

LIVING LITERATURE



University Mags vs. Littles

— CHARLES ROBINSON



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A CLEAN READING EDITION

Advertisements, subscription promotions, the front cover and blank leaves have been omitted, as has the running trade directory ("The Chronicle") and its capsule little-magazine notices; a note in its place records what those two instalments held, and two further notes name the plate sections, which a text edition cannot carry. 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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ACADEMIA & THE LITTLE MAGAZINE

by Charles Robinson

LITTLE MAGAZINES, WHICH HAVE ALWAYS pursued a kamikaze course, are now confronted by a new peril: the encroachment of universities which, for reasons of prestige, have started publishing their own little magazines with unimaginative gusto. The perennial suicidal tactics of operating on shaky finances while heralding the avant-garde writers are still part of the pose struck by little magazines; but the creeping influence of university reviews and quarterlies is usurping their unique position. Unlike the independent littles, university-based magazines have secure financing that ensures them a longevity which the independents have never had, seldom have desired, and often have scoffed at. In addition, they can afford posh formats the independents seldom approach. The psychological value of a tidy periodical of ninety-six or more pages, replete with drawings, engravings — often vari-colored printing — is devastating. The majority of independent magazines are hand-set or mimeographed (often from incomplete or mixed fonts) and shoddy by comparison. They may be more ingenious and experimental with layouts; but, on the bookshop magazine shelf, the university magazine is immediately more appealing. Prospective readers are drawn to the university magazine's attractive cover just as prospective auto buyers are drawn to the sleek-lined car with a plush interior. In both cases external appearance is a more decisive influence than relative horsepower or performance. But the predecessors to the university magazines, the little magazines that got their start from 1912 to 1925, demonstrated their capabilities, careening into the calm highways paved by Howell's middle-classism and insipid realism with a candor and brazen self-assuredness which most Americans weren't ready for and couldn't accept. The new generation of writers — from Frost, Pound, and Eliot to Anderson, Joyce, Hemingway, and Faulkner — found

sympathetic editors, not at the publishing houses, but in the little magazines: POETRY, THE LITTLE REVIEW, TRANSITION, and the DOUBLE-DEALER. America's roving literary impresario, Ezra Pound, forwarded manuscript after manuscript to POETRY Editor Harriett Monroe, LITTLE REVIEW Editor Margaret Anderson, and others.

The Thirties brought several changes: many of the magazine editors had served their literary cause and, like Margaret Anderson decided to stop publishing, while many were forced to stop publishing by lack of funds. Though other little magazines were beginning to fill the void, most of them switched emphasis from literature to politics filling their pages with left-wing treatises — the intellectual's answer to the Depression. And the universities began to publish little magazines—PRAIRIE SCHOONER at the University of Nebraska KENYON REVIEW in Ohio, SOUTHWEST REVIEW at Southern Methodist University — many of them to provide markets for local writers who were finding it difficult, if not impossible, to publish in the East, the center for both magazine and book publishing.

After a temporary lapse during War II, the late Forties saw a revival of interest in little magazines which has continued through the Fifties and into the Sixties, particularly at the universities. Almost every major university has now placed an entry in the little-magazine field but the results have not been altogether favorable.

The reasons for starting a literary magazine at a university are in accord with the idealism that prompted the independent magazine to crusade for the new writers with their unorthodox forms, confused syntax, and obscure symbols. For the most part the university is interested in establishing its own reputation and image via the literary magazine much as Kenyon College has with the influential KENYON REVIEW. Although there are editors, like John Crowe Ransom, who are involved with and concerned about

literature and might use magazine as a vehicle to carry out their own particular concerns and involvements, they are handicapped because the magazine is also vehicle for the school. Most editors recognize this dilemma, even though they do not feel it as a handicap. The editors of one university review, for example, have said: 'We are very grateful for the support given the magazine by the University. . . . In return we hope to add to the prestige of the University by publishing a good magazine. There are no disadvantages that we can now discern.' The Editor of TRAC has noted: 'No matter what may be said [about university attempt . . . to alter policies and/or bring influence to bear with . . . contributors — I believe personal independence of the editor is vital. A conscientious person, he [the university editor] will be bound to modify more or less his decisions — even though no actual pressure may be brought to bear.'

Intervention and/or censorship by university administrators has been more direct, however. Last year, the University of Oregon with Harris drew its support from the NORTHWEST REVIEW (later restored). Other Karl Shapiro, who has edited two of America's most distinguished little magazines, POETRY and PRAIRIE SCHOONER, elaborated upon university administrative meddling with both, during a Library of Congress symposium on Literary Publishing in America, held last spring. He had this to say about his dismissal from PRAIRIE SCHOONER:

I edited the PRAIRIE SCHOONER, said to be the oldest campus literary magazine in the country, also for about six years, and was forced to resign (or was fired) over a question of censorship. Evidently a chemist who had become a Dean was informed by a telephone operator at the university press, who read proof in her spare time, that I was printing irreligious and obscene literature. I took to the radio and read it to the citizens of Lincoln, Nebraska. No one objected to the story.

Shapiro's conclusion was:

In every campus literary venture there is a chain of command that runs from the magazine itself, through the English and other Humanities Departments, through the university press, the administration, and on to public opinion. In extreme cases, . . . the controls can go as high as the governors of states and involve the expression of historical fact itself.

This control, whether subtly oblique as May suggested, or overt, has resulted in university magazines which are conservative, even staid. And, quoting Shapiro again: ' . . . magazines that may develop a stylistic expertise that is amazing, but that is all they can do.' Thus, university-based little magazines tend to establish coterie of writers who reappear with boring frequency. Only token, if any, attempts are made to 'discover' new writers; and, often, when new ones are also published, there is a surprising similarity between their stories and poems and those of the established coterie. All of which suggests that it is virtually impossible for the university magazines to cause any upheaval in current literary practice or tradition — one of the most important functions of the genre.

Some of the independents of course still are crusading for the new writers and schools and publishing avant-garde and experimental stories and poetry. R. R. Cuscaden, Editor of *MIDWEST*, has pointed out that 'none of them last very long and perhaps their real function is not to outlast *POETRY* but to provide, however temporarily, the loyal opposition.' And: 'Thank God for the mimeograph machine, anyhow. There is a kind of rise and fall in editorial direction and purpose in little mags that is no doubt inescapable. *MIDWEST* is probably now at its apex; I hope to maintain the present plateau, but on with the laws governing all this are immutable . . .' And here is the real problem and issue: are the independents furnishing the opposition and, if they are, will they be able to

withstand the surge of the university magazines and offer them continued opposition? Because of their financing, universities have the advantages not only of offering a better-looking product but of being able to peddle their product more effectively. For instance, libraries, which are a valuable source of income for any little magazine, are more likely to subscribe to the university magazines, since they will continue publishing (the independents probably will not) and they will be publishing reputable writers (the independents may not be—at least, not from the cozy temporary perspective); yet, it is the independent magazine which is in dire need of the libraries' financial support. Too, universities often provide their magazines with enough money to conduct subscription drives; and, if they do not, the magazines can continue at a loss (some periodicals, independent and university alike, rarely operate in the black) and build subscriber lists. Though they would like to conduct subscription drives, the independents do not have the necessary finances nor, in most cases, enough money to let them continue appearing until their subscription lists could be built up. In addition, the university magazines can pay for secretarial and editorial help, paid contributors, purchase advertising, and in other ways function much like commercial magazines—if on a smaller scale. All of these advantages—the combination of good packaging, marketing, and respectability—will eventually result in the university magazines' accumulating the bulk of the little magazine readers. Or—considering the other face of the process—independent little magazines will not be able to perpetuate themselves because they are no longer reacting solely against the mass-circulation magazines (as they were twenty or thirty years ago), but also against members of their own family, the university little magazines. Thus, the whole battle has changed. Where once there was a unified force of little magazines and supporters fighting for recognition

against popular tastes, today the forces have split. The independents feel that not only have the popular magazines sold out, but that the university magazines have followed suit—that, although the latter may not appeal to popular tastes, they have adopted a peculiar academicism as sterile as the policy of popular magazines turning out formula pieces. The university magazines, of course, deny the charge. And while this ordinarily might be a healthy literary fight, the overwhelming advantages commanded by the latter will eventually destroy the ‘loyal opposition.’ For the most part, university magazines are unconcerned with the situation. Involved with assembling their select coteries and enhancing their magazines’ literary prestige — and, tangentially, that of their benefactors — the over-all state of literary publishing is of little or no concern to them. Being academically oriented, many of them deemphasize creative literature, with scholarly criticism, reviews, and articles taking up two-thirds or more of their pages. This is not altogether surprising: the insistence upon teacher-publishing necessitates more and more outlets — and, since a university is footing the bill for a magazine, it is not unreasonable to expect the magazine to be an outlet for academicians. What is surprising is that such a magazine should also attempt to be a literary showpiece. Not that the two aims are incompatible, but that this schizoid ambivalence seems to have resulted in the mediocrity of these journals.

If the university magazines would abandon their ambivalent role and concentrate on criticism and reviews, their relative value and position would be considerably enhanced. Criticism, for instance, has been the forte of the KENYON REVIEW; and it is with the criticism — not the stories and poems — that KENYON REVIEW has established its reputation.

And if little magazines are to remain a vital literary force, they will have to reassess their positions and attitudes. In

the past, they largely refrained from attempting to play a dual role. When criticism was part of their content it was relevant to the original work being published. Margaret Anderson and the readers of *THE LITTLE REVIEW* carried on a steady dialogue about the arts, a dialogue that was both stimulating and pertinent to many of the works being published therein, such as Joyce's *ULYSSES*. Now, there is a trend toward the type of criticism found in the university magazines — of late, concerned with such recently-current authors as Hemingway and Faulkner.

This, of course, isn't the entire story. There are other reasons why the present bumper crop of little magazines generally lacks the vitality gains of its illustrious predecessors. If, for instance, university magazines are guilty of functioning primarily as public relations enterprises for their benefactors, then far too many independents, under the guise of grandiose proclamations, are founded and maintained solely to satisfy the egos of their editors and the editors' friends. The result of such an objective is as staid a type of magazine, printing as repetitiously-boring and uniform kinds of material and names as any academic university-oriented magazine with its coterie. Far too often an independent magazine is begun because a group of friends want an outlet of their own; and it remains just that, not attempting to expand either its contributions or its quality.

And, as Robert Bly and others pointed out in 'something like a symposium' (*CARLETON MISCELLANY*, Spring 1966), most little magazines, university and independent alike, are publishing far too much material; and, consequently, the material is imitative and mediocre at best. Perhaps the present proliferation of little magazines does not permit selectivity; faced with filling X number of pages for times a year, an editor has to take what is available. If true, this itself, is antithetical to the expressed aims of most editors: '...

print the best poetry being written today ...' etc. And, in the first analysis, indiscriminate editing results in self-annihilation — usual early death for an independent magazine and nothing more than an innocuous inane life for a university magazine.

Unless, then, little magazines begin to be more discriminatory about what they publish, their vitality and ultimate worth will be negligible. The independents will have to expand their coverage and actually attempt to print the best — not just the best that the editor's friends are writing. And only if the university magazines recognize their relative strengths and weaknesses — which are intimately connected with their academic umbilical cords — can they become an effective force. Were they to limit themselves to criticism as in reviews, their academic forte, they would then avoid the control problem. Regardless of where the support is coming from, little magazines will have to become more selective and begin to publish what is deserving and exciting rather than what simply fulfills a coterie or academic or otherwise — requirement. When these things happen, little magazines can once again join forces to bring Kultur to America.

THE CERTAINTIES

Systems of ethics pass over so many shapes: what the ear
beholds in nature and orchestra; what the eye discerns in
blacks.

In yellows and browns,
the dead seasons are scattered
over lakes and walks;
empty benches seem wider
in the last few devotions.

A. Fredric Franklywil

TOWARDS PRINT (THE WORLD IN POETRY)

by the Editor

A LARGE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE in any given time and culture resemble one another vastly more than they differ. In fact, this can be said of nearly all of them. The same can be demonstrated of poetries. God creating himself in his own image (viz.: god-men re-creating themselves in changing facets and tempos) makes what is 'popular' in dress, in attitudes . . . in literature or any of the arts. The hold-outs and holdovers and those said to be 'ahead' of their time are worth unacceptable to most persons, there being so comparatively few of their kind/s.

The favored (yet limited) poetry of today is as 'common' in the critical sense as was the poetry of the Victorian Age, or of any other age. This is why things the more-accepted critics praise do not 'endure,' as they say. Of course, nothing actually endures; everything is in flux. But the 'alive' — in being different from majority-approved problem modes — is what is significant because it carries through and over to another stage of culture.

Every poetry, to be sure, is in some way different from every other poetry just as every man is different from every other man. Still, most poetries and most people, anywhere and in any same period, hold far greater resemblances than they do differences.

Typical Victorian works have prominently in common song and story. These elements are submerged in the prevalent works of today; they have most prominently in common what I'll call picture-series. This basic concordance is not limited to visual-image conjurement; by picture-series, I also mean progressions of sounds, odors, motor sensations,

ideas conjured separately or in any combinations and proportions. And the more persons who are led to appreciate a given poetry, the more common the combinations and the methods of using the elements (leaving aside matters of skill, talent, or genius).

Once stated, this is pretty elementary stuff; however, extremely few people are disciplined to analyze in elementary channels. God-men are too closely involved with looking at what they are re-creating to their immediate satisfactions (seeing that it is 'good' in their reflections of a culture's time) to try to distinguish what's in the real sense not making/doing, but conforming. This even applies to the (much alike, really) efforts at free association to produce the unanticipated neoteric juxtapositions we find stimulating. Soon, these processes themselves will grow so overused that whatever novelties of effect are achieved, the meanings of most of them (intellectual and nonintellectual) become recognized as insignificant noncreations.

I'll venture that the poetries of today which probably will beyond tomorrow are those ranging backward and forward historically, utilizing contents of past cultures while at the same time presenting visions of the unique impressions of these contemporaries are the 'culture filters.' Such poets make far reaches toward universal in well-executed and validly-individuated work. Theirs the better chances because multiplexity is the true reflection of period. The poetry will not be directly centred on socio-historical themes, but these will be woven into it through areas of physical sciences, philosophies — inevitably those of the other arts, along with material derived from the psychic and psychological temper of past and the present.

Resuming, with enlarged coverage, from Towards Print of last issue — although poetry of Jim Brown in a big pamphlet, *THE CIRC IN THE BOY'S EYE* (VERY STONE HOUSE — \$1.50), is strictly personal and largely introspective, built from simple

themes of human relations and reactions to immediate environment, its technique aptly illustrates the modern 'series.' One piece, *At the Beach* indirectly states the method:

AT THE BEACH

at the beach
I put my eye along the sand
and make movies
strange angle shots
of glistening bodies
and a one-legged bird
,gather my characters
a little girl
playing in the lonely shallows
a boy in a blue bathing suit
digging in the moist shore sand
and three fat girls wading cautiously out
I sit up and direct the action
deciding on my blonde heroine . .

While not intended to elucidate the poems, the frank sexual drawings by Bill Bissett correlate with the intimately sex-centred and more typical ones. Brown assays few farther reaches than those of physical sensation, but his simple language is poetically effective and he exhibits a fine sense of the requisite restraint for persuasive consumptions in poems of this type.

No one I've recently read excels Alfred B. Cahen in spare tightness of -series (*HOUSES OF ICE — \$3 — AMERICAN WEAVE Press*)

(Continued on Page 132)

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

‘THE VISION OF RUMPELS TILT SKIN’

(Commented upon by David Lyle)

From Trace #61, p. 145, by Howard McCord

I concern myself with the vagaries of Design the patterns & structures of statement that worry thru the human mind.

We must listen . .

Should we dictate . . . we invite anomie, lostness (for) we lost contact with that important part of us that is the outside world.’

Outside world. Outside world, tilt skin, skiing, etc. is

d. As Descartes ‘Action by Contact.’ Shown, world scaled to Mach’s effort to get ed. t Descartes Action by Contact,’ shown right in this same Trace on this same page 145, quoting Mach direct from p. 104 of Philipp Frank, as Frank saw Mach.

Not merely Mach numbers, but the Descartes/Mach principle of logical (design) action:

‘His fundamental point of view was that all the principles of physics are principles concerning the (Ski-ing, Rumpels tilt skin) relations between sense perceptions, hence principles that state (i.e., scale) something about concrete experiences.’ The Trace writer then writes himself: ‘This is the only place where meaning has any meaning.’

Principles that state (i.e., scale) concrete experiences in Rumpels tilt skin format have appeared by David Lyle in previous issues of Trace, and also, with some of these previous issues of Trace editorially referred to.

The scaled Rumpels tilt skin, skiing, time study etc etc, is the Machian scaled design principle of 1904:

‘When a coalesced mass of light sensations (i.e., information) hits the eye (or optical character pickup) something happens akin to the conservation of energy.’*

**Some Contributions To The Analysis (Situs) of Sensations, Ernst Mach — p. 93 — OPEN COURT Press, 1904.*

BEAUTY'S ACCEPTANCE; & JOHN KEATS

Dear Editors: Mr. Bogg's article in Trace 62/3 prompts me to express what always struck me so forcibly about the 'Grecian Urn;' in my opinion Keats' most important poem. His attitude of acceptance, toward beauty — Not only can it not be permanent; it need not be fully realized — no bones broken. Beauty is truth, and so on, and true aestheticism the antithesis of greed — quintessence of materialism. All that does not consist is Keats' hanging on to the 'Grecian Urn' rather. Two stanzas are dispensable. Whereas with love I'm afraid it's rather a matter of a built-in defence-mechanism, one can really sustain writing at too high a level. Now, having read the first two, and the last stanza of the 'Grecian Urn,' will people please go on to: Gently Go Man by Alan Hunt E. I. Lo

‘TO CLEAR THE RECORD’

Dear Editors: As an editor, I do happen to know the writing of several of men caught up in the writer-in-academia teacup-tempest. But this is too little-fingerish. Say, caught up in the bread-and-butter storm. So, to clear the record, let's say that Guy Owen has championed the good causes of contemporary poetry, reform, civil rights, and peace. He is an excellent novelist, with a fine ear for Southern speech and an open-eyed wryness as to the Southern scene. Visiting poets act neurotically sometimes and abuse hospitality. I am sure that his protest was born of very real frustration (Poetry, or poetic creativity, being still a very thin edge of the consciousness of educated people in the South). The main burden of his remarks should be understood as a protest against ignorance, including the narcissistic ignorance of poets and writers (in some, it does stupidly exist). I do not know all of Guy Owen's poetry — I wait for him to publish a book of poems — but I do know that he has wit and warmth and a will to see into our time and into immediacy. His interest in poetry is not as conservative as his critics have implied. Consider these, his lines from a recent FOLIO:

To see this new apple . . .
To see the fruit itself, I say . . .
To see the freshness of things, yes.
Ha!
Are there no seeds for poems here?

START READING POETRY, STOP READING BIOGRAPHIES

Sam Bradley

One further comment. There's no reason why a Ph.D. cannot be a poet. The poetry, however, depends on the man, and is an independent, soul-embraced thing. Beside inspiration and craft, conventional distinctions, including Ph.D.'s, are trivial things.

Dear Editors:

The continuing controversy about the professional whereabouts of the poet is wearing thin. It smacks of dogmatism. If you are a garret poet, you defy and defame the academician. In return, the academician and/or poet holds up his shield . . .

All the reasons, on either side, simply become specious. There is no historical or aesthetic law that prescribes an artist's other profession or lack of it. His experience, his talent, and his industry are the sine qua non of his work. If the academe is regarded as a prison — la! — Cervantes wrote in prison; Haushofer created his Moabiter Sonette in a cell. The freest individual may fail as an artist, though he tries, if the requirements are missing.

We obscure the issue because we — who should know better (as poets) — keep harping on the material side of art when all that counts is the quality of the work. A poem is good or bad; and to hell with how the poet earns his living! Who am I to tell anyone that he has to starve or not starve before he will succeed in his art? Whoever has the talent for creation will have the sensitivity to life which is the substance he has to form into poem, novel, painting . . . All else is rubbish.

Though I am an academician, some critics have just defined me as 'experimental.' Though I have some financial stability now, I have known hunger; was nearly executed by the Gestapo at fourteen; was buried alive at Anzio after being torpedoed off Sicily . . . These matters are, for hopefully quite a while yet, my business. My poetry, on the other hand, becomes public property the moment I send it to an editor. And then it has to stand on its own images, regardless how I 'amuse' myself away from the desk.

Perhaps I am freer than all the debaters who so earnestly wish to impose their formulae upon one another. Perhaps my teaching helps me to create, for I deal with young creative minds and do not pigeon-hole their talents. Yet, I just recently told one of my gifted writers to leave college because he must find his way alone. The point I am making is clear, I trust.

Why have the poets succumbed to the very conformity of labeling

they affect to despise? Why must we pose as partisans when what we should do is produce? Aren't such arguments outbursts of second- and third-rate talents who keep sniffing out the stews of their neighbors instead of spicing their own? Let us start reading poetry and stop reading biographies.

Hans Juergensen

CALL ME MAXIMUS

Linda W. Wagner

TO SAY THAT CHARLES OLSON'S MAXIMUS was conceived in gloomy, mysterious dark of the Pequod's hold would be oversimplification enough. It would, however, bear investigation. Most writers have at least one literary mentor somewhere in their backgrounds; as Olson's first publication in 1938 showed, his was Herman Melville. Then, in 1947, Olson published CALL ME ISHMAEL, one of the best studies of MOBY DICK ever written. It is accurate, sympathetic criticism, possibly because Olson and Melville were both 'Americans.' But let Olson, seaboard dweller that he also is, clarify that definition:

I take SPACE to be the central fact to man born in America, from Folsom cave to now. I spell it large because it comes large here. Large, and without mercy. It is geography at bottom, a hell of wide land from the beginning. That made the first American story (Parkmans's): exploration. Something else than a stretch of earth—seas on both sides, no barriers to contain as restless a thing as Western man was becoming in Columbus' day. That made Melville's story (part of it). Plus a harshness we still perpetuate, a sun like a tomahawk, small earthquakes but big tornadoes and hurrikans, a river north and south in the middle of the land running out of the blood . . . Some men ride on such space, others have to fasten themselves like a tent stake to survive. As I see it Poe dug in and Melville mounted. They are the alternatives.¹

Man must have the daring, the breadth, to live all there is to be lived. As Olson writes of Melville: 'He was a plunger. He knew how to take a chance.' And into what does an American plunge? Not an isolated present, but an extended one — the

ethnic existence described so well in William Carlos Williams' *IN THE AMERICAN GRAIN*. Or, again, as Olson describes Melville: 'Beginner — and interested in beginnings. Melville had a way of reaching back through time until he got history pushed back so far he turned time into space. . . . Melville went back, to discover us, to come forward. He got as far as *Moby Dick*. . . . Logic and classification had led civilization toward man, away from space. Melville went to space to probe and find man.' Space. Bigness. Big concepts, big approaches, big endings. This was Melville, undeniably. Perhaps this too is Olson — for what is greater than a Maximus?

¹ *CALL ME ISHMAEL*, pp. 11-12 — REYNAL & HITCHCOCK, 1947.

Relating Olson to Melville in no way limits the present appraisal of him. His criticism of *MOBY DICK* is further proof of his awareness of poetry in its largest sense. Of course, it is Olson's own poetry that is of primary importance — his daring, attempting poetry, not all of which succeeds in some senses of the word.

Olson's Maximus is many things — beginner, seaman, mythic Gloucester dweller; a gull in speed and perception (and whiteness), an embodiment of coastal and interior history, a crystallization of the universal present — 'dating back as I do to the first Race;' a wise man; an angry man. Maximus, the greatest: Ahab and *Moby Dick* coalesced. The beginning of big concepts and, at times, the evocation of big criticisms.

Some readers claim that Maximus as he exists in Book I² is not yet an individual. He is not as identifiable as Paterson is; he remains the great abstraction, described chiefly through juxtaposed minor characters. This is the tenor of the carping. Perhaps one might ask whether or not Olson intends Maximus to be a person. He may well prefer the larger mythic frame, capable of carrying many associations and ambiguities. At least, whether as an 'abstraction' or

fully-drawn character, Maximus brings across vividly Olson's primary beliefs.

