which actually correspond more closely than words to ideograms, might work better — but then, we get the word-order echoing language and are back where we started.

SENSORY AND BEHAVIORAL RECALL

A cold hand when I speak of ice in the hand. A tensing and tiring of the running muscles as I take the reader through a poem in which I am running. A theory of poetics for our age, where men do alter the minds of other men, must discuss techniques for inducing and making use of such recall. The techniques cannot be those of the hypnotist, as they would tend to ruin poems and, in any case, demand the immediate presence of the person to be affected. There are things, however, for the poet to do; and those of us more or less newly arrived do them almost instinctively. A movement away from what is called density helps, a movement away from baroque and distracting imagery, away from syntactic and rhetorical padding or bracing, a movement toward simpler and more pervasive rhythms, a movement toward words that stay close to the senses, close to the familiar in detail if not in the main construct.

Those things I've listed as characteristic of the newest poetry may be said to be characteristic of all fine poetry — not new at all. I think skilled readers have always tried to let word magic work in them, and the best poets have always aimed their work at this level of receptivity. If there is a real difference between the older and the newer poet, it is that the newer poet is becoming aware of his need to enter into a reader-listener and change him. And the newer poet has many additional tools to work with. Chief among these is the demonstration-strengthened conviction that it is possible to work such changes. Secondly, are formal bodies of knowledge: several psychologies, hypnogogics and mnemonics, linguistics, psycholinguistics, and others. A most interesting resource is the huge backlog of periodic failed or partially-successful translations, baring the anatomies of some poems as 'chunks of encapsulated consciousness' and evidence about the transferability of such chunks.

Most poets today are milling around wondering what hasn't been done, what there is to do. My feeling is that virtually nothing is yet done; it is all to do, or almost all. Poetry, I think, will prove the major tool in exploring the functioning and possibility of transference of Being. So far, even the best have done little more than play some of the possibilities by ear.

TOWARDS PRINT (CURRENT POETRIES: EXPANDING, YET UNTHINNING)

by the Editor

IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT THE physicists' theory of diminished powers in multiplying parts is apparent in the evidences of vitality in today's poetry, although — with so many more inconsequential and bad books and pamphlets appearing — quality may seem rarer to those who may not see fair representations of the swollen tide of publications. The proportion of probable valid contributions remains about the same; the rate of increase in worthwhile books is no less than the rate over all. Of course every new poetry offering does not come to this desk; but the onrush is large enough that the culls number in the hundreds, and a substantial percentage merit author-by-author report.

In a beautifully-designed large format, SEVEN SEVEN 7 : 7 is appropriately dedicated to Anais Nin (poems and photographs by Daisy Aldan and Stella Snead — FOLDER Editions, or c/o Snead, 14 Janki Kutir, Bombay-54, India — \$3. & \$1.95). Cover photos are by Marlis Schwieger and Lynn Millar, and Margie Trauerman gets credit for the design. Few of the poems and prose poems come up to the level of Not a Cemetery in the Snow (which, incidentally, first was in TRACE No. 59, though this is not mentioned): '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, . . . I veer over the vertical glass coffins / where costumed maggots crawl to a savage dirge. . .'. A reasonable guess is that selections were those of Miss Aldan herself, and of her associates. A perceptive editor might have gleaned pieces from the talented poet's works to vie with the outstanding Snead photos — if perhaps not those which would be so obviously related to them. Carroll Arnett probably benefited from the editorial advice of James L. Weil to present his effective group of staccato poems (THEN — \$1., pamphlet — ELIZABETH Press). Characteristic is Every Single Day:

Close the door
softly now, out
and walk away
don't go, even
to sleep on
the off chance —
from it, knowing
it must follow
wherever I go,
still there? Open
slow, see it's
still right there.

Despite that many before him have emotionalized the self's shadow, Arnett conveys the continuity and 'watcher' theme in memorable fashion — quite differently.

**SELECTED POEMS, EARLE BIRNEY
(McCLELLAND & STEWART, LTD.
— \$5.), IS A LARGE BOOK FILLED
WITH MUCH OF THE BEST FROM A
MAJOR POET. ALTHOUGH BIRNEY IS
CANADIAN, HE HAS LIVED IN MANY
PLACES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD,
AND LITTLE OF THIS VOLUME IS
CLASSIFIABLE AS REGIONAL; NOR IS
IT THEMATICALLY LIMITED — HIS
PERCEPTIONS RANGE AS WIDELY AS
HIS TRAVELS. THE WORK IS REplete
WITH LINES DEMANDING QUOTATION.
AT RANDOM — FROM ANGLOSAXON
STREET:**

Hoy? with climbing sun
festooned with shopping bags
bigthewed Saxonwives
waddling back wienerladen
march the bleached beldames
farded flatarched
stepping over buttrivers
to suckle smallfry

And from Way to the West:

horseshit ochre everywhere
roiling
like paper twisting and browning
before it fires up from hot ashes
there's somebody's Hell ahead
meantime our lips are prickling
and the trees are dead
but it's another 20 miles before the sign
SUDBURY and Christ there on a skull of a hill
3 Manhattan-size stacks
phallic Calvary
ejaculating essence of rotted semen
straight up
mass sabotage at Cape Kennedy

There is an author's Preface and six pages of notable art of Leonard Brooks.

A translator (especially if he's not a poet, himself) often fails to transmit the original impressions. But, with the modern poet using a high percentage of specific verbs and nouns, the translator is supplied with many simply-definable words which are the projections of the metaphors. Today's reader of such translations may more surely reform the foreign poet's own vision and idea. The German of the late Johannes Bobrowski lends itself well, in this respect; and Ruth and Matthew Mead seem to have done an excellent job (SHADOW LAND — first published by DONALD CARROLL, London, and available from ALAN SWALLOW — \$3.50). These English versions will enhance Bobrowski's reputation this side of the language barrier. From *The Death of the Wolf*: 'Autumn, / melt away with the / mists! Now a dark season / crouches before the high / wall, before the ice, / the owls swoop over the snow / spitting at dusk, / a sail of sleep, / lost.' From *Elderblossom*: 'Houses in a wooden street, / at the fences, elder. / Down the small steps / the white-scrubbed threshold — / then, you remember, / the flecks of blood.'

More adjectives here, yet plain ones. Easter is again more sparse. ‘. . . The river / comes, the birchwoods / grow up to the wall, towers, / stars round the cupolas, the golden / roof lifts a cross on chains.’

The remarkably-close affinity of dictions — the similarities in choices of low-keyed and restrained, but simple and moving syntactical constructs — employed by the better socially-critical poets, in different tongues, is apparent on turning to an American, Sam Bradley (*MEN IN GOOD MEASURE* — \$3. — *GOLDEN QUILL* Press). *Amid the Elements* is dedicated to William Carlos Williams (whose work eventually may be looked back upon as chiefly important because of its influence on younger more-lyric poets):

**WINDOW GLAZES UP ITS PARABLE. A SWALLOW
DIPS TOWARD THE GLOW BUT MEETS (INSIDE, WE
TOAST) MAN'S SEAL, HARD REBUFF.**

**BUT WHAT VOICE IS FINAL IN THE HIGH-WROUGHT
CASTLE? I CROUCH AND SERVE THE FIRE.
THERE'S YET AN OUTSIDE FREEDOM.**

The dissimilarity lies in Bradley's employment of terms such as 'final' and 'hard rebuff,' and in his declaration of theme in the closing two lines. For today's more approved critics, this currently reflects greater credit to Bobrowski; but any tomorrow could birth change in critical notion, since Bradley's adjectival, adverbial, and propositional interjections and conclusions are precise and unelaborate. For instance, in Mr. Eliot's *Quartets*: 'Artists, brittle-housed. Waste is scraped stones, / praise is polished urns. Here's a frozen / rose. (Hush you little winged idiot of / venus-arc'd words not sanctified / in cloistered analysis. / But I do not / hush. I contend: . . .)' Though these particular quotations happen to be from poems which, because of the literary reference in the dedication of the former and through the title of the latter, might be tagged 'literary,' the essence of such Bradley poems is by no means 'upon' or in any secondary manner of 'take-off.' He is his own man.

Again crossing the Atlantic, we come to an intimately-personal comprehensive collection by Pete Brown (FEW — 10/- or \$1.65, ltd. 700 c., paperb., cover design and art, Mal Dean — MIGRANT Press), a sharp contrast to any of the foregoing. Along with the modern trends in succinct metaphors, flows an augmenting current of often wholly-unadorned and metaphorless first-person work that relies upon projection of heightened experience and/or nostalgic recollection in what might be called sophisticatedly naive language. Brown's is seldom bare of simile and metaphor — as in *Ballad for the Queen of Outer Space*: 'She

spins through the sky / trailing clouds of lovers / like robes like stars / galaxies of sadmen oldmen . . .’ But then, he has such as Poverty/Sweet Substitute: ‘I’ve never slept with / Anyone but you on / a floor she said but / after a while she / found someone with / a bed / instead.’ Or, opening lines of a longer piece, 1965: ‘My friend made love to her before me, / because I was late; I paid / the fare to the beach at the end / of the city; the afternoon / was grey and rain poured from the sky; . . .’ Reading almost any of young Brown aloud, one can believe him when he says he has made his living entirely from his work since 1960. His publisher states that, at twenty-five, he had given more public readings than any poet of any age. If only as transmissions of valid individuated reactions to his place and time, Brown’s writings are likely to endure longer than that of many poets of larger intention.

If searching for an example amongst men of academic reputation, to confute the notion that professors, because they are professors, must be mere craftsmen or poetasters, none better could be found than Warren Carrier (TOWARD MONTEBELLO — \$3.95 — HARPER & ROW). The jacket’s display of indubitable poetry, rather than the ubiquitous resounding vague and predictable ‘critical’ praises, affirms this. However scholarly he may be, Carrier has dreamed the dreams of the truly creative; his complex enchanting pieces rise out of levels of nonrational association few can movingly re-evolve — another book which is quotable in virtually all its parts. This is *Perspectives and a Recollection*:

PERSPECTIVES AND A RECOLLECTION

The day is dirty snow. Faces turn
to salt. Words tick toward utter fizzle.
The ladies weep in dark parades. Guns
go off in proper numbers all year long.

Why make the bed or put the garbage out?
The cat can piss in corners, bite his fleas

like friends while Buddhists burn for politics.
 Get fat. Who cares? Drink yourself to quarrels
 or sleepless schemes. Minutemen are piling
 caves with ammo to save the state for kooks.
 Diesels honk their horns of sweet escape.
 Rockets pound through smog to abstract space.
 We walk through drifts of the dead like melting snow.
 Once live birds made gestures in green air.

He's not usually this specific and semi-hortatory; the last two lines are more indicative of his flavor, but this poem is quoted to refute another charge indiscriminately hurled at 'prof poets'—that they say nothing of vital significance. Carrier is more characteristic with: 'Love is a poem, / is a dream, is nothing, these final fragments I comb / from your tongue on the common sand, salt / and sleep.' (Exile) Or: ' . . . cats with women's faces jump in the sea; / beneath my wheels a bearded man lies mangled / like a childhood dream; a lady lovely / / in the breeze goes swinging through her rooms. . . . Our dreams are true; our lives are bitter lies.' (Beyond Colonus)

Wayne Clifford's lines: 'No one is mad. Each has his own degree of sanity. / The only place left to us is love.'—concluding Preface to a Lesson—express the major thematic content of *MAN IN A WINDOW* (COACH HOUSE Press — \$2.50, paperb.). Lyrical love poems or poems about love predominate; and Clifford succeeds in conveying his unique degree of sanity. Most of these convey moods and sentiments well—often, very movingly—yet most are occasionally overwrought with a kind of poetic slickness, and marred here and there by triteness and too-sensational or -grand phrases and turns. As: ' . . . quivering lust at my nostrils / until they are white / and brittle as agony. / / Tonight I make a mistress of the wind. / Despondence is strange magic.' (Practical Definition) Inversions also fault some poems. All of which is regrettable because, when he exercises restraint, he

can be quite good. Here is Where Is the Sadness:

Where is the sadness, of your body clinging to me where
has it gone the linen feel of you touching my hand a still
hour long where the silence of birds and other sound

That a wish has become our wall and I never find a chink
to keep the echo of your body's clinging on an hour's brink.

This is an attractive book (designed by Stan Bevington), with much art by Dennis Reid (silkscreened photos). The economy and force of Louis Coxe's lines, the frequent pointed originality of statement and conjurement, and the fact that his style is consistently well individuated — all manifest in *THE LAST HERO* and other poems (VANDERBILT University Press — \$4.) — surely set him well above the typical mediocre academic poet. Yet, he fails to convince, to project deep emotion — does not convey personal effects of any intensity. And there's a kind of hardness, reinforced by the exercise of high technical skill. This book contains a number of translations; and it's interesting to note that Coxe transmits the feelings of poets in another language better than he gets his own feelings into words of his own tongue. Or do his own poems really rise out of strong emotional states? One surely must doubt that they do. In spite of fine metaphors and heightened phrases, the work confirms that Coxe composes quite detachedly — if not altogether coldly — with rigid intellectual control over whatever had moved him. Even in brief poems where he employs simple words and his poetics are without extended contrivance, he is merely interesting — not exciting. An example is *Idyl*:

Lovers who meet each other
Under cover of dark
Grind a single hunger
Against a thirst to spark
A heat for the brain's fever
Or the craze of a heart.
The owl wild in the wood,
The blind mole underground,
Shall meet at dusk in blood
And single of hunger find
An end not understood.

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FOR THE ABSOLUTISTS

It does no good to call death idiot:
Who but an idiot would think to turn
A good sword to Samurai? This sword
Fought at Gettysburg; but death, an idiot,
Who may have been born so, would burn
Up everything, convert to muttering the word.
He scatters everything, a girl, an idiot.

Tracy Thompson

SCAN PP. 21-25, 248-258

THE CHRONICLE

THE CHRONICLE, 'An Evolving Directory' — five pages here and eleven at the back of this double number, some hundred and seventy magazines and presses. Both parts are omitted: a working address list rather than reading matter, superseded by THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE TO LITERARY AND ART PERIODICALS. The year's INDEXED CONTENTS, which follows, is kept.

BROADSIDE PRESS is entered from Old Mill Place, Detroit: 'Dudley Randall, issuing monthly single sheets of new poetry ". . . of the Negro Revolt" . . . Gwendolyn Brooks, Robert E. Hayden, et al. Colored stocks — 6 for \$2.50. Book: FOR MALCOLM: POEMS ON THE LIFE & DEATH OF MALCOLM X.' That is the press's second year and the anthology's first notice outside Detroit.

COYOTE is listed care of City Lights at 261 Columbus Avenue — 'COYOTE'S JOURNAL now annual book. Other books: THE WAY TO THE UNCLE SAM HOTEL, Wm. Brown . . . READING AT BERKELEY, Charles Olson.' CHELSEA has a book-size double number of new Italian writing and another 'explores science & techn. in poetry,' A. R. Ammons editing. CULTURAL EVENTS IN AFRICA comes from the Transcription Centre in Dover Street; CRONOPIOS from LaCrosse, Wisconsin, whose first number is entirely one man's art and poetry and which prefers 'the subjective poem.'

The names are listed in Trace_62-63_1966_chronicle_names.txt beside the transcript. — ED.

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

A TEACHING POET'S BLUNT OPINION

Dear Editors: I was surprised at the Philistine tone of the letter by Guy Owen. Education, particularly higher education, is a damned mess, setting a social seal of general mediocrity, or worse, on both pupils and professors. What a good teacher does — and Owen may be a good teacher — is try to work for as humane and wise a learning as he can, but this is despite the System.

Sam Bradley

ANOTHER HAS HIS SAY IN VERSE

Dear Editors: Herewith, an Epistle about irrelevant epistles anent the problem of writers who work in Academia:

The letters pile
up pro-con
the writer's right
to starve or
stuff his progeny
to teach or
not to teach . . .
that is a
question? Oh why!
I do as
it damn pleases
both my gullet
and my vanity
so long as
the 'dear sirs'
of editorial grace
think my implosions
worth their ink.

P.S. I write quite a lot.

Hans Juergensen

AND SO DOES A NONTeaching WRITER

Dear Editors: Much can be said pro & con about Poet in Academia. But these two professor types (in TRACE No. 60) certainly don't help their own case with ludicrous howlers such as suggesting 'a course in criticism somewhere' for Ginsberg or Corso. Or, forcing a poet to take a course in the history of the English language! Any poet worth anything will inevitably be drawn into a study of the language's history — a personal search for what he needs, what appeals to him, not a systematized outline. But what really gets me is Miller's notion that a poet or writer without a job may sink into 'semi-idleness.' If a man isn't willing and able to spend at least thirty-five hours a week, at least forty-six weeks a year at his art, he simply isn't an artist. Postulate a novelist who, in a given five-year period, has to spend hundreds of hours doing his own retyping — sheer drudgery, nothing creative about it — I know him well, Horatio. Ah, semi-idleness — typing eleven hundred pages in seven drafts!

In the college atmosphere, you are immersed in ideas, opinions, impressions. Highly stimulating. Also tends to keep you from going to the raw material directly — yes, to that 'real present world' of the garbage collector, and forming (rather than constantly defending, exchanging, elaborating on, expounding) your own ideas, opinions, impressions.

Felix (yearning for Semi-Idleness) Singer

Problem Compounded: Poet And Editor and . . .

Dear Editors:

What with going to school full-time (to get a good education so I can get a job so I can live ever-after, mesmerized) and my wife working full-time for the civil service (which has its own rather unique conception of what constitutes a living salary) and the kid being only three and

too young to work, we had grown rather used to starving. And when we were feeling particularly affluent — like having a dollar or so left at the end of the month — I'd say GOLIARDS under my breath.

So, we'd get out the folder marked Issue No. 6, rearrange it, stare at it, and grow terribly frustrated. Not nearly enough cash even to buy postage — much less paper, ink, machine rental, etc. So, we'd fold up everything neatly and retire to the nearest saloon and blow our extra dollar or so, and say to ourselves: ' . . . don't know how, but some day ole GOLIARDS is gonna make it.'

I was advised to sell advertising to make costs. I tried that. After two weeks, all I had to show was a greater frustration.

I talked to our Dean of Fine Arts. He shook his mighty head and said 'yes' it was 'wonderful,' but when the time came, he reneged.

I even made one or two abortive attempts to solicit donations from little-maggars. Sue Boyd ran a notice for me, as did Frances Brinkley. Together, the two brought in less than \$25. . . . Then, I considered direct solicitation of my readers; but something in me just wouldn't coordinate. I cannot ask these people for money. They didn't ask me to publish GOLIARDS, and I just can't ask for help from them.

Then, it happened. The damned GI Bill was finally passed. After several more months, a check came. Like I say, by now we're rather accustomed to noodles, beans, and ketchup sandwiches. So, quick like an idiot, I buy sixty-six reams of paper — which is now sitting in the middle of the living room floor — and on which I've pasted pictures of Greek statues and things. And I feel that the world isn't quite so bad after all. I've got just enough paper for another issue. The pages are counted — all 125 of them — and neatly arranged. All I have to do is figure out how to rent/borrow/steal a printing machine of some kind. I had

been promised use of an old Davidson 241; but when we uncovered the thing and cranked it up, it didn't work. And the man gets \$12 an hour for fixing it. So, that's out. Had a long talk with the V-T people; and they're interested in little mags (now) and isn't it all wonderful and stuff — but I can't afford them either. They made me this little brochure of all their machines, along with rental/purchase prices, etc. Now, I'm going to take this around to a few of the local rich . . . I've got this idea that there are enough people in town who need a tax dodge that, if I find one of them, I'm in business. If I incorporate as a nonprofit cultural literary organization, whoever contributes will be able to note that on their tax returns. So it comes to this: I've got one of the best damned issues of any little mag, at any time, sitting here in the folder. And I've got enough paper for it. And somehow, I'll find a way to print it. Soon, I pray . . . I got energy, but no money. Jerry H. Burns Freedom Won in ONE Academy Dear Editors: Thanks for your reply to that letter I sent regarding censorship of the recording (phono) of Thousand-Year-Old Fiancée & Other Poems. I just heard that Western Michigan University's President, who had not been informed of the attempted censorship, has overruled the Dean and others involved in putting down the record. It will be released later this fall or early winter (AURAL Press, Broadcasting Dept., W.M.U., Kalamazoo, Mich.—49001). One hopes that the press will now be able to function more freely. The idea of a press devoted to doing recordings of poets reading from their own work is certainly a good one, providing there is no attempt to suppress material which doesn't meet some dean's conception of 'poetry.' Robert Sward (Editor's note: The work in question first appeared in TRANS-ATLANTIC Review, later was printed in FROM A WINDOW, and became a book published by CORNELL U. Press. The Western 266 Michigan U.'s broadcasting department issued a written invitation to make a record of it for their Poet's Series, more

than a year ago. It was fully recorded last January (1966), and the jacket designed and printed soon thereafter. Advertising brought numerous advance orders. In late September, Mr. Sward received notice that the title poem must be deleted!)

A FEW MCKE(Y)D REACTIONS TO TRACE

Dear Editors: I am eager to read the new developments in Japanese movies, especially if A. Fredric Franklyn, one of the world's most complex word-stylists, has become a producer or director in the cinematic industry itself himself. Reflexive criticism is what puts the particular tax on the critic. I have been trying reflexive criticism for generations, but with only that success which is commonly known as bungling. I get dizzy and wind up the self-critical paragraph as soon as I can quit tangling up the topic or whenever lurching overcomes me, whichever occurs first. Simultaneous occurrence of those two writing-stopping phenomena earns me extra gaming points. . . .

I want to skip over the potted poetry, except every few pages to read a poem and renew my bigotry toward it (I actually do like a few phrases here and there, such as, from Genius, 'Time is a cannibal — and history, her toothpick,' because that is a farfetched metaphor and pretty revolting too; and 'dropouts with super charged bitches' from Leitmotiv 60's, because that sounds risqué); to marvel and agree and luxuriate through some further treatise like *The Imagination of the Amateur* . . . ; to start reading some of the surregalistic and/or highly symbolic stories. . . . Publish on, Mac May.

D. McKee

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KRITA YUGA . . . KALI YUGA

Lo man, unformed, prerogates his domain,
Into a saffron yellow presa.
Lo brittle man, longishly abbreviates
His fag end knighthood into song.
A little kinkle of his mind,
And man becomes some mythic Kalevala.
This poor mortal creature
Unfit to fly
Comes crashing down upon us
And inundates his sainthood
With a thud.

Anne-Marie Scherger Baumgartner

THE GOLDEN PROF

by Raymond Barrio

(An editorial note: A quiet personal essay by William Heyen, in TRACE No. 56 — describing an individual situation and asking questions more than stating a positive thesis — drew heavy cross-fires of letters. The detailed ‘answers’ of Guy Owen and Jerry L. Miller were published in No. 60 as best presenting two professional views of the creative writer in Academia. In the letters section of this TRACE, are brevities from Felix Singer [who is not a teacher] and from Sam Bradley and Hans Juergensen [who are], reacting to the Owen/Miller pieces. Barrio’s raillery comes as the extreme anti statement.

None of the seven is acquainted with any of the others. They live in widely-separated parts of the U.S. However they may sound, personalities are not involved. Apparently, they aren’t even well acquainted with one another’s writings. Barrio, an art teacher whose brush drawings were in TRACE No. 48, is also a nationally-published [stories and articles] writer. And it’s relevant that Owen, in addition to THE BALLAD OF THE FLIM-FLAM MAN [recent novel from MACMILLAN], authored the RANDOM HOUSE novel, SEASON OF FEAR, a hard-hitting frank depiction set in Southern tobacco country. The contradictions played upon would seem to reside within Owen as they do not in the others, excepting Heyen, a young poet just beginning to teach. Bradley represents the more-established poets; and Miller and Juergensen are becoming more-published of late. TRACE readers are familiar with the varied talents of Singer, whose novel in ms., HOGBUTCHERS, FOUR DOZEN, NEAR NORTH, has set a record in gaining favorable attention of editors . . . but without, as of this writing, gaining a publisher because of his

adamant stand against compromising revisions.)

THIS INTELLECTUAL MIDAS, THIS professor of fool's gold, glittering astutely: . . . 'King of the hill,' eh? There it is — in TRACE No. 60 — the most cogent exposé of the latent death in Academia ever to blossom in doom. Don't miss it: Guy Owen's Letter to a Young Poet in Academia.

It should be read from every podium, by every rascal — be widely distributed and given away at every corner. It is the most blatant expression of pedantese on the market today. I'm sure Owen didn't mean it that way. But that's the way it comes out.

Completely ignoring Thoreau's lyrical admonition to a young poet — the only way to fly — to 'go up garret at once,' Mr. Owen blandly sets up a slew of zen reasons favoring a stuffy stultifying aesthetish Academia. What a ruthless submerging and drowning of all that is fine in the creative impulse this is — against a young poet's reaching out for himself (trying to maim himself, all right) — to make his own mark on humanity's canvas.

What's the idea? Go down the line of the brief missile. Take every kernel apart. Practically every so-called ideal and value expressed therein is meant to reduce the spirit of youth to rigid mortis.

It is anti-intellectual, antcreative, antilearning, and propedantic. Mr. Owen commits that most heinous intellectual crime (remembering Clong's Law: It takes one to know one): equating intellectualism with pedanticism. Owen himself it is, begorrah, who is fundamentally at odds with the house of intellect and with the whole spirit of genuine philosophy, and with all the fine furniture therein. May he and Jacques Barzun simmer graciously together forever.

Therefore, young poet, do not heed this bland sensible, though at times terrifyingly true, advice. What puny advice it is: eat first, pay your bills, get your Ph.D. and become 'king of the mountain.'

Instead, forge your own ideas with nerve. Be yourself!

As it is unforgivably true that catcalling advances far fewer causes than it ought to, let us peek into this den of intellectual poultry and pluck at some of the fetters.

To equate critics of pedants with the KKK and similar putrefaction, as implied in Owen's second paragraph — and more fully and wretchedly developed in the third paragraph — is a dandy flub. Wherehin's the logic?

Now that the rednecks and the fascists are out of the coop (???), we are beckoned over to another perch; and lo, what are we confronted with? We have 'almost all of the Beatniks' helping intensify the distrust of American universities. Great Gulp of Scotch. Are the Beatniks really taking over? Have we come to that?

Then follows a sly but more vicious slander: in spite of this wormy fifth-columning, the Beatniks nevertheless 'are very anxious, I find, to give readings at colleges' and to publish through university presses.

Let us cut down this puerile 'you're a Beatnik' and 'you're another' crap and get back home to ideas again. No matter who holds them. No matter what titles are, what handholds used. For, if an idea is devastating enough to stand on its own strength, should it make the slightest difference (to a truly-honest open inquiring mind) whatsoever who makes it? Or even for what motive? (You are opposed to Hunger & Exploitation. Communists are supposedly opposed to H&E. Therefore you air a filthy red.) What, after all, was McCarthyism but a shutting off of liberal views via guilt by association?

Without in the least appearing to defend Beatniks (what the hell, let's face it, they really couldn't care less), it seems the height of something to point your finger at them and their scroungy beards in a diversionary tactic to dodge their pungent acrimonious and sometimes-devastating criticism of The Social Lie.

The easiest thing in the world for a Ph.D. pedant on a fat salary with his fat summers and his fat tenure and his expanding ass and his pitter-patter is to publish a little magazine. Editors and publishers of little mags, already hairrassed to death could use a little more support. But don't begrudge a man his taste. Some prefer swimming to pool. To each his own sweet bitters.

And there are only two good reasons to teach: one, for love of instilling new ideas in eager young minds; two, for the money. And not the money exactly, but the free time that money can buy . . . for, if picking fruit or being a garbage barge loader paid as well as teaching, and gave similar gobs of free time, then there is nothing at all wrong with pursuing any miserable fate.

But we must move on. The worst lurks deeper yet.

In hushed tones, Mr. Owen proffers his gilded secret to the young poet: 'I have never met . . . a garbage collector who edited a little mag. . .' Boy! What a cherce. Either Ph.D. or garbage collecting. Holy O'Higgins.

1) Isn't it even remotely possible that either gentleman, as well as several other kinds of gunmen, is equally capable of editing or turning out fireworks?

2) Wasn't it Thoreau's consuming passion, always, to achieve sufficient leisure time to do the fundamentally-important things he wanted to do? Whether by teaching or surveying?

The crux of necessity, in brief, is the free time, the inclination (incentive), some training, and the peace of mind (which admittedly comes from security) to be able to dabble in the delights of life, love, poetry, or art.

Every poet's background has got to be different; name-dropping proves nothing. Williams and Stevens and Eliot; hell, anybody can play that game.

But let's try on this insight for clarity: absolutely the surest way not to become a poet is to become a Ph.D. in

English. Can Owen own up to this?

Ph.D. equals security. OK? Nothing wrong with that. But if it's poetry . . . 'go up garret,' ferret.

Let us proceed. The next riposte is about as brazenly an anti-intellectual a satellite as anyone's orbs will ever see: 'Most of the doctors and dentists I know are as anti-intellectual as Goldwater. . .' Snappy bubble gum. Even if it were true — so what? But is it really true? Any bone mechanics in the house? Again, without in the least intending to defend the honorbright ex-Centaur from Ariz., let us ponder upon the nasty implications proffered by the prof: since most doctors I know, therefore, il., i.e., all doctors, wow, everywhere, etc.

And still later (still to the yonk poet), this gem: 'You mention being forced to read Chaucer . . .' and: ' . . . your friend who absolutely refused to take a course in criticism . . . I would say without any hesitation that his attitude is foolish.'

He would. Ahem. Ah well. How well we remember the times we had to swallow gobs of castor oil every week as a child because It Was Good For Us. The most terrible nit of advice this poor perfessor can proffer is to study Chaucer (or any boyd, no matter who) simply because some nimp thinks some good may emerge from it.

The real root of the trouble is insidious. He's great, Chaucer, all right. But what is worrisome are the pedantic clunks who make assinine assignments, with no one at all to question their judgment, in order to give grades which the poor student, in order to set himself up for a livelihood, must work for. Here, Fido. Grades . . . are rather beside the point.

Poetry, this is the terrible price paid, the creative juice.

And here is this Owen bolting himself firmly in the stocks: ' . . . but I went on to publish a study of the imagery in Fitzgerald's THE GREAT GATSBY.'

A study of imagery, eh? About thirty million people have read TGG. Have thirty read Owen's critical study? He does himself a serious disservice, inviting such a foolish comparison. A criticism, as Owen makes only too clear, is a kind of rational caged animal — while a novel or a poem is (or should be) a wild free critter with an altogether different kind of appetite.

Owen's position is so bleak, negative, cynical, and apologetic as to be palpably inappropriate to the argument he himself establishes. It isn't Owen personally who is being sarsaparillaed here so much as the Philistines his words and ideas most comfort: the Pedant-hoofed Horned Profs. In fact, a true pedant (like many hypocrites with racial prejudice) wouldn't even have the guts to state their miserable case as baldly as Owen does. As satire, his viewpoint is great.

A bet: Owen would probably be first to admit (only he does it nowhere in his inexcusable defense of the devil-soled academic establishment) that to aim high and produce great creative work takes a hell of a lot more gut and courage and sacrifice and dedication and uncertainty and misery and hell to even begin to try than any picayune literary crit could ever require.

So the issue isn't at all, as Owen would like it, a choice between hauling garbage and/or college proffing. It is entirely and solely a condition between writing and not writing. Going up garret at once, or slaving away, or fattening one's rump in some assy chair.

But? He's not through. Nossir, not yet. Toward the end of his somnambulation, beaming, Owen relinquishes his most powerful bolt: 'But he must have the Ph.D. or . . .' or else —

What blackmail! No poetry. Pay the price. Get your degree. Do what scholars seem to want. 'Prove to the footnote boys that you can succeed on their terms.'

Well, you can't.

The third kid will have arrived by then. And your several debts will have mounted so high you won't be able to fend your wife off any longer. (Assuming, of course, you're normal, moral, and might want to raise a family like everyone else.)

So. If it were my advice that was being solicited, I'd say to that young poet: Keep the hell away from Owen's footnote emporium altogether. Stay in North Beach (as though that were also the only alternative) if necessary. Go North. The Peace Corps is a dandy experience. But so is anything that is meaningful and genuine and live . . . provided it doesn't drain you of all your energetic hours, and therefore rob you of creative drive. For that matter, four hours of polishing nuts and bolts once a night is not a bad way of keeping mornings fresh and free. So, the secret is: some part-time livelihood, whether garbage, teaching, or anywot.

There are still more Owen hallucinations: 'I go on the assumption that the true poet can't be stopped.'

Ah? No?

And a really risible chuckleball: 'Wouldn't a course in criticism somewhere along the line have helped Ginsberg or Corso or Kerouac?' Ginsberg, anyone? I brashly predict that Ginsberg will be read one hundred years from now.

And: 'You say it might kill their creative instinct? I'm sorry, but I say, so much the better then.'

There it is, folks.

In Black and White.

Holy ferrous cumulus. This bleeter has actually exposed his despicable corruptibility. What a dastard. Kill off creativity . . . So much the better, eh?

'Perhaps the situation ought to be deplored, but there is no way of bucking it.' No? No way to shuck off the chains? Then, why the hell put them on in the first place?

Finally. For a great Wagnerian immolation: 'It would be better to turn out a first-rate study of Wallace Stevens' poetry than to clutter up the literary landscape with

third-rate poems.' The hell it would. More genuine poetical instinct is snuffed out by coldcocked criticism than by any other poison. Poetry is alive, to be swallowed raw.

And how about the reverse, which happens to be the truer state of affairs, i.e.: how many third-rate critical studies are now being disgorged by Academia?

It is ten million times better to clutter up the landscape with third-rate poets, failures, would-be starters, seducers, and practitioners all, than to have what we have now: a sterile arid foggybottom educational literati in the universities doing everything in their sulphuric power to foster nitpicking criticism -- and despising the creative imp in all of us.

Poets — arriba!

If the young poet can't see that the favor Guy Owen and his monks are offering is a skinny slice of treacly bread in exchange for mummification in a gilded cage, then to hell with him too.

But if there are any young starving darlings out there, help yourself to some glory. Go after your own goddamn dreams. Climb. Jump. Lust. Thump your chest. Go after your own true self. You can even go ahead and teach if you want. Just don't make a full time career of it, that's all. It is a dandy occupation, even a satisfying one.

(Incidentally, Jerry Miller's letter following Owen's is a much humbler, more intelligent, and much more reasonable presentation of the issues, and much better fare. Fortunately for youth, not all profs think alike.)

Above all, fight to keep the equivalent of a full morning or afternoon a day (not evening) for your own creative ventures. This is the only issue going here.

So, to hell with Academia and to hell with all its ribbons and to hell with all its subtle snubs. Live and live for yourself. Read Emerson and Thoreau. Write, Write poetry for yourself. Get it published, if you can. If you can't, stick your

neck out and publish it yourself. Stay the hell away from English pedants, or at least laugh up your sleeve at them. Major in sociology or botany.

For, if I'd my druthers, in place of king of the hill, just call me . . . King of the Road.

THIRD EDITION

ISSUE P. 275 · SCAN P. 35

ALAS!

So much for poor Merriam's ancient felicity!

A. Fredric Franklyn

THERE ARE NO EPICS ANY MORE?

A FEW EXPLORATORY REMARKS

by Sam Bradley

OBVIOUSLY, THE MATURITY OF A PEOPLE varies from time to time. A time of lyrics and ballads is often a sort of cultural Spring, a promising adolescence. Sometimes a people grows to be able to enjoy sustained work; we Americans, for example, have developed interest in the long narrative poem. Admittedly, it has no popularity like that of the long novel, and both poem and novel are likely to slip quickly from view of a hasty people. Still : what's memorable? and why?

We have traditionally considered the epic as supreme narrative poetry (Homer's work has been a best seller here). But, fellows of the American story, is it still possible?

Not long ago, at a symposium in Philadelphia, Kenneth Burke reconsidered the AENEID and decided that a Roman peace through pacification would not do for an epic of our time. I'm not sure how many hawks, how many doves, were there — or if many people associated what he said with the immediate questions of American shame or glory. Art is often considered 'detachedly,' as if it were quite independent of all other affairs.

Moreover, Kenneth Burke was speaking some months before the wintertime (1965-66) writing of the journalist, Eric Sevareid. Sevareid wrote :

The God of War has taken charge, on all fronts. Men
merely react.
In this stage of the war, the diplomats have lost control
. . . The
moralists, horrified by our bombing, as well as those
who want us to
get out in the belief that no meaningful victory is
possible — they too
are stalemated. We must fight this war . . . ; and a great
power simply
cannot turn around, apologize for its mistake, and pull
out of a war.
Not this great power, at any rate, whose government
lives and dies by
popular opinion, and not in this era when all our wars
are holy wars
by repeated official declaration.

If poets nod regretful agreement, not many go on to correlate Plato's insight: 'States are as the men are; they grow out of the characters of men.' Blood lust of newspapers, with blood-bathed headlines, is not silenced; when a victory is trumpeted, we forget Homer's 'It is not right to exult over slain men.'

But Burke says no Romanlike epic for us; today, a projected epic should not be merely national in outlook, but rather designed to fit man for world citizenship. Immediately, a cynical objection occurs: can an epic rise out of a place and a people without restricting glory to that place and people? (Nationalists today can react like Jewish zealots: 'We are the chosen people.') The sense of family and clan and national involvement brought the audience to past epic poets. The poet has pointed to his people as unique, and he was involved with them—he had none of the alienness that industrialism brought. Also, the poet shared their language.

Today, Burke predicts, a fitting epic would have a world language. Does that rule out such an epic as he proposes? Alas, history races in decay from that old center, Babel.

But suppose we cast out the demand for the epic that has: one nation, one people, one language. May we learn to take pride in a nation, a people, a language, a heritage other than our own? Can we, fearfully beset by American faults and limitations, respect divine uniqueness in others quite different from us? 'My people' has been, often, often, a restricted in-group. Peter Ritner, in *THE SOCIETY OF SPACE*, speaks of love as a force to break all barriers and to force us to extend and to transcend ourselves.

Our Christian heritage has been, at best, forward-looking; and our artists have sought new moulds for the spirit. In shaping a new epic, we are not likely too unthinkingly to accept old restrictions of form and content. Standards for new creation will not be set by timid academics. True, many epics have been backward-looking (to a golden age of ancestors) and conservative. 'The Classical temperament,' says Ritner, 'poses a certain challenge to Nature'—for nature is immense, rich, creative, while the Classical temperament is second-thinking, smug, cautious, and prone to accept uncritically what's been culturally sanctified. Particularly is this true of post-Alexandrine civilization; the Renaissance brought hope, though perhaps more limited hope (amid nationalisms) than we have credited. Dante took Vergil as guide. Certainly it is healthy for the writer today to read Robert Graves on Vergil (*OXFORD ADDRESSES ON POETRY*), in which he effectively punctures academic idolatry of Vergil, that mediocre lackey of Augustus.

A creative man, despite what his education has conditioned him to, will be overwhelmed with new experience and love. He will break old ego bonds, says Ritner, and 'bridle his fears and his natural animal conservatisms.' Kenneth Burke sees a universal humaneness in the personal

local achievement of some artists (for example, William Carlos Williams) within a national culture. I have seen Pasternak, in the Soviet Union, as such a man.

Narrative poems, culminating sometimes in the epic poems, may be prompted by the new hopes of people, new aspirations of a world. 'What interests me,' Henry Miller has declared, 'are those things which are above and beyond the questions of nationalism. The man is the important thing, not what country or culture he represents.' Agreed: with the understanding that he does represent a country and culture, whether he will or no, and has inherent tendencies toward certain faults as well as toward certain virtues. Perhaps he needs to know that he must break through the provincial limitations that often deep-root his pride as well as often give offense to others different from him—needs to know this to a psychological depth which is cathartic and open to a catholic compassion.

Sensitive men who, like Americans caught in a war situation, can 'merely react'—are men who have lost, first, vision, and then, hope. I often hear them echo Arnold's stoic: '... wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born.' A new world for us? There are unwritten stories — of the struggles amid flowerings of the American greatness, of the rising consciousness of freedom and destiny in African peoples, of the status change and spiritual rebirth of Asians, of the New Worldism of Latin Americans, and of the self-liberations of Europeans. Are these epics? Yes, potentially; the realization depends on poets.

**WHAT DIAMOND PURPOSE DOES IT TAKE TO SEE
POETRY'S ENDLESS DIFFICULTY LIKE A STRING OF
ICY POOLS AND DROP INTO THE FIRST AS QUIET
AS A JEWEL, TURNING A LITTLE, SLIPPING
SIDEWAYS, DROPPING, WATCHING OVERHEAD YOUR
RIPPLES TREMBLE, SLIDE, AND DISAPPEAR?**

James Dougherty

ISSUE P. 279 · SCAN P. 39

MARY GRAHAM LUND:

FARM-YARD REALISM WITH MIRRORS

*What a vague, what a passionate murmur,
Lacking any intelligent plan;
But a sound may be truer than reason,
And a word may be stronger than man.¹*

I wondered at those dreamy fellows Groping at the borderland of mind, How their lines could be so smug And prettily contented with the senses, . . . While a mirror hung within them Trained to show them outlines.²

DREAM IS NOT POETRY, BUT IT may become poetry, if the static becomes dynamic. Ideas move faster than words: what begins at the unconscious level may become conscious; the indefinite may blossom into the concrete; a sensual melody may become verse.

But, unless the poet is driven by a conscious purpose, the dream, the sensory impression, the imaginative flight (the inspiration, if you wish) is likely to result in futile gestures, in rhyming riddles, in jig-saw conundrums. It is of no avail for the poet to try to catch the elusive impression on the borderland of mind, to use his craft or skill to cut out patches of realism, unless he uses the conscious power within him to 'show him outlines,' to reveal truth — relative truth in the context of the real.

Charles Lamb, denying that genius is allied to insanity, claims that 'the true poet is not possessed by his subject, but has dominion over it . . . Where he seems most to recede from humanity, he will be found the truest to it.' The existentialist is right in his claim that action is the way to life. The poet, the artist, does not succumb to the pain of life; he uses it as material for his art. He does not live in his mind, he objectifies it; he weaves of his heart throbs a thing of beauty for the edification of the race. The great

contemplative,' says Thomas Aquinas, 'is the complete contrary of the false contemplative — the mystic who looks only into his own soul, the selfish artist who shrinks from the world and lives only in his own mind.'

¹ *V. Nabokov, from the Russian of V. Khodasevich.*

² *James Franklin Lewis, from GOAT'S MILK AND MIRRORS (11. 39-44).*

He does not always do this consciously. Frieda Lawrence, who lived with genius, understood this. 'My wife,' D. H. Lawrence complained in a letter to a friend, 'has a beastly habit of comparing poetry — all literature, in fact, to the droppings of the goats among the rocks.' Yet Lawrence recognized the superiority of the spontaneous in art. In his introduction to *PANSIES*, he writes: 'Let every pensée trot on its own little paws, not be laid out like a cutlet trimmed with a patte de mouche.' The false contemplative may cut a poem out of paper and decorate it with words from the dictionary; but only the poem that is torn in pain from the living brain will be able to 'trot on its own little paws.'

