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CALIFORNIA

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QUARTERLY

SANORA BABB

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE

LÉON DAMAS

JEAN-JOSEPH RABEARIVÉLO

RAY BRADBURY

SYLVAN KARCHMER

HENRI COULETTE

EDWIN HONIG

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HOWARD GRIFFIN

THOMAS MCGRATH

MILLEN BRAND

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A CLEAN 6 X 9 READING EDITION

A Place Called Choice: Second, Third and Fourth Parts gives this issue its argumentative center, with E. P. Thompson setting the terms. The fiction—*The Vine* by Root Embraced by Sanora Babb; *A Flight of Ravens* by Ray Bradbury; *Birthday* by Sylvan Karchmer—moves among private crisis, social pressure, and public consequence, with each story's title and setting supplying a distinct point of entry. The poetry runs from *Three French Colonial Poets* and *In a Season of War*, shifting between grouped poems and single lyrics rather than settling into one house style. The printed contents bring together 5 works of fiction, 10 poetry entries, 1 prose or editorial entry, giving the issue a deliberately mixed pace across genres and forms.

This edition resets the journal's literary texts for reading. Each piece begins on a fresh reader page and identifies its original journal page and PDF scan page; advertisements and decorative matter are omitted. Artwork and irreducibly visual material appear as labelled original plates.

CONTENTS

Notes on Contributors	<i>Contributor notes</i>	2
The Vine by Root Embraced	<i>Sanora Babb</i>	3
Three French Colonial Poets	<i>Poetry feature</i>	15
Barbarian	<i>Aimé Césaire</i>	15
Borders	<i>Léon Damas</i>	16
Rebel	<i>Léon Damas</i>	17
The Drunkards	<i>Jean-Joseph Rabearivelo</i>	18
A Flight of Ravens	<i>Ray Bradbury</i>	19
Birthday	<i>Sylvan Karchmer</i>	27
Dedications	<i>Henri Coulette</i>	31
Aftermath	<i>Edwin Honig</i>	33
Autumnal	<i>C. E. Eaton</i>	34
The Change	<i>Howard Griffin</i>	35
In a Season of War	<i>Thomas McGrath</i>	36
The Fire at Cat Creek Bend	<i>Millen Brand</i>	38
A Place Called Choice: Second, Third and Fourth Parts	<i>E. P. Thompson</i>	46
A Legend of Huehuetonoc	<i>B. Traven</i>	56

Notes on Contributors

SANORA BABB's stories have been published in Cross-Section, 1948, American Short Stories for 1950; by the State Department abroad, and by the U. Her story, The Wild Flower, has been translated into twenty languages.

RAY BRADBURY's books, Dark Carni'Ual, The Illustrated Man, and The Martian Chr, icles, and his stories in The New Yorker, Harper's, Mademoiselle, etc., one of wh' received the third O. Henry Prize for 1948, have itained him a wide audience. lives in Los Angeles.

MILLEN BRAND is the author of many short stories and three novels, The Outward Ro, Tiu Heroes, and Albert Sears. He is now living in the East, at work on two nove he has spent many years in California.

AIME CESAIRE is Professor of Literature at Schoelcher College in Fort-de-France, well as Mayor of that city, and a Martinique Delegate to the French Parliament command of the French language is considered by some to excel that of any white p HENRI COULETTE is now 23, a student at Los Angeles State College, where he edits college magazine, Statement. His poems in this issue represent his first published wo LEON DAMAS' poetry grows out of his childhood in French Guinea, his schoolinp; Martinique, his study of law in Paris and the Negroes he came to know there-Nep;r from Senegal, the Congo, and the United States, workers, artists, and students, shared his extreme poverty.

CHARLES EDWARD EATON has contributed poetry to many American periodicals. is a resident of Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

HOWARD· GRIFFIN has published a book of poems Cry Cadence. He is currently gaged in writing a novel at the Huntington Hartford Foundation in Pacific Palisad California.

EDWIN HONIG is the author of Garcia Lorca, one of the Makers of Modern Literatu Series, as well as of The Moral Crisis, a book of poetry. He is now teaching at Harva SYLVAN KARCHMER's stories have appeared in The Arizona Quarterly, Epoch, T University of Kans as City Re'View, Western Re'View, and others. His work is also rep sented in The Best One-Act Plays of 1947-48. He lives in Oregon.

THOMAS McGRATH has had poetry and criticism in magazines in the United States and abroad, is the author of *To Walk A Crooked Mile*, and of *Longslot O'Leary's Garia of Practical Poesy*, collections of verse. J. J. RABEARIVELLO was born in 1901. His family, of the nobility of the Hova, the dominant native population of Madagascar, was extremely poor, and he was forced to leave school at 13. His poems, published in France, Latin America and Spain, were written in Hova and translated into French which, with Latin and Spanish, he had taught himself. Unable to identify with either his own community or the white administrators controlling his country, or to find his position professionally, he committed suicide in 1933. His work is compared, in France, to that of Rimbaud.

E. P. THOMPSON's work has appeared in literary magazines in England. The Overture and Part One of his poem, *The Place Called Choice*, were contained in our Autumn 1951 issue.

B. TRAVEN's international reputation rests on his many novels, three of which, *The De Ship*, *The Bridge in the Jungle*, and *Tiu Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, have been translated into English. He has been for many years a resident of Mexico.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 3 / SCAN PAGE 5

The Vine by Root Embraced

Sanora Babb

Nurse Ko Mai Ying lived in the small happy household of her First Uncle Ko See Ming and his two servants and their child. Her parents had died of the plague in the late Twenties when she was fifteen, and the six years with her uncle had -brought. her closer to him than she had felt to her busy, fashionable parents. Ko See Ming was busy too, but not fashionably so; he was a scholar• busy with his books and his students, many of whom imperiled themselves in actions for reforms. Ko See Ming worried about them and cautioned them, hut he too was a man of ideals. He permitted Mai Ying to attend the university and to study nursing, as she wished; And now, she bad been more than a year at the hosital.

"Well," he asked her on one of her days off, "what has happened to all this k of your wanting to study medicine the United States?" "I want to," she said blushing, "hut feel sad to leave the hospital." There one thought she would not confide her uncle. He had never married, apred always reluctant to discuss his th, and yet he was too wise to have only within the covers of his hooks.

"You do not look like a nurse or a doctor, anyway," he said, teasing her, "more like a flower."

"What, Ming-Sook, does a nurse or a doctor look like?" she flared. "And what flower?"

"O, not a jasmine or a pear blossom, but a daisy• perhaps."

"Good," she said, believing him. "A pretty daisy with attentive black eyes, not vain like the jasmine, doused in perfume, but tender just th~ same, and innocent."

"O, Ming-Sook!" she laughed, and blushed again, wishing that Dr. Chung would think' of her as a daisy.

"I understood," her uncle said, "that nurses soon got over blushing."

"My work is not all of me! Should I change altogether?"

"No, no.. But, tell me, who is this young man, the thought of whom makes you blush?"

"There is none," she said sternly. "The blood flies to my face at too many things. It is embarrassing."

"You are a strong girl," he said, "but sensitive too. No need to be embarrassed. Besides, I hear you are a good nurse."

Mai Ying was a good nurse; although new in experience, no one need question her serious intention and her desire to help people in their suffering. Because of this she felt subtly related to Dr. Chung Wai Tong. Dr. Chung was thirty, an age, in his country, when he should have been married and the father of children. Because he was so preoccupied with his work, because his reputation in the hospital was respected and secure, no one made jokes to hurry him, no one, that is, except the worn old men. Even they were cautious before his stern face and dedicated ways.

The nurses were afraid of him, but only because they suspected he could divine their inadequacies, and more so, because of his purity. Their harmless flirtations took on an aspect of evil in their own eyes if Dr. Chung's clever eyes saw them. It seemed to them that he needed no respite from the hard, tiring work; but as much as they admired him they could not wholly imitate him.

Mai Ying was not afraid of him in any way. Even his purity did not frighten her, but rather attracted her; she was more afraid of the worldly men and their bright talk and bold eyes. When the other nurses spoke of Dr. Chung's quietness, she only smiled to herself because to her his smooth, withdrawn face was not quiet at all, but suggestive of emotions which she could not read, a turmoil under the surface which fascinated her curiosity. She indulged in romantic thoughts about Dr. Chung, which was against the rules, but who could govern such irrepressible mysteries?

She expressed her desires in the quality of her assistance to him, working so untiringly that he at last appeared notice that she was devoted to him well as to her work. This was very embarrassing to her although she dreamed a thousand times of such recognition and its blissful results. Each night before she went to sleep she sent her thoughts through the same fantasy she would go to the United States to study, Dr. Wai Tong would go special study; they would return work together, two doctors, in a place with the most modern equipment and the most progressive treatment. Later, she would take time out for children, but she

would always prac beside her husband, giving the three them her abundance of love.

In a moment's rest from duty, secretly watched his face for a sign, was sure that she saw the change felt in her own an articulate warm gl filling the eyes, so that they must a direct looks; a softness come to the t mouth; his whole face alive with munication, held back.

Before he had spoken to her, she summoned by her uncle and told Dr. Chung had asked for permission marry her. Since Uncle Ming w remarkably modern man, he with his willing permission until he knew wishes. She was so overcome by answer to all her yearning that nearly fainted.

"For such a little one," Uncle M said, "such large feelings!"

She smiled at his goodness. "You treat me as a son," she happily.

"As a daughter! As a daughter sh be treated."

s There ·could be no objection. Dr. Chung came of a good family. "A family with money," her uncle said, "but don't let this be important to you. It is important only to the outward eye trained in search of its customary value." Wai Tong was the only son and therefore given every opportunity. His four sisters, all older, were married and now attached to their husband's families. His father had died when he was a child. After his sisters married he and his mother lived on in the large old family house, alone except for the servants and the visiting relatives. Dr. Wai Tong bad never been away from home, since the university and this hospital were in his own city.

They were engaged and Mai Ying moved through the days as in a silky dream. But there was one disappointment. Her work that she loved and for which she had prepared in desire to help e sick was suddenly as nothing. Dr.

ai Tong did not request her resigna- • n; he assumed it. Discussion had the 'r of superfluity. He was a man of tra- ·tion. In love, she had neglected to tice that, and there had been little versation between them. Mai Ying e troubled by a sense of waste and lessness. She had no taste for the itless lives of women who strenuously rsued their own pleasure. She had been rounded by that dead sea of restive • re all her life and she yearned tod the fertile landscape. How could go calling endlessly, receive guests lessly, sleep late from night parties, y bridge and mahjong, go to

the dog, the horse races, the bay shore, the tains, shopping for pleasure instead necessity? Would she not remember people in their narrow beds wanting a drink, wanting relief from pain, wanting death, wanting to be well again? These things she said only to herself, quietly in her mind, because—was it not a fact that she wanted to be married? Wasn't it a miracle that she was marrying a man she loved?

Through love she would lead him to understand her desires.

They were married and she moved into his mother's house. Madame Chung, a small, heavy-faced woman of uncertain age, accepted her with courtesy but no warmth. Her eyes shone only for her son. In his presence her morose face became animated with youth; her voice rose lightly; she chaffed him for his silence. Mai Ying at once felt herself an intruder but she believed the old woman in some way glad. She gave her the attention she had so recently given others, quietly, modestly, waiting for the mother's affection to grow.

Relatives came and went, the smothering, numberless aunts, uncles, cousins. There were large chattering dinners at which the laughter and hardly concealed animosities fastened themselves to her clean and tender mind in whirling, mismated patterns. Mai Ying was soon aware that there was little affection within this family but instead a determined collusion which wore the face of loyalty. How often she longed for the company of Uncle Ming even in the new weeks of her marriage! Together they always spoke of his ideas which were warm with sympathy and kindness, of her work, of the future of their country. Often they had been joined by professors from the university and by her student friends. Their speech was not masked as that of the Chungs, but wore Mai Ying blushed in shame and confusion at the everyday words splashed the tender poem of her desires.

its true face. They talked simply or importantly, they made plans, they were serious, they laughed, they drank tea, and Mai Ying had gone to bed with her whole being aglow like a lamp in the dark lighting a path.