The first of these, it seems to me, is that man must attempt, that he must dare, the omnipresent safety. In contrast to his ideal, Olson sees modern society characterized by trivia, schedule:

credit out ahead, each generation living 33 years of shoddy & safety — not at all

living

It comes as no surprise that Olson deifies explorers, men who search for fulfillment in the new, even if such tasks demand 'pushing their

² THE MAXIMUS POEMS, Jargon 24 — JARGON-CORINTH BOOKS, 1960. And n.b.: all ensuing poetry quotations are from this book. limits.' After all, 'the seedling / of morning: to move . . .' or, O Melville once wrote: 'Failure is the true test of greatness.' Accordingly, Olson describes men who were 'the cream of the milk,' m without hands or feet — fishermen: ' . . . it is elements men stand the midst of; elements like the sea, the air, tansy; elements fit surround these few who have been awakened by 'the demand.' The second of Olson's convictions is that man must recognize space, his area, or rather the arealness of it. Olson loves Gloucester — its people, its history, its affinity to the sea. But to his space, Maximus has the obligation to create an identity consonant with 'Gloucester-man / weave / your birds and fingers / new.' There may be no fear. All elements of life are necessary, as Ahab proved. Olson's Maximus has primitive powers, the power of anguish, of heated feel — 'a metal hot from boiling water' ('it isn't / for us to say / what a proper fire / is, it's what, / like Corinth / burning down / producing bronze'). Great men may be formed by the very environs lesser men may fear. Maximus revels in living 'off-shore, by islands hidden in the bl / jewels and miracles.' He is often identified within the poem w either the 'tender' mast of a ship or the

flight of a gull — free, bound to some extent by ‘the thing you’re after.’ Balancing quest/dare of Gloucester-man is his ‘nest,’ an identity born of him only ‘more than memory, than place,’ an identity in polis. Olson writes that, although ‘polis is place,’ it is also ‘eyes,’ made f ability to see/feel/know place. In MAXIMUS, Olson frequently addresses his polis, Gloucester, which stands in antithesis to n C. common culture: ‘Perjorocracy,’ ‘a search for safety,’ ‘a deathrst, mu-sick,’ a culture peopled largely with ‘the Good, the always das his / Safe.’ But what of Gloucester? Here, ‘Men / have cause to knent where god is,’ praise eloquent as anything in modern writing. Olson’s optimism turns to outright love as he champions his root city, tar— is city: where gulls now paper the skies where fishing continues and my heart lies Polis, perjorocracy, safety — the vocabulary here is Olson’s, but max sentiment is Melville’s. Even though Melville had seemingly abandoned cities, he showed the necessity for human society through pitying condemnation of the isolato. Olson too pleads for the ears all men, asking that they dare ‘afford to take the risk,’ that they be kept ‘off the sea.’ Olson’s sea is also Melville’s. It is beauty, mystery, power, the source of good and evil — evil that often leads to good. The sea brings gifts, in contrast to ‘the muck of the in-shore sea, the sludge of all shallows.’ His whale too is Melville’s, and his God (at times) whose face ‘is terrible. Is / perfection.’ Olson’s use of ‘whitenesses’ seems to be similar too in its ambiguous reference, but his focus is more often on ‘all such colors as spring is.’ Olson’s view of nature (and whiteness) differs from Melville’s in that nature to Olson is not the mystery which man/God is. Natural beauties are attainable. As Olson writes of Melville’s philosophy: ‘To Melville it was not the will to be free but the will to overwhelm nature that lies at the bottom of us as individuals and a people. Ahab is no democrat. Moby Dick, antagonist, is only king of natural force, resource.’

Whereas Melville stressed the evil 'harmonies' between nature and man, Olson sees man's best impulses springing from nature:

it was the red of buds sent me this spring, lighting up the valleys

It's the condition in men (we know what spring is)

Only Olson could say: 'the nasturtium / is my shield' — or: 'the flowers / turn / the character of the sea. The sea jumps / the fate of the flowers. The drowned men are undrowned / in the eddies / of the eyes / of the flowers / opening / the sea's eyes.' As Olson summarized in *CALL ME ISHMAEL*: 'Melville wanted a God. Space was the death before time, earth, man.' Consonant with Olson's respect for man is his emphasis within *MAXIMUS* on man's means of finding fulfillment: 'Eyes / & polis / fishermen, / & poets / both: / the attention, and / the care.' The theme of seeing and doing — well and carefully — is illustrated in Olson's creation of the Maximus/carpenter, 'the first to see the tansy / take root, the fishing stages then at Cressy's, / and the boats beaching / at Half Moon.' It is not futile to look for a Christ figure in the carpenter. It is, however, more to the point to realize that he is important because 'Anyhow, he was the first to make things, / not just live off nature.' His ability to create places him above the fisherman, the most easily-recognizable identity for Maximus ('A fisherman is not a successful man / he is not a famous man he is not a man / of power, these are damned by God'):

Men are so sure they know very many things, they don't even know night and day are one

A fisherman works without reference to that difference. In any case, 'No where in man is there room for carelessness,' being carpenter, fisherman, or poet. For exactness is the center of Olson's art:

I measure my song, measure the sources of my song,
measure me, measure my forces

A simple statement. But, as Olson writes in the best poem of his book, *Maximus*, to himself:

I have had to learn the simplest things last. Which made for difficulties. Even at sea I was slow, to get the hand out, or to cross a wet deck.

The sea was not, finally, my trade.

But even my trade, at it, I stood estranged
from that which was most familiar . . .

I have made dialogues, have discussed ancient texts, have thrown what light I could, offered what pleasures doceat allows

But the known? This, I have had to be given, a life, love, and from one man the world.

Tokens. But sitting here I look out as a wind and water man, testing and missing some proof . . .

It is undone business I speak of, this morning, with the sea stretching out from my feet

Perhaps 'It is (all) undone business' — life, this poem, and all cornicism of either. Let me only affirm that Olson's poetry proves that one could do worse things with early years than to study the masterpieces of daring. One could, after all, have played it safe.

A MAINE WRITER & THE CONTINUITY OF LIFE

Abigail Ann Hamblen

THE POETRY OF ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN receives very little critical attention nowadays. Its easily-anticipated (and monotonous) metres, its almost-naively direct metaphors, render it unfashionable, and hence unremarked. But many critics who pass it over are not aware that Coffin (undoubtedly considering himself mainly a poet) produced some outstanding prose, prose which deserves to be studied carefully.

Anyone who reads it with attention soon will discover that he is living in Coffin's own country. By the magic of superbly-crafted writing, he is in Maine, living on the sea-swept coast, suffering incredible storms of snow and wind and tossing ocean, knowing the equally-incredible loveliness of calm summer days. He will find himself, too, imbued with a kind of awe at the unrelenting movement of man's life. For Coffin tells us steadily, repeatedly, that nothing can in the end hold back or deflect the onward-moving vital force. The very nature of life is to be endless, he says. And he says this in many ways.

To understand him and the message he brings, we must examine his background as he presents it to us. Again and again he shows the bleak beauty of his native Maine coast, with its rocks and lashing waves and hunger-crying gulls. Again and again he describes the white houses, the spires, the barns, the fields, the wild flowers, the pines.

And again and again his Maine people pass in review: little boys, bronzed farmers, weathered fishermen with the sea in their dreams, clipper-ship captains taking possession of the world, women both seductive and maternal. He

spreads all Maine life before us: its storms, its affluent sunshine, its penury, its astonishing lavishness, its pockets of degeneracy, its examples of courage.

Perhaps because he loved this place so much, because it had given him life and happiness, his prose seems to sing. At times, his sentences seem literally to undergo a metamorphosis into poetry. Emotion charges each line. If at times this gives the reader a breathless feeling, the language is always moving, often exciting. Even nature descriptions partake of this emotion. An October lies before us:

The smell of frost was on everything. The birches were like a cluster of bonfires, and the maples had burned down to red and orange coals. Many of the leaves were gone, and more blue sky showed through the trees than the boy had ever thought was there in the woods. The ground crunched like molasses candy underfoot, and bright leaves came up to Thomas's ankles. It was easy to breathe deep, and each breath made the boy's head swim.¹

**OR A TERRIBLE WINTER STORM AT SEA BECOMES
REAL:**

It was the blizzard of the century. It came thick with snow that was like sugar. Like blind tons of sugar being dumped out dry from hogsheads. Ten thousand hogsheads. It came at them with a gale behind it.²

The charming autobiography of his childhood, *LOST PARADISE* (1934), bears this lyric intensity, as it bears the essence of everything he wrote: the beauty of the coast, the delight in the changing seas, the spicy personalities of his small world. The budding poet is seen as the sensitive little boy, Peter, who is alive to everything about him.

For example, one may cite his response to what happened on a certain brilliant September day when, rowing in the bay, he sees a deer running from the hounds. The deer plunges into the water: 'He swims fast, with a ruff of crystal around

his body. After him flowed a patch of hounds. As the deer came near the boat the edge of the furrow of crystal broke into beads, and the beads rolled off, full of light.' Peter knows he will never forget this moment; years later, he gave form in the poem that says: 'From my boyhood I remember a crystal moment in September.'³

Life on the rocky sea coast is hard, whether one fishes for a living in a turbulent ocean or seeks to wrest crops from a stony soil. Such life breeds a rugged race, men who fight both the elements and their own follies, men who are careful both to respect the past and to think for the future.

For there is never any doubt but that the future will come. Through Coffin's work runs the almost-exultant recognition of the challenge of existence. We live on what passed yesterday, he seems to tell us, we forge the lives of tomorrow. Relentless as the changing New England seasons, the past resolves into the present, and the present into the future. Man's continuing life is symbolized for him in the birth of sons. *LOST PARADISE* gives a hint of the importance the father-son relationship is to have for this writer. From the beginning, Peter has 'confused his father with God.' It was easy and natural that he do so, for the father is both strong and tender. And he is unique: 'Peter had never yet seen a head as handsome as his father's head, so upright and so broad across the brows. He knew he would never find one' (p. 27). Being with his father is different from being with his brothers. 'They didn't make his body tingle all over as his father did. It was like sitting in the middle of a sunny June day' (p. 250).

¹ THOMAS-THOMAS-ANCIL-THOMAS, *pp. 102-3* — MACMILLAN, 1934.

² RED SKY IN THE MORNING, *p. 148* — MACMILLAN, 1935.

³ COLLECTED POEMS, *Crystal Moment*, *p. 141* — MACMILLAN, 1957.

On one occasion, his father speaks in a natural offhand way about the sons he (Peter) would have some day. Peter knows

at once that he will have such sons. But his heart pounds the way a rooster's wing pounds just before it crows, and his back and thigh muscles feel 'like branching limbs on a young oak tree.'

Later, his poetry is to abound in boys and their ways, and in the satisfaction of sons. One may well envy the man, he says, who has 'all the work a man can do and sons to take it up when he [is] through.'

Coffin's three novels, though differing in plot, are concerned almost exclusively with the father-son relationship. Clearly, this is the most significant of all human relationships, far more important than that of friends, even more important than that of lovers. For, obliquely, in each story it provides the assurance that life never stops, no matter how stale and grey it may seem at the moment.

His first novel, *RED SKY IN THE MORNING* (1935), tells of the Prince family, descendants of prominent wealthy ship-owners and captains. Prince ships had gone all over the world; the Prince name had been one with which to conjure. By the time the story opens, the glory has gone; only the boy, Will, understands how proud a Prince can be, how earnestly he might try to live up to his strong ancestors. He has great will power and energy, and he is seen to be very different from the other contemporary Prince men. These are: Uncle Frank, pleasant, kind, but inefficient, a failure; Cousin Rupert, a prosperous novelist, but incredibly coarse, degraded; and finally, Daniel, Will's father, mad with jealousy, frantic with love for his elder son who dies young, stubborn, wrongheaded, insensitive to the yearning love Will bears him.

The failure of Daniel to realize the worth of the father-son relationship causes terrible suffering. And the sadness of Will Prince's end is that he dies without a father (for his father has spurned him). And he dies without begetting the

sons he had dreamed of. Yet, one small positive note is sounded: Will's death brings luring father back to his mother. Eventually, more Prince sons may be born and The continuity of life may have been halted; surely it cannot be endynst

MACMILLAN, 1934.

JOHN DAWN (1936)

is almost a paean to vigor. The cent of the character, John Dawn, is a seafaring man, descended from seafar men. His strength and his ardor for life are clearly inherited. His red for life is even greater than that of his strong forefathers — more dramatic. John builds beautiful ships and sails them around the world he becomes wealthy with the exciting wealth of the clipper-aristocracy. He owns the world, and he is ready to pass it on to own strong sons. For his sons are the end and all of his being. The beautiful tender mother is simply a mortal part of him; but his s are his immortality, and he glories in them.

His dreams die, unfulfilled. One son, who has become a sea captain, abandons his ship to join the frenzied gold diggers of California. is found murdered in a deserted shack. The other son, whose temperament runs to schooling and poetry rather than to seafaring, is killed in the Civil War. John Dawn, once triumphant, assured, almost re is left desolate.

In this novel, the sorrow is that Joel and Robert Dawn fail to ca out the implications of the father-son relationship as their father envisioned it. They fail to realize the importance of the chain of ex ence; in them, the continuity of life is balked.

THOMAS-THOMAS-ANCIL-THOMAS

is an elaboration of theme of the importance of the father-son relationship, and the end chain of life. Not only is THOMAS a much longer novel than the two, it is more explicit and detailed; it develops ideas they only im

The book is a little confusing until the reader discovers that story concerns not just one generation, but four. The scenes shift ab amongst the lives of young Thomas, his father, Ancil, his grandfather Thomas, and his great-grandfather, Thomas. Three of the generat fought in wars (Revolutionary, Civil, World War I). Two of the r save friends' lives; two of them enjoy illicit love affairs. All of th are vigorous, lusty, with a tremendous yearning after life. 'Hun lasts,' is the way Coffin says it: 'Generations, civilizations, a thous years with riches and power and remarkable death in them leave mark on such a thing as hunger. Hunger outlives the rings in trunks of the oldest oak trees. It batters down death at every turn twist of time. It turns back the edge of time and shatters space v every beat of its wings' (p. 339).

And so, hungering for life, the men of the Coombs family do really know death. The fathers achieve strange immortality beca they live in each act performed by their sons. Each has loved his during life; each has been proud that he had begotten a son to carry on after him. Their love and pride do not perish, Coffin says. In some mystical fashion, the father-son relationship continues after the death of the father. He shows this in a rather unusual incident involving Thomas' wedding night: It was a strange thing, but he could think of nothing he could call his own all through this night of strength and man's will and love. It was the shape of his father on the shape of his limbs, the voice of his father speaking to him . . . The whole night was full of his father. Yet Thomas did not feel cheated. He knew it was right

that his father should be in him and guide him through this best of his nights, since he had loved his father so. It was right for his father to take part in his wedding. (Pp 219-20) Much later in the book, he muses that a man is more than one man. The love that he and his father had for each other was strong. Perhaps his father is still living in him, Thomas. The continuity of life, and the hunger for it, symbolized in the father-son relationship, are expressed also in what Coffin calls 'the life-urge.' More, this urge is the ultimate 'goodness,' a goodness with which law or faithfulness to friends have nothing to do. It is a driving force which lives within the eager young man, a legacy from all those who have gone before. 'Many men were in him, living still out of the long ago, aching to go on. It was a goodness come down to him through many, many urgent men' (p. 324). This is what matters, Coffin seems to say over and over again, this urge to propagate, this ardor to beget sons. He tells of it in many ways: it gleams out from the lines of his neglected poetry as it shines through the flowing prose of his three beautiful novels. Young Will Prince dreams of the day he will come back to his island home with his own sons to tell them of their grandfather. John Dawn, though he loves his exquisite Ruth, is consumed with desire for sons; and when his sons fail him, he knows his life is over. In THOMAS . . . , the lustiest of the three books, the sheer maleness of the leading characters is impressive. Wives and mistresses are simply the means whereby the primitive hunger to beget life is satisfied. Through them come the sons whose beings are sparked by the father. The reader may find it strange that a writer nurtured in the stern winters and scanty summers of a rocky Maine Coast can celebrate vitality in this way. Let him remember that life is more likely to be significant when it is not too easily attained, too comfortably kept. And, as we have seen, Coffin points out that hunger is immortal.

THE SHORT STORY

Stanley Berne

AS TO THE SHORT STORY — IT IS perhaps difficult to say anything about that form which will sound new. On the other hand, volume* attains, at least, to the ambition of setting out a new dimension to a form, in which, classically, that dimension already exists without it being possible until now to attain it. But these stories attain that new dimension, not at the expense, at all, of the classical form, but in honor of it, adding to that form something already clearly suggested by it, earlier.

The short story (as literature) has failed to prosper in the Twentieth Century, simply out of neglect. It seems admirably suited to our time which is attested by its wholly nonliterary use. That is, it is popular on the level of the lady-magazine, in which the form is thoroughly emasculated.

What is it classically? It is a short piece of prose narrative comprising a reading time of one sitting. It is complete within itself that it differs from a chapter of a novel, in that at its opening it does not bear a continuance of theme from what precedes it. It is written in prose. It offers the development of a single idea or several closely related ideas. It has a beginning, which introduces, or warms up, or discovers the 'idea;' a middle, which develops the idea by illustration; and an ending in which the idea or emotion comes to some decrease of tension. The idea of tension exists in every good story, and this tension offers the story its unity, as the tension is offered, then builds up through the center, and then simply slackens or abates at the end — which effect should offer the reader some intellectual or emotional satisfaction.

The idea of beauty, as an end, has always been at the heart of thorough practice of an art; and the short story, classically, has as an ideal, the creation of beauty as 'ideality,' as an effect, even when the elements of the story cannot be said to be beautiful, as the story that is dealing with real life cannot be said to employ beautiful elements.

But the neglect of the short story as a major art form has occurred because of its great success in the past. When the short story began to realize its potential, it was so successful that it became exacting and demanding — not only for the writer but for the reader — and thus it lost much of its appeal. began to devote itself, in the early Twentieth Century, to a cinematic realism, it gave rise to the cinema itself. The camera took over, exactly, the function of the pen, and the camera 'wrote' reality as the pen can never even dream of doing, because of the shadows and lights thrown on a screen in which the characters go through the actions of a machine-precision reflection of reality, which is cinema. There was nothing further to do in the short story, as well as in the novel, but to write it for the camera.

** Refers to a book of stories to be published by WITTENBORN — and which this article will be the Introduction.*

But it can never be the function of dedicated authorship to allow the genius of words to be the servant of another art. I could never feel that the major function of language is now over and done with. The critics of literature seem to set their jaws in the stubborn direction of forcing writing to serve the cinema, by insisting there is but one kind of narrative, and that is cinematic narrative. (By cinematic narrative, I mean simply, having flesh and blood characters move through a recognizable reality of objects.)

The stories in this volume have as their aim the demonstration that the short story can do the things that only language itself can do, which the camera cannot do, and that the short story can have a new dimension of power by

operating within the frame of the action of language itself.

By language, we can mean words; by context, we can mean word arrangement in which each word as a unit exists in relation to the word next to it, left or right; by length, we can say that the words form a pattern in prose exactly as a bolt of cloth has a pattern which gives it interest. Within these contingencies, we can have texture, such as words that are set in phrases create, by an emotional or intellectual effect; that the short story, in this way, has a frame which is the length of the story itself. All of which has a two-fold result: one, the story exists in and for itself as texture, word-pattern, beauty of effect, resonance — in that the words cause an action in the reader; two, the story does relate to reality, by the use of words that create images of things, ideas, men and Nature, so that a reflection on life is intended which is not cinematic at all, but is a reflection of reality through states of beauty, emotion, and intellectual response.

The possibilities of the short story (for the future) are immense, and its investigation has only begun with the efforts of the short stories in this volume. The power of language is lost when it is held subservient to an intended function which is other than literary.

It has always puzzled me as to why there is such selfishness in regard to the forms of literature. Why are critics so fearful of investigations into the further possibilities of communication by way of language? Is it that our world, a world in which change and revolution has been speeded up, is so disturbed, that they have the desire to stprese the world in its mad flow toward a nebulous and often-frighten[s]impl future? Or is it that newspaper criticism (by far the most influent[not f] is so tied to the industry of publishing, that it acts as their agents the w protect the investment that is gigantic, in the production of books acorn stories that are so largely designed, at least hopefully (by the pof vi lishers), for sale to the cinema? Or is it that

publishing, already a part of the mass media, is inevitably tied to a public of nonreaders, who demand nonbooks, written anonymously, that are profusely pictorial devoid really, of any intellectual depth at all? And yet, the best readers are those whose commitment to language is entire, who believe that in spite of pictures, it is words alone that can render us the subtleties and complexities of the past, the present and the future — words that are processed through the ideality of a vision of an author, whose talent and genius is put to the service of the discovery of new forms, not for themselves, and not for him but for the purpose of knowledge and investigation. This does not pose a threat to newspaper language as it is now practiced, but does offer the possibility, in the future, of a new use for language. One is more elastic, fitted to further emotional and intellectual contingencies, able to render ideas as well as things, international in its vocabulary and far more simple and immediate in its grammatical construction. One. And yet, basically, the commitment of an artist is to that reality around him out of which is fashioned a method of communication of which will present a series of pictures, as in a volume of short stories, time each in its own frame — with the persistent ambition to reflect beauty. Then through, for the writer, a plastic use of language, in which the timeless and persistent images of a moment of time (this moment, this hour) are drawn together in an arrangement that will be entirely faithful to the whole effect of a terribly-complex reality. That reality is always moving and shaking, always uncertain, yet eternal; unforgivably ugly in yet won back by the beauty of Nature, left alone; always contingent Al yet 'fixed' by the process of art that reflects reality, but cannot he himself any longer to imitate it; that art which itself is always a handmade thing, never to be confused with reality itself, but always an artificial plastic picture, obeying, if it is to have any value at all, the laws of Nature, because the hand that makes it is subject to

those laws; artificial, to the degree that a house, a building, a city, a mine, an airplane is artificial, but none the less quite real, as that art comes to win the audience. It is certainly not the function of the contributive critic to 'pVha form' and smirk at the expense of the effort of research to produce a new art product; it is not for the publisher to feel threatened about our present investment. (His present investment is doomed.) He should simply be prepared to retool, and to go on to even greater profits. It is not for the newspaper critics to go about, like the Luddites, smashing the weaving machines in the hope they will go away. Why cannot they commit themselves to inevitable change, and criticize from the point of view of generous judges hearing evidence which is perhaps nasty and disagreeable, but inevitable.

A Loss . . . A Note

from Thomas Bledsoe

On Thanksgiving morning, 1966, a day like any other except for the turkey, Alan Swallow's wife went out to say good morning to her husband. There was nothing unusual about this. Alan, since he ran a one-man operation, frequently worked late into the night at the correspondence nobody else was available to do. All the letters I have had from him over the years, and they were many, have been written at times like this, when the world went quiet and he could do his work.

The only thing is that on this Thanksgiving morning it was different. Mae found him slumped over his typewriter, stone cold dead.

How do you phrase a lament for one of the good people we can't afford to lose? We first got acquainted when I published a book by Alan; we ended up by his publishing mine. But neither of us was ever trying to do anything more than

publish books we felt were good.

Alan did a much better job at this than I did. He became, was, and I wish I could say is, the only literary publisher left in America. He published books that suited his own taste. He didn't worry much about the balance sheets; my own royalty statements are evidence of this. But he managed to make it, and have a going operation; and how many of us heretics can say the same?

I mourn Alan as a friend. But in publishing, what I mourn is not the books of mine he would have published in the future, but those of all the people I never heard of, whom nobody else will ever publish. What happens to them?

And now he's gone. Requiescat in pace, Alan, and Ungod bless your soul.

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ARTISTS' LIBERATION FRONT FOR WHAT?

Lynn Lonidier asks:

LAST SUMMER I SAT THROUGH A MEETING of 'artists' who were trying to arrive at some unity of purpose before they held a press conference and let their name, Artists' Liberation Front, be known.