James Franklin Lewis had an almost-exaggerated awareness of the irrationality of the human mind, and sought in macrocosm and in microcosm some resolution of its contradictions. He was quite definitely moving toward the position of the existentialists, trying to attain pure psychical data by which Husserl called an epoché, a reduction. The observer, whether poet or philosopher, must inhibit every ordinary objective position as Sartre said: ' . . . put the world in parenthesis,' go beyond man's situation in the world to the very source of man — ' . . . the transcendental and constructive consciousness which is attained by phenomenological reduction, . . . ' — an act which requires expert recognition, comprehension, and description of the manifold appearances of every objectifying position, every attitude of the mind.

In the long poem from which the Lewis epigraph is taken, he illustrates the multiple ways in which the artist may 'put the world in parenthesis.' His view of the looking-glass world of antimatter has had the ultimate acceptance: TARGETS No. 5 (April, 1961) published two excerpts from the poem, both of which question the external world and accent the mirror image in the type of inversion humor of logical contradiction which characterizes the 'Irish bull,' as well as classical satire. In one of these excerpts, as well as in the one published in OUTCRY No. 1, an issue dedicated to Lewis, he pays a tribute to history, that 'delicious mess' which is 'a gift to the past . . . to the future,' as it has been the training ground for the 'mirror' within man, particularly man as artist.

As a scientist, Lewis thought of the mirror as beyond history: organic substances are steric-isomantic. The road to nuclear power may lie on the other side of the mirror — Tweedledum and Tweedledee are enantiomorphs — even the Hegelian helix is an asymmetric structure with distinct right and left forms. As a poet, Lewis was trying to make

278 of a poem a thing which would have structure and meaning, neither one extricable from the other. His increasing sense that apocalypse was rising to the surface of history was characterized more and more by the hope that the machine would lead to a new revelation. His last poem, The Stepolds of the Mind, ends with the prophecy that man would 'from the unstable misconstructions, and the coarse extractions of guilty pseudo-civilization, / Somehow strike free. . . .'

IN PART TWO OF GOAT'S MILK AND MIRRORS, SUBTITLED ESTHETICS, LEWIS ATTEMPTS TO PORTRAY THE POET WORKING IN THE LABYRINTH OF MODERN POETIC METHOD, THE 'LYRIC WAY.' THIS BEGAN FIVE CENTURIES AGO AMONG THE ARTISTS OF FLORENCE WHEN BRUNELLESCHI DISCOVERED 'PERSPECTIVE': THE PRINCIPLE OF AN ORDERED RECESSION TO CREATE AN ILLUSION OF DEEP SPACE WHICH ENABLED THE ARTIST TO SHOW COMPLEX FORMS WITH ALL THEIR FACETS IN THE ROUND. IN THE VIEWER, THE VANISHING POINT MAY INDUCE A METAPHYSICAL GIDDINESS: AT THAT SPOT, THE PICTURE DISSOLVES INTO NOTHING, OR LEADS INTO ETERNITY. FIVE CENTURIES LATER, CEZANNE AND THE CUBISTS, UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF NEW SPATIAL DISCOVERIES IN PHYSICS AND MATHEMATICS, SAW THE VISIBLE WORLD BROKEN DOWN AND REASSEMBLED IN SPHERES, CUBES, CONES. AGAIN, THE VIEWER MAY WONDER! DOES IT ADD UP TO ZERO OR TO INFINITY, THIS GEOMETRIC DANCE OF ARTIFACTS? WHAT DO PICASSO'S EFFORTS TO COMPRESS TIME AND SPACE INTO A SINGLE DIMENSION MEAN TO OUR CULTURE — A CLOWNING PARODY OF SCIENCE OR THE PRELUDE TO A NEW BREAK-THROUGH IN KNOWLEDGE? IS IT MAGIC OR HALLUCINATION THAT GIVES US A VIEW OF FACE OR FORM FROM ALL ANGLES? OR A NEW VIEW OF REALITY THAT MAY LEAD TO ETERNAL TRUTHS?

Paolo Uccello's great painting, *The Universal Deluge*, holds the spectator enthralled by the drama of the crowded canvas in its naturalistic detail. He was one of the early painters to

use the principle of perspective. Practicing poets use Uccello's method now. They dump a fragmented world into a poem and surround the medley of images with a circle of form. An extreme example is *FINNEGANS WAKE*, which Joyce begins in mid-sentence on the first page and closes with its beginning on the last page, completing the sentence in a circle like the River Liffey which holds all of Dublin in its embrace. Anyone who has seen a stage production of *FINNEGANS WAKE*, or has even heard a recording of it, will have a direct realization that it is not the word which communicates, but the sound and the gesture of sound, the projection of personality through sound. That is the lyrical way. If the poet is dedicated to a search for truth, however vaguely, the vanishing point in his welter of images will lead on and on into infinity; if he is merely a seeker after fame, the vanishing point will lead to zero, a circle as empty as his soul.

For Lewis, the focused center was never a zero, but always an opening into infinity, a peep-hole upon a widening vista of the future. He was intensely conscious of the chaos beyond and around him, convinced that only art and poetry can build to a new synthesis of culture. Statues and words carry the content of the past, but only when they are fragmentized and reordered. Art stylizes experience and tames its chaotic elements to statue or poem, but statues grow old and words grow stale; the future changes the past as it becomes the present. Hence, the necessity for the artist and the poet to change the style, to distort, to fragmentize, rebuild. All these problems are presented and illustrated in Lewis' great book, *GOAT'S MILK AND MIRRORS*.

LOVE IS NOT FOR THE SAYING OF IT.

Below the level of mind and eye,
Below the level of hand and ear
Born in the morphine blood it burns
Clings to the bone and sings in the nerves.
Before the touch, before the cry,
Before the sound, beneath the sigh
The rhythm of you beats fast
Caught in this body of me.
Love is not for the saying of it.

George W. Linden

PAUL W. SAWYER

I

The Los Angeles of Ina Donna Coolbrith La Puebla de La Reina de Los Angeles the nostalgia of Ina Coolbrith writing: 'Dear little child-city of my memory. How far apart from the great tumultuous mart of today! . . .

narrow streets, adobe casas brea roofs and sidewalks, and only playground to which was the hills at the side, . . . cactus of the prickly-pear variety into which in our mad races we frequently tumbled to our disaster,

Ina Coolbrith niece of Joseph Smith the 'belle' of the Cow Counties Dancing with Old Don Pio Pico one of those orange blossom evenings

PAUL W. SAWYER

the nostalgia stayed with her
trying to forget 1858
to forget Robert Carsley
to forget at 17
in his arms
could she give herself
the beauty she was
to Carsley her husband

partner
Salamander Iron Works
She fled to forget
to San Berdoo
Carsley after her
wanting to take her back
lost his arm fighting
her protective step-father.
To forget
She left L.A.
for Frisco
to forget Carsley
and 'the toughest city
of the nation'
Writing little sentimental poems
to forget
but nostalgia
orange blossoms
brought her back
hot dusty plain
and prickly-pear
fallen into
(the disappointed starlet years later jumping nude
off Mack Sennet's Hollywoodland sign
into the prickly-pear
4 days to pluck it out of her dying body)
Carsley without an arm
The years before now
the past we go
back to
the city we don't
want to live in

PAUL W. SAWYER

L.A.

Three years here in the Valley
before I could admit
I lived here
This my home.
wanting to flee
'the toughest city in the nation'
the asphalt heat
covering the hot plain
the junk of Sepulveda Blvd.
Victory Bowling Alley's
revolving sign
and the Intrepid Fox lighting up
at Roberts
past Andrés
and endless
gas stations
the dirt strip in the
center
gone to seed
the way
to the Mission
and the palms
now moth eaten
an old
forgotten
movie set
Not like Blake saw it
1853
his geologist eyes

PAUL W. SAWYER

‘On turning the point of the hill we came suddenly in sight of the mission buildings, which with the surrounding gardens stood isolated in the seemingly desert plain and produced a most beautiful effect. The gardens were inclosed by walls but the graceful palm rose above them and groves of olive, lemon, and orange trees could be seen within . . . Herds of cattle were seen on parts of the broad plain, feeding on dried grass or the burrs of the California clover which covers the ground in the latter part of the summer when all the grass has disappeared. The plain doubtless presents a beautifully green surface in the winter and early summer when watered by the rains.’

PAUL W. SAWYER

THE VALLEY NOW

all parceled out tracts of houses not at home at all asphalt streets every corner a MacDonald’s Hamburger and 3 gas stations where the cattle grazed ‘the road bordered in some places by a low growth of shrubbery and cactaceae . . . the distant ranges of mountains had a peculiar barren look and in color were of various shades of brown, blue, and purple.’

tumbling into prickly-pear as a young girl romping the playground of the hill Robert after her her breasts swelling trying to forget the way the city her L.A. has become.

PAUL W. SAWYER

II

The way the freeway is
terrifying
a little beyond control
not like
when its child’s play
that easy

anyone could do it
blindfolded
not like that
terrifying
the wheels under me
loose
giving way
L.A.
a little beyond
what anyone
can really handle
the way it is
How to define that difference
the way it really
is
just beyond
where I can touch
define
like it is
controlling the image
the possibilities
the city opens up
L.A.

PAUL W. SAWYER

A MAN-MADE PLACE

houses, streets
gas stations
endless
the mountains
that used to
frame the city
all blotted out
smog
From the plane
I couldn't see the

ground
until we came down
thru the smog
and saw the
houses
laid out in blocks
All man-made
'the toughest city in the nation'
not like Ina Coolbrith
saw it
not the Daniel-Flores gang
not the hombres
and filibusterers
not Major Bell
and the Rangers
cruising down
Nigger Alley
or the whores
'Mala Vidas'
as they were called
but 'tough'
for how it's
homeless
for how in daylight
the phony glamour
disappears
and I wake
up feeling dirty
like the

Paul W. Sawyer

movie sets
are phony
off the screen
like they are
the morning after.

'Dear little child-city'
Shit
It never was
like that
'Adobe casas
and little
brick school house'
Bullshit
you forget how
it really is, Ina
prickly-pear and
no arm
a jump off
the Sennett sign
broken dreams
and moth-eaten
palms
that's L.A.
the place that
cannot lie
It's only us that
lie
run away
anything to forget
the way it is
the way it's always been

PAUL W. SAWYER

L. A.
free
way
no
home
out there beyond
here
no
image

but
some
where
else
free
way
way
free
L.
A.
beyond escape.
We kid ourselves
the city does
not lie
we lie
no place like
here
L. A.
to know that
to not forget
as you forgot
skipping out to

PAUL W. SAWYER

FRISCO

where they don't know how because they're in the womb
the nostalgic womb before 17 and Carsley and step fathers
who take off arms in fights in Frisco before the fall into
prickly-pears She didn't fall she jumped naked 4 days to pull
the pricklers out 4 days to die L.A. after the jump the pricks
that did her in the way she did herself what was her name?
L.A.

DAVID MARGOLIS

SONG

Although it is against the law,
There is no beast that you can't keep,
Behind the hedges in your yard,
Completely hidden from the street.
And if (small chance) the neighbors see,
It's easy to convince them that
The tiger, blood smeared round his jaws,
Is just your yellow pussycat.
The goings-on of animals
That nightly pad across one's dreams
Somehow are lost when daylight comes
Amid the children's final screams.
Oh, cunning is the beast of prey,
Who'd tear the eyes, friend, from your head,
And eat the living members out,
And then pretend that you're not dead.
The law protects all men the same,
And so permits the beast you keep
On your side of my garden hedge,
Completely hidden from the street.

Stuart Z. Perkoff

AT THE MASQUERADE

1.
with love
(that versatile tool!)
the betrayers fill their terror
hands impromptu crammed
with lethal deceptions
they move in imitation dance
the images of their gestures blur
their eyes, confuse
actual definition
deny the physical

thing itself, its
solidity inviting hands
to human put hands on it, itself
open, a demand, a grasping
what is at risk? their game of control, as tho
all green & grow were not
flung fragrant into winds
continual transformation!
new! unvisioned! unhuman! joyous! undeniable!
rigidly identified, they map & read maps, learn words,
 use gestures
of anonymous distance
such gestures are not dance

STUART Z. PERKOFF

they are exhausted by the total
futility of knowing
their inevitable
failure. at their game
their game of touch
to which they offer hands
warped rigid with holding
all movement, structure, desire, known
limits specific of the
flesh / body / the secret
other / it is a reach
of absolutely certain

2.

despite their inventive costuming
they find no unyielding boundaries
unannounced some seemingly
long dead thing
flowers / explodes
it has fire
it has earth
it has air
it has water

it has all, all, a turbulence
forming terrors cling to shreds of mask
violating costume's shattered façade
desperate, they call out ambiguous names
with which they attempt to cloak a fear
so enormous & flab, so vicious & tender
as tho they
authored it
they watch root / animal / dance / flow
past the polish
of their fear wet
unblinked eyes

CHRISTOPHER PERRET

CIRCUS

The tents and ten-pins
the bottle-tops and tips
I lie in the vineyards songs and sobs
and look at the moon
I talk alone
reputed mad and not afraid
I link arms chains and faceless bracelets
carry them through the market-place
a penny's worth here
and a gift horse there
I hold a hand but cannot find its mistress
the other gripping splintered wood
Life is a game and battered shows
its teeth in my way of cocksure throwing
the needles of those women that string the waves
through dolphins clouds all moving targets
For your sake Love
I scatter sheep
I straddle mountains
wink in my sleep
wondering what the mumbling's all about

When the flags lie still
and the big tents fill
I wake

CHRISTOPHER PERRET

DAYBREAK

Break the red seal of my heart
and you will find the night disguised
in consonant costume of the smile
kissed from your lips — for what
I stole is infinitely more than you
could know was yours to give: Fire
from the mountain and pulse of home-
ward trawling ships — sleep from the land —
your image joyful in the fishing sea —
If I have the secret habits of the orphan
stray — and kneel to snatch your breath
from the quietly waking day — it is
to mold it to my body's augury — a bird
trapped against the monstrosity of the sun
and lulled awake without suspicion —
its host held close — yet tenderly —

CHRISTOPHER PERRET

HENRI ROUSSEAU

If I'd had a wad of tobacco
and a knotted walking-stick
a mongrel dog
and a knowledge of the woods
I would have stopped
perhaps
to talk and smoke
But the stench of the jungle
and birds of Paradise
are frightening things on a

Sunday afternoon
A brush moves all alone:
I know you call it Wife
Table Breadknife
that it's a way of life
that it's only simple philosophy
to break one's bread
and drain one's wine
to gather autumn leaves and
fire the sun once more
with one's own mind
But a man you're darker than you'll tell
Rousseau
and what your eye does spell
is more than idle play
Walking by I could hear the old fiddle
flying
filling the room with screams
spilling out in the garden
I ran

(Hamburg – Oct. '63)

STANISLAW GROCHOWIAK

ARCHAEOLOGY

Age? And how shall the fingers be taught?
You touch a tree — but it's a cloud of silver . . .
Draw water — verdigris stays in the narrow valley
of the palms.
Run? Ankles trip you, and thighs.
Fly? You flounder in your rotting silk
flapping loosely in that bitter air
sweet as ether.
Such reverence hath no virtuoso
no altar boy lifted a Sunday cassock
as you raised that butcher knife
still dripping.

(A translation from the Polish, by Victor Contoski.)

STANISLAW GROCHOWIAK

BRONZE SONNET 1

What's history without absolution?
The sword, one time naked, now assumes wings
And something of a saint's stance, hovering
Low over earth, battered, cracked, and broken.
And who knows the ascension of the raped,
Those fair daughters of pallet and delight,
Their eyelashes brushing the void,
As each on her own private cloud is laid?
In dark silicon hollows, dank basements,
Sit the valiant. Goodness in great white
Beards wraps them round as in cloaks of regret.
Oh how much dignity their thighs beget,
Licked by the soft glow of the hoary light,
And the fire shakes not with wind but silence.

(A translation from the Polish, by Victor Contoski.)

STANISLAW GROCHOWIAK

THE BEATEN

Daying very slowly
At the disconnecting of fingers
At the lack of light
Flowing from her knees
At the slow closing
Of doeskin lips
Those crevices
Where the tongue raged in silence
Like a delicate flame
Thus closing quietly the doors
Of their separate houses
Taking the palms off the doorknobs
So the hands grow
Gray from hoarfrost
Leaving as though into music —
Into that darkness opposite
So going
They grow silver
Like two rotten wood statues
Crushed
At last they feel
Their hands
Their feet
Cut to five toes
Their backs
On which the whip
Descended.

(A translation from the Polish, by Victor Contoski.)

MARCUS VALERIUS MARTIALIS

II, LVII

That fellow you see promenading
in an amethyst gown, so leisurely,
as he makes his progress through the crowd —
whom even my old friend Publius
can't outshine in cloaks, or Cordus
himself, who's A-1 in cloakwearing —
who's followed by a mob of spongers
in togas, and long-haired slaves
carrying his sedan-chair
fitted out with new straps and curtains —
that fellow, this very minute,
pawned his ring at Cladus' pawnshop
for a measly eight sesterces
to buy himself dinner with.

(A translation from the Latin, by Barriss Mills.)

MARCUS VALERIUS MARTIALIS

II, LXXXVI

Just because I don't pride myself
on writing poems that read backward
as well as forward, or ones
with a secret, filthy meaning
when read the wrong way round,
or the kind where a word's repeated
like an echo in the Greekish manner,
or soft, unmanly galliambics
such as eloquent Attis might utter —
that doesn't mean I'm incompetent
as a poet, Classicus,
though you seem to think it does.
Would you order Ladas, the race-horse,
to trot along the narrow path
of an acrobat's plank? It's degrading
to take too much trouble with trifles,
and hard work spent on foolishness
is stupid. Let Palaemon
write poems to please his circle
of flatterers. I'd rather
reach the ears of a chosen few.

(A translation from the Latin, by Barriss Mills.)

MARCUS VALERIUS MARTIALIS

III, xxvi

You've got your estates, Candidus,
all to yourself, and your money
all to yourself. And you've got
gold plate and porcelain vases
all to yourself, and choice wines
from Massicus and Caecubum
aplenty, all to yourself.
You've got brains and ability
all to yourself. In short,
you've got everything in the world
all to yourself. Don't think
I'm trying to deny it.
But you've got a wife, Candidus,
who belongs to everyone.

(A translation from the Latin, by Barriss Mills.)

MARCUS VALERIUS MARTIALIS

IV, v

You're a good man but poor
and honest in heart and tongue,
Fabianus. What are you after
in coming to Rome? You haven't
the makings of a pimp or parasite.
You couldn't give false evidence
in a solemn voice against
the frightened defendants in a lawsuit
or seduce your best friend's wife
or letch after frozen old hags
or peddle nonexistent influence
at court or rent yourself out
as a claque for Canus or Glaphyrus.
Then how will you making a living,
without a trade? I'm trustworthy
and a loyal friend.' That's nothing.
You'll never make yourself rich,
like Philomelus, that way.

(A translation from the Latin, by Barriss Mills.)

TU FU

VISIT

In life we could seldom meet
Separate as the stars.
What a special occasion tonight
That we gather under the candle-lamp!
How long can youth last?
Our hair is peppered with white.
Half of our friends are ghosts
It's so good to see you alive.
How strange after twenty years
To revisit your house!
When I left you were single
Your children are grown up now.

They treat me with great respect,
Ask where I came from.
Before I can answer
You send your son for the wine.
In the rain you cut scallions
And start the oven to cook rice.
It's so hard to get together
Let's finish up these ten goblets.'
After ten goblets we are still sober
The feeling of reunion is long.
Tomorrow I have to cross the mountain
Back to the mist of the world.

(Translated from the Chinese by David Rafael Wang, who suggests readers will find it interesting to compare with translations by others, notably by Kenneth Rexroth.)

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IT WORKS

When you have 'nothing to wear'...

Sheepskin No. 2

he concentrates on neuro-surgery

Oh la la...

for those black lace moods!

...the rugged spirit of masculinity.

End of the Explosion?

ISSUE P. 308 · SCAN P. 68

**THE GIFT OF MANY HAPPY
RETURNS.**

ISSUE P. 309 · SCAN P. 69

I HAVE BEEN VERY HAPPY

THROW KISSES WITH YOUR EYES

The word is out: Ah men / Ah women

LOOK WHAT THEY'RE DOING

Lady Luck would've if she could've

ISSUE P. 310 · SCAN P. 70

FRESH VIOLETS TODAY

A slick of color, texture and marvelous feel.

If you like things neat and clean...

There is only one joy...

He loves me

He loves me

He loves me

He loves me

that intrigues, excites,

teaches, thrills, soothes

and delights.

the zestful world of the Deansgate man

What if it poops out in Paducah?

(That's an Intimate question)

ISSUE P. 311 · SCAN P. 71

MARILYN HARRIS

THE CLAY MAN

On this hot June 1st, the Hunekar barn cast long irregular shadows across the well house and cowyard, stopping short of the high ridged willow brake where an inert windmill mocked the day with a deeper silence. Where the shadows stopped, the earth fell away into a hollow cavity, a pond in good times, now a dust-rimmed pit dotted with the bloated carcasses of dead cows that fed whole continents of black flies and their maggot offspring. At the bottom of this pit, close to the spot where a scant moisture puckered the red clay and made it malleable, a small girl knelt, pleasurably engrossed in the purely sensuous act of creating clay men. A late child, threatened imminently with womanhood, Dorma brushed aside the little determined rivulets of sweat that coursed down the side of her nose. Three jagged red clay smudges appeared on her face. Her plain muslin dress, flecked brightly with bits of yellow and green, bore similar smudges, but Dorma had no time for personal repairs. The clay was ripe for molding. Tomorrow would be too late, and her fingers, like small white splinters, deliberated in the red-velvety ooze, calculating the exact weight of a clay arm, correcting the distorted position of a clay head before the sun baked it fast. A sweet personal warmth pervaded the girl, nameless, feminine perhaps, although she looked more like a boy since Frank Hunekar had cut off her long butter-colored hair.

Three clay men rested close by her knee in a state of completion. The fourth lacked legs and one arm. As Dorma bent over to form the missing limbs, new sweat rivers poured off her forehead, but the child's beauty, in a large measure, was her concentration. Nothing deterred her from the task at hand, not even the swarms of black flies that had caught the

scent of human sweat, and now buzzed close for a feast of live flesh. With a slight gathering of her brow, Dorma whispered to them a gentle ephemeral reprimand. 'Fly away, flies,' she said, easing one clay arm into position. 'Fly on away. I'm busy.' The movement of her body sent the flies skittering back to the bloated cow carcasses. While her fingers pressured a leg out of a lump of raw clay, Dorma assessed her clay men and found them pleasing.

High on the ridge road, Frank Hunekar herded the old pickup truck to a position directly above the spot where the girl worked. A big-chested long-limbed fellow, he would have been considered young in good times,

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but a kind of animal ignorance added years to his irregular face. A black shock of hair grew down over his neck, coarse-textured as the black shaggy arcs that too prominently served as eyebrows on the weathered field of his forehead. Like a dog tortured by an unseen thorn, he lashed out at his brown world with sharp gestures of brutality, and sniffed in the air a vague futility, and hungered for an honest enemy, one with a face and name. Now he leaned his elbow against the horn and made it scream, then craned his neck over the vibrating hood to see if the girl had heard. Hunched over the steering wheel, he sat motionless for some time. When he stirred, it was to thrust impatiently the palm of his hand against the horn and hold it there, causing the continuous shriek to resound against the stillness. Drawing the sleeve of a barn-soiled work shirt across his mouth, he leaned over to the far window and hollered down the steep incline. 'You gone deaf down there? If you're goin' into town, get up here 'n climb aboard.' Then in a curious softer afterthought, as if he knew the key to handling the girl was not in bullying her, he handed down a bribe that very nearly transformed the harsh lines about his mouth into a smile. 'Might see the gypsy. You'd like that, wouldn't ya, Dorma? Y'hear me?'

Dorma heard, and glanced impassively over her shoulder. The clay men would have to wait. Frank Hunekar needed company for the long trip into town. She rose from her kneeling position with a native timidity that had grown more acute since the loss of her hair; and clutching at the folds of the yellow- and green-flecked skirt, she bent her body into the steep incline that led to the top of the ridge. Before she'd become a Hunekar three years ago, she'd been a ward of the county, and before that, nothing. It wasn't gratitude that bound her to Frank Hunekar. Even in the nothingness prior to the county home, she'd always managed to find a red-clay

pit where worlds could be fashioned to fit images of personal will. But Dorma was aware why she'd been sent to the Hunekar farm. The keeper at the county home had told her that Frank Hunekar needed a female to help fight the drought. According to Preacher Ridley, a lock of hair from the head of a girl child would break the curse of the drought. For three springs, Dorma had trailed behind Frank Hunekar down the sandy barren rows, feeling the pinch of the shears as they ate close to her scalp; and all the while, calm had lived permanently behind the wide arc of her blue eyes.

Without vehemence or regret, she climbed steadily out of the pit in the direction of the waiting pickup. Her hand made a small gesture to remove the smudges from her face. A smaller sense of embarrassment caused her to duck her eyes from the relentless stare of the man inside the cab.

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Wind died early today, Mr. Hunekar,' she said, settling quickly into the seat beside him. Then, in a faintly musical refrain, she added: 'No wind at all.' Her hands folded themselves into a little self-conscious knot in her lap, and she sat as prim as a woman three times her age, the only discernible portions of her childhood clinging tentatively with the red-clay smudges on her face.

Frank Hunekar rammed the gear shift toward the floor of the old truck, causing a shriek of agony to rise from the rusted bowels beneath the hood. Pitting his strength against that of the truck's, he forced the thin rubber tires to adhere to the ruts in the road. 'Look at ya, Dorma,' he scolded, 'smudged awful to be goin' into town, ain't ya? Why do you go down into that stinkin' hole? I've told you not to, ain't I? Ain't I told you not to?' It was like him to take out his anger on the truck. His farm hands gripped at the wheel to keep from striking the girl whose implacable face he could not fathom. Squinting heavily into the hot still sun, he cursed all things he couldn't understand: the girl, the unseasonable

heat, and the rotting desolate land that stretched out in an endless sheet of brown beyond the cracked windshield that was splattered with dead grasshoppers and small winged things. 'I'd a done better to leave you over at the county home,' he muttered, 'done better jes' to leave you where you was at, for all the luck you brought me.'

'—m sorry, Mr. Hunekar.' It sounded sullen only because it was honest, and because her face, blessed with a permanent expression of exile, appeared detached and removed from any personal involvement with the apology. Infants wear this expression and lose it with the first step, but Dorma's remained fixed like a delicate shroud on her features. Her eyes left the white hot dashboard and fell to searching his face. 'Do you think we'll see the gypsy, Mr. Hunekar?'

The anger about his mouth melted to a low humor. 'Never can tell. Maybe so! Maybe so!' Here a grunt intended to be a laugh raised his upper lip, revealing an irregular row of slick yellow teeth. The subject was revenge, and it pleased Frank Hunekar. He savored each word like a bite of good food. 'He ain't got a chance in hell if he steps foot in these parts, but he done it before, so you never can tell. Ain't nothin' gonna break this drouth till someone breaks him who done sent it.'

'Have you ever seen him, Mr. Hunekar? With your own eyes, I mean?'

'—didn't have to see him,' he shouted. 'I can see what he done, can't I? Look out there. He done that — done all of it.' He jerked his head toward the scorched land. His eyes locked and blinked rarely; it was more his silence and the whiteness of his knuckles on the steering wheel that

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gave Dorma need to turn away.

Over the hood, about fifty yards up the road, a jack-rabbit darted frightened out of the dried stubble embankment. Frank Hunekar saw it and plunged his boot onto the accelerator, causing the truck to leap forward in a shudder of speed. Dorma stiffened when she saw the rabbit stop; and when she saw that Frank Hunekar intended to run it down, a single cry summoned her hands to cover her eyes. A moment later, wheezing from the abuse, the old truck broke speed. 'If I'd a had my gun,' muttered Hunekar. He saw the girl hiding her eyes, and grew expansive. 'Hey, things gotta die, you know. All things. Ain't nuthin' lives but what it gotta die.' He thought about his words, and wiped the sweat from his upper lip with his tongue while he thought. The sweat had a salt taste, and his thoughts pricked him like a pair of tight shoes. A big laugh dissolved his discomfort, and he clamped his hand down on top of her soft butchered head of hair. 'Come sit close to your Pa, ya hear.' The laugh dwindled into a guttural and private amusement. 'Some Pa, ain't I?' His rough chapped hand slid off her head, down the white canal of her neck, inside the front of the yellow- and green-flecked dress, and cupped around her breast. The road was smooth now, and he was bored. 'You're growin' up, Dorma,' he said, low, squeezing his fingers. His eyes narrowed on the plain flat road. 'Keep a comin', Dorma, ya hear? Make 'em melon size for your Pa.' Between two fingers, he pinched the tip of her breast. Water gathered in the corners of Dorma's eyes. Beyond the splattered windshield, she watched a slow distant bird circle gracefully toward the sun.

In town, Frank Hunekar parked the truck close to Armstrong's store, and told Dorma to wait for him. She used to go with him into the store, but some of the town women had started marching out of Armstrong's whenever she'd appeared. The men had liked her, though, and had always stayed behind after their wives had left. They used to take turns hugging her up to them. They used to laugh and joke a lot with Frank Hunekar and ask him if they could go over to the county home and get one like her. Deacon Armstrong had always offered her lemon drops to come and sit on his lap. Now the sun beat down on the thin metal truck, converting it into an oven. Dorma's soft jagged hair lay matted with perspiration; and, beneath the small bloodstain on the yellow- and green-flecked dress, her right breast throbbed. Outside the truck window, people shuffled back and forth on the wooden walkway, bent with hard times, toting gunny sacks filled with items to barter. To the left of the truck, two small boys chucked stones at the thin rubber tires; and when Dorma glanced out at them, they put their thumbs to their noses and ran off into the crowd. Over the top of the steering wheel, she saw a dust cloud gathering at the

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end of the street. 'He's comin',' yelled a voice, close enough to startle her. 'Preacher Ridley's a comin.' The crowds on the sidewalk, suddenly rejuvenated, turned with eagerness toward the dust cloud. Because they'd never known an abundance of anything but misfortune, the people had come to lean heavily on Preacher Ridley.

A slow sick wave passed over Dorma, brought on by the heat and lack of air. Raising her chin for a breath's relief, she saw up the road a shiny black Model T, driven at speed, cut through the dust and brake to a stop across the street in front of Pritchett's Hardware. Before the crowd and dust closed in around the car, Dorma saw the driver and

recognized him. Preacher Ridley was the tallest man in town, and when he stood on the running board with a rifle thrust over his head, he could be seen by the smallest child. He was wearing his Sunday black suit. The crowd laughed and talked with him for a while; but when Preacher Ridley stopped laughing, the folks got quiet and listened. He was talking hard, pressing down on his words like he did on Sunday mornings when he prayed. 'They got a trail on the gypsy in the next county,' he shouted at the people, 'and if he heads this way, we'd best be ready.' A cry of approval rose in a collective voice. 'We're meetin' in the church to 'point look outs. Right now, we're meetin' — so get on movin', all of you.' Preacher Ridley shook the rifle at them, and pointed with it toward the gray steeple behind Pritchett's Hardware. Dorma saw Frank Hunekar come out of Armstrong's and start across the street. She called twice, but he was laughing with Deacon Armstrong and Mayor Salinas, and didn't hear. Moments after Preacher Ridley had ordered them into the church, the street was empty, and the dust was settling like ground fog.

Returning to herself, Dorma studied her fingers and thought of the clay men she'd left at the farm. It was more a need for air, and a hunger in her fingertips for red clay, that prompted her to leave the truck. She had no desire to disobey. She knew of a shallow clay pit at the end of town down by the mass of rocks that mounted with the land ridge over the creek. Slipping quietly along the empty walkway, she idled a moment in front of Armstrong's store to admire a window display of sugar-dusted lemon drops.

'Aren't you going to the meeting, Dorma?'

The voice came from behind, and formed a crescent around her. Raising her head, she saw in the reflection of the window, a man. It was not unusual that he knew her name. Most of the men in town did. 'No, sir,' she replied, holding her eyes on the display of lemon drops. Frank Hunekar had

told her not to walk the streets of the town or talk to the town folks. The sun exploded continuous sparks on the man's reflection.

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Unable to recognize him, Dorma edged politely by, ducking her head so the smudges on her face wouldn't show.

When she realized he was following her, she knew he'd been with her all the while. Her bare feet gave off a thick echo of soles and rubber heels. When she stopped, he stopped; yet, each time she looked back over her shoulder, the wooden walkway was empty. 'What do you want?' she called to the quiet street where nothing stirred. Off in the woods, a dog barked. She opened her mouth and closed it again, afraid someone might hear her calling out to nothing and think her daft. Gaining the end of the street, she took courage in the gray distant rocks laced over with still willows. There was in earth and growing things, a reliability, and Dorma hazarded a last look back. The town was empty. In the pleasurable rush of relief, it came to her how frightened she'd been; and hurrying, more to escape her own disquieting feelings, she blinked away the brown-dust sameness of store fronts and darted eagerly toward the variegated tracteries of sun and shadow.

The dryness underfoot gave off popping sounds; and when she stopped in the underbrush to remove a thorn from her toe, the grass crackled once too often. Over her shoulder, she saw him standing several yards behind her. Beyond the point where he stood, through the jigsaw of June foliage, she saw the distant gray steeple where the people were — and help, if she needed it.

'You're a hard one to catch, Dorma.' His face, at first expressionless, now warmed to a grin, as if they'd been playing a game, although Dorma was certain she'd never seen him before. His clothes were different from farm clothes; his suit looked like pictures she'd seen in Mr. Armstrong's

mail-order catalogue. As he approached in a gingerly manner through the brush, it occurred to her to run; but there was in his eyes a hot brown melancholy that warred with the broadness of his smile, and Dorma held her position.

‘What do you want?’ she asked, more shy than frightened.

‘To talk, if you’ll stay a minute.’

‘— ‘bout what?’

His laugh was as brash and young as his face. ‘Does it have to be “about” something?’ He kept coming toward her, bending this way and that to avoid the low-hanging branches. ‘I’ve never seen such a place for rushing around,’ he grinned. ‘Back there in the store, I was standing with a dozen people, one minute, and the next minute, I was standing alone.’ He was winded from the chase, and awkward in the woods. When he sat on a dead stump and started picking sandburs off his trouser cuffs, Dorma knew he’d never had much to do with the earth because his hands were as

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smooth as his shoes and face.

‘Preacher Ridley called them into the church,’ she offered, ‘on account of the gypsy.’ It was not like her to go on so with strangers, but she’d searched his face for an evil to run from and found nothing. ‘Preacher Ridley says he’s coming this way from the next county, and the town best be ready for him.’ Suddenly an old timidity washed over her. She stepped behind the leafy shield of a scrub oak, talking to get it over with. ‘Preacher Ridley had his rifle with him. I guess they’ll —’ She faltered, though not perceptibly, and finished in a whisper. ‘— kill him, if he comes this way.’

The burs removed, the stranger stood up, expansively blasphemous. ‘Your preacher sounds like a bag of wind to me.’ He grinned. ‘Must to you, too, or you’d have run to the church with them.’

‘I don’t belong in the church,’ she said flatly.

‘Where do you belong?’

‘I work for Frank Hunekar.’ It was easy enough talking to him. She saw no reason to stop.

‘You his daughter?’ He fell into step behind her, and she heard a jangling in his pocket.

‘No. How did you know my name?’

‘I heard the men in the store talking about you.’ He was walking beside her now, his arm brushing against hers, his eyes slanted down on her face. ‘You know something, Dorma?’ There returned to his voice a lightness, like lingering joy, and kindness concurring. ‘You’re almost beautiful, not pretty or pleasing. No tricks about you. You’ll be all beauty one day.’

Dorma lacked words to respond to the compliment, and she lacked a sense of the word as he’d used it. It had not occurred to her to think of beauty in terms of people. Within the cramped frame of her experience, beauty lay straight ahead, beyond the land ridge at the bottom of the shallow clay pit. There was the raw stuff of beauty, the clay for molding. Eagerness sent her scampering ahead over the mass of rocks and down into the pit where she took advantage of a moment’s privacy to brush the smudges from her face and smooth back her hair.

‘Do you always run, Dorma?’ he laughed down from the top of the rock. ‘Do you ever walk?’

Her fingers were already submerged in the clay and hard at work when the stranger settled opposite her. Considerate of her concentration, he crouched quietly and watched until he could perceive the shape of her creation. ‘A man?’ he asked.

Dorma nodded. ‘See?’ She held it up for his inspection.

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He moved forward out of a squatting position until he was on his knees less than a foot away from her. 'It's good,' he told her, scanning the clay image. 'It's very good.' Then his eyes went back to her face with the same intense pleasure.

A curious hot wave crested at the back of her neck, and crept down in warm fingers over her forehead and cheeks. 'I've made better,' she murmured, ducking low to hide the blush. 'What were you doing in town today?'

Still watching her with those warmly-importunate eyes of his, he sat back on his heels. 'Trying to see Mr. Armstrong,' he explained. 'But before he ran out of the store, he was too busy laughing with some other men about—' His voice broke and stopped. When he spoke again, it was at once urgent and infinitely tender. 'How old are you, Dorma?'

'Don't know.' Swiftly, she launched into a second clay man, afraid she'd stare at his face if her hands weren't busy. It was a clean face, smooth and clean as any she'd ever seen. 'What'd you want to see Mr. Armstrong about?'

'I sell things. Does Mr. Hunekar pay you for working for him?'

'He feeds me.' She calculated the position of a clay arm and attached it with miraculous ease, answering his questions absent-mindedly, asking her own in a similar fashion. 'What kind of things do you sell?'

'Is that all?' repeated the stranger. 'He just—feeds you?' Their conversation ran like intricate counterpoint, threatening to blend without warning.

'—lets me live with him and sleep in his house. It's warm there.' Although the second clay man lacked legs, Dorma held it up for his inspection, hoping he'd say: 'It's good, it's very good'—again. But the stranger merely stared at her as though looking for something that had dissolved into the air.

Dorma set to work making legs for her man, hungry for praise. The woods were quiet all about, except for the sound

of his breathing, and the heavy sound the sun made as it beat down upon them. When he spoke, his voice came with a gentleness through the silence. 'Do you have parents, Dorma?'

'Dead.' Death was a matter of fact, and ugly. She dispensed with it quickly.

'Is there a wife for Mr. Hunekar?'

'No.'

'You're there alone?'

She answered his question with a scant nod, working feverishly to complete her man. The work went badly because her eyes, independent

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of her will, insisted on stealing glances at his smooth white hands. They rested motionless on his legs, in a state of repose, like enormous white birds. Unaccustomed to the bittersweet weight of thinking, she thought about her feelings, about how she'd like to touch his hands. But when a sunless heat, like hot pitch, seared her cheeks again, she shied from thinking. 'What kind of things do you sell?' she whispered, embarrassed.

'Notions!' His reply shot through the shallow pit with unexpected velocity, an ebullient salesman's enthusiasm paced with such perfection that, at the moment she leaned forward to see his wares, his fingers were already hard at work in a flurry of motion, producing from the depths of first one pocket, then the other, bits of minor magic. 'Thimbles!' he grinned; and a dot of silver appeared briefly between his fingertips. 'Thread! Spools of thread! All colors! Pins! Needles! Ribbons! Knives!' His voice, winged with pride, climbed to a pinnacle so dazzling that it commanded wonder as he showed her this blade for opening cans, this one for cleaning catfish, this one powerful enough to skin a bobcat; and Dorma gaped throughout the performance, awed less by his wares than by the incredibly-beautiful and -agile movement

of his hands, like white birds in flight with each slightly-spatulate fingertip serving as a wing, soft and infinitely gentle.

At length, he exhausted his supply of words, and his hands rested; and out of the silence that grew between them, he noted the timid rapture on her face and mistook it for longing. 'Here,' he said, offering her the miraculous multi-bladed knife. 'Would you like to have it?'

When she made no move to accept the gift, he told her in businesslike tones that the tip end of the sharpest blade was good for adding features to clay men; and by way of demonstration, he set to work on the first clay image, pricking eyes into the flat surface, and a heart. 'There!' he said, clearly pleased. 'See?'

He folded the knife inside itself and dropped it in her lap. Then, on his knees before her, he caught her face between his two resplendent white hands. 'It's a gift,' he told her. 'Make fine clay men with eyes and hearts.' His hands cupped firmly around her face, and the rest of the world became a dark open place, less than a shadow. Words she couldn't understand came out of his voice: instructions for adding features to dead clay men, repetitious tributes glorifying her beauty. Where his ten fingers rested on her cheeks, ten fires erupted; and within the instant, Dorma, the child, grew up. In the dimension of his voice, in the icon of his face, Dorma felt herself crystallize and become inhabited. Her tongue, never articulate, could make no response to his sudden departure. Within her untutored mind, she felt a conflict of vast proportions — a full emptiness,

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an empty fullness — and when it came to her to call him back, his passage through the underbrush had diminished to a crackling echo.

As she started after him, the knife fell from her lap. Stooping to retrieve it, she noticed the difference in the clay

men. The one with eyes and a heart, she caressed with her fingertips. She crushed the second clay image with the palm of her hand back into the hot flat earth. 'They won't hurt him,' she whispered to herself. 'They're looking for someone else. They won't hurt him,' she kept repeating; and all the while, she knelt at the bottom of the hot clay pit, shivering.

But the need to see him again grew until she could no longer resist it. Over her shoulder, she saw through the trees the town's brown monotony. Then she hurried, her hands reaching out to clear a path. 'Pins, needles, ribbons, knives' — and the chant set pace for her feet. Thorns got lodged in her toes, and the chant dulled the pain. The desolate woods streaked past in an intolerably-ugly blur, and Dorma lengthened her stride through the hostile place where low branches slapped at her legs and the trees took back their shadows. 'Hurry,' she whispered between chants. 'Warn him away.' The rest of the distance through the clearing, the chant lodged like dry wads in her throat; and just as she sighted the brown dirt street, the air exploded with three shotgun blasts. When a hard-talking voice cut through the dust, Dorma ran.

In front of Armstrong's store, the people gathered in a little distorted knot. At the center, Preacher Ridley railed a triumphant: 'It's him!' And the people yelled. Dorma stopped a distance from the crowd, succumbing to an old drowsy timidity. She closed her eyes and tried to ease her scorched lungs with deep breaths of air; but a pulse exploded on her cheeks where his hands had been and, losing what sense she had, she pushed forcibly through the crowd. The preached stopped talking when he saw her. The crowd moved back with the stiff respect crowds give to a mad dog. Although her will resisted, Dorma forced herself to look down at the ground. As she caught sight of the white-bird hands resting limp and blood-spotted in the dust, a stern twisting took place inside her. Her muscles went rigid. She walked

the last few steps to his side with a stiff ritualistic bearing and went down beside him quietly until her cheek rested against his dead palm.

The moments dragged. The crowd grew restless in the heat of the day. Frank Hunekar stood and gaped with the others until a sudden animal fury sent him lunging for her. 'Git away from him,' he yelled. 'Git on away 'fore I —' As he spun her up and around, the crowd caught sight of fresh blood on her face. A confinement of fear rose with the simmering mirages, isolating the people behind an impenetrable pensive silence.