Where in this house of dead talk and corroded spirits was a light on any path? Her thoughts of the future burrowed in a dark tunnel. She heard the heavy door at its end slammed to with muffled sound as if by a slow damp wind. It was her duty to stay within this family whose wealth bought them no stores in the public market of the heart. Her husband was the only image of love and she waited for him each night with

trembling expectancy which she had learned within the first days of her marriage to conceal before his mother. • Wai Tong was not talkative and often ate his meals in weary silence, but when he entered the door she noticed a subtle glow under his pale skin, and his eyes though shielded revealed a message.

At night in their room he was withdrawn and shy and because of her own intimate shyness, they could not approach the full expression of their love.

Each day she thought of little ways to cross this cool stream of virginity between them, and each night she failed.

Her amah watched her with a patient, closed face, but if they were in the room together the old woman's face creased into wrinkles of humor and mischief. She kept her voice low, telling her the tale of her marriage night. And a good thing, she said, there was no amah in the household of her husband's family to check the marriage bed and report to his parents; the husband of her lady had initiated her against her will.

"I am old," her amah said. "In end we are all alike except for stati and that is natural."

Mai Ying opened her lips to obj but closed them quickly. The old woman's loyalty lay with Madame Chun "In a little while your blood will s where it is and not fly into your face the mention of a man and a worn That too is natural." The furrows her face tracked merrily upward wards her eyes like the imprint of hen's feet in the soft earth. "Besides and now her mouth turned down It the curve of a rooster's tail, "it is o a burden when a woman is tired, when is she not? A woman like me. F that time with a woman a man has flowers or bird songs; he puts them o in the poems."

"Perhaps not all men," Mai Yi ventured, "and it is good to have poems;

"Poems!" the old woman said bitter! "When will the great he-male of t earth act as he speaks?'1 "He will!" "He? Cher da pow! He mlls out t big guns!"

"Not all, amah. Some both speak do. Some have no voice. Have you?"

"Hah! What a voice I have! It be still as a mountain, or coo like nesting bird or roar like a beast. Do y think even a whisper could reach throu the thick walls of this house?"

"This house is old, amah, it is falli down."

The old woman was confused, t she said in a low, sly voice, "There rot in this house but not in the walls."

The girl was silent. The amah said playfully, "So? You are going to be a man?"

"I never said that. I want to be a woman. A whole woman, free to help."

"Help ·what?" "History." "Eh?" "Ourselves." "Such wild talk! Student talk I You are young and will come to your senses."

"Well, don't worry now. In secret we are as good as the men. As for help, ven't we always worked ·ourselves into the grave? If you mean me to read a k or write one or make a public ech and spectacle of myself, then, I not." "O, there are many things we could I" "The best is to seduce your husband soon as possible. It may settle many gs. That night Mai Ying spoke to her and about returning to the hospital. e put on an air of aged patience and appeared to be delighted with her. "You are like a child," he said. "How you forget so soon that I should lose "O, face!" she said impatiently. "You are a child, but you will learn importance.". "And its inflexible strength!" she said.

had the grip of a dead man's teeth on their lives but she dared say no more. "It is unfortunate for women to be ted," he said coldly. "Their minds off toward every new idea and they e no respect for the things we have by for centuries." I have respect for the good in our 'tion; I have none for the false."

to bed!" he commanded.

She went softly to bed and after a while she spoke gently into the stiff silence that filled the room and pressed against their breath. "I was not a child in the hospital."

He took her into his arms, but she could only weep and he tried to console her, speaking tenderly, almost with love. To her ears his words sang against the silence like little bells. In the first of her sleep she heard the cautious slup of small slippers beyond the door. Amah, she thought drowsily, but she was too much wounded and in love to be angry.

"Little wife," the small bells rang far away, "do not go to sleep."

But the bells rang like a whimper, louder and louder, and they were not now her husband's voice but a voice in another room, someone in

pain. She sat up in her bed, thinking she was on duty, thinking that someone needed her.

"What is it?" "Mother!" he said. He leapt from the bed.

"She is ill. Go quickly." They hurried together down the hall and entered her room without knocking. The old woman sat stricken in her bed moaning and crying. "Where is the pain?" Mai Ying asked kindly. The mother waved her aside and spoke sharply to her son.

"She does not want anyone to see her when she is ill," he said simply. "Go back to sleep. I will take care of her. She is used to me."

He did not return all that night, and for three days the mother lay in her bed, seeing no one but her amah all day, demanding her son's presence all night. On the fourth day she appeared well and sat in the garden. In the afternoon she sent the amah with a message that she they waited she studied the wished to be amused and Mai Ying joined her for a game of cards. Time after time the mother won and finally, clapping her cards upon the table triumphantly, she declared, "You are no competition for me! You have youth but I have experience. Tell me, now, which is best?"

Mai Ying's thoughts, that had taken refuge in the green dusk of the magnolia tree because she felt the other woman pierce her tenderness, clung briefly to its white flower. A magnolia tree is always planted in a rich man's garden, she mused.

Madame Chung waited. She grabbed at a baby spider letting itself down from the tree; catching its life line she blew the insect to and fro with her heavy breath. The little creature appeared to climb the air, retreating, but going toward her hand where the thread was held. She pulled, trying to break it, and, failing, let go. The spider fled with all the fury of its instinct and swung free.

"Which?" she said boredly. "Experience," the girl said, without knowing, but she saw by the woman's lively demanding eyes that she expected this answer.

"So." Madame Chung pursed her lips with satisfaction. "Youth wears away, experience grows. I am no longer young, but I shall never be old."

Mai Ying wished to be excused but she dare not leave until her husband's mother released her. There was a long silence in which the

woman sat ticking an earring back and forth with a thick forefinger. She seemed highly pleased with her victory at cards.

At last she ordered tea and while nutely.

"Daughter?" she said in a tone delicate mockery. This was the first time she had used this name, and Mai Ying felt frightened that she was about to command her to some impossibility.

"Yes, mother." "Are you a proper wife for my son?" The girl started. "Your amah has brought me no dence from your marriage bed. Have you had lovers?"

"No! No, no!" She began to tremble. "You are a modern girl and your id are not mine. You have worked, and was not necessary. You have been f with yourself."

"But, I have not!" "Please, I cannot speak of...!" She rose and would have left the garden.

"The tea is here. We will play another game of cards. You must improve yourself. You must learn how to speak your elders."

In the evening Wai Tong's bare concealed eagerness to be with his • withdrew when Madame Chung vealed that she had been offended. He retired early. Mai Ying had been drained by the mother of that day's spirit strength; she felt weak in her loneliness and she asked a simple question seeking comfort.

"Do you love me?" The doctor took off his glasses, placed them carefully on top of the old teakwood chest with his ring and his watch. He appeared naked to her as if he had just taken off his clothes in public. He slipped the knot of his western necktie. "Love," he said slowly, "is an institution of women. I do not believe in it." "Then, what have we?" she asked, frightened.

"Marriage." She turned on her pillow, unable to receive any new sensation. She felt exhausted, her mind was spinning slowly to the dark pit of escaping sleep. Her heart ached in her thoughts like a throbbing clear, hopeful morning she asked herself why she loved this man, there was no answer anywhere save here. Her intelligence might enhance it, but it had no power to diminish it. This new knowledge, as was the discovery that by love her pride was assailed, cut to its roots like a plant in the wrong season. Only another climate would urge its new leaves into the green world of sun and storm. She went to see her First Uncle. He in another province but would soon return. The sight of his door gave her rage; she was surprised to feel by and

that she had been lost to herself long weeks. His birds in their had been brought out to sun and decided to take one pair back with. As she walked along the street her d fitted firmly over the worn woodhandle shaped by her uncle's hand, he often took his birds walking.

er First Uncle was like a strong wind blowing steadily. A reminder was needed in the dark house to she must return, and where she now under the command of her t night, as every night, there the amah's secretive slippers outhier door, slapping away in dis- • tment. That night they were cned by the mother's cries of anguish, and again Wai Tong rushed to her in alarm. Mai Ying remained in her bed, waiting, longing to be of help in illness, even though she had abandoned the hope that the mother would come to love her. The moaning died away, the night quieted, and later, much later, the doctor returned to his bed and fell heavily asleep. Mai Ying lay awake desolated by his presence, by the warmth of his body and the delicate odor of musk brought bade from his mother's rooms. Perhaps this devouring mother would die some night in her illness. She could not deny the wish and yet she felt ashamed, and afraid of the guilt which clung to her mind. The morning would dissipate these dark thoughts and she would renew her efforts of affection to the mother. It was true, and no blame should be made, that one could bear his pain in silence and another could not. In the morning Madame Chung kept to her rooms, but in the afternoon Mai Ying glimpsed her dressed well, wearing her best jade in her ears, and on her hands, stepping soft-slippered into the rickshaw, commanding the puller and going off toward the city. Mai Ying sat in the garden and read, urging her mind to reach for a larger pattern than was encircling her within this house.

How happy she was when the old woman did not return for dinner and she and her husband sat at the large table alone. Then he appeared the young man in the hospital whose eyes betrayed an emotion her tender probing since had been helpless to release.

"The lotus is blooming on the pond;" she said with delicate eagerness. Then, fearing her boldness with him, "Today I read in the garden." She would not tell gether so quickly that she must hu him she had read a serious book;; that would only disturb this rare moment.

to become a part.

Abruptly the mother goodnight.

"The scented-nights are in blossom, too," he said smiling at her, and she felt this was a gesture of love. This beautiful white flower, open only at night, was a flower of lovers.

The garden was cool and fragrant with the moist quiet leaves and the fertile earth and the enchanting perfume of scented-nights gleaming like small timid moons in the dark. She spoke of her birds, and he was silent for a moment.

"Are you lonely?" he asked. "Not with you. And in the day. I wait for you." She longed to say to him that she wished to be busy, and not at his mother's command, but that would only make him irritable.

"You are a good wife," he said gently. "We shall spend our lives together."

She could not speak. Her hopes unfolded like a stricken bud reviving. In time she would persuade him to understand her need to be useful.

They heard the running feet of the rickshaw boy and the crunch of wheels in the lane. She could sense her husband's withdrawal with no word spoken.. Mai Ying wanted to go to her room to avoid seeing the mother, to pretend sleep, but that would be a discourtesy. Instead, she called for tea to be made and soon they sat at the table listening to Madame Chung's recital of the day. Her small eyes glittered and her energy filled the room with restless demands upon their attention. Mai Ying saw how the mother drew him out of his silence; he spoke little but his face waited for her every inconsequential word; they laughed to- "How I shall sleep I" she said loud "I am worn out with such a day!" walked toward her rooms, tottering little, not with age, but from the heels of new western slippers she never before worn.

"My mother is like a young • the son said delightedly and the mother looked back at him and laughed, a low wicked laugh of pleasure. Mai felt a shock of knowledge pass through her mind, too mercurial for her to hold. She too rose abruptly and to her room.

Long after midnight the mother's whine came to them along the silent clawing like a rain-wet cat at the edge of their consciousness. Wai Tong sat in bed, rubbing his face, saying almost with anger, "Mah, Mah!"

Mai Ying sat up too.. "Your mother is not ill I"

"Hush I" he said. "She has attacked. She overdid herself today."

"You are a doctor. Why don't cure her?"

"My mother's illness I cannot he said tiredly, "but I must do w can. Go to sleep. When she is asl will come back."

The mother's voice rose and the became words: "I cannot endure~ I cannot endure this!"

Wai Tong rushed from the roo Mai Ying lay in her joyless bed dering why the amah never an these night cries. It came to her that the soft steps of the cautious sli that crept nightly along the passage waited like cars under their door those of the mother. Trembling, she rose in silence and went on bare feet along the hall which was now like a narrow unlighted street of hostile doors. Her heart thundered into the stillness. Her body was cold with fear. She felt her way counting the doors with her touch. And then she heard-that which her cars denied and her mind refused and her heart repulsed. And over it, like mold on a leaf, the gluttonous monotone of the old woman. The girl sank down sickly in the darlc, alone and lost in a pathless jungle, where birds screamed and beasts sprang and leaves moved, crowing before her eyes; where fallen it decayed in an hour and sultry vines andoncd their roots and embraced a tree.