Sitting next to me was a poet-editor-teacher affiliated with Experimental College at San Francisco State who came for the same reason I had—to see what was in back of the 'artists' front, to find out if there was a place for us in it. The poet-editor-teacher stayed five minutes, said Nope!—and left. Fascinated by the 'fireworks' of the meeting, I stayed on. Not inclined toward parliamentary procedure, ALF 'artists' screamed, cursed, and walked out on one another. I wanted to believe that the 'artists' weren't able to carry on an orderly business meeting because they were harboring their organizational energies for whatever unfinished works of theirs were tucked away. As a little ghetto studios in parts of the city removed from the hippy scene, we excitedly asked: What kind of clothes should we wear to gain the respect of city officials with whom we'll deal?

Another item of business was: Should ALF make a public statement condemning the War in Vietnam? (And what of the plight and turtles sterilized by radioactive fallout on an island in the Pacific?)

The 'artists' then heatedly concerned themselves with: Should ALF change its name? Deciding on the name Artists' Liberation Front took up a greater part of the previous meeting. Names are important; they get you somewhere, and evidently Artists' Liberation Front was not a popular name with much of its membership. However, ALF held a press

conference, at which time it was necessary to announce the name itself, and the name stuck.

And now, with the press conference under its belt, now that Abelor is sponsoring a series of wandering art fairs to bring the Tenderloin youth and the Hunters Point oppressed into closer bond with their community, now that ALF is creating a public image for itself, perhaps the power-towel companies will remember FLA or LFA or their whenever they become supportive of the 'arts.' That way, power-towel companies won't put so many ads on paper to attract tourists to San Francisco. There will actually be an art movement here to attract people and lend prestige to San Francisco's sagging cultural scene. In return, hard-working, deserving young potential Van Goghs will receive a yearly stipend of paper towels to wipe their sweat and tears.

That is why I went to the beginning of the Zellerbach Paper Company meeting where it was to be decided how to spend a great sum of Zellerbach money on the 'arts.' Artists — and some who don't do art — posted themselves outside Zellerbach's door. We didn't represent an organized 'front' (with the exception of the Mime Troupe which crashed the Zellerbach cocktail party despite an agreement between us and a Mime Troupe representative that we would send a representative into the meeting to see if we could get a hearing to make our needs as artists and promoters known). The Mime Troupe maneuver was legitimate. Anything goes in the 'arts.' Being novel can bring about art. Being pushy and noisy helps, too, until you've established a name, been heard — even if you are good. But all of us, including the Mime Troupe, were asked to leave. Equality.

One quality I suspect I share with many 'artists' in ALF is a seeming incapability to promote my writing. I hold down a part-time job, earn about two-hundred dollars a month so I can spend the greater part of most days writing. When I send my writing to publishing establishments, the rejection slips

say: 'I liked your whacky story. As a boy, I raised snails and thought their parthenogenesis more exciting than love. . . . However, this is a business, and we have to think of the customers.' (NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY) . . . or: 'Your last story was the last straw for the blackballing system we have here; if the writer is out there taking chances, so must we be, and if he isn't, the whole enterprise is pointless.' (NORTHWEST REVIEW) . . . or: 'Although your romantic images are quite lovely . . . we simply do not publish any poetry . . .' (McGRAW HILL). The choicest rejection was: 'Wow, what a journal this one is. Where the fuck are you going, baby?' (NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND)

I don't relish banding together with other 'artists' just because I'm not making it. It would make more sense to stand in a Saint Anthony bread line. One member of ALF supplied me with a reason for belonging to ALF: I could 'meet people.' But a fraternal organization could serve that purpose. The only reason I see for joining a 'front' is because within it there is identification with like souls — a unity of vision that causes the artists to admit similarities do exist in their media, their style, their message, and that these artists try to meet the artistic needs of the people within their group. As they number, confront the world with their similarity of vision, the world sees so much of it as to get used to it, grow to love it, support it, imitate it, emulate it, and admit it did have relevance for the age.

When a poet, a member of ALF whose poetry I admire, asked whether I would take part in the ALF Fair, I assumed the ALF had some works in the offing, some buried treasures of artists with something to say in a new way — ready to show, in body, and that they intended to use that material to turn on the public.

On ALF's Sunday at Glide Methodist Church, I was to do poetry with children, as I had been doing for three years while teaching grade and had done in San Francisco State

College's Pegasus program. ALF wanted this event held outdoors so children would be drawn to it spontaneously. And later, indoors, I was to read my own poems to an audience (I didn't know how much later).

I dropped by the Fair on Saturday to decide whether to work with the children outside or indoors. I've learned that children cannot concentrate on poetry if there is too much going on around them.

What I saw at the Fair was a few paint cans on the sidewalk, a couple rolls of newsprint, and a lot of room-dividers arranged in a narrow maze leading toward a raucous rock'n'roll band. A few people stood about making marks directly upon the roll-dividers. A crowd of children were drawing pictures. A furtive-looking crowd which looked like a lot of ALF members and a few artists waiting their turn to perform stood around the rock'n'roll band, looking as though they would rather be at the show at the Fillmore Auditorium — but it was free! I couldn't draw poems from children amongst all this turmoil.

I noticed an ill-made sign pointing into the church. A few people were wandering around inside, a few children were yelling, running up and down the stairs — as that's always fun. In one unsettled room someone was attempting to present an 'art' experience to children. One girl spoke up exasperatedly: 'Well, what're you going to do with us next?' Nothing happened. The person conducting the event was busy setting up and moving furniture. But the Fair had started at noon. It was now after 5:00. The only part of the Fair that seemed running smoothly was the selling of food outdoors.

In another room, I encountered what looked as if it might be the poetry reading in an hour, but there were people sitting, waiting for it to begin. Perhaps, for them, the confusion was the show. I spotted a poet who had asked me to take part. The poet was in such a tumbledown over

someone's not having done something for some event that he tottered on happening or not that the poet didn't stand still. enough for me to say I couldn't participate in a disorganized affair. The poet said I hadn't let the poet know about the children's event, so the poet had just put down any time tomorrow for that part of the Fair — nothing definite. I'd be here for my reading at 5:00 tomorrow, for sure though, wouldn't I? I was shown a sign where each poet was scheduled into a half-hour plot (growing intimation of an art grave) from 5:00 on. Surely, at the reading, a certain calmness required for listening to poetry would be provided, the doors would be closed, children would not be running up and down stairs. I would show up, but just for the poetry reading, because I had said I would, because it was scheduled. But I didn't want to. I wanted to protest ALF's free-for-all. In fantasy, I made words on a sign to use to picket the Fair. One side was for San Francisco: PAY ME. I WORK. I PRODUCE. I AM AN ARTIST. I AM WORTH SOMETHING. And the other side was for ALF: THE ALF IS SELLING ITSELF OUT FOR WANT OF VISION. Sunday, I became involved in working on my novel. No time to picket. I did spend an hour preparing my poetry reading. I decided to end it with selections from the want-ad section of Sunday's paper and call it Ode to ALF. I didn't want to read. My kitchen sink was full of dirty dishes. What did ALF have to do with poetry? At 4:30, I spent a quarter to cross the Bay. I spent 50c to park my car so I'd be on time. At 5:00, I was amongst a few people and one toughish frightened kid (perhaps from the Tenderloin) wandering around asking where's the reading? Someone said it's downstairs. When I got downstairs, someone said it's upstairs. I ran into a dancer disquietly waiting to perform, way past the time he was scheduled. At 5:15, I washed my hands of the poetry reading, decided to go have a beer with a friend who had come to hear the reading. I returned to the church about 7:15, thinking there might be a poetry reading

going on, and I deserved to know what had happened to my part of it. ... Still, no poetry reading — must have been cancelled. But the schedule was still posted at strategic places around the building. Then, in walks the poet. I start fussing about this grave art scene. The poet says don't be bitchy, why don't I stay and read, the reading's going to start in a bit, why don't I stick around and have a g time, there's a lot going on. I continue to 'bitch.' The poet tells me don't be so rigid, don't I know events at f don't start on time. No, I didn't know — and, aside from the rock'n'roll band outs I didn't see anything going on. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw key word in the ALF Fair poster: HAPPINESS. But the expression the poet's face was one of consternation. The poet's car had bro down. That's why the reading was delayed more than two hours. I felt sorry for the poet who was in a position of a poetry read starting two and a half hours late because of a broken-down car, no one in ALF's entourage of 'artists' could have carried on. An felt sorry for myself that ALF would go its merry way, with me an handful of artists in the path of its destruction. It took 25c to get back across the bridge. While I had been aw ants had taken over the kitchen. Feeling murderous, I got out t spray gun. Soon there was an ant grave, and there were all the di stacked up. I stood before them, thinking that, other than ants, I c think of another aggregation that should be done away with. Prior to the Fair, Ralph Gleason's column (SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE) explained: 'In between readings there will be rock'n'roll paintings and all manner of good things.' I hadn't seen manners or any good things. As for the dancer who was to partici and who is an artist, is he still waiting to perform while the no making goes on? And what of the people who came seeking 'happ ness' and instead found a freakout that resembled the aftermath slumber party? Will they ever set foot on ALF band-o'-hoky terr again? Answer was supplied by Gleason: The ALF Fair was 'a g event . . . a huge success

with many social outcasts finding somet in common with the community for the first time.' I disagree. I've seen children on the streets devise more to ha for themselves than was available in materials, encouragement spontaneity at the ALF Fair. I feel that Tenderloin 'youth' is b exploited by claims of being helped by the 'front,' while ALF h itself to publicity in order to gain entry into the art world by wa the back door. At its next 'poverty pocket' fair, I suggest ALF hold a rum sale. The 'artists' could sell their clothes and get arrested for n—which would greatly aid them in their clamor for publicit also suggest a new, more appropriate name for this floating bod 'artists' (to be dealt with at the next business meeting of ALF): Iron

STUART PERKOFF

human blood is its own
cartography. man knows
the distances, alone
& huge within the flow,
islands of purity,
great caves of death, embraced
by flesh, the map of history
on which all pain is traced.
the flesh is muscle-clamped to bone
bone on bone on bone, to structure
a bone cartoon, which strives to make
a balanced tension, prone to rupture
on feet unlikely for their function
their stolen shape twisted, the horse
whose hooves they were, extinct. he found
them too clumsy to pace the course.
'my meat eats me,' says Roethke. i eat it.
eventually everything is food.
all life is dying, death is life completed.
in the same flesh, living is death renewed.
a flow of generation & return
more deathless than man's lust

to be divine. yet rage and terror burn
man's blood bubbling the dust.
flesh is not taught to trust
enormous rhythms. nothing it can learn
from what it holds within itself denies
the foredoom of its own decay. flesh dies.

K. G. KASBERG

FISH WERE THE FIRST TO:

on the sun themselves
which sun-simmered sands
were peopled with pebbles
but they crawled about barely breathing
like prowlers in search of legs
until Darwin nosed their
evolution
swim around seek-
zodiac systems self-
ing a symbol for their
salvation which they finally found
in the Pisces crown, but since
man needs omens too fish
fry on Fridays

K. G. KASBERG

QUIT SCHOOL TO

dive
way beyond their depths
where
they feign a place to hide
from all unknown fears of being caught
and
save fish-face and phony
pride
by telling tall-tailed

manmade stories
fly at flies
or bite on fake bait
and
swallow whole illusions
for
realities which made suckers out
of those denser dolphins
and
purposeless porpoises
and gilt goldfish
fix their face
with
an unshocked shocking
eye
by ogling from some blank-
eyed bowl at man's ruling role on earth
which
made them understand why
men
search for escape with
fish on weekends

K. G. KASBERG

THE BURROWING MIND

The mind, clamped in a casket night,
Floats or dissolves into the past,
Like faint rain falling soft, to note
Where roots are deep and knead the dark.
Follow that wriggling mind like a mole
And move below all mountain time,
Past memory where helpless miles
Of home routes twist to birth and dream.
Here, mind falls into seed, to soft
Eddies of thought that shift and shove
All self out. Selfless, I'm safe,
Consumed in specks and bubbles of love.
The small, cramped mind must burrow back
To meet the rootless present sane —
To rise in time, kite high, string broke,
Into the blue balloon of sky,
Where I'll fall soft in the reigning sun,
Blind as a mole in that holy day.

TREVOR GOODGER-HILL

ON MY WAY TO LABOUR

I walk the ritual of the sidewalk,
house and factory,
sun-up, sun-down, remember
the magic of these hours
in the early days of mine and man.
The curb-stone is the slaughtering block,
impassive as the christian ethic.
See there, the steeple
is an office block as I approach.
Then the switch-blade flicks
and testicles drop.
Each night I hear the eunuch's scream.

DAVID C. FRENCH

POEM IN WINTER

In this time of timeless cold when
Snow shudders its crust across the earth,
I am snared by the melody of your smiles
Like a child captured thick in pleasure.
This voice, that should not speak in parables,
Pelts down with pilfered courage
Awkward movements that fail to quicken
First temptations into tenderness.
Instead of this, I babble of poets
Like some proud scholar perched upon a dais;
And my tears wash away the stains that slip
From the petals of an unknissed winter rose.

DAVID C. FRENCH

WALKS AND WAYS

Words that I poured before him
Stayed untouched.
It seemed
That he listened
Only to the spiders
While they wove their webs
Into the aging corners of his thoughts.
After they and I
Had crept away,
He gathered himself up
With a muted clatter
Like an old collector
Half-distracted from his distractions,
And found his way to the garage.
The car was more silent than he.
Spilling over the seat,
He buttoned the engine
Into life,
And let it run,
Like a universe,
Forever.

DAVID C. FRENCH

AN OPEN FORUM, CLOSED-MOUTHED

You sit there mutely patient,
Like a cat among supermarket
Stalking grounds,
Waiting for my tongue
To trip this edge of courage
I have taken weeks to hone.
My epithets lacerate
The room with stoic silence
While your still voice only
Speaks of babies born immaculate.
I will, one day, gather all my rage,
Like marbles broken into vanquished heaps,
And slink away to find a place
Where even tired sounds of footfalls
Are filled with tender eloquence.

HELEN LUSTER

THE COLD AT LAKE BEARESSA

O teddy
bear the moon is
a fur/ry thing on
Have a beer
and a ball on a per/
haps ski lift?
Hung on
and hang on
the sky and riding
and boron/borax it's
for happiness.
She's been so
called
by many
and by so many
names.
And many are thus

but few are chosen
Ishtar
serenely
Selene
Astaarte
for a start.
A part. But o bear,
Bear-essa the lake . . .
To bear is to be.
She loves you
forbearing with her
for/seeing that
she's not just this
frail
call-girl
though this be her calling
her calling
and telling you this:
that the boys do
like to throw rocks
and snow at her
reflection in this
a chill pool.

CHARLES SHAW

ONLY IN THE END

They came,
wearing bits of yesterday
pinned to their unconcern
and veils of distance in their eyes
that blinked in the rusted sun.
They whispered
in dark places
and spilt a wide despair
that boomeranged against
the naked night.
They leered and mouthed
and listened to
the mutterings of mice.
They hung the dawn with
oranges and shells.
They told
a prophecy of moons
and beat hydrated drums
only in the end to find
that time had come unlocked

PATRICIA WELLS

OF THE SLOW SLIM PREMISE OF THE MOMENT

Of the slow slim premise of the moment
all that is remembered is green grapes
lying in a bowl and the rude sun gathering
darkness like wild flowers. Near the periphery
is the burned bright recollection of a wine tall
young man standing by an open window.
There was no reason to doubt
his continued presence like a fixture
on the wall. The curved black chair held
a sad still orange breed of cat
sleeping calm as a child. The room may have been
high and tall as a pylon with cold space

forming like weeds and an immense ceiling
where snappy yellow gargoyles architected
the way. But there was no reason to doubt
the quiet bright might end. Oddly,
dead center of the darkening place the disaster
erected an ugly shatter sound like a decaying bridge.
Wheel loud blast of pinched tires ripped
through the pane. The wine tall young man
fell helter skelter into the scattered sky
leaving behind a rough slam bang burst of cry
to smear the almost white walls.

C. D. MACDONALD

A DAY DREAM

The sheets
Are smooth,
And rap around
With no debate,
You are in
The long talk of the sun,
As you pile up blankets;
The box falls over
Twist your face
To the north
Around to points
Fearing the loss of hope,
When I talk to you.

C. D. MACDONALD

THE WINGS

The
Wings are on the
Fig;
White is gold,
And the devil
Digs in cascades of sand
Like an ant.
The Jew
Picks the sky,
With a pin
And an old Greek
Fellow
Spreads his lips
Over the number
of a flower

STEPHEN J. DOHERTY*

MORNING AZURE FLOWERS SEEM

Morning azure flowers seem to weep
Their blue calyces, sad cheeks, crying
Dew upon their indolent spines.
No shimmering sunstrokes aid their
Despairing mien.
The sky is a loft for hoarding tranquilly,
Dull clouds.
The quagmire is completely indifferent
To what emerges from its eternal energy.
Dew-tears trickle down the flower-stems
Silently, unlike the tremulous billows
Near the edge of a furrowed sea.
The gardeners glance through the pallid
Morning air and see the flowers
Grieving quietly, their petals never
Posing a felicitous smile.
Discouraged with their work of raising

Disquiet beauties, the gardeners moan
Uneasily about the sick daylight.
Suddenly, like a smack of two spheres
Colliding, shoots a shaft of multi-
Colored sunlight, ripping through the dull
Gray atmosphere like the pinnacle of
Beethoven's Second Symphony. The quagmire
Grabs hold of it and sucks it to its heart.
The flowers dry their tears with sudden
Smiles, and the gardeners look into the light.

— *having published none of his poetry.*

** Mr. Doherty died of injuries suffered in an automobile accident
in March,*

MIGUEL GONZÁLEZ-GERTH

PONTIUS PILATE

He saw the doorknob turn
But did not feel the fanlike breeze.
And there she stood, witch burn-
Ing, bitch yearning, now sans chemise.
She stepped, suddenly deft,
Out of his candid indecision,
Escaping through the cleft
Of a peremptory derision.
At first it seemed that he would follow,
As trembling thoughts came to relax.
But he realized that truth is hollow
And left his drink to the dirty sax.

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MIGUEL GONZÁLEZ-GERTH

SOLIQUY WITH ECHOES

the vast window of morning opens to a solitary world. before perception lie the manifold investitures of ageless echoes. and now to act. but wait, first to reflect upon the sundry happenings of yesterday and of the day before. this is the proper way, the careful way: start the day right, they always say. perhaps if we could hear those words again: how many days? it will be here tomorrow. do you love me? sir, we are sorry to inform you . . . for heaven's sake, let the cash register ring. or should the church bells ring? for time is made of money and life is made of time, and strictly speaking, yes, that's right, life is worth living.

MIGUEL GONZÁLEZ-GERTH

no, let's start again. yes, yes, from scratch. the window of the morning opens to a lonely world. before my eyes lie the wakened streets, a modicum of snow, a small variety of old misshapen cars. get up. it should be said in exclamation. and now to act. the world is cruelly waiting though the sun is not yet out. motions, gestures, all rehearsed before a mirror. perhaps if it were not before a mirror: to the left, to the right, up and down, here and there, coming, coming. ready? for heaven's sake, just why so fast? let's think, let us reflect. we must have time, we all need time.

so, let's start again. yes, from the top. my window opens to a world that's all alone. the streets are practically the same as always. there's not much difference between today and yesterday or even day before. get up! what for? it's new year's day in paradise. the world, the world turns without us. we do have time to think and to reflect. the ring of money and the ring of time are alien to us now. perhaps, then, we can hear those words again: do you love me? yes, i love you. yes, forever. tomorrow is today. sir, we are sorry to inform

you . . . no! let's start again. what's that you say? there is no
time? the window of the morning opens to the night

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ALBERT DRAKE

MEMORY: RETURNING TO AN EMPTY INTERSECTION

Boy and bike heel through dawn
Down smooth walks, and bearings
Turn easy: there is no friction.
Underwheel the shopmen tidy up;
Their water dissipates into mist
And memory. Like the handlebar
Foxtail tossing gently back in
The wind, the boy's hair is thick;
His eyes sharp, lungs clear: life
Is easywheeling on good bearings.
Down smooth cement and a tailwind,
On the fountain counter he sees
Glasses stand like all his days:
Full and empty, some with straws.

ALBERT DRAKE

CONVERSATION WITH MY FATHER

Our elbows steady the table's curb;
Our palms hold our thoughts. We glare
Over a glass of beer, over generations,
And my inquiry is a protest:
— You mean, the twenties and thirties?
The joys of the Jazz Age: where men
In undershirts dealt cards below a ten
Watt bulb, drank whisky neat, and played
The radio, naive as Lum and Abner.
Where Keaton and Chaplin walked:
Wide rutted roads, without sidewalks,
Faced funny clapboard houses, and parked
Six cars in twice as many blocks.

Of uncomplicated wars; unregimented moods,
To the lawless extreme of Dillinger.
When anything was possible, like the Model T
Running primly upright to ford a new epoch.
Those good times, now mirrored in the sweet
Serenity of the late late show:
You mean it wasn't so?
— No, he sighs. Unable to explain, he stares
At where our glasses have stained the table,
The interlocking rings like distant worlds.
— No, he says, it weren't.

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J. D. WHITNEY

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF LOVE

Come and
let's walk back
upstream
back to the
old site a
mound
dig
thru layers of
what
has settled
there
on it
sift
find a
ring
piece of
old
letter and
then walk
back down to
now
with no thing
of where we
were,
come from,
but that part
of an old
myth
still warm and
useful.

LARRY N. CRAFT

WHISTLE-STOP

Red flashes
as both your stop-lights
mimic stars.
Dirty sidewalks
where lunch-hour children
turn parking meter knobs,
And stray dogs
sniff legs of passers-by,
seeking masters.
Village of coal dust
your children have bare
feet and hearts.
Muddy water
cleaves your middle and
carries your garbage.
How do your vacant-eyed
store fronts face shoppers
at Christmas, smiling?

BELLE ADAMS

SAGA

Sparrow of a boy
You pecked at life,
Poland your seed and crumbs.
Grew to a lanky man.
Caged for five years,
Raged and fed yourself images.
Lakes rivers fields of hay and rye
Skies schoolmasters mothers
Mud of roads buds of snow
Pedlars' packs country songs
Polkas mazurkas.
Freed

You flew west,
Settled by this lake
Among strawberry beds.
Here you hack brambles and poison ivy,
Feed the birds.
More than birds —
Children and poets
Strange lone travelers
Without a by-your-leave
Come to your table.

THOMAS S. McKEOWN

WATER WOMAN

you did not
feel me against
your back
fish-headed
cold metal
scales at my
neck
I have gone
under
swimming back
I forget your
mouth
sometimes
a fat carp
in the waves
butchers
grind up
the boney flesh
violet water-
your foot
bleeds
into promises
beautiful hair-

amber fields
flow out beyond
shoulders

MICHAEL GREGORY

OUT OF THE RIVER, NIGHTINGALES

I. Four years at war
my father bore me
before he returned
to find me born.
When I ask
what war is
he doesn't remember.
II. Behind the marshalling
of rainbow in her hair
eyes in the wave:
her breath swam high
above the wrack of union
above pocked stanchions
beyond fummy desire.
Your father is a good man
bellied eyes floating
Obey your father.
III. The old knowledge:
though we won't sleep
with sister or brother
it remains. Kneeling
surrounded by building
fences me, hair whiting
less woolly, he handed me
a ball of soil.

MICHAEL GREGORY

DAWN : : SNOW

I know my impossibilities :
one does not speak to God with rubbed sticks,
but too often I wake when the beast has let off
his rude and snuffling objection of my shards
too derelict of pigeons to face. . .
the leg jogging there barely portion
to disjunct remain
her eyes who was
the greenest bulge
beetles
his angels spasm arms in
. . .air banged off doorway: light and glass
between my glass between my blood crawling
for its bottle: lips hairy for loving wood.
Faceless: clouds cleanse the sky:
trees grow small: suns get watched
to blindness: someone's rubbed god
speaks miracles of damp cohesion.