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'Once't I felt a wind,' gasped a woman close to the front; and the farm women about her exchanged quick glances and pursed their lips into drab thin lines.

'A wind abringin' rain,' said another.

'Fore the girl touched him, there was a wind —'

'Yeh, a wind —'

The crowd unkotted and moved slowly back. Frank Hunekar jerked his hand away from the back of her neck and wiped it hard down the side of his trousers. Then he eased himself, like a full pitcher, to the protective side of Preacher Ridley.

Alone at the center, Dorma fought back to the churning that cut through her head. 'It wasn't him,' she whispered to the ground. 'He only sold things. Notions, and —' Her voice drifted. She turned two small tremulous circles on the same spot. Then calm returned to her wide blue eyes, and she stood still.

When it came to Preacher Ridley that now it was the girl who carried the curse, it came abundantly, with great suddenness. Waving his gun, he sent the crowd scurrying home; and in a loud voice, he summoned Deacons Armstrong and Pritchett to his side. Drawing away from the girl, he took Frank Hunekar aside and offered him a low

winking comfort. 'Take her on back to your barn,' he said, low, resting his arm heavily on Frank Hunekar's shoulder. 'When dark comes, we'll ride over and he'll pray the curse outa her.' Dull-faced Frank Hunekar nodded dumbly to the preacher's advice. The deacons giggled like old women, and muttered hoarse 'Amen's.' Dorma moved of her own volition toward the old truck; and there was about her step an obedience that was neither fierce nor plaintive, a symmetry of motion at once alive and recognizable, and withered and dead.

All the way back to the farm, Dorma chanted softly beneath her breath, while Frank Hunekar, keeping well over on his side of the seat, cursed. Hunched over the steering wheel, he muttered strident meaningless oaths; and, once, he made a question out of his mouthings and hurled it at her. 'Why'd ya have to go to him, Dorma?' he shouted. 'Reckon you coulda seen who it was, like the others done, and stayed clear.'

'Pins, needles, ribbons . . .' Her voice came like faint music over the rumble of the truck.

'I've a mind to let 'em at ya,' cried Frank Hunekar, knowing all the while that they'd come and he'd be powerless to stop them. Stabbing his foot down on the accelerator, he sent the truck hurtling down the road. 'And shut up your yammering, will ya?' But Dorma wouldn't, or couldn't; so he cursed all the way home, and continued to curse long after

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he'd shooed the girl into the barn and slammed and bolted the door.

Alone inside the dark place, Dorma moved with obedient docility to the end stall. There, she stretched out on the matted corn husks, her eyes bright, a faint hum escaping her lips: 'Pins, needles, ribbons . . .' Almost beautiful.

A small wind came with the dusk, blowing the praying committee down the narrow farm road. Frank Hunekar was

pacing in front of the barn. He left off pacing, and tried to reason with them, 'Seein' as how the wind come up,' he pleaded, 'must mean the curse is gone.' But the churchmen had come a great distance in good faith, and declared they owed it to themselves and the town to make sure. Preacher Ridley, by virtue of being preacher, elected himself to go in first; and, as the barn door slammed shut, Frank Hunekar shouted thickly: 'She ain't more'n a kid, you hear? Be easy!' The wind struck cold against him, and another wind blew dust in his eyes. He turned away from the gaping deacons and stared dully at the withered land.

After twenty minutes, Deacon Armstrong called time on the preacher; and when no hard-talking voice sent back a reply from the darkness, the deacon pushed his way into the barn, muttering: 'Preacher or no — fair's fair!'

Frank Hunekar squatted close to the barn and drove trembling hands through his black hair, then let his lank wrists hang limp between his legs. 'Ain't no curse,' . . . holding his voice down a pitch below the wind, afraid Deacon Pritchett would hear and tell on him. The dust lifted in eddies around his feet, and the wind rose in the night, carrying with it the stench of bloated cow carcasses. He sniffed and covered his nose, still mumbling.

After too long a time, Deacon Pritchett grew nervous, making sucking noises on his false teeth. 'The missus gits skitterish at dark,' he rasped down at Frank Hunekar. 'I told her I'd be a'home by eight.' A cadaver of a man, thin, easily agitated, lust made him bold. 'Ain't leavin', though,' he declared. 'Not till I done my turn.' And grappling with the latch on the door, he fought his way into the darkness.

Frank Hunekar was on his feet and running when the door slammed shut. 'Bout enough, ain't it, Preacher?' he hollered. 'Storm's comin'. Ain't no curse. Come on out and see for yourself.' When no answer came, he hocked from his throat a slime spittle of dust and grit and spat at the barn.

Ragged bits of dead crop stung his face, and as he turned away, he shoved his fingers down through holes in the pockets of his work pants. He sulked in the night, and threw black glances over his shoulder at the quiet place where the praying was going on.

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Of a sudden, there was a whining in the wind that touched a misgiving deep inside him. 'She ast for it,' he flared. 'She brung it on herself.' Where the clouds gathered overhead, thunder sounded; and, between the thrashing in the sky and the dull torment inside his head, Frank Hunekar rose to full fury. Running forcefully against the wind, his feet floundered in the ruts that led up to the squat frame house. First, he made the screen door scream against its hinges, then scream again, louder, as he reappeared with a dot of lantern light. Next, he took the distance to the barn in long lunging strides, shouting wildly above the gale. 'Lea' her be, Preacher, you hear? Lea' her be now.' He beat on the door. 'You done enough. Now lea' her be.' He cursed, then stepped back and rammed the door with his shoulder. The latch split, and he careened into the quiet dark place. 'Di' you hear me, Preacher? Di' you hear me acallin'? You can git on home now, and take 'em others with ya.' His voice made a timorous sound of authority. When the barn gave back silence, he grew wary, and obeyed an instinct he'd learned from breaking animals. He halted his step and listened.

Light spilled from the lantern in slanted yellow paths, diverse and anemic in the pitch black. He pinched his eyes together in an attempt to probe the shadows. He held his breath and gentled his voice. 'Dorma? You there?' Only the wind cried. He called again. 'Preacher?'

Music came in sweet humming from the farthest corner, and Frank Hunekar whirled on it. 'Is that you, Dorma?'

The song was tuneless, but the voice carried a lilt with it and struck pure tones in the high register with haunting

clarity.

‘Make fine clay men — with hearts and eyes —’

The voice drifted.

‘— pins and needles, and — everything dies —’

A cold trembling shook Frank Hunekar. He inched forward, waving the lantern ahead of his feet. ‘Preacher, lea’ — lea’ her be now,’ he choked. Then, louder: ‘Pritchett, it’s way pas’ eight. Your missus’ll be awaitin’—’

‘— pins, and needles —’ A sigh muted the voice. ‘— ribbons, knives —’

Fright pushed with the wind at his backside. Frank Hunekar moved reluctantly toward the far corner. A volley of thunder exploded overhead, startling enough to steal a heartbeat; and while he was trying to catch his breath, the wind hurled fingers of yellow light into the far corner. The lantern surrendered a handful of illumination. He saw into the darkness. His face froze in crooked veins. He wrenched loose a tortured cry of ‘Gawd!’ His eyes, impaled on the horror, would not turn away.

MARILYN HARRIS

In the corner, the girl knelt over Deacon Pritchett, pleurably engrossed in the purely-sensuous act of carving men. Her hand guided the knife down in a circular motion into the left side of his chest; and with a moist red skirt, she brushed aside the endless blood rivers that poured out of the cavity. Behind her, two crumpled bodies, their chests slashed into ragged shreds, stared profoundly up from dark bleeding sockets where eyes had been. Dorma’s expression was one of sweet personal warmth as she smiled shyly at the lantern light. ‘Make — fine — clay — men,’ she whispered. Softer now — ‘with hearts — and — eyes.’ Then, wiping the knife on the hem of her dress, she bent low over the deacon’s face.

Frank Hunekar staggered back. 'Gawd!' A violent paroxysm seized his muscles. 'Mighty Gawd!' Suddenly the wind blew out the light, leaving darkness. He dropped the lantern and ran. He ran down the narrow farm road, through the wind and rain. The rain moistened the clay, and the clay thickened on his soles; and he tripped over the ruts and fell, raising his eyes to the darkness, screaming: 'Gawd! Mighty Gawd! Hulp!'

Then the skies parted, and the storm was upon him.

STANLEY COOPERMAN

CADBURY'S GUITAR

Creole
ladies
leap on the strings
complaining
of television and
thirst:
it's DRY back there, they
say, astonished
at dreams of dust
and withered blood,
the young accomplishment
who wanders horn-
rimmed among red plush
fancies,
while Missus Trollope
sweats rhinestones
behind the melted cheese.
Tall trees and burning cotton:
with earnest eye-
balls
he concentrates,
plucking freight-cars
from a mandolin,
and all his fingers

document joy, the daring
darling
goosebump mellowing
storyville fellow-
ing, Anglo-Saxon
songs
of Barcelona.

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DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

MOBIUS TRIP*

I feel myself
a truck on freeways
held within 5 miles of sixty
by a chain of reasoning:
phenomenal over abstract spaces.
I must write to F—,
a poem for all
paralytic drummers. The wrath
of the Earth is on your useless limbs.
Stiffed fingers, blasted out of hand
bear the curse of raging clay.
What less concrete
than 20 thousand miles of tar?
An apron cast off clumsily
by a giant drone?
What more paralytic
than this — — — white
Möbius' line?
O numbers!
Oh, the
space of all im-
possibilities weighs cancellation
Overhead.

** The Möbius is a geometric puzzle. Draw a solid line along one face of a paper strip and a broken line along the other. Put a half-twist in the strip before gluing its ends together in the form of a bracelet. If the lines are drawn down the middle (parallel to the edges) of each side, you'll find you can join them end to end into a single line that's endless. I.e.: you will have constructed a single piece of paper with only one surface.*

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CLARENCE ALVA POWELL

MIASMA: THE DEIFICATION OF THE BEAST

i

While one seeks in disparagement
The baser levels of speech, the tendency,
Although dealing with mental derangement,
Still is to retain sobriety;
Therefore dalliance with moderation
Softens not too much the damnation
Tailored neatly in his own creation.
The guttural, monosyllabic speech
A catch-jargon for the multitude
Reverted inward in the mental breach
Of mass-betrayal while politicoes allude
To freedom's tintured coloration
Paralytic in the strangulation
Of new-born and unborn generations.

ii

He sang a song of somnolent Kong,
A measure chanted in alluvial slime
Hate-inspired, a slant-brow hate-song
Rising fetid from miasmatic time;
Rise up ye abysmal beasts, he sang
He intoned, Love thy ourangoutang
As thyself and strum the bane-twang.
He loosed juggernaut from nether cavern
Against the unsuspecting innocent,
Plunged both the deity and tavern
Deep into his dark impediment;
And gleeful maniac, with raucous clang,
Grasped the devil's hand and there hangs
The simian-pure idiot whimper-bang.

G. R. Morgan

THE POET OPTS FOR POSTERITY

A ragged wind rattles
the academic eaves
tonight
Now is the winter of our
the weather of our
: There will be a meeting at
4 pm in the coffee lounge
to discuss ways & means
for ensuring the Survival
of all those who have
published not less than . . .
not more than . . .
and never in X,
X,
or X.

WILLIAM A. HENKIN, JR.

TOMORROW I COME TO TRIAL.

Unlike K., I know my crime:
I have tried to change the course prescribed for me.
No one will say if I have succeeded
or not.
(Is it strange
that some sort of Christian should burn while
Rome fiddles?)
I am not unprepared to receive guests or detectives at
any hour;
I know what they don't, and I'm not scared:
I have read their books already, from cover to cover.
I have made love with my neighbor, and found her
wanting.
She, perhaps, has complained;
and if Nero, her son, should kill her for it
and climb on top of her,
flaunting my head as a sign that
the job is done? So what?
I expected to die.
This kind of crime will serve
adequately, this time.

CHARLES TEKEYAN

every day. I told him I was accustomed to being fired after only a day on the job. Never held one longer than that. The variety and challenge and interesting new associates the advantages of being fired fast. He looked at me worriedly and then unhappily. Pitying him for not being able to be fired too.

My first customer after lunch a very tired lady. Tired of walking, of herself, of life. Her ugly young daughter with her talking constantly, so who can blame her? The lady admitting she did not know what kind of shoes she should buy. About to admit she didn't know if she should go on breathing. Measured her foot and looked at her face. Then I held her foot and rubbed it slowly. Looking into her eyes. I've

never touched anything so exquisite, lady. It's arousing all of my passions. She watched me helplessly. Close your mouth, lady, I don't want to do anything there.

Gently taking off the other shoe. That foot a beauty too. Reminding me of ancient Greece, America before the settlers arrived, Paris when there was no France. The flesh not of this world, the shape was for sweeter days, the over-all design and setting a masterpiece that will never be seen again. Telling all this to her while caressing. And again I meant what I said. Just as surprised as she. And I drew in their scent deeply. Wouldn't exchange these feet for a field of orchids presided over by a dozen flamingoes.

Held them against my cheek when she encouraged me by pushing them against my face. A pat for this one, a kiss for that. Sighing loudly and falling low in her seat. Her skirt about to go over my head. I moved back. Madam please. Propriety before all else. But she leaned forward suddenly and seized me. My ribs aching in her embrace and everyone in the whole store stunned by her lusty display. Strength had come to her. And now confidence. She pointed to shoes in all directions and refused to try them on. Buying everything and giving me the money as she stared at me as if it were the first time she was seeing me since she came into the store. Gave her feet a couple of tickles before I put her shoes back on. She shrieked sweetly, the space between her knees widening sharply.

Mr. Loshank rushed up to scold me for getting too familiar with the customer. Demanded that I apologize and leave the premises at once. I walked away to get my coat. The lady told him she would buy nothing if I did not remain. Mr. Loshank calling my name, calling me to come back. I'm the forgiving type. But I'm also the stubborn type. Keeping my ways. Because they are all I have. I said good-by to the lady. We hugged. She left without her daughter. A depressed woman next and right away I took off her shoes and tickled

her. Laughter filling the store and Mr. Loshank screaming and pulling me away from her.

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CHARLES TEKEYAN

Charles Tekeyan

‘He’s wonderful!’ she said. ‘Let him do it more.’

Mr. Loshank stepping back and the dumbfounded expression on his face a thing for pity. Resumed tickling the bottoms of the woman’s feet. And finding that her feet were incredibly beautiful too. I brought her three pairs of shoes when she calmed down. Making the purchase without even looking at them and she walked out happily.

Mr. Loshank stood by the rest of the day and watched with awe as I tickled, patted and petted all kinds of feet, all of them out of this world in their splendor and inimitable attractions. Customers buying shoes in a third of the time and buying several pairs at a time. The majesty of free enterprise when people take leave of their senses. I was delirious, myself, not because I was showing ability as a salesman but because I was able to combine business with appetite. Having found a new passion in the depths of the routine. Every foot more beautiful than the previous one. Unfair that the job should give me so much pleasure and none to the others. Must ask Mr. Loshank if I can stay and work for nothing.

‘Sir —’

‘You’re a genius, my boy, I’m sorry I didn’t see the kind of salesman you are.’

‘Will you let me stay —’

I am making you the assistant manager! There’ll be a raise in salary, my boy. And beginning tomorrow the other men will follow your amazing techniques.’

‘Thank you, sir. I —’

‘Don’t thank me. Thank yourself. You have a great future here.’

In the morning all the salesmen in a circle. To watch and learn the rudiments of this revolutionary new method. The foot as a god to worship. Opening up thereby the angels with purses. Leading to the true god of money. Mr. Loshank lectured while I demonstrated. A dummy foot. I didn't like that. Something perverted doing these things with a foot of this kind. Why must everything become artificial so fast? Drained of sweat. Death comes when impulses are replaced by substitutes. That's why I can't breathe I guess. Dying. I ran out to get air. On the sidewalk I saw a girl with naked feet. I asked her if she would like to try on some shoes. Not buy them just try them.

'Shoes? What are they?' she asked.

Could see she had never worn any. I held her hand and took her to the window and showed them. All the glittering disgusting lowdown emblems.

'I'm not old enough to wear such things, even for a second.'

'You must be sixteen at least,' I said.

'No, I'm twenty-six. Or is it thirty-six? I forget. But I'm not old

CHARLES TEKEYAN

enough. These are for people over a hundred.'

Had to touch her feet, hold them. Bending down and grabbing them before she could make another move. I kissed them over and over and licked a good deal of the fine dirt on them. She wasn't so different. Found I was a kind and understanding man just as the other women had. Pulling me up from the shoulders. Strong as only the barefooted can be. I kissed her lips because that was what she wanted me to do apparently. First time I did a thing like that. It was as enjoyable as kissing feet.

Mr. Loshank's hand on my arm all of a sudden. Hysterical and he implored me to come back to the store. Pulling me away from her as if he doesn't know she exists. He began to

escort me to the door as the girl spoke to me.

'You are the first man,' she said.

'First man for what?' I asked, being dragged.

'First man who didn't step on my feet when he kissed me.'

A wave of the hand and she strolled away. How long must I endure the persecution of those who love me? Yes Mr. Loshank loves me or else why would he embrace me like this while I strain to watch her departing figure? Expanding my chest with the biggest breath I ever took. It broke the hold he had on me. Free at last and dashing away, the sidewalk flying under me. I caught up with her at the corner but she started running too, not away from me because she took my hand and I really understood now. The city is after us and we must outrace it. Darting around lampposts and people in wheelchairs. Not stopping until we reached the mountain. How could I run so fast, so far, so high without even being out of breath? Ah inspiration. From her and made of unrefined gold. But now what do we do?

She told me of a lake on top. Deeper than an ocean but clearer than a stream. Her mother is there and she wants me to meet her. And we might swim. But it's winter and we'll freeze in the water, won't we? Not up there. Always winter and summer combined up there. And she laughed because I knew so little and was so naive.

In a minute on the ridge and the lake in front of us. Behind us the city and our backs must remain turned to it. Her back beautiful. Creases and inclines like the face of the earth if the city hadn't been down there. Her dress had fallen off and now she turned. Perhaps breasts are as interesting as feet. First time I've seen a naked person. Why is it I want to take off my clothes too and press myself against her? The more I look at her, especially her chest. Losing all my passion for feet. Rising now, my eyes on points of interest. She has her own mountains I must climb. I watched her recline on a rock in the sun. She was the rock of my hope for

ever-

CHARLES TEKEYAN

lasting life.

Perspiring magnificently. I moved toward her beckoning thighs. All the trees around us rising to the same height. Now a tree in my pants trying to rise. I began to undress. Discarding shreds of clothing hurriedly to reach her before the great blades of grass around her stretching to embrace her. Suddenly she rose and jumped into the water. Her head popping up in the distance. Then gone in the shadows of the willows leaning by the edge of the lake beyond.

Completely stripped except for the shorts. I sat down to wait. A toe in the water proving there was no warmth there. Except for her. I was blazing for her and even in the water I would not be extinguished. And she the fire that started it all, now cutting a path through the lake and she arrived revealing the heat of her beauty as she stood dripping in front of me.

‘I just spoke to my mother.’

‘Where is she?’

‘The other side of the lake. Can you swim?’

‘Certainly. But a little later. Why don’t you lie down and dry off a bit?’

‘I told her all about you. She’s waiting. Has things for us to eat too.’

‘But I took off my clothes.’

‘She won’t mind.’

Squinting to gaze into the unattainable distance. I wanted to know what the future would bring. It had brought me here. But not satisfied. To penetrate all that stood between me and undying omniscience was my desire. And first the penetration of her unimaginable softness.

‘I don’t see anyone down there. Is your mother sitting?’

‘No she’s in the water.’

‘I see a white flamingo I think.’

‘That’s a swan, silly.’

She threw herself into the water. How inappropriate. The tree sticking out from me wants to be planted, become solid, and she keeps moving from place to place. Unable to adjust myself to the unpredictable rhythms of these natural surroundings.

‘Take that off and join me,’ she shouts.

Fortunate it’s too sunny and she’s too far to notice I’m blushing. The tree turning into a weed drying up and lost forever.

‘I’ll keep this on if you don’t mind.’

‘You can’t. It will pollute the water. Don’t you see how clear it is?’

‘Why should my shorts pollute the water? They’re clean. Wearing them only since yesterday.’

‘I will go and tell my mother not to wait for us. Stay where you are

CHARLES TEKEYAN

and I’ll return soon.’

An insult to my — to my everything. She has decided and dictated enough. To show my independence I will — Yes my derision of her fears. Tossing my hands in the air nonchalantly. Perfect swan dive into the cool silence mirroring all time. Like ice but bracing to meet eternity face to face on its own grounds. How dank it tastes.

But when I came to the surface for air. Oh this isn’t funny. The sun gone and the water black. Where did she go? Don’t swim well enough for dark games. Unbearable, something burning me all over, the iciness so cold it is hot, I must get out of here. Out of breath as I pounded myself to the edge and clambered onto the ground. The water becoming an awful acid, oh what have I done, where is she, is she all right?

I knew just by looking at the willows in the distance. They knew. Leaning over and seeing through the blackness of the

toxic water. And now the willows leaning all the way back, withdrawing from the horror, in retreat to mourn as only they can. While the one who poisoned her world watches.

About an hour later her body up and floating. White and motionless. Never again will she be unpredictable. I made this lake her tomb. Her small elegant feet passing by. In the blur of my tears like pink webbed swellings. I burned her up with what I am. The first time that warmth has been scorched to death.

I tore off the faded rag covering my trunk. So foul it was fatal. Throwing it down on the ground with a curse. Still wet but I put on my suit. Watching the crimson distortion float into the unknown beyond my range of sight. The swan suddenly at her side to guide her. Then came the inscrutable sound of crying, almost human and at the same time unearthly. Not for effect. From the heart. When it beats secretly because it is shy, unworldly.

Some of the dark green arms around me reaching up to catch me and strangle me. I ran. Down the mountain jumping and bobbing.

Bewildered and exhausted in town just before sunset. Wandering through the streets until I found myself in front of the store where I worked. Lights bright. Means nothing. That brightness won't save the earth some day when the sun dies and all the planets around it turn into solid ice.

I paused to stare stupidly into the window at the attractive stupidities. Mr. Loshank spotted me and came charging. Certain he was going to attack me. Not afraid of him. Nothing to lose.

'What's happened to you? Where've you been?'

'Have you been to that mountain over there?'

'Which mountain? No mountains around here. Come inside.'

CHARLES TEKEYAN

'I'm useless.'

'You're a great salesman. Just a little strange. You look like a mess. But come in and get to work. We need help.'

'Have you ever heard a swan cry?'

'Swans? What are you talking about? Get in and start working.'

'I don't feel like —'

'You must, my boy. It was disastrous. None of the boys had your success. How do you do it? We haven't made a single sale. Women were slapping them and walking out. Even complained to the cops. Go in there, my boy. Put your genius to work again.'

Too tired to say no. Mr. Loshank's hand on my arm again, an aggressive hand that didn't know its own weakness. He seated me in front of a woman being shown a pile of shoes by one of the salesmen. Mr. Loshank told the fellow to get lost because a real salesman was taking over.

Took her foot in my hand and looked at her even though she told me the other man measured her already. My reply a lie the second it left my mouth. I claimed I wanted an excuse to have her foot in my hands. To touch something so tantalizing. Disgusting. To be close to something so precious. If only I could run away this instant. And then I apologized for lying to her. The odor is unbearable, lady. When did you wash your feet last? They're so ugly you can't stand to look at them yourself I guess. Screaming the second I dropped the pointless limb in my hand. Stumbling over some shoes in front of me but I managed to walk out. Cold, very cold on the street.

Richard L. Dalon

VANQUISHED

Christopher lived on Web Street. It was a simple ordinary nice street. As the hot dry summer impinged upon Holy Oak — the town in which Web Street was located — Christopher Hunding was busily pacing back and forth across his front porch. He awaited some important news.

He lived in a comfortable house, not exceeding his means nor below his status in the community. It was light-green with dark-green shutters and curtains, giving the appearance of a doll's house, or — as everyone on Web Street called it — quaint. There was a narrow curved driveway that led to a small brick garage, recently whitewashed and kept clean daily by Christopher's son, Charles.

Just adjacent to the Hunding's home was a gray brick house with a large picture window, too stately for the motif. An elderly woman eyed Christopher as he continued to pace from one corner of the porch to the other. He would take fifteen steps — she counted them — stop, turn around in a circle, then continue to the other side.

The elderly woman seemed to be almost as interested in what Christopher was anticipating as he was. She sat on an old and frayed chair, like those one would always expect to find in an antique shop. Occasionally she would rise, go to the window, and push her short fleshy nose — with its lumpish nostrils — against the glass, attempting to get a better look.

Christopher glanced and saw her round head in the window. He thought how much her head looked like an overripe pumpkin with a sponge for a nose, and two large, circular, eyes — or were they grapes? And he laughed to himself.

The door to the porch opened, and a short man with spectacles in a drab gray suit, stood in the doorway.

‘How is my little one, Doctor?’ Christopher asked, trying to force a smile on his lips, yet giving away his fright, almost panic, by the expression in his eyes.

There was no reply; and the doctor walked slowly to the far end of the porch and sat on the thin wooden railing. He finally said with the stern professional tone a doctor always assumes when he is not quite sure of the diagnosis: ‘You have a very sick girl on your hands, Christopher. I have given her as thorough an examination as I can, here; and I can find nothing physically wrong with her.’

RICHARD L. DALON

‘Nothing physically wrong with her! Are you trying to say she is mentally ill, Doctor?’ Christopher indignantly asked, making his way to the doctor’s side and placing his wet palm on his shoulder. ‘She is only a child; I don’t understand.’

‘I haven’t made that diagnosis yet, Christopher,’ he replied confidently. ‘I merely said that I could find nothing physically wrong with her, now. Of course, she will have to come to the hospital for further examination, and I cannot make a complete evaluation until she has been given a few tests. She will have to stay at least three days, perhaps longer. Arrangements should be made immediately.’

Christopher was not sure what the doctor had said, for his mind had been too busy inventing possible diseases for his little girl. He glanced at the house where the old woman watched, and she seemed to know and understand what the doctor had said. And now she couldn’t wait to gossip to anyone who would listen, and tell all that she knew of the child’s sickness.

‘When should I bring her to the hospital, Doctor?’ Christopher asked, still not fully aware of what he was saying.

‘Bring her tomorrow morning sharply at nine o’clock, and we will begin testing immediately.’

The doctor began to walk across the porch to the steps which led to the sidewalk, but he stood on the stairs, turned, and motioned for Christopher to come to him.

‘What is it, Doctor?’ Christopher asked in a frightened and quivering voice.

‘I didn’t tell your wife of the child’s condition or of her going to the hospital. I don’t think it would be wise to tell her of the child’s possible mental sickness. Wait until we have completed our investigation. Here, give these pills to your wife. They’re just a tranquilizer to make her sleep. And perhaps you’d better take some, too. Well, good afternoon. I’ll see you at the hospital tomorrow at nine.’

Christopher watched him walk hurriedly down the white cement path, climb into his black new-model car, and drive away.

The day was at its hottest as the scorching sun beat down upon the trees which lined Web Street. The trees looked like candles, melting and dripping wax, while the flame gives off its heat.

Inside the house, Mrs. Hunding sat clenching the child close to her breast, as if she were trying to suckle her. Mrs. Hunding’s face was exactly like those of millions of housewives one sees shopping in the supermarket. She would never attract a second look from the opposite sex — at least, not now. She was draped in a faded red quilted bathrobe. Her

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RICHARD L. DALON

Richard L. Dalon

thin unshaven legs were spread and propped up on a footstool, like those of a woman in position for childbirth.

The screen door slammed shut, and Christopher Hunding walked into the room, staring at his wife and child.

'Well, what did the doctor have to say, Deary?' she asked in an almost pseudo-melancholy tone. Why must she persist in calling me Deary, Christopher thought as he continued to glare at his wife. Why is she holding the child so tight? Doesn't she even know how to hold her own daughter? If only I could make her understand how much it annoys me to see her sprawled out in that chair — like a whore — and calling me Deary.

Once she seemed such a pretty creature to me. Her wild gay enthusiastic nature thrilled and excited my mind so that I could not resist her. I was young, and my heart was so full of adventure and conquests that my entrails sometimes burned within me until I felt they would scorch a hole through their fleshy cage.

Now, my wife, like a constant flow of water, keeps my skin wet and prevents the simmering ashes that remain from becoming a blazing flame. My entrails are being smothered, and they rot and decay within, their stinking shrinking den. Will these smoldering impurities ever be extinguished and my misery finally end?

'Did he give you any medicine for her? Maybe it's just this terrible heat that's making her sick?'

'Franny, for Christ's sake! The child is ill, and she has to go to the hospital for a few days,' he replied in a tone he always assumed when he felt she was asking a stupid question.

The doorbell rang. He walked down the short corridor and opened the screen door to a plump baby-faced man with red hair and hamster cheeks standing there next his son. He recognized the man as Mr. Johnson who lived several houses down on Web Street. Mr. Johnson's face was red, and he puffed so that, when he began to speak, a fine spray of saliva came from his mouth while some clung to his lips and stretched up and down like rubber bands along the sides of his mouth.

'Your — your — son ran his bicycle across my newly-seeded front lawn,' he sputtered as he shook his pudgy fist in front of him. 'I expect you to p-p-punish the boy for it, Mr. Hunding.'

Christopher's son, Charles, stood with his head hanging down as if he had just been found guilty of some great crime. He reminded Christopher of a dog which has just been beaten, creeping and half-crawling with ears down and tail between its legs. He wished his son would stand with his head erect and look both him and Mr. Johnson in the face and shout:

RICHARD L. DALON

Yes! I rode my bicycle across the grass. Now give me my punishment!

Instead, he saw tears begin to roll down his freckled cheeks, and inarticulate cries and sobs blurted from his mouth.

'I'm sorry, Father,' sobbed Charles, 'I didn't mean to ride my bike over Mr. Johnson's lawn. I won't do it again; I promise.'

An inward feeling of hatred passed over Christopher as he observed the pitiful sight of Mr. Johnson and his own son. Is this what I have raised my son to be — a sobbing whimpering vegetable who crouches and hunches his shoulders and back before his father? He wanted to beat him; he thought of binding him to a tree and lashing him with a whip until he

begged for mercy.

‘Well, Mr. Hunding,’ Mr. Johnson said, spitting the words out, ‘your son has admitted his guilt; the rest I shall leave to you. Good day, Mr. Hunding.’

Christopher watched Mr. Johnson waddle off the porch and observed how the rolls of fat shook up and down with each step he took. Perhaps the pig will trip down the steps and kill himself, he mused.

‘Come inside, Charles,’ he said in a composed and placid tone. This tone even surprised him — perhaps he should be yelling. Once inside, they stood facing each other, neither knowing quite what to say. Why did this feeling of hate for his son hang over him? Yet, he was not able to yell or even to scold him.

‘Charles! Charles! Please come in here and help me with your sister,’ his mother shouted from the other room. Charles looked at his father, received a nod, and then went into the room to his mother.

As night encroached upon Holy Oak, Christopher Hunding left his house and walked down Web Street toward the river which ran on the outskirts of town. The night air was hot, and a pungent odor hung over the town like a predator hanging over some prey, playing with it before killing it with a certain pleasure. He stopped as he came to the edge of the river. A street light shone brightly, illuminating a small whirlpool close to the river’s bank. He gazed into the whirling water and watched the human feces, the good people of Holy Oak dumped into the river, being tossed about in a vortex. The musty stench rose from the river and mingled with the pungent odor hanging in the air, smothering the town from its own filth. But no one minded this foul rancid stagnating scent engulfing Holy Oak; even Christopher’s once-sensitive nostrils were now immune to the smell.

Suddenly disgusted by what he saw, he turned and began to run. He ran until his lungs started to burst, sharp cutting pains shooting through his chest. He coughed and gasped for air. The pain in his head was un-

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bearable. His legs felt detached from his body. He stumbled to the ground, crawled, and at last turned on his back, writhing in pain, with his mouth open and his fists clenching the grass. He could not distinguish between the obscure visions in his mind and reality. He saw his wife and son hanging from a large red rope; but they seemed to be laughing at him as if he were dead, and they were living. Exhausted, he closed his eyes and slept. Just how long he lay sleeping he did not know. He awoke, walked home, climbed into his familiar bed. The next morning, he remembered nothing of what had happened the night before.

Monday morning arrived with the deathly buzzing of the alarm clock announcing another day. His wife was already up making his breakfast. She entered his room and, walking noisily to his bed, shook him. Her foul morning breath, hanging breasts, and sleep clinging to the corners of her eyes greeted him daily.

'Hurry, Christopher, you have to take Jeanne to the hospital before you go to work,' she said as she pulled down the sheet he hid under.

Getting out of bed in the morning always seemed the most difficult of chores for him. But, up again, he went to the bathroom, shaved, washed his face, brushed his teeth, combed his hair, put on his shoes, trousers, shirt, and tie, passed through the rooms, and sat down at the kitchen table.

Jeanne sat at the opposite end of the table, staring directly into her father's eyes. Her long shiny dark hair hung past her shoulders and, from the back, gave the impression of a black curtain which might at any moment be drawn

apart to reveal a picture of exceptional beauty. The bangs draping over her forehead accentuated the dark brown resplendent eyes that gave her a mature appearance. She had a thin strong face, a small nose and chin, and beautiful white flashing teeth. She ate her food carefully, making certain that not too much food was on her fork before she placed it in her mouth. She looked at Christopher as though she were going to speak; but, instead, she lowered her eyes and said nothing. Christopher noticed that every time she did this — and she had done it quite frequently within the past two weeks — there was a certain inexplicable glance or perhaps an intuitive perception which gave him the feeling he wouldn't understand what she was about to say and that she, realizing this, kept silent.

Jeanne had not spoken a word in three weeks. At first, both Christopher and his wife thought it was because of an argument she had overheard between them. However, she began to have other symptoms. She began crying, but not as a child cries. Instead, her face had the expression of a statue with water streaming from its eyes. Her tears gently trickled down her cheeks, but neither eyes nor face showed any change of expression.

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It was as if she were crying for someone else.

'Hurry, Christopher!' shouted his wife, 'you'll be late for work.'

Franny turned to Jeanne, brushed her hair, straightened the short blue dress she wore, and kissed her cheek. Franny did not appear to be upset. Her daughter was going to the hospital; she accepted it with indifference. She gave no sign of compassion, and it did not bother or upset her daily schedule.

Arriving at the hospital, Christopher and Jeanne entered through a large glass door and stood in the center of a round reception-room. The paintings on the wall, the marble floor,

and the echoing of their footsteps reverberating throughout the room reminded Christopher of an art museum. He walked to the information desk, spoke to the girl; and then, taking Jeanne by the hand, sat in the far corner of the room. Finally, the doctor Christopher had talked with on the porch approached them. He wore the same gray suit, with a different tie — even wider than the other one — and walked in the same crooked manner.

‘Jeanne,’ Christopher said in a quiet tone, picking her up in his arms and huddling her as if it might be the last time they would see each other, ‘go with the doctor. You’re going to spend the day with him. You’ll have a lot of fun, and I’ll be back to see you later.’ As he spoke, he could not help feeling ridiculous. He felt he was babbling baby-talk to an adult. He became embarrassed and felt the blood rush to his face. The harder he tried to be natural, the more he blushed; and now even the doctor seemed to be laughing at him. Without another word he left the hospital.

After a complete physical examination, Jeanne was taken to the psychiatric ward on the third floor. A nurse took her into a small room. It was a perfect square containing only three pieces of furniture: two chairs, and a small table with a microphone on it. Behind the table, the wall was a one-way mirror from which the patient could be observed from another room without seeing his observer.

The nurse left. A tall serious-looking man entered and sat down in the other chair. He introduced himself as Doctor Krull. He began to talk quietly and calmly to his patient who watched him intently.

‘What is it you dislike about your home, Jeanne?’ the doctor asked in a nonchalant and unassuming manner. ‘Do your mother and father have many arguments?’ he asked before she had time to answer the first question. He did not seem to be disturbed by the fact that his patient was not reacting — at least, verbally — to his questions. He began

displaying a series of pictures; he would place one in front of her, let her look for a moment, then take it away and replace it by another. First appeared trees, animals, cars, people, then a simple plain red house. Suddenly, she began

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to move her lips and, in a chanting rhythmic singsong manner, began:

Dogs are chained,
Cats are free,
But both are just the same.
Chain, or house, or cage — to me —
Are all the same; all the same, all the same.

Over and over she recited this verse, as if she had rehearsed it many times in her head but was saying it for the first time. The doctor continued to ask questions which were subsequently answered by the same refrain. After several hours, he rose from his chair, smiled, pulled gently on Jeanne's hair, and walked out of the room.

The same matronly nurse who had led her there came and took her to another section of the hospital. She was put in a children's ward on the second floor. She neither talked nor mingled with the other children. She seemed too aloof and unconcerned to be bothered by their mundane and typical childish actions.

The door to the ward opened and three people approached Jeanne's bed. They were Christopher, Mrs. Hunding, and a short fat old woman.

'How's my little girl?' the fat woman asked in a sarcastic tone. 'Isn't she pretty? My, you're getting to be a big girl. Come now, come to your Aunt Essie, dear.'

Christopher glanced at his wife, who wore a contented proud motherly expression. He felt ashamed of his wife and her sister in front of Jeanne. Jeanne knows, he thought, she knows 'everything.'

‘It’s such a shame that a good child has to be sick,’ Aunt Essie said as they drove toward Web Street. ‘There are so many evil and bad children in the world; but it’s always the good who get sick. We must have faith. God’s ways are strange, and it is not for us to question them. It must be for the good, and we must trust in God — we must pray tonight for Jeanne.’

‘Oh! — you’re so right, Esther. We’ll all go to church this Sunday and pray for Jeanne,’ Franny said with a melodramatic sigh which was out of keeping with her character.

‘That’s enough!’ Christopher shouted in a manner which even shocked him. He would have continued, but it became so quiet, and his wife and Esther gave him such a peculiar stare, that no words came to him. His throat became dry; the sweat dripped from his forehead onto his eyelashes and made him blink and rub his eyes.

‘Here, dear, let me wipe your eyes,’ Franny said, not the least annoyed by Christopher’s hopeless plea or command.

The two women continued with their loquaciousness and Christopher

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with his driving.

That night as Franny and Esther complained and soothed each other’s problems, Christopher went to his bedroom and fell into a dreamful sleep.

He was alone on the prow of an ancient trireme in the middle of an ocean. The three tiers of oars were constantly moving, but no one was behind them. The ship did not stir, even though the oars kept rowing to the sound of a rhythmic drum. A huge chain held the ship in place as it strained to break away like a prodigious prehistoric bird caught in a trap. The oars splashed desperately in the turbulent water until the ship was surrounded by a white foam. Then the drum slowed to a steady dragging beat, as though the ship,

aware of its fate, were giving up. The foam drifted from the vessel and could be seen in the distance as it bobbed up and down on the swells.

The ocean became a somber ink-black. Suddenly thousands of scintillating lights flashed just above the ocean and appeared to be moving in all directions. As he stared at the hypnotic lights, a weird soft threnody could be heard emanating from the heavens. A strange melodious elegaic tune that he often had tried to sing to himself during the day. These flashing lights were flying fish which often followed ships and covered the decks with their bodies. But only one small fish landed on the deck, just in front of him. He tried to pick it up as it squirmed and gasped; but before he could throw it back into the dark sea, it died in his hands. The threnody ended. The flying fish were gone; and the unmanned oars ceased to row. He stood in the center of the ship holding the fragile fish in his bloodstained hands and stared into the ugly sea.

Christopher sat at the table the next morning thinking of his dream, which was to become inseparable from him. He tried to remember and analyze every aspect of it. He did not eat, nor did he speak to his wife who was busily cleaning the kitchen in order that Esther might not see a dirty untidy room.

He went to work — his mind occupied with the strange dream.

During the following two weeks, Jeanne's condition worsened, and she was kept in the hospital. The doctors said she was dying; but that there was nothing physically wrong with her and they could give her no treatment. It was as if she wanted to die. Her once-charming alive face and body had retrogressed into that of a fragile and pathetic creature.

Late one evening, as Christopher sat alone in his home (Franny and Charles had gone to her sister's for the day), he received a phone call. Without saying a word, he dropped the

phone and shortly stood before his dying daughter's bedside.

Jeanne's pale desolate defeated face sank in the pillow. It was barely

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recognizable to him. Small pearl-like tears formed in the corners of her eyes and slowly trickled down her cheeks.

'Oh, my God! what have I done to the only thing I love?' lamented Christopher. He could no longer prevent the tears from falling and mingling with hers.

She said nothing, but he understood. She breathed heavily and sporadically. Gasp ing for her last breath of air, she extended her slender gentle hand, placed it into his . . . then closed her eyes. . . .

He left the hospital and began to walk through the dark and lonely night. Large raindrops beat and were whipped across his apathetic face. Without knowing why or how, he found himself standing at the edge of the black scowling river. My wretched miserable life has finally come to an end, he thought as he stared into the whirling deep.

It commenced to thunder. Clouds angrily and quickly raced across the sky. And no one heard the insignificant splash.

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PITHECANTHROPUS ERECTUS

Nine out of ten bodies of murdered people, hidden by their murderers, are found by the police. However, I do not think that they will ever find Heinrich.

I am a fisherman. Of luck, I know little. If the fish don't run for anybody else, they don't run for me.

Probably, without complaining, I am somewhat unlucky. I am thinking specifically of last spring, when the old man was still with me. We had a month of bad fishing, the old man cracked up the boat, the Mexico business fell through, and I killed someone.

Shortly after he ran the boat into the El Segundo oil wharf, and while we were waiting for the boat to be repaired, the old man decided that he would take his share of the insurance money and go back to Denmark for the declining years of his declining years. I learned a great deal from the old man — about the sea and about fish and about how to act in a tight spot. Well, I had some money saved and while I was sorry to see him go it was possible that life would be less complex without him.

Actually it was our last trip down to Mexico which marked the beginning of the troubles; it came right after the three weeks of lousy fishing and the old man cracking up the boat. One of the troubles I had with him was that it was always necessary to remind him that I was the skipper of the Sea Queen. He had a master's ticket, any ship any sea, which made it hard for him, I guess.

Since we were supposed to be strictly day-fishing I never kept any books on board, so the trip that I am speaking of, on the day before we left, the old man said casually: 'I'll bring my books tomorrow.'

Then we get out and I look at the books and they're in Danish. Smart old man. I damn near threw him overboard. Just to teach him a lesson I dis calibrated the sextant a shade. But for as much trouble as he gave me, I really used to worry about him. One day I stopped over at his house and when I knocked at the door there was no answer. The door was open so I went in, and he was lying on the couch on his back and he seemed to be gasping for air — his head was back and he was opening and closing his mouth with a drawn face. I rushed to him and said: 'Are you all right? Is it your heart? Do you need pills?'

He sat up. 'No, no, dese are just de exercises I do so I don't have double chin.'

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Or take the day before he was to fly to Denmark. He called me at about six in the morning and asked if I would take him to the LaBrea Tar Pits. This was while the boat the still being repaired and I had a lot of time on my hands. Of course I was tempted to ask him why, on his last day before flying to Denmark, he wanted to go to the LaBrea Tar Pits, but I knew he'd give me some screwy answer. I just said sure, I'd be glad to take him. It was, I felt, the least I could do.