Where music drifted, cons old, from faraway stream of clear, clean water, ting a spell, making a poem in the glc. The dance. The joyous clements dance• forever broken in discord and forever stolen and forever "I heard," she said humbly, and her ·ce in the darkness was a woman's 'ce she had not known before.

He was settling himself carefully, 'etly into bed. He sighed, inviting 11I listened." Her voice was low; she dered if he could hear. She did not but the words ticked in her mind the seconds of time which pass un-. They came to her lips and she them from another place take the of sound and explode in frags falling dully on the air. "I heard." He sighed.

I will go away," she said.

He touched her hair. She moved her head away.

"I will go to another hospital." "You are my wife." "I am not your wife." Silence. "Did you marry me to save your face?"

"Please let us go to sleep," he said desperately.

"Did you?" He swung out of bed and paced about in the dark.

No more words came to her lips. Her mind was still. A dazzling white space blinded her thoughts as the eyes are blinded by gazing directly into the sun.

"You had better go to sleep," she said.

He fell down on his knees by the bed and wept a long while. She became aware that she was searching feebly about in herself, as in an old trunk belonging to another time of her life, for pity. The pity she found would not fit this new experience. Everything in the trunk looked strangely out of date. She seized love for a moment and drew it on her mind like a glove, and all the scams gave way but her mind remained pinched into its lovely cruel shape.

He was mumbling in his tears. He was crying for himself, not for her.

"My father-" he was saying, "- died when I was five. My mother took me into her bed-" He sobbed without control. "We-she will never give me up, never, and-I cannot leave her. I 1-I tried. She will not let me go." He was silent for a time, not weeping. "Mai Ying?"

"You love me but I cannot love. It is too late. You are young and your a power outside its own locked mechanism.

nearness tempted me. I must have a wife. I will be kind to you."

"Try to go to sleep," she said • and it seemed to her that he was a stranger in a narrow bed calling the nurse out of his nightmare.

He got into bed obediently and lay sobbing in the dark, less and less, and after a while he fell asleep. She lay awake staring into the fading night, but when he rose to leave for the hospital, she pretended sleep.

When she heard the rickshaw pull away, she dressed and went into the garden, carrying the bird cage along the paths in the thin morning sun, gathering comfort from the two little creatures that depended upon her. She felt emptied of all emotion save a cold desire to speak to the mother, to finish with her obedience, to flee this house.

The mother always slept late, but the girl waited with unnatural patience, drinking tea, watching the birds. She felt like a mute spectator of all that would soon take place. When the amah told her that Madame Chung had finished her jochan, Mai Ying went in and sat at the table, looking scornfully at the old woman. Madame Chung poured a cup of tea and set it before the girl. Her face was eased; she gave Mai Ying a little smile of greeting. A bit of congee remained in her bowl and she dipped

the china spoon twice to get it all. Then she sat peacefully chewing a cake and drinking tea.

"Cha," she said, indicating the girl's tea with a finger tipped by a long painted nail.

The girl did not touch the tea. She felt alive only as a machine is alive by "Last night," she said. Her body trembled but her voice was dead and cold. She felt weary • as if she might have rest before going on. A subtle identification had taken place; she was her husband Wai Tong whom she loved; she was a young animal lying wounded • sight of a moonlit clearing, and the jackal howling in the dark were the old woman's lust.

"I listened!" Her voice raised like cry for help.

The mother's face was smooth like rock. Her hair strained the skin of her forehead, pulling the high pencilled brows upward away from the flat nose. Her mouth, long set for dominance held like two leather straps ready to lacerate. Her eyelids were down like small fringe curtains on the face of a bawdy house. "You heard nothing." • "I heard." "You imagine." "Give him up." She waited. "Or shall-

The mother's lower lip flapped controllably for a moment, then large upper teeth pinioned it angrily. The girl looked at her teeth, one missing and the others mended with yellow gold. She saw for the first time that without makeup Madame Chung was ugly.

"No," said Madame Chung quietly and she smiled as when she had won cards. "You will live here with me and my son. You may have separate rooms.

"O, I cannot!" Mai Ying said desperately. "I am dutifully asking you permission, but I shall leave without it." • She tried to remember the ways of her uncle's house.

now," Madame Chung said slowly. "You will not soil our face."

"Sit down, child, shouldn't we talk it over first? You are a very independent young woman. Perhaps--" he smiled.

"I am not the only one who knows,"

the girl said, remembering the amah, remembering the relatives. "Others will know without my telling." "Precisely," Madame Chung said idly. "It is your duty to save our face by destroying this ugly rumor." "Then you must lose face!" Madame Chung clapped her hand over her own mouth in a gesture of fearful surprise. Mai Ying stood up, leaning the table for support. The

mother jumped to her feet at this pertinence and all the fury she had concealing exploded in a loud howlscream of jealousy. „Geen yan I" she shouted. "Dir.ty I" A large vein swelled on one side her forehead. "You sing-song girl!

you broken package I" • Her hands d the air in rage and appetite for young girl's face.

ai Ying picked up the cage with the silent huddled birds, and walked out gh the scented garden, out the gate, and without memory of the and after that the turning streets, ' e, the weariness, she came to her '• house.

was alone, mending the tiny hamof a pet cricket for the child two servants. When he saw her surprised and happy but his face with concern. She stood holding d cage tightly, and he gently unher hand. This gesture released 'on of silence, but her speech y as it had since last night. 1-Sook, do not make me go c? When have we dealt in such She could not smile in return, but she sat down, remote and falsely calm, facing away from him into the courtyard. Her voice as if disembodied recited her news.

The old professor lifted a tiny porcelain figure from its wooden base and studied it while he gathered his thoughts spilled like grain from an overturned cart.

The child came in with his cricket in the open cup of his hand. The old man sent him away, promising the mended house by evening. "Let your cricket go about as he pleases a bit. He will like you better." The child stared at the distraught girl until she spoke to him. He giggled and ran out.

"I feel destroyed, Uncle Mini. I am walls and windows and no rooms inside. And it will never change. I know."

"Everything changes." She looked at him curiously. "Work," he said cautiously. "Work is like the surface stitching of a deep wound. It holds the severed parts together while the wound heals from within. It is not the whole cure. No one must be so careless as to think that. We only assist nature."

She was silent.

"Mai Ying, you have not forgotten all the people who can afford no other cures than nature?"

"At this moment," she said, ashamed, "it seems that I have. When I find myself-

He nodded at this slip of hope.

She thought; I must learn to sleep and to be awake with this person that I am now. Already I cannot remember any other self.

"We go through life shedding our selves, growing new ones."

"Have you?" "Many times. I have lost and I have found; it is not all destruction."

It seemed to her that these sensible truths meant nothing and yet her reasoning mind urged her with the faint voice of one buried in the debris of a ruined house; to listen.

"A divorce, too, is necessary." "O, Ming-Sook," she said sadly. "You are not afraid of anything!"

"Many things." "Of losing face?" "No. I am afraid of dead ideas. They are as dangerous as a corpse in the street spreading corruption. In such an old mouldy pocket of our life you find the clean air and the sun." He stood the window in the flecks of light • shadow cast by a persimmon tree, sorted the ideas that came to his son's mind. "My friends, the students still come here," he said proudly. "It is like the climate of clean air and sun. They ask of you. They would like to have you with them." He smoothed black hair. "Not at once, of course."

Her thoughts felt like a wound unbandaged hand over the terrible hole "Perhaps by Moon Festival."

"There's time enough," he said, "in ways time."

Her tears began. Uncle Ming led her to the couch the sun-filled corner of the room, "here, close by," he said. "I must finish mending this home for the cricket, I shall lose face with the small boy."

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 15 / SCAN PAGE 17

Three French Colonial Poets

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 15 / SCAN PAGE 17

Barbarian

Aimé Césaire

This is the word supporting me
beating upon my body of yellow leather
where the moon devours in the garret of mildew
the barbarous bones
of cowardly beasts prowling with lies

Barbarian
of sketchy language
and our faces arc beautiful as the real operative power
of denial

Barbarian
of the dead circling in the veins of the earth
breaking sometimes his head against the walls of our cars
and the cries of revolt never heard
turning by measure and by timbre of music

Barbarian
the unique thing
barbarian the tapaya
the white amphisbaena
barbarian, I the spitting serpent
who by my rotting flesh awakens me
suddenly a flying gecko
suddenly a fringed gecko

and sticks so well to the very spots of power
that to forget me you must

throw to the dogs the shaggy flesh of our breasts.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 16 / SCAN PAGE 18

Borders

Léon Damas

Give me back my black: dolls
to disperse
the image of pallid wenches
vendors of love
going and coming
on the boulevard of my boredom

Give me back my black dolls
to disperse
the everlasting image
the hallucinating image
of piled and spanked marionettes
from whom the wind brings misery
mercy

Give me the illusion never to appease
the exposed need
of roaring demands
under the unconscious disdain
of the world

Give me back my black: dolls so I can play
the simple games of my instincts
to rest in the shadow of their laws
to recover my courage
my boldness
to feel myself myself
a new self from the one I was yesterday
yesterday
without complications
yesterday
when the hour of. uprooting came

Will they ever know this rancor of my heart
in the eye of my mistrust too late opened
they have stolen the space that was mine
custom days life
song rhythm
 effort
pathways water
 home
smoking grey earth
wisdom words palaver
ancestors
cadence hands
 standards
 hands
tramplings
 soil

Give me back my black dolls
my black dolls
black dolls
dolls

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 17 / SCAN PAGE 19

Rebel

Léon Damas

Of course I am
fed up
without even waiting for them to take
things in the manner
of a well done camembert

So I'll put my feet in
the dish
or simply my hand at the collar
of all that fouls me
in big letters
colonisation
civilisation
assimilation and so on
Waiting you will hear me
often
slam the door.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 18 / SCAN PAGE 20

The Drunkards

Jean-Joseph Rabearivelo

THE DRUNKAR

What invisible rat
coming from the walls of the night
gnaws the milky cake of the moon?
Tomorrow morning,
when he has run away
there will be traces of bloody teeth.

Tomorrow morning,
those who got drunk all night long
and those leaving their games,
looking at the moon
will stammer thus:
"To whom belongs this four-cent piece
rolling on the green table?"
"Ah I" one of them will add,
"my friend has lost everything
and killed himself."

And all will sneer
and, staggering, will fall.
The moon, the moon has gone,
The rat has carried it away to his hole.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 19 / SCAN PAGE 21

A Flight of Ravens

Ray Bradbury

He got off the bus at Washington and walked back half a block, that he had decided to come down. But now there was no one in New York he wanted to see except Paul and Ben Pierson. He had saved them for last, knowing that he would need to counteract the effects of too many appointments on too many days too many erratic, neurotic, and unhappy people. The Piersons would shake hands, cool his brow, and comfort him with friendship and good words. The dog would be loud, long, and immensely happy, and he would go back to in a few days thinking well of York simply because two amazing events had provided him with an oasis — a burning desert of panic and unhappiness.

Ben Pierson was waiting on the floor of the apartment house, outside the elevator. "Hello, hello!" she cried. "Williams, to see you! Come on in! Paul home soon, he had to work late office. We're having chicken tonight, I hope you like. Chicken, I made it myself. Do you like, Williams? I hope you do."

"How're your wife and kids? Sit down, take off your coat, take off your glasses, you're much nicer looking without your glasses, it's been a muggy day, hasn't it? Do you want a drink?"

Somewhere in this flow he felt himself steered through a doorway, her tugging at his coat, waving her free hand, and the faint smell of strong perfume from her mouth. "Good Lord," he thought, surprised, "she's drunk." He looked at Helen for a long moment.

"One of those martinis," he said. "But just one. I'm not much of a drinker, you know."

"Of course, darling. Paul'll be home at six, it's five-thirty now. We're so flattered you're here, Williams, we're so flattered you spend time with us, it's been over three years!"

"Oh, hell," he snorted. "No, but I mean it, Williams," she said, each word a bit slurred, each gesture a bit too careful. He felt that somehow he had got into the wrong apartment, that this was somebody's visiting

sister, an aunt, or a stranger. Of course, this might have been a bad day for her, everyone had a bad day on occasion.