HARRY SMITH

MY MOTHER USED TO SAY

from the Yiddish of Menke Katz

A house like a story, once upon a time,
chimneyful as if built of clouds,
the earthen floor like an extinguished sky.
Death lives in the cemetery nearby,
with a body of grass, with a heart of moss.
The fog rides to a black nowhere
to meet its enemy, the far away light.
The far peaks show through the windowpane —
how long, how long our love will be.
Sawing the hours, the cricket does not tire.
From under a stone, a sad grass leaps out
asking if it is summer in the world,
eager to hear its own sorrow shrilled by the cricket.
My father naps and holds me by the dress;
I should not fly to my lover.
I am still entranced by his love words :
O my bride, who can buy a silver chip of the moon?
And I will give you all the silver of the moon.
The tiniest life is a moment with God and the stars,
and I will be with you a whole day in eternity.

HARRY SMITH

THE HANGMAN'S FOREST

from the Yiddish of Menke Katz

So many gallows burgeoned in the hangman's forest,
will there still be a whole tree for little birds?
The hangman knows more spring in gallows than in
trees —
O so many springs strangled in the hangman's forest.
A tree without a noose is a waif.
The hangman loves best to rest in the shade of a
hanged man.
O so many gallows will yet bloom in the hangman's
forest!
But, lo: for every hangman grows a tree.

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JOHN STEVENS WADE

LIMITED

from the Dutch of Ellen Warmond

I want to close the doors of the world for you the doors of the
hard light and the cold space to define myself more
taperingly to this small universe to this: a room to embrace
you or this: a bed for caresses

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WEEKEND

from the Dutch of Bert Voet

I like a Saturday night in a city with shoulders of light and
thousands of posters the rain-voices of pigeons the murder
and fire sirens calypso singers a stand for taxis a man from
Burma cafes with female waitresses a shop window of
tombstones the tunnel-mouth of a bridge water and stone
and dreams and an unnoticed pain a pain that can hear no
name painful as a railway platform at night

JOHN STEVENS WADE

HORSES

from the Dutch of W. J. van der Molen

Horses hardly hate at all.
Around a table of grass
they sit close together
under the lamp of the trees.
They are so home-loving, almost afraid
of the wind and the dew that is coming.
Their tails hold back the rain;
they only go out together.

SMALL BLUES FOR FOOTSTEPS

from the Dutch of Lizzy Sara May

The night lights the city
the wind accompanies the street
the moon embraces the house
the bridge guards the water
I have no shadow any more
the shore defends the water
the door protects the house
the silence protects the street
sleep defends the city
I have no shadow any more

GEORG BRITTING

SUMMER FEELING

Short, glowing summer, stay. Your breath
Annoys the timid grass. But the grain
Loves you, the reddening grapes. The cricket
Sings your praise,
And the lark ascending into the blue
Trills his way to please you,
And the scarlet blossoms of the wild poppy
Are a fiery cry of joy.
In the cool, bright nights
The green grass arises again.
The snail wanders through the dewy fields
And doesn't see the stars above :
Far from its feelers. Already now
It fears, like the toad in the dark roadway,
The salamander in the swamp
Of sweet, rosy morning.

Translated by Rainer O. Schulte and J. Michael Yates.

IVAN GOLL

WATER MIRACLE

Watermouth full of foul fishes
Watereye waterhand
Water whose what
We neither know nor guess
Water laughing water weeping
Up and down in the water tower
Listen how the water towers
Wave as well as fear.
Water tribes wander wander
Into the shoreless seas
Where the water spirits die
Where the sea dog drowns
The water sleeps beneath cedars
Oversleeps the sea time
While the sea god
Rises to the water harps.

Translated by Rainer O. Schulte and J. Michael Yates.

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EARL HENDLER

ON THE LATEST SHOWING AT THE JEWISH MUSEUM

The rabbi from Utah
delivers a silver eulogy
over those boxes
spicing each six days of bread
for my friend who gobbles the whole seven
and me who stand
teetering without a prayer shawl
over that abyss of mirrors
shocking me into a forever-dwindling face.
A brother to Mormons,
he deigns to lay on hands
to raise us tabernacles out of sand,
mirages to gull God's people into saints,
while we smile.
Evoking a chorus
to stir the air,
sacramental like his lotioned cheeks,
he trusts to move the salt in a believer's tears,
but gets for all his calling
a sermon on kinesiology,
a dismembered apocalypse of horse
strop-strop-stropping
in pieces of junk
an assembly of hula hips
writhing for all the world's King Davids,
the Lord's glory
one endless ring of chrome
spinning its answer to Ezekiel's question,
'Can these bones live?'

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JAY BAIL

PERIOD OF TIME

He pushes the button and takes his finger off even before he hears the chimes ring once inside. He waits with his hands at his sides and then brings his right hand up and runs the tips of his fingers over his forehead. It is very quiet here in the hallway. There is one carpet that runs the length of the floor but it is very thin. It is not thick enough to absorb the shouts and the laughter and the clinkings. But there is no noise. Except the slight scraping sound made by his fingertips moving against his forehead.

He pushes in the button, listening to the chimes ring and then removing his finger. His hands at his sides, he waits, staring at the door.

It is a wooden door and it is colored deep brown and stained with waves of black. There are five squares that are indented at even spaces in the height of the door. In the squares are further indented squares. And in the indented squares are waves of black.

At that moment, there is the sound of feet moving along the hardwood floors inside. The sound gets louder until it stops abruptly. There is a loud click and then silence and then the door is opened. . . . He stops rubbing his forehead and looks around the cafeteria but everyone's lips are moving to different words. He listens to where the voices are coming from. His head still, his eyes staring slowly back and forth on the floor, he abruptly turns around and sees in back of him, only a few feet away, two women, sitting and talking.

'Nice weather out, isn't it?'

'Yes. I should say it is.'

'I hope it lasts. But you never know.'

'Very nice out. You don't have to wear a coat.'

'And they say it's going to be nicer tomorrow.'

'It's about time it got warmer. It's been cold so long.'

'I like cold weather but not as cold as it's been. But you
never know. It could be over tomorrow.'

'They say it might rain.'

'It's about time we got weather like this.'

'But you never know.'

'Just lovely out.'

'But you —'

He turns away but he does not stop listening. . . . He rubs the tips of his fingers back and forth over the table top. His fingers are extended

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straight out, almost rigid, as they move from one end of the arc to the other. . . . His palm is slightly above the desk top. His arm moves slowly and then more quickly, and then stops altogether.

He stands up and moves his head idly from one side of the room to the other, blinking his eyes quickly. He goes over to the sink and turns on the water, at first hot and then cold and then warm. He washes his face many times, rubbing the water in, around. And then he washes his hands. He dries both and walks over to the bed, sits down on it and hunches forward, his forearms crossed on his knees. His tongue moves over both his lips, wetting them. He sits in that position for a few minutes and then he lies down on the bed, arms behind his head, looking up at the ceiling which is deep brown and stained with waves of black. . . . He notices this as he stops opposite the door. But he does not see any other patterns in the door because his eyes are looking at the button which his finger is pushing once quickly, releasing it even before the chimes sound from inside, and then pushing it again and releasing it almost as quickly. The third time, he pushes the button but this time he waits a few moments before releasing it. He waits in the quiet of the hallway. Although there is no noise, the hallway rugs are threadbare and narrow and cannot possibly muffle the shouting and the laughter and the clinkings of glasses. But there are no sounds in this hallway. There are no sounds of footsteps approaching scuffling to a stop. And there is no sound of a clicking and then a silence and then a door being opened. There is only the slight scraping sound made by fingertips either moving across a forehead or a table top or almost

anything.

She is lying in the bathtub and the water laps against her neck.

Her chin is very strong. The length of her lips is long and her upper lip shows almost no width while her lower lip is somewhat wider. These are generally considered beautifully-shaped lips but it is difficult to say this because they are frozen apart so that her tongue can be seen lying against the back of her lower teeth.

Her nose is short and sharp and straight, inclined slightly upward. Her eyes are full, not small and not large, but seemingly-large because they are wide open and staring straight ahead. She is looking at the bare wall, staring at a space between the window and the hamper.

Due to the lapping of the water against her neck, her head slowly slides to one side of the bathtub and she is now looking at the wall next to her, staring at a spot slightly below the towel rack. Her lips are still parted and because her whole head is on a lower level than before, the water runs muffled over her face.

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into her mouth and down her throat. She does not close her mouth. Nor, in the last few minutes, has she breathed. It is difficult to take a breath. She moves her arms slowly, but they cannot pull her up. She looks across at her naked body, at her nipples and the tuft of hair between her legs, seeing beside it, all around it, water that is light red and then darker red, water that laps around her neck violently and then slower, and she moves her eyes slowly up and then to her left and then to her right, and she licks her lips once, and then twice, and during the third time her mouth opens widely, and then her lips come together, and then they fall slightly apart and remain in that position. The eyes remain open looking straight ahead but not seeing the people who are talking. . . . He turns his head and, in back of him, buying a newspaper, are a young man and woman and they are talking and he does not listen but he hears.

‘Nice night out, isn’t it?’

‘Yes. Pretty warm for this time of year, isn’t it?’

‘Yeah, I could do with a lot more weather like this.’

‘So could I.’

‘Got pretty hot this afternoon, huh? Well, I don’t mean hot. Warm.’

‘Yes. It certainly did. But they say it’s going to get pretty cold again soon.’

‘Yeah? When?’

‘Oh, I don’t know. That’s what the weather bureau says.’

‘Ah, can’t believe them. Don’t know what they’re talking about. But it was a pretty nice day out, wasn’t it?’

‘Yes. It certainly was. I love days like this.’

‘Real nice. But you never know.’

‘Lovely out.’

‘But you —’

He walks away from them but he does not stop hearing. He licks his lips slowly and a few minutes later he is again

licking them. Sweat rolls from the roots of his hair down the sides and the front of his forehead and over his face and his nose. It is very dark out. He passes by only a few street lamps. There is no one walking on the street except himself. . . . The clanging of footsteps does not disturb him as he looks across the living room at her. She says something which he cannot hear but he pretends as if he has, and he answers but afterwards he is not sure that he has said anything. Afterwards, there is the light of the afternoon sun bursting from the windows to the radiator and the plants and the boards and the thick rug that completely covers the floor of the living room and that effectively muffles the shouting and the laughter and the clinking of glasses until he

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cannot hear what is being said. He smiles and talks to a man on his right but after every sentence he loses the meaning of what he is saying. After a while he stops talking and looks across the room vaguely. . . . He gets up from the bed and walks across the room and sits down at the desk. He looks through the window, running the tips of his fingers over the desk top, making a low scraping sound. There are rows of buildings outside that are pushed one against the other. He looks at them for a long time and then he opens the desk drawer and takes out a paper bag. He opens it and spills out four letters on the desk top. They are the letters R, T, O, L. He arranges the various combinations of letters that can be put together. But none of the combinations spells a word. He looks in the paper bag but there are no more letters. After arranging them a few more times, he puts the letters back in the bag and the bag back in the drawer and he looks out of the window at the first pinnacles of darkness.

She opens the door and looks out and smiles at him. Wait a minute will you, she says to him, I'll be right back. He nods his head and smiles and he can hear the swishing of her footsteps moving away from him. The door is slightly open, not enough to see in. . . . He looks at the five indented squares spread across the height of the door and he looks at the indentations inside of the indentations, watching the black waves move motionlessly into the grain of the wood. He watches this with his hands behind his back and it is at this moment he sees that the door is completely closed. He turns the knob, but the door will not open. He pushes in the button three times, two short and one long, and he waits in the hallway among the silences, arms behind his back. He

looks down at his feet, watching his legs move in a short arc back and forth. Everything is very quiet in the hallway. . . . Again, he brings his left hand up and rubs the wet soap back and forth across his right hand. When he has built up a lather, he releases the soap, and rubs both his hands across his face back and forth, deeply, not leaving any portion uncovered, and then moves his hands down and soaps them on both sides. He rinses off his hands and then his face and he dries them.

She tries to scream but she can not. All she can do is lie in the bath listening to the footsteps moving away and then the closing of the outside door. She does not breathe too deeply. She tries to make a small sound with her mouth but it is only a gurgle. Bringing her lips together, she parts them with her tongue, and then moves her tongue slowly from left to right and then back again over the lips, failing to make them wet.

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arms move slightly and then stop. She moves the big toe of her right foot, watching, and then it does not move. The water is red. Slowly she moves her eyes up and then to the right and then across to the left and she opens her mouth but only a gurgle comes out. She stares straight ahead at a spot on the wall between the hamper and the window. Her mouth is partially open, the tongue lying flat in the mouth. The water laps against the neck and the body, moving the arm . . . back and forth across the table top. His fingers stretched out, barely touching the surface, he makes a distinct scraping sound across the desk, while looking out of the window. It is seven floors down and he can see many buildings jutting out of one another. He can see people walking across the many streets and down the many pavements. . . . He pauses for a moment, and then he gets into the bus and sits down in the back where there are two people talking behind him.

'Man, this weather's really something.'

'Yeah. I know what you mean.'

'I could use a hundred more days like this.'

'The funniest thing is that it's the middle of winter. They never expected weather like this.'

'It's Florida weather is what it is.'

'Yeah, well, I don't know what it is, but I just hope it keeps up.'

'They said it would.'

'Yeah?'

'Yeah. They said it'd keep up like this. Be real great weather, they said.'

'Yeah, well, you can't trust them too much, you know.'

'Hmmm. Well, I just hope it keeps up like this.'

'Yeah, but you never know.'

'Real great.'

'Hm. Never —'

He rubs the soap over his wet hands, making a lather. After putting the soap down, he runs both his hands over his forehead and cheeks and jaw and neck, and rubs in the soap carefully. Then he rinses both his hands and his face and he dries them. He moves to the middle of the room and he turns his head slowly in one direction and then in the other. . . . He stands there staring down at his feet, watching his legs moving in a slight arc back and forth. He pushes the button, two shorts and one long, and he waits in the silence of the hallway, looking at the door which is a deep brown stained with waves of black.

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JAY BAIL

Jay Bail

From inside, there is a sound of shuffling that comes closer and louder, and then does not come at all. There is a loud click and then silence and then the door is opened . . . She smiles at him with her long lips. Oh, look, she says, give me a minute, will you. I'll be right back. She moves out of his sight and he hears her shuffling moving away. The door is slightly open. But not enough to see in. The hallway is quite dark. The bulb is working but it is not a very powerful wattage and he can barely see anything. He can barely see the rug lying on the floor but he knows it is long . . . and he knows it is not thick enough to hide the laughter and the clinking of his glass with hers. She smiles at him and laughs once shortly and drinks the highball as does he. She asks him a few questions and he answers them, but he cannot think through the shouting and he is not sure he has said what he meant but it does not matter because he sees that she cannot hear him. He takes another sip and he agrees with the man with the white hair who has just proved to him something fundamentally important but which he cannot remember afterwards. She is across the room, agreeing or disagreeing with a group of people, and he sees her hair spring back and forth. He sits down on the sofa next to a man who tells many jokes, none of which he can understand. He counts the number of people who are smoking and dancing and laughing . . . When he gets to four, he looks in the paper bag, but there are no more letters. The four are B, A, K. He arranges them into as many combinations as he can think of, but none of the combinations spells a word. He pauses for a few moments, thinking, and then he puts the letters back in the paper bag and the paper bag back in the desk drawer. He looks out of the window at the night and then he goes over and lies down on the bed. He lets his body float again to the mattress, his spine curving to the softness, his right hand moving to his

forehead. He rubs the tips of three fingers against the forehead . . . and there is a sound of scraping which he can very plainly hear in this hallway. He brings his right hand down to his side and he sees the door slightly open and he pushes the button again, and again he hears in the hallway and there is no sound coming from anywhere. He pushes against one of the indentations and the door opens slowly and then knocks softly against the wall inside. He walks into her small hallway and it is dark and the whole apartment is dark. He waits, but still there is no sound. He walks slowly into her kitchen and there is no one there. There is no one in the living room either. It is very quiet and the hardwood floors creak under his weight and occasionally creak after he has walked over them. He stops in her bedroom and sees that the beds are made.

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the rugs are straightened and that again it is empty. He walks into the bathroom and in the darkness, he can see the white bathtub and sink and toilet seat. He walks back into her hallway and he stops and he looks around but there is no one, and he stops breathing and he listens but there is no sound, not even of the creaking floors. He turns and walks out of her apartment and as he is about to pull the door closed, he hears the sound of lapping water.

She takes off her bathrobe and stands naked, looking down at the water running from the spigot into the bathtub. She dips her hand into the water and then takes it out and is about to turn off the spigot when the chimes ring. Quickly, she puts on her bathrobe and she goes to the door and opens it. She smiles at him and says, wait a minute, will you. I've got to turn off the water. She leaves the door partially open and moves quickly to the bathtub and turns off the water. She puts on her slippers, walks back to the door, and opens it. There is no one there. She walks into the hallway, turning her head from left to right but not seeing anyone. She looks

down at the carpet, barely moving her eyes, and then she turns around and walks back into her apartment, closing the door behind her. She pauses, staring straight ahead and then she goes into the bathroom, takes off her robe and gets into the water. She soaps herself now, running the lather carefully over her skin, with her body stretched out the length of the bathtub.

She has a strong chin with an almost invisible dimple. Her lips are long and with a thin top lip and a more full bottom one. Her nose is short and straight and tilted somewhat upward. Her eyes are not small and not large. She has what is known as a clear complexion, her cheeks rosy and unblemished. And she has been told more than once that she is a very good-looking girl.

She washes her face carefully, rubbing the soap in and then letting it soak for a few moments, and then rinsing it off. She takes a long time washing her body. Through the splashing of the water, it is very quiet here in the bathroom. She does not know how quiet until she lies back and takes a deep breath and stops in the middle of letting it out. She holds her head straight and looks down obliquely at the water and all she can hear is the lapping and then it is not all, and then the lapping does not exist as she turns her head quickly.

The floor creaks behind him as he walks into the kitchen and finds no one there. Nor is there anyone in the living room. In the bedroom, the

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beds have not been made and the rugs are mussed but there is no one there. The bathroom is still and filled with whiteness and there is no one there. He walks back to the living room and sits down on the couch, but after a few moments he is up . . . and talking again. He smiles at a woman who is explaining the holiness of giving birth. He listens to her and to others and he shakes his head when needed and nods his head when needed. Once he even laughs. And he sees her across the room, filling a man's glass and laughing in a burst, throwing her hair to the left and the right. And there is shouting and laughter and the clinkings of glasses. The rug is very thick and successfully muffles the sounds around him. He does not hear too much of what is said and what he does hear he cannot understand. At the door, she kisses him lightly on the cheek and smiles and says good-bye and he smiles also . . . rubbing his right hand across his forehead, causing a scraping sound that can be heard in the hallway. There are five square indentations in the height of the door and inside of the indentations are further indentations, colored by black waves running through the grain of the wood. He pushes the button three times, twice short and once long, but there is no answer. He waits for a long time but no one comes. . . . He takes out the paper bag and empties the letters on the desk. There are only four. There are no more. They are T, Q, S, A. He arranges the letters in all the possible combinations but none of the combinations is a word. He looks under the desk but there are no more letters. Again, he uses all possible combinations and again it fails. He looks at the letters for a few moments and then he suddenly sweeps them off the table with his hand, listening to their clatter on the floor. He looks out of the window at the thousands of houses below. It is dark now. Wherever the moon is, he cannot see it. It is quiet in the room now as he bends slowly down and gropes on the floor,

collecting the letters. He puts them in the paper bag and he puts the paper bag back in the drawer and he walks across to the closet and takes out his best suit and tie. He puts them on quickly in the darkness.

She dries herself slowly, enjoying the warmth of the bathroom. Then she puts on her bathrobe and goes to her bedroom. The bed is made and the rug is pulled straight. Naked, she slips in between the covers and pulls them up to her shoulders. She closes her eyes and smiles and thinks how well the party went. Soon, her individual thoughts dissolve and she falls off the edge of consciousness into sleep. She breathes silently, occasionally opening her mouth, through which can be seen her tongue lying flat against her lower teeth.

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JAY BAIL

Jay Bail

The sky is starless with pitches of black. It is cold out but there is no wind. He walks quickly along the pavement looking straight ahead. He walks up the steps, goes in the outside door, and stops opposite her apartment door. It is a door slightly taller than he, colored a dark brown, with five indented squares spaced evenly over the height. He pushes in the button two short and one long. He waits in the silences of the hallway with his eyes lowered and the tips of his fingers running over his forehead, making a scraping sound that can not be hidden in this quiet. He is about to ring again when he sees the door is partially open. He pushes against it with the tips of his fingers and it opens slowly and then knocks against the inside wall. He walks into her hallway and he sees that the lights are on in every room. He stops and waits but nothing happens. He goes into the kitchen but there is no one. There is no one in the living room. He goes into the bedroom and the bed is made up, covers tucked in, hospital corners, white sheets. The rugs are pulled straight. He goes into the bathroom but there is no one there. He turns off the faucet and he puts his hand in the water and it is lukewarm. The bathroom is very clean. There is no one there. . . . Let me turn off the water, she says, and he can hear the sound of her bare feet moving away, leaving the door partially open. When he looks up, the door is closed.

She can only scream without making a sound. The water moves her arms back and forth. She licks her lips but cannot make them wet and then they are wet with the thickness that is coming from her throat. She brings her eyes up and moves them to the left and then to the right and then she is

staring straight ahead at a spot on the wall between the window and the hamper. Due to the pressure of the lapping water, which is now red, her head slides slowly to one side and she is staring at the wall near her. Her mouth is open, her tongue lying against the back of her lower teeth. She has not breathed now for some minutes. She opens her mouth and hears the gurgle and she can not move and all is a rushing silence about her and then she hears the sound of feet, silence, a click, silence, and then a door being opened and a woman saying she must turn off the faucet. . . . She pulls the covers up to her shoulders and eventually sleeps with her eyelids frozen perpetually apart.

He does not even look at the letters that he has dropped from the paper bag to the desk. He looks out of the window at the houses and then suddenly he sweeps them off the table, hearing them clatter onto the floor. He goes over to the sink and he turns on the water first cold and then hot

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and then lukewarm. He wets the soap and rubs it on both his hands. He puts the soap down and spreads the lather from his hands onto his face and then allows it to soak in. Then he rinses off his hands and face. It is at this moment that he hears the three buzzes, two shorts and one long. He looks at his door and he opens his mouth but the only sound he can make is a gurgle.

‘Nice day, huh?’

‘Yeah, not bad. We could really use days like this.’

‘God, I wish it was always

In the darkness, he puts on his good suit and tie. He goes to the door. It is very quiet. All that can be heard is a scraping sound.

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JOEL WEISHAUS

THE SOPHISTS

Sun gold left its halo dissolving
In the western sky. last rays knifed
Through trees setting them on fire.
Night's cool blue slowly metamorphosized.
Venus lifted her angelic face and smiled.
Moon silver shook loose a dusty cloud,
Drenching the tranquil sophists in lemon
Phosphorescence.
They sat on a mountaintop overlooking the valley
of Geber.
They sat with nicotine-stained fingers.
They sat with teddy bear minds.
'The gist of it is that i'm tired of waiting
for him to appear.'
'But he's already here, you know that.'
'More than rumors?'
'Strings around necks; men stretched to . . .'
'Imagination!'
'No! No!'
'Then what?'
'Fishes.'
'Left-handed fishes?'
'Yes, yes, then you know.'
'Only rumors.'
'Then hear more: thousands freed from . . .'
'Enough! Just tell me, why the pending holocaust?'
'He died.'
'Oh, pity. We can use him now.'
'I wonder.'

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THOMAS KRETZ

BIRTH

When occasionally a grab
of intangible sunshine
streams the dark corridors
I alone stumble along
I feel the sensuous warmth
of a long thin poem
squirming out of myself
like a hungry nightcrawler
peeking over the seventh green
not knowing where he wriggles
confused by the clearing dawn
yet free and warm and working
sure of the situation.

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RICHARD O'CONNELL

BEAR FABLE

Three hunters went out for bear And hit one on the road.
Pulled up. Thinking him dead — They lugged him into the
backseat And started the car, but the bear Alive started
clawing the hunters. They stopped the car, locked it up With
the bear inside on his back Tearing loose the upholstery.
Shoot him! one of them shouted. But the bear sat on top
their guns. Another car full of hunters Pulls up. They shot
the bear Through the windows, taking the kill. Moral: Get
your bear off the road.