Anyway, even with the discalibrated sextant, he got us to Puerto Vallarta fairly directly I think. I left him tinkering with the engine and went ashore and loafed for the rest of the afternoon.

At about six the old man came ashore and we went to the Playa del Oro and had a shower and a long dinner with many courses and smoked our cigars on the terrace. At ten I went to the bar to meet Lola. She had been drinking heavily which was unusual for her, so on the way up to her room I gave the old man the high sign. Just in case.

The alarm was set for five but I woke up a few minutes before and took a shower. When I came out of the bathroom Lola was up and sitting in a chair. 'Let's have 'em,' I said.

'Nope.'

'Please.'

'Nope.'

'Quit wasting time.'

'I don't have them.'

'Okay,' I said, 'who does?'

She didn't say anything, she just sat there.

'Look,' I said, 'I don't want to get nasty, brutal, harsh — I don't even want to get angry — I just want to know.'

'You'd like that, wouldn't you?' she said.

'It's not a matter of my liking it or not liking it. It's simply a matter of your telling me.'

'And I told you that I am not going to tell you.'

I walked to the window and opened the curtain. It was already light outside. 'It's light outside,' I said.

'I can see that.'

'God damn you, why don't you just tell me?'

'Don't swear. I am not going to tell you.'

I walked back to the chair and put my hands on her shoulders.

'Let go of my shoulders,' she said.

'Tell me.'

'I won't tell you and grasping my shoulders isn't going to change matters any.'

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I let go of her shoulders. 'All right,' I said, 'I've let go of your shoulders. Tell me.'

'I told you, grasping my shoulders or not grasping my shoulders, I shan't tell you.'

I hit her. She started to cry — softly, rocking back and forth in the chair.

'Stop crying,' I said.

She continued to cry. I walked to the window again and looked out at the sea. 'I didn't hit you that hard,' I said. But she went on crying. 'I can't go through with this,' I said, 'but

you must tell me. I have to know. If you won't tell me you will have Heinrich to deal with. You are acquainted with his methods, I believe.'

She didn't answer. She just cried and rocked back and forth in her chair. I went to the door and opened it. Heinrich was sitting in a chair outside the door. I motioned with my head for him to come in and then left the room, closing the door behind me.

As I walked down the hall I heard the beginning of a scream which was cut off abruptly. The scream made me stop for a moment and put my hand on my knife.

But I went back to the boat and half an hour later Heinrich came by with the stones. 'Let's go,' I said to the old man and we pulled the hook and steamed out.

The day that I took the old man to the LaBrea Tar Pits, heavy skies threatened rain and the weather bureau had posed a ninety-five percent probability for heavy showers. It seemed an appropriate setting, primeval and only imminently antediluvian so that with a little imagination you could spot a mylodont ground sloth or an emperor mammoth waddling fatefully towards his doom, a tomb of bubbling tar.

The old man and I were standing reading a sign:

PIT NUMBER TEN

EXCAVATIONS CONDUCTED IN PIT TEN BY THE LOS ANGELES MUSEUM FROM JAN 29, 1914 TO MAY 26, 1914 BROUGHT TO LIGHT THE ONLY HUMAN REMAINS DISCOVERED AT RANCHO LA BREA. THIS HUMAN MATERIAL, WHICH CONSISTED OF PORTIONS OF A SKELETON, INCLUDING A SKULL, OCCURRED AT A DEPTH OF FROM 6 FEET TO APPROXIMATELY 9 FEET. ABOVE THESE HUMAN REMAINS WERE FOUND BONES OF THE LARGE EXTINCT CONDOR-LIKE VULTURE, TERATORNIS. GROUND SLOTH REMAINS WERE VERY ABUNDANT, ALTHOUGH OVER 100

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SKULLS OF OTHER MAMMALS, SUCH AS HORSE, DIRE WOLF, MOUNTAIN LION, GREAT LION-LIKE CAT AND SABRE TOOTH CAT WERE ALSO EXCAVATED. CONSIDERABLE ANTIQUITY IS ASCRIBED TO THE HUMAN REMAINS, AND IT IS BELIEVED THAT THIS SKELETON REPRESENTS A RARE PITHECANTHROPUS ERECTUS.

Which led to thoughts of Heinrich. I don't know whether his looks would be more properly classified as Pleistocene or Neolithic and I suppose it is academic, the point being that he definitely did not look of the current era of human development. So I was surprised, in the midst of these thoughts, when I realized that standing at my right, gazing so intently at the escaping gases, was Heinrich's wife, or ex-wife, Elizabeth.

A girl of extreme beauty, Elizabeth. One, moreover, whom I had more or less coveted for some time (the qualification having to do with Heinrich rather than her). Oh Elizabeth, Elizabeth of the fair complexion, the delicate features, the lithe and graceful body. Why she married Heinrich was as great a mystery to me as to everyone else who knew them. Beauty and the beast was the immediate jest, but certainly it was something more than that — for a while, at least. Heinrich never said anything about it. When I asked

Elizabeth she had said: 'Once he beat me up. And he whistles to Grieg.'

Elizabeth said that she had just taken her grandmother to tea at Seibu. I introduced Elizabeth to the old man. She told us that she understood Heinrich was either in Singapore or on his way back, and then she invited us to dinner at her house at Malibu Colony. After I delivered a subtle but painful kick to the old man's shin he declined — and I accepted. Then the rains came and we ran for our cars.

Well, it must have been that I was getting sloppy. Two months ashore had begun to have its effect. Neatness is an acquisition, I feel, probably considered a virtue on land but directly correlated with survival at sea. It doesn't make any difference if you keep your house like a pigsty as long as it doesn't bother you, you are comfortable, you have enough room and you know where everything is. But a ship demands a constant vigil of neatness which can never for a moment be relaxed so that not only does the ship appear neat — everything is stowed in its place at all times and anything taken is immediately returned — but the mind of anyone aboard must perforce work in a neat and uncluttered way. You must walk with precision in a heavy sea and so you walk carefully in a light sea. You know that in foul weather anything not tied down can be a menace so you always either tie things down or are prepared to tie them down if necessary.

DONALD MISHELL

Being neat along with getting up early are both difficult for me. But at least on a boat I know that neatness has a function, so my energies are directed toward my survival. Ashore or at sea it takes a lot of time to be neat, but the energy pays off at sea. Getting up early is difficult too and I'd been having to force myself out of bed even at ten in the morning. Yet when we were running the boat I was up every morning at five no matter when I had gotten in the night before. Actually the old man would swing by, but at the first sound of the doorbell I was up and jumping into my clothes. It wasn't difficult because I didn't have to think twice — there was no alternative. And it was the same with neatness. I was neat at sea and neat ashore because it is much easier to do things one way.

But just as when you are neat with your personal possessions so too do you become orderly in your thinking, it also happens that when you lapse into sloppiness your thinking loses its order.

I had dinner with Elizabeth and then we went to a movie which was a very depressing French effort. Although it was raining lightly when we went in, when we came out there was a downpour. I told Elizabeth to wait under the marquee while I got the car. She insisted on coming. Despite my protests. Then we got to the corner and the gutter was flooded — a seven- or eight-foot stream was running down the street. Once again I asked her to wait while I got the car. She would have nothing of it. We jumped to the middle of the street only to find that to get to the curb on the other side meant another jump because there was another stream there. This time she slipped. 'Oh,' she said, as soon as I helped her to her feet, 'I've ruined my stockings.'

'What the hell did you expect?' I asked.

On the way back to Malibu we stopped at a roadhouse to have some beers but it was jammed with college students —

which for some reason added to the depression.

Therefore I was surprised when I took her home that she suggested that I spend the night. She made some coffee which we drank hurriedly and then went to bed.

I just put my arms around her, in fact, when the phone rang. It was right next to the bed and she picked it up on the third ring. 'Yes,' she said. 'In bed . . . no, I went to a movie . . . alone . . . sure I did . . . in bed, I told you . . . of course, three of them . . . speak English . . . I said three, and a line clear down the block . . . damnit no . . . okay, I'm lying. . . .' She slapped my hand with which I was fondling her breast. 'Yes . . . no . . . oh shit . . . good-by.'

I lay on my back with my hands behind my head. My car was in the driveway and the keys were in the car. It was obvious that at least I

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should put it around the corner. At least that. I was very comfortable and

it was raining. We lay on our backs staring at the ceiling. 'Uh . . . what

do you think?' I asked.

'I don't know.'

'Singapore?'

'Beverly Hills.'

'Think he'll come?'

'I guess not.'

'Odds?'

'He won't.'

We made love. After we made love it occurred to me that now, at least,

GK'66

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really, I should move the car. Just move the car. I was very comfortable and it was raining. We were going to make love again when a disturbing thing happened.

There was a knock at the door. 'Elizabeth, let me in,' said Heinrich. He knocked again. 'Elizabeth, come on, open the door and let me in.'

Very quietly and very quickly I got out of bed and dressed. 'I know he's in there with you and I just want to talk to you so please let me in.'

'I'm not going to let you in,' said Elizabeth, who had also gotten out of bed and put on a robe.

'Elizabeth, please, let me in.'

'No.'

'All I want is to talk to you.'

'I can hear you, talk to me from there.'

'I can't talk to you through the door.'

'Sure you can, I hear you.'

'Please, Elizabeth, let me in. I won't do anything. I just want to speak to you.'

'No.'

'Why don't you let me in? Please, let me come in.'

'You can't come in.'

'I only want to talk to you. He is in there, I know, so there are two of you and only one of me. What could happen? Just open the door and let me come in.'

'No.'

'Bitte, lassen sie mich herein. Ich mochte mit Ihnen sprechen . . . oh excuse me, I just slip into German because I . . . Please, let me in.'

'I can hear you from there so why don't you just say what you want to say and then go.'

'I can't talk to you out here. Just let me in for a few minutes so I can talk to you and then I will go.'

I thought it was a damn sticky situation. I didn't suppose that Elizabeth would change her mind and open the door, but in the event that she did I certainly didn't want to be there. It would be relatively easy to leave since there was a back door and it was highly unlikely that Heinrich would have brought someone to watch there. However, that would mean leaving Elizabeth in a dangerous position and it would leave me open to an attack by Heinrich at some unspecified future date. It didn't seem like the right thing to do, to leave Elizabeth so suddenly and in such great peril.

It didn't seem like a good idea to open the door to Heinrich and say: 'See here, old man, I'm sure if we just all sit down together we can come up with something.' It didn't seem like a good idea to leave and then play

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hunter and hunted with Heinrich until he cooled off, because for all I knew he was capable of carrying a grudge for years.

I lit a cigaret for myself and one for Elizabeth.

The dialogue continued.

'Please, Elizabeth, let me in. I want to talk to you.'

'You're talking to me now.'

'I can't talk to you when I am out here and you are in there. I want to come in to talk to you.'

'You can't come in.'

'Let me come in to talk to you.'

'Talk to me from there.'

'But it isn't the same. I want to see you when I talk to you.'

'No.'

'Only open the door. I won't do anything. I promise I won't do anything. What can I do? Please, let me come in.'

The whole thing was getting on my nerves. So far Heinrich had not directed any remarks to me. What if he did? Then what would I do? One thing I thought of was to slip out the back way, climb to the roof, walk quietly to the front of the

house, leap off the roof onto Heinrich's back putting one hand over his mouth and with the other hand stab him to death in the heart with a knife, hide his body until the boat was ready and then take him out to sea, tie some lead to his feet, and dispose of the body there.

'Please, Elizabeth, let me in.'

'No.'

'I want to talk to you.'

'So talk to me.'

'Open the door and let me in so I can talk to you.'

'You are talking to me.'

'But I want to see you when I talk to you. I can't talk to you when I can't see you. Please, Elizabeth.'

I slipped out the back way, climbed to the roof, walked quietly to the front of the house, leaped off the roof onto Heinrich's back putting one hand over his mouth and with the other hand stabbed him to death in the heart with a knife, hid his body until the boat was ready and then took him out to sea, tied some lead to his feet, and disposed of the body there.

NEW YORK & THE WORLD CINEMA

by A. Fredric Franklyn

'Whether the script is assembled or written, it is the director's job to translate it into a film. This is a key operation, for it is concerned with fusing techniques from the silent films with the latest technological developments and combining the unique characteristics of the movie medium with elements from theatre and literature. These are not easy problems.' — Hortense Powdermaker's

HOLLYWOOD THE DREAM FACTORY¹

PERHAPS THE ONE MOST SIGNIFICANT distinction between European motion pictures and the Hollywood product is a fundamental difference in their premise: The medium evolving from the film capitals of Europe is largely a cinema of ideas. An inspiring percentage of the films in the last two decades from England, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, etc., were created with a definite artistic intent in an atmosphere that encouraged such an approach.

In this climate, so congenial to the reaches of the human mind and spirit, it is not arcane, or even unfamiliar, to view the drama of conflict as an experience which takes place at least as often and as seriously within the man as it ever does from outside him. And to achieve the stature of a protagonist, and the audience's identification, it is not necessary for the hero to be forever doing something, or having something done to him.

In far and away the greater number of Hollywood movies, the root-assumption about life and audiences is that events happen to human beings from the outside. And the film-goer comprehends only the conflict which has its focus in externals. The notion that drama can be achieved without

any of the stock trappings (those of adventure, or opulent romance, or situational comedy, or farce, or mystery, or horror) has not yet disturbed the two-dimensional façade erected in the commodities remade continually by the larger American film studios. The audience must be constantly mollified (i.e. pandered to) with the blatant gimmicks they have learned to accept in lieu of the more substantial forms of drama. These imposteurs sometimes entertain, on an amoebic level, but they never require or attract a second viewing. They want only an uncritical acceptance.

¹ LITTLE BROWN ed.—*Universal Library* (GROSSET & DUNLAP).

Such an elemental approach to the medium, however, does nothing to help eliminate the barriers between an emotionally spoon-fed and intellectually-underdeveloped audience and the substance of real ideas. In her essay, *ZEITGEIST AND POLTERGEIST*,² Pauline Kael discusses the phenomenon of the apparent increasing indifference of American audiences to the actual content of their films, beyond the surface action and gimmicks which titillate them:

... audiences have seemed indifferent to incomprehensible sections in big expensive pictures. For example, how is it that the immense audience for *THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI*, after all those hours of watching a story unfold, didn't express discomfort or outrage or even plain curiosity about what exactly happened at the end—which through bad direction or perhaps sloppy editing went by too fast to be sorted out or understood? Was it possible that audiences no longer cared if a film was so untidily put together that information crucial to the plot or characterizations was obscure or omitted altogether? *WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?* was such a mess that *TIME*, after calling it 'the year's scariest, funniest and most sophisticated thriller,' got the plot garbled.

In recent years, largely because of the uncertainty of producers about what will draw, films in production may

shift from one script to another, or may be finally cut so that key sequences are omitted. And the oddity is that it doesn't seem to matter to the audience. I couldn't tell what was going on in parts of *55 DAYS AT PEKING*. I was flabbergasted when Cleopatra, with no hint or preparation, suddenly demonstrated clairvoyant powers, only to dispense with them as quickly as she had acquired them. The audience for *THE CARDINAL* can have little way of knowing whose baby the priest's sister is having, or of understanding how she can be in labor for days, screaming in a rooming house, without anybody hearing her. They might also be puzzled about how the priest's argument against her marriage, which they have been told is the only Catholic position, can, after it leads to her downfall and death, be casually dismissed as an error.

Earlier in her article, she cites an even more pointed instance of this remarkable divorce on the audience's part from any concern with the fundamentals of a storyline, as long as it pays off in its superficials.

² *I LOST IT AT THE MOVIES* (BANTOM ed., LITTLE BROWN & Co. & The Atlantic Monthly Press). She refers to a showing she attended of a dubbed version of the French director, George Franju's famous *EYES WITHOUT A FACE* (deliberately misnamed here as *THE HORROR CHAMBER OF DR. FAUSTUS*):

...the audience seemed to be reacting to a different movie. They were so noisy the dialogue was inaudible; they talked until the screen gave promise of bloody ghastliness. Then the chatter subsided to rise again in noisy approval of the gory scenes. When a girl in the film seemed about to be mutilated, a young man behind me jumped up and down and shouted encouragement. 'Somebody's going to get it,' he sang out gleefully. The audience, which was, I'd judge, predominantly between fifteen and twenty-five, and at least a third feminine, was as pleased and excited by the most revolting, obsessive images as that older, mostly male audience is when the nudes appear in *THE IMMORAL MR. TEAS* or *NOT TONIGHT*,

HENRY. They'd gotten what they came for: they hadn't been cheated. But nobody seemed to care what the movie was about or be interested in the logic of the plot—the reasons for the gore.

Miss Kael's observations are even more appropriate to films like those in the genre of the James Bond series. Here everything rests upon how far the novelty of gimmicks, and the incidental thrills of violence, will carry the picture. The audience for motion pictures of this calibre could care less about their continuity, or the spurious rationales in each of them for all their pointless concern with mayhem and prurience.

In their massive and definitive work on the history of THE JAPANESE FILM,³ Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie discuss a particular type of period drama the Japanese call *chambara*, the essence of which is these same extremes of non-sequitur sadism and bloodshed:

Pointless killing is one of the main features of the Japanese film, whether *chambara*, or modern gangster movie. Innumerable people are killed to no apparent point. In fact, looking at the general run of Japanese pictures, the feeling of the cheapness of human life is unescapable. Apart from excessive killing, Japanese films also tend to accentuate the attendant gore. Gushing blood, open wounds, and the like abound in the average Japanese adventure film, period or modern. There are also all kinds of torture and various varieties of suicide. Often the violence goes beyond the bounds of plot necessity. For example, a man falls dead toward the camera. He has been fatally shot or stabbed. This, however, is not enough. Right in the foreground, next to the camera, is a fire into which his head drops. As we watch the fire burn away his face, horses trample upon his body—all in full detail. In Nikkatsu's 1955 *BEYOND THE GREEN* (*MIDORI HARUKA NI*), made especially for primary school children, there was a scene in which a gang of children,

having finally

³ GROVE Press. captured the villain, pin him to the ground while the heaviest of their number climbs onto a seven-foot ledge and jumps off onto the man's chest, to the accompaniment of the sound of crunching bones.

Anderson and Richie do not exaggerate. On the other hand, Japan's motion-picture industry probably regularly employs more directors of artistic substance than any single other nation. An astonishing number of their names have become familiar to Westerners: Heinosuke Gosho, Kon Ichikawa, Tadashi Imai, Shohei Imamura, Hiroshi Inagaki, Keisuke Kinoshita, Masaki Kobayashi, Akira Kurosawa, the late Kenji Mizoguchi, Mikio Naruse, the late Yasujiro Ozu, Kaneto Shindo, Hiroshi Teshigahara, Shiro Toyodo, Kimisaburo Yoshimura — and as many more among the new wave, all of them working at least into the fifties, and almost all of them currently directing in the major studios in Japan.

There is probably an equal number of contemporary 'name' directors in Hollywood. But, when their work is examined, instead of their reputations, the prestige attached to most of their names becomes incomprehensible. In his NOTES ON HOLLYWOOD DIRECTORS, Dwight MacDonald stated the case ruthlessly and accurately:

... the Hollywood director has nothing to say. For the artist to create, however lamely, he must believe in something — realism, romanticism, Communism, his own importance, it doesn't matter what. He must have standards of some sort, and feel a certain pride in maintaining them. He may let himself be bent by outside pressure to a greater or lesser extent, depending on his temperament, but his sense of integrity must draw the line somewhere. None of these things is true of even the most talented Hollywood director. They are not artists. They are craftsmen, specialists, technicians who turn out, perhaps with stifled boredom or indignation, whatever the industry requires of

them. Sometimes a talented director gets a good scenario to work with, and the result is a film that is at least superficially interesting. More often, able directors waste themselves on hopeless scenarios. Whether the material is congenial or not, the Hollywood director accepts it without protest and dutifully sets to work on it.

Chairs can be made this way but not works of art. There is something lacking in American movies, even the best of them, and that is a sense of personal conviction.

The glib references continually made to Hollywood as the American cinema capitol have always provoked certain reservations in me. And with the quality — and number — of films from New York since World War II, my own objections to the focus on the Hollywood product gain increasing emphasis for me. In short, where is it happening today, in the U.S.? It's a question worth asking. . . .

4 INTRODUCTION TO THE ART OF THE MOVIES, *by Lewis Jacobs (The Noonday Press, FARRAR, STRAUS & CUDAHY).*

The difficulty in discussing the feature films which have come from New York is not, as the viewer who is better acquainted with the Hollywood package might suppose, that there are so few of them. On the contrary, an astonishing number of motion pictures of artistic merit, or at least controversial substance, have come from the East. And this, in a country whose film industry—at least its largest portion, which is on the West Coast—is outspokenly organized on the principles of flamboyantly-antiartistic motives.

I had a notion, when I undertook this article, that it was to deal with, at most, four or five New York films. In fact, I'll be referring to more than five times as many! I only wish there were space to treat adequately with all of them.

Elsewhere I have mentioned that there is an internal evolution in the world cinema today which is fully the equal of its more evident external progress (i.e. wide-angle vision, stereophonic sound, color, three-dimensional processing,

etc.). And I added that the only major cinema capitol in the world which, by its own intent, is not a participant in this inner dimension is Hollywood.

I had occasion recently to interview Colin Young, the Chairman of the U.C.L.A. Theatre Arts Department, for an article I was planning on its Motion Picture Division. He spoke about production costs in the United States as against those in Europe: 'Considering the problem here in America of recovering the negative cost, you have to have a certain type of picture with specific (i.e. commercial) ingredients. If you have these elements, you have no trouble raising a million or two.'

He was, of course, referring to the majority of American films. And they are made in Hollywood. He continued: 'In Europe, exactly the same restrictions [handicaps] apply. Jean-Luc Godard, for instance, has to get his negative cost back in Belgium, France, and Italy. Of course that's three or four-hundred thousand dollars for the negative cost in Europe, as against perhaps a million or more in the U.S. for a comparable production.'

Concerning the distinction between the approaches of the commercially-oriented film maker and the artist or experimenter (or student), he remarked: 'The student or the artist begins with a picture. Then he worries about conforming to the demands of a market. He doesn't start with a business commitment and then try to fulfill it with a made-to-order film.'

The Hollywood milieu, and its exclusively-mercantile approach to the cinema, is as far removed as it's possible to get from the atmosphere of the nouvelle vague or cinema vérité French directors, or the

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PERMANENCE & IMPERMANENCE: KEATSIAN MUTABILITY

by W. Arthur Boggs

IN THE FEW SHORT MONTHS between January and September, 1819, Keats wrote the seven poems which critics have generally united in considering his greatest works: *The Eve of St. Agnes*, written in January and revised in September; *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, written in April; *Ode On a Grecian Urn*, *Ode on Melancholy*, and *Ode To a Nightingale*, written in May; *Lamia*, written during the summer, finished by early September, and revised in March, 1820; and *To Autumn*, written in September. Thus the acme of Keats' poetic accomplishment—with the possible exception of the famous Chapman sonnet and the *Hyperion* fragments—consists of four odes, two short tales, and one literary ballad: almost 1,300 lines, of which *Lamia* constitutes more than half. Through all of these poems runs a recurrent strain of permanence and impermanence—often, permanence vs. impermanence—which is closely allied to Keats' often-expressed desire for a life devoted to sensation.

The evidence for his yearning for a life of sensation may be found both in his poetry and in his letters. *I Stood Tip-Toe* eulogizes the senses. *Sleep and Poetry* predicts his development of sensual themes which he summed up thus in lines 96-97: 'O for ten years, that I may overwhelm / Myself in poesy.' In the famous letter of Nov. 22, 1817 to Benjamin Bailey, he wrote: 'O for a life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! It is a "Vision in the form of Youth," a Shadow of reality to come—.' The next spring, in a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds (May 3, 1818), he wrote: ' . . . for axioms in philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses; . . . ' Almost a year later in the letter of Mar.

19, 1819 to George and Georgiana Keats, he praised sensation: 'Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced—Even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your life has illustrated it.' In the fall of the same year in the letter written to George and Georgiana Keats, from the 17th to the 27th of September, 1819—almost at the end of his active career as a poet, although he did not yet know it — he was still dedicated to sensation: 'I have been reading over a part of a short poem I have composed lately call'd *Lamia* — and I am certain there is that sort of fire in it which must take hold of people in some way — give them either pleasant or unpleasant sensation. What they want is a sensation of some sort.'

I Permanence-impermanence can be shown to be part of much of Keats' other work as well: Sleep and Poetry, Endymion, Ode to Indolence, and both of the Hyperion fragments, etc. However, it is my intent to explore this strain only in Keats' best work, excluding these three poems—and only in poems in which his execution can be fully known, which excludes the fragments.

From first to last, Keats dedicated himself to making his poetry sensual to a degree which few other poets in our language can match. His own greatest comment upon this sensitivity to sensual experience and its conveyance is found in his theory of Negative Capability ('... which Shakespeare possessed so enormously') expressed in the letter of Dec. 21, 1817 to George and Thomas Keats: 'I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.' He went on to say: '... with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.' Or, as he wrote Oct. 27, 1818 to Richard Woodhouse: 'A poet ... is continually informing and filling some other Body ...' If these two statements are taken in conjunction, one can arrive at the conclusion that Negative Capability, for Keats, involved

objectifying the sensations of man through imagery which makes man feel in a manner such that the poet himself is felt not to be present. This is very probably what he meant when, in one of his last letters (Aug. 16, 1820 to Shelley), he wrote: 'I am sure you will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore.'

A complete treatment of all of Keats' methods of objectifying his sensations in poetry would occupy volumes. However, it is possible, within a comparatively-short study, to show that his awareness of one aspect of sensation helped to shape the configurations of his major poems, often lending them additional dramatic tension. Certainly, anyone who lives for sensation — or is even very much aware of it — is also aware of the impermanence of human existence, particularly when this existence is compared with objects and even living beings which seem to exist in a state of continuous obliviousness to death or destruction. But Keats was too much of a thinker and a sensualist (in the very best sense of the word) to mistake these seemingly-permanent objects or beings for the truly permanent.

In his poetry, Keats apparently distinguished three major categories of permanence-impermanence: the eternal, or that which lasts forever, which may be subdivided into two categories — death as a permanent state of nonexistence and the ideal or completely abstract, that which lasts forever, being completely idea; the continuous or seemingly-permanent — that which exists in nature and reality and lasts for a very long time (or, if contained within the realm of ideas, one which has or has had long existence — of which the nightingale's song, the urn, and the concept of the ancient gods are examples); and the impermanent — that which is immediately seen as mutable. Category one can never mix with two, although at times, as with the song of the nightingale or the existence of the urn, two can come

close to one, and certainly can be a symbol of it. Categories two and three may, upon occasion, interchange.

Category one in Keats' poetry is both not rare and very rare. As everyone who has read him knows, the death image (and some critics maintain, the 'death wish') is extremely frequent. On the other hand, the ideal or completely-abstract is extremely rare; for, to express this absolute in absolute terms, he had to do so abstractly, and two famous quotations do show him expressing the abstract idea, as in the first line of *Endymion* and in lines 49-50 of *Ode On a Grecian Urn*: 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever;' and, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," — that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.' Generally, however, when he wished to suggest the completely permanent, he used some form of death image — else, his permanence symbols are usually sensual images suggesting continuity.

Thus, throughout this essay, the phrases completely permanent, complete permanence, etc. will be used for what has been described as the second subdivision of category one above, and the words permanent and permanence and the phrases continuously permanent, seemingly permanent, etc. reserved for Keatsian images or symbols which suggest long existence or even timelessness (other than that of death) — but certainly not the eternal, immutable, or the Platonic Ideal.

At this juncture, to point out that Keatsian mutability differs considerably from the Shelleyan variety. Shelley saw the world and universe much more Platonically than Keats did. For Shelley, the real world was a continuous conflux of changes ever representing outwardly the inward fixed ideal: Intellectual Beauty. For him, mutability was good, beneficial, and generally benevolent, just as the Ideal existing behind it. Thus he seems usually to have recognized but two really-fixed points: the changeless, and the continuously changing. Possibly Shelley came closest to the Keatsian view

of mutability in *PROMETHEUS UNBOUND*, in which the bound Prometheus could represent a type of Keatsian continuous permanence. But, since this change is to come to an end with the unbinding, this comparison is more apparent than real. Keats was never Utopian enough to envision perfection on earth.

As outlined above, Keats seems to have recognized the same three categories. Moreover, he seems also to have recognized various degrees of the seemingly permanent and of the impermanent. The song of the nightingale may be even more permanent than the Grecian urn, although the urn poem is his strongest treatment of this idea. Porphyro's ecstasy in stanza xxxvi of *The Eve of St. Agnes* is certainly of shorter duration than that of the devotee to melancholy in the ode on that subject; and the ecstasy of the devotee to melancholy is much shorter than the days and nights that Lycius and Lamia love, although apparently one of the subthemes of *Lamia* is the dramatic tension between permanence and impermanence, with one of the symbols of impermanence this very love.

As he worked upon his seven classic poems between January and September of 1819, Keats must have been well aware of his own feelings toward permanence and impermanence, judging by the results. In each of the poems he made considerable use of permanence-impermanence; and, in at least three (*Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode on Melancholy*, and *Ode To a Nightingale*), the use is thematic. A case can be made for thematic use in three more (*La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, *Lamia*, and *To Autumn*). Only *The Eve of St. Agnes* stands clearly to one side from thematic permanence-impermanence, although it does contain a rather large number of images and situations which do involve Keats' own peculiar brand of mutability. However, the best method of studying his use of the idea is to begin with *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*; to continue with the first three

designated; then to consider the other three, concluding with To Autumn. This order has three advantages: it is almost chronological; it has a logical progression; and it tends, generally, to keep like poems together.

In La Belle Dame Sans Merci, the permanence-impermanence strain is handled with dramatic intensity in a delicately-ambivalent manner. Whatever the theme or main meaning of the poem — courtly love, the poet's reaction to poetry, love, or even death (among those which have been suggested) — Keats has set up a situation of dramatic intensity emphasized by the impermanence of the landscape and some of the other description, and the seeming-permanence of the fairy lady and the ambivalent permanent-impermanent final condition of the night.

The poem contains a number of impermanence symbols — some sad, some glad — in: the withered sedge; the absence of birds; the end of harvest ('Squirrel's granary is full,' line 7); the lily on the brow of the knight and the roses which fade in his cheeks; the garlands and bracelets the knight made for the lady (no doubt of flowers); the food she fed him, even if of a supernatural type; her weeping and sighing and his kissing; and perhaps the cold hillside. Balanced against these, of course, are the permanence images: the lady herself, being a fairy, is supernatural and therefore in a sense 'out of time;' she takes the knight to an 'elfin grot' and thus out of the realm of the natural and into the realm of the timeless supernatural; and finally she causes the knight to dream.

Note that Keats used the dream several times as a permanence symbol, as getting closer to the timeless ideal world. Madeline calls her dream in The Eve of St. Agnes 'immortal' (line 313); and of the love of Hermes and the nymph in Lamia (lines 126-127, 1), Keats wrote: 'It was no dream; or say a dream it was, / Real are the dreams of Gods, . . .' The knight's dream is of other knights ('. . . pale Kings,

and Princes too, / Pale warriors, death pale were they all;’ lines 37-38) who, from their paleness and ‘starv’d lips in the gloam / With horrid warning gaped wide — ’ (lines 41-42), seem to be either dead or permanent captives in the timelessness of fairyland. In either event, their condition is at least one of continuous permanence.

The knight himself has been returned to the land of the living (or the speaker of the first three stanzas would not have been able to address him); but, since he has tasted the fruits and the love of the fairy, life has lost meaning for him except as a search for what he had lost — a fruitless search, Keats would seem to suggest. At any rate, the knight has gone from impermanence (his world before he met the fairy) into a type of permanence (the elfin grot), has dreamed of another type of permanence (the pale knights), and has returned to impermanence (the cold hillside) where he apparently longs for the permanence of the fairy and fears the permanence of the pale knights. In this poem, Keats has used permanence-impermanence, change contrasted with stability, to evoke the dramatic situation between the fairy and the knight and to bring the final condition of the knight into sharp focus.

In *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, neither permanence nor impermanence takes major emphasis; rather, the balance of the two gives the poem dramatic intensity. In the *Ode on Melancholy*, Keats again used the contrast between permanence and impermanence — this time for dramatic lyric intensity — but emphasized, as the poems seem to, the impermanent. Of the seven considered here, this ode comes closest to being his mutability poem; however, even in this one, permanence has its place.

The poem begins with a series of impermanent symbols of permanence (a paradox, perhaps); but all of the opening symbols of death or poison are, with the exception of *Lethe*, highly mutable (subject to death, change, or destruction):

‘Wolf’s-bane,’ ‘nightshade,’ ‘yew-berries,’ and the ‘death-moth.’ Only at the beginning of this stanza with Lethe and at its end with ‘shade to shade’ (the soul after death), did Keats introduce the completely permanent — which, of course, is very important at the close of the piece. The next two stanzas, up to the last two lines of the last stanza, are filled with intense images of the most constant and shifting change: ‘weeping clouds;’ flowers, green hills, fog; ‘a morning rose;’ the rainbow to be seen in the sand just as the wave recedes from the shore; the anger of a beloved. These images, all in the middle stanzas, are more concrete.

At the beginning of the third stanza, Keats turned to more abstract images of perhaps even more immediate and shifting change: ‘Beauty that must die;’ ‘Joy, . . . Bidding adieu;’ and ‘aching Pleasure.’ After these images of mutability, he rose toward the final step of ecstasy in melancholy with that famous symbol of exquisite delight in fine taste: ‘. . . whose strenuous tongue / Can burst Joy’s grape against his palate fine.’ At the climax of pleasure-pain, joy-melancholy, the grape will break for an instant’s enjoyment, and the reader knows that the most intense experiences in life can be ‘enjoyed’ (as melancholy can be enjoyed) only for the shortest intervals. At this point, paradoxically, Keats showed that the ability to enjoy such intense experience is the key to one’s entrance into an immortal and continuous enjoyment of it (lines 29-30) through death: ‘His soul shall taste the sadness of her might / And be among her cloudy trophies hung.’

Thus, from Lethe and poison, Keats has brought us full circle through the most mutable mutability to the most permanent permanence, death. But his real purpose was to emphasize the shortness of any intense emotional experience. In doing so he showed a paradoxical relationship between melancholy and joy as intense experiences, and created a dramatic lyric contrast (if not conflict) between the

very mutable impermanence of intense melancholy and the complete permanence of death which is, of course, in human emotions associated with the idea of melancholy or sadness.

If, among the 'great seven,' the Ode on Melancholy is the poem on mutability or impermanence, the Ode On a Grecian Urn is the one on immutability or permanence. However, in the latter, Keats was careful to distinguish between the completely permanent (the abstract statement about beauty and truth at the close) and the continuously-permanent (the urn). In addition, some of his continuously-permanent symbols (the scenes on the urn), if imagined as actual instead of pictures, become very mutable and changeable within an instant. Only because they are pictures are they immutable. At the beginning of the poem, note that Keats was careful to set up the fact that the urn is not a completely-permanent object, but a continuously-permanent one; it is the 'still unravish'd bride of quietness,' and the 'foster-child of silence and slow time.' The still in the first line suggests the possibility of change, as does foster-child and slow time of the second line, since a foster-child is not a child by blood kinship, and even slow time changes. Only silence (as the absence of sound) is an absolute; the urn will never speak audibly (its pictures suggest unheard melodies). With *Sylvan Historian*, Keats suggested that the urn tells a story which will last as long as itself; yet, not forever — for historians and woods are not completely permanent. Too, in the first three stanzas, culminating in the third stanza, Keats equated the ecstasy of joy of human experience with the actions of the lovers on the urn because their condition could not change, and then he did exactly the same thing at a lower pitch in the fourth stanza with religious joy or awe as he presented the picture of the sacrifice.

In the final stanza, Keats asked his readers to make the transition with him from the relative permanence of the urn to the complete permanence of the abstract ideal. Thus it is

that the physical shape of the urn 'dost tease us out of thought / As doth eternity: . . .' (lines 44-45); and with the word eternity, he suggested the complete permanence of the ideal so that, as he returned to an image of impermanence ('When old age shall this generation waste,' line 46), the idea of complete permanence (eternity) links with his famous equation of beauty and truth — also a statement of complete permanence.

The Nightingale ode, too, is thematically involved with permanence-impermanence, occupying a position intermediate to the impermanence in the Melancholy ode and the permanence in the Grecian Urn poem. It begins much like Melancholy with images of poison, Lethe, and opiate, but with a big difference, in that in Melancholy Keats called upon his audience to reject poison as a path toward melancholy, while in the Nightingale ode he called upon them to accept some drink which would retard the senses so that the imagination might freely follow the bird. What is interesting here is the manner in which he handled the dramatic tension between permanence and impermanence, keeping them delicately balanced so that one cannot say that the Ode to a Nightingale is either a permanence or an impermanence poem. He very early identified the bird as a permanence symbol when he characterized it with the word Dryad, recalling Greek myth and the immortality of wood nymphs. The bird, then, and the poison or opiate represent the theme of permanence in the early part of the poem. In the second stanza, the very impermanence of wine and summer is stressed. Then, in the third stanza, the speaker (although the I is almost undoubtedly Keats, he would not have to be the speaker) is ready to fade away with the bird. In this stanza, one gets the contrast between the impermanence of man who grows swiftly to old age and the seeming permanence of the bird — or at least of the bird's song. In the fourth stanza, the speaker returns to a favorite

Keatsian symbol of permanence, Poesy. As has been shown in the treatment of the Urn, Keats equated art with permanence, and poetry was always his favorite form of art. However, as the speaker continues in the dark wood, he smells the perfume of flowers which he names in profusion—certainly symbols of impermanence, as in line 50: 'The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.' In stanza six, the speaker brings impermanence and permanence together with his thoughts of himself (impermanence) being dead (complete permanence) and the song of the bird (continuous permanence), culminating in the magnificent last two lines of the stanza: 'Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain— / To thy high requiem become a sod.' The climax is reached, presenting several images of permanence contrasted with impermanence in stanza seven. The bird is now 'immortal' and 'not born for death.' Then follow the images of hungry generations, emperor and clown, and Ruth (all symbols of impermanence) culminating in two more magnificent lines signifying permanence: 'Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam / Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn.'

At the risk of digression, one must examine two of the symbols used in the marvelous seventh stanza in the light of modern knowledge. The bird's song Keats described as the same in ancient times as in modern is an example of what we know today as genetic inheritance; actually, the song does have a curious inherited permanence from one generation to the next, being imbedded in the gene structure within the chromosome. As long as mutation does not take place in this gene, and as long as there are nightingales, the song will remain the same. This is an instance of idea imbedded in, and transmitted by, matter. Secondly, many scholars today believe that the story of Ruth is not history, but story—that the whole book is a short story imbedded in the Bible. If this be true, then Keats used a peculiar symbol

in Ruth, because she represented, for him, impermanence; yet, if Ruth is only a character in a story, her story is the same as when it was written, and she also becomes a permanence symbol. In the manner in which Keats referred to the emperor, clown, and Ruth, one must believe that he considered them to be symbols of impermanence.

With the speaker's return to himself through the world Forlorn, the permanence of the bird's song fades away and the speaker's own impermanence reasserts itself. He does not know whether he was awake or asleep, whether what he heard was imagined, was 'vision' or 'waking dream.' Certainly, however, his awakening does bring him back to the world of mutability and impermanence.

So far, we have been dealing with poems which evoke moods (the three odes), or at best only hint at story (the literary ballad). Now we turn to two which do tell a story: *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *Lamia*. As will be shown, *Lamia* is very central to the problem of permanence-impermanence, but *The Eve of St. Agnes* (the one poem which could not possibly be considered thematically permanence-impermanence) represents a strange side-trip—for Keats did use some evident contrast between permanence and impermanence in this piece.

First, we'll consider his use of cold and the world outside the castle at the beginning of the poem and at its end. This world, including certain portions of description immediately within the castle, is part of harsh reality and is impermanent, even as winter will change to spring, and the rulers of the castle will change as one succeeds another. Yet, within this world of impermanence, Keats stopped to describe the 'sculptur'd dead' (line 14) in the chapel—certainly symbols of permanence. The world of Madeline's chamber lies within the world of imagination, of romance, of everything as it ought to be—a permanent world, if art be permanent. Still, Keats, as he developed this part of

his story, used many symbols of impermanence to emphasize the fragility of the whole concept of romance which, as a breath can make, a breath can destroy. Then, at the end of his story, he took the lovers into the harsh impermanent world of reality again. Nor did he suggest, *Lochinvar* fashion, that they got away. From the Baron's dreams of many woes, one may suspect that a great deal of trouble came from the elopement and that perhaps Porphyro and Madeline did not escape. With a fine dramatic irony maintaining the impermanence of the real world, Keats told us only (lines 370-371) that '... they are gone: aye, ages long ago / These lovers fled away into the storm.'

There are far too many symbols both of permanence and impermanence, throughout, to catalog here, there being at least one in every stanza. Generally they are used to promote the tension in the story between the real world of the outside and the ideal world on the inside. But there are, in addition, two symbols within Madeline's bedroom which must be discussed in more detail. One of these permanence-impermanence symbols really divides itself into two symbols; for it consists of the thing in itself, the stained-glass window, and the red shadow or 'warm gules' (line 218) it throws for a moment upon Madeline's 'fair breast' as she undresses for bed. Indeed, this window and its shadow are symbolic of all the action within Madeline's chamber. The story, considered *qua* story and as romance, is artistically permanent; both the story and the stained-glass window in its actuality will exist for many generations, one to be read over and over, the other to be seen again and again. Yet, the shadow which falls on Madeline's breast is extremely impermanent when one considers the story as actuality — it lasts only for an instant and symbolizes, within the reality which is the story of Madeline and Porphyro, the tenuousness of this single night, a night which may have been as unique as the wedding night of Romeo and Juliet

(Keats never told us).

The second of these symbols, Madeline's dream of Porphyro — no doubt brought upon by his singing to her — is also highly symbolic of permanence-impermanence in the treatment of the bedroom scene. The Porphyro of her dream is the ideal Porphyro because he is vision. Because he is ideal, by a sort of Platonic equation, the permanent Porphyro (Madeline describes his looks within her dream as 'immortal') has a clear sweet voice and sad eyes, spiritual and clear. As she wakes, Madeline describes the actual Porphyro (line 311) as 'pallid, chill, and drear!' In the consummation stanza which follows, Porphyro proves himself more flesh and blood and perhaps less 'pallid, chill, and drear' than Madeline had imagined. In stanza xxxvii, Porphyro assures Madeline that it was no dream, and the two steal away into the harsh world of cold reality. Although Keats used many symbols of permanence and impermanence in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, the poem cannot really be considered central to this strain in his poetry.

Lamia, however, has much to say about permanence and impermanence. The manner in which Keats opened indicates that he recognized the impermanence of continuous permanence; for he described the time of the action as being (lines 1 & 2, l): 'Upon a time before the faery broods / Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,' (in more prosaic language, during the classic period of Greek mythology before the time of the fairies of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance). Yet here, as elsewhere, his fairies and his mythological gods and nymphs, as indeed Lamia herself, represent his own concept of continuous permanence.