"I'll have one with you. I've only had "How old do you think I am, Will go on, guess, how old do you think am?"

one so far," she said, and he bdivced her. She must have started drinking, quietly and steadily, since last he had seen her. Drinking every day and every day. Until... He had seen it happen to other friends, time and again. One moment sober, and a minute later, after one sip, all the martinis of the last three hundred days that had taken up occupation in the blood, surged from the system, rushed forward to mei::t the new martini like an old friend. Ten minutes ago, Helen had probably been cold sober. But now her eyes had lidded a bit, and her tongue was erasing. the very word she was trying to say.

"I really mean it, Williams." She never called him by his first name. "Williams, we're so flattered you bother to come see Paulie and me. My God, you've done so well in the last three years, you've gone up in the world, you've got a reputation, you don't have to write for Paul's pulp magazines now, no more of that dreadful crap..."

"It wasn't dreadful crap, it was good, Paul's. a fine editor and I wrote good stuff for him."

"Dreadful crap is what it was. You're a real writer, you're tophole now, no more two-cents-a-word for you, how does it feel to be a successful novelist and have everyone talk about you and have money in the bank? Wait until Paul gets here, he's been waiting for you to call." Her talking poured over and about him. "You are nice to call us, really."

"I owe Paul everything," said Williams, breaking away from his thoughts. "I started in his magazines when I was twenty-one, back in 1941, and I made half-a-cent a word."

"That makes you thirty-one now, my God, only a young rooster," said Helen.

"Oh, I don't know," he said, flushi "No, go on, guess, guess how old am," she asked.

A million years, he thought, sudde a million years old. But. Paul'll be right. He'll be here soon and he'll be right. I wonder if he'll know you, He when he comes in the door?

"I'm no good at guessing ages," said.

Your body, he thought, is built of old bricks of this city, and in it are and asphalts and mortars unseen limed with age, you breathe carbonoxide from your lungs, and the color your eyes is hysterical blue neon, the color of your lips is red-fire n and the color of your face is white cimine from stone buildings, with here or there a touch of green or bl the veins of your throat, your tem your wrists, like the little garden squ in New York City. So much marble, much granite, veined and lined, and little of the sky and the grass in now.

"Go on, Williams, am!"

"Thirty-six?" She gave something that was a a scream, and he was afraid he had over-diplomatic.

"Thirty-six I" she cried, whoop· slapping her hands on her knees. "Th" six, oh you darling, you don't really thirty-six, my God, no I" she ye "Why I saw thirty-six ten years ago!

"We've never talked about age fore," he protested.

"You young nice baby," she said. was never important before. But surprised how important it can get 'thout your knowing it. My God, you're ung, Williams, do you have any idea young you are?" "Fairly, I guess," he said, looking at • hands. "You sweet young child," she said.

ait'll I tell Paul. Thirty-six, good rd, that's rich. But I don't look forty forty-six, do I, darling?" She had never asked such questions fore, he thought, and not asking quesns like that was to stay forever young. "Paul's just turning forty this week, s his birthday tomorrow."

"I wish I'd known... " "Forget it, he hates gifts, he nev er ls anyone about his birthdays, he'd be lted if you gave him a present. We pped having birthday parties for him t year. He threw the cake out the • dow then, I remember, it was all lit, d he threw it down the ventilator t, still burning."

She stopped suddenly as if she had something she shouldn't have said. ey both sat for a moment in the tallinged room, shifting uncomfortably. "Paulie's due home any minute," she ', finally. "Another drink? How does feel to be famous, tell me? You always e full of conscience, Williams. Quali- • Paulie and I said to each other, 'ty. You couldn't write badly if you ted to. We're so proud of you, ·e and me, we tell everyone that 're our friend." "That's strange," said Williams. "It's 'rd world. When I was twenty-one Id everyone I knew you. I was really d and excited the first

time I met, after he bought my first story The door buzzer sounded and Helen ran to answer it, leaving Williams alone with his drink. He worried that perhaps he had sounded condescending, as if he wouldn't be proud to meet Paul now.

He hadn't meant it that way. Everything would be all right as soon as Paul roared in. Everything was always all right with Paul.

There was a great, echoing of voices outside, and Helen came back bringing with her a woman of some fifty-odd years. You could tell that the woman was prematurely wrinkled and gray by the bouncing way she moved.

"I hope you don't mind, Williams, I forgot to tell you, I hope you don't mind, this is Mrs. Mears from across the hall. I told her you were coming for dinner, that you were in town for a few days to see about your new book with your publisher, and she was excited to meet you, she's read all of your stories, Williams, and loves your work and wanted to meet you. Mrs. Mears, this is Mr. Williams."

The woman nodded. "I've wanted to be a writer myself," she said. "I'm working on a book now."

The two women sat. Williams felt the smile on his face as if it were separate from himself, it was like those white wax teeth children buy and pop in their mouths to make them look buck-toothed; he felt it beginning to melt, that smile.

"Have you ever sold anything?" he asked Mrs. Mears.

"No, but I keep at it," she said gallantly. "Things have been a bit complicated lately, though."

"You see," said Helen, leaning forward, "her son passed away only two weeks ago."

"Why I thought you knew," said Helen.

"I'm sorry to hear it," said Williams, awkwardly.

"No, that's all right, he's better off, poor boy, he was about your age, only thirty."

"What happened?" Williams asked, mechanically.

"He was terribly over-weight, poor boy, weighed two hundred and eighty pounds and his friends kept making fun of him. He wanted to be an artist. He sold only a few pictures on occasion. But people made fun of

him so he went on a diet six months ago. When he died early this month he weighed just ninetythree pounds."

"My God!" said Williams. "That's terrible."

"He stayed on the diet, he stayed right on it, no matter what I said to him. Stayed in his room, stayed on the diet, and took the weight off so nobody knew him when they saw him at the funeral. I think he was very happy those last few days, happier than he had been in years; sort of triumphant, you might say, poor boy."

Williams drank the rest of his drink. The sense of depression that had been growing for days now closed over his head. He felt himself dropping down through a great depth of black water. He had done too much, seen too much, lived too much, talked with too many people, in the past week. He had counted on tonight making him well again but "My you're a handsome young man," said Mrs. Mears. "Why didn't you tell me he was so handsome, Helen?" she turned almost accusingly to Helen Pierson.

"Oh, much nicer than his photograph much nicer. Do you know," said M Mears, "there was a week or so the when Richard was on his diet, that looked quite like you? For just a short week, I'm sure of that." Yesterday, Williams continued his interior monologue, he had fled into newsreel theatre for a brief respite from endless appointments at magazines, radio stations and newspapers, and on screen he had seen a man ready to fall from the George Washington Bridge. The police had coaxed him down. ' somewhere else, another man, another city, on a hotel ledge, people yelling daring him to jump. Williams had to leave the theatre. Stepping out into hot concussion of sunlight everything had been too real, too raw, as it always was when you came too quickly upon world of living creatures after a dream. "Yes, you're a handsome young man, said Mrs. Mears.

"Before I forget it," said Helen. "son Tom is here."

Of course, Tom. Williams had Tom one time, years ago, when Tom had come in off the street long enough to talk, a bright boy, an alert boy, mannered and well-read. A son to be proud of, that was Tom.

"He's seventeen now," said Helen. "He's in his room, do you want me bring him out? You know he got in a little trouble. He's a nice kid. We've given him everything. But he got running with some Washington Square gang, a bunch of roughnecks, and then robbed a store and Tom was caught. This was about two months ago. There was such excitement and my God, w

stir, but things'll work out. Tom's a she was not letting go of this new brightkid, you know that, don't you, Williams?" She filled his glass. "A fine kid." Williams started on the mess that was like a lightbulb in a room after the sun had burnt out.

"Your plan sounds terrific," said Williams.

drink quickly. "You know how kids are. Not much "Do you really think we can do it; Williams, do you think we can really do it? You think Paul's a terrific writer, don't you?"

do in a town like this, not for kids yway." "I've seen the play-streets." "Aren't they awful? But what can "Sure I do. You've got to try." "He can always get his job back if he has to."

do? We've got a surprise for you, Williams, Paul and me. Do you know at? We're buying a place in the ntry, after all this time, after all years, getting out, Paul's quitting magazines, yes, actually quitting, 't you think that's wonderful? and '• going into writing, just like you, Williams, just like you, and we're living in Connecticut, it's a nice little place, 're going to give him a real test, give lie a real chance to write, you think can write, don't you, Williams? Don't think he's a damn sweet [ittle "Of course I do!" said Williams. "Of "So Paul's quitting his damned job, that editing and we're getting out in country." 4'ff ow soon?" ome time in August. Might have to it off until September. But the first the year at the latest."

f course! Williams' spirits lifted. t'll do it! If they'll only go away, out of this town. Paul must have enough by now, after all these of editing. If they'll only go! If only let him... e glanced across at Helen with her t face that now was only, bright she held certain muscles forever way, she held them steady and hard, "Of course." "So this time we'll really do it. Get out, take Tom with us, the country'll do him good, do us all good, cut out the drinking, cut out the night life, and really settle in with a typewriter and ten reams of paper for Paul to fill up. You think he's a damned good writer, don't you, Williams?"

"You know I do." "Tell me, Mr. Williams," said Mrs; Mears. "How did you get to be a writer?"

"I liked to read when I was a.kid. I started writing every day when I was twelve and kept at it," he said, nervously. He tried to think of how it had really been, at the start. "I just kept at it, a thousand words a day... "

"Paul was the same way," said Helen, quickly.

"You must have a lot of money," said Mrs. Mears.

But at that moment there was the sound of a key clicking in the door. Williams jumped up involuntarily, smiling, relieved. He smiled at the hallway and the distant door as it opened. He kept smiling when he saw Paul's shape and Paul looked wonderful to him coming down the hall into the room. Paul was fine to look at and Williams stuck out his hand and hurried forward, calling his name, feeling happy. Paul strode across the apartment, tall, plumper than a few years ago, his face pink, the eyes abnormally bright, slightly protuberant, faintly bloodshot, and the faint smell of whiskey on his breath. He grabbed Williams' hand, pumping away and shouting.

"Williams, for God's sake, it's good to see you, man! So you called us after all, good to see you, damn it! How you been? You're getting famous! Christ, have a drink, get some more drinks, Helen, hi, there, Mears. Sit down, for God's sake."

"I've got to be going, I don't want to intrude," said Mrs. Mears, edging through the room. "Thanks for letting me come over. Goodbye, Mr. Williams."

"Williams, God damn it, good to see you, did Helen tell you what we plan to do, about leaving town that is? About the country?"

"She said -- "Boy, we're really getting out of this damn town. Summer coming on. Glad to get out of that raping office. I've read ten millions words of pulp crap a year for ten years, don't you think it's time I got out, Williams, don't you think I should've gotten out years ago? Connecticut for us! Do you need a drink? Have you seen Tom? Is Tom in his room, Helen? Get 'im out here, let him talk to Williams here. Gee, Williams, we're glad to see you. Been telling everyone you'd come to see us. Who've you seen in town so far?"

"I saw Reynolds last night." "Reynolds, the editor at United Features? How is he?. Does he get out much?"

"A little." "You know he's been in his apart for twelve months, Helen? You remi her Reynolds? A nice guy, but army or something screwed him up. He afraid to leave his apartment all year, afraid he'd kill someone, anyone, the street."

"He left his apartment last night wi' me," said Williams. "Walked me do, to the bus-line."

"Hey, that's all right for Reynol, glad to hear it. Did you hear Banks? Killed in an auto Rhode Island last week."

"No I" "Yes, sir, damn it, one of the ni, guys in the world, best photogra who ever worked for the big magazin, Really talented, young, too, da young, got drunk and was killed in crash on his way home. Automobili Christ I"

Williams felt as if a great flight ravens was beating upon the hot air the room. This was not Paul any mo This was the husband of the str woman who had moved in after Piersons went away, some time in last three years. Nobody knew ·wb the Piersons had gone. It would do good to ask this man where Paul now, this man could not have told an, one.

"Williams, you've met bur haven't you? Go get Tom, Helen, ha1 him come out!"