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HOWARD MERONEY

FIAT

God said, 'Let there be light.' So yesterday it dawned upon us. The Electric Company came. Eleven workingmen with automatic Buzzsaw, they chopped down thirty Trees, then elevated three crossed Poles, and hanged a transformer. Their Supervisor left a sign: 'Go where the Boss cannot See you, and sin there.'

WILLIAM ROBERT MILLER

COMMERCIAL

This handy home lobotomy
is the next best thing
to expensive decapitation
curing hoaxes and hexes
such as acute cogitation . . .
guaranteed to nip
incipient emancipation;
and if you add this handy
attachment,
 chuckled the happy huckster
 through the wavy haze
 of Channel Zero,
you can bore a hole
clear through to China
and slide down the cloacal cable
of your scatological soul
to say hello to Chiang Kai-shek
and all the folks at home.

SUSAN FORTHMAN

HIGH SCHOOL

Aftermath? comes history, he said,
and my insect eyes mourned
on the wide chin,
prematurely acne-free.
I adored him between the s-f
bug and the champ sandwich-eater.
But he, teenage celibate,
sank in the embrace
of the imaginary number
on the blackboard,
and never saw my hunger-
bitten fingers grip
the desk — anoxic divers.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES (3)

I am a writer. My name is Anigus, but I can't remember why my name is Anigus. It is difficult for a writer to live in the world, or perhaps it is difficult for a person to live in the world; I'm not quite sure which it is. I am young, but the people I know are dying, and I know fewer people all the time. This is a factual statement, and I dislike the sound of factuality but must continue with it for now.

Once, when I was younger yet than I am now, I knew the difficulty of living . . . and there was a man living in the town, and I sent him a letter telling him that he lived easily and that it was hard for me to live, but that I would give more to the world than he would with his businesses and money . . . and I asked him to recognize this and help me to live a little easier for the moment so that I could spend more of my time making those things I would give to the world. In the engraved envelope of his reply, there was no letter, but there was a dried pigeon turd. I have long since lost the envelope, but the pigeon turd I made a tinfoil box for, and I still have it in the top drawer of my dresser. Sometimes I look at it. Yesterday I seem to remember that it was winter. Rain blurred the window in front of my writing desk, and I went into the rain and walked, but it had an acid feel about it, and my skin burned, and I turned and walked back and returned to my desk. Today it seems to be summer. The sun shines, and there are no clouds, and I would walk in the sun, but it would burn my skin and I would have to return. I can't remember now how many days there have been between today and yesterday.

I have a friend and when we were younger we walked together sometimes and talked of things and I went up to his apartment where he had painted a picture of death on the

wall. He would not open the blinds so that the light could fall full on the painting on the wall, but I could see the swirls of black and red paint and the thick place where the paint at the bottom of the painting ran in streaks toward the floor, spread across the rug, dripped down through cracks in the floor into the apartment below us, worked its way through the walls and floors and soaked into the ground from pools smelling the heavy smell of raw oil paint. That house is torn down now, the sides crushed by machines that stood and cracked the walls with the sound of breaking timber — machines that scooped the earth and then leveled it. A concrete building is being built there now, but the oil in the earth has not dried, and there is trouble making the foundation stand solid against the shifting earth. Sometimes

JON REMMERDE

I have walked by there and seen the men crawling against the forms, seen the yellow machines stand against the sky, swinging buckets of concrete in over the forms, the concrete rushing fluid to the forms and spreading in pools that men try to distribute with metal knives and broad-bladed hoes, and then they try to make the concrete dry and take on form. My friend is older now than he was then, and I see him less and less often. He stays within houses and tries to remember what he has done, tries to see what he must do, and it is hard for painters to live in the world. Once he came to my house, the sorrow in his eyes, embarrassed in his need, and said to me that he needed to stay in my house. Time splits into fragments that cut as ice against the pallet. I offer to him a dried pigeon turd that I have saved in the tinfoil box and he moves away from me, the sorrow then standing like a fog between us. I try to move toward him, but he is gone and it is winter with clouds spiraling toward me out of the tops of trees, heavy and grey moving from all around me in all forms, and the painter who is my friend has gone. In my intestines there is the need to consume clouds, breathe in all the fog, find the rain moving through my skin and across my blood. 2 I can't wear the shirt any more. My skin is claustrophobic. I paint patterns and a row of buttons along the front of my chest. All day I try to look like a shirt and tie, and at dusk I walk. People move around me but do not touch me and are silent when their faces move with the motions of talking. I reach out. I would say, the form of your body against the coldness of the rising moon is a form of beauty for which I find no words and only action moving into the softness with gentleness . . . and she would say, why must you cast my body against the coldness of the rising moon and not against the setting sun . . . and I would say the moon combines the beauty that is yours with the beauty that is the dream of my mind. Fog disguises itself as sleep and

moves across the back of my eyes, and I reach my hand out in front of me and grasp nothing. I become afraid of the enveloping sounds of darkness. To hum into my own ears is to shut it out and yet to shut out the first warning sound that may let me step quickly to one side. I am silent and standing outside of all light. Paints run in my mind in swirls of red and black and overflow through the contracting pupils of the eye, run across the lines of my own body, blurring the forms, and run to a pool that works into the pores of the cold concrete. Above, against the dark sky, there is the quick motion of the wing of the dying bird, the sound of unfinished breathing.

JON REMMERDE

Builders of freeways are lost in the red dust that once grew almond trees that flowered white against the white days and turned green and grey. Machines live in monotonous existence. Euclids and Caterpillars and Whites and Mercedes and Land Haulers coughing in the sudden choking dust of back and forth trips when small children stand distant and feel the power surging into their bodies and pimpily teen-agers feel the machine almost as if moved under them, knowing that were they to operate these twenty tons, big-breasted girls of dreams would wait for them and fall to the ground in front of them at the end of the day, fondling their testicles that ache for this, tonguing their cocks, looking into their eyes with soul-deep admiration as they grasped their buttocks to pull them deep inside of their wet cunts until at dusk the pimpily boys must stand behind trees whipping at their penises until the white sperm falls to the sterile ground and the hate grows inside and the real drivers walk down off the silent machines into a world they have forgotten, sit watching t.v. while fungus grows out of their eyes and down their drooping faces and dust settles into dying trees.

And in the city in the night, blind men that do not know that night has sunk tight against the earth move through the streets, chests against brick walls, fingers extended past ends of arms to feel their direction, feeling then the lights of the city rasping against their ears, knowing that they move to the corner and then to the corner and are patient for the day again.

In the night that is the night of the city, when trees block out the sky and lights block out the stars, the man who was my friend came to the door and we stood with the screen between us. He said your house is large. I want to sleep in your dirt basement up against the furnace that thunders with the sound of flame and coughs black chunks of soot to swirl in whirlwinds against the walls. The tight pattern of wire screen was like fog between us and split the sound into angular crystals that cascaded past my ears, shattered against the walls and covered the floor in clear flowing currents that looked like they were not there. The fog moved thicker and closed in around his form until I could not see him and reached out toward him and the screen split my flesh into square patterns of white nerve cells that dripped red and black paint that pooled on the wooden floor of the porch and caught the yellow light from the globe over my head.

JON REMMERDE

Night closes down and my arms are spread and reach out beyond the tips of my fingers. She is close to me and I touch her, but my fingers are blunt things that scrabble across the floor and up the angles of the walls and touch nothing. I taste her nearness moving fluid into my throat. Sounds cascade in crimson flowings out of my ears and are caught in the blackness spiraling in from far outside everything and are absorbed.

Tired, I lie across the bed, the rough patterns of the bedspread cutting into my flesh. Rain makes steady sounds

against the house and moves with the motions of my own mind. I feel her hand against my back and turn and say, I had a friend. She says hush it is time for silence and spreads her body above me, moving down against me and shutting out the tim behind her. The night moves heavy against my eyes. I turn to the turning. I feel the spiraling motion catch me and turn me inward toward the point of focus.

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GERALD LOCKLIN

BELMONT SHORE

It is December of the year for burning bridges and I have come at last across the decades to the ocean, to a bay domesticated by a needless breakwater, auscultated by the offshore derricks, slick with wasted oil, lit, at night, by power plants that neither Edison nor Kafka ever dreamed of, channeled down a cobblestone marina for the rich at heart (who will, of course, inherit even oceans), and I see behind me arches of ephemera aflame and no more bridges to be burned — how can I help but wonder if, when all is said and done, I'm not a little crazy?

Is a man completely sane whose wife is asking four-fifths of his income, which would leave a hundred bucks a month for brand new unwed wife, their truly child of love, and, worst of all, a mad Corvair that runs on three cylinders?

What is one to think of a teacher who gives a party for a hundred students at a one-room pad, although the last time out it was the cops because the Negroes scared them and a few days later comes the FBI investigating for a bank robbery?

What sort of poet gives up writing poems to waste his time on nameless sui generis antivignettes and a novel threatening to run a little longer than a lifetime?

How can he help but perish when, instead of publishing, three nights a week he practices karate, afternoons lifts weights, and the rest of the time has migraine headaches?

And what of his draft board? They haven't heard from him in years. Will not some slimy former English major think to trace him through the little magazines? (I'll tell them I have nectar on the brain, a club heart, a trick penis.)

To think that all my mother wanted was that I should grow up normal like the stupid people, go to mass on

Sunday, marry a nice girl without sex organs. And now a million vigil candles burn in vain.

This is but to skim the evidence, and yet I am, I fear, forced to conclude that I indeed am sane and that, in lieu of heaven, hell, or percolator, in the sky there flourishes a cosmic bedlam, set aside for mothers, wives, department heads, and editors, for everyone except myself, my crazy friends (who wear their caps and bells beneath white shirts and ties and work in schools and libraries and delivering cheese), and this young girl, as lovely as a villanelle, who hates all poetry but Joyce's, cummings', and Kenneth Patchen's, doesn't give a fuck for god or country or the dean of women, worships Modigliani, Mastroianni, and Belmondo, and for some insane and obscene lack of reason loves me, loves me, always, always, loves no one but me, here in our one-room fun room love room by the sea.

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FAIR GAME

Mary Nordseth

(A PLAY IN ONE ACT)

Scene : a tomato patch.

Characters : two middle-aged men, Cyrano and Apollinari.

How long have you been here?

. . . A couple of days.

I'm sorry . . . I'm late.

That's all right.

Really, I am sorry.

I don't mind.

Really I hate to have you wait like this . . . for two days.

I don't mind . . . I don't mind waiting.

But you shouldn't have to. You really shouldn't have to wait TWO

DAYS.

Yeh . . . yeh, two days.

But that's terrible. How could you do it? You didn't even have a blanket.

No (LAUGHS) . . . not even a blanket.

God!

(LAUGHS) And it was cold. It was really cold.

I feel terrible. I feel so . . . ashamed, for making you wait, so long.

Don't.

(PAUSE) What did you do?

I just sat here. I sat here . . . and shivered. (LAUGHS) I didn't even

have a blanket.

How could you do it?

I don't know . . . I wanted to see you, so I just . . . did it.

But you must have been hungry.

I was . . . I still am.

What about the tomatoes. You have a bag of tomatoes. . .
. Why didn't
you eat them?
They're for you. I picked them for you.
Oh, thank you.
That's all right.
Could I have one, please.

MARY NORDSETH

Oh, please do.

Thank you.

You're welcome. . . . Salt?

Yes, please. Ummm. They're very good.

Yes, they are.

(PAUSE) How do you know.

Ah, well I can tell. I can tell by the way you're eating it.
That is, it
looks good.

You know what I think? Do you know what just entered
my mind?

No.

I think you DID eat one. I think you ate one of these
tomatoes. I think

you ate one and aren't telling me, that's what I think.

I didn't eat one. I haven't eaten for two days.

(PAUSE) I know you did, but it doesn't matter.

I really didn't eat one . . . they were for you.

Well, it doesn't matter. I know you did, but it doesn't
matter. (PAUSE)

Could I have more salt, please?

There is no more.

No more?

No.

But I need more.

I'm sorry.

Look, I need more salt. How can I eat the tomatoes, if I don't have salt?

I guess it must be pretty hard.

Hard? It's virtually impossible. . . . Do you know what impossible

means? Do you?

No . . . not really.

You fool. It means that something is, well, just simply . . . not possible.

Can you grasp anything of what I am saying?

More . . . or less.

More or less? More or less? . . . I have a bag of tomatoes. You have

graciously given me a complete bag of ripe tomatoes, but I cannot eat

them. That is, I have eaten one . . . and was about to eat another, and

then you tell me there is no more salt.

That's right . . . not a grain.

None?

No. Not a drop.

You don't know what you're saying. You couldn't know.

Yes, I do.

How could you?

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MARY NORDSETH

Mary Nordseth

I can imagine.

You can't even imagine.

Yes, I can.

I came here hoping you'd have something for me. I had faith, and I knew you'd have something for me. And you did . . . you did, and I thank you for it.

That's okay.

And I accepted your gift. I accepted the tomatoes. And I ate one. You gave me salt, and I ate one of these succulent fruits, I ate one, hoping to eat another. I might have eaten the whole bagful. Really, I might have eaten all eighteen of them. And you . . . you didn't bring enough salt. Why? . . . You only brought enough for one tomato. Why? You could have told me to bring my own salt. Can't you see that? Don't you understand? I could have brought a BOX of salt. A whole box.

I'm sorry.

That's not enough.

How did you know there were eighteen tomatoes in the bag?

A guess.

Liar. (PAUSE) Liar.

Yes, you're right.

Liar.

I'm sorry.

You liar.

Okay, you win, I am lying.

Lousy liar. (SOFTLY)

I am a lousy liar.

Liar. (SOFTLY)

Well, if you had brought enough salt, I wouldn't have had to lie.

Stinking liar.

I don't LIKE to lie. God knows, I avoid it whenever possible. Really, I almost NEVER lie any more.

You lied just now.

I know I did, but I had to. You made me.

Because I didn't bring enough salt, you had to lie?

I had to.

Just because I didn't bring enough salt?

Yes . . . but I'm sorry. Really. (PAUSE) Here, I'll eat the tomatoes, WITHOUT salt.

Forget it.

No, I will, really, I'll eat them all, without salt.

MARY NORDSETH

It doesn't matter.

But I WANT to. I want to show you I can. I OWE it to you now. It's

the least I can do. I mean, I shouldn't have lied. I'm sorry I lied, so now

I'll show you how sorry I am. I want to show you I'm sorry. I want to

apologize. Look . . . I'm going to eat one now, without salt.

It's no longer important.

Please, let me prove to you that I'm sorry. Watch, I'll eat one.

Don't bother.

Please, I want to.

(PAUSE) You'll probably get sick.

No, I won't. (HE EATS TOMATO AND GETS SICK)

You got sick.

Yes, I did. (PAUSE) I wanted to show you I could do it.

Getting sick doesn't prove a thing. It was a waste of time.

But I wanted to DO something. For having lied. It was the only thing I

could think of to do.

There must be another way. Really (LAUGHS) there must be some-

thing else you could do.

What? Could I do something for you? What can I do for you?

Oh, I don't know . . . exactly.

Please tell me.

Well, I guess there is something . . . you could do.

I'll do anything.

I . . . want to throw a tomato . . . at you.

At me?

. . . It might help.

All right. All right then, go ahead. Throw it. Throw it. Hit me with a

tomato. Go ahead. Hit me in the face. I don't care. No, really, I don't

care, If that's what you want to do, if that's the only way, go ahead.

(SCREAMING) Well, come on. Pick it up. Throw it. But do it now. . . .

Hurry, please. Here. Here's one. Throw it at me. Hit me. Hit me here.

Hit me in the eye. Please. Please do it. Get it over with.

(HE THROWS TOMATO) . . . Sorry.

You missed me.

(LAUGHS) Yes, I really did.

How could you miss me?

I don't know.

You must not have aimed. You didn't take enough time.

Yes, I did. . . . I was . . . very careful. . . . It's been so . . . long.

MARY NORDSETH

Well, yes it has, but really, one doesn't FORGET how to throw tomatoes. Even after three years, one doesn't lose the knack COMPLETELY.

I'm sorry . . . but I think I have.

(PAUSE) Try again, please.

Okey, but I'm telling you, I don't think I can do it. (HE THROWS AGAIN) . . . See, what did I tell you? . . . Maybe you're too far away.

How's this? (THEY TOUCH NOSES)

Ridiculous. (HE STEPS BACK) That should do it. . . . Close your eyes now, and hold still.

I don't want to close my eyes; I want to watch.

I'd rather you didn't.

But it's easier for me if I watch.

It's harder for me.

Why?

You know . . .

I won't look at you.

Please . . . close them.

I'll look at the tomato.

All right then . . . the tomato.

. . . Well, throw it.

Open your mouth.

My mouth?

Please, it's better that way. (PAUSE) Wider. Can't you open it any WIDER? . . . That's good. (HE THROWS AND MISSES)

You missed.

Maybe I didn't.

What do you mean? That's rather an abstract thing to say, under the circumstances.

You wouldn't understand. . . . I'm going to sleep now. When I awake, we'll try again.

Oh, good.

You won't leave while I'm sleeping, will you?

Oh no, I promise.
That wouldn't be fair, you know.
One thing I am is fair.
I know that.
You must believe that.
I do.
Maybe I'll go for a walk, while you sleep.

MARY NORDSETH

Don't go too far.
I won't.
Don't get lost, for God's sake.
Don't worry.
... Well, I do.
I'll practice opening my mouth, while I walk.
I'd appreciate it, if you would.
I know that ... Cyrano? (HERE THEY SWITCH ROLES: HE LIES
DOWN,
OTHER MAN STANDS UP JUGGLING TWO OR THREE TOMATOES
AND EXITS,
YAWNING)

THE ABSTRACT MAIDEN

Newell Hart

I heard this loud crash and ducked, like maybe plaster might drop from the ceiling. Never can tell about that physical culture nut upstairs. He's always dropping his weights. But no, my windows hadn't rattled so I realized the noise came from nearby. I slipped over to the door, the one that separates me from that one-room flat. The crack in the battered panel is easy a quarter-inch wide. And it wiggles like a snake. It makes snooping so easy, in fact, that I keep my old sweater over it for protection. I don't want Hugie the Kook peeping in on my romantic ups-and-downs. Actually, I shouldn't call him that. His character is more like a checkerboard. Anyway some guys have to know the pulse beats of other people; and sometimes Hugie is that way.

Well, that woolen sweater I don't wear even if it is monogrammed—it's got a hole in it, and in my business you got to be neat. Call me Aram the Slick. So I laid my big brown eye against that woolly hole and scanned the scene. It made a real sporty lens through the crack. That's when I saw Hugie's doings, but I'll confess I was a little soggy at first. There he was, on all fours. Down on the floor like his beard was sweeping up. I knew that was out because, to put it like sweet charity, his digs would never make the cover of Home Decor. No, he was gathering up coconuts. So help me. The prettiest, shaggiest bunch of coconuts you ever saw—some of which had rolled under the bed. His beard was so close to the floor I couldn't tell his head from the 'nuts. Same reddish-brown color, too.

I admit I was fascinated. Maybe he was playing a new game? Or he was pad-happy? I knew he'd had no female company for a spell; and right there that can fuzz up a guy's

brain. But why ask myself nutty questions? Hell no—I watched instead. One at a time, with his hairy and tattooed arms, he gathered all those fallen coconuts. And one at a time, he put them back into that net sack. Then he tied the whole bunch under the antique chandelier. For good measure, he built a delicate bow-knot from the flat hemp. His mug turned into a kid's grin. Then he spun the sack around like it was a snazzy new mobile. I could hear him muttering between his teeth: 'You coconuts won't drop again!'

It was no good trying to tear myself away. None of my business? Well

NEWELL HART

now, you never know — you just can't tell. I mean a guy has to know what his sub-renters are up to. Not that I owned the four-storey monstrosity; I paid rent, myself. But I let Hugie have that one spare room. Till the wrecking ball do us part. We kept our connecting door nailed shut by mutual agreement. No, I was snooping strictly out of duty — but it helped to remember that he owed me twenty bucks for the last two weeks. Curious? Mild, man, mild — because those stupid coconuts weren't all I saw. Oh, no. He had the ingredients for a whole South Sea pageant: dusty palm fronds from some hotel; a pair of Polynesian fisher- men's hats; a long roll of bamboo slats.

I walked across the room to my hi-fi. No, he'd hear it. I pulled out a smoke. No, he'd smell it. It had to be like I wasn't even home. I hadn't listened to Brubeck for two days and I was itching for a cigaret. Then I snapped my fingers. It came to me. Hugie had a date. A regular old-fashioned date. He'd mentioned it two-three days earlier when we were arguing in Happy Herb's Bar. We were jawing around on the subject of beatniks, or something like that. I tell you, those Beats are safe as a cathedral. You can't criticize 'em to the hip. I said when they approach they should shout up like a

leper — unclean! He said I was biased. Okey, so I said they were the leading lights of the Twentieth Century. Then Hugie said I was naive. Sure, I know, screen 'em individually — but that consumes energy, and that I save for my promotions. So what in hell are they? — I asked. He said that man they're nothing, there's no such thing — just cats in costume. The movement was dead.

I sure don't care a hoot either way. Just want to get it clear, that's all; because I had called Judy Niles a Spider Web Beat, on account of her new hose. And Hugie didn't think it was clever at all. Had he been with her like I had? Christ, no. And here was his oily argument: you have to have a kitten for a month, and then you know. That's okey — it's the brand of bobcat he is. Me, I don't care to get too familiar with 'em; especially not with my Bevy of Broads, as I call my street maidens. I mean I don't like it for more than a night or two at a time. But Hugie, he's got no business head at all. With him the big joy is up here — tapping my head to show you what I mean. With that guy, even sex has to be part mental.

Judy Niles — she had sand in her feet when I found her. She was from Santa Cruz, half mermaid and half boardwalk doll. I said, let me take you away from all this and put you on the street. Then I painted the picture. She clapped her hands and jumped up and down on the bed. Well, that's my nature; I like to make a trim doll happy. A guy has to

NEWELL HART

have his kicks; and it's especially nice when the kick pays off in bread. So I took one last peek at Hugie's exotic preparation. Then I went and lay on my amber quilted bedspread. Now that I was onto his funky idea, there was nothing to do but wait till she came. It was Judy he had the date with. No doubt of it. He hadn't exactly told me, but this was her day all right. So I lay there, seemed like forever, sweating it out, wondering if his excited banging would drown her gentle knock.

One thing I didn't know. Was this to be a one-shot affair? Or a holy month? Hugie — he had this thing about moon changes. He switched maidens and work and 'inner character,' as he called it, with every full moon. Don't ask me why. I argued till I was purple in the face. He gave me no sensible answer. You have to live the part, he'd say — and twiddle his sandy beard as he downed his beer, just a-grinning at me. For a whole month, he'd be a French existentialist, read nothing but Sartre, and walk around like limbo lost. Then he'd be a prophet, say Jeremiah, and stick his cherry nose in sacred scripture. He'd stroll around with a white robe and cry repentance — and by God wouldn't poke his snout in a single bar, not even a coffee house. During that siesta, he missed the very first of the Beatle Explosion. First he read of them was in one of those dry sociological journals. He asked me to explain the new music. I tried. I said: 'They don't sing those songs, man, they have them.' He listened to a record, dug, and for four full weeks he was Agonizing Ike. You tell me — because I refuse to divulge more of that caper.

Once in a while he went on a square gig, end-quote. He was a bearcat on electronics. Had a degree, in fact. Like, he took off with a crew to American Samoa. Something about

installing educational T.V. for the native schools.

Again, I could hear him whistling away in his room. He was a kid going fishing. Oh, how he was building it up, pulling out all the stops to inflate his spirit. What he was this month, I couldn't say. Nothing, I guess. I mean, between characters he wasn't anything. That was his neutral period — I forget the term he used. Dormant state, maybe; anyway, that's when he conjured up who to understudy next. For a minute I thought he might be practicing to become Daddy Neptune of the South Seas — if they have such down there. Oh yes, you bet, each time he changed roles he also switched women. He'd keep 'em two, three, maybe four weeks.

'We have insights to give each other,' he told me once. 'When we've done that, we're finished. Dig?'