Looking at the story as still another example of permanence-impermanence, it is quite evident that a love such as that of Lamia and Lycius cannot be permanent; for, the very basis of the love — such intensity — cannot be maintained in any personal relationship between the sexes.

In this view, then, Lamia comes off best, as she recognizes the impermanence of their affair and wants only to maintain it as long as she can. Yet, when Lycius insists that their love be solemnized by marriage (introducing a factor of permanence into what had been a highly-satisfying if impermanent relationship), he is about to destroy his own happiness (one can almost hear the medieval court of love in session!). That Keats was criticizing any attempt to maintain satisfied love at a high emotional pitch becomes clear on study of Part I which, in reality, has two purposes: 1) to prepare us to accept Lamia as a sort of supernatural creature;² 2) to prepare us to accept the end of the poem as inevitable. Hermes seeks his nymph, and by giving Lamia the boon she craves — release from her imprisonment as a snake — he finds and enjoys her. But, interestingly, even though (lines 127-128) 'Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass / Their pleasures in a long immortal dream,' nowhere is it intimated that the affair continues beyond a single consummation. However, it is very plainly indicated that Hermes burned for the love of the nymph, that he found her, and that he consummated his love. It is equally clear that the affair is typical of many in which the gods periodically indulge. Consequently, even at the level in which a sort of continuous permanence is possible — the mythological — Keats showed that the gods do not indulge repeatedly.

But Lycius insists upon attempting to make his arrangement as permanent as he can, and the coldly-realistic and rational Apollonius shows that such permanence cannot possibly be. What is even more interesting is that Lamia, awakened to human feelings by Lycius, acquiesces even when she knows what will happen. By asking Lycius not to invite Apollonius to the wedding, she attempts to avoid her fate; but she does seem to know, by the way she goes about her preparations, that she is doomed to failure. Being supernatural, she knows that continuous

permanence is not to be found in sexual love; yet, she cannot admit of her supernatural nature (although Lycius, either in hope of flattering her or in earnest belief, several times says she is immortal) because to do so would cut the ties between immortal and mortal just as the marriage vow does. Finally, Keats clinched his point (lines 1-4, II) before he had worked his story through to conclusion — thus foreshadowing the inevitable end of any attempt such as Lycius’:

Love in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is — Love, forgive us! — cinders, ashes, dust;
Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit’s fast : —

As far as we’re concerned here, the ode To Autumn, the last of the seven great poems Keats wrote during the first nine months of 1819, contains his last words on permanence-impermanence. For a young man of twenty-four who was to die within fifteen months, To Autumn is the best possible epilogue to the strain of permanence-impermanence permeating his poetry of this year.

² The question whether Lamia is Keats’ answer to Coleridge’s Christabel will never be answered, but both poems do contain snake women.

On first consideration, one might think that To Autumn is another poem about mutability, much like the Ode on Melancholy, only not nearly so intense. To be sure, the fruitful season of what we in northern North America would describe as Indian Summer, is full of mutability or impermanent images beginning with the ‘Season of mists’ (line 1) and continuing through the description of the ample harvest of stanza one, the harvest activities of stanza two, and the evening-sunset scene of stanza three. However, even from the beginning, Keats introduced some permanence images. This season is also a ‘bosom-friend’ (line 2) of the maturing sun; certainly the sun is a permanence symbol, and certainly the season will return year after year. This,

Keats made increasingly clear in portraying the harvest activities in the second stanza through a personification of Autumn. Then, he surely suggested the *ubi sunt* (continuity or permanence) theme at the beginning of stanza three when he asked: 'Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they? / Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—.' He went on to describe the music (the bleating lambs, the swarms of gnats, the robins' whistle, and the twittering swallows) as well as a harvest landscape in the long northern twilight just as the sun goes down. Of course, what really emphasizes the continuous permanence of the changing seasons is the reference in the last line to the 'gathering swallows' as they twitter in the skies. The swallows are certainly leaving, but when the songs of spring return, the swallows will return with them.

After finishing *To Autumn*, Keats did not live to see the swallows return twice; but, in his unique fashion — always being his own man, always sensing and feeling for himself, always having to work things out in his own way — he impregnated the seven great poems of his last productive year with very complicated configurations of permanence-impermanence of which we have here indicated only the most relevant.

the little tides of fire
wave over
my white-haired mind;
their names,
young girls grown old

Stanley Trybulski

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THE SAME COWBOY:

A THEME IN MODERN AMERICAN POETRY*Victor Contoski*

BACK IN THE EARLY DAYS OF television, there was a program called *You Are an Artist*. An artist — you could tell he was an artist because he had a beard — drew a picture slowly line-by-line; and, at home, you drew your lines in the same places on your sheets of paper. All you needed was pencil, paper, and fifteen minutes. The program was like a mystery because you didn't know what you were drawing until the artist was practically finished. At the end of the program you discovered you had drawn — let us say — a cowboy. The artist turned to you and said: 'Now wasn't that easy? You are an artist!' And just the way he said it sent shivers up your spine. You — an artist! And you had a picture of a cowboy right in front of you to prove it. You became an artist simply by spending fifteen minutes in front of a television set following instructions. Of course, nobody was surprised at your picture. Nobody bought it. In fact, nobody even looked at it, because there were thousands, maybe millions, of such pictures differing only in minor details — somebody used a dull pencil, somebody else did his in red, and one really-imaginative fellow drew the cowboy in pen. But he was still the same cowboy. It seems to me we are in danger of a similar situation in poetry. Instead of one artist, however, we have a group of poets — you can tell they are poets because they have degrees — and instead of television, we have the colleges and universities which are rapidly becoming means of mass communication. The situation is particularly dangerous because the poets who work regularly as teachers are people of taste and culture who agree among themselves on their values. They edit 'good' poetry magazines, and they award the literary prizes. Not all poet-teachers, of course, write of the same old cowboy. Robert Creeley teaches. So does James Wright, though his current poetry is quite different from his pale early efforts which brought him public

acclaim and the Yale Younger Poets Award. But how about Richard Wilbur, Anthony Hecht, X. J. Kennedy, Howard Nemerov, John Hollander, Reed Whitemore, Robert Mezey, Adrienne Cecile Rich, Edgar Bowers, and Donald Justice? Good poets? Certainly — some among our best. Here's a stanza on a painting:

One-woman waterfall, she wears
Her slow descent like a long cape
And pausing, on the final stair
Collects her motions into shape.

Who wrote it?

Please understand that I am not criticizing the stanza as poetry. Indeed, the technique leaves almost nothing to be desired. There are no unnecessary words. Our impressions of a woman descending are much like our impressions of a waterfall, a continuous smooth exciting motion. The descent as a cape is a fine figure, particularly in the context of the poem, where we find the picture is of a nude woman descending a staircase. Long is a beautiful word because it emphasizes the continuity of the descent. The well-placed comma forces the reader to pause just as the woman does; and the woman and the poem come into focus together. The rhymes are unobtrusive, though they emphasize the important words. Shape, the most important word in the stanza, is in the most important place.

But who wrote the stanza?

W. D. Snodgrass, you say? No, although Snodgrass is capable of such subtle rhymes and he does have a poem about a painting (by Monet):

These lilies, if these things are waterlilies
Which are dancers growing dim across no floor;
These mayflies; whirled dust orbiting the sun;
This blossoming diffused as rushlights; galactic
vapours;
Fluorescence into which we pass and penetrate;
O soft as the thighs of women;
O radiance, into which I go on dying . . .

And the author is not Donald Justice either, though Justice has a poem, *On a Painting by Patient B of the Independence State Hospital for the Insane*. Furthermore, his poem has the same delicate, almost superdelicate, sensitivity to art, the same polish, and the same lack of guts.

The clouds resemble those empty balloons in cartoons Which approximate silence. These clouds, if clouds they are (And not the smoke from the seven aspiring chimneys), The more one studies them the more it appears They too have expressions.

Donald Hall? Well, not exactly, though I certainly see why you mentioned Hall. His *Munch's Scream* is in traditional form, though he doesn't emphasize the rhymes. But he does speak sensitively of painting:

Observe. Ridged, raised, tactile, the horror of the skinned head is there. It is skinned which had a covering-up before, and now is nude, and is determined by what it perceives.

Richard Wilbur? You're getting closer. I'll give you full credit for that guess. The rhymes have the sure ring of Wilbur rhymes, and Wilbur again has the same delicacy. The stanza might be from *Museum Piece*, which employs identical metre:

See how she spins! The grace is there, But strain as well is plain to see. Degas loved the two together: Beauty joined to energy.

But the poet is not Richard Wilbur.

Adrienne Cecile Rich? No — though I am very impressed with your knowledge of modern American poetry — or should I say ‘verse?’ The metre is not quite that of Love in the Museum, though the sentiment and technique are similar:

Now will you stand for me, in this cool light, Infanta
reared in ancient etiquette, A point-lace queen of manners.
At your feet The doll-like royal dog demurely set Upon a
chequered floor of black and white.

I am also giving full credit, if you guessed: John Hollander, Howard Nemerov, Anthony Hecht, and Reed Whittemore. They are all witty and versatile. If they have not already written poems about museums, they will.

But perhaps you think I’ve quoted from obscure poems dug up after days in the library. Not at all. All the quotations above are taken from poems in two popular paperback anthologies: CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY and THE NEW POETS OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA. Think how many similar poems there must be which have not made the anthologies, have not even been printed! Maybe almost as many as the cowboys drawn on *You Are an Artist*.

But what if you are an artist, or someone who loves art? Then you’re not interested in such cowboys or the modern poet’s equivalent: poems on the death of a dear animal, preferably a dog; poems on the beauty of foreign cities, particularly in Italy where poet-teachers go on scholarships or sabbaticals; poems on museums and painting; poems on the poet’s students; or, when the poet is really hard up for a subject, poems on poetry. And you won’t pay good money, or, even more important, good time for such poetry, regardless of the sensitivity, technical skill, and popularity of the poet. The ‘artists’ are all drawing the same cowboy, and — what is worse — they are teaching others to draw him.

The mystery stanza, incidentally, is from X. J. Kennedy’s *Nude Descending A Staircase*.

WILLIAM PACKARD: POETRY IN THE THEATRE—II

*(taken from a radio series recently broadcast on Wbai, N. Y.
C.)*

Poetry in the theatre.

— who needs it?

Poetry in the theatre.

— so what's all the noise about?

Poetry in the theatre.

— okay, okay, but what I want to know is: so what?

THAT IS THE GREAT UNANSWERED question of verse theatre. Why do we go on and on and on, trying to tell ourselves that we ought to have a poetic drama, when we're not even sure what it is, or how we go about getting it?

In our first article, we examined the role of poetry in the great world theatres of the past — the Greek theatre, the Elizabethan theatre, the Japanese theatre. And we saw that poetry was a very important part of the shape of a play in these traditions. We also saw that the playwright was obliged to write his poetry according to certain fixed conventions.

If you press me for a definition of poetry in the theatre, I won't be able to give one. Since poetry does exist in the theatre, perhaps it's not up to me to explain what it is or why it is important. Because it may be that we are dealing with something which is actually inside of us, something which is simply attempting to get out and find its best expression in poetic drama. If that's the case, then perhaps we need not so much a definition of poetry in the theatre as a good description of what's going on inside of us. T. S. Eliot wrote: The human soul, in intense emotion, strives to express itself in verse. It is not for me, but for the neurologists, to discover why this is so, and why and how feeling and rhythm are

related. The tendency, at any rate, of prose drama is to emphasize the ephemeral and superficial; if we want to get at the permanent and universal we tend to express ourselves in verse.¹

— which seems to make sense. We need only look back through our literature, to the most exalted moments of intense emotion, and we will see that the language inevitably tends to fall into the form of poetry. For example, take one of the highest expressions of the religious sensibility, the twenty-third Psalm of David, as translated in the King James Bible:

The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

There can be no doubt that this is poetry of the highest order, although I imagine that David was not interested merely in writing a good poem. He was concerned with giving dramatic expression to a very real and personal victory over his own disposition to doubt and despair. And this expression of his victory, because it took place in an extreme state of intense emotion, fell into the form of poetry. We need not worry as to whether this twenty-third Psalm has extraordinary qualities stemming from the fact that it happened to have been translated by some anonymous Elizabethan during the reign of King James; that opening line, 'The Lord is my shepherd . . .', is equally assuring and affirmative and poetic when translated into French: 'Le Seigneur est mon berger . . .'

So the Psalm endures as poetry and is a good example of what Eliot means when he says: 'The human soul, in intense emotion, strives to express itself in verse.' However, we don't need to go to religious poetry to establish our point. We can do the very opposite: we can

¹ A DIALOGUE ON DRAMATIC POETRY, Selected Essays (HARCOURT, BRACE, & WORLD). take one of the most perverse and contradictory and antireligious sentiments ever conceived — and, because it is also written in intense emotion, it also tends to fall into the form of verse. I am referring to the passage of tragic blasphemy in Milton's PARADISE LOST, in which Satan utters a curse that encompasses God, mankind, and himself.

Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
And in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
So farewell hope; and with hope farewell fear;
Farewell remorse! all good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my good; by thee at least
Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
As man erelong, and this new world, shall know.

Satan's curse is just as terrible as David's praise is wonderful; and yet, both expressions are highly poetic. Eliot's point is well taken: the most intense expressions of which we are capable, whether positive or negative, will often take the form of poetry.

What does this tell us about poetry in the theatre? Only that those moments which are the most dramatic and compelling are also the moments in which language is most desperately needed to give voice and rhythm to the suffering or joy of the actors and the audience.

And, as we saw, this is the case in the Greek, Elizabethan, and Japanese theatres. That is the reason, when we are thinking about poetry in our own theatre, we must turn back to see what has already been accomplished in the great periods of world drama. Michel St.-Denis writes:

We do not go back to our classics simply out of respect for the past. We do not want to be congealed by our respect. By looking at the Greeks, the Spaniards, the Elizabethans, by looking at Shakespeare as well as at the Chinese and Japanese theatres, we are trying to find resources for our modern world, for our modern art, our modern theatre. We are trying to rediscover secrets of composition, of construction, of language, we are trying to rediscover what is meant by form in order that we may express substance: for modern realism needs new instruments with which to reach the heart of reality. We want to develop realism, not to kill it. There is only one theatre and it is in constant evolution as time goes by.

2 THEATRE: *The Rediscovery of Style* (THEATRE ART BOOKS).

This one theatre will be forever tending toward the form of poetry, because poetry is a very human need; its rhythms are closely associated with the pulse of our own heartbeat. It will always be with us. The problem is not to try to explain why poetry should be in the theatre, but to try to account for its absence when it is not there.

I do not mean ta tum ta tum ta tum ta tum ta tum. We must try to forget that silly middle-class notion that poetry is a lot of tinkling sounds, or that it is something separate from its meaning, or that it is some sort of welcome embellishment, an ornament attached to the dramatic action in the same way tinsel is attached to a Christmas tree. This misconception infuriated Antonin Artaud, the great French actor and critic. He wrote: 'The idea of a detached art, of poetry as a charm which exists only to distract our leisure, is

a decadent idea and an unmistakable symptom of our power to castrate.”³

Poetry in the theatre has nothing to do with great actors or great directors or great scene designers; it has nothing to do with out-of-town tryouts or last-minute changes in the script. It is the life of the play itself. In the *POETICS*, Aristotle says:

The Spectacle, though an attraction, is the least artistic of all the arts, and has least to do with the art of poetry. The tragic effect is quite possible without a public performance and actors; and besides, the getting-up of the Spectacle is more a matter for the costumier than the poet.

That’s a pretty shocking thing for us to hear. We in the American theatre are so obsessed with the director and with the producer and with the actors and with the lighting experts and with the electricians and with the stagehands that it is terribly difficult for us to imagine that a play can actually exist by itself. In fact, some of our leading playwrights have been seduced into making public statements to the effect that their written texts were no more than ‘indications’ or ‘suggestions’ which were waiting for some great stage director to come along and translate into the reality of theatre. This is complete nonsense. Aristotle is right. I can sit all by myself and read the *ORESTEIA* of Aeschylus and receive the full impact of the tragedy, alone, in my own imagination. Because the poetry is that potent.

But what, exactly, is this poetry? It can’t be just anything that rhymes or anything that has a lot of rhythm or anything that has a jingling and pleasing sound. It has to be something much more inclusive than that. One must have a very special relationship to oneself to be a poet; and, to be able to write poetry, one must see things in a

³THE THEATRE AND ITS DOUBLE (GROVE).

Richard McKeon translation (RANDOM HOUSE).

very special relationship to each other. Further on in the POETICS, Aristotle says:

It is a great thing, indeed, to make a proper use of these poetical forms, as also of compounds and strange words. But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt by others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity of dissimilars.

Metaphor, then, is the soul of poetry. It is an identification, such as David makes in the opening line of the twenty-third Psalm: 'The Lord is my shepherd . . .'

Let us look at some examples of the way metaphor is used in the theatre. In ROMEO AND JULIET, Romeo says at the beginning of the balcony scene: 'But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks? / It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.' This is a double metaphor: the light is the east and Juliet, the sun. Later in the same speech, Romeo says: 'See how she leans her cheek upon her hand! / O! that I were a glove upon that hand, / That I might touch that cheek.' And to Juliet's response, 'Ah me!', he says: 'O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art / As glorious to this night, being o'er my head, / As is a winged messenger of heaven / Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes / Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him / When he bestrides the lazy-passing clouds, / And sails upon the bosom of the air.' This is something more than exquisite poetry. Shakespeare is not simply writing for the printed page, he is also writing for the stage; and so we have to consider the placing of the characters in this scene: Romeo under the balcony, looking up at Juliet, the source of light. And when he speaks of ' . . . the white-upturned wond'ring eyes,' these eyes looking upward are his own. He is actually positioned under the balcony with his head tipped back, gazing at Juliet. Shakespeare is describing in the

written metaphor what is there in front of us.

This metaphor has been used many times. It is to be found in the *DIVINE COMEDY*, where Dante is down below, looking upward at Beatrice, the source of light. But, in *ROMEO AND JULIET*, the metaphor is used not only in the written poetry, but in the actual staging of the play as we see it from the point of view of the audience. The literary metaphor is complementing the dramatic metaphor.

Another example: in the last act of *OTHELLO*, we see Desdemona lying on her bed and Othello, his mind poisoned by jealousy, coming into the bedroom to strangle her. Othello is a Moor, and Desdemona is white. This is very important; Shakespeare never lets us forget the contrast between these two images of dark and light. Othello speaks: It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,— Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars! It is the cause.— Yet I'll not shed her blood; Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow, And smooth as monumental alabaster. Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men. Put out the light, and then— put out the light? If I quench thee, thou flaming minister, I can again thy former light restore, Should I repent me; but once put out thy light, Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature, I know not where is that Promethean heat, That can thy light relume. . .

5 Quotations here and ensuing are from Falstaff edition, ed. by George L. Duykinck from 1632 folio (HENRY T. COATES & Co.—1859).

The scene is terrifying enough — a man has been crazed with jealousy and is about to strangle his wife. But Shakespeare makes it into something much more — he uses the image of darkness overwhelming the image of light. Othello refers to 'that whiter skin of hers than snow, / And smooth as monumental alabaster.' And there is the light of the candle which he puts out; and we see it there. We see Othello is dark, and Desdemona is light. I do not believe Shakespeare

was concerned with any racial theories; he does not attach any special connotation to color as such. But he uses the poetic image of dark and light to suggest a metaphor of the two characters: Othello is dark and driven, a victim of obscured passion; Desdemona is light and innocent, a victim of love and obedience. Thus, the metaphor is not only on the printed page, but also on the stage before us.

For final example, in *HAMLET* there is a brief scene just before the play within the play, in which Hamlet makes outrageous fun of Ophelia. This is filled with puns and filthy double meanings — Elizabethan bawdiness at its best, yet also a bit more than this:

H.: Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

(Lying down at Ophelia's feet)

O.: No, my lord.

H.: I mean, my head upon your lap?

O.: Ay, my lord.

H.: Do you think I mean country matters?

O.: I think nothing, my lord.

H.: That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

O.: What is, my lord?

H.: Nothing.

O.: You are merry, my lord.

H.: Who, I? O.: Ay, my lord.

H.: O God! your only jig-maker. What should a man do, but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

Good fun — but it also has a dramatic purpose. The scene does not take place in isolation, but on stage in the presence of Claudius and Gertrude and Polonius. In fact, we suspect it is intended for their benefit, and that Hamlet is simply using Ophelia as a foil; because Hamlet is trying to show everyone that he is mad and nimble and unaccountable — in short, that he has put on 'an antic disposition.' But he also wishes to convey a message: ' . . . for, look you, how cheerfully my

mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.' It is as if the playwright were saying: Hamlet is mad, but Hamlet is also not mad. To show us this doubleness, Shakespeare has chosen the metaphor of the wise fool, the playful maniac who has a method in his madness. And the metaphor is effective not only on the page, but it is there in front of us on the stage.

Poetic drama is most effective when these two types of metaphor, the literary and the dramatic, work together and complement each other. We have also seen that 'The human soul, in intense emotion, strives to express itself in verse.' And the rhythms of this verse are closely associated with the pulse of our own heartbeats, which are with us so long as we live. And it does not really matter whether poetry is serious or absurd, religious or antireligious, full of suffering or of joy; no matter which, it will be some sort of metaphor, some insight into the way one thing in this world is the same as some other thing. In the theatre, a good metaphor will be as effective on the stage as it is on the printed page.

T. S. Eliot, in that same *DIALOGUE ON DRAMATIC POETRY*, wrote: 'No one ever points to certain plays of Shakespeare as being the most poetic, and to other plays as being the most dramatic. The same plays are the most poetic and the most dramatic, and this is not by a concurrence of two activities, but by the full expansion of one and the same activity. I agree that the dramatist who is not a poet is so much less a dramatist. . . .' There is no 'relation' between poetry and drama. All poetry tends toward drama, and all drama toward poetry.

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A PORTRAIT OF THE WRITER AS AN OLD HAT

James D. Houston

Geneticists are predicting their ability to control human development, reproduction, environment. Artists tell me that chaos reigns in painting. Everything goes. Nobody knows one thing from another any more. Funny-paper imitations sell for thousands. Ripley himself would be amazed to learn that Believe It or Not optical illusions, rendered in oil, get thousands too. So does Modigliani. They're all equal. Warren Miller predicts there will be no post-Southeast Asia. And General Electric has come out with an automatic carving knife that will save the man of the house all that trouble of applying his arm to the roast. 'Comes with a re-charger storage rack, and hollow ground, perfectly matched stainless steel blades. Truly portable. All you do is guide it.'

It's the same old story. But is that what's bulging in my head? No. All these are among the images oozing. What I want to know is: Do the images matter any more? I keep trying to connect some of them into meaningful shapes. Yet, were I to catch and connect them all, would it matter?

As someone wrote recently, there are too many ironies intersecting in a din of silence. And multiply the ironies by this speculation: our world seems to have one of two directions; either we become a crowded, push-button, dehumanized society run by a bureaucracy of technicians — or we explode. A third alternative: the individual pursuing his own style — which ironically is now most available in the country which is doing the most to eliminate individualism, to mech-

**SOMETHING'S COMING IN. I FEEL
IT IN MY HEAD, BULGING— HINTS
OOZE INTO MY CONSCIOUSNESS. I
CAN'T SEE MUCH OF IT; BUT
EVERYTHING I READ, SEE, THINK IS
PART OF IT. I SEE CIVILIZATION
LOSING; AND I DON'T WANT TO
BELIEVE IT. I SEE 1984 EIGHTEEN
YEARS AWAY; AND I DON'T WANT TO
WELCOME ITS INEVITABILITY.
PHILOSOPHERS ARE TALKING ABOUT
'THE SECURE PROGRESS OF
ORGANIZED KNOWLEDGE,' THEN
CONDEMNING 'INDEPENDENT
RENEGADES,' LIKE SARTRE. ANIZE
THE WORLD — SEEMS MORE AND
MORE AN ARCHAIC NOTION, A
NOTION THAT WILL HAVE NO CHANCE
OF SURVIVAL IN ANOTHER THIRTY
YEARS, IF PREDICTIONS ARE
CORRECT, IF POPULATIONS DOUBLE
BY THEN, IF GENETICISTS ACQUIRE
THE CONTROLS THEY CLAIM THEY'LL
HAVE. THE WHOLE CONCEPT SEEMS
OUT OF STEP WITH THE NEAR
FUTURE. HOW LONG WILL THE WORLD**

**PUT UP WITH THE MAN WHO WANTS
TO GO HIS OWN WAY? SUCH
CONDUCT IS SOCIALLY INEFFICIENT.**

What then of the writer, that variety of would-be individual who has so much trouble keeping quiet? Is not the writer too an archaic idea? I'm talking not about the reporter, but about the man who aspires to literature. Does it make any difference any more? Few people pay attention to writers these day — even to the good ones. Few but writers read other writers. And critics read other writers mostly for the wrong reasons. Can literature really compete when movies are better than ever, when television has paralyzed the country's eyes, when Buck Rogers is all coming true, and when nothing less than the delicious threat of a world-annihilating bomb can make men shudder? Literature may well have had its day. When printing was young, when books met less competition, poems, novels, and stories had a meaningful place. Now their efficacy, as well as their appeal, seems to diminish each year, even though their production increases.

Creative media develop in response to the needs of particular kinds of individuals — thrusts of some part of the human potential. The personal need comes first, then the social justification. The writer, I believe, is a recent phenomenon, having appeared, say, within the last 170 years. Previously, men who wrote — with few exceptions — had other occupations, other identities. The idea of the writer, of the man who devotes his life to imaginative expression in language and who derives his identity through that activity, took form in the Nineteenth Century with The Romantics — the Mirror and the Lamp conception. Instead of holding a mirror up to society, he became in his own mind a lamp, with self as the starting point. Thus, the self conceived as writer.

The notion itself is a fruit of a mechanizing, dehumanizing, anti-religious society. Men were being disenfranchised, alienated, cut off from roots and beliefs and social fulfillment. Some became writers. Literary expression is a way to justify one's existence, a way to fulfill oneself within the society without being entirely in the society. The idea of the writer begins as a means of satisfying a need in a certain kind of modern sensibility. It acquires social reverberations when people of similar sensibilities discover and respond to the writer. But nowadays it seems that the idea of the writer and those ideas which so many writers have advocated in one way or another — pursuing the good life, individual fulfillment, breaking loose from inherited restrictions of various kinds — are essentially archaic, out of date, passé, in a society that appears to be moving in an entirely different direction.

I want to believe that literature is doing some good, and that it can be an authentic way for the writer to make the social connection. But today I'm not sure. I suspect I have arrived too late for literature. Today's passwords are speed and ease. Recordings, television, films, and sound tapes are the modern media. Newspapers, comic strips, advertisements, high-speed high-pressure periodicals are the vehicles for written language. Great works of poetry and imaginative prose have been produced, and they will endure. But, henceforth? Certainly literature will survive for a while as an industry, because there is money in it and because thousands of people are committed to it, or to parts of it, in one way or another — editors, writers, publishers, reviewers, columnists, critics, teachers. Like everything else in this country, literature has its own sustaining and self-perpetuating apparatus. Yet perhaps this very commitment is one of the final thrusts of romanticism in the Nuclear Age. A dying breed. The dinosaurs of literature will die, far behind the frontiers of human progress, held back by

the weight of books they drag around like ponderous tails.

In my own life such lag is now a familiar pattern. It began with an adolescent search for Polynesia. Melville had beguiled me with his South Sea stories. For years I believed in the Gauguin legend. He was my idea of a modern saint. Finally, on the trail of Fletcher Christian, I tramped Pacific Islands for a while. Polynesia was gone, of course, before I got there. I arrived in time to see the last grass hut bulldozed into the sea. Today, my home country, California, is visibly slipping through my fingers. I was born here and discovered the place for myself just in time, it seems, to watch the last orchards replaced by Macy's and Thrifty Drug. Thus, if I bill myself as a writer, it appears simply to be in the scheme of things.

Yet something is coming in. From where? From THE NEW YORK Review of Books where philosophers and geneticists are capsulized? From the daily unavoidable headlines? From Warren Miller? From those remnants of orchard outside my window? Or from my brother-in-law, one of California's last independent farmers (who wrestles with governmental farm policy and with workers who would rather draw welfare checks that stoop for strawberries — and can I blame them?)? From wherever, it's coming. When it comes, this is how I'll respond: glued to this machine, glued by vanity and irrational hope and stubbornness. Have I any choice? In a world of fugitives, Eliot says somewhere, the man moving in the opposite direction would appear to be running away. Is that justification? Is it enough to be a maverick, outside the stampede of history? Is it enough to pursue this odd notion of the individual that I believed in, unconsciously, and lately consciously? I'm not sure any more. I haven't much choice. I just cling to it doggedly.

I think of my father and all the men of his generation who voted for Goldwater for many of the same reasons I'll keep writing and hugging my archaic images. My father grew up

before and after the First World War, and America as he remembers it then had a certain shape and texture and style that he wants to see preserved. He can't bear to see the world become something other than what it seemed to be when he was thirteen in Texas. He wants school teachers to be stern disciplinarians, to teach the three R's the way he learned them. He believes progressive education has ruined a generation of Americans. We can see the results, he claims, in increased juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, drug addiction, and the crime rate. He wants policemen to have more authority to handle criminals, believing that a strong authoritative police force will diminish crime. He also wants an authoritative central government which will give the country and its people a sense of stability. The world now is too fragmented, he says, with too many progressive ideas, and there isn't anyone the people can respect—who can tell them what to do in order to stabilize their disjointed lives. Yet, at the same time he craves authority, he resents government intervention in education and medicine. He resents unions, housing developments, civil service, civil rights programs, or any manifestation of big government, mass production, or radical social change. He wants authority in some things, independence in others. He contradicts himself; his position is not rational or thought out consistently. It is based, rather, on recollected images which overlap and cancel one another. My father has an inherited feeling about America and how life here should be lived. That style of life has escaped him, and he isn't quite sure why or how. Communists, perhaps, in league with the unions and the drug addicts. Something has gone wrong. Nonetheless, he clings to his images and lives his life as best he can, resisting violations of his style and images, remaining resentful of most of what he sees.

My father is representative of a generation of Americans. Perhaps two, because I am essentially the same as he. I may

understand a little better than he some of what is happening to this country, to this world. I don't like what I see either; but I realize I am essentially powerless to do very much about it. So I cling with a grotesque sort of faith to out-of-date Thoreauvian notions about how a man can live his life.

What are the alternatives, after all? Recently someone said there are three: absorption, alienation, and detachment. Absorption is to give oneself up to the doomed future, to get in line for the big barbecue and get 'em while they're hot and succulent, to ride the wave until it breaks on the rocks. Alienation is to pull out, reject, deny, expatriate, hedonize while you can, or perhaps live the dark life of the coffee-bar watcher, or try juice or junk or whatever kick offers itself. But I'm sorry, man. I can't do that. Too many inherited limits. Sorry. Got to be self-honest. Detachment, then. Stand back, observe, make rational comment on what's right and what's wrong, living the delusion that the intelligent magazines are forums for ideas where men of good conscience can exchange opinions, thus arriving at conclusions which are sound — thus applicable — thus bound to influence men in power. No, I can't buy that either. Why not? Sorry, again. Can't accept any of the three. As usual, I'm obliged to discover my own posture in terms of my own experience, towards a world I thought, a week ago yesterday, I had by the balls.

Absorb? Alienate? Detach? Wait for the explosion? Become a mystic — that other mode of detachment, the purely cosmic connection? I don't rule it out. It's a way — it's a way. But still, I search for my own way of reaching, of walking, of standing. I used to think this was enough, this habit of pecking at a machine (itself a fore-glimpse of the robot). Today, I'm not sure. Maybe it is. I feel better now than when I sat down to type this.

When it was announced that Steinbeck had been awarded the Nobel Prize, someone asked him why he wrote. 'I don't know,' he said, 'it's been so long since I have wondered why.'

Easy for him, when he's sixty, not to wonder any more.

PERSPECTIVE The river sizzles silver with hoarded cans, sometimes, but usually wears lucent husks of the night-blooming contraceptive; paltry flowering things having always catered to the river's love of ostentation. Raymond O'Hara

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DONALD FREED

FRAGMENTS OF THE ELECTRA* (FOR BARBOURA)

Peasant: Another day. The river-shows off the sun.

It'll be a hot one.

Still, there's a fresh wind. Just right.

She's still asleep, well-dreaming and talking all night.

She's still a virgin — still a girl.

Electra:

To the well and back. I know how many steps.

I know each rise or fall of ground by heart:

The big stone at the edge of the yard

(father is in his grave)

Those little flowers further on

(mother is a black whore)

Beyond the well the river

(my brother and I — we are nothing)

** These and the ensuing from OEDIPUS are new translation
adaptations.*

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DONALD FREED

FRAGMENTS OF THE OEDIPUS — I (FOR L. J. F.)

Priest: Oedipus, we are mad with fear and death our world is coming to an end. I am here to conjure for you the mothers suckling corpses in their grief. To intercede for these children you see here bloated and starving — fat with hunger.

King, you loved us and this city once and called it home.
O, let that bird of old, that sign of luck
wing back!

Oedipus: I see. In the old king's name justice must be done.

No more sobbing or death —
Tell all my folk that the sun is breaking through
to shine and reflect our life, our greatness.
Now comes the sign, at the last moment.

Oedipus: To the murderer, when my voice reach him, I
vow

his days shall be as filthy as his crime.
He shall be cut off and worn down.
It takes no plague or oracle to see that you have been
remiss.
Long ago the murderer was among you: red-handed.
But I am of a different stamp
and will not sidestep my fate.

DONALD FREED

Tiresias: Now I shall pleasure you: You have spoken your own sentence; and cursed your own curse. Foul thing that you are.

Oedipus: You madman — do you know to whom you speak?

You are on shifting and dangerous ground.

Tiresias: I stand here like a rock — beware.

Oedipus: You have lost your vision and your truth.

Tiresias: It is in your command.

Oedipus: What? What did I command — what is happening here?

Tiresias: I spoke straight out — plain.

Oedipus: But I make nothing of it, give me another chance.

Tiresias: You seek the man of blood: it is you!

Oedipus: Who could dream that you were such a thing — such an absolute hoax?

Tiresias: A hoax you say? Strange, your mother and father they called me wise.

Oedipus: My — stop! Say that again. See:

I am quiet.

See how quiet I am?

PROLOGUE TO AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I am Didachist Maybeard, and my age is thrifty-three. I come of a long line of long lines, a hairy genealogy of the discoverers and the explorers of the barberpoles and other such spirally conspiratorial confines — Maybeard, Didachist, syllogist of the Sheared (Shear and shear alike, said my sibling, Samson Chist, upon which wife Delilah lopped him from her shopping list). But at the age of thrifty-three I am the rage of the Didachistmas tree.

I am, after all, a prologue to a shopping list, midway between the barberpoles and the Maybeard tree. Suppose, in my rage, I raised a hairy fist — only to find that my knuckles have paunches, that where there's a will there's an auto-da-fey and that no sooner do I rise but what in the memory of my runs I must grit my haunches? What then, didachist of the shopping list? what target merits taking down the shenanigans?

My age is thrifty-three. My pointed beard makes sensuality in conic sections, that erectile geometry of frugality. But I will not yield my face to any man. It is the face of the briefest Shakespeare in hard respite, the hind ear lifted to hiss the sudden doggerel

GIL ORLOVITZ

of the Piltdown man — for who shall honor me with a fake burial? and who shall argue my bones out of the cesspit? My jaw protrudes only from my craw. I will not yield my face to any link. I come of a long line of long lines begun, my friends, when God was forced to think back.

Looking at me alone, it can be seen that odious memory is no longer in His hands.

The motion, therefore, that the motionless will wind about the barberplexuses, must fail on the ground of the spiral

castration of the nexuses, the practical joke of the moral cravat cut off while trying to choke off the screw through the butt; evolution no more, after all, than the ethical rationale of the biologic whore supposed to pulsate in slime mould as well as in Divinity when His feet on earth got cold: 'O, Resplendent Rot, forsake me not Thou who growest under dark cloud and in angels' armpits — grant me the washing off of Pilate's Deodorant.'

You see, Didachist Maybeard is quite surreligious at thrifty-three. Between the barberpoles training their snakes for Adams and Eves, are the magnetized dreamers

GIL ORLOVITZ

bearing the cosines of Cain on longitudinal foreheads.
We are our brothers' sleepers,
and we dream of long leaves
behind gumgreen eyes and hoarheads.
It was a hairy Maybeard who thrashed through
Paradise
with his electric shaver
to tempt all hidden faces
by virtue of the make-up of angelic schemers —
Maybeard the White Slaver
with his apples and fibs
and his foliage of ribs
and his barberpole snakes demonstrating the perfect
seduction
of no beginnings and no ends
to the spiralling Falls From Graces —
I am, indeed, the rage of the Didachistmas tree,
and at the bottom of the shopping list the suction
made my own fist jerking out my asshole
from the memory of my runs
from God's sons —
shear and shear alike all crucifixions
suckling Man Hairless from his dug-addictions.
So say I,

Didachist Maybeard, thrifty-three,
about to zip down my autobiography.

HELEN L. GILKEY

LIKE A CURVE, SPRING COMES

From a long hollow
All Spring frets out
When barns bulge their hinges
And new lambs over old, bleat-stout
And the suckling calves pull away
To cud on green-born, wonder hay.
When the trapped-drift snows
Slush-yield beyond the gutters down
And gray ice-holes of
Roadways satin-smooth a new, patched gown.
Like a curve Spring comes when
Dusty, leaping throats of pairs
Streak open windows, sigh-boast
And when the sun holds
Its pivot wider
And upward arms
Bend down their praise.

J. MICHAEL YATES

PROSTITUTE, ABSTRACT

Her line of lines
Jigged, then evened —
An exercise in penmanship
From rude rhythm, this steady
Deadly coming of perfection.
Her steps absorbed years, gestures,
Formulae of exchange. A levelling :
First light after long darkness,
Writhing nights in chains of streetlights
Straightening away toward one final dawn.
How to handle any holy thing.
Life and death approach together :
Down a familiar downtown street inside,
She sees for the first and last time :
Just short of nothing, everything disappears.

J. MICHAEL YATES

PHASES

Daily, she came
Less and less cautiously
For the small food I held
In the finger-tips of my words.
By the time
I had completely disarmed her suspicion,
Her strength had increased through my feeding :
I dared not try to seize her.
Now, mornings she leaves
To foray in the streets for me :
We wait as I ready myself to try
Anything her blood waits to resist.

KARL KROLOW

TODAY STILL

Today I can allow you
To go to sleep quietly
While I stand a little longer
In the street with a few men
And observe the moon.
Slowly it will change itself
Before our eyes
While the cyclone feeds.
If only I could
Eavesdrop the dogs
Quarreling around the first dead
In the distance.
Their baying has already the hoarse metal
That will be in our voices,
Tomorrow,
If burnt faces
Hang out of windows
And the blue syllables of water
Collapse into red alphabet.

*Heute Noch is from FREMDE KORPER, Suhrkamp, 1962, translated
by J. Michael Yates.*

KARL KROLOW

DISQUIETUDE

Trip with both hands : —
The journey into the interior
Of moments illuminates
In Bengal fire.
Without weather and Sunday
Disquietude : —
Noise of a peacock
Spreading his wheel
Or small movements
Between right and left.
No one arranges
The haste of shadows
Which live because of light.
At the bank
Between stranded words
Water converses with water.

Unruhe is from UNSICHTBARE HANDE, translated by J. Michael Yates.

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SEYMOUR GRESSER

LETTERS TO FRANK TIERNEY

LETTER I

Dear Frank, a letter and you understand refusals to compete within this righteous vision of an absurd world. I first learned to make unreasonableness pleasant and acceptable when America was still scented nectar and bees invisible as prophecies in palms touched tenderly by an old gypsy woman; she slobbered how successful I would be when all I wished from the gills of miracle was to pass into the fourth grade.

How thin now the difference between prophetic words and prophecy and quietness on the windowsill of a private world to name the present silence become a woman in Samson arms tumbling with stones.

SEYMOUR GRESSER

We live such utterly distant worlds
and there are friends. A bridge was there
for neither of us drowned yet where
did it touch and were there witnesses
we really crossed? Gambling for coffee
surely without malice
a span of concern surely beyond the mirrored
heritage of common friends.
We both are half possessed by Sisyphus
yet sharing insufferable abuse
is hardly a voice of love
though it has an eloquence
its own magnificent silence.
Dear Frank, without raw toothed sentimentality
here is a beginning to the breaking
heard when Eastside Westside
birthed on an accordion
and laughter for the last time
broke among the cries and bathed
the ugliness of a now unbelievably
terror shaped room.

SEYMOUR GRESSER

LETTER XIII

Dear Knuckles have you heard
the great society is off on a sled
this soundless winter
though I would not say
whiteness is no longer with us.
The runners and wood-slots need invention;
when spring pummels hillsides
with incessant sweet rain,
will it be true that only
Noah and his chosen few
will send for doves?
Hands need the smell of tender plumage

covering the wrists
just enough for birds to know.
They will not guess;
yes or no is an olive branch
in their predestined eyes
charcoal or bloom.
Scribblers of virtue
who dares unbuckle doom
from a grim unwritten book?
With means to mollify tormented man
our hands grow distant from the miracle
of sharing power; we break bread
from private ovens, eat first
and run indelible tracers through the crumbs.
Gypsies beware; a once robust profession
dies of indifference in supermarket aisles.

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SAM BRADLEY

(DANTE'S 700TH ANNIVERSARY) INSTRUMENT OF PROPER POWER

Mr. Trubler, making water, muses on *Commedia* and a two-time wife. A daughter (*Paradiso* !), a son (*Purgatorio* !) —both now escaped from leathering. Exquisitely tooled. He scratches, sighs the lateness, and plots to lay the law. Hope funnels. Who can deny Nature's doubling? Who listens more than he to august Phlegathonic wind? Not Betty, misty mate, whipped into that purity, the past. Oh, she'd submit, but hardly feel. Damn.

O to hoist stinging Dantean covenant, and caper through latitudes drained to hell!

'Rectitude!' He savors, through false teeth, bravo over base. Marshall of literary circles, stickbearer, he classifies low and high. He shakes, remembering laid-on, screaming wind. The whip! old blackbreath scourge! ... Academic linen flaps.

Fortunately, travelling up and down, he's found bondsmen of the dead. Richly they've hailed him and Italian guide. 'Bell'e fatto,' he spits. Flushes. And hears the Styx.

H. M. GORDY

STUYVESANT PARK

trees
from the empty
can of night
blacken forth
on the sun's
frightened face
this man's forehead
divided in blood
is a marquee
children
gather and grimace.
he has lost
even his frankenstein
a cop,
eyes hard as bottles
reminds him
that the day
is blowing up skulls
like white balloons

H. M. GORDY

THIS COUNTRY

I.
the smoke
is your left hand
my blood
II.
horns, hide, bones
a poetry of gulls
picks the teeth
of the sea
III.
the night
is a whale's carcass
caging those terrible snows

cascades
of whitened
friends
where the tracks meet . . .
if there are eyes uncovered
0/ miles
horses/ their mouths filled
with skyscraper teeth
chew old years: THIS KIND GRASS
under which men have gone
red and white as chrysanthemums
throw a needle up
you will hear
nothing at all
drop

RANDALL PARHAM

REVOLUTIONS

Holding hands with the wind hands
girls and men and men, girls, girls
nothing stands beside me stands
lone and dreaded to be so alone
dancing girls her hands out, whirls,
outwhirls the men, men and bone
spinning round not knowing around
here circuits lead nowhere nor are sound.