The son was fetched, seventeen, sil, into the parlor doorway where, feeli the drinks come over him rapidly n Williams stood with a freshly filled g! weaving slightly.

"This is Tom, Williams, this is Toi "Yott remember Tom." "You remember Williams, Tom?" "Say hello, Tom." "Tom's a good boy, don't you think, Williams?"

again. "Say, it'll be good to write again!

Write, have free time, and take off some of this fat, too."

"Don't do it like Mrs. Mears' son did."

Both talking at once, never stopping, ways the river, always the rush and e stumbled words and the acohol blue-

e eyes and the hurrying on. Helen 'd:

"Tom, say a few words of gang yarn for Mr. Williams."

Silence. "Tom's picked it up, he's got a good 'nd, a good memory. Tom, say a few ords of gang talk for Mr. Williams.

h, come on, Tom," said Helen.

Silence. Tom stood tall and looking the floor in the parlor doorway. "Come on, Tom," said Helen. "Oh, leave him alone, Helen." "Why, Paulie, I just thought Wil- • s would like to hear some gangargon. You know it, Tom, say some r us."

"If he doesn't want to • he doesn't "Come on out to the kitchen while I myself a drink," said Paul, moving illiams along by his arm, walking huge

'de him. In the kitchen they swayed together Paul took hold of Williams' elbow, k his hand, talked to him close and -ct, his face like a pig's that had been • g all afternoon. "Williams, tell me, think I can make it go, quitting this -,? I got a swell novel idea I" He hit iams' arm, gently at first, then with point of his story, harder. "You that idea, Williams?" Williams back, but his hand was trapped. fist smashed his arm again and "He was a fool I" Paul crushed Williams' arm tight, tight. In all the years of their friendship they had rarely touched, but now here was Paul gripping, pressuring, petting him. He shook Williams' shoulder, slapped his back. "In the country, by God, I'll have time to think, work off this flab I Here in town you know what we do weekends? Kill a quart or two of Scotch between us. Hard to drive out of town weekends, traffic, crowds, so we stick here, get loaded, and relax. But that'll be over, in the country. I want you to read a manuscript of mine, Williams."

"Oh, Paulie, wait!" "Stop it, Helen. Williams won't mind, will you, Williams?"

I won't mind, thought Williams, but I'll mind. I'll be afraid but not afraid. If I were sure I'd find the old Paul in the story somewhere, living and walking around, sober and light and free, sure and quick in his decisions, tasteful in his choices, direct and forcefu! in his criticism, the good editor but most of all the good friend, my personal god for years, if I could find that Paul in the story, I'd read it in a second. But I'm not sure, and I wouldn't want to see the new. and strange Paul on paper, ever. Paul, he thought, oh, Paul, don't you know, don't you realiu, that you and Helen will never get out of town, never, never?

"Hell!" cried Paul. "How you like New.York, Williams? Don't like it, do you? Neurotic, you said once. Well, it's no di~erent than Sioux City or Kenosha. You just meet more people here in a shorter time. How's it.feel, Williams, so high in the world, so famous all of a sudden?"

Now both husband and wife chattered. Getting drunker, their voices collided, their words. rose, fell, mixed, quarreled, blended in hypnotic tides, an unending susurrus.

"Williams," she said. "Williams," he said. "We're going," she said. "Goddamn you Williams, I love you I Oh, you bastard, I hate you!" He beat Williams' arm, laughing. "Where's Tom?". "Proud of you!" The apartment blazed. The air swarmed with black wings. His arm was

beaten senseless. "It's hard to give up my job, that old check looks good..."

Paul clutched Williams' white shirt front. Williams felt the buttons pop. It seemed as if Paul, in his pink intensity, were going to hit him. His jowls heaved, his mouth clouded Williams' glasses with steam. "Proud of you I Love you I" He pumped his arm, struck his shoulder, tore at his shirt, slapped at his face. Williams' glasses flew off and hit the linoleum with a faint tinkle.

"Christ, I'm sorry, Williams I" "That's all right, forget it." Williams picked up his glasses. The right lens w~ crazed like a ridiculous spider web. He looked out through it and there was Paul, stunned, apologetic, caught in the insane glass maze, trying to get free.

Williams said nothing. "Paulie, you're so clumsy I" shrieked Helen.

The telephone and doorbell both rang at once, and Paul was talking and Helen was talking, and Tom was gone so where, and Willi~s thought, clear! I'm not sick, I don't want to throw not really, but I will go to the bathr now and I will be sick and I will th up there. And without a word, in ringing, belling, talking, yelling, in apologetic confusion, in the pani • friendliness, in the hot rooms, he w through and beyond what seemed crowd of people and sedately closed bathroom door and got down on knees as if he were going to pray God, and lifted the toilet seat.

There were three sickening gasps plunges of his mouth. His eyes tighb tears running from them, he was sure it was over, he was not cer whether he was gasping for breath crying, whether these were tears of or sadness or not tears at all. He hea the waters vanish away in white. po celain to the sea, and he knelt there, sti in an attitude of prayer.

Outside the door, voices. "You right, you all right, Williams, you okay He fumbled into his coat pocket, dr out his wallet, checked it, saw his turn-trip ticket on the train, closed • up, put it in his breast pocket, and hcl his hand tight to it. Then he climbed his feet, wiped his mouth carefully, an stood looking in the mirror at the od man with the spider-webbed glasses.

Standing before the door, ready open it, his hand on the brass knob, h eyes clenched shut, and his body swayin he felt that he weighed only ninety-th pounds.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 27 / SCAN PAGE 29

Birthday

Sylvan Karchmer

Morning after morning it was the same on the bus. The old men who rode into town at this hour had nothing to do with themselves. They were from the Arnold Keller Home on the hill and they made the trip each morning merely to break the monotony of staying around the Home. Once in town, however, they could walk along the streets and pause for long stretches of time to stare into shop windows and finally end their day sitting in the City Park dozing in the afternoon sun. Their lives were that. On the bus they were silent for the part; all their jokes had been retold many times, all their recollections. Each knew the other thoroughly after the fashion of people who live together in closest proximity many years and yet who bear no special affection for their neighbors.

This morning, as was their habit, they in separate seats, watching the drab, painted houses on Hickory Street and wondering how they were going to spend long day in town.

At the intersection of Hickory and which marked the north boundary of a small Negro settlement, the bus stopped, and a colored woman, holding a small boy firmly by the hand, got on. The boy was wearing a white shirt and his hair was neatly brushed. While his mother waited at the driver's box for change, he freed himself from her grasp, skipping down the aisle and at the first vacant place climbing on the seat, but when his mother came down the aisle she called him to follow her. He did not obey at first and she had to seize him by the arm. She led him to the back of the bus behind the sign that divided the two races.

"When do I start being five?" he asked after they had been seated. He spoke in a clear, high-pitched voice that had something of a ring to it.

"You started being five this morning." "The very first thing this morning?" he demanded.

An old man, sitting directly in front of the pair, turned around, looked at the boy and shook his head smilingly at the question.

The boy glanced up and noticed the old man was watching him. "I'm five today," he said. "I'm not having a party. My mother's not giving me a party."

"That's too bad," the old man said. "When you're five you're not old enough to have a party. Besides I'd rather go to the picture show and see Mickey Mouse." He turned his eyes away from the old man and asked his mother, "Is Mickey Mouse at the picture show downtown?"

"We're sure hoping it is," she replied. "Oh, look," cried the boy and his eyes grew large. "There's a big old squirrel. Look, Mother, he ran up that tree." He pointed with his finger and commenced to laugh. There was something fresh and spontaneous about the way he laughed. The old men on the bus had not heard laughter like this in many years. Many of them had been staring vacantly out of the window; they turned around in their seats now and looked at the boy.

said his mother. "Everybody's watching you."

"Did you see him run up that tree?" The laughter came again.

"I said you'd better hush." "Let him laugh," said the old man who had noticed the boy first. One of his cheeks twitched a little. He touched it with the palm of his hand as if to steady it. "He's not bothering anybody," he said.

"I'm going to the picture show on account it's my birthday," the boy explained to the old man. "And I'm going to get a chocolate ice cream soda too. My mother already promised me."

"And what else are you going to do on your birthday?" Another old man, who had white chin whiskers, asked the boy..

The first old man rebuked the second without looking in his direction by commenting: "It seems to me that going to the picture show and eating a chocol ice cream soda would be plenty."

The second old man ignored this servation. Instead he called to the li boy. "I'll make you a proposition. If laugh like you did awhile ago I'll • you something." He searched his pock pretending to take a long time, th actually he knew exactly in which p he would find the package of chewi gum.

"How do you want me to asked the boy.

"Just like you did before." "You mean when I saw the squirrel The boy spied the stick of gum whispered to his mother: "I don't kn how he means."

The first old man, glancing sever at the second • said, "It's not right tease a child. Give it to him." His ch twitched more than it usually did he put his hand to it.

"I just want to hear him laugh," plained the second old man.

"He did have some laugh, that color boy did," another old man near t front chuckled.

"Well, go ahead and take it," the second old man. "I don't want bargain with you, little fella." He p the stick of gum over and sighed. "B I'd sure like to hear him laugh agai It was something, that laugh was."

"Thank the gentleman," said the boy' mother.

"He don't have to do that. I'd j like to hear him laugh."

There was a pleased expression on t faces of the old men as they watched t boy undo the wrapping from the stick gum. No one said anything as he pop the stick into his mouth and started work his jaws. Then he smiled at th the boy and took her by the arm. "W c' d better tell Mr. Driver we want to get off."

t old man. "I'm going to sec Mickey ouse," he said. "I hope he gobbles up e cheese." He was laughing again. All e old men watched him. The whole osphere of the bus seemed lighter. nversations started up front. "Don't stop now," said one of the d men to the boy. "Laugh for us laugh again," observed the second man. "What about another piece of "Looks like he's got about all he can age now," said one of the others.

"How did I laugh?" asked the little y, eyeing the gum again. "I don't w how I laughed." "When Mickey Mouse eats up all cheese," supplied the second old man. "Oh," exclaimed the boy, "that way."

scious that he had an audience • he ghed again. The men exchanged ces and smiles; they chatted comably and felt happy.

The bus made a right turn on Main. It passed the large department es, the elegant shops with their fancy w windows, and the gilded fronts of spacious theatre houses. The little stopped chewing the gum and grew rbrcd in the sights he saw. Sμddenly, the bus waited at a signal light, he out in a high voice, "Mother, her, there's Mickey Mouse. There is. I can sec her."

is mother glanced out the window.

don't want to go to that show." ut it's Mickey Mouse," protested She removed his hand gently from her arm. "You don't want to go there. That's not a nice show for you to go to."

"You promised I could see Mickey Mouse. You said I could go for my birthday," he insisted.

By now the light had changed, and the boy, afraid that his mother would not. get off, jumped to his feet, importuning her as he started down the aisle, but she called him back. At first he would not return, but at the sound of her voice calling him sharply he came back and slid into the seat beside her. Now she tried to explain to him that their picture house was down the street in another section of town. He must be • patient a few minutes longer. But her actions did not make sense to him. It was Mickey Mouse he wanted to see. His chin quivered and he commenced to cry in a thin, small voice that was hardly audible in the bus. But the first old man heard him and turned around. "Don't let him cry," he said. "You mustn't let that boy cry."

"He's all right •" said the boy's mother, as she touched his shoulder. "Aren't you all right? You wouldn't like that show at all. It's an ugly old show. We're going to a nice place and we'll get an ice cream soda afterwards."

"I don't want a ice cream soda," cried the boy. "You promised me I co~ld see Mickey Mouse." His thin voice rose again as he opened his mouth and the wad of chewing gum fell out.

The second old man stirred uneasily in his seat and made a fierce face as he searched his pockets for another stick of gum. "I sure hate to hear a boy cry," so no right teasing that boy," he said. "Y don't have one bit of right."

he said in a low voice to no particular person on the bus.. He found the gum and turned around, but the little boy hid his • head in his mother's lap. Everyone else on the bus was very still.

The boy's mother was conscious of the attention he was creating. "Hush crying," she said. But he would not be quiet. "He'll be all right," she went on. "He'll get over it in a little while."