No, I couldn't dig. Gradually, as I lay there, it was coming to me. The

NEWELL HART

total scene. One of his girls he went through real fast. Just one week, if I recall. I forget her name, but I knew her well enough. I mean she was one of my stable. Hugie — oh, God — he got burned up by her. He was combing out the kinks of her past. She still loved her mother, I think. No, that wasn't it. Her mother had never told her if she was a virgin — way back there — that was it. Well, after he got her all psyched-out she was happy. But he wasn't. He liked to pontificate, not unload his Past. Hugie had got a little drunk one night and talked too much.

Resting there, reconstructing his motives, I nearly forgot the show. I jumped up quietly and slipped over to my peek-hole. Hugie was fiddling with that bamboo roll, had it all spread on the floor. And he had a long cord tied from the bedpost to the bookshelf. So I went back. Judy Niles hadn't shown. And by comparison, was a drag.

That's the minute the full flashback hit me. The girl he talked too much to — jeez, what was her name? — like I say,

she was one of my own; a hefty blonde drop-out from the Peace Corps. Anyway, she spilled the whole backdrop to me. For a year, Hugie had been tortured by a memory from Samoa. He'd only mentioned part of it to me — as the real insights he saves for the damsels. There he was on the island, sniffing the flora that bloomed from volcanic soil, bugged by all the modern gadgetry that ruined the pure vision of pristine nature — or something like that. He was struggling to lift a heavy transformer to the pickup truck. This beefy islander came along and picked it up. He set it on his brown shoulder and easily packed it up a mountain.

Also other strange funny things. Like trying to show the natives a T.V. movie. They ignored the show and crowded around the lighted tube. Such excitement! Never had they seen an electric-light bulb. And the native who dragged a shark into the studio when the chief banana was absent. What was T.V. for anyhow? — it was to show off his proud kill to all his countrymen! Its tail was tied to a high beam, and the sharp snout dangled low — dripping blood all over the carpet — and the old man stood grinning for the camera.

Did these things impress Hugie the most? You know they didn't. He remembered the boat trip to one of the nearby islands, off Pago Pago . . . the campfire, the singing and dancing, the cold beer and warm bananas — and the beautiful girl who came to hold his hands. He'd heard about those Samoan girls, but he wasn't sure. . . . After all, she had a small child in tow. For lo, this long time, his memory had re-created the softness of her speech.

'Would you like to take me into the bushes?'

NEWELL HART

Newell Hart

Oh, the shame of it, he'd told Eloise — that was her name, Eloise—the gal whose mother maybe wasn't a virgin, or whatever. What about her small child? — Hugie had asked. And he saw her point a bare arm to her husband, 'Oh, he'll take care of it. Come on.' He had glanced to where she pointed. There he saw the same brute who had toted the transformer for a mile, uphill and nonstop. Hugie shrank away, frozen.

Poor Hugie. I could feel for him. I strummed the words over my own heartstrings like a lute. I'm the first to allow it was a most beautiful line of poetry: Would you like to take me into the bushes?

For many moons — even during his Jeremiah reincarnation, I suspect — it gnawed at him. A thousand times he had nodded to her bid. It carried him through lonely nights, a dream lost, Fool, Hugie, fool! That must've been the climax, the time he took up that promotion job — visiting supermarkets, installing silly cardboard gimmickry, passionately hooking up baseball players to soggy cereals. Maybe it was penance to make him forget. For a while he was rolling in bread; even paid me two-three months in advance.

He'd never rest till he fulfilled that lost dream. At the peak of his torture, he'd discovered Judy Niles — as I say, one of my Bevy of Broads. He spotted her at her sidewalk stall, plying her trade; and the very next day he told me. He called her the Abstract Maiden, and wasn't she one of mine? How about an introduction? Maybe it was his formal period. I had personally found and trained her — how to dress in sexy clothes, how to approach men and dip forward to show a little cleavage, to smile and make the pitch. Hugie's walls

simply dripped with the abstract paintings she'd sold him. Every night, he'd go to see her spot-drop the pigments to glossy paper, push the button, and — presto! — out popped a lovely abstract. Oh, that machine is a tremendous money box. Goes over like fire throughout Bohemia, especially here in the Village. Only the beatnik artists — or however Hugie refers to 'em — scoff at its creations. They have no sensitive feel for the bold color and design.

I heard the tap-tap at his door. Breathless, I stole over to the peephole. By then I had the scheme fathomed all the way. The Abstract Maiden — Judy Niles — was a ringer for the island girl in his memory. Long black hair, brown crayola skin — well, the works. Sweet fulfillment was nigh. For a minute, when I saw her swishing in, I could savvy his every passionate motive and move. Oh, he had that pad transformed and he was like Robinson Crusoe there in the growing dusk. His dappled glade was wild as the colors exploding from all those abstracts on the walls. Coconuts abounded, fronds sprouted from everywhere, and the bamboo roll had been tent-pitched over the long cord. Rugs of pandanus leaf, no doubt woven by Samoan women, graced the floor. It was the coziest island hideaway you ever saw.

I watch. She stands there smiling at him . . . whispers she is ready

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eager to do what he dreamed . . . now he loosens her wreath of hair . . . lets it fall to her shoulders . . . he removes her cloth, piece by piece . . . she is a brown shadowy eel . . . now he fits the little grass skirt about her rotating rump . . . she wiggles it, just so, to please him. There was even a big black pot at the hut's entrance. Something exotic was steaming up. Not food! I couldn't believe it was less than a love potion to titillate their nostrils. I wouldn't put it past him.

By God, it was too much for me. The last I saw, she was pulling him into that bamboo tent. I left in a huff and went

down the street, around the corner, and into a bar. The same bar where I used to bounce. No, I wasn't a floor man who used tact and judo — I was a bouncer. Only grunted to Happy Herb's barman and took my unmixed drink into a dark corner. That way I could, you know, sort of vicariously enjoy the scene upstairs. I used my imagination plenty. She looked beautiful all right, never better. Why hadn't she cavorted like that for me? The more I drank, the prettier she got. The Abstract Maiden. Jeez, why hadn't I thought that up? Was I wrong to have her up for only a night or two? Was there anything to this month-long idea of his? Maybe there were things — insights — I could give her. Or it was even possible she could teach me a thing or two. I was going out of my mind.

It came to me that Hugie didn't really want to retrieve that old dream; I mean, simply do right by miffed chance. I was acting like Hugie himself now, crawling inside the other guy's mind. Crazy. Anyway, I got the Jungian message of what he was really after. What he wanted was to know how that Samoan bit would've ended. Yeah . . . what woulda happened had he taken the gal into the bushes? Hugie didn't realize it, but that's exactly what he longed to know. I could feel it. And I was getting more sure by the minute how it should end.

I dashed out of the bar, down the busy street, up the flights of stairs, and into my room. First, I peeked into the hole — I mean after all! — and I saw they were dressed and sitting happily on the pandanus leaves. Cooing, laughing, toasting each other with drinks. I walked into the hall and down to his door and rapped vigorously. The bearded one opened up and greeted me with a warm smile. Hugie's gray eyes twinkled ever so friendly. His gracious arm swept me inside. I gave Judy Niles a sweet little greeting, and then I let him have it. My fist is still aching.

'Seduce my salesgirls, will you!' I shouted righteously. I always make a short speech for such occasions.

Judy Niles only laughed and slapped her red capris. Poor Hugie fell back into his hut, knocking hell out of that beautiful tent. The coconut sack fell as he swished by. Matting was ruffled, palm fronds lay across his lap. I gritted my teeth, braced my legs — breathing hard and waiting. Hugie was a big boy, but he never got up. He just sat there in all that exotic rubble. His hand was holding to his bloody fuzzy jaw; and on his

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face was the silliest grin I ever saw. The girl flipped on a lamp and practiced a shudder as we watched. Suddenly, he began nodding his head slowly, up and down, like he'd seen a fresh glow from heaven.

'That's it,' Hugie said, trying to snap his fingers. 'By God, Aram, that's it. I'm free.' His voice was chirpy as a bird's and his head swooned round and round. 'I got my cake and ate it too — but I knew it, her husband woulda killed me for sure!'

The damn fool was waving happily at us as we left the room. Outside in the stuffy hall, Judy Niles looked up at me and smirked.

'Quickest twenty bucks I ever made,' she said.

Good-bye rent, I thought, and twitched my lips. I guess, actually, I was glad she said that. Because I was just about to invite her into my den for a month. Instead, I waved her good-bye and told her to go peddle some paintings. She laughed and tripped down the stairs, a flash of red and black motion in the dimness. I took a deep breath. Back in the hurricane room, I helped Hugie finish the rest of his bottle.

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GENESIS*

(Translated by this author)

I. In the beginning God created marijuana, hashish, heroin, ganja, peyote, morning-glory seeds, LSD, psilocybin, Coca Cola, mescaline, DMT, and the other psychedelic drugs. Then after God had rested he said to his son, Timmy Lee Lowry: 'Wow-ee. I've really done it this time, baby.'

3. And God said: 'I like LSD best and I'll call it Lysergic Acid Diethylamide.' And then God put it in tiny capsules.

5. And God said: 'LSD will bring people of all races, colors, creeds, political persuasions, income brackets, and blood types from the darkness into the light; from the light into the darkness; from the semi-light into the semi-darkness; from . . .'

6. 'Man, I've gotta have some of that stuff,' interrupted God's son, Timmy Lee Lowry.

7. And God said: 'It'll take you to Nirvana, Gomorrah, Toronto, Sausalito, Greenwich Village, Bucknell University, and even the Sunset Strip in Hollywood, with a subscription to Ramparts and a photograph of its editors thrown in at no extra cost.' And God's son said: 'Then let me go forth at once.'

9. And so it came to pass that God gave Timmy Lee Lowry a 5,000-microgram, sugar-coated capsule of LSD and he was sore afraid.

II. After taking the capsule, Timmy Lee Lowry remained in a coma, in a fetal pose, asleep on an Early American hooked rug, for six weeks. In the seventh week God's son stirred a bit and said: 'Who goeth out there in the universe with my copy of Ramparts?'

4. And God said: 'It is me — I mean I — God. Your Father.'

5. And Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'The hell you say. I am God. I am invincible. I am eternal. I am omnipotent. I am absolute. I am Aldous Huxley. And, besides, I teach art at Bucknell.'

13. And God said: 'But that is not so, my son. I am God the Father and you are my LSD-addicted son, Timmy Lee Lowry.'

**Book I of the new Bible for LSD worshipers. Written on nonwatermarked papyrus by an LSD-addicted monk who is now investigating the Kennedy assassination.*

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14. And Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'No, I am God. Both Karma and LeRoi Jones have willed it, and I'm off to Nirvana, Gomorrah, Toronto . . .'

15. 'For that, you are banished forever,' God said. 'Take your pot and your Ramparts and go.'

III. And so Timmy Lee Lowry went forth, surreptitiously taking with him the formula for LSD. He went forth on his motorcycle, arrogantly picking up strangers and not asking for Prestone Anti-freeze. Soon he came upon Cain and his brother, Abel.

4. And Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'Hey, there, who's your travel agent in these parts?' And Cain replied: 'Our what?' 'Your travel agent? Where do you get your supply of LSD?' Timmy Lee Lowry said, 'Oh, that,' said Cain. 'What is that?' said Abel. 'Don't pay any attention to Abel — he's square,' said Cain. Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'I can see that. I think he should be locked up.' 'Well, if he is, I'm not my brother's keeper,' said Cain.

12. Realizing that Abel was square, Timmy Lee Lowry and Cain left him behind and set out to find a cap in somebody's pad. 'I'm not so sure I ought to,' said Cain. 'The last time I took LSD, I ate up all of our camel-skin tents.' 'Oh, don't chicken out on me now, baby,' said Timmy Lee Lowry. 'Stick with me and I'll take you to ecstasy.' 'Will we be back before dark?' Cain asked. 'It's my turn to feed the sheep.'

IV. And so Timmy Lee Lowry and Cain set out for the nearest town. 'Why don't we stop off at Abraham's place?' said Cain. 'He's got a real swinging place.'

3. And when they arrived at Abraham's tent, his wife, Ketu'rah, had just put some LSD in the oatmeal and it was

being voraciously gobbled up by Medan, Ishbak, Zimran, Joksham, Mid'ian, and Shu'ah. 'Welcome. You're just in time to take a trip,' said Abraham. 'Wow-ee,' said Timmy Lee Lowry.

6. After eating the oatmeal, the household became delirious and they began rolling about on the dirt floor as though their subscription to *The Village Voice* had run out. A heated argument broke out over who was God. They all claimed to be. Then Ishbak tried to squash the family dispute between his thumbs like a flea . . . Cain recited James Baldwin verse all the while muttering: 'Abel is a 'fraidy cat, Abel is a 'fraidy cat' . . . Ketu'rah walked through the yard picking up imaginary plastic flowers . . . Medan pulled at his tongue until it was three feet long . . . Joksham

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and Zimran played patty-cake, even though they were on opposite sides of the room . . . Abraham strummed *Ebb Tide* on the zither . . . Timmy Lee Lowry hopped around the tent, believing that he was a grasshopper in a Doris Day movie.

10. After three days, Abraham's household gradually returned to normal. All except Cain. He was dead. He had tried to jump across a crevice which turned out to be a mile and a half wide.

14. And so Timmy Lee Lowry set out for greener pastures. He had not had time to make his own LSD and would have to buy it at the going rate, locally.

16. Upon reaching Gerar, Timmy Lee Lowry found that things were looking up. 200-mcg. LSD capsules were common. One acid-head, Abim'elech, was coating sugar cubes with 500 micrograms.

19. And so it came to pass that Isaac also came to Gerar, in search of Rebekah who, after dropping some LSD in her wine glass, slew her children with the jawbone of an ass and fled to Gerar with a traveling salesman. Isaac, who had become tired of her anyway, set up house in the valley of

Gerar and immediately began to look for Rebekah's replacement.

V. One day, after Timmy Lee Lowry had had a bum trip and chewed out his travel agent for almost getting busted by the local constabulary, he ran into Isaac, who was also stoned. And Isaac said: 'Let's go dig some wells.' And Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'Now you're talking, baby.'

4. And so they went to the valley, taking with them 100 cube heads and 500 cubes. Timmy Lee Lowry, who had come upon a cache of LSD while shacking up with Rebekah, gave everyone a cap, and they all began to dig. In four days, their wells stretched for 250 miles; and, since the wells were dug so close together, they merged and formed a river 100 yards wide. And that is how the Jordan River was born.

8. Timmy Lee Lowry returned to Gerar and asked to stay with Rebekah. Since she was out of LSD, she readily agreed. And Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'I think I'll take 1,000 mcg. this time.' And Rebekah said: 'Count me in, too, baby.'

12. And so they undressed and got into bed. In about an hour, since nothing had happened, Rebekah stirred. She thought that she was a 25-foot-high Anacin bottle and that Timmy Lee Lowry would fill her full of tablets. But her lover had gone. He was outside fixing a flat on his motorcycle. One week later, Rebekah got out of bed to look for Timmy

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Lee Lowry, tripped over a watermelon and broke into thousands of tiny pieces.

VI. And so Timmy Lee Lowry set out for Mamre, fortifying himself with 2,000 mcg. of LSD for the journey. Upon his arrival, he found a herd of camels digging graves for Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah, who had committed suicide while giving an LSD party for her Cornell classmates. Since the camels had also taken LSD, they were digging the graves 30 feet wide and 60 feet long. Joseph, who had also had a cap, was doing cartwheels across the desert.

5. After Joseph had been gone for seven days, Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'Whither thou goest, I will go.'

6. And it came to pass that Timmy Lee Lowry found Jacob wandering incoherently and screaming at the sun: 'Yellow, yellow, yellow . . . she loves me, she loves me not . . . BLT on rye with mayo . . . light . . . dark . . . you got bad breath, sun, bad breath . . . quiet . . . Maya . . . Mayo Clinic . . . I said you've got bad breath . . . I gotta hold her hand . . . too goddamn much light . . . if you can get this laundry any whiter, I'd like to see you try it . . . no, BAD breath . . . moon river . . . sansara . . . Nirvana, the capital of Cuba . . . police review board . . . moon river . . . happiness is an ice-cream soda . . . I think I'll take some of this sand back to Bucknell . . . help, help, HELP!'

8. Since Jacob was in no condition to travel (by motorcycle, that is), Timmy Lee Lowry left him wandering in the desert looking for an Avis Rent-a-Car outlet. So after leaving Jacob with several capsules of LSD, Timmy Lee Lowry set out for Egypt.

VII. And while on his way to Egypt, Timmy Lee Lowry was accosted by a stranger in the night, who definitely was not Frank Sinatra. And the stranger said: 'You have sinned and you shall reap what you sow. Repent before it is too late.' And Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'Don't bug me, Daddy-O. I am God.'

5. And the stranger said: 'No, I am God.'

6. And Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'You are not God. I am God. You are nothing but a Presbyterian. I have walked through the valley of Mandan and Lewisburg and everyone calls me God. I am God God.'

7. And God said: 'A pox on you, my son.'

8. And Timmy Lee Lowry said: 'I can transcend time and space and eternity and UHF. I can't even see you, stranger. All I can see are Adam

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and Eve and a snake doing the Boogaloo.’ 9. And God said: ‘You can’t even transcend the Jordan without LSD. Let’s face it, son, you’re nothing but an acid-head.’ 10. And Timmy Lee Lowry said: ‘Out of my way, stranger. You oldsters are a bunch of wet blankets.’ 11. And God said: ‘I denounce you and your religion forever. You are selfish, egotistical, and alone. You shall from this day roam the earth as an outcast in search of a nirvana that will always be beyond your reach.’ 12. And Timmy Lee Lowry said: ‘Be gone, Daddy-O. I’m off to anywhere. Somewhere, Nowhere. To the Sunset Strip.’ 13. And God said: ‘Don’t forget to write. I’ll need to know where to send your copy of Ramparts.’

THE BOOK I FELT LIKE WRITING*

Felix Singer

A voice or no voice, a word or none . . .

It is nearly spring. The streets and sidewalks are dry and normal, but thick ice crusts, with footprints firmly embedded, cover the grassy plots and the walks in the yards. School lets out and the little girls with green pointed hoods and stick legs in tight black pants, like fairy-tale figures, balance for seconds on the ice crusts before leaping back to the sidewalk.

If you lack someone to talk to, to trust, to love, to turn to, you become damaged. All your dealings with other people are unnatural because you are trying too hard or in the wrong way to befriend them or you lean over backwards to avoid appearing to do so. There is in you something so lonely and so desperately eager to give and receive love that is difficult to control . . .

A faint distant whirl of approach, growing quickly louder, then fainter — the cars on North Southport Avenue. If you listen carefully, you can distinguish trucks and buses from cars, and you think you can tell which are going south and which north.

Language is that indispensable, involuntary flow of mental sounds, spoken sounds, ink marks, and machine figure-tapping whereby that which is supposedly you, even if you can't always recognize it, is transmitted after a fashion to somebody, even if that somebody is only you again.

You slump in an armchair in a cold room. You wear an overcoat, two pairs of pants, two shirts, a suit coat . . . and you write slowly, steadily . . . You hear in the silence the cars passing and now and then a plane overhead. Yesterday, the newspapers told of the first human being to enter outer

space outside of a space capsule. He was a Russian, so one is not supposed to feel human pride, but a national chagrin. He spent about as much time turning somersaults in empty space as you have just spent turning verbal somersaults in your empty space here. He knew it could be done, and yet he must have hesitated and had some doubts as to just how it would come out and whether he could crawl back into the protective environment. Same here. In FELIX KRULL, Thomas Mann plays with comparing the artist and criminal with the trapeze artist. Both swing through air, giving illusions of freedom and grace, both may so easily fall to the ground. To start a book like this, having no idea where or how you will end, is more like the somersaults in space. Your life would be the illusionary connection you have with every writer who ever tried to hold a reader with such semi-free fall subjective somersaults.

* Selected from the holograph and only copy of this work, by the Editor.

FELIX SINGER

your presumed, presumptuous assumptions of mental resemblance to the reader. Nobody cares whether you find your way back to the capsule, back to the earth.

The moment it strikes you that there may ultimately be a published, or at least publishable, book in all this, you start to systematize it, plot it, shape it. This one time, don't. Let it come day by day till the paper runs out . . .

Inner and outer selves, public and private selves, can never be identical. How closely can they, should they, resemble one another? Give people too close a facsimile of what you really are and they react with a mixture of a little admiration for your candor and a lot of disdain for the selfish critical cantankerous features of the personality . . .

William James says that the older the person, and the better the thinker, the less likely he is to think in pictures, the more likely purely in words. It's a different sort of

thinking. Why 'better?' . . . more generalized, presumably more comprehensive. Behind all that a James thinks, believes, there must be, as he admits elsewhere, the hardrock assumption that generalizations are possible, that there is a universality to experience, that there are universally-valid relations. Assuming this may be indispensable to thought; but assuming it does not make it so.

Absolutely ridiculous to have gas heat turned off March 19th, with the temperature 20° . . . Not being poor would be so simple. All that is required of you is to let other people proscribe how you shall write or think or behave or be. So simple, and so impossible.

To drift from picturing to word-thinking is analogous to drifting from intense personal participation in the lives of a few very real fictitious people to assaying conclusions about the temper of your time, the nature of personality, the destiny of man. You cease to be artist; you become philosopher. It may be that if one continues patiently, intently, with a loving but detached understanding, to focus on a few fictitious people, one indirectly approaches, or reflects, or suggests, those same all-embracing generalities. Maybe, maybe not. The fiction writer would like to believe this . . .

Now, to turn the gas off on a Friday and then phone Monday to have it turned back on . . . would be to confuse them utterly. It may be warmer on Monday. Meanwhile, let us imagine that we are on the French Riviera. The sky is deep and everlasting blue, the sands are hot under your toes . . . The women are slim-hipped and full-breasted and very conscious of their semi-nakedness as they sprawl with carefully-contrived abandon . . .

POETRY IN THE THEATRE—III

William Packard:

IMAGINE A PLAY IN WHICH ALL of the characters quietly retire. Imagine that the footlights die down, and that the rest of the set disappears into the darkness. Imagine that there is only one man who remains alone on the stage. Now there is no movement, there are no encounters or confrontations. One man sits in silence, and his eyes look out over the audience. Slowly, he begins to speak.

And now, imagine the magic of language. Imagine that this man's voice goes out over the entire auditorium, pronouncing each word so that it can be heard by everyone, the poetry of those words suggesting all the patience and outrage, all the guilt and humility, all the fear and heroism of life as we ourselves might be living it up there on that stage.

That is the role of poetry in the theatre.

Why doesn't that happen more often? If language can achieve such a remarkable effect, why don't we experience it more fully in our own theatre? Why are we sometimes embarrassed or bored or baffled by poetry in the theatre? Is there some secret to spoken poetry, something we don't know about? Is it some sort of acquired mystery which is the exclusive possession of such masters as John Gielgud and Laurence Olivier and Richard Burton?

I don't think so. And although we may not be able to give any formulae for greatness in the speaking of verse, at least we may know what it is that we don't want. We don't want the sort of thing which Stanislavsky describes in his autobiography, *MY LIFE IN ART*¹:

It is better not to read verse at all, than read it in the way which is considered lawful, requisite and patented in the sense of poetry and musicalness. Rhythm does not consist in stressing iamb's and anapests. I cannot bear the marchlike beating out of rhythm. I want to sleep when I hear the reading of verse in a solemnly monotonous voice with chromatic tones crawling up. I cannot bear vocal leaps to the

terza or quinta with a fall at the end of each line to a secunda. There is nothing more vulgar than a made, sweetish, quasi-poetical voice in lyric poems, which rises and falls like waves during a dead calm. What can be more terrible than the female readers at concerts, those tender, posing, soulful young ladies in light gowns who read from a pink velvet-bound book dear verses like: 'Little star, little star, why are you so still?' We flatter ourselves that we have made a good deal of progress in the reading of poetry since the Nineteenth Century. Have we? Perhaps we still can find in our own theatre traces of this antique picturesque approach. Or else we may go to the opposite extreme. Our actors may try to cover over the very fact that it is poetry; they may give in to the temptation of 'illustrating' the text with all sorts of irrelevant 'business.' Or an actor may throw away the text altogether and substitute his own subjective intensity, some sort of 'inner truth' which has no relation whatever to the written text.