RANDALL PARHAM

HOMEcoming

The sometimes stomping, sometimes stepping
Light on twisted toes to miss the rain
Of night before last — a hard one — bring
Them home again by whistle-stop train.
The little legend, lying lumped there
Half asleep, her mother too, their blonde
Hair twins the roots into our first dare
To bed together. . . . when first we donned
The black lace of matrimony.
She burst out shredding those and us too,
You from me and two of you from me
For her to suck the breast she clung to.
So here we are to start all over.
The sheets are clean. A start to win back.
The girls can play outside, the clover
Ripe to pick and water all we lack.

CHARLES GOLDBERG

POEM IN THE LAID-DOWN SKULL

My ugly daughter, forgive me
your life;
for fixing you in the target booth,
alive;
for tying tennis shoes on your feet
and books to your eyes;
for making you stiff in a room
of girls or boys. Forgive me the good works
you feed to Time,
that it may swim and snap you.

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CHARLES GOLDBERG

THE SOURCES OF CHARLIE

Fragment of a giant father who called the cyst on his left, tough cheek 'my walnut,' and of a small, dark, determined mother, a strong ad libber, he tumbled from the three-storied house, from the struggling shadows of midwife and carrier, to the street. Colors screamed, trollies ran up and down on a wave, his teeth arrived and balls, jobs, etc., until he was filled up to here with triteness, but he always bore on his back the black kitchen stove, the way, Friday sundowns, she'd shawl her dark hair and let two hands swim over the candles, then gather the light they'd gathered and carry it to her face . . .

Mixed in the bald stare of days and conflicting theories of stars, he heard the voice of his father and the rabbi's, conspiring to get death.

MARION SCHOEBERLEIN

PURGATORY OF TWO PEOPLE

At the gray tea hour the alcoholic priest
Thinks in a sweet fever of one particular parishioner
Who was never a virgin, dropping hot flowers all around
him,
Out-blowing the sad horn of the church.
'Tomorrow I will run faster from this green light,' he
thinks,
'But this afternoon not a single bone of goodness
Remains in me. We will go to purgatory together.'

MARION SCHOEBERLEIN

POEM ON GOOD FRIDAY

The room was dark on the guitar.
The brown cow bowed.
The black cat hid.
The alligator in the heart of Judas bit.
To get away from clumsy men
The woman Mary Magdalene
Slept alone, dreamed of a roller coaster into heaven.
Christ, the butterfly was trapped.
Lightning cracked the wine glass of St. John.
And all around the sky was falling, falling.
Peter, the most lost puppy of them all
Betrayed . . . oh Pharisees, oh Saducees, sing out!
You've trapped the butterfly of Christ!

IGNACE M. INGIANNI

A WORD DOMINANT

Time slides away, the hills are unreal
as though the earth had just begun
and we are creatures of some lost
and forgotten fable.
Adam and Eve,
positive and negative potentials,
dizzy, with senses aflame,
leaning on unsubstantial air,
soft and vaporous.
Miles are as nothing,
it is as a first enchantment,
the mind unwinds the wealth of hours
into a swelling synthesis;
leaves sounding like rain,
sunlight in your hair,
summer on your parted lips,
your body moving across my brain
like a rising tide,
you and I and the earth, over and over.

IGNACE M. INGIANNI

THROUGH WHAT YEARS

and what bodies have the fateful chromosomes
filtered through — dream and fact
and the organic process eternal,
the endless epiphany
of our fluent selves,
that today we meet and bid our bodies tangle,
danger and desire and all the hungers of the blood?
Let Freud go hang.
Lean back upon the hot ground
and drop the tight bundles of concept.
This is our day, our turn to be alive
under the ancient sky.
After ten thousand years
we lie here among these hills.
Let us say the silly words,
the agitated words all lovers have whispered.
Let us choose one bright word
not yet translated into speech
out of the grammarless vocabulary of life.

STANLEY COOPERMAN

PORTRAIT OF MARINKEE

Giraffes walk across the moon
like your hands
pointing
to white grass.
Their throats are long,
dappled with curious
stars
and shadows funny
as mouths. They move in a dance
of unlocked legs,
elongated
gum-bubbles, and a feel
of surprise or kiss; lip-
flopping on leaves
quiet
as sleeping bees, lengths of you
make a landscape of quick
hooves, a line of
startled
stems against the sky.

MARTIN STEINGESSER

HER SONG

touch me o here dear
where tick tick ticks
love's sticky bomb.
Come
whisper me things
to body me double,
and undo the button
inbetween my legs
here o darling kiss
me sweetly
tongue-true and i will you
grease with love love's buttercup

Softly to slip
in sure slow time
our bodies'
arced calling
O open me
with dazzling
your inch of bone
Darling
here
where i'm live
and you and i down will ride
rapid the runnels of my pride

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STEVEN OSTERLUND

FOR CHRISTOPHER PERRET (1930 — 1965)

Christmas 1965 — you were choking on death in Germany. I was drinking to the shadow of my face. Everything was snow, tinsel, loud carpets of paper.

And what last facing? — a dozen times you sat across the page or in some bright beach chair, burning in the Roman sun.

We seek to make everything the fattest fruit, to give them chunks of apple meat to pick from their teeth. In return — five lines of mild mention in a journal, a small photo and scrawls from original notes.

But it can all be grasped, clutched in the hand, knowing everything — how we are surrounded.

Yes! Now you have to hold!

'Death will find us nothing we have not looked for, found, and held — an island wrought, this world shedding its furious mask, transformed.'

IRENE SCHRAM

GOAT SKULL

Look I'll trade you
this old bone
it is the mouth & skull of goat
here are all its teeth
hang it
on your wall by
the harts feet
rabbit skin
boars tusk
lamb rug
I have a horn too
from a dead beast & extinct
and you give me
marbles tins the canary-cage
Last of its kind, &
the mouth & skull of goat.

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LEE HICKMAN

FURTHER WORK ON WHAT HAS BEEN SPOILED

I.

Guilt lays no eggs, its young
slide from its mouth full-grown
This guilt that curls around
my fingers makes no sound
as it bleeds them, and around
my feet, and wound along
my gnarled bitten tongue,
splits its slimy lips
dropping down each lung
its squeezed-out hungry young
that crawl into my words and cling
like vibrant dung; the throng
of rots that sleep across my lids
clot my brain. Guilt that feeds
on guilt is never hungry long.
And decay has no ending.

LEE HICKMAN

II.

Moments in my mind:
maggots in a carcass
putrid in sun. Air so thick.
Memories in silent gasps
evaporate. Mother and Father.
Sister. Brothers. Friends.
Lovers who kissed my sickness
(and so the wise were conned)
Teachers, even Tiresias my whisperer,
who lured me into hell with them.
Tiresias spirit/Tiresias female
who stirred me with his stick
when I was batter in a bowl
uncaked yet, prophesying
neither chaos nor decay,
nor cities I'd enter.

III.

Or perhaps I am pisswater in a pool
in some beast-traveled street at night
with the moon's reflection on my scum.
Even the moon cannot escape me
or else does not reject me.
It shines upon stagnation as a friend.
The sun will be my end.

JOHN HIDEYO HAMAMURA

CRAZY SUE, SHE DEAD

Sing me lonely, sing me dead;
Red shoes lying under my bed.
Send me ashtrays filled with gin,
Ice cubes piled in an old soup tin.
Salinas highway; side road, weeds.
Headlights, moonlight, barb wire beads.
Moon hills silver, oak crevasse.
Hang man's cord over sweet wet grass.
Hang man's cord. Body swings clear . . .
Sing good journey and cold keg beer.
Save your sorrows full of sin.
Pour my ashes in an old soup tin.

BETH LIPSCOMB

NIGHT RITUAL

Under a white egg-moon
Grade A large, I walk the dog.
A man-thing with a beast on a string,
I feel the night while he snuffs news
From every bush and hackles-up at shadows.
This ritual seals up every day.
Throwing out the merry-go-round motions
That are tribute paid for full bellies,
Body preening, and elaborate shelters from the rain,
I search for the glint of something warm
And timeless. Sometimes buried there
Under the husks of squirrel-cage days,
I find brief, sweet flashes of recognition
In the eyes of the other-bound; who know
Though back to back, we walk the same direction.

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FELIX SINGER

THE FINAL PLAY

by Alexander Playwright

Curtain rises on a bare stage.

Offstage Voices: Now? . . . Yes, now — and remember, be pleasant and cheerful. (TYPING SOUND.)

PLEASANT CHEERFUL MIDDLE-AGED ACTOR COMES ON, SURVEYS THE AUDIENCE WITH A WARM SMILE.

Actor (VERY PLEASANTLY): Ah go to hell, you bastards.

DIRECTOR RUSHES ON STAGE, RIDING UNICYCLE, MUCH AGITATED, DISMOUNTS.

Director: No, no! This is the audience! You can't start off that way! That was impossible. Now smile nicely to show it was all a mistake.

Actor: I haven't stopped smiling, Director.

Director: Well, show them it was just a joke. Now say something nice. Welcome them, make them feel at home.

Actor (STILL CHEERFULLY PLEASANT): Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our performance — and go to hell.

Director: What is the matter with you? You think this is some way-out European play? They have to like you. Just think, just imagine you die in this play; you don't want 'em to be glad you're dead, do you?

Actor: Why not? Am I better than one of the Viet Kong?

Director: None of that now. No politics, Playwright. I'm losing my patience with you, Actor. Now either you follow the script or we'll have to replace you —

Actor: What script?

Director: Well, the outline he's preparing now. You are supposed to get the ball rolling. You are supposed to get six people, two dogs, and one cat on and off this stage, not to mention the playwright —

TYPING SOUNDS OFFSTAGE STOP.

Playwright (OFFSTAGE BELOW): Whatinthell you mean — not to mention the playwright? Where would you hams be without the playwright? Making faces and doing prat-falls, that's what. If I weren't writing this thing — (HE HAS STARTED TO WHEEL HIS DESK-CHAIR WITH ROLLERS AND TYPEWRITER TABLE ON STAGE. DIRECTOR PUSHES CHAIR AND TABLE BACK TOWARD WINGS.)

(This work has been selected from the holograph original of an unpublished Ms. Arrangement and punctuation, by the Editor.)

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FELIX SINGER

Felix Singer

Director: Not yet! We've got to work you in properly. You can't just barge out here —

Actor: You did.

Director: Never mind — Listen, Playwright, we haven't arranged your entrance.

Playwright (HALF-OFFSTAGE, TRIES TO MOVE BACK ON): WE! WE!

You mean I haven't! I haven't! Don't forget who is writing this thing.

Director: All right, all right, but don't you forget who's staging it. (PUSHES HIM OFF) (TO ACTOR) And you stop fly-catching out there. I told you to come out and make a pleasant introduction and get the Ingenue on . . .

Actor: Oh boy. In that topless bathing suit! Oh, man! Ladies and gentlemen, without further ado, I give you two of the loveliest —

Director: She'll be wearing a bikini.

Actor: What! Why, for God's sake? Why?

Director (MOUNTING HIS UNICYCLE): The cops heard about it.

Actor: But their attention is already beginning to lag. Can't you hear all that coughing and whispering and chair-creaking? That —

Director: I can't help it. The Public isn't ready for it. You have to make those compromises.

Playwright (OFFSTAGE): The topless suit was a compromise! I called for a nude! It was set in a nudist camp!

Director: Keep out of this, I tell you! Now as for you — keep smiling like that and get her on here fast, and one more step out of line and you're finished — you get me? (STARTS TO RIDE OFF)

Actor: There she is, ladies and gentlemen, our lovely radiant Ingenue just back —

Director (STOPS CYCLE, GETS OFF): No, we've got to — (INGENUE COMES ON, WEARING BEACH ROBE, TRIPS OVER CYCLE AND FALLS) Not yet. We're starting over. Without all these ad libs, or heads will commence to fall, along with bodies. Now both of you off — you hurry up and build yourself up — I want a thirty-five inch bosom —

Actor: I like it the way it is.

Director: And you straighten your tie and comb your hair and start mopping your brow. . . . It's a hot day in Aug —

Playwright: July! July! July the 4th weekend!

Director: Now let's go. Off and on again. From the top. Curtain!

(CURTAIN COMES DOWN AS ALL EXIT. CURTAIN RISES; PAUSE A BEAT; ACTOR COMES ON.)

Actor: How do you do, ladies and gentlemen. I am Joseph Starface, star of tonight's performance, and I want to welcome you bastards all here

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FELIX SINGER

tonight to the The Final Play by Alexander Playwright. My, but it's hot, isn't it? A real scorcher (GOES INTO HISTRIONICS, AS IF IN THE DESERT AT NOON), the hottest day in decades. I . . . can . . . hardly . . . breathe. It —

Director (OFFSTAGE): She's ready.

Actor: The sun beats down in all its effulgence. I'm . . . so . . . exhausted . . .

Director (OFFSTAGE): Step it up now.

Actor: And so, ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased and honored to present to you that lovely lovely Miss Mary Sue Ingenue. (SHE COMES ON, TAKES OFF HER ROBE, POSES A LA FASHION MODEL IN HER BIKINI, THEN STARTS FOR HIM)

Ingenue: You've changed! You don't love me any more! Is there—someone else?

Actor: Of course I love you. I shall always love you. Madly, hopelessly. But —

Ingenue: But what? But what? But what? But what? (GOES ON SAYING IT)

Actor: Twice is enough.

Playwright: Keep saying it. I like the sound of it. And you come back with: What but?

Ingenue: But what? But what?

Actor: What but? What but? What but?

Ingenue: Well, you said 'but.'

Actor: Yes, I said I shall always love you. Madly. Hopelessly. But —

Ingenue: But? What?

Actor: What? But?

Ingenue: But there is someone else, who — ?

Actor: Who?

Ingenue: Who?

Actor: Yes, who?

Ingenue: I'm supposed to say who? who? who?

Actor: Your mother.

Ingenue: What's the matter with my mother?

Actor: That's what I want to know.

(MOTHER COMES ON — A VERY SWEET OLD LADY)

Mother: We all have our faults. I don't know why you don't like me, my dear, you've never explained. Can't you tell me? I would like to have you like me.

Actor: But I do. That's the difficulty — don't you see? I have prepared myself to oppose you, to resist you —

FELIX SINGER

Ingenue: Why? Just to spite me. Because you resent me. You resent my beauty, my charm, the spell I weave —

Mother: Now, now, dear, mustn't be too vain —

Actor: Well, the reason I — Look, we've got to get those two dogs on. Let's get it over with. Would you call Bob?

Mother: Well, I did want to go to a movie. Nice air-conditioned movie on a scorcher like this.

Ingenue: Scorchers? Are you sick, mother? I'm comfortable.

Actor: It's a hot day in July. That's why you are wearing this.

Ingenue: Oh, Oh, I forgot. Whew, it is hot, isn't it? I think I'll take a nice cold bath, if I may use your bathroom.

Actor: Why go off now?

Ingenue: You know I'm allergic to dogs.

Actor: Who said anything about dogs? She'll never get Bob on here like that, babbling about movies.

Ingenue: You don't know mother.

Mother: Yes, indeedly, a nice clean family-type movie.

Actor: What family? You haven't got —

Ingenue: She would if you'd marry me —

Mother: Well, not right away, perhaps — you know it takes nine months. You know when I was carrying Mary-Sue I thought I'd never deliver.

Actor: Considering the speed at which you talk, I can't understand that.

Ingenue: Joseph! — you're not to talk to mother like that.

Mother: Oh, he doesn't mean any harm. He's a nice clean boy, just as dear old Mrs. Nickelbee was saying. Do you know where the newspaper is — Oh, Bob hasn't brought it in yet. Bob! Oh, Bob!

Ingenue: What'd I tell you! I've got to get away.

Actor: Leave the door ajar! And throw out the bikini — one piece at a time.

Ingenue: What for?

Mother (CALLING BOB): Where are you, sweetie?

Actor: It's interesting.

Mother: Here, Bob! Here, Bob — that's a nice boy. (BOB, A GREAT DANE, COMES ON CARRYING NEWSPAPER)

4:15 P.M. AT THIS POINT THINGS REALLY BEGIN TO HAPPEN IN 'THE FINAL PLAY.' JOHN SCULPTOR KNOCKS ON THE BACK DOOR AND ASKS FOR A BITE TO EAT. HE HAS WALKED ALL THE WAY FROM KANSAS CITY. EXPLAINS HIS WAS AN UPPER MIDDLECLASS FAMILY BUT THEY LOST MOST OF THEIR MONEY BY WAY OF BEING CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SWATER PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. HIS FATHER HAD HOPES SWATER

FELIX SINGER

WOULD APPOINT HIM AMBASSADOR TO HAWAII AND WENT HEAVILY IN DEBT TO BUY A YACHT FOR THE TRIP.

Actor Starface: To Hawaii?

Sculptor: I tried to tell him. But once he gets an idea into his head—it's hopeless.

WHILE THIS GOES ON, BATH WATER INRUSH SOUND STOPS AND THE TWO PARTS OF THE BATHING SUIT ARE THROWN OUT OF THE BATHROOM. SCULPTOR STARES WITH AWED REVERENCE, STARFACE FIXES HIM A PEANUT BUTTER-JELLY SANDWICH. SCULPTOR SO DELIGHTED WITH IT, ASKS FOR ANOTHER. STARFACE FIXES ONE FOR HIMSELF AND SCULPTOR. INGENUE ASKS FOR ONE; STARFACE HANDS IT IN TO HER. STARFACE CALCULATES THAT HE HAS ENOUGH INGREDIENTS AT HAND TO MAKE TWENTY SANDWICHES, PROPOSES TO MAKE THEM AND THROW THEM OUT TO THE AUDIENCE. DIRECTOR RUSHES ON STAGE ON UNICYCLE TO EXPLAIN IT'S IMPOSSIBLE; USHERS WILL COMPLAIN ABOUT THE MESS — NO FOOD-DISPENSING LICENSE, SOMEBODY MIGHT GET HIT IN THE EYE AND SUB, ETC. PLAYWRIGHT WHEELS ON TO PROTEST ON AESTHETIC GROUNDS. DIRECTOR TRIES TO GET PLAYWRIGHT OFF, BUT HE WON'T LEAVE UNTIL HE GETS A SANDWICH.

MEANWHILE, SCULPTOR MAKES SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO GET INTO BATHROOM. STARFACE STOPS HIM. SCULPTOR EXPLAINS HE has To Go. STARFACE TELLS HIM TO GO THROUGH THE THEATRE. HE DOES SO, ON HIS WAY DISTRIBUTING SANDWICHES TO THE AUDIENCE. DIRECTOR RESIGNED TO THIS.

WHEN PLAYWRIGHT GETS PEANUT-JELLY SANDWICH, HE COMPLAINS HE IS AFRAID TO GET HIS FINGERS STICKY LEST THEY STICK UP THE TYPEWRITER KEYS. INGENUE OFFERS TO LEAN OUT OF BATH TUB AND FEED IT TO HIM—DOES SO, BARE ARM AND SHOULDER VISIBLE. MOTHER RETURNS. SHE WENT TO THE THEATRE ALL RIGHT, BUT DIDN'T LIKE THE PROPAGANDA IN THE NEWS REELS SO STARTED SEVERAL SMALL FIRES IN AN ATTEMPT

TO BURN IT DOWN, WITH COACHING FROM PLAYWRIGHT, SHE EXPLAINS HOW SHE DID THIS—BITS OF NEWSPAPER SOAKED IN MACHINE OIL PLACED AT VARIOUS CORNERS . . . BUT THAT SHE BUSILY YELLED FIRE TO GET PEOPLE OUT AND THINKS NO ONE WAS HURT.

Ingenue: Mother, that's the fourth time you've tried to burn a theatre down.

Mother: Dr. Jones—he's my p. a., you know—he said I am sublimating my own frustrated theatrical ambitions. You know, I did want to become an actress one time. He says he thinks I'm trying to set the

FELIX SINGER

stage on fire. You know, figuratively and literally. Do you think that's true? Mmmm, these sandwiches are delicious!

AT THIS POINT PLAYWRIGHT STARTS TO DEPART AND SCULPTOR RETURNS.

Playwright (to sculptor): Kindly do your defecating on your own time. Not in my play!

Sculptor: That would be bringing coals to Newcastle, wouldn't it?

SCULPTOR IS INTRODUCED TO MOTHER, AND THEY DISCUSS ARTISTIC SPIRITUALITY, ETC. INGENUE COMES OUT OF BATHROOM WEARING ONLY PEEKABOO TOWEL—DOES AN Eek! STRANGE MAN! WITH MOTHER'S HELP AGAINST STARFACE'S OBJECTIONS, SCULPTOR PERSUADES INGENUE TO POSE IN THE NUDE FOR HIM, ALTHOUGH HE HAS ONLY MODELING CLAY TO WORK WITH.

JUST AS SHE AGREES, DIRECTOR FRANTICALLY SCREAMS CURTAIN. IT CLOSES TO ALL BUT A TWO-FOOT GAP THROUGH WHICH WE SEE THE TOWEL DISCARDED AND A GOOD (BUT SAFELY LIMITED) CHUNK OF ANATOMY. DIRECTOR, PLAYWRIGHT, MOTHER, STARFACE HAVE A HEATED BRIEF DISCUSSION IN FRONT OF CURTAIN ABOUT ARTISTIC FREEDOM, STRIPTEASE SHOWS, ETC.

MEANWHILE, BEHIND CURTAIN, SCULPTOR PERSUADES INGENUE TO PUT ON TOP OF BIKINI BECAUSE IT ENHANCES THE EFFECT. SHE COMPLIES. . . MRS. INGENUE IS PROTESTING, BEFORE THE CURTAIN,

THAT SHE KNOWS THAT SCULPTOR'S INTENTIONS ARE PURE, WHEN WE HEAR INGENUE SCREAM: 'PUT ME DOWN! YOU HEAR ME? PUT ME DOWN!' —NOT TOO CONVINCINGLY.

Playwright: But we must see this! Conflict! Drama! Part the curtain!

Director: Now, see here—I'm the director: I'm the one to holler curtain when and if—

Playwright: You're the one to holler what?

Director: To holler curtain.

Playwright: Pardon — didn't catch that — to holler?

Director: To holler curtain!

AND THE CURTAIN PARTS, THOUGH DIRECTOR TRIES TO HOLD ON TO IT AND IS DRAGGED OFF HIS UNICYCLE. SCULPTOR (BACK TO US) IS CARRYING INGENUE (FORMALLY STRUGGLING) TOWARD BATHROOM DOOR. A LITTLE BIT OF PROTEST, ENDING WITH

Director (HANDING HIM BOTTOM OF BIKINI): Now go in there and put her pants on.

Sculptor: Put them on?

Playwright: Good! Good! Reverse twist. Excellent. Always turn the

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situation upside down, that's the new European vogue.

Ingenue: He ain't gonna turn me upside down! — vogue or no vogue.

Sculptor: I'm from Kansas City, myself. (EXITS, CARRYING HER, DOOR

LOCK CLICKS. STARFACE HAMMERS AT DOOR)

Starface: Mary Sue! Mary Sue! Are you all right? (PAUSE)
Are you

all right, Mary Sue?

Ingenue: Fine — just fine —

AS STARFACE RETREATS IN FRUSTRATION AND RESIGNATION AND
EVERYBODY ELSE EXCEPT MOTHER GETS OFFSTAGE, MOTHER
REMAINS

SILENT A MOMENT — THEN

Mother: You know, I bet I know what they're doing in
there. (STARFACE

JUST LOOKS AT HER) Playing Chinese checkers. (SHE
STARTS TO

CRAWL AROUND THE FLOOR) You know, Mrs. Nickelbee's
little grand-

son was here yesterday and I let him play with the
marbles from the

checker game. I wonder if he lost any — the little rascal.
Mary Sue!

(CALLING AT DOOR) Oh, Mary Sue! Have you got all the
marbles in
there?

Ingenue: What?

Mother: I said — have you got all your marbles?

Starface: Mrs. Ingenue, in a broader sense, none of us do.

IN ABOUT FIVE OR TEN MINUTES, INGENUE AND SCULPTOR COME
OUT.

Starface: Fine thing. You give a poor man a peanut-jelly sandwich, and

this happens.

Ingenue: And he beat me.

Starface: What?

Ingenue: He beat me, two games to one. That's because he had the first move.

AND SO ON AND SO FORTH UNTIL WE GET THREE MORE PEOPLE, ONE

MORE DOG AND ONE CAT ON THE STAGE. AT THE END, INGENUE AND

SCULPTOR GO OFF TO GET MARRIED, AND STARFACE JUMPS OUT OF

THE WINDOW. PLAYWRIGHT WHEELS ON STAGE IN ORDER TO EXPLAIN

THE SEQUENCE TO AUDIENCE, BUT DIRECTOR PUSHES HIM BACK OFF.

DEFENDER

[illegible]

Decorum.

Deduce.

Dependence.

Delphinus.

Degenerate.

Democracy.

Demonstrative.

Denial.

Depravity.

Despair.

Destiny.

Devotion.

Destruction.

Deterioration.

Detachment.
Determination.
Dignity.
Disappointment.
Discipline.
Discovery.
Discretion.
Disguise.
Disillusionment.
Disorder.
Disposition.
Distraction.
Distribution.
Division.
Doctrine.
Dogma.
Domination.
Dominance.
Donation.
Doubt.
Downfall.
Drift.
Dreams.
Dread.
Drama.
Dramatic.
Dreadful.
Dress.
Drought.
Drunkenness.
Duality.
Duress.
Dust.
Duty.

Seize D (16) [illegible] d'accord, Mais! Fades—mais D'amour
Quand mene MA EHERE !! Christopher Perret

The Phoney

*you're alive or you ain't (paraphrase of a Hindu
proverb)*

The wind blows a stench of fish from the docks. It mixes with the coffee in the cups of those still up on the waterfront street. Around the corner a cloud of soot: Marchpane appears, half-running. He stops. He is of middle stature, complexion, sobriety. His suit is nondescript. A cat jumps out of a garbage can and scares him — swinging tail and all. The lid clatters to the pavement and Marchpane tries to kick the cat, but he misses. He extends his arms like wings and waits — but he does not fly, so he walks. Something of the tired megalomaniac shows in his stare. A quiet lonely sound comes up from the pit of his belly. He catches a seaman by the arm as he passes. ‘What time is it?’ ‘Easy, mate!’ The seaman extricates his arm. ‘It’s just past the hour.’ ‘What hour’s that?’ It is dawn or almost dawn. Still, early or late, an accordion plays behind a wall, and a whore leans her fat elbow on a dark window sill.

‘How about it?’ the whore says.

‘How about what?’ Marchpane grumbles.

He listens to the clatter of his heels on the pavement. He is thirty-five and he has had enough. Enough of everything — especially of being Marchpane. A bum lurches from a doorway: ‘Hev you got a dime for a poor mis’ruble . . .’ There is no compassion in Marchpane’s heart; if there ever was, it is irrevocably lost. ‘What street’s this?’ he asks the bum. The bum mutters to himself. ‘. . . Gaaagggghhhhhh, go on man!’ — Marchpane spits out in a sudden fit of anger. He pushes the bum back into the nighttime shades. In the window, the whore shakes out a fat laugh from nowhere.

Marchpane half-runs the remaining block. He bursts through the swinging doors. Lola is sitting at the bar — otherwise the place is deserted. A juke-box plays a quiet

melodious swing tune. There are dirty glasses on the tables, and the floor is littered with cigaret butts.

‘Where is Louie?’ asks Marchpane.

‘I dunno. In the john I think. He picked up some virus he says.’

Marchpane sits on the high stool next to her and rubs elbows.

‘I didn’t think you’d make it tonight,’ Lola says, looking into her glass. ‘Louie was looking at the clock. He says: “You think maybe something happened to him?”’ I says — pardon the expression — I says: “Maybe

CHRISTOPHER PERRET

he's dead." She laughs sharply. 'That's not funny.' 'It wasn't supposed to be funny. What happened to you anyway?' 'I was held up.' 'Must have been a disappointment to whoever done it,' Lola cackles. 'What do you mean?' Marchpane asks suspiciously. He is offended. 'Whoever held you up.' 'Oh for Christ's sake, Lola, stop the bad jokes.' Louie comes out from the back wiping his hands on his apron. 'Ah look what the wind blew in,' he says with feigned surprise. 'We thought maybe you wasn't coming tonight. "Strange," I says to Lola — "strange that Marzipan is not coming tonight." I was just going to close up.' 'Don't call me Marzipan.' 'Oh Christ, he's so touchy. That's what it was wasn't it, before you decided to be a real one-hundred per cent red-blooded Anglo-Saxon-American — right?' 'That's all he's got to worry about,' Lola says disgustedly, 'that's his great big problem — didn't you know that, Louie?' 'Let's get it over with,' Marchpane says. 'Now!' Louie says, 'with the sun practically blinding us.' Lola lays her hand on Marchpane's arm: 'Aren't you getting tired of it, Kiddo? Don't you have anything better to do?' 'A drink, Louie,' Marchpane says. 'You want something, Lola?' 'I'm telling you,' Louie says, wagging his big finger in Marchpane's face — and he is truly mad now, 'I'm getting tired of this little game of yours — and now, at five in the morning, when everybody's tired . . .' 'It's six, Louie,' Lola says. ' . . . I don't give a damn! — five! — six! — who the hell cares!' Louie yells. 'It's not your piddling money that keeps me in business. You'd better know that. It was all right for a while. . . . If you ask me, you're a phoney!' Marchpane is hurt. Very slowly he says: 'A drink, Louie.' Louie is vigorously wiping a glass behind the bar. 'How do you want it — straight?' Louie is still mad. 'Straight.' Marchpane drinks the bourbon as if he is on fire. 'Another, Louie.' 'Christ-Jesus! — what'cha do — eat some of them Mexican peppers?' 'He's maybe been in the desert,' Lola says. 'O.K., Louie, where is

it?’ Marchpane says.

CHRISTOPHER PERRET

‘Where is it. As if you didn’t know.’

Louie reaches under the counter and pulls out a soiled towel. He unwraps it. Lola sighs and finishes her drink. She picks up the toylike .32 and bounces it in her hand, as if feeling the weight of it.

‘You know what I think,’ she says. ‘I think this is a goddamned stupid game.’

‘Why can’t you play it at home?’ Louie says. ‘Alone.’

‘Because I don’t have the guts, Louie, that’s why.’

‘O.K.,’ Louie sighs resignedly, ‘but I tell you again, I’m sick of it. Let me know when you’re through.’ He walks to the front and bolts the door and pulls down the shades; then he goes out the back and slams the door behind him.

‘What’sa matter with you?’ Lola says. ‘Why don’t you grow up, Marchpane?’

‘What would you do if your name was Marzipan?’

‘Some reason.’

‘The whole damned day I wonder why, of all the people in the world, it’s got to be me who’s called “Marzipan.” Is it my fault if my old man was a crackpot? He called my brother Pistachio and my little sister Nougat. In France, Napoleon made a law against things like that.’

‘Sounds to me like your whole family’s nuts,’ Lola says seriously.

‘You’re right,’ Marchpane agrees. ‘All the more reason.’

‘All the more reason for what?’ Lola says acidly.

‘All the more reason for getting it over with,’ Marchpane says — and now he is getting mad as well.

Lola picks up the pistol, which she had put down on the bar, and holds it gingerly in her rough hand. She is thinking.

‘You’ll do it for me, won’t you?’ Marchpane whimpers.

‘How much will you give me if I do?’

'Here!' Marchpane says, pulling a thin fold of bills from his pocket, 'forty-two dollars. That's all I've got.'

'What about change?' Lola says grimly.

Marchpane throws the few coins from his pocket onto the bar.

'... seventy, seventy-five, seventy-eight cents,' he counts. 'I swear that's every penny.'

Lola takes the money and, after having unfolded the bills to count them, puts the lot carefully in her purse.

'Hold it here on my chest,' Marchpane says, feeling the cold gun barrel pushing through his shirt. 'When I count three. One . . . two . . . three!'

The pistol gives a short click. Christopher Perret

'That goddamned Louie will cross me up one of these days,' Lola says angrily, wrapping the pistol in its towel. Marchpane says nothing. He sits huddled over the bar while Lola pours herself another drink. She sips slowly, not watching him, until he slides off his stool and starts for the door. 'Here!' she calls, opening her purse and throwing him a ten-dollar bill, 'you'll need it.' Marchpane shoves the bill in his pocket. He blinks in the dawnlight as he goes out the door. 'The phoney,' Lola mutters when he is gone. She spits on the floor. 'He could have said thank you.' A block up, the bum is still slouched in the doorway, but this time he says nothing. The whore is still leaning on the window sill. 'Well, back again,' she says. 'How about it then?' 'How about what?' Marchpane says — but this time he stops. She looks him in the eye. There are deep pink wrinkles in her face. Marchpane takes the ten-dollar bill from his pocket as he walks in the house. The whore opens a door at the back and he walks in. 'You're very fat,' Marchpane says critically. 'There's some who think I'm too skinny,' she laughs bitterly. While the whore undresses, Marchpane lies down on the bed fully clothed. He stares at the ceiling. The long slanting sun is coming is through the window when she turns. She is all bulges and dimples, and her enormous breasts are blue with an intricacy of converging veins. 'What's your name?' she asks. 'Joe,' Marchpane says and closes his

eyes. The whore looks at him. A cock has just crowed for the seventh time. She is getting tired of standing there naked.

‘Aren’t you going to take off your clothes?’ she says. But Marchpane, wheezing softly through his nose, is fast asleep.

Slowly – before putting on her clothes – she slips the ten dollars from Marchpane’s hand.

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EVERYTHING FORTUNATE AND DEEP WITH LOVE

That air and that light were unlike the air and the light he had come to know in other times, at other places, as if colored by the fullness of that scene, shapen by the depth of that weather, the very total yet subtle sense of a well-being approaching joy pervading everything lending the air its color, the light its shape. He remembered everything of those walks, though the streets and the paths they had gone had been unfamiliar to him until several days before.

From the rooms they passed the buildings of the university: private homes and gardens converted for use as student living quarters; old and columned Southern houses now used by the fraternities; the darkened shapes of buildings housing lecture halls and laboratories standing like wounded eagles, aged and dying; and the newer structures in the process of being erected, rain pools collected in muddy ovals pocking the open wounds of earth astride the lumber and the planking and the skeletal scaffolding, leaf shade shadowing it all, shifting, softly blowing, blurring. And the talk each time they walked, the talk from the book store and the soda fountain and the luncheonette, soft young girls and Southern farm-boy faces idling, walking, standing, incessantly talking, their laughter going out above the trees, fusing with the leaf shapes, the leaf shade, and endlessly threading their voices, their beautifully-young and effortless voices.

His friend would comment midway in the block of tennis courts, watching (his eyes making the effort of a squint in the great glare of red clay and the white of the nets) the movements of the girls, lithe with their legs in shorts, slender, graceful with their hair pitching from side to side

and their breasts gently jouncing as they waited for the ball, ran soundlessly to meet it, touched their rackets to it, smiled as it cleared the net. And the boys, opposite, tanned at the arms and throat, calling 'Good shot!' or 'Thirty love,' the sun on their heads, healthy with good fortune, smiling: on many courts, moving, soundless, smiling, lit.

Past the university they took a back street intersecting West Cumberland, a street silent in foliage and earth smells, dark down a hill with shrubbery and cool loam. Always at one narrow point they walked singly: ahead of him, his friend's arms seemed long, his neck slender, the white of his shirt like a stab of pain in the heat of the day, and his back whole, somehow unwounded, the structure of bones beneath intact, assured. Then by a bridge of stone across a shallow stream ('The Mississippi?' he would ask, and smile) slipping among gold pebbles and glittering rocks below them, beetles and dragonflies sifting the light and the blue spray of the

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falls for whatever was to be found there, purple, silver, crimson, pink. And past the stone bridge an open field, a field seared with light and heat and scored by rains and seasons beneath the sky to a red dust burned of its grass and weed root, and the dust whirling, when the wind rose, to a mist of powdered sand slashing at the faces of the rock slabs and reducing them, slowly, steadily, in all weathers.

When they had reached the next street, a broad road of white concrete which formed a segment of one of the highways which passed through the center of the city before going up into the cool and shadowed hills beyond and becoming lost somewhere he had never been among the distant green slopes and blue ridges, he knew that they were entering 'downtown,' that they had crossed an almost visible but unstated border separating what they had come through (the hills, the fields, the stream, even the university campus) from what they were about to enter among. At the corner was

a gas station where they waited for the changing of traffic lights, a boy whose head was grease-stained sprawling beneath a car and working its underparts, a man with a beer paunch who was holding to a hose as gasoline pumped into a car tank, his hands heavy and solid and thick, and a bench in the shade at the side of the station where two Negroes were talking (always there when they would pass, always their tired voices, never their words), a black hairy dog at their feet, yawning, waiting. And, at the opposite corner, the slats painted white and mounted on a post, the measured mileages to the names of other cities: Memphis, Birmingham, Atlanta, Chattanooga: each for the choosing of a road, the setting of direction; each with its way to be taken, its distance to be gone, its lights to be reached at last in the first smoke of dusk after the days of riding, time as the dusty crossings of fields, as the deepening darkness of the stretches of mountain driving.

A bank was being built in the block ahead: construction crews moved like insects in and out of the holes of the framework, bearing some straw, some brick, some plaster, for the further and seemingly-endless securing of walls and floors and boards and doors, sweet with the smells of sweat and paint and planks exposed to rain, cool in the hollow of the shell where they worked and took lunch and drank beer, their legs stretched and their feet crossed, their boots muddy with varnish and cement and sawdust, their hands stained with their working, bits of plaster remaining caked beneath the fingernails no matter how long they had scrubbed to remove it. (It was the rhythm of the week their work would hold: each day that they would pass was another floor laid, another wall bricked in, another thing their hands had worked. The week was building as the workers built, their work confirming that the days had passed.)

The sidewalks narrowed here, and there began a consciousness of land at a premium, little space to be left

unoccupied, traffic heavier and buildings and shops crowding to be part of 'downtown.' They would pass the rows of rooming houses, porches welling in shade, in cool, in voices within

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the rooms of old houses; the dark little stores with dusty windows and wooden floors; the newer offices, air-cooled and unreally luminous in blue fluorescent ceiling fixtures.

On that day they turned into a side street which they hadn't walked before together, a vast red and brown building of brick at the end of it, two blocks away, the Farmer's Market, which his friend had wanted him to see. The street it faced was crowded with trucks and station wagons bearing fruit, flowers, vegetables, garden plants, chickens in cells of boxes: a farmer's market without benefit of these stands and stalls within the building itself. A small crowd had collected about a man holding a gamecock which could well have passed as a member of his family: the same bright and clear green eyes, the red-blond hair, the uncommon coloring. The two of them stopped briefly, watching the man's fingers stroking the ruffled neck and throat, gently, casually, as the man answered questions of the bird's breeding and prowess, the voice quiet and Southern and as gently measured, it seemed, as the fingers stroking.

A great darkness and fragrant cool came, after the street, within the building, and dabs of pepper-green, pale celeries, cucumber smells. And the eyes of fish staring from showcase windows, ice steeped about their gills, their purple scales; pink turkey birds hanging motionless by hooks of chrome through their throats; red sides of beef running with warm blood.

His friend stopped at a stall and greeted the man and girl behind it: the man asked if he had enjoyed the last bread he had bought there, and the girl brought a long loaf from beneath the stand, smiling with a great patience and some

vast understanding, her speech soft and shaded French: fourteen or fifteen, and as foreign there and uncommonly colored, somehow, as the red gamecock had been. He saw that his friend watched her too, his face dark and framed in darkness, his shirt very white. He passed the money to her across the counter and took the loaf, and again there was a length of arm, the solidity and soundness of the back, the deep whiteness: and, this time, the hands, the movement of them and their light. The girl had seen him, too.

Outside, they walked not with the commitment of direction (for it was afternoon, the light fierce and the sun heavily touching everything, time placed before them into afternoon, into dusk, into evening, for whatever they should fashion of it however should be their fashioning: time bountiful and endless, it seemed then, time together), yet away from the streets and the eddies of pink and black faces and in the direction of the hills. There appeared a row of broken shanties, squalid in the heat and pouring light, and a dirt road sloped where the street ended. One of the shacks, more brightly white in paint, many of the rotted boards replaced and made fast with new nails and hinges, bore a large lettered sign reading BEER.

His friend looked at it and turned to him. 'Are you thirsty?' His eyes, brown, seemed to have deepened since he had last looked at them, as if

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the heat, building in the afternoon, had reached them finally and entered, filled them, touched their rims. 'Yes.' The word refracted with the light, the heat, came doubled and redoubled as though through echoing caves and groves of gold and green and tree-dark, swelled almost into the hills beyond, returned soft and small and quivering, here, only here, where they were standing, where there were their words. Beyond the screen door was a room with two wooden tables and chairs and a bar of unbleached and unpolished wood with four stools lined before it. As they sat, the woman behind the bar, watching the way they entered and walked and placed the stools beneath them, shifted her weight to move before them, saying nothing, her arms thin, her hands on the wood like chicken feet. 'Two beers,' he heard his friend say, the words settling like coins on the bar, dark, bright, spinning, ringing on the wood. 'Dark or light?' They were the words of a hillbilly ballad as she spoke them, twanging and whining, crisp. 'Dark.' And threads of sunlight needled through the screens among the tight curls on her head as she bent pouring two glasses, stabbed within the beer as she brought both glasses to the counter with the foam spilling in streams along the sides. 'The first sip is the best,' his friend said to him, and his lips remained foamy until he drank a second time. It was strong and cold, green and gold and rust, the glass heavy and thick and deep. The heat was going slowly from his eyes. The radio had begun playing hillbilly songs: guitars and ukuleles, cowpokes and rustlers, women and love: plaintive and loud. Beside him sat a construction worker from the bank structure, his face young, his shirt smelling of plaster and smeared with paint, his hands heavy with their dust. And with him another of the crew. They were talking. Across the bar and before them were wall cupboards with glass doors, bowls and plates and jars and glasses behind the doors, gathering the dust and

the light of many such other afternoons. At the center of the cupboards was a narrow shelf supporting two faded pictures in their frames: sailors in their whites, two faces in two faded pictures, smiling, young, rakishly-wise: sailors who had joined, or boys on construction crews, or tennis players on the university courts, moving beneath the sun and tanned at the arms, at the throat: the short light hair, the youth and the smiles, the forms of wisdom. He noticed that his friend, too, had seen the pictures, had studied them. 'Dark beer is spring beer, stronger and tastier than the light. It's especially good in this hill country.' His friend's glass was half-empty,

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thin rings of white clinging inside in tiers. A patch of light had found his cheek, lay there motionless and soundless, lit his eyes, filtered to his collar. Could he know that it was there, possibly feel it, sense it?