But the boy, hearing her words, sobbed again. Everyone on the bus could. hear him now. The first old man rose from his place and made his

way back to where the boy and his mother sat. His chin twitched and it was with difficulty that he spoke. "You don't have There was an undercurrent of r ment among the old men. • Their f were stern with disapproval. The had laughed so merrily, and now she made him cry •! The first old man, ha • spoken his mind, hobbled back to seat; the second old man spoke to from across the aisle and they nodded emphatically.

The boy's mother stared strai ahead of her; she did not seem • to no • the hostility of the old men. Her h moved across the boy's head as it upon her knee; she patted his check, the boy touched her hand with his o fingers. He had ceased to sob now was very still.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 31 / SCAN PAGE 33

Dedications

Henri Coulette

MIGRATION

Autumn, and migratory birds begin
Their long passage south, following the river,
Their sord shadow sheathed in the black: night
Of the fixed globe, of the factory towns.

Fatigued, the workers lie in coffin rooms
And listen while the birds parade the streets
Of the midnight sky, and mingle sweat
And grief with contemplation. of time.

Not time of poverty: meticulous
Timcclocks that regulate the cominoil sun ;
Not time that mocks the pulse it binds; nor psalmed
Hour of the church, or bankers' fiscal year.

But time as movement measured by its goal:
Holding the turning seed, the womb holds time ;
And calloused hands holding products of their
Labor are movement's valued calendars.

And measured, too, these dreams, for they will end
With poor men rising, leaving poverty
Wrapped in the wilted winding sheet of their
Long suffered innocence, and, rising, they

Will walk, communing in the warm spring nights,
The avenues of purpose, and, walking, learn
The revolutions no clock: ever knew,
Leaving the birds poised like an arch of stars.

It is childhood's haunted house

That shapes the rapt mind in its warp;
Warp of the fabled house of winter nights
Where choirs of cold wind troop through empty rooms,
Wail in a multitude of tombs.

Dust on the spiralled stair records
Your step and comments on your search;
And ritual of seeking hands that find
In secret places childhood's fading letters
Whose rumors tenant egr~ous manors.

It is the labyrinthine house
On the legendary midnight hill.
Antique its corridors, those catacombs
Where memory hears the gothic heart
That hallows you always through the caroling dark.

THE PROBLEM

OF CREATION

For Thomas McGrath

Noting here the lean burro leaning against
The dry wind, the tourist cars with insects
Smeared across windshields like emblems
Of escape, the corn and the Corn God dying,
I note, too, that the river moves south,
Raising mesas, confirming these reflections.

And south the Gulf, where Crane's bones,
Washed by salt water, stain that sea
And take it, for have we not words where
Others have marrow, or is bone
Obedient to wild genesis, the source, the sea?

In Mexico, where lakes are metaphors
For later myths, the eagle remembers
The serpent dead beneath the thrust
Of talons; his sharp, enameled eye will watch
While images become bread in the oven

Of your words. His scream is your reward.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 33 / SCAN PAGE 35

Aftermath

Edwin Honig

After six years of the painful hopeless pause
Stuffing their wound with the never-ending gauze
Of self-defeat, the look of horse gazing
At horse in fields spoiled of all grazing,
Liberation thundered over them: across
Their footpaths beaten with remorse,

The endless tracks and whining engines
Of the schoolboy inheritors of the Indian's
War yelp, laden with tobacco and sweet,
Believers in the blowout and the big treat,
Bobbing in low-brow helmets to a jazz
Of soft obscenities and moral impasse.

Past masters of the cog and wheel, terrible
Machines of infinite direction, noble
Knights on steeds of steel studied
Life as souvenir, the curdled
Comforts spiking dreams, and women •
Catalytic to any honied praise of home.

The waves now past of the stereotypic
Bewildered boy, echoes of his melancholic
Joy litter thickets near a road where oxen

Nod before a plaster shrine and a paysan
Thanks an icon, weathered as his days,
For the young grass where now his horses graze.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 34 / SCAN PAGE 36

Autumnal

C. E. Eaton

AUTUMN

In autumn light the red magnolia cone
Spurts seed, hard glaze of anybody's lust;
With the last, white, death-haunted flower gone,
Congealment scars the air and flaunts the dust.

Still, lechery, summer-preened and spawned,
Prinks in the integument of the seed :
You remember how the wind droned and droned,
Condoned debauchery of your purest need.

Y ct, what more living, you must ask your senses,
What more is your conviction than this red?
You stand in a quick wind of violence,
Strong, a moment still, and undefeated.

Struck by the stored propulsions of the tree,
What was too limp in your regret goes tight;
Desire, delusive of infinity,
Secs you ruddy in another summer's light.

But after wind-thrust, the red explosion,
A ceasing of the tumult in the air
Recalls the early white, as in a vision,
The first coronal blossom floating there.

Softly a radiance among the leaves,
Angelic whiteness hovers there above,
And shines and waits for anyone who grieves
To know what lacked the gentleness of love.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 35 / SCAN PAGE 37

The Change

Howard Griffin

The room became a fort against the night
'of driven curtains, bookshelves, eaten doors
that opened by a trick into a world
of starlit space. Daylight became
sleepwaking summer infinitely prolonged
piling the pheasant colored sand
about the blinded sills and chimney-base.
The wind became a wide uncurtained room
packed with the sound of the three cornered firs.
The walls became uncertainty of green
or ocean blue, the brandishments that time
wrought on the wood. -

The house
burst separately as if a star
should lose togethered force and fall
down streaking years. Each change
brought a new patina to the floor
minutely strewn with fragmentary earth,
shell mica, herbage, artemisia.
The heat of life glazed tears
upon the stiffening face and semen
dried in the daylight like a snakeskin charm.
The dusk: became a maze of sound. Within
the dogfall storm no one could glimpse
whether the sea gave way to land

or land to sea.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 36 / SCAN PAGE 38

In a Season of War

Thomas McGrath

IN A SEASON OF W

Blood on the maps, on the flags, in a moon of blood,
In a winter when profit statistics fell like confetti
Or a snow of broken statues -

Lincoln, Paine

Turned to headlines in a capital joke.
Then screwed to the grand piano of the past

(An ape, immortal, .shall in time play Bach)
A president improvised a waltz of death
For the armed cotillions. For all of us. Ah, dark:
Winter of the heart. Winter of hate and war;
Winter of death of anonymous lovers
And of the clumsy and still virginal son
And of honor: when the bankers' phoenix from the fire
Of burnt-out cities, like interest in a vault,
Was reborn. Winter of the killers' moon.

Can spring be different? Its mothering lonesome rain
Falls like the tears that are about to be shed
For the nameless soldiers who died before being born -
Killed by their neighbors' ignorance or greed.

Or can the summer thrive, or autumn bear its fruit,
Or the new winter's magnetic North delude
With dreams of snow and silence? Another spring
May open all the wounds of hope and growth
Like early flowers; or bud another war.
Nothing is changed by time alone. Ourselves
Must drain that soldier color from the moon
To no corpse color, but to white of peace.

Now kill the cold king of our calendar.

Rain of our blood, let end his killing. reign.

2

The colorless penumbra of a bloodless wish
 Ensanguines crisis: the orbit of the year
 Spins like a wheel and either Red or Black:
 Arrives. Yet never chance, but power, born
 From the human imperfection of our sphere,
 Kills and controls. And not the Pope of Death,
 Whose journeying false Christ he sends, black magical,
 To touch the secret number of the year
 Need win. A deeper magic stops the game,
 Transforms the players into Right and Left,
 Extends its system beyond chance to time,
 Ordering humanity from wish to act.

' Nothing is changed by time. When time has changed,

Nothing is changed by chance. Only ourselves
 Arc changed and have thrust on us all the power

Of change, as heavy as the ass's head
 On Bottom. In a deadly comedy
 We hunt for runes or the transforming rod
 While the black alchemy of armorers
 Turns all our calendars to bandit lead.
 Where are our dreamed and charming Magi then
 To point the star of peace across the world?
 Where our saviours to redeem the time
 Beyond frontiers of the atomic Rose?

3

Only ourselves. (Upon the midnight street
 We meet the future but it wears no face.)
 Only ourselves. (Or at the factory gates
 The woman with the leaflet crying: Peace I)

Only the soldier with a broken gun
 Can stop a war. Only the children know
 The face of a day of peace, a plaything clock
 Without the menace of the rifle hands.

Give us that day. The quiet of a street
No one had bombed shall be our guilt and wish
And all our hopes be carried in our hands.
They must be strong that will create a world,
And must be hands that have the greenest thumbs
Of ungilt gardeners of our circumstance.
Our human rites reclaim a waste of war
To plant the orchards where the field guns arc.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 38 / SCAN PAGE 40

The Fire at Cat Creek Bend

Millen Brand

When a crown of dim light appeared over a low hill ahead of him, Fred Means believed he was coming to a town and perhaps to a place to sleep, but it turned out to be only a grass fire, burning beside the road. He drove past the ring of flame, staring sideways at it. It was already too big for one person to put out, and was slowly spreading, leaping up in weeds and brush. Eyes of sudden light glowed as the dead leaves on a small oak tree burned and faded.

It was early spring, and dry. Behind the fire, the flattened crests of the mountains followed the valley here much as they did in Texas.

He turned his tired shoulders and gazed back, even when he had passed the fire. It seemed strange, burning like this late at night with nobody near it. It was going for midnight. In his mind recurred the memory of a brush fire that had started one night down near Corpus Christi and that had killed five people before it was stopped. It was just such a fire in just such a dry valley with the hills behind for a flue.

He crossed a low, wide cement bridge over a shallow creek, and came to a truckers' stand. He went in and took a stool and tried to get the attention of girl walking up and down behind counter like a small pink pigeon. "Say, he said, finally halting her. "Say, do the road just a little there's a grass fi going. Anybody here mention it?" H included with the girl a half-do truckers, but they shook their heads showed no interest.

"Coffee?" "Yeah. Say," he persisted, "don't yo • think maybe you'd ought to report t fire, call in somewheres?"

The girl lifted her head indecisively "Where was it?" she asked.

"Right down the road here about mile, maybe not that."

"Across Cat Creek?" "How do you mean?" "The other side the Cat Creek brid there?"

He said it was. "Then it's okay." She flipped at scarf around her throat and put the ti ends between her breasts. "It can't p the creek and, yeah, there's nothing t other side the creek."

"I still figure you'd ought to tel phone. A fire... "

"It's only a volunteer fire departmen His eyes seemed to concentrate and watch. His mouth was edged with heavy lines.

y ain't gonna come out for no fire other side the creek." As she spokc, walked to the far end of the counter re she stood with one foot up on a She looked hostile.

"I've seen fires get going," Means •. "It ain't good. A fire ought to be t out while it's small." A speckled mirror ran along the wall • d the counter. He was surely dirty. lier in the day, he had driven straight ugh a heavy dust storm, bad enough nd Dallas to makc trucks shacle up wait for nightfall and the usual drop wind, He had kept going, but maybe was a mistake. The car engine was tcd with dirt and the carburetor was • g up. But he had wanted to make c. He was promised a good job in a bing supply house in St. Louis and needed a good job bad. Since his ~ifc had died, everything steadily been going wrong. The two dren were boarded with friends and little girl had developed a bone in- 'on of the leg. She had been a long e on her back and it had been cx- 've. The friends had helped. They been good to help, but now he was • d to them. He was not one to like be behiqd. Now he wanted to get to Louis and make some real money. e was promised all the overtime he d use and he would put in the time begin to get ahead again. Sitting at little girl's bed, he had got into a. With the room half dark and her • • g and turning her head and shoulnd having to keep her leg still, a d suffered like that. Her eyes would at him and he had sat helpless. n the mirror he could sec his long, ridged nose dividing his face sharply.

When he finished his coffee, he went out and the cold night air penetrated his thin cotton suit. Wind had begun to blow fitfully. He imagined it had the dry smell of- dust. It rattled the canvas covers of several of the waiting trucks. He got in his car and started it and was greeted by a loud, screaming sound from under the hood. It was exactly likc the scream of a frightened horse. Abruptly it stopped and the motor clicked along evenly. A trucker who had followed him out said, "You got trouble?"

"You hear that?"