¹ MERIDIAN, *MG4*.

I agree with Stanislavsky that any kind of artificiality or contrived effect in the speaking of poetry is repugnant, but I am not so sure that I would agree that we should sacrifice all attempts at music. I am more inclined to agree with the French poet, Paul Valéry, where, in his essay *On Speaking Verse*,² he is trying to advise actors who are preparing to do a play by Racine. They are struggling with the difficult conventions of the neo-classic French tragedy: the alexandrine line, the absolute caesura, and rhymed couplets. Valéry says that they must continue in their struggle, because that's what it's really all about. But he goes on to say:

Moreover, and above all, do not be in a hurry to reach the meaning. Approach it without forcing and, as it were, imperceptibly. Attain the tenderness and the violence only by the music and through it. Refrain for as long as possible from emphasizing words; so far there are no words, only syllables and rhythms. Remain in this purely musical state until the moment the meaning, having gradually supervened, can no longer mar the musical form. You will finally introduce it as the supreme nuance which will transfigure your piece without altering it. But first of all you must have learned your piece.

In other words, the actors are to let the rhythms of the text become a part of them, until a thorough familiarity with its musical form suggests the interpretation 'as the supreme nuance which will transfigure your piece without altering it.'

This is a very interesting approach. It may easily be tested by looking at some examples of highly-rhythmic lyric poetry. And to make the test more revealing, let us look at poems which are very obscure, poems written in dialect. We can take an old English ballad, a Scottish song, and an Irish lyric. And perhaps we shall not be able to see whether the rhythm and the musical form is enough to communicate at least one essential note of emotion, because we shall not be able to understand the specific meaning of each word.

EDWARD, EDWARD

one of the great poems in our language, has relentless and inexorable rhythms, matching a series of relentless revelations unfolding a tale of stark horror which takes hold of us as through a sort of myth of the unconscious. And yet, because of the musical form, it is all quite impersonal and remote, as though we were viewing some terrible wound from a great distance. The essential note here is, I believe, that of profound remorse. The climax is reached in the last two stanzas :

²THE ART OF POETRY — VINTAGE, VI94.

‘And what will ye leave to your bairns and your wife, Edward, Edward? And what will ye leave to your bairns and your wife, When ye gang owre the sea, O? ’— ‘The world’s room : let them beg through life, Mither, mither; The world’s room : let them beg through life, For them never mair will I see, O.’

‘And what will ye leave to your ain mither dear, Edward, Edward? And what will ye leave to your ain mither dear, My dear son, now tell me, O? ’ ‘The curse of hell frae me sall ye bear, Mither, mither; The curse of hell frae me sall ye bear : Sic counsels ye gave to me, O!’

Next, a lyric by Robert Burns wherein the rhythm and the musical form communicate a feeling of cavalier abandon. Here are the opening stanzas :

Green grow the rushes, O; Green grow the rushes, O; The sweetest hours that e’er I spend, Are spent among the lasses, O.

There’s nought but care on ev’ry han’, In ev’ry hour that passes, O : What signifies the life of man, An’ ’twere na for the lasses, O.

The war’ly race may riches chase, An’ riches still may fly them, O; An’ tho’ at last they catch them fast, Their hearts can ne’er enjoy them, O

But gie me a cannie hour at e'en, My arms about my
dearie, O; An' war'ly cares, an' war'ly men, May a' gae
tapsalteerie, O!

And the third, an Irish lyric by James Stephens, contains words and phrases clear enough to the modern English ear; but again, the rhythm and the musical form are what communicate the one essential note of emotion, which I believe to be that of affectionate caprice:

I know a girl,
And a girl knows me,
And the owl says, what!
And the owl says, who?
But what we know
We both agree
That nobody else
Shall hear or see;
It's all between herself and me:
To wit? said the owl,
To woo! said I,
To-what! to-wit! to-woo!

It is evident that Valéry's point holds true, that the musical form of each of these poems is enough to communicate the essential note of emotion, even though the specific meaning of each line may not be understood. We understand — through the use of rhythm and the shape and form of the words — far more than the explicit meaning which a prose paraphrase would have given.

This demonstrates that spoken poetry relies almost entirely on musical form and that lyric poetry usually carries one essential note of emotion. Dramatic poetry is something else, because it contains not just one, but several notes and voices of varying pitch and intensity. A serious question is raised: how are all of these notes to be read together to express the poet's intention? First, we must discover what that intention is; we need a fairly-accurate idea of what the

poet is saying. And this is by no means easy. Sometimes a given text will require concentrated study and effort over a long period of time before its complete meaning will become entirely clear. In Shakespeare, for example, we may read a passage and say: 'Oh, this is perfectly easy. I know very well what this is all about. It means this and this and this.' But when we examine the text more carefully, studying the lines word by word, image by image, idea by idea, we may find our first interpretations to be the very opposite of those intended.

Unfortunately, in the theatre, sometimes there isn't the time for deep study. The actors usually are more concerned with achieving dramatic effect apart from the poetry, so that often one simply has to do the best one can, hoping that the spoken poetry will not be too far short of the mark. But it usually is. And what makes matters worse is that, even with all the study and effort in the world, one still can't be absolutely positive about the intended meaning of a text. One often can't check one's interpretation with that of the author. Michel St.-Denis tells a story of someone who once telephoned Louis Jovet to criticize his recent production of a Molière play. After thoroughly deploring the way Jovet had interpreted the text, this person concluded: 'Molière would not have liked it.' To which, Jovet replied: 'Have you got his phone number?'

COLLECTED POEMS — MACMILLAN.

Unfortunately, we don't have Shakespeare's telephone number; but we do have his written works, and we do have his own advice as to the proper approach to a poetic text. In *HAMLET*, after the actors had come to Elsinore for their first rehearsal, Hamlet instructs certain 'unready' players in the way in which they should approach the play's text:

Speak the speech I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but

use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O! it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings; who for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you avoid it.

In other words, Hamlet does not want his actors to conceal the poetry with stage gestures and inflections — he wants them to approach with a voice that is natural, informed, and unaffected. There must be a temperance which 'o'ersteps not the modesty of nature.'

After reading Stanislavsky, Paul Valéry, and Shakespeare on the proper approach to a poetic text, we seem to find one facet in common to all three points of view. They are agreed that an actor should not be obsessed by the search for the interpretation of character. If an actor will sit down and study the text long enough and carefully enough and with enough humility, so as to discover the musical form and the rhythms and the various voices and notes of emotion, and if he will work to make all of these things a part of him, then he will find that virtually everything in the text — syntax and sentence structure, the pace and the mood of the scene — will work together to provide him with an interpretation of character. He does not need to create it for himself. He only needs to discover it.

Falstaff edition, ed. by George L. Duykinck from 1632 folio (HENRY T COATES & CO.—1859). For a final illustration of the proper approach to a poetic text, I turn to an example of a dramatic speech from a poetic play, John Webster's tragedy, *THE DUCHESS OF MALFI*. Toward the close is a speech which illustrates the form and shape of the words, and the manner in which they determine better than any actor the

interpretation of a dramatic character. Antonio has secretly married the Duchess, and then has been forced to stand aside helplessly while she and her children are savagely murdered by her insane brothers, Ferdinand and the Cardinal. It is a study of senseless malevolence. Antonio's speech seems to sum up the numb horror we feel at the sight of such sweeping disintegration of all moral order; it is as if the whole world were in a state of decomposition. It is the beginning of the famous echo scene, and Antonio looks out from a fortification of Milan at the great waste of tombs and monuments. The music of his speech seems to convey the atmosphere of disillusion and resignation:

I do love these ancient ruins.
We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history:
And, questionless, here in this open court,
Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather, some men lie interr'd
Lov'd the church so well, and gave too largely to't,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till doomsday; but all things have their end:
Churches and cities, which have diseases
Like to men, must have like death that we have.

As Valéry says: 'Moreover and above all, do not be in a hurry to reach the meaning. Approach it without forcing and, as it were, imperceptibly. Attain the tenderness and the violence only by the music and through it.'

AN ALIEN SCENT

A southern odor: Shadows open
And all land On their hinges:
Dissolving in all water. This gesture:
Mime.

William Ulrich

THE CASUAL MIND: A CINEMA BY AND FOR FETUSES

A. Fredric Franklyn

THE NINE FILMS BRIEFLY TREATED in this article are recent Hollywood gems. Aside from their unfortunate place of origin, their only unifying factor is the consistently-incredible bad taste and opulent stupidity with which they were made. They all make a lavish use of the best cinematographic equipment in the world. And most of them employ some of the highest-paid talent in the world's cinema. The misuse and positive abuse of so much wealth and means is, I think, breath-taking. But what is even much more incomprehensible is the absolute conviction on the part of these entrepreneurs of sex, sadism, and stupidity that they are artists performing a creative function, and (as some of them carry the arrogance of their self-congratulation even further) a public service!

At the present time, unaware of the tremendous activity and vital air of freedom on the New York cinematic scene, most of the world automatically assumes that the American cinema is happening almost exclusively in Hollywood. The name of that city and the term, American motion picture capital, have become virtually synonymous. It's a neat fraud. But it's leaking at every seam. In the next couple of decades, if the medium of the motion picture doesn't suffer the same fate in the U.S. as vaudeville, burlesque, and the legitimate stage, and if Hollywood movie makers don't stop thinking of audiences as exclusively made up of twelve-year-old mentalities who are easy pickings for their scams and cons, New York is going to become the nation's film capital and Hollywood is going to become a cinematic wilderness.

The several films which this article briefly considers constitute a fair amount of evidence in support of this notion . . .

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM / UNITED ARTISTS

Harold S. Prince's fifth-rate stage comedy has been rehacked and squeezed into the confines of a ninth-rate motion-picture laugh-riot comedy-sensation humorous-type funny, unrewarding and DULL movie by reliable 'scenarists' Melvin Frank and Michael Pertwee, and by Richard Lester's flashy, frosty, scammy direction. (Lester has also bounced out *THE KNACK OR HOW TO GET IT*; *THE MOUSE ON THE MOON*; and the two Beatles quickies, *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT* and *HELP*. Even with the formidable assets of the Beatles' personalities and their music, the latter pair of flicks were too slick and 'evirtuate'.)

Bores like Zero Mostel, Phil Silvers, Buster Keaton, Jack Gilford, and Michael Crawford are entirely self-styled comedians. It's very difficult for the audience to give any credulity or agreement to their visibly self-congratulatory three-sheeting. It's equally difficult to respond with anything but snores to their glib, overworked, self-consciously dirty, burlesque style of delivery. Another fast-paced, beautifully-photographed, gorgeously-costumed bomb aimed exclusively at the morons who want to watch plenty of tits and tumbles, without anything disturbingly-rewarding aimed at the cortical level of their response apparatus.

Melvin Frank, who also produced this uncooked lobster, has been quoted by the U.A. Studio flacks as saying: 'I wish I had as much money as I've been asked — "What is comedy? What makes a thing funny? Why do people laugh?" And I wish I had the slightest inkling of a definitive answer to any of these questions.' I couldn't agree more with Mr. Frank! On the other hand, judging from the screenplay which he and

Mr. Pertwee have adapted from the Prince burlesque, I find it difficult to credit that anyone connected with the motion picture production ever even had any such problems in mind during its shooting.

CHAMBER OF HORRORS / Warner Brothers

This is 'prop' entertainment at its lowest and fanciest. In color too. Directed and produced by Hy Averbach, with a scenario by Stephen Kandel. It was originally intended as a television series! Anyway, when it didn't sell, the studio and 'talent' extended the footage to feature length and put it on the cinema market. (On the theory, one supposes, that what isn't good enough for the boob tube is always adequate for the average American movie-goer!)

This is another of the myriad clunkers which continues to milk the House of Wax background for its incidental effects of horror because the writers and directors who turn them out feel safer with a proven formula than they would sticking their own necks out to attempt something original. The number and variety of props in this version proliferates until it's an open question whether or not they may actually deserve to share the billing on an equal footing with the cast itself. Chief among this ingenious assortment (which the story line generates too fast to use any of them adequately) is the circumstance of the villain losing a hand — which permits him to use a whole catalogue of screw-on cutlery in its place.

But these gimmicks, even stacked one on top of another in the context of the screenplay, aren't so offensive as the ones employed by the production to goose the flagging attention of audiences: film exhibitors have been burdened with what the studio's executives, in all seriousness, have decided to call a 'fear flasher' and a 'horror horn.' According to the publicity department's handout, these cinematic technological advances will cue audience reactions for the story's 'four Supreme Fright Points.' Considerately, 'The

audio-visual devices will enable patrons to decide whether to turn away, close their eyes, cover their ears or face the consequences.'

This television-into-motion-picture metamorphosis stars Cesare Danova, Wilfred Hyde-White, Laura Devon, Patrice Wymore, Suzy Parker, Tun Tun, Philip Bourneuf, Jeanette Nolan, and Marie Windsor—in a clutter of utterly unmemorable cameos.

Fear, on the part of producers and studio executives, of the money and prestige which American directors once commanded, originally precipitated the star system in the U.S. Today, the same generic predicament all over again, with the actors this time, seems to be inspiring the increasing emphasis on childish exhibitor gimmicks, and production techniques like technicolor, wide-angle vision, stereophonic sound, three-dimensional vision glasses, and so on. Now the fear flasher and the horror horn have been added to all this weight of anticreative impedimenta.

Possibly, movie makers and exhibitors will push the already-extant olfactory gimmick more determinedly in the near future, so that our favorite plots and personalities will be able to produce smells.

I mean, deliberately!

FANTASTIC VOYAGE / Twentieth Century-Fox

Photographed, in color, by Ernest Laszlo. Edited by William B. Murphy. Directed by Richard Fleischer and produced by Saul David.

The studio press releases have the temerity to point out that this overdressed CinemaScope-DeLuxe production set its makers back six-and-a-half million dollars. Shades of Thorstein Bunde Veblen! Well, it's something of an achievement after all, even if only a negative one: the fact is, most of this easy-go currency was blown on the sets . . . which all look as if they'd been mocked-up or done in miniature—giving this SF thriller the unmistakable air of a

cheapie!

There are a couple of solid actors in the cast, like Donald Pleasance and Arthur O'Connell. And it's a cinch they weren't overpaid. If any appreciable amount at all of that six-and-a-half million berries were shelled out for cast, it probably went to the names, like Stephen Boyd, Edmond O'Brien, and Arthur Kennedy—notwithstanding their collective incompetence. Raquel Welch is in the picture precisely for the same reason which justified all the expensive sets. She's just another of the many attractive fixtures, like the inner-space ship or the giant hypodermic needle. The only difference is in the cost: she was undoubtedly less expensive! O'Brien's role, too, for all the blatantly contrived effort to disguise the role as what is euphemistically called a cameo in Hollywood, clearly has no serious function. The part could have been played by anybody — even Edmond O'Brien. What is particularly annoying here is that the basic story idea is a marvelous gimmick; at least, on the level of science fiction. Yet, the results are those usually achieved when the gimmick is permitted to outweigh everything else: depthless characterization, superficial relationships, wooden dialogue, and nothing more dimensional by way of a theme than the usual pseudo-military posturings about the other side's weapons potential and the fancied urgency in this threat. Possibly the idea simply has been filtered through the conflicting crafts and the inevitable confusion of too many writers: the scenario was done by Harry Kleiner from David Duncan's adaptation of a story by Otto Klement and Jay Lewis Bixby.

MURDERERS' ROW / Columbia

If you love Dino, and if you can stomach Ann-Margret, the total absence of anything of value — or with so much as an entertainment quotient — in this shaky satire on the spy melodramas may persuade you, or at least anesthetize you.

There are the usual phony non sequiturs about Dean Martin's supposed alcoholic manliness.

And the fugitives in the theatre from burlesque audiences can indulge themselves furtively with wild private fantasies as they watch Ann-Margret gyrating suggestively in just enough clothes to offer maximum provocation to this kind of prurient daydreaming. Of course, there is added support for this business-end of the picture from the myriad blank-faced big-boobed and long-legged nonentities cluttering it. These less restless and more silent sexual objects aren't allowed to dance of course, or to do anything else which might compete with the really-concentrated gonadal heat generated by A.-M. But, like her, they are present anyway, to be stared at.

Dino, of course, is there for the older members of the distaff side of the audience to long to mother him, and for the younger women to contemplate in another light. His ponderous consuming inability to act, or even to personalize his roles, hasn't troubled anybody so far. One supposes his total lack of craft or inventiveness will go on accumulating millions of dollars for him, as well as extravagant adulation from the sexually-starved American female, and open heroworship from the sexually-haunted American male. Propped up predictably with color, lots of location sets, and a wider screen than it's possible for an audience to look at comfortably (or attentively), this latest Matt Helm thriller was fumbled out (i.e., directed) by Henry Levin. It's a must for matrons, truck drivers, teenagers, and fairies.

IN LIKE FLINT / TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX

Hal Fimberg's screenplay is a circus of clichés, melodrama, and heavy-handed plotting. It has its points: some funny bits (Lee J. Cobb noting, *en passant*, a portrait of James Coburn in the costume of a matador); a certain amount of genuine, even scathing commentary (Coburn, upon learning that a professional imposter is occupying the White House, 'An actor? For President?!'); some visual shenanigans (Cobb in drag); and the customary props of these spy melodrama satires, like an excessive number of beautifully-undressed girls, at least one colossally-expensive set, and at least one gadget-gimmick established early in the plot which figures in some crucial way later.

Director Gordon Douglas hasn't racked up any kind of important cinematic credit with this production; but the film entertains, and that's a respectable function ignored by too many of the swiffties in this genre which are glutting the market. The contempt these melodramas display for human life (in the number of supernumeraries meaninglessly killed, maimed, disfigured, and beaten) is occasionally offensive; but this is just the price tag on the genre's chief entertainment factor.

My principal objection is the way in which script and direction invariably misuse Cobb's talent in a special way at the conclusion of each film in this series; he's forced to play a sort of idiot all the way through these satires. Holding one of the highest offices in the nation's defense program, he's exploited as a semi-moron whose chief function seems to be one of deciding when the moment has arrived, in dealing with a problem, to run to Flint for help. It's a serious enough misuse of a fine actor, but at the conclusion of each of these pictures, he's also compelled to display the happiness of a

baboon, after Flint's postured heroism has resolved all the problems for the governmental incompetents like Cobb! The flatness with which these scripts have structured the role of Lloyd C. Cramden, head of Z.O.W.I.E., seems almost a deliberately-sadistic abuse of Cobb's acting craft.

The scene in which Cobb appears disguised as a woman has absolutely no organic place in the script. The 'enemy' has seen through his disguise from the beginning; they know about it before he even arrives. He's immediately incarcerated, disguise and all. As for the script necessity to get him 'on the scene' for the film's conclusion, any number of less-sadistic expediciencies would have sufficed. However, he's put in drag anyway, and for nothing more than a quick visual joke. As he emerges from the car which has brought him there, and stupidly follows his enemies to his own entrapment, anybody in the audience with any respect for the craft must feel sick. He looks like a beggar! The sequence reminded me painfully of the moment in *STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* when the custodian and the matron from the insane asylum, where she's to be put away for the rest of her life, are ready to take Blanche away. I think it's perhaps a fair question to ask, why can't America's 'motion picture capital' find a better use than this for the exceptional talents of a performer of Cobb's stature?

A FINE MADNESS / WARNER BROTHERS

In the scheme of things, it's as unreasonable to expect an image of resourceful male virility as successful as Sean Connery to act as it would be to ask somebody like Ginger Rogers to portray a moment in the life of Sarah Bernhardt. Of course, the difficulty here is that a Hollywood flick once did require precisely that of Miss Rogers! And, unhappily, in his role of the poet, Sansom Shillitoe, Mr. Connery is required, in fact, to structure a believable three-dimensional human being. The assumption that, like an actor or something, Connery would be able to do this hasn't helped him, however, in achieving a performance which differs in any appreciable degree from his wooden-faced 007 fun-roles. He may be reciting poetry or haranguing older women for an assumed insensitivity to poetry, but the audience knows all the time that it's really James Bond passing the time momentarily by putting them 'on' a little. In another minute, he'll cut all this faggy nonsense and pull out his flat black little service automatic and shoot the crap out of all these Russian agents masking as British and American poetry lovers. That's the trouble with these movie personality studs: snap a lens on them in an area which departs too far contextually from their preestablished images, and they begin fumbling around until they start to look unmistakably insincere and incompetent. In a way, it's sadly unfair. It's a little like taking a new baby, removing the swaddling clothes and setting it down at night without carfare in the middle of a long straight run on the highway between Los Angeles and Las Vegas; then, leaving it with the suggestion that some time before it freezes to death it might be able to thumb a ride in one direction or the other. Filmed (inevitably) in technicolor, by Ted McCord, the screenplay was adapted by

Elliott Baker from his own novel. Joanne Woodward cutes it up in one of the two female leads. Jean Seberg plays the other one. And there's this cute scene at the end where 007 punches Joanne Woodward right in the mouth. Now we all know he wouldn't really do that to Miss Woodward of course. So we are free to indulge this kind of latent hostility in ourselves vicariously and in good conscience. But that's exactly the point: none of this strained cuteness ever for an instant engages our belief.

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**A BIG HAND FOR THE LITTLE LADY
/ WARNER BROTHERS**

Produced and directed by Fielder Cook. Written by Sidney Carroll. Photographed in the increasingly-inevitable technicolor by Lee Garmes, and edited by George Rohrs. Starring and major supporting roles by Henry Fonda, Joanne Woodward, Gerald Michenau, Burgess Meredith, Paul Ford, Charles Bickford, Kevin McCarthy, Jason Robards, John Qualen, and Robert Middleton.

The story in this instance is founded in one of those ideas that strikes everybody, at first glance, as a marvelous unbeatable plot gimmick; yet which, in practice, no amount of story conferences and rewrites can make work. Fonda is the presumed sucker who has blundered, through his addiction to gambling, into a game the stakes of which are way over his head. Bickford, McCarthy, Robards, Qualen, and Middleton appear to be the hard-headed and arrogantly-assured pros who are going to fleece the civilian and teach him to keep away from the games the big boys play. Fonda's wife and ten-year-old son (played by Woodward and Michenau) are the props to lend his greenhorn air of vulnerability and stupidity an atmosphere of substance. Paul Ford, as the banker who loans Woodward the 'bread' to remain in the game after Fonda has had his pseudo heart attack, apparently is a complete stranger to husband and wife although he's been well-known for years to all the other players. Of course, Fonda, Woodward, and Ford actually are in cahoots to trim the pros at their own game; and the kid has been loaned to the spurious couple by some equally-shady friends who are his real parents. They win their game. But the cuteness of this super superplotting isn't concluded merely at the success of their scheme, or after the revelation to the audience of this delicious swindle, later. Even the doctor (played by Meredith) who treats Fonda's phony coronary seizure was in on the collaboration to put the bite on the pros. And at the conclusion, after they've divided their loot, each member of the conspiracy is shown in

some paradoxically ‘unexpected’ circumstance, such as: Meredith ogling a show-biz cutie in a posh saloon while she sings Rosy, You Are My Posy; Woodward dealing a game of black jack, like the pro she really is, in the same saloon. It’s all penultimately contrived and supercute, one ‘switcheroo’ following on another, until the movie’s makers conclude the audience has inarguably had its last nickel’s worth.

Offensive as it is, the plotting is less a marvel of clichés than the script’s characterizations. Bickford, for example, is presented as an aging woman-hater and misanthrope. Yet, after he and the others have let themselves be bluffed out of a twenty-thousand-dollar pot, he kisses Joanne Woodward’s hand and tells her ‘it’s been a privilege, ma’m!’ His ‘chivalry’ is the property of seven out of every ten films ever set against a Southern background. But what is yet more offensive about this is that there will be no objections whatsoever from the audience after they learn he’s been swindled. Seen against the fresh context of that later development, Bickford’s chivalry merely makes an ass of him. But the audience buys his character anyway, just as though it still had any point or meaning.

There are some good people in the cast. Most of them, however, are fearfully overrated motion picture personalities. Fonda is always a prime instance of that; but, in this cast, Robards is a yet greater example of a fifth-rate ham bulging at the seams of a first-rate regard afforded him only by a completely-uncritical audience.