They were speaking next to him, and she was still standing against the back of the bar, but their words did not go beyond them, though he wanted to hear, and her eyes were with something, or perhaps with nothing, beyond the screen door in the glare and the width of the day. He half-turned to look at his friend and saw that he was watching her face and her arms folded across her. The light had moved now to include all of her in it except her face: it worked at the print of the dress she wore, went the angles and the scrolls of the design, traced the interlocking patterns, yet in the end all that it had done was to illumine, for the print was untraceable after its beginnings, the pattern too complex and intricately worked ever to reach its end, or an end, of its design, going off, when the logic and symmetry had been thought to have been perceived and defined, into yet another series of dependent patterns and labyrinthine designs, mazes of shapes and forms and colors and shades, fusing, contrasting, meeting. All that the light could do was to illumine; and yet, despite the failure of a

larger vision, a vaster synthesis, there had come the great balance and beauty of the parts which had been recognized and tracked to their bits of ends, the small designs at the centers, the starting patterns.

The tips of his fingers pressed lightly against the curve of the glass; the glass was with but light and rings of foam.

‘Another one?’ It had sounded like a voice other than his own, yet he could feel the vibrations through his chest and in his throat (tanned at the arms and throat).

‘Not here,’ and they were walking past them to the door, still at their speaking, the builders.

In the street the day was large: no leaf, no hand, no outdoor corner went untouched by it. And the songs still played, rhythmic and cool: women and love.

On each of the other days they had walked to a downtown corner, turned where a man in white stood turning slabs of meat on a griddle, with the smell of grease and onions coming from the doorway, and had separated at the building in which his friend worked. (His friend would mount the stairs slowly, after saying ‘I’ll be with you later,’ enter the large room, hang his jacket, go to his desk, be greeted by several of the others at their desks and typewriters, and seat himself before one of the teletype machines, watching for news of what had happened since the previous midnight when he had left the office, the pattern of things evolving, the shape, somewhere in it, of design, of things moving and rising and falling and breathing, somehow somewhere distantly.) And heavily pass that time, be that time, until there was something else, a fuller thing (asking only where, and in what manner, what form), the face darkening (foreign there and uncommonly colored as a red gamecock or a child’s

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French voice in a Farmer’s Market of the South), his eyes, and the white of his shirt.

But that day there was not to be that corner, the griddle smells of little meals being worked over by men in white uniforms a size too large for them, the mounting of stairs and their walking in separate directions: time, that day, like a line limply sinking, settling, stretching before them with the feel of its weight somewhere out beneath the dark rocks and the cool moss in the deep water from among their hands under the sun, bountiful and endless, into afternoon, into dusk, into evening, time they should fashion to something in a manner that should itself be of their fashioning.

‘There’s a place I’ve passed several times, and liked, but never been in.’ It had sounded like some other voice; he wondered whether his friend could feel the vibrations through his chest and in his throat.

The place his friend had passed several times, and liked, but never been in, had a sign above its door: The Huddle. Suddenly dark inside, they walked to the end of the bar and moved two stools which faced the others and were to one side of the bar. The county prohibited the sale of drinks other than beer, but it seemed more of a bar than a beer bar: white cloths on the few tables near the wall, curtains on the windows, and a mirrored backing to the mahogany bar itself which repeated the low violet lights playing the pyramids of bottles and the rows of glasses arranged before them. It was dark there, and the other faces came slowly, only after the outlines had dissolved into something more definite, more tangible: two men at the other end, and a woman who was getting down from her stool between them and approaching him and his friend from behind the bar.

‘What’ll you boys have?’ She had a soft and a full face, a young face, with the brown hair worked above it and at the sides.

‘Two Buds,’ his friend answered, and she swayed off to the bin, removed two moist bottles, unworked the caps, and swayed back to set them before them with two small glasses.

She came from behind the bar and assumed her stool again at the other end, flanked by the two men. She would look intently at one, then at the other, as each of them spoke, laughed intently at what each of them said, seemed interested in seeming interested in the words they offered, the laughter they gave, the glances.

‘I like it here, Bill,’ he said to his friend.

‘The same as any other place.’ He didn’t look up as he said it, but he continued pouring beer into his glass.

‘No, it’s better than the other place, and for a beer bar it isn’t bad.’ But already he felt that he had gone too far, overextended himself because he had wanted to like the place, because he had wanted the time then to be good, to be full.

‘They’re all the same: a few more mirrors, a few less lights.’

It was as if, suddenly, they had approached the narrow point and were again walking singly, the white of his friend’s shirt somehow immense in

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the pain it could induce and sustain. 'But with other things, with the right things, they can be more.' 'They're always the end for me, Hal, the bottom of the barrel, crawling and digging for the last scraps remaining.' One of the men was whispering in the woman's ear, and she made herself bend back her head, the hair falling behind her, and laugh easily and fully. He lowered his glass and looked at Hal, his eyes again dark, steady. 'Your feeling for bars seems to have changed since that whole time.' He looked at Hal until Hal spoke, the eyes still darker, steadier. 'I hardly knew them then, Bill,' but it was inadequate even before it had left him: it told nothing, and there was everything to tell in it, everything to be told (asking only where the telling of it should be possible, where the words which could hold it, the words which, in some way, could work it out and wholly touch it in its importance, its truth). Bill had looked away again and into his glass, and began to speak, softly, as if to himself, or to the glass. 'I stopped by several times to see you afterwards, but you were never there.' He held the glass more tightly, and he looked to see the whiteness of Bill's shirt again, to feel its pain. 'They told me you'd been there, and I waited after that, but you didn't come back. I always wondered why you didn't come again after the few times you were there.' (It was more than the white which pained now.) 'You were never there when I came; you were somewhere, but you were never there.' He was frowning, searching it again, trying for some new understanding, failing. She stood before them suddenly, behind the bar, removing the empty bottles and setting two newly-glistening ones almost exactly on the water rings the first had left. Hal looked past her, saw the others who had filtered in while they had been speaking (a woman and two men at one of the tables nearby), saw through the curtained windows that there was blue within the street, not white, not day. It had worked and passed to

blue, to dusk (into afternoon, into dusk, into evening, bountiful and endless, time they should fashion to something in a manner that should itself be of their fashioning). She took several of the coins near their glasses on the bar, dropped them in a drawer, and went back to her stool. 'Why didn't you come back?' They both poured beer into their glasses. Bill drank, then looked at the glass. 'There seemed never another right time for it. It was something which needed its right time, and somehow that time was never there again.' 'Such a long time,' Hal said, and drank that he should say nothing more. 'Where were you: what were you doing with that time?' Bill's words

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had sounded difficult to speak.

‘There was a boy named Harry,’ he started, taking a breath, tightly pressing his glass, ‘a boy who gave syphilis to someone he had loved, and who arranged for an abortion, and who was almost killed by a friend he was very close to, the girl’s husband. He wanted badly to die, and I was with him for much of the time after that, and made him want it less.’

One could do the telling in a minimum of words, simple words, words almost of a story, fit them together, join them, and at the end it would emerge as told, all of a design and all of a story, a simple story simple in the telling and spare and simple in the words of the telling.

One of the men had slapped her buttocks, and she had cried ‘Damn!’ in feigned irritation. She was drinking and laughing, intent, though watery-eyed now, and less efficient in the process, on whatever (it was better, for the moment, to watch them, to listen, rather than look into the glass one was holding, or stroke the rings of water on the bar) they were offering, whatever they could give and might be giving.

‘Is giving enough for you; is giving all you want?’

He needed, as he had heard Bill say it, the whiteness of his shirt, the pain. And he knew what he would say.

‘I’m not that giving’ (asking only the words to tell it).

‘Oh, God, you’re always giving. From the time I first knew you. Even now. Even now you’re giving. There’s never a time you’re not giving. But you give it not as giving, for that would be too praise-seeking, too presumptuous, you think, for you. You do it in other ways, in small ways that are large but seem small because it is all outgoing and has no anticipation

of return mixed with it; small because one can't ever put one's finger on it and say "Here it is," or "It is in this he gives," or "He's giving now." None of these things, because it's larger than that, and because it's always operative and never reserved, as it is with the rest of us, for the moments one is able, or for the times that it occurs to us as the thing to be done, the right thing, the good thing. None of those things, because it's larger and greater and deeper, and because it's really love.'

His cheeks had flushed, and his hands had come to rest on the bar. His voice had been almost angry, certainly with a force and a passion new to it. Hal stayed a moment watching Bill's hands on the bar (almost as white as his shirt), then stepped from the stool and walked to the center of the floor. There was time needed, a pause, an area of quiet and dark. The juke-box bubbled with tinted water and colored lights, some organism standing with its workings exposed and its fluids pumping through it for all to see. The names of the songs were there, in metal slots, and he read them, but saw nothing. There was time needed.

'Hey!'

From the table nearby, with the two men and the woman, a hand was raised and motioning to him. He went to the table and saw their faces for the first time: the three of them young, one of them silent, the woman

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grinning, and the man who was gesturing looking about the eyes and lips as if he had had more to drink than the others.

'I'll match you for the juke. You call.'

He tossed a coin and tried following it in the air with his eyes.

'Heads.' (Yes, there was time needed.)

He retrieved the coin, studied it ("So right you be!"), and handed it to Hal, shaking his head as if, seriously judgellike, he were putting into work some involved process of simple

justice, presiding over its implementation that, no matter what might happen by other codes whose shocking unreliability was everywhere measurable in terms of their constant risings and fallings, justice would prevail here and right triumph.

The woman opened wide her eyes and arched her brows, as a child might in the enactment of mock surprise and delight, applauded lightly and quickly with the tips of her fingers, and laughed, a laugh like some small forest animal, high, and in short bursts.

It was a dime, enough for two records, and Hal knew that he should present the man with a semblance, at least, of the fruits of that justice and that right which the man had worked to mold.

‘What would you like to hear?’ Hal asked him.

But the man would have none of it for himself, and he waved his hand.

‘It’s all yours; you won it. Whatever you want to hear.’ Certainly, justice would prevail here and right triumph.

He pushed two buttons and the organs of the thing began their work in full view. She laughed again, black-haired and small and somewhere in her forest. As he walked back to his stool at the bar, he saw that Bill was gone.

A man sang of women and love: no cowpokes, no rustlers; no guitars or ukuleles. Only women and love. She was behind the bar again, and he asked for two more bottles of beer. Her eyes were now like the man’s who had presided at his table over the fair and equitable administration of justice: dreamy and watery, only loosely seeing.

He felt his friend next to him again, mounting his stool. Bill leaned to him. ‘I think someone must be renting the men’s room as living quarters: clothes are spread about, and a toothbrush, and a shaving outfit.’

Bill smiled the way a dawn slowly shows through banks of black and purple clouds, gradually inching to span the

whole arch of a sky.

‘I wondered where you went. I won in a game of skill at that table.’

‘I left just as you redeemed your chips and made off with fists crammed.’

It was like improvising at the piano, picking first at a melody, a rhythm, and then embroidering upon it with the harmonies, the chord progressions.

For it was time that was needed.

Hal leaned to him in imitation, even smiling the way Bill did: ‘Unless the bartender straightens out soon, and stops being such a good sort with the patrons, there won’t be anyone to serve the beer or run the establish-

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ment.'

The woman at the table was pointing at them, speaking of them to her friend whose dime Hal had won. She laughed every few seconds, looked at them, looked back to her friend, then looked at them again. She wanted it understood that they were being spoken of at her table.

'Ah'm makin a little wagah with mah friend ovah heah: ah claim you two ah related, an he claims yoh not. Could y'all settle ah disputin? Ah you brothahs, maybe?'

'We're brothers,' and smiled deeply. 'Do you think we look alike?'

'Oh, yes. And theah's not much that separates you eithah, is theah? How much: nine a ten months?'

(No, there's not much that separates us.)

'A year,' Hal told her.

'Ah jus knew you wah close, jus lak ah knew you looked alak, an lak ah knew you wah brothahs.'

She turned back to her friend, pleased with the way it had gone.

Hal and Bill smiled as they drank, and Hal leaned to him: 'But it's all true, isn't it? What of it can be denied?'

Bill smiled and shook his head: 'You're right, it's all true. "So right you be."'

A large man in an apron and a blue shirt appeared then behind the bar, and the woman went behind a curtained door, her hair coming loose and a shoulder strap showing from beneath the short sleeve of her dress. And another man, a smaller man with unfocused eyes and a small grin, followed behind the large man.

'You can take care of those dishes first in the back,' the large man, the bartender, said to the unfocused eyes and the small grin, the dishwasher, then moved to the other end of

the bar to serve a man who had come in.

The two friends watched the dishwasher look around him, survey the ashtrays, the empty bottles in the racks, the broom in the corner: comically, bewilderedly.

'How are you, Stan?' Bill said to him. Was he improvising at the piano?

'How do you know his name is Stan?' Hal asked him.

'Stan Laurel, of Laurel and Hardy. He looks like Stan.'

From the way he watched him, spoke to him, there seemed more than improvisation in it. (What was the more?)

Stan's voice was thick, and his lips moved as a child's lips shaping new sounds: 'I'm goin to a party, and there's gonna be women and liquor.'

'Oh, is that it?' Bill laughed, nodded his head, understood the party, the women, the liquor.

Stan seemed encouraged, seemed to have sensed that what he had said had been understood.

'Have to finish up here, then I'm off to a party. Plenty drinks and lotta women.' He shifted from one foot to the other and rubbed his hands, as if

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it were deep winter, grey, the sky with wind, the earth hard with cold.

'I see, I see.' Bill laughed even more darkly; the smile seemed to hurt him, and looking at it was as full with pain for Hal as was the shirt and the vastness of white. There was no doubt now that Bill understood, that something within him had opened to the man's words and risen throughout him, low in his bowels and stomach, up and across his chest, into his throat, flowering twistedly on his lips in a slash of a smile more like a wound.

Stan eased off behind them to his sink with dishes, and the bartender moved toward them to change their glasses and bring two more bottles.

‘Stan seems like a good man,’ and a trace of Bill’s smile remained.

The man looked at him, smiled quietly, continued handling the glasses and the bottles.

‘Willie, my dishwasher? Oh, he’s okay. Give him a buck for his bottle and a buck for a woman and he’s your friend for life.’

The man understood, too: it was in his voice, in his eyes as he kept them to the glasses that he rinsed, even in his large hands as he put a white towel to the bar and worked it in ovals across the shining mahogany surface before them.

‘Don’t do much work, but heck, I can do most of it, myself.’

Yes, he understood.

He had moved away again to the other end of the bar.

The woman who had been bringing bottles before the man had come now stepped from behind the curtain across the room. She shifted uncertainly, looked for the stool she had left, then made her way, waveringly, toward it. Her face was heavily white with powder, her hair assembled correctly once again, the shoulder strap adjusted so that it did not show. The same two men helped her to the stool between them, each holding an arm. She resumed her smile and her intent examination, though now with eyes that could not hold clearly and for long to their features, their faces, waiting again for the words to be given and unfurled within their cigarette smoke, waiting again for a gesture offered on the air.

Bill was drinking, and Hal looked at him and feigned the seriousness and purposefulness with which a stranger asks local directions of a person he has never before seen.

‘Just where is the location of that furnished apartment you were speaking of, the one with the full wardrobe and toothbrush and shaving equipment?’

Bill smiled, but the pain was gone from it. 'To your right is a curtain. Behind the curtain is a door. Behind the door is the apartment, furnished.'

Hal's feet touched the floor and he was walking to the curtain in a slightly-veering arc: they had been there several hours. Then, the door. There were old pants and jackets hung behind the door, and a toothbrush and tube of paste on the sink; and next to them a razor and a shaving brush white with lather. It was already dark outside the window.

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He looked into the cracked mirror: one side of his face hung an inch lower than the other side. Bountiful and endless, into afternoon, into dusk, into evening: it was already dark. And he felt again the pressure of light, the vast field of whiteness that was Bill's shirt, and he could feel that his cheeks were wet. In the mirror he saw tears spilling one by one from the edges of his eyes, and in the blur and flow of colors and shades he remembered the woman's dress, the pattern of it with its colors and shades running to each other, joining, fusing (all that the light could do was to illumine), dividing to their separate ways. A vision of the world? And the pain renewed itself as he thought of him sitting there now, his back slightly bent and leaning to the bar, looking, fingering the glass, the shirt not less white than when he had put it on that morning, and the music, the juke-box playing (he could hear it through the walls and the doors and the curtains), another voice, another song, other women and other love. And how the French girl had given him the bread and looked at his hands, the man stroking the gamecock, and the woman looking at them both and believing they were brothers (what had she seen?). No, there's not much that separates us, but none of those things, because it's larger and greater and deeper, and because it's really love. (But where could one tell it, where the words with which it could be told?) Or is it really only, as he had said, the bottom of the barrel, crawling and digging for the last scraps remaining.

And he thought of Harry, of Stan, of a baby that had been killed before it was born, and of how badly he had wanted to die; and the husband a close friend, shooting at him and

trying to kill him, because the girl's body was with his pus, his sores, infected with him, and because they were close friends (where were the words to tell it?), because they were close (no, there was not much separating them), because he had been with him during that time and had worked to cause him to need less badly to die (and where, in what place, could one tell it, even if there were words?).

Or the woman looking intently from one man to the other, needing their talk, their glances, their cigaret smoke, their hands, that there might be a thing there for her; the man seeing him at the juke-box, flipping the coin, giving it; and the woman speaking to them, wanting their attention, asking if they were brothers (what was she really asking of them?), needing a response, a word, a small animal's laugh from the depth of a forest. (The gamecock had been frightened, and the man was stroking it in order to soothe it, comfort it, assure it that it would come to no harm within his red farmer's hands. And hadn't the bartender said of Stan, despite the little work he did — but heck, he could do most of it himself —, that he was okay, okay and in no danger that he would come to harm with his large bartender's hands nearby, rinsing the glasses, touching a towel to the bar and working over the rings of beer and water in small ovals, his eyes to the dark mahogany?)

HERBERT MORRIS

He saw his eyes in the mirror, rubbed the line of tears from his cheek to his chin, and saw again clearly. His eyes were darkly blue.

'I know, I know,' he heard himself say, the lips working softly, slowly. (I see, I see, Bill had said to Stan. A vision of the world?)

Moving beyond the walls and doors and curtains, he went to his stool and smiled at Bill as he mounted it and sat.

'I think that must be Stan's apartment, Bill: a place to come and go.'

‘Between parties?’

Two men were now seated beside him, one a boy, the other with grey hair and lined about the eyes. He thought he remembered their faces from among the bricklayers and painters and builders of the construction crew. They wore slacks and short-sleeved shirts, and the older of them bore tattoos down the length of both arms; they were smoking and drinking, occasionally speaking.

Stan reappeared near them from behind the curtain of his sink. He spoke softly to the bartender, almost shyly: ‘Tom, I done mosta the dishes, an I can do the rest tomorra. Can I go now, Tom, I got a party waitin?’

‘Go ahead.’ The bartender looked at him, reached into his pocket, and put two bills into Stan’s cupped hands (a buck for his bottle and a buck for a woman: and a friend for life. Women and love).

‘Thanks, Tom,’ he mumbled, still smiling, his eyes weakly glistening, and moved off.

‘You’re a good man, Tom,’ Bill said to him softly.

Hal looked at him as he had said it: the dark face still framed in darkness, the hands white cupping the glass, the shirt smooth and infinitely contained with its whiteness, bountiful and endless, into afternoon, into dusk, now into evening.

The bartender looked at them alternately.

‘Heck, way I figure it’s the man’s life. Take it away and you kill him. He’s half-gone the way it is, but so long as he can still enjoy it, why keep it from him?’

When he had moved to the other end, Bill looked at Hal, half-smiling.

‘Stan and I are brothers too, Hal: we like our liquor, we like our women, we like our parties. Do you think that woman over there would have seen the resemblance?’

The collar was touching his chin, Hal saw, touching the side of his face where the sunlight, earlier, had touched him,

and his eyes were very dark. Then he was looking into the cracked mirror in Stan's room again, one half of the face caught in the crack and so at another level than the other half, the eyes very blue, the lips forming to I know, I know, all of a design and all of a story, seemingly, a simple story simple in the telling and sparse and simple in the words (I know, I know) of the telling. But most of it remaining, in the end, untold (how, even if there were words, and in what place?). A vision of the world?

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HERBERT MORRIS

Herbert Morris

And again there was time that was needed, a pause, an area of quiet, of dark. (It's the man's life.)

But Bill continued speaking, unsmiling now, looking at the glass: 'You and Jimmie are the best and the deepest things of that whole time, Hal. The rest of it is nothing. I was busy too, I was working, but it was nothing like yours. I was working with bars, and I was working with women, but all of it was a sick and a broken working, and now there's nothing from that time, nothing except you and Jimmie.'

One of the men of the construction crew, the boy, had asked him for a light, and Bill reached across and gave him a book of matches.

GK'66

HERBERT MORRIS

'Much obliged,' he said, saluting with a finger. His voice was Southern. 'I remember Jimmie so well, Bill: light, very Southern, very lovely.' 'She hated being Southern. The last time that I saw her, in New York, on leave, she barely sounded Southern. It was one of the things she worked so hard at.' Hal remembered they had both been in uniform, and she had taken them that evening to a party at Jeanette's, a Southern girl whom Bill had known from home, a girl who painted and who had long been in love with Jimmie; a girl, Bill told him, who had tried to kill herself because Jimmie did not love her. And he remembered Jimmie that night, darkly light on the sofa, silent, listening, drinking yellow wine. 'The last time that I saw her his books were all over the apartment, wherever I turned. They were going to be married in the summer.' (But did the words fully hold it; was it now wholly told, wholly carried in its own true weight, its own real depth?) The tattooed arm beside him reached across to the ash tray, the fingers working slowly to crush the cigaret. Bits of plaster remained caked beneath the fingernails. (To work was to continue each day and to talk and to move and to be breathing in the certain way that one breathed; to be building, in the accumulations of one's continuing, one's talk, one's movement, one's breath. What had they been building beside him, and the other ones, boys and men endlessly coming, endlessly going, from the sunlight like a stone on them to the dark and the cool sea and the shadowed skeletal scaffolding, bearing the straw, the brick, the cement, all for the further and seemingly-endless securing of walls and floors and boards and doors, sweet with the smells of sweat and paint and planks exposed to rain, cool in the hollow of the wave where they worked and took lunch and drank beer, their legs stretched and their feet crossed, their boots muddy with varnish and cement and sawdust, their hands stained with their working, bits of

plaster remaining caked beneath the fingernails, no matter how long they had scrubbed to remove it? What had it gone to, the construction jobs, the continuing, the talk, the movement, the breathing: where was it now, in what structure, what thing that had been built, that remained, that stood solid, unshifting, always in its volume, in its touchability?) He looked up, and at Bill, happy to be beside him: 'Let's have some air.' They slipped from their stools feeling the floor uncertainly beneath them, passed the construction workers (the boy was asking the man what other building jobs he had been part of), and noticed that the group at the table had left. Before they came into the street, they saw the two men at the end of the bar still giving their words within their cigaret smoke, still offering their gestures on the air, but the woman gone, no longer holding to their faces with her eyes, needing their speech, their laughter, their hands.

HERBERT MORRIS

It was cool as they walked, late, dark: the narrow-sidewalked streets, the limits of 'downtown,' the black and wind-whispered shell of the bank, the lights of cars illuminating the slats painted white mounted on a post and the mileages to Memphis, to Birmingham, to Atlanta, to Chattanooga (all that the light could do was to illumine). And the open field with only the night above it, all of them (no, there's not much that separates us) somewhere breathing in the darkness and at rest finally (the French girl with some vast understanding, the gamecock), only the night sounds working beyond their windows and their beds, only the night now moving soundlessly, the night holding it and telling it more simply and more sparsely than it could ever have been told, moving above them (even Harry somewhere, and Harry's butchered baby), containing them as nothing shall as deeply contain them (even Jeanette, Jeanette in the North, in Jimmie's New York), working endlessly toward the first faint light tearing the night's east, bountiful and endless, again into afternoon, into dusk, into evening, and farther where they must pass singly.

And, as they walked, the very great and deep whiteness of his shirt in the darkness, and that (asking only where the telling of it should be possible, where the words which could hold it, the words which, in some way, could work it out and wholly touch it in its importance, its truth) no word could tell it.

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VELMA ARMSTRONG

THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT

At the faint click of the lock and creak of the hinges, the young interrogators looked eagerly toward the door. Even their deference for their chief failed to erase their relief at the interruption. While they sprang to salute him and join him for a whispered colloquy by the door, the prisoner slumped at the desk, head on arms, harassed beyond notice of what was happening.

The chief investigator dismissed them and sat down in a chair on the opposite side of the desk from the prisoner. He remained silent while noting the scurfy scalp beneath the yellowed wisps of hair, the map of a long life traced on the prisoner's neck, and the uneven shallow breathing.

'Comrade,' he said, 'you are weary. We must conclude this business and let you rest.'

The prisoner sighed deeply, shook his head, and forced himself to sit erect. Benevolently he observed the sprinkle of gray on the chief's temples, the slackening of his jaw line, and the slight bulge at his waist. Then he smiled. 'The young cats pounce too swiftly for this old mouse.'

'Then I must deliver you from them. They report you have started to record a message for the people. As you have already declared your love of our country and desire to serve it, you need merely add encouragement to cooperate with the regime.'

'And if I refuse?'

Almost too softly to be heard and as if with great reluctance, the investigator said: 'Death.'

'Ah, you tempt me. Without God's help I should have yielded long ago.'

The prisoner covered his face with outspread fingers. After several minutes he raised his worn face and said: 'I am

ready to finish the recording. Be patient with my rambling. I am old and tired. And the people will believe me only if the words are mine.'

'Of course. We want you to speak naturally.' The investigator switched on the tape recorder.

The prisoner edged nearer to the slowly-turning disc. As his voice regained its sonority, he shifted his benign gaze to the investigator, as if he were an uncle sharing a treasured memory with a favorite nephew.

'A traveler, exhausted after having crossed a sandy desert and climbed a rocky slope, collapsed on top of a mountain. From this summit he looked down upon a beautiful garden. In it he could see happy people were tending the flowers, reading under fruit-laden trees, refreshing themselves by

VELMA ARMSTRONG

sparkling fountains, and entering marble palaces.

‘Forgetting his fatigue, the traveler sped down the slope and across the plain, past forests, vineyards, orchards, and fields. Although the distance to the city in which was the beautiful garden was as far as across the desert, he in his joyous anticipation ran in a few hours the same miles he had stumbled over from endless day to endless day.

‘Arrived at the city, he found only one opening in the sheer wall around the garden. Beyond a pit so deep its bottom was lost in darkness, he thought he could glimpse a green haze, hear ethereal music, and smell an exquisite fragrance.

‘He accosted the first passerby, a man well seasoned with years. “Sir,” he asked, “how may I enter the garden?”’

‘The citizen smiled compassionately. “Stranger, no one may enter the Garden of Delight before he is chosen. Suddenly with rapturous song he is carried into it, and he never returns. Those who try to force their way into it fall into the abyss with appalling shrieks at having lost all hope of ever entering it. Such, also, is the fate of those who try to push others into the abyss.”’

‘Charlatan!’ The investigator flicked off the recorder. ‘You have tricked me into listening to the gibberish with which you beguile the people and ridicule the regime.’

‘The prisoner raised a placating hand, as if to ward off a blow from the fist shaken at him. ‘You threatened me with death. To me that would be entry into the Garden of Delight. But I should lose the right to enter if I failed to warn you of the abyss.’

‘If you are implying sentencing you to death will sentence me to hell, I believe neither in heaven nor in hell.’

With somber gaze the prisoner regarded him. 'You may not believe, but you have heard death's whisper — and been afraid. You need time to become familiar with him and decide whether he is friend or foe. Bring back the young cats to toy with the old mouse. For them death is a distant adventure.'

'You shall not tire them with more of your foolish fables. Instead, in your cell you shall decide whether tomorrow you enter most agonizingly your Garden of Delight.'

After the prisoner had been led away, the investigator paced back and forth. Whatever direction his steps or thoughts took he was unable to arrive at a conclusion as to whether or not the prisoner desired death. Abruptly he pulled a chair under one window, stepped upon it, and looked through the bars at a gray box of dingy snow, cement-block walls, and heavy clouds.

He returned to his desk and dropped his head on his arms. Behind his closed eyes there appeared a vista of trees and flowers, wafted by a potpourri of fragrance and melodies. And the hand of the prisoner offered him a nectarine.

CHARLES WYATT

SHE HAS BECOME IMPROBABLE

She has become improbable, this muse,
Lurking in the dust of the window shade,
No harder tits on stone statues —
I use
A blade to milk her, hacking from the staid
Untroubled silence of her retreat each
Reluctant echo, dull and unlikely.
Behind her, twittering on the unreachable snow,
A blur of sparrows, wary and grizzled,
Ducking for seeds against the galvanized droop
Of a frozen drainspout ——
She would never confide such things to me,
Being of a more classical bent.
Outside, on the dog-yellowed snow,
She would grieve poor Hector's blood
Blackler than he'd believe.

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JASCHA KESSLER

A CURRENT BAD DREAM

... I am in the stupormarket and the wild cries out to me, Stopcorn! but four is plenty lackbirds, cause mother, and so I farther off right and left there where I lie, down in the I'll off caprice where any one can and its label too on the self, so when we twostep on it's low, sweet slow, attuned to my own slopping basket at the meetsection — and now here I am, rapt and found wanting, all of it: I's knows and hears, lingers, harms, ands feats down to the crotch stock and marrow; but it's its hunkers that drives me, park me in the slot, takes me and stakes me rite out to the fine lines there at the cash majesty as I slash my blankroll, cheek to the checker and then, raising the poker, again and wet again, I ante up at her, straight bluff to her spade flush, right to the Queen it seems as though my two by too baabaabagsfull of ipsofacto ware all the goods to seed in this last of fall horrible whirls. . . .

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HARLAND RISTAU

DISCLOSURES FROM THE OTHER SIDE

The have-nots have the precious gift of poverty, like a middle-aged woman who cannot slip off her wedding ring. The have-nots throw garbage out of the window, like Koufax tossing up a left-handed curve. They never worry whether American Motors split, nor do they raise an eye brow if General Electric drops a point; they seem careless in patriotism, seldom seething over the dangers of Vietnam. They fornicate in phone booths, they like crowds in living rooms and they seldom back the banks, and they drink! And everybody with or without a college education knows the have-nots deserve nothing, because it's their own damned fault!

WALTER BENESCH

A FIVE-ACT PLAY FOR FOUR MINUTES

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THREE ESCHATOLOGISTS AND A BASSOON

Prologue: (SUNG) Let the Old Ones find the place upon the map, a three-dimensional contourtype:

Act I: (VIRILE) Bold (again . . .)! Obliterated for a great cause!

(. . . one life lived, so tantalizing to die a youth . . . but make it sure and sudden — no stumps to drag to the entire end, the infirmities of splendid age enough, uncompounded. . . .)

Act II: (CONSIDERED) ‘Here’s a high point, splendid place . . .’ ‘fresh air . . .’ ‘commanding view . . .’ ‘fit for at least a major . . .’ ‘broad — hold a hundred men . . .’ ‘strategically important . . .’

Intermission: hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

.

WALTER BENESCH

Act III: (EXUBERANT)

‘Quick! An appropriate name!’

‘Where’s the Press?’

‘A stand determined!’

‘Shall be taken . . .’

Act IV: (WITH CONVICTION)

‘Our . . . courageous . . . young . . . men . . .

shall . . . brace . . . once . . . more . . .

for . . . freedom’s . . . line

(RISING ACCENT) . . .

that . . . they . . . may . . . remind . . . us . . .

. . . of something or other, there on

map No. DD 136-A-42-Z-901 . . .’

Act V: (STATELY)

The People:

'Glory be to the Father!
Glory be to the Son!
Bunches of Glory for Mother!
Open Heaven Wide!
Skip the Admission Charge!
(HUSHED) The Commander in Chief is now praying. . . .
see the tears . . . '

THOMAS BLEDSOE

**THAT'S HOW THE POETICS CRUMBLE,
EDUCATION-WISE**

Now class
The Professor of Poetry said,
We have a question.
Should the poet
Accept Social Responsibility?
Or does he just
Create?
Buzz groups now,
Class.
Groups of six,
Four groups.
Let's achieve
Consensus.
They con
Sensed,
Prosaically enthusiastic,
Soberly uplifted on camera,
Jamming
The poet's still, small . . .
Drunken voice,
Intoning.
(You know
Howpoetsare.
Disreputable)
Like look, kids,

The drunken voice whispered,
There's one
Immemorial
Con
Sensus.
Liquidate the Pedagogic hustlers
Woodenly buzzing
Their sawdust souls,
Denying in you,
My children,
The life they were packaged into
Castrate.
There followed
A sudden silence.

WILLIAM ERWIN

DISCOTHEQUE

passing through the bistros, I scan the
stooled literati, semi-diletantish roans —
Erectile with placebo personae
Harken! the destruction of Laforque, symbolic illiterate
the quasi-discord of poor Rachmaninoff, the
peasants poet,
I am told
hair rooted deep in coffee grinds
they belch and spit the toothless promenade
of ancient ritual, rambling in despair:
the panacea for failure, I was told
passing out near Charybdis (take this whisky-sour
back — it's all water) I breathed relief
defying la belle dame au chihuahua
who jived in convicts' boots upon the floor:
sensual, somnambuliste — satanic princess
'your lapels are too wide; what? cut my beard?'
Dance you bitch, the drums are breathing
And the curtains closing
I am told

SAM BRADLEY

LOSSES TO RECOUP

Our deserts gamble. Deserts have time to spend.
Money? Men? muh — moneymen.
Roulette sky corrupts hope.
The vulture shrieks, impregnated by wind
under a pandering horoscope.
A hurtling idiocy of wind
dares a hither and thither, a to and fro.
What outrager is your kin?
Idle question? Spin. I — in.
This time, the loser will win?
(Again. End is a sort of luck. Hopes end.
The vulture, violated by beginnings,
swings high. And has Time — to spend.)

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JO LOMBARD

THE SPIDER WHO TOOK LSD

A spider once lived in a museum of modern art. One spring night as he was making his web over a corner of a Jackson Pollock specimen, a thought came to him. It was his first thought, and he didn't quite know what to do with it. Tying off his thread, he looked around for someone to share it with.

'Having trouble there?' called a leaf-roller cricket, lighting on a nearby mobile. 'You didn't finish your web. You sick or something?'

The mobile was slowly revolving, its copper wires glinting in the moonlight, and the spider waited for the cricket to come around again. 'Fact is, I was just thinking. I'm tired of weaving the same web every night. First the spokes, then the spiral; first the stringers, then the ringers. Why should I be a slave to habit?'

'You got a point there, Mac. Try something different. How about my type of construction? Here, I'll give you the formula. First, roll yourself in a leaf. Next, weave the edges together starting at the narrow end: zig, zag, zig, zag all the way down. There, you've got yourself snug as a bug in a rug.' The cricket began to fiddle absently, rubbing his translucent wings.

The spider waved a couple of furry legs in the air impatiently, and exclaimed: 'No — no, I don't want another formula. Absolutely no rules, that's what I want. Why, look at this painting I'm working on. You don't think that was done on a formula! No, sir! No strings at all, you might say. No preconceptions.'

'Preconceptions?' puzzled the cricket, recalling mating songs and egg deposits. 'Well, go right ahead, and let me know if the thing hangs together. If it's all the same to you, I'll weave my usual, today. That way I'm sure to wake up

tomorrow night.' The cricket jumped off into the darkness, imparting a backward motion to the mobile piece on which he had been sitting, and thereby leaving behind an excellent illustration of Action and Reaction, the title of the mobile.

The spider was undaunted. 'Framework, phooey. I'll weave the Great American Web, totally formless and saturated with significance.' He chose a fresh canvas and set to work at once.

The first light of dawn surprised a South African termite, just off the boat and crunching behind the side of Trafalgar Square. He barely missed catching his leg in a rather sticky wicket. 'Watch it, Bub,' he said to the spider, 'you're breathin' on my territory.'

'It turned out just the same,' lamented the spider, ignoring the admonition. 'This web looks exactly like all the others. Oh dear!'

Immediately a large succulent fly buzzed in and was trapped.

JO LOMBARD

‘Gotcha,’ said the termite empathetically.

The spider began to munch his dinner. It was a big one all right, and the formic acid dripped over his jaws. ‘That’s the trouble with conventional form,’ he responded. ‘It’s so predictable. But tomorrow for sure, I break out of the mold.’

The next night’s web, however, was as routine as the last. Its gray logarithmic spiral was a perfect match for the op art canvas behind it. The spider, ready to tear his fuzz out, crawled straight into the striped tail of a scorpion. ‘Oops, no offense meant,’ he mumbled, recovering himself. ‘I can’t understand it, can you? Every time I try to make a different web, it comes out the same.’

‘My dear fellow,’ crackled the scorpion in his most critical tone (for he fancied himself a critic), ‘it is evident to me, steeped as I am in the Oriental flavor of life, that you must free yourself from your unconscious image of webness. That is no doubt your difficulty.’

‘How do you suggest I begin?’ the spider inquired.

‘In the East, they do it with opium. As a matter of fact, I came over with a load of the stuff. We shipped out of Hong Kong with a million-dollar cargo. Down around the Horn and into New York City, where the market is. Of course, opium isn’t in any more. Not for artists. It’s LSD, these days. I’ll tell you what — a friend of mine’s an engraver beetle up at Columbia, lives in the desk of a graduate student in psychology. Bored hell out of those drawers. He’s our best contact to get you a jolt of LSD. What do you say?’

The spider could hardly contain himself. ‘Rhyme and reason overboard! New freedom for us arthropods! How could I refuse?’

In a few nights, the scorpion had obtained a fix. The spider sat, or squatted, to await results, while the scorpion

watched from a hole in an egg-shaped blob of clay labeled: 'Lump of Life.'

The spider did not have long to wait. The walls around him began to melt, the white plaster dripped thickly over the canvases, and sudden flowers bloomed briefly in corners. Filled with a great sense of being, the spider looped his threads in an incomprehensible concatenation of trajectories.

'Glorious,' he cried as he shuttled over his creation. 'Freedom,' he exclaimed, soaring through the orange flowers which by now had filled the room. 'Not a spiral in it, not a common catenary in the lot,' he remarked. The room was ablaze with cycloids and epicycloids, sinusoidal bumps and hyperbolic humps.

'A masterpiece,' whispered the exhausted spider, 'the inchoate essence of arachnida.'

The Great American Web failed to attract a single fly. Three days later, the spider died an incommunicable death.

A POX ON MEDIOCRITY

(AN INTERVIEW WITH ALGONQUIN WHIFFENPOOF)

by Francis Murray

A GONDOLA WAS WAITING for me as I stepped off the elevator into Algonquin Whiffenpoof's palatial apartments in the Waldorf-Astoria Towers, and I was quickly rowed into a small canal near the library. The butler presented himself as I stepped out of the gondola, and, through sign language, motioned for me to be seated in a high-backed Italian Renaissance chair in the foyer.

The walls were vibrating from a thunderous rendition of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*; and, judging by the decibels of the sound, the entire Metropolitan Opera Company was ensconced in the *salon de musique*. As I sat quivering from the noise, the butler handed me a note to the effect that my appointment with Mr. Whiffenpoof would have to wait until the opera was over. The next thing I knew, a large gathering of people moved out of an adjoining hallway.

' . . . kindly deposit your quarters in the turnstiles and follow me single-file,' said a middle-aged woman with a battery-operated megaphone. She was wearing a vivid purple cocktail dress, gold shoes, and a lavender picture hat with a large white ribbon extending almost to the floor; her bouffant rose Du Barry wig looked like a three-storey beehive.

'Now please form a circle in front of this doorway,' she signaled; and some twenty-five or thirty people followed her orders. This Twelfth-century marble doorway of San Leonardo al Frigido in Massa-e-Carrarra is the most recent addition to the apartments. It was probably sculptured by Biduino, who was greatly influenced by Guglielmo of Pisa, the famous mid-Twelfth-century sculptor of Tuscany. The

doorway was removed from the church in the 1870's and installed in a private villa near Nice, France. It was last seen in the 1920's; until recently, when Vincent Price discovered it quite by accident in St. Tropez, where it formed part of the runway in a seedy little provincial bistro.

'On your left you see one of James Rosenquist's famous POP paintings. It is the 683-foot replica of the U.S.S. Independence, consisting of 193 floor-to-ceiling panels. This, of course, is the same size as the boat. Now, over here . . .'

In about an hour, the noise subsided and extras in costume and makeup began running down the corridor toward their dressing rooms. The principals, including Birgit Nilsson, left by private elevator. Shortly, Mr. Whiffenpoof appeared in a bright red kimono (he'd thought the Met was going to give Madame Butterfly) and led me into the library. There was a 'Welcome Jehovah's Witnesses' placard scotch-taped to one of the glass doors.

'I can't tell you how thrilled I am to meet you, Mr. Whiffenpoof,'

I began. 'I think I have read every single one of your short stories.'

'Oh, how nice,' he replied, handing the kimono to the butler, revealing turquoise jodhpurs and matching jacket.

'I especially liked your story in last month's ATLANTIC. But where on earth did you get the idea of two cats falling in love?'

'Wasn't it divine?' he laughed, crossing his legs and motioning for the butler to light his Turkish pipe. 'It came to me in a dream, so I simply hopped out of bed and dashed it off on the typewriter as fast as I could type. It didn't even need a rewrite. How about that?'

'I'm not the least bit surprised,' I said, taking a drink the butler offered me.

'Now, when your editor asked me to give some advice to unpublished writers, I thought, My, my, what can I, the most

sensational author of the decade, possibly tell neophytes about how to write and sell short stories? Then it occurred to me just to begin at the beginning,' he said, sucking on the pipe.

'I think that is a marvelous idea,' I said, checking the tape recorder.

'Well, I arrived in New York in 1928, fresh out of Harvard, with only \$25 in my pocket and a letter of introduction to G. Wedgewood Ridgewood, the brilliant editor of *Ragweed*, who happened to be my uncle on my mother's side. Like most unknown writers,' he continued, 'I thought that I knew everything there was to know about writing, and I was confident that all New York was just waiting with bated breath for my genius. And what a prophetic assumption that turned out to be!'

'I take it you were an instant sensation?'

'Precisely. As I was on my way to Uncle Wedgewood's office, I was run over by a taxi as I crossed 45th Street at Broadway. And who do you think was a passenger in the taxi?'

'I couldn't possibly guess.'

'None other than Jeremiah Pfudd, the well-known editor of the *Sunday Morning Post*. He got out of the car to see whether or not I was dead and he noticed that I had something clutched tightly in my fist. Well, as you probably have read dozens of times before, it was the manuscript of *Willows Weep, Too*, which I was taking for Uncle Wedgewood to read. Jeremiah took one look at the opening paragraph and jerked the manuscript right out of my hand. The rest is legend. *Willows Weep, Too* was published in the very next issue of the *Post*. In fact, he stopped the presses and threw out the lead article about a possible depression, to make room for it. After that, *Willows Weep, Too* led off an O'Henry collection; it was the basis of a script for John Barrymore; and a Broadway musical was made out of it.'

'It was a wonderful beginning,' I said, sipping my drink.

'It certainly was. After that, I was so swamped with offers that I had to go to Europe to get away from all the mail and the phone calls. Even then, it took five full-time secretaries to handle my correspondence in Paris. I still get letters asking why I let Prudella die at the end.'