A low whine had begun, which seemed connected with the scream that had sounded before. Means raised the hood and they listened closely but it was hard to tell where the whine came from. It seemed to come

from everywhere. The trucker got a long screw driver and put it to the generator and pressed his car to the handle, listening as if with a stethoscope. He put it to the right-hand and to the left-hand water pump. Another ' trucker stopped the motor and tried turning the water pumps by hand. The right one turned hard.

"Looks like this is the trouble," he said. "Yeah, this is it. You got to put in a new water pump."

Means frowned and put his hand in his pocket, touching his thin billfold. "I got no money for a pump..."

The trucker's look said, You better get the money.

"I got to get to St. Louis." "You'll never get there, you don't put in a pump. Take my advice." 4-0 "He's right, brother," the other trucker said.

It had surely been a mistake, driving through that dust. But he had been in ~ hurry and had held the car against the lank brown clouds blowing from the fields. "Maybe he could put in a kit and save on it," the first trucker suggested.

"Hell with that," the second trucker said. "It'd be a complete waste of money. Put in a new pump."

- The first trucker reached in and turned the pump. "Yeah, that's the only thing," he said.

Means was facing south. A wash of pinkish color eddied up, as if stirred up by the wind. "Look there," he said. "Look at that fire."

The two truckers stared. "It's a fire all right." "I don't like it," Means said nervously. He remembered again the Corpus Christi fire and how it had spread. "Say," he said, "I wonder if the bunch of us got brooms if we could put it out. Now's the time to put it out."

"I thought you wanted to get to St. Louis."

"I don't like to see no fire get going like that. I surely don't."

"I got no time myself. I can't leave the truck for nothing like that."

"Nah," the other one said. The truckers hurried to their trucks, As the big vehicles pulled out on the highway • swinging north, their lights flared momentarily on a bare frame farmhouse across the road. Means noticed that dry grass and dead weeds swept right up against the house on the side toward the fire.

He knocked on the low front door, first gently, then louder. A milk stain of light came on, and the door opened crack. "What do you want?" a wo asked. She had folded a pale wrap around her, body like a corn husk.

"There's a big grass fire going, do the road. I figured I better tell you."

• The woman looked numb with sle She twisted her hand on her wrap "Fire? Well, there's a telepho~e in drive-in place across the road."

"They wouldn't do nothing the "They wouldn't? Why not?", "Said it was across the creek and n body'd come."

"Oh, it's across the creek." The w an's voice changed. A heavy, blur male voice called from inside, "Who there?"

The woman called "Man says there's across the creek."

An unintelligible mumbling sound and the woman turned to Means. "W thanks for tellin' us." Her face show displeasure.

"It looks like it's getting pretty big, Means said.

He was about to leave when he r membered his own needs. He said, "Y know if there's a place to sleep up road here? I been driving pretty lo without finding a place."

"About two miles up is Cat C Bend. There's two motels there if th ain't got the lights out,,and the Linco Hotel." Eyeing his clothing she sai "You better go to the hotel."

He thanked her and went back his car. As he started it, in the rear-vi mirror the growing crown of light wav ered, indistinct, large, and red agai the night.

The level road went straight to t part of his circular face. His ears were like cups attached to the rings of his skull.

town. It was the first town he had come to in sixty miles, and, typically, it was a single cobble street thiclclly lined with wooden buildings. The whole street was dark. As he drove down it, a light showed over a small sign at the front entrance of the Lincott Hotel. It glinted dimly.

In this small western town it was now late. When he parked his car and went into the hotel, he found himself approaching another dim light over a desk, with a wide lobby floating to the side in a camphor gloom. As if awaiting him, a night clerk with bony temples motioned him forward and tried to overcome, with the pleasantness of his voice, the

utter dilapidation of the building. "Room?" he inquired, tapping with a pencil.

"Yeah, something cheap." "How about one for a dollar fiftyfour that we usually get two six for?"

"Anything cheaper?" "Well now," the clerk said less politely, "I do have one room left for a dollar three. I don't often have one of them rooms available. It just happens now and then I do."

"I'll take it," Means said. As he spoke, floor lamp with a violent red shade flashed on and its shuddering bulb cast a blue flame on a dozen dry, black chairs. In one of these, an armchair, the figure of a man who had been motionless was now stretching his arms over his head. From one of his hands gleamed a thick piece of twine, which hung down to a hump in a rug and went under it. His face was round. His hair, parted in the middle, had a forced, bed-down look. His eyes were as black as his suit and seemed the only distinct feature. When he had stretched, he settled back again in the chair and pulled on the piece of twine. With a sound of scratching and clutching, a small rat emerged from under the rug, desperately trying to hold on to the floor. The man remarked blandly to Means, "Yes, how are you, stranger?" and went on, "I see you looking at this rat. I was in the toilet back under the stairs a while back, me and James J. Randolph who's gone now, I'd enjoy to have you meet him, and him and me found our friend here and somehow, with the aid of well, I wouldn't like to come right out and mention the rubber instrument-somehow we got this young rat cornered and tied."

The clerk muttered uneasily, "Bert, why don't you just kill him now and get it over with. It's right time you killed him."

"I wouldn't like to do that somehow." As Means stood waiting, the man addressed as Bert beckoned to him. "Come closer, stranger," he said, "and take a look at this rat." Means advanced toward the glare of reddish light in which the rat cowered. It was abjectly trembling. "Be careful he don't run up your leg. They like to run up people's legs," Bert said sharply. He juggled the rat, making it flee one way and another until it came to a trembling rest again, its threads of whiskers bloodied by the light. Its eyes had begun to protrude. Its fear was evident, and so overwhelming it threatened to become stuporous.

The clerk called out in anguish, "That rat must have just come in here today."

Means, "Let me show you that r We haven't had a rat he~e in months."

"That's right, Billy boy," Bert assured him.

Bert remarked severely, with a h" of a drawl, "Billy boy, don't you kn you lost the lcey to 203?"

"Place fumigated once a week." "Right again. Cleanest hotel this side Adota." He pointed the rat directly at Means. "Now, friend, just take a look at him. Just look at his head and tell me what he looks like."

Means did not answer. "He looks like a rabbit. Ain't that what he looks like? Look." Bert reached down and agilely caught the rat by the head and pulled back its ears so that, with elongated ears and eyes, the rat did have an albino-ish resemblance to a rabbit. "Ain't he a rabbit?" he insisted. Against his will, Means nodded, and with the delighted triumph of a suggestionist and the gratuitous triumph of making a fool of somebody, Bert cried, "No, he's a possum," and swept the rat's ears forward. And now the rat did have the long • pale look of a possum. "But take no offense. That's western talk, stranger." He routed up the rat again so that it ran and twisted and finally settled in a perfect petrification of fear. The flame of light in its bulging eyes shook repeatedly like the rhythmic convulsions of fever. "I'm certainly going to kill this rat at the right time," Bert said, gazing down at it. "I wouldn't want to let it loose again in Billy's highclass establishment here. It might chew some matches and set fire and do all kinds of damage and that would be resented by a certain party." He raised his sharp black eyes to the cleric.

The clerk seemed not to know which side to put his weight on. In his nervousness he dropped his pencil and stooped to pick it up. He almost cried out to Billy turned and with a wild sudd movement rattled the keys hanging a sooty board beside the desk. "Yes, I did. Yes."

"So there's nothing available und a dollar fifty-four," Bert prompted h' "Keep the goddamned room," Me said, shoving his small canvas bag under his arm.

Bert called out softly, "Stranger, wouldn't be hasty if I was you. N Just consider it fairly and practically Rooms at the two motels at Cat Cre Bend would cost you twice a doll fifty-four. If they had rooms. North o south of here there's nothing to be h for three hours driving. There certain!

Means said in a choked voice to cleric, "Show me the room."

The cleric eagerly came out of cage and led Means back toward the rear. In the darkness of the rear of the lobby a flight of steps went up to a blue light whose ghostly radiance lit the warren-like hallways of the second floor. They mounted into this penumbra! and, proceeding automatically through several cross-halls, the clerk found and unlocked a door into a small room. The only furnishing noticeable in it was a bed with a mattress as thin and flat as a fallen gravestone.

He waited. "I'll take it." "Yes, sheets changed every night, sir." "Who is this Bert?" "He's the overseer of the RCFH. Randolph Consolidated Farm Holdings. CFH owns the hotel here too. Leave under the rug responded with a fury of shivering.

He put his bag in the room, sir?" Means hesitly put down his bag. "Now if you'll come back down and register."

Means stared at the hand holding the twine and answered, in a low voice, "I do need it."

Quickly Billy relocked the door, observing - "You're lucky even to get a room, and that's a fact. It's plowing and there's "Do you believe you could plow by tractor, keep the speed even and not plow too wide?"

"Extra men from the day shift are here right now, besides the Means nodded. "Excellent. -I see you know what I mean. We want every hand we can get now, for the next few days..."

Means could hear groans and res coming through the walls with a sibilance of voices humming through comb The frame building seemed to "But, Bert," Billy interrupted. "Hogan says he's bringing in ten men tomorrow."

With sleep, and the presence of unconscious men followed them down the In the lobby, Bert sat waiting. The had returned to its hiding place, and string intermittently vibrated. Means conscious of Bert watching him he signed the register. He was conscious of Bert's steady gaze as he got to his thin fold of money. He noticed it still holding the room key.

"Well, let's have the key," he said, Billy stopped dangling the key and lightly handed it to him. "Always give the man the key," Bert without moving. "The man wants the pay for. Tell me, stranger, are staying long in our community or passing through?" His voice was dead again. "I'm just here for the night."

ust passing through. Yes. But doubt you could be interested in a certain table proposition.... Ever drive a here's good money to be had here, t good money, if you needed it."

dragged on the twine and the object "Our friend here says he can drive a tractor. If he can drive a tractor, he gets a card, and if he gets a card, he works." Bert dragged the rat out from under the rug and started it running up and down again, in the full flush of its tremors.

"God damn it, take that rat out and kill it," Billy cried.

"Billy boy, what is the matter with you? What's got into you and made you so touchy and nervous anyhow? You know right well I'm going to shoot this rat when James J. Randolph comes back. James J. Randolph helped me catch it and it's only proper and fitting he should be here to help me kill it. Everything in good time. I see you know what I mean."

Billy's left cheek was now laced with an uncontrollable tic. He made one last protest, below his breath. "Man got his room and wants to sleep."

"I got this rat tied and he ain't going to get loose and you can count on that," Bert said.. Drawing firmly on the string, he added, "Not much gets away from me, Billy boy. Remember that."

'cross the creek, jumped it. It's bur three four farms already. We got to ever'body out!"

"You said I get a card?" Means asked.

Bert called, "Now just a minu Horton. No need to get excited."

"Yes. Which shift would you prefer, day or night? We plow nights by headlights... "

"But this fire's headed straight f town."

"I'd sooner have day." "So I expected. And how long can we count on you working for us?"

"I got to get a new water pump for the car."

"One day. You'll make enough to get that in one day." Bert frowned.

"I did figure to get to St. Louis by the weekend. I surely got to be there by Monday."

"You work three days and you'll get there by Sunday night. And you'll have all that good extra money."

Means said nothing. "Three days," Bert repeated. He spun the string in a momentary circle, like a skipping rope.

"He won't never make St. Louis then by Sunday night," Billy said.

"I guess he'll make it," Bert said, jerking the string. "I guess he won't mind driving two hundred miles or so a day extra for just two days. When he's got that good pay envelope with him. Will you, stranger?"

He had just said, "Will you, stranger?" when there was a loud shocking sound. A bell was ringing at the center of the town. First a stutter as if the ringer had grasped the bell rope awkwardly. Then it clamored harshly.

The street door of the lobby swung violently inward and a man hurried toward the desk. He cried, "Billy, fire! Fire heading tight for town. Started "I know all about these grass fir Horton. There's no danger to the to at all, none at all. There's a ring fresh plowed ground around this to a good fifth to a quarter of a mile wi Few strips maybe need watching, mostly that fire's going to just burn its out against the plowed ground."

"But, Bert." Horton was pantin "That fire's burning farms. It's spre ing. Why look... " He pointed urgent! toward a single back window: "You see it I"

In the window appeared a pale pi light like an enlargement of the reddi glow Means had seen in his rear-vi mirror.