But the whole gimmicky, overcrowded saccharine production is so quietly and totally awful that its collective effect beggars the question of individual performance inadequacies . . . which are, in any case, too numerous to detail.

TOBRUK / UNIVERSAL

Another watch-Rocky-get-the-sub-human-Jap-a-Nazis entertainment. The gore and death which please the audiences for such so-called war dramas are packed into the story with as little logic or reason as they ever contained in these divertissements — where any kind of genuine reflection or edification is absolutely beside the point.

We learn some things from these two-dimensional Hollywood exploitations of war: Combat is fun. The enemy is always conveniently impotent. Combat is colorful-technicolorful. American (or, at least, allied) soldiers are always reassuringly superior. Heroes have some special invulnerability to bullets, fists, knives, and shrapnel. (Anyway, the main hero does.) It's fun and noble and good to get killed for unstated inexplicit abstract ideals. Only in wartime, in the army, navy, air force, or marines, is it possible to find true friends and romance. Everybody who goes to war does so from intensely-idealistic motives — that is to say, none of the services personnel are just sheep who,

127 lacking the courage to protest the carnage and stupidity of war, were simply drafted. War, in fact, is always glorious and, if you're on our side, the noblest ideal of man.

And that tireddest of all the fatuous and clichéd attitudes of Hollywood toward holocaust: it takes a war to really show you what a man is like under the skin! As if, indeed, this were a positive justification for limitless murdering and maiming. Or as if the horrifying extremes of the inhuman pressures of combat ever brought out anything in human nature but its excesses!

There's a scene in this particular shoot-em-down epic where our hero, Rocky, bursts into a mammoth pill box and turns a flame thrower on all the personnel occupying it. The audience, of course, is expected to feel some great big

California-sized emotion of partisanship, pride and patriotism welling up inside their American (or allied) breasts in response to this glorious achievement. I found myself unaccountably identifying with the poor bastards who were getting their faces and lungs roasted. If I'd been one of them and I'd seen this seven-foot clot come posturing in with his flame thrower, my patriotism for der farterland would have turned to jelly. I'd have puked even before this humanoid animal charred me with his war toy.

Get a look at the expensive names and talent that had to be bought to realize this wide-angle, technicolor turd: Directed by Arthur Hiller. Photographed by Russ Harlan. Written by Leo Gordon, edited by Bob Jones, and produced by Gene Corman. Starring Rock Hudson (that's a fifth of the flick's entire cost right there), George Peppard, Nigel Green, Guy Stockwell, et al. Green plays himself, as usual. Peppard and Stockwell turn in a couple of useful credible performances—which, without saying, are entirely wasted on this war 'epic.' In the tradition we have learned to accept from Hollywood's touchingly-persistent and lavish bad taste, Hudson is big and unfinished.

Perhaps the most disgusting aspect of this completely-disgusting production is the fact that its director, Hiller, is the same talent which was put to so much more worthwhile use in directing *THE AMERICANIZATION OF EMILY*. The latter was as fine and imaginative an indictment of war as *TOBRUK* is a sycophantish and clichéd paean to it.

THE APPALOOSA / UNIVERSAL

Another expensively-cast and -costumed and gorgeously-photographed can of cinematic pablum, the main point of which seems to be to prove that nobody — but nobody — tells Marlon Brando what to do (not the writers, not the director, not anybody). After all, who's a better judge than The Brando of what kind of story material, sup-

128 porting cast, and direction are best geared to support the Brando image? This is an image fixed in the minds of 185 million Americans or so. It cost a lot of money to put it there. And Marlon Brando, for one, isn't going to have it tampered with merely for the sake of something as inconsequential as a theme or as downright silly as the notion of expecting an actor to act in a Hollywood movie!

This latest Brando vehicle was directed (as much perhaps as he dared) by Sidney J. Furie, photographed (during the few-odd scenes which weren't devoted to the picture's Important Image) by Russell Metty, edited (as much probably as he was allowed to) by Ted Kent, and produced (insofar as this was possible) by Alan Miller. On the exceedingly-rare occasions when the script and camera were permitted to focus anywhere else, the supporting cast included Frank Silvers, Rafael Campos, Alex Montoya, Miriam Colon, and Emilio Fernandez. Insofar as there was any, Anjanette Comer coasted through the female lead.

Johnny Saxon was the only hostile element in this otherwise hundred-percent—hostile, that is, to the main program which everyone and everything else seemed devoted to: retelling the Brando soul's accounts. In fact, this dirty bird, Johnny Saxon, not only refused to invest a minute of his time and craft in building Brando, the stinker ran away with the whole picture. While everybody else was occupied exclusively with their genuflections to Mecca (including

Mecca), Johnny Saxon was making waves, upsetting the apple cart, rocking the boat, ignoring completely any of the possibilities for making friends and influencing people . . . in short, acting!

And this acting ruined everything, spoiled what otherwise could have been a complete nothing, turned a motion picture sinkhole into something exciting, and created a formidably three-dimensional villain whose lineaments were so believable that they breathed life and body into what should have been a lifeless and insubstantial melodrama.

Despite Saxon's flagrant dereliction, however, all the loyal supporters and fans of the Brando story will find all the elements they have come to expect from most of the stories written around their hero: a great soul hiding out in an inarticulate tabernacle concealed by his lips; a great purpose deriving from a great injustice done him; a scene in which he employs a saintly restraint on his manly responses after receiving great provocation from the villain; and a later scene in which this hero is horribly beaten by some particularly-unfair means. At this point, the quest begins which will culminate in a great and final revenge; but only after many additional injustices and abuses—and incidental complications—along the way.

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FILM STILLS

Eight pages of production stills are interleaved through 'Nine Hollywood Movies' and carry no reading matter beyond their captions. The films shown are A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM; A BIG HAND FOR THE LITTLE LADY, with Joanne Woodward and Henry Fonda; MURDERERS' ROW, with Ann-Margret and Dean Martin; CHAMBER OF HORRORS, with Cesare Danova and Patrick O'Neal; FANTASTIC VOYAGE; and A FINE MADNESS, with Sean Connery. The reviews themselves are given in full above. — ED.

A FIRST POETRY BOOK; & A NEW ONE BY ANNE SEXTON

THE DEFT COMMENTARY OF THE ballad and the hard statement of sculpture combine in R. G. Vliet's first book (EVENTS & CELEBRATIONS—\$5—Viking). The sculpture is made of common stuff: stalks of white yarrow, sea gulls, crickets.... And the common poetic stuff, events of love and dramatic narrative, builds with it to epiphany. The material is wrought, sometimes overwrought, but usually textured so that an individual mind among the goods startles the reader with its frankness, its clarity.

Not that the revelation is a substitute sensationalism or mock crusade so often set up as truth; not that the language is simple in any derogatory sense; but at the best moments (and there are many), the language slips from tight rhetoric and structure into an expression that fulfills — justifies, if the need is there — its poem. The love poem, I pull you stalks of yarrow, builds from the characteristic terseness of the first line to a compelling reticence at the close: '... And freshen how the loss / is. The smell of yarrow pinches. / The hairy stalks are rough, / untidier than lilies, real.'

A baroque exuberance bounces in some of these terse lines, a colloquialism that forces poetry out of itself, views of an ordered perception: 'The crickets in their antique real world, / shrill ethiops....' are part of the same mind as the woods' catalog 'of the dark chokecherry / of larkspur nightshade purple monkshood / palegilled toadstool and red baneberry;' the woods where 'The sun in one last high time / ... wrenches the trees;' here 'Poetry (if it must come) must come never kept, / but unkempt and dragging weed / up from the seas, must be / bulbous-eyed from old / astonishments.' The two prose parables at the end of the book exhibit the same perception, but the intensity of the

poetic moment is here dropped more often in favor of the catalog, alone: object controls rather than mind.

'That sense is in the tragedies' informs the imagery and diction of the poetic sculpture of the book. It is perhaps more apparent in the ballad's objectivity, the almost-ritual impersonality of the book's masterpiece, Clem Maverick. This long 'post mortem' upon a western blues-singing Pan by various survivors stands out from the lyric contrivances of the rest of the contents with a sheer simplicity, a practical inevitability that makes its technical scope all the more satisfying. Here is the major celebration, celebration following the event of life. Vliet is concerned with the process of his craft; the dramatic mode of most of the lyrics, as well as their images and subjects, indicate that they are in the widest sense poems on poetry; Clem Maverick may be read on one level as personification of poem and symbol of poet, each moving in its own realm, each touching the other, yet each imposing a challenge to any facile romanticism which would either identify or mutually-exclude the two. But the real strength of the poem is in the creation of Clem's characters and its natural transubstantiation into the lives which continue him. Vliet's ironic viewpoint subordinates both philosophy and technique to a fully-dramatic celebration-event.

The created persona is harder to discover in Anne Sexton's third and latest book (*LIVE OR DIE* — \$4—HOUGHTON MIFFLIN). A pretense of autobiography prevails. And this couples with what becomes more and more in Mrs. Sexton's work a reliance on subject matter. The shock value of her troubled vision has begun to wear off. Psychology is not poetry; the poet knows this, but she seems to persist in trying to equate the two. Despite the over-all accomplishment (which is, as usual, high), the brilliant flashes (which are frequent), and the three or four really-beautiful poems, the book is a disappointment.

The colloquial stance does not save the poems so often as in her earlier volumes. Where once it startled, the rhetoric has become mere trickery. The poetic experience of 'And what of the dead? They lie without shoes / in their stone boats.... / They refuse / to be blessed, throat, eye, and knucklebone.' in her second book, *ALL MY PRETTY ONES*, becomes: 'I sat all day / stuffing my heart into a shoe box' (from an autobiographical segment); and 'O Sylvia, Sylvia, / with a dead box of stones and spoons, // with two children, two meteors / wandering loose in the tiny playroom, // with your mouth into the sheet, / into the roof-beam, into the dumb prayer....' (From an elegy for Sylvia Plath.)

Subject matter commands a kind of rhetoric; here a vision of hysteria informs a loose line structure and a sprinkling of exclamation points and italics, attempts to force the vision out of flat statement without the benefit of usual poetic devices. Subject matter, narrative, vision: at their worst they become an excuse, a therapy, a lie. At their best they become what the reader feels but does not see, as in *Menstruation at Forty*: 'I was thinking of a son. / The womb is not a clock / nor a bell tolling, / but in the eleventh month of its life / I feel the November / of the body as well as of the calendar. // ... // Love! That red disease— / year after year, David, you would make me wild! / never growing old, / waiting for you always on the porch ... [sic] / year after year, / my carrot, my cabbage, / I would have possessed you before all women, / calling your name, / calling you mine.' The moments are not many.

The later poems (the contents are arranged chronologically) indicate a growing discursiveness, an emergent philosophy, a desire 'to endure,' 'to remain.' The long syntactical patterns that helped to make *TO BEDLAM AND PART WAY BACK* exciting, here tend toward prose—the metaphorical inevitability lapses into mere idiom and expectancy.

Anne Sexton is a fine poet. Whether her problem is imitative fallacy or indefinite conception, I hope she resolves it sufficiently to turn her work into poetry again.

Michael Gregory

TOWARDS PRINT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

His are often masterful composites of all the -series, as in opening lines of *Death of a Dog in Salem*: The ocean is the only pure highway. I would prefer to die on it than on historic streets, where now a crushed dog cries innocent of history. Innocent. The frantic quivering, the animation of his legs trying to speak, to tell us something of ourselves; so near the pin sharp smell of ocean, such a death cannot be much different from drowning, or the sea. If it can come out of light, we call it darkness. Or we call it death. . . .

Despite frequent modifiers, his lines come sharply alive because of the many verbs and the simple nouns. And while he rarely calls upon the past to give dimensionality and his themes are rather limited to close personal reactions — like Brown's, if varied — he strikes a wide range of emotional keys common in humanity throughout time. He manages this with a minimum of generalities, and these invariably are mingled with evocative specifics. Possibly his higher achievements are in short — often very short — poems; yet this by no means presages he may not attain recognition as a major poet.

It's interesting to compare Cahen's with those of a lesser poet who yet shows many of the same qualities — if not his acuteness. This is Eda Casciani (*OMNIBUS* — \$2.50, pamphlet — SOUTH & WEST). Precisely what underlies the difference? She uses pictures rather than vividly presenting them; and her 'story' elements run courses of rather expected succession in each poem. Again — she employs a sound technique which runs predictable courses, and yet which reads a bit jerkily. It's no easy feat to make the words of each line come alive in 'being' the line; but this is what one must do if to be a capital 'P' poet. Simply spinning out nice chains

of musical language forming attractive sketches of semi-detached largely-narrated reactions, is of no avail when the words do not become the poem. In contrast Cahen is able to make a piece live with poetic unity although he characteristically changes his verbal tones from line to line. Finally, the endings of Casciani poems have a patness not found in Cahen's whose endings nevertheless are those that fit and preserve unity without spelling out *finis*. The Casciani endings are better in brevity such as *Oriole*:

ORIOLE

Black are my days
nights without song
the dog's throat went dry
since you came in
with the dead oriole
in your shaking hand
then followed it

A highly-skilled poetizer, Henri Coulette is in the main uncontemporary (*THE WAR OF THE SECRET AGENTS*, recent Lamont Prize winner — \$3.95 — SCRIBNERS) despite frequent uses of modern scene and current (or late) event. He is so very adept that he often grows 'slick.' There is no achievement of valid individuated idiom as he endeavors to update the song/story methods of fifty years ago with many quite good similes and metaphors. Rhymed (mostly earlier pieces) or unrhymed, his stanzas are weakened by connectives, both those of words and those of narration and thought. Of course, not a few are intentional verse; but this criticism is borne out by what I think the best poem in the book, *Archambault: A Suspicious Poem*:

ARCHAMBAULT: A SUSPICIOUS POEM

The lost addresses of the soul are these:
the great estate
with mermaids at the gate
or the cold-water flat with wolves —
wherever loneliness like a disease
or a wildflower evolves —
or where like alabaster in the dark
she lies in wait
whom you would celebrate
in the exclusion of the mind,
whom you, in dreams, inchoate, know as ark,
crucible, and rind —
or where, powerful, irresponsible,
you turn away
from what the others say,
and — like a mirror come to life —
make of duplicity the single rule,
and use it like a knife.

A 'lost' poet whose better work is a distinguished contribution, particularly in richly-poetic records of a recent past in the socio-economic and mytho-religious development of Mexican-Aztec culture, is the late W. P. Covington-Lawson. Literally all of his poetry recently was indiscriminately published by his widow (THE GARDEN OF SINGING WATERS — \$5 — from Mrs. Lawson, 3562 Eagle Rock Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif.—90065). This book contains, among pieces marred by clichéd poetizing and imitative — however convincingly they convey inspired intent — of past romanticisms, other works which transmit genuine individuated talent. Many of the latter are in much older traditions going back to the dramatic heroic narration in heightened language as in Beowulf. His freedom of form and employment of series in a majority of these may be tabbed 'modern;' but, because of the sparsity of metaphors, they are

scarcely so. For instance, some of the most effective passages in a long work, *Quetzal-coatl*, are bare of metaphor, relying upon emotional narration and dialogue, with hortatory commentary. He does this astonishingly well. An excerpt where the only two metaphors have been in use so long that they have become quite definitive provides a partial demonstration of his scope and power:

Proud possessor of the heritage
Of blood of Hidalgos
Which he has mixed with the blood
Of his cooks, his maids, his laundresses;
The wives of his coachmen, his gardeners, his
carpenters,
The soft bed of don Francisco
Knew them all;
Great progenitor of meztizo bastards,
Patron of the arts,
Right arm of the archbishop,
Great pillar of the cathedral;
Ten cents a day to his peons,
Hunger, sweat and fevers to the toilers
In his great desert plantations
Of Henequin;
Drunkenness, poverty and filth to the workers
In his great distilleries of pulque;
Your many bastards will miss you,
Don Francisco,
Guachapin, Spaniard, brute,
Drinker of the blood of the pueblo — . .

Since he was meticulous in research and himself lived over long periods among the populations he describes, aside from literary merit, the historical and closely-factual authenticity of Covington-Lawson's writings are notable.

In two basic components, odd though it may seem, the poetry of Dave Cunliffe, a young Englishman identified with the 'mod mods,' fails to qualify in the most-accepted

contemporary mode for the same reasons that Covington-Lawson's is unqualified (DEEP WITHIN THIS BOOK OF EARTH is Writ a Description of the Beast — 5/- or \$1, pamphlet — SCREECHES Publ.). And these two poets also have predominating protest themes in common, though Cunliffe's is very limited — not using historical range and repeatedly, poem after poem, pessimistically dwelling upon the world-doom theme. Among his closer influences are Kenneth Patchen and William Butler Yeats. The two basic elements referred to are stark hortatory commentary and generalizations marked by paucity of simile and metaphor—often altogether lacking these in portions where specific images are conjured. A better example is *As Our Eyes Sink Deep with Shame*: This world is afoot with disturbances. Like that noisy guy who ran bleeding into the saloon bar, at the last intermission, to launch his suicide & nobody saw or heard or so much as mentioned anything other than what a lousy play it'd been.

& we drag our minds over the edge of this doomed earth to flee its wrath as our eyes sink deep with shame.

That noisy guy, draped in a fat umbrella on the bar-stool directly facing the john, doesn't seem to be breathing anymore.

& we look up to where the light is & only wish we could escape this night as our eyes sink deep with shame.

In R. H. W. Dillard (*THE DAY I STOPPED DREAMING ABOUT BARBARA STEELE* — \$3.75 — UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA Press) we find a more praiseworthy voice than any of the foregoing, with exception of Cahen — whose methods are so different that he and Dillard fall in technically-unrelated categories. Dillard's poems are loaded with protest, but subtle and controlled; and he makes skillful use of history and foreign locales, including those of Latin America as well as tales of Arthur, Chaucer, the British age of chivalry, the ancient East. . . . And while he may be dubbed a 'book poet,'

his presentations are vividly alive both in language and emotion. The effects rely less upon story than upon dances of bright images, in his best pieces. Here are closing stanzas of *Perro Con Mascara Humana*:

He grows, the dog, fiesta, Round and round, they clap
The rhythm of the dance And ring the hard guitars. (Growls, then
growls no more.) They slap the ground With flat bare feet
And dance, the sky, The shadow of the eagle, Sing the spinny
sky, The girl's black hair, Her turning face, around And —
hai — around.

They dance around the hard Carved stone, the eagle's
head, No feathers now, the curving beak, The lifted blade,
And open mouth, reclines The dog, the starving Beast, dog
with the human mask, Eh-hai.

Work of Theodore Enslin as represented in *THIS DO* (& the talents) (*EL CORNO EMPLUMADO* — \$1, paperb.) shows his —series— when so, since many pieces are too brief for this — mainly visual, tactile, and motor . . . and occasionally aural. But, looking at the poems in another way, always sound: voice tones each reader should conjure. Enslin employs first and second person narration—also dialogue. And, at the same time, these devices cause story to carry longer pieces as much as series. His methods are similar to those of Jim Brown, but markedly more effective, revealing the hand of an older long-practiced poet. Enslin's thematic limitations (the intimately-personal again, and the type of story occurrences) are the same—and still, the precision of right simple words through which his poems are made is such that he succeeds beautifully despite his use of generalities that leave more to the reader's invention. He covers more nuances of love relationship, yet with sexuality implicit rather than explicit as in Brown's. To accomplish this, he introduces parallel references and environmental evocations unmetaphorically. Here are two of the shorts, *Bouquet* (left) and *The Proposition* (right):

Blue flowers —
candytuff I think,
stiffly fading
in your vase.
The room grows
smaller
as each floret
turns
in
to the grey walls.

Not so I asked you
that you could answer me
yes
or that you would
know I asked
you did
pressing against me
as you bent over the table
to find something
you needed

Gene Fowler, in *SHAMAN SONGS* (\$1, pamphlet — DUST Books) is not in the mainstream of modernity. To the limited extent series is found, it is that of idea or invocation, with pictures which would be almost 'mono'-static but for his special way of obtaining time depth through acts of ancient mythical and mystical significance—special in that there are no direct references to them as coming from the past or to identify them historically. And, as the title denotes, he often relies upon song, as such, and not as subsidiary to metaphor—which is little called upon. He prefers simple general terms and descriptions, gaining direct associational effects. As he himself else where has remarked, his words, phrases, and lines frequently do not identify as the poetry, but are instruments evoking things underlying them. Yet his magic is not always or altogether that of reference. For

instance — from each man's lust as a cult:

On stretcht hides of the shaman's tent
woman Gods mimic the first wild dances
— thundercloud dancers in a sacrament

Stolen tusk of a grandfather buffalo.
Unfalling carvd phallus of our tribe.

My corded arm is painted to the elbow in the red rains of
our Spring.

The sudden women shine at the river, trickt from winter
with a dance's thundercloud rise.

LAKE AT DAWN To conceive of the lake The quiet, the
beauty, mystic and silver Slender as a nude lying under milk
pale skies One arm of a trailing willow leaning over, from cool
green tree, long-haired as the dawn Is to think of a Japanese
woodcut. Florence Ungar 137

SCAN PP. 15-16 AND 152-166

THE CHRONICLE

The Chronicle — the running trade directory of little magazines and presses that TRACE carried in every issue, a supplement to THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE TO LITERARY AND ART PERIODICALS — runs in two instalments in this issue, two pages here and fifteen more at the back, some 207 entries in all. It is omitted, with its capsule notices: it is a working address list rather than reading matter, and it is superseded by the Guide itself. What follows is a note of what these instalments record.

The year is 1967 and the directory is thick with what would later be called the mimeograph revolution. BROADSIDE PRESS of Detroit is recorded with POEM COUNTERPOEM by Margaret Danner and Dudley Randall and with LeRoi Jones's A POEM FOR BLACK HEARTS as a fifty-cent broadsheet. THE COACH HOUSE PRESS of Toronto announces JOURNEYING & THE RETURNS by B. P. Nichol — 'a long poem, a recording, & a selection of visual concrete p./objects' — one of the earliest notices anywhere of the book that made him. FLOATING BEAR appears under Diane di Prima with No. 33 guest-edited by John Wieners, alongside Philip Whalen's BRAINCANDY and di Prima's THE CALCULUS OF VARIATIONS. BIRTH PRESS has Tuli Kupferberg's THE BOOK OF THE BODY.

From London: TRIGRAM PRESS with Jack Hirschman's YOD and Asa Benveniste's POEMS OF THE MOUTH; FULCRUM, GOLIARD, FERRY and GABERBOCCHUS; TARASQUE at Trent Bridge with Roy Fisher and Spike Hawkins. Newly noticed or newly moved: HANGING LOOSE at 80 Avenue C, KAYAK BOOKS in San Francisco, QUIXOTE at Madison, WORMWOOD REVIEW, VERY STONE HOUSE of Vancouver, NEW MEASURE under Peter Jay at Oxford, and OPEN SKULL, which is OLE renamed after its seventh number. DUST BOOKS carries William Wantling's THE SOURCE, and WINDFALL has Jory Sherman's MY FACE IN WAX with an introduction by Charles Bukowski. LILLABULERO advertises a Faulkner story out of print since 1932.

Endings are recorded as plainly as beginnings. APPROACH, the Pennsylvania Quaker-oriented magazine the Editor calls 'one of

the best of this mid-century', discontinues at the close of its twentieth year. CAMELS COMING suspends. ECHOS has issued its last. EAST SIDE REVIEW has its mail returned, no forwarding. And WORK notes that its fourth number was the last edited in Detroit by John Sinclair. The full list of names is in Trace_64_1967_chronicle_names.txt beside the transcript. — ED.

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GRAPHICS

The graphics section stands here in the issue and cannot be reproduced in a text edition. The magazine's own contents page lists it as 'A Tru-Vu Technological Identity Poem' by James Hiner, six ink drawings by Ben Tibbs, and 'American Concentrate', a second Tru-Vu by Hiner. The Tru-Vus are collages of clipped headline and advertising copy — one of them a cut-up NEW YORKER masthead dated April 30, 1999 — and what little of their lettering the reading could recover is not worth setting as prose. One plate is credited to the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Phillip D. Adams. They are noted here rather than passed over, so that the section the magazine lists in its own contents is not simply absent. — ED.