'Really?'

'Isn't that fantastic? Of course, the story is a classic now. Everybody reads it. So you see my literary career was launched with a bang. It would be five years before I got around to seeing Uncle Wedgewood. We happened to meet by chance at Newport one summer, and he was mad as hell because I hadn't written anything for Ragweed. So, after spending a few days at Bar Harbor polishing a story for McGall's, I wrote Prudella's Pink Bloomers especially for Ragweed. It was a sensation,' he said, running his fingers through his brown toupee. 'I was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and the police had to provide an escort for me wherever I went. Women literally threw themselves at my feet. And I had a rose named after me. Whiffenpoof White. Within twenty-four hours after publication, every single copy of Ragweed had been snatched from the newsstands and copies were going for as high as \$30 on the black market. That was a lot of money in those days.'

'I'm sure that it was.'

'During those early years, in which I averaged about three million a year in short-story sales, alone, I often lectured at Columbia University. There was SRO for my classes in how to write and sell short stories, and it virtually took an Act of Congress to get in. I remember all too vividly an intense young man who sat to himself at the rear of the classroom, taking copious notes on everything I said. It was the King of England.'

'I wish you were still teaching the class,' I said.

‘Oh, no, my boy. I no longer hunger for the limelight. It’s the simple life for me from now on. But my philosophy is the same now as it was then. “Keep it simple. Don’t overwhelm the reader,” I would tell my students. Then I would give, as an illustration, the hauntingly-beautiful opening lines from *Willows Weep, Too*: “My name is Prudella. I live in a big white house. Our house is on a hill. The hill overlooks a small creek. In the creek are fish and frogs. I like to play in the creek. It is such fun.”’

‘Yes, we had to memorize those opening passages in our English Lit class at Southern Methodist.’

‘I know. It’s required reading at Harvard, too. But you see how I keep it simple. The very first sentence immediately hooks the reader and whets his appetite for more. I don’t fool around with a lot of color and unnecessary words. It’s simply a bravura type of storytelling that one rarely finds in fiction today.’

‘You can say that again,’ I said, being polite.

‘Of course, character is important, too,’ he said, checking his manicure, ‘and I have done this superbly in the second paragraph when I tell the reader that Prudella is eighteen, a nymphomaniac, a Presbyterian, a former Girl Scout, a breeder of fine horses, an asthmatic, a thief, a Tri Delt, a glutton for peanut-butter sandwiches, and that she is engaged to Gayelord Stoopnickle.’

‘Yes, you are a master at characterization. What were some of your other successes?’

‘Well, there was *The Comma*, which appeared in *The Knickerbocker*. It was completely devoid of characters, plot, or dialogue. I think that it captivated the editor sheerly because of my exquisite typing. Another early success, which I wrote while taking a ferry from Manhattan to Staten Island, was sold to the editor of *McGill’s* before the boat docked. I didn’t know he was reading over my shoulder. Remember *Stop Sign*? It was later made into a hit movie for Jean

Harlow, and I was called to Hollywood to do the script. That was before your time, but people still rave about it. MGM spent over \$100,000 for a motorcycle decorated with mauve leather for Jean to ride throughout the picture. And the matching mauve bra was a sensation, too.'

'Have any writers especially influenced your career? Perhaps Hemingway, Faulkner, Proust, Farrell, Camus, Dostoevski, Waugh . . .'

'Who?'

'Hemingway, Faulkner, Proust . . .'

'Oh, no, not really. I was always too fascinated by my own gems to bother reading anyone else.'

'I see. Are there any writers you especially admire?'

'Well, I was always fond of Sheilah Graham.'

'How would you rate Mailer?'

'Arthur Mailer. Well . . .'

'Norman Mailer. I think you are thinking about Arthur Miller.'

'Oh, yes, Marilyn Monroe's husband. Well . . .'

'No, Mailer wasn't married to Miss Monroe. He wrote *THE NAKED AND THE DEAD* and . . .'

'Oh, heavens, no, I never read science fiction or horror stories.'

'What final advice would you have for young writers?'

'Tell them to study all of my short stories they can possibly get their hands on.'

'Thank you, Mr. Whiffenpoof, for taking time out from your busy schedule to give me this interview. I am sure that our readers will love every minute of it.'

'Not at all, my boy. It was my pleasure. If you have the time, why don't you catch the next tour of the apartment. It's only \$2.50 and you get a quick look at my typewriter and quill pen.'

'I'd love to,' I said, 'but I have a deadline to meet. Maybe next time.'

‘Fine. We’re open 9 to 5, Monday through Friday, except Christmas, New Year’s, Labor Day and my birthday. And bring a friend.’

A feline morning stalking the grass
Readies to pounce —
on drops of dew — Arching sunbeams on a misty tail
The fog-ball rump quivers in anticipation
Of an encircling leap on
the first blade of grass
To sink sheathed claws into the soft
neck of day. Steuart Bjornsson

N.Y.—WORLD CINEMA (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 357)

neorealist or documentary-feature Italian directors, or the free-cinema or social-commitment English directors. Once in a discouragingly-rare while an artistic achievement is produced from this stultifying environment of fear and greed, such as Stanley Kubrick's *PATHS OF GLORY* or *DR. STRANGELOVE*, but the imprint of such a definitive personality is rare in Hollywood.

The freer atmosphere in which the New York directors seem to be able to work, sans the corporate environment, has produced at least a couple of dozen films which and directors who, for all their individual differences of style and purpose, are comparable both artistically and commercially to the best of the current European, Oriental, Indian, and South American. There are a number of similarities in the working environment. Generally, the financial prospects and pressures are quite close.

When I interviewed him recently in his Beverly Hills home, Jack Garfein spoke knowledgeably of both comparisons (he directed both *THE STRANGE ONE*/1956 and *SOMETHING WILD*/1961 in New York):

We can make movies in New York with the same amount of financial backing as they do in Europe; and sometimes for less.

I wouldn't say there is any one school of direction in New York.

But it is more personal than it is in Hollywood; more like it is

in Europe. Films reflect a director's point of view rather than the

operating imperatives of a board or corporation.

In Hollywood, the younger directors and the new people
go along
with the status quo. They're afraid to risk originality.
The big motive
is this fear. And the resultant aim is to please a
company rather than
to achieve an original style.
There are some exceptions, even in Hollywood. Stanley
Kubrick,
for instance, has a definite style. And George Stevens
and William
Wyler. Their work is original. But there aren't enough
directors like
this in Hollywood.
Generally a director has to reach a plateau, in terms of
his career
here, where he's sufficiently famous and in demand to
be able to risk
a personal style and to make demands of his own.
Without the prestige
of such a reputation, it's difficult enough to work at all,
let alone
impose personal standards on a picture which may add
to its expense
or conflict with its other interests.
In New York it's much more individual than it is here.
You have
more control over your picture, and you don't have
people breathing
down your neck. You can get things done more simply,
without the
complications of unnecessary personnel and a studio
hierarchy.
And there's more of an artistic community in New York.
People
there can meet and talk about their work and what
they're trying to

do. You have this in every movie capitol in Europe. But here (in Hollywood) you don't have it. There's too much fear. Everything is

dominated by the industry. You don't have the same degree of freedom.

On the other hand, you don't have the same degree of technical competence available either. In that respect, they're marvelous here. You have the best technicians in the world working in Hollywood. New York doesn't compare to them.

We had some technical difficulty, for instance, with the bathroom sequence in *SOMETHING WILD*. I couldn't get adequate help anywhere in New York. We finally had to telephone one of the Hollywood Studios, and they taught us how to handle it over the phone!

Jack has illustrated one side of an interesting dichotomy. The other side is even more interesting: It is not a little strange that Hollywood motion-picture scripts and productions so often build New York's industry! I mean, they frequently set a story's locale arbitrarily in the East, film only its exteriors there with a location unit, then do all the interiors in Hollywood. In other words, why set New York and its environs so frequently as the background in films which could as well make use of other backgrounds, including the West Coast?

This is understandable in a scenario the source or nature of which absolutely dictates an Eastern setting. And shooting the interiors in Hollywood, especially when it's a Hollywood company's production, makes obvious sense. Even for a New York crew and company, the number of usable sound stages available is limited, and there is usually some kind of wait for them. And this isn't the only obstacle to interior sets in New York: They are also not nearly so well equipped, technically, as the newer, modern ones of the large studios on the West Coast.

If the cinema capitol ever is to remove itself Eastward again (where it began), clearly one of the requisites will be the investment on a massive scale, from some source, in newer technical facilities there.

Not all the films which come out of the New York milieu are artistic successes. Some of them fall as short of that as the most inept Hollywood, low-budget crowd-pleasers.

Joseph Marzano's *MAN OUTSIDE*, for example, is an absurdity. To my knowledge, it has never had a general release, playing instead in only a few of the art houses. And the movie is beneath criticism. The students, in the cinema-arts department of any college in the country which has one, commonly do better with efforts which they would be the first to admit are amateurish. Marzano is an amateur who has deceived himself — or allowed others to mislead him — with the notion that it is not necessary either to study or to practice a craft to get on the outside of it. In his ludicrous incompetence, he proceeds on the assumption that it is only necessary to undertake a project with a feature intent, and expose enough negative footage to get the minimum length, and the result will be professional. Perhaps, if he ever learns to connect ten minutes of 8-mm. film (without sound) in a meaningful way, Marzano may reach a level where he can reasonably attempt 16-mm. shorts. But it would require decades of reading and listening and viewing — and absorbing and learning — before he could begin to think of any serious creative cinematic intent in a feature-length.

Most of the artless, tin-drum attention-demands jerry-built by the Andy Warhol-Naomi Levine-Ronald Tavel-Chuck Wein-Taylor Mead promotions are not many steps above the same level of self-congratulatory incompetence. Pictures like *JAROMELU* (Levine), *MY HUSTLER* (Wein and Warhol), *SCREEN TEST* (Tavel and Warhol), and Warhol's *EMPIRE*, *SLEEP*, *CAMP*, etc., have no greater purpose than mere impudence; and they do not even achieve that

interestingly.

The swindle in Hollywood is perpetrated by evil adults with a profit motive they weigh in the balance against every other human and artistic concern. The con in New York has been worked by frenzied, childish egos without even a self-respecting motive.

The cut version of *SLEEP* ran five or six hours. Like *EMPIRE*, it remained relentlessly and mindlessly fixated on its subject, a sleeping man. At that, six or eight hours of film on the sleep of an individual for an average night, without any artistic merit at all, might have had some medical or anthropological value for an occupationally-limited audience. They might serve, for instance, as interesting support for the R.E.M. cycle theory developed recently at one of the universities (rapid eye movement). But the six or eight hours of the film do not comprise six or eight hours of the subject's sleep. In fact, they cover less than twenty minutes of it. There are a half-dozen or so sequences, lasting anywhere from a minute to a few minutes, each of which has been repeated endlessly in the processing lab. In other words, a twenty-minute film has, through sheer duplication, been processed out to five times feature length!

Frequently, in decorative art, a large painting will be composed of a single, minute pattern, repeated hundreds or even thousands of times on the same canvas. But this does sometimes achieve at least a decorative art, if not an especially inspired one. The Warhol banalities represent only hostility; they are fevered and juvenile reprisals directed at anyone gullible enough to give them a fair viewing. And their *raison d'être* is the massive frustration and resentment of the absolutely untalented for a society which has inevitably failed to convince them that they are creatively important in either the immediate or the long-range scheme of things. Apart from the frocked amateurs and the petulant untalented, though, there are both capable experimenters

and canny film makers in the East. Among these, the late Robert Rossen turned out at least one film which is as good as anything ever produced in the U.S. I'm referring to *THE HUSTLER*, which was made in 1961.

The picture was photographed beautifully. It was rooted in an excellent adaptation of Walter Tevis' novel, by Rossen with Sidney Carroll. And it had an unusually cohesive and colorful cast, which included Paul Newman, George C. Scott, Jackie Gleason, and Piper Laurie. Every member of the cast was an excellent performer anyway, but they were also extraordinarily suited to their roles. The resulting relationships they structured together in the film were singularly vivid and believable.

Basically, the movie's theme is that the pattern of the so-called loser derives from a frame of mind. The subsidiary theme is that our life values are reflected in the actual choices we make in our relationships and activities; not in what we say about, or hope from, what we think our motives and goals are. These are not especially original ideas. But the treatment they have received has lent them something fresh. In some way, the fusion of the two ideas, in the polyphonic edifice which the screen play and direction have constructed, has suggested a third one. This is the picture's statement: It is possible that the specific form or direction our energy takes is not what matters. . . . Perhaps we get our time from the values we ourselves place upon the things we do.

In this story, the protagonist is a pool-hall hustler, with an ambition to achieve greatness at the game. The particular outlet he has chosen for his nature is not important. It is only an idealized external expression of an inner conflict which, as the story progresses, takes on other aspects and complexities. The primary quality which direction and writing have given the film is from having allowed its dimensions to happen . . . in a natural way . . . without falsifying them with overstatement or artifice.

My own notion is that, in the next decade or so, motion pictures of artistic magnitude will become increasingly silent. The great art, after all, is to involve the audience, isn't it? A too-detailed delineation, in my opinion, aborts the audience's experience . . . just because it makes comprehension too simple. No intellectual or emotional reach is demanded of the viewer. From moment to moment, in the typical Hollywood entertainments, his understanding is continually cued with the most explicit directions concerning what, at any given point in the picture, he is expected to think or feel.

The art has to be understatement. And, as in the case of so many of the first-rate directors in the New York American cinema, that was the essence of Rossen's art. Another original New York directorial talent with an equally professional approach is Sidney Lumet. His screen version of Mary McCarthy's novel, *THE GROUP* (1966), adapted by Sidney Buchman, is a dull film, but not for any reason that his direction could have mitigated. I have pointed out a number of times in other articles, particularly in my review of Masaki Kobayashi's *KWAIDAN* (TRACE No. 59), the futility, in terms of length, in transposing epic-sized novels to the screen. Unless the novel to be adapted for screen treatment is actually, as in the case of Hemingway's *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*, an overwritten short story, or unless it is to be adapted only in part, as was Samuel Shellabarger's *CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE*, or unless it is adapted to make a series of films — with some way of constraining the audience to see them all — in sequence, even the ordinary length novel is not suitable material for motion-picture exploitation. As I've also previously pointed out, the fact that a scenario based on a best-seller has a pre-sold audience is only a commercial — not an artistic — reason for this fatuous persistence on the part of Hollywood producers in adapting novels for films. The McCarthy book, especially, is above all a novel of ideas. Script and direction have faithfully followed its story line and

sequential development. But they have miraculously mislaid all of the heart of its concerns. I am persuaded, also, that filming this particular screen play in technicolor was subtly a mistake. The habit we have formed in the U.S. of taking the use in our films of every available technical device as an unquestionable virtue, is frustrating in its insouciant arrogance. Surely it's not inconceivable that some motion-picture properties defy adequate representation in color? It seems reasonable to me to suppose that there are, somewhere, a few black-and-white films which, in color, would have been artistically overstated. We certainly understand that it isn't always desirable, for instance, to have an elaborate musical score backgrounding some types of cinema stories. The reality is that each script represents a whole series of fresh choices in its musical, photographic, costume, and set possibilities; just as it does more obviously in the selection of a cast. Thinking of these problems, even in their routine recurrence in each new film as matters of absolute governing standards, is naive. I.e.: it's always good to get the loudest possible sound track from a mixer, or the greatest possible number of musicians and instruments behind the picture's score, or — finally — to use color, wide-angle vision and stereophonic sound in all movies.

Also from a novel, the adaptation by Morton Fine and David Friedkin for Lumet's screen version of Edward Lewis Wallent's *PAWNBROKER*/1965 suffered much less from the incompatibility of its source with the cinematic medium than *THE GROUP* did. The sheer variety and completeness of the range of concerns in the McCarthy novel were much more defeating than the less-complicated theme of Wallent's book. But even in *PAWNBROKER* I felt an embarrassment of riches in the more-limited screenplay's suppression of the book's ampler scope. And this film had additional weaknesses, at least as distracting in their import. At least in the script, the protagonist has been too completely isolated in a single

dimension. This aborts the essential audience empathy which the character must attract, if the film's conclusion is to realize fully its entire meaning.....

The death of his employee/pupil must have meaning for the pawnbroker, if his consuming grief over it is to be meaningful to the audience. But the older man has never once taken the boy seriously, or troubled to answer a single one of his questions with any real regard for his welfare. When the boy dies to save him at the end of the picture, it simply isn't believable. Nor do we care about his resultant tardy concern for the boy.

Admitting all their weaknesses, though, both pictures have many excellences; and not only the more evident ones of technique. What is perhaps more valuable, they bear the imprint of a definite directorial personality. And what is even more to the point, they have achieved the kind of individual statement which is a director's obligation to himself.

There are many polished directors in New York producing pictures as worthy of serious attention as Rossen's and Lumet's films: Delbert Mann's *MARTY*/1955, with Ernest Borgnine and Betsy Blair (adapted by Paddy Chayefsky from his teleplay). And Mann's *MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT*/1959 (screen play also by Paddy Chayefsky from the latter's own play), Jules Dassin's *NAKED CITY*/1947 (adapted by Albert Maltz and Melvin Wald from a story by Wald, with Howard Duff), which inspired a whole series of television shows based on the same idea. Fred Zinnemann's *HATFUL OF RAIN*/1957, screen play by Michael Vincenti Gazzo and Alfred Hayes (adapted from Gazzo's play), with Tony Francoisa, Don Murray, Eva Marie Saint, Lloyd Nolan, and Henry Silver.

Possibly dominating the atmosphere of slick professionalism among the experienced New York directors, Elia Kazan has directed a number of films there which merit artistic consideration: His *GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT*/1947 (adapted by Moss Hart from the Laura Z. Hobson novel), with

John Garfield, Gregory Peck, Deborah Kerr, and Celeste Holm. His *BABY DOLL*/1956 (story and screen play by Tennessee Williams), with Eli Wallach and Carroll Baker in the cast. And his *ON THE WATERFRONT*/1954, with a scenario (and later a novel) by Budd Schulberg (based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning series of newspaper articles, *CRIME ON THE WATERFRONT*, by Malcolm Johnson), cast with Marlon Brando, Eva Marie Saint, Lee J. Cobb, Rod Steiger, and Carl Maldon.

Of all the smooth professionals in the New York cinema, Kazan is probably the least sincere and the most colorful, with the least depth and the most directness. There is a good deal of artifice and even some downright corn in his films. While it's not as exaggerated as the non-sequitur violence of Edward Dmytryk's *CROSSFIRE* — released in the same year — Kazan's film is basically just as dishonest. Without its gimmicky premise, *GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT* would lose too much of its progression and probably all of its impact. *BABY DOLL* is so shallow in content and exaggerated in treatment that it's difficult to believe that its direction or its performances could either hurt or help very greatly. But director and cast have certainly achieved the characters and relationships which Williams' impetuous blueprint has required of them.

Even *ON THE WATERFRONT* is fundamentally schmaltz, with its unrealistic focus on its italicized hero . . . who, by the way, was a far cry from Schulberg's more honest image of him. In the book, shortly after he makes his grandstand play in the courtroom, the Brando character disappears. He never gets an opportunity to punch anybody. Nobody ever even hears of him again, except for an unidentifiable body which might have been his and which is found some time later decomposing in a lime barrel, with thirty or forty ice-pick wounds in it. Hardly the American movie-goer's recollection of Kazan's Marlon Galahad.

All the same, with all the hoke that is his trademark, Kazan draws more first-class moments from his actors than probably all the other directors in New York put together!

Less slick than Rossen, Lumet, Kazan, etc., but filmed with the same regard for technical excellence and believable human concerns, Jack Garfein's pictures are the most unjustly neglected work to emerge from the New York cinema. *THE STRANGE ONE* (scripted by Calder Willingham from his novel, *END AS A MAN*, and the play version — which Garfein also directed) was completed in 1956, the year which Penelope Houston (in *THE CONTEMPORARY CINEMA*) PENGUIN Books. said 'seems a watershed . . . between a middle-aged cinema and a young one.' *SOMETHING WILD*/1961 (written and directed by Garfein, photographed by Eugene Shuftan, Robert Rossen's photographer on *THE HUSTLER* — and edited by Carl Lerner, who also edited Delbert Mann's *MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT*) starred Carroll Baker and Ralph Meeker.

Garfein, who knows Lumet very well and who was a friend of the late Rossen, says of *THE STRANGE ONE*: 'This film really introduced the antihero here and in England. It influenced people like John Osborn, but it was too far ahead of its time.' Of *SOMETHING WILD*, he says: 'I used only straight cuts; no dissolves at all. I wanted to tell the story through pictures rather than with overstatement.'

He compared this style of cutting to modern music, where the sounds of composers like Orf, Bartok and Schoenberg seem harsh to the ear now; but which, in another ten years or so, will sound melodic: 'In its time, Brahms' music must have struck listeners as harsh in its fresh tonal values and juxtapositions.'

Discussing his handling of actors and dialogue, he explained: 'I like to use the actor as an instrument, to get the performance with a minimum of words. I prefer going for something organic rather than clever dialogue, such as Meeker's jerky, embarrassed movements and noisy

clumsiness in the scene where he serves Carroll her first meal in his apartment.'

Garfein is emphatic about this aim to make use of natural dramatic materials, and not to lean continually on dialogue as an expository crutch. 'There were practically no words spoken in the first twelve minutes of the film,' he says. 'I liked doing it that way.' He feels it more rewarding for a director and more dramatic for the audience.

SOMETHING WILD is a unique film in other respects. It is a remarkable forerunner of Murray Schisgal's play, *THE TIGER*, as well as of William Wyler's film of John Fowles' novel, *THE COLLECTOR*. Less obviously than its resemblance to these later dramas, it also presaged Kubrick's motion picturization of the Nabokov novel, *LOLITA*, in 1962.

Lolita is fourteen years old when Nabokov's antihero becomes separated from her. His subsequent agonizing search for her endures four years. When at last he finds her again, Lolita is no longer a nymphette. She is eighteen years old, pregnant, and married to a very nice nonentity. This is where Humbert Humbert at last buries the dream and accepts the reality.

Similarly, the lack of adornment in the conclusion of Garfein's film achieves the same painfully-deglamorized pedestrian reality. This endings has drawn some of the film's most hostile reproaches from its critics. But, as the director himself remarked: 'The picture isn't spoon-feeding the romantic appetites of the intellectual and emotional cripples which the unvaried diet of Hollywood pap has raised for audiences here.' This same intensely individual perspective for the work is also the basis of his ideas about direction: 'It's the personal vision of an artist that lives. It's the only thing a director can reach for, in attempting to bring something original to his own work.'

Carroll Baker, in the role of Mary Ann, is a double asset to the film: Besides being suited to the role so well, in her

physical characteristics and presence, she's a capable actress. Her performance gets the empathy, which the character must have from the audience, and keeps it. And she has beautiful features; but they are not the banal good looks of commercial beauties and Vogue corset ads. Emotion is a familiar thing in that face, and easily realized without exaggerations of expressions or mannerisms. It's a pretty-enough face, but it's also a person. It tends to attract the lion's share of the attention in most of her scenes.

Ralph Meeker is the kind of wind-blown refuse which drifts into acting because it has no place else to go. The less said about his really awesome insensitivity, the better.

Aaron Copeland's score is the picture's only other serious liability. It is pretentious and heavy-handed, constantly distracting and detracting from the visual experience, and dominating scene after scene which would have been served better with restraint. Musical popularizers like Copeland, Montovani, and Ferdy Grofé are without subtlety, as well as without art. Their judgment is clownish in happy insulation from any considerations of unity.

Second only to the ending, the most remarkable thing about this film is the opening. The rape scene is economical and effective. It is not so melodramatic as the rape scenes in films like *THE VIRGIN SPRING* and *TWO WOMEN*, but it does not need their extremes. Where it really makes its point is afterward, when Mary Ann's attacker has finished with her and she is neither dead nor hysterical — just bruised and shocked. . .

She has been left on the ground beneath some park trees. She pulls herself together now, and gathers up her scattered belongings. No one has witnessed the event. She is free to continue on her way home, just as if the incident hadn't even taken place! In fact, there isn't realistically any alternative to this course. It's too late to look for help. She knows her assailant would probably never be caught. She can go to the

police now, but the only real purpose it will serve will be to get her a painfully unpleasant notoriety. And on the face of it, she doesn't need any special (i.e. medical) attention.

As a matter of fact, she goes home and, after a brief nap on the floor, between the window and the radiator (during which she recovers from her state of semi-shock), she takes a bath. The picture's director has avoided every pitfall of overstatement. And with a single choice now, again requiring no spoken material, he gets all the reality he requires:

After her bath, Mary Ann sits on the bathroom floor in her nightgown for the remainder of the night (a restored but less substantial image of purity). With a large pair of scissors, she attacks each garment she has discarded, cutting them painstakingly into tiny swatches, which she flushes down the toilet a few at a time. It is a titanic labor of rejection. Neither director nor actress exaggerates it with unnecessary emotion; but the anguish at the loss of innocence and the suddenness of life becomes a tangible thing, as real as the clothing she is destroying.

Even more of an innovator, and definitely a part of the new wave in the East, Shirley Clarke has been compared to France's Agnès Varda. But there is nothing worth mentioning in common between her own outspoken style and the insipid saccharinity of either Varda's or Jacques Demy's (her husband) precious fictions.

THE COOL WORLD

was made in 1964. Shirley Clarke worked with Carl Lee on the adaptation from Warren Miller's novel and the play version of it which the novelist did in collaboration with Rossen.

Making use chiefly of nonactors, Miss Clarke gets surprising performances from most of them. The New York her camera sees is, at once, the real city and a product of the director's 'personal vision.' And Warren Miller's extremely attractively-overwritten novelette lends itself to successful screen interpretation in a way that a novel of novel length could not have done. Miller has a tremendous ear for the idiom of his Harlem kids, and Miss Clarke has preserved all its color and vitality in the screen play.

In the feature-length documentaries being filmed in New York now, France's (actually, Jean Rouch's) *cinéma vérité* comes to the American shores . . .

Peter Graham compares the team of Albert and David Maysles to New York's equally-established team of Robert Drew and Richard Leacock (the latter was actually born in England), and the Frenchman Chris Marker (who is also a novelist, literary critic, and essayist, and who was born in 1921, the same year as Leacock). Marker's documentary style, Graham feels, is more poetic in a personal way than that of either of the two American teams. The Maysles brothers, as well as Drew and Leacock, are more concerned with an abstract idea of objectivity, about the achievement of which Graham is a little skeptical.

The Maysles, he points out, consider themselves the purists of this naturalist cinema. Their idea is that they should not interfere with the subject during the shooting, and that they should never set things up (in method-acting parlance, what would be called playing results).

Graham considers Drew basically a journalist. 'His aim is to lay bare the facts and make a rational indictment.'

But Graham feels that all of them exaggerate their objectivity. The technical advances in America in what he calls unobtrusive equipment certainly minimize the directors' connection with their subjects: the new, handy, silent cameras; quick, precise exposure settings; fast film; and the portable recorders synchronized electronically with the camera. The filmmaker is able to move about so inconspicuously that he occasions the minimum amount of distraction to the more-natural responses of his subjects.

The product of the cinema vérité directors is, however, not completely divorced from their personalities. It is just that they achieve their statements a little differently from the feature director: 'Through the selection of incident and the editing,' Graham points out, 'they transform the material into an artistic unity. The camera, by focusing on a particular rectangle of reality, heightens it — thus producing a kind of distancing effect between the image and the spectator. This is why ordinary people seem more ridiculous on the screen than they would in real life.'

Drew, Graham adds, says he may not know for sure what will happen (in his shooting), but he will have a pretty good idea of what he is after.

The films of Drew and Leacock reflect definite and highly personal choices: SUSAN STARR/1962; TOBY/1954; PRIMARY, EDDIE SACHS, YANKEE NO!, X15 PILOT, PETE AND JOHNNY, KENYA/1961; FOOTBALL, JANE, THE CHAIR, NEHRU, and THE QUINTS/1958-63.

JANE is particularly effective for a reason which quite possibly its directors, Drew and Pennebaker, may not have explicitly intended. . . . Essentially, this is the story of an actress, Jane Fonda's first experience with doing a New York play. For most viewers, the high moment arrives when Jane reads Walter Kerr's review of the opening night's

performance. Neither the play nor Jane's debut is successful, and her real feelings speak for themselves, without the need of any special emphasis placed upon them.

It's a logical choice for a focal point in this documentary, but it's not mine. I saw something else happening. . . . There is another figure in this cinematic biography who has almost an equal place to Jane's in it: This is the director of the flop in which Jane has made her first Broadway appearance. Without ever appearing to make an issue of it, this individual's vanity and incompetence gather responsibility from his every foolish and shortsighted action. The implied indictment the film makes, in the scene where he tries glibly to explain their failure, is damning.

Whether or not this method of indirection was deliberate in Drew and Leacock's *JANE*, its purposeful march in the Maysles' *THE SHOWMAN/1962* is inarguable. The film's subject, distributor and producer Joe Levine, is stripped, scene by scene, of every protective coloration until, at the film's conclusion, the discerning audience knows profoundly that they have had a murderously-candid look at what is surely one of the ugliest human beings of our century.

The triumph of the techniques of the Maysles is that they have allowed this human slug to expose himself, stepping in only to orchestrate the appalling score he has given them, in terms of the selections they have made and the editing of the whole. The end product, all the protests of the compilation film makers notwithstanding, is as creative and distinctive as the most original feature work here or abroad.

There are also the feature films from New York which are more deliberately experimental and iconoclastic; the so-called underground films. These are myriad; but I'd like to discuss three of them particularly, by way of concluding this article:

Written and directed by Adolfas Mekas, photographed by Ed Emshwiller and produced by David C. Stone, *HALLELUJAH*

THE HILLS, which had a 1964 release, was filmed the year before.

Directed by Theodore J. Flicker, and written by him in collaboration with Buck Henry, *THE TROUBLEMAKER*/1964 was a project of the original Premise Theatre improvisational group in New York's Greenwich Village. It was produced by Robert Gaffney and the cast included Tom Aldredge, Joan Darling, Ted Flicker, James Frawley, Buck Henry, etc., etc. Frawley played three of the roles: Sol, Sal, and Judge Kelly.

GOLDSTEIN, produced in 1965 by Zev Braun, was written and directed by Benjamin Manaster and Philip Kaufman, edited by Adolfas Mekas and photographed by Jean-Phillippe Carson and Enrico Sar-sini. The major characters were played by Lou Gilbert (the Old Man, and also the Father of the Sculptor), Ellen Madison, Thomas Erhart, and Benito Carruthers. Nelson Algren is featured in one of the film's sequences. The first two of these are comedies. The last one, *GOLDSTEIN*, is a cinematic ballad. All of them are exceptionally original in method and intent. *HALLELUJAH* and *TROUBLEMAKER* bear strong resemblances to the current European films; especially the way the French directors are treating films like Truffaut's *SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER*/1963 and Jacques Tati's *MISTER HULOT'S HOLIDAY*/1953 and *MY UNCLE*/1958.

GOLDSTEIN is more difficult to classify. It is in many respects an unfinished work, occasionally glaringly amateurish. Yet, in other ways, it is the most interesting of the three, and the freest, in its results, from European influences. All three films, of course, are original, and encompass highly individual directorial approaches and statements. That they have been influenced by the European cinema works for them, not against them. They are not, in any sense, copies. It can only be said that they have most decidedly not been influenced by the Hollywood formulas.

And perhaps it would be simpler to say just that. They are marvelously fresh in their free-wheeling approach to the

medium. They offer many surprises. The photography in the two comedies, especially, has achieved a variety that seems inexhaustible in both of them. The scripts, too, offer endless small rewards, in addition to their general competence and unique treatment.

One of the devices employed by Mekas in HALLELUJAH is the use of two girls (Sheila Finn and Peggy Steffans) in the one lead role of Vera. Sheila plays Jack's (Peter Beard's) Vera. And Peggy plays Leo's (Marty Greenbaum's) Vera. Without ever making the statement with the kind of excessive explanation that beats an audience to death with the message, the intent is clearly to show Vera as each of the boys sees her in his own mind's eye. Jack and Leo are both in love with her and they become rivals. But they also both go walloping off on a crackbrained camping trip together, so their rivalry is not brought into a serious focus which would defeat the film's satirical dimensions aimed at spoofing some of the serious European imports as well as the Hollywood box-office mendicants.

THE TROUBLEMAKER has trained its satirical guns on the ubiquitous acceptance of corruption in New York City as a commonplace of life. And in their subject, they have a worthwhile target. Few people outside of New York's permanent residents know how prevalent this now is in every walk of life in the city.

Holidays like Christmas are dreadful with the range of their small obligations which, collectively, make of the season a private hell of fear and indecision. The 'holiday spirit' means only that it is tip time eighteen hours a day for two or three miserable weeks: the elevator man; the garbage man; the building maintenance man; the milkman; the mailman; the waiters, delivery boys, servants, etc., etc.

And this says nothing of the real graft, which has become accepted as a way of life in New York. Nobody with any money or position in the city has any illusions left about

‘uncorruptible’ officials or administrators or even cops. It’s all a big, ugly in-joke which only those too poor for it to make any difference to them aren’t choking on.

The only aspect of the film with which I found myself quarreling was the ending. But, to that, I take a two-fold exception: It is vague; and, for me, this is always suspicious. Is its vagueness so deliciously ‘different’ after all? Or does it merely reflect the confusion and indecision of its author and director? And additionally, in this particular film, there seemed to me to be a special obligation to deal honestly with the ending, because that’s where the values become clear — if they’re going to become clear anywhere. . . .

My own feeling was that its makers quite blatantly side-stepped any question of the story and thematic resolution. And the cop-out spared them two decisions: how to conclude the flick’s story line, as well as what kind of position to take in relation to the question of values which it raises. This is cheating, and measurably reduces the film’s effect.

GOLDSTEIN has one of the most haunting film endings I’ve ever seen. It’s a double ending, actually, and either of them would have been effective. Together, they have achieved something extraordinary.

On the face of it, this is the story of a young sculptor with an immensely wealthy father whose egocentric personality has all but shattered his son’s prospects for achieving his own identity. There is nothing particularly original in this basic material . . . if the story had been organized along traditional lines! But there isn’t even any hint in the opening of the film that this in fact is its substance. The picture opens with the kind of suggestive focus on the Old Man — who comes out of the ocean and walks ashore — which easily persuades the viewer that he is about to see a ten-minute short about a funny character.

And the camera remains with the Old Man most of the time during these opening sequences, as he blunders first into one night's lodging and then into another, in the homes of the individuals he chances to meet. After a while, though, the picture begins to develop other characters — the Sculptor and his friend, Jay, and so on.

Inexplicably, by the way, the professional quality of both the script and the photography begins to pick up at this point.

Circumstantially, the Sculptor saves the Old Man from some half-absurd predicament he's stumbled into. Here the younger man discovers that the older one has some strange fascination for him. The compulsion of this tie is only heightened the more when, without a sign of gratitude for what the boy has done, the Old Man tells him to get lost. What the audience knows, which is outside the Sculptor's ken, is that the Old Man is a dead ringer for his father (as mentioned earlier, Lou Gilbert plays both roles), except for the contrast between the Old Man's rags and whiskers, and the Father's clean-shaven, expensively-dressed, business appearance.

Ultimately, the film becomes an allegorical search. The young man gives up everything, his wealthy background, his talent, even the work he's done, to go out and seek the Old Man whom he knows now he must find, but whom he will never find, of course.

His departure has given his friend Jay a role too, now, just as the Old Man's momentary advent in his life gave the Sculptor his meaning. Jay simply sells all the fused-metal sculptures as his own work, fleetingly acquiring the fame and money which have always been his real goals. He himself knows he can't hold on to them. But he is driven to try, in the teeth of the knowledge that his friend might return at any time or a search might be initiated for him.

At the conclusion, the Sculptor has only begun his search for the great purpose of his life. He has been running and running; and the last we see of him he has dropped exhaustedly to rest in some tall grass, his prone body and outflung arms cutting a crucifix in the knee-high grass.

The Old Man is, of course, far from there, pursuing his own journey. And at the end of the film, without explanation, the last we see of him he is dancing out on a jetty. He has come to the ocean to which he returns now, only his silly hat floating on the water to suggest or verify that there had ever been such an identity at all.

These and the other films discussed or mentioned in this article are not exemplified to imply that they provide a really comprehensive view of what is happening in New York. First of all, probably nobody knows entirely anyway. And if anybody does, then he probably lives there, where the scene is fresh and immediate for him!

But the quality and breadth of even the portion I have seen emerging from the New York cinema have struck me with the possibilities they suggest. Nothing in Hollywood is happening big enough or excitingly enough to tap a similar degree of enthusiasm.

It's not really possible to second-guess the future. Perhaps it isn't going to descend, cinematically, upon New York to elect it to be the new American film capitol. Wherever exciting movies continue to happen, though, here or anywhere else in the world, the New York directors and films won't be out of it!

James Hiner:

REMEMBERING EROS

I SUBSCRIBED TO RALPH GINZBURG'S EROS for a year. I was offered a pack of playing cards decorated with Renaissance art if I would renew for a second year; but I was short of money at that time and, besides, had heard rumbles of the growing legal storm and doubted the magazine would last long enough for a second investment to reach maturity. I didn't resubscribe; but I wasn't mad at them.

EROS was a fair magazine. I write them after their first issue, telling them so. It wasn't a great magazine; it wasn't even great pornography. I doubt if one would say it was worth the twenty-five dollar subscription price. It may not even have been worth the \$19.50 I paid as a 'privileged charter subscriber.' But it wasn't as bad as a prison sentence, either.

It was a magazine about like those that fill our hankering after Civil War facts, and catered to approximately the same sleazy taste; the magazine dealt, that is, with various minor tributaries of the American past — slicked up to make resemble the Mississippi. Like America's heritage (as some love to see it), EROS was too pretty on the outside to be real; and on the inside promised the sneaky kind of knowledge that begins with a gambit at a cocktail party and eventually winds up on a quiz show: 'Who first said "Shakespeare was a bugger?"'

For the most part, that is. Of its contemporary materials — and the trouble with EROS was that most of the contents were neither contemporary nor relevant — two pieces were permanently fixed in my mind. (I speak nearly two years after the fact and without the magazine before me.) Either was enough to excuse, if not to justify, EROS' existence.

The first was the editor's printing of some of the graffiti received — for the most part scrawled across the backs of

business-reply cards — in response to his original canvas. A few were outrageously funny; one or two were merely as pathetic as a Thurber male, and for similar reasons. But most, in their irrational violence, left no doubt in the reader on which side of the cover obscenity lay. The publication of EROS, in that one presentation, peeled off the epidermis of civilization and showed the self-condemned ugliness beneath. This act, alone, made the magazine as valuable to 'peace' (yes, it must be in quotes) as conscientious objectors to war, and provided at considerably less cost a fragment of the kind of lessons learned from Birmingham and Selma.

The second also concerns Birmingham and Selma. I am thinking of the photographic essay on erotic love: black man, white girl. The girl neither voluptuous nor simperingly pretty; the man only moderately muscled, and poetic rather than oratorical. The restraint of the editors (the man and girl were nudes, not naked) was for once in keeping with their theme. And if any reader found titillation from the essay's very restraint, it was a titillation the reader himself supplied and stands charged with. It was an essay in self-discovery. I showed it to several persons who, till then, had been isolated from both EROS and prospects of miscegenation; but none of them threw the publication back in my face. There was often at first a reaction of silence, and then a canting of the head as though they were hearing the question for the first time—like students discovering why a seemingly-old familiar question was being asked. Discovering, that is, the reality behind the question, and letting go of their new-found land with great reluctance.

That is what I remembered of then. What I shall think of in the future is 'an astonishing piece of judicial improvisation.' The phrase is Justice Harlan's. The occasion, as I suppose everyone now knows, was the Supreme Court's decision upholding Ginzburg's conviction and sentence.

What I shall ask for a long time to come is: What about the Supreme Court? Either five Justices are ignorant of the law or four Justices have not learned the majority's assessment of means and ends. Four Justices said that the verdict wasn't relevant to the charges; five said damn the charges, he's guilty of something.

Where the law is concerned, I am naive. I have a lawyer friend who tells me so from time to time. I do not, he insists, understand the 'dynamic relativism' of the American courts. But I am learning. This most recent five/four decision has helped me as no number of similar splits—with the majority going my way—could have helped. For now what I want to know is: Why should the American judicial system be satisfied with five/four—or six/three, or seven/two, yes, or even eight/one?

Why should nine skilled rationalizers be held in higher esteem than twelve (as they say) good men and true? Why should trained intelligences be permitted the luxury of dissenting opinions denied the ordinary jurymen? Why should only the untrained be required to reach unanimity?

Because, my lawyer friend says, otherwise judicial processes would grind to a halt. I am sorry, but I am unable to follow that argument. The jury system has not caused the processes to grind to a halt. What is unique about the Supreme Court?

Yet, on the other hand, if a halt is called for—the judges being unable to unite and being denied the satisfaction of majority opinions and the gratification of dissent — a halt might very well be the best thing. If the form of the law or the substance of the case, or both together, call forth anything less than unanimity among the best legal minds of the land, let there be a halt until mind catches up with its matter.

And of course there needn't be an absolute halt (it is my lawyer friend who has hung that word like Ubu's horse around my neck). The means of temporary injunction, of

consultation with the fraternity at large, of progressive review, of status quo ante bellum (you can see how much I am learning) might be invoked — and the legal community, I think, could invent still other varieties of temporary halt.

When *TIME* reviewed the Court's decision (Apr. 1, 1966), it spoke, with *TIME*'s own slant, of the 'painfully honed tests' applied by the 'nine harried Justices.' But I ask myself: if 'painfully honed tests' means, as I think it does, 'legal contortion,' is the law therefore not an avenue for a high-wire act? Expertise is the practice of giving convincing reasons for acts the wisdom of which is unsettled. I find expertise in those 'honed tests,' and it seems to me a kind of syco-phancy to describe them as honed 'painfully.' If the law is a kind of instrument for getting us down town and back, I do not believe it should be applauded for recommending we go on a tightrope. Especially as we may stumble over the clenched fists of five Justices hanging on that rope for dear life. 'Painfully honed tests' are an aristocratic luxury; democracy needs an instrument safer than that to handle. Otherwise we may find ourselves applauding the sharpness of the ax without realizing that it is real heads which fall.

Now if our Justices should not be required to be adroit, neither should they be 'harried.' No Justice should be harried. Certainly, not all nine of them. Let them, therefore, come out of their robes (those anachronisms!) and come down from their dais, and let them break for a cocktail hour. And if they are still harried, let us have two Supreme Courts. Or three or four! Let them pass the work around. A nation that has learned to live with five/four decisions — a nation willing to leave its freedom to five/four decisions — surely can learn to live with plural Supreme Courts. As long as we also require each court's decisions to be unanimous, no safeguards will be sacrificed to plurality. This should amount to pure unharried gain.

I am sorry it had to be Ginzburg, but I am glad it wasn't all loss. There are four radically-disturbed dissenters among the Justices; my reading tells me there are many times that number of distressed citizens. We come to wisdom slowly. But let us come to it while the world gives us time.

Remember EROS.