"Billy, how many Horton asked.

Bert checked Billy as he started speak. "Billy boy, I think you bett remember those men got to get up plow in the morning. I don't think • would do them no good to go out an just uselessly wear themselves. out." Horton cried wildly, "But, Bert, tell you farms're being burnt out!"

"Yes, I heard you say that the fi time. I surely did. But you got to r member this fire is certainly a gr favor to those niggers and poor farmc that's trying to scrape a living out those little pieces of land over towa the creek. Get them burnt out and they have enough sense to get them so good-paying jobs and make some real money. It's the greatest favor you could think of to them and that's a fact."

string and ran the rat out in front of him. "Well?"

The bell had stopped ringing and orily a phantasmal sigh continued in the air.

"You can see our men are so tired," Bert went on, "they didn't even hear that bell."

Horton said bitterly, "I'll get men ewheres else." "Just watch those few strips of land that ain't plowed, Horton," Bert called after him as he left.

Means started to follow. Bert's voice caught him sharply: "Stranger, where 1ou going?" Less peremptorily: "You know you got to get up pretty early to tart plowing, don't you?"

"I'll start plowing. Don't worry about that."

"It's funny but I do. It seems to me you got to have your rest to keep that tor right on the line. We wouldn't t no man that couldn't do a full y's work." Bert pulled on the rat's Let Us Be Your RESEARCH DEPT.

If we don't have it

WE FIND IT LARRY EDMUNDS

BOOK SHOP 1603 N. Cahuenga Hollywood 28, Calif. Phone Hempstead 3273 Means continued toward the door. "Stranger!" The word rang out hard. The barrel of a gun was pointed at Means, level and small and with a black center. It hung suspended and still. Bert's eyes, like two expanding beads, measured its stillness. Means breathed shallowly and heard outside the sound of men running.

The gun continued pointed at his breast. When he turned, he sensed its hollow barrel still upon him as he walked to the door. The hallucinatory anesthetic of camphor changed to the sting of cold outside air. He walked as slowly as before and as he walked, the hotel's small front light threw his shadow ahead of him, toward the center of town. Time stretched out like a substance and he seemed to advance dream-like in this substance until he heard a shot.

Only then, as if released, he began to hurry.

THE RED BARN We cannot learn from the experience of others, but it is sometimes comforting to read of their mistakes... ZEITLIN & VER BRUGGE Booksellers 815 N. La Cienega, Los Angeles, Calif, Phone BRadshaw 2-5165

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 46 / SCAN PAGE 48

A Place Called Choice: Second, Third and Fourth Parts

E. P. Thompson

THE PLACE CALLED CHOI

(Continued from the Autumn Issue)

SECOND PART

The night was full of heaving, matter in labour Sucking the vacuum in, expelling at last With anxious love the tiny identical spawn Then vegetables with feelers, climbing toadstools, Long-haired arachnids, orchids which ate birds, Snakes lurching on legs, egg-laying creatures The size of a Bank. Beneath the accountant's office We found the tusks and gills, the horny clanging scales, And reconstructed the slope and swarm of its carriage, The brain in the base of the tail and the skull like a teacup. This was next morning. But that night At every window was the breath of clawed beasts.

At dawn the noise diminished. Hair on the instep M uffied and smudged the spoor of the men from Swanscombe In the great snow. Later, we found in the road A slave's skull crushed by some huge megalith (Perhaps an altar stone) like a snail-shell cracked by a thrush. But at the time we could see little through the mist Except for those great stone images with beaks And the terrible- ten-armed and helmeted gods.

At nine the Greeks went out, helmeted and cruel, Coming back at length (the survivors) with sweet breath And radiant faces. The place, they said, was good.

□7 And so, shortly before ten, the Man of Business Issued out from the house to set the place in order.

A lot needed attention. Those heathen idols Were quite unsuited to a man with his professions. He created from his rib a well-tailored god With regular office hours and remarkable files.

It was quite safe to go out now. At half-past ten The maid banged the gong, and we gathered in the morning-room. We held a short service of praise and thanksgiving.

We had all dispersed t-o our rooms for· elevenses When - quite suddenly - matter opened its jaws and retched, Fetching up a great belch in the shape of a mushroom With curly rootstrings of fire eye-sockets pus Riccstraw red with abortions, cots full of scabs.

Nothing quite so big as this had happened before. The doorstep was crowded. The distress was painful. The headline blew its nose and shuffled uneasily. The concepts of dignity coughed in their hands discreetly. The treatise on ethics cried, "Ah love o, pity" And went up to bed. The wall-eyed god Came down in person, flatulent with forgiveness. For weeks afterwards the sermons were in mourning But no one had done it. It had all been an accident. The alibis were perfect. The bishop at that time Was rehearsing a sermon with his hand on the altar The professor was at work at that very mome~t On a volume of spiritual values.... Some suspicion, it is true, fell upon the scientist, Who was rumoured to keep Something locked up in the lab,. But those who had seen It said the story was nonsense - Anyone could tell It had been kept as a pet. As for the people they were nowhere near the scene, In the bar at the speedway growing in their gardens The prize and private blooms of their own non-existence While their kids played at guardsmen and bandits in the suburbs.

The matter stood there. The issue was undecided. Being a poet, there was nothing I could do. It was not my line of business. I went back to my room. But I felt, somehow, uneasy. The air chattered with fever. I kept looking at the clock....

At five to twelve there broke in at my door That sandalled rQ.nner wet from Marathon, Leaving his blood-stained reedbanks, skirting the chalkpit, Leaping the dyke, fording the bloody Sangro, Scarred and fresh-cut from the yards of Stalingrad, Shaking me by the pulse, crying to wake the house: "Brother, stand to your life,! About you, brother, loo k:

O love, O human pity, now give me courage! O comrades of our human house, O spawning world Issuing the innocent lark, gushing with apples, The husk and juices of it, all that's sweet or young, Mother and ploughman, weaver, whoever's broken bread!

I looked, and the work on ethics crawled with gaols. The concepts fell apart and were full of gibbets. The values were yellow with law and pious lynching. Bulging and smug with blood, the leeching headlines The altar clotted with prayers, guns, sacrifices. Not once or twice only, but everywhere I looked The speeches of statesmen suppurating matter.

Defilement of life I From each denial, From the timid evasions and privacies of the Good, From the elegant nails of the ladies of plastic, From the saurian's crutch (the successful man of business), The pointed tool of the gunman, From the lusting speedway, the heart-throb of the crooner And all the public nuisances done on love, Each sale to the Bank of human bonds, from each and every Denial of the sandalled runner, there issues this spawn Swarming the yard of the world like midget spiders, Spawn of that fungus settling on every city, On the walls, the cathedrals, climbing the fertile smoke-stacks, Drifting on every sill, waiting there to germinate And fetch up larks and children in one belch....

Already the windows are shut, the children hailed indoors. We wait together in the unnatural darkness While that god forms outside, shaping like a mushroom, With vast blood-wrinkled spoor on the windswept snow. And now It leans over us, ~isting the panes with Its breath, Sucking our house back into vacuous matter, Helmeted and beaked, clapping Its great scales, Claws scratching on the slates, looking in with bleak stone eyes.

THIRD PART

"And 'tis a pretty toy to be a poet."

Tambourlaine.

I, What should a poet say? Poet, a pretty thing, Philatelist of words, Playing with sets of rhyme, Sticking in kings and birds, Sensing behind the. wall And the expensive murals The silverfishes crawl The whining digits mate Throughout the ~tate A stench of blocked morals And uncollected values, And at the top of all The wittol and the stall?

Say, first, we stand upon A tributary star, Issue of chaos, one In a swarming universe. Say, next, that life began As accidental spawn Of some atomic war Within the changing sun. And, last, declare that man (All changing matter, alone) Grew taller than his nurse, Air, water, stone, Arose and mastered change, Chaining the atoms down,. But found within

his soul A civil war begun, And felt within his heart The seeds of fission
spawn Till matter broke apart Flaming from pole to pole, The star fell in
the sun, And while the poet sat Turning the album of time, Sticking in
this and that To make a set of rhyme Swarming chaos took The poet and
his book.

ii, I We are each way defined - We stand on the crust of a star Turning
around a coal, Eternity's wind bcfiind, Infinity's moors before. Man is
what he has made, Carving himself a soul With bone and cutting blade -
The flint and teaching spade Revealing what we arc. From each
encounter with matter Man and his needs have grown. Air, stone and
water Thought to limit his needs, But out of the water came wisdom And
song came out of the stone. First of all, I declare That man is changed by
his deeds, And all within his kingdom Is stone, water, air, Transformed
into a fire Lighting the moors, and blown By every tempest higher Until
air, water, and stone In the furnace of the mind Are changed into desire
And all things are defined.

111. I stand upon this hurst Above the straddled town, Considering
water and air, And fire at the core of stone, Calling to mind the first Flint
arrowhead, shaped antler - Clumsily fashioned stuff To master wolf or
bear, And yet it was matter enough To make man come aware Of desire
and knowledge, vast As the megalithic altar Cast from the stuff of his
thought I stand amazed at the past All flint, bone, have taught,
Considering how the steel, Oil and teaching steam Reveal unknown
desires, New ways to act and feel - The fractured atoms seem In their
creating fires Already to meet and plan. A megalithic man.

It is time that I spoke my mind. I am sick of an "anxious age," I am fed
to my teeth with the cant Of "Guilt" and "Original Sin." From all the fires
that raged In England's youth, I find A grocer's timid candle Is all that is
left behind And life, being unassuaged By the fuel of cant and cash,
Consumes us in the flames Of unfulfilled desire Down to sarcastic ash,
And threatens to disown Fire with terrible fire, Air, water, and stone
Resume what was their own.

Whatever evil there is I declare was first let in By timid men with
candles And talk of original sin. Man is what he has made, Chipping bone
with bone, • Shaping the teaching spade Man is urged by his needs To
change the world, and then Transfigured by his deeds Changes necessity,
Becoming whole and free.

I stand upon the earth And watch the bursts of space. I declare the important facts Are neither guilt nor sin, But pain, hunger and war, Compassion, anger, and birth. And, last, I raise my voice In the teeth of the swarming wind I declare that man has choice, Discovered in that place Of human action where Necessity meets desire And moors and questioning wind, Water, stone, and air, Transfigured in the soul, Can be changed to human fire, And all that chaos has spawned, Man, becoming whole, Can order and control. "The accursed poor who can never be bought Clothed wiJh their flesh against the Pharaoh's sword,J. terrible infant, child of their desire."

Thomas McGrath.

Crime and compassion, then, statistics, ecstasy, But mostly crime.· At first the fat Cistercians Engrossing the farms with love. Rascals like Hawkins, Their sloops steaming with slaves, trading in bibles - But valiant men in their way, men to encounter the wind. Then Cromwell with his chaplain, slaying at Burford Buff-coated passion, was still a fit antagonist, Swearing by Property and Christ, an honest hypocrite.

Next came the jolly vicar with his sensitive daughters The weavers starved at their looms. Silicosis, anthrax The hunchbacked children the pieceners charred in the mills Black mud and standing water, the wastes of Passchendaele•. Men making good with guns. And all those accidents Fetched up by benevolent progress. Last, that race Of awl-eyed masters, victims of every wind, The hairy spoor in the snow, the monster of stone.

Standing above the lamplit town, I watch this crime Callous and beaked, crushing all comprehension, Killing whole streets of men, sticking its horny knuckles In the eyes of all comers. Man, who is changed by his hands, Evolved the Man of Business, within whose mind The clawed beast of possession gnawed all bonds until Man fell apart, and split from self to self, The acquisitive brain cutting off the creative hands.

The brain, cut off from the earth, forgetting love, Grew beak and claws. But the human hands Within the mines and mills grew into union, And brain was fashioned afresh by each encounter, Engaging with matter among whale-backed moors, The hands becoming men, taking to Blackstone Edge The torch the runner brought from Marathon.

Now crime, compassion have reached the place called choice, I hear at last the voice of resolution, loud From the flagstones and setts, the

commons engrossed for sheep, From the mullioned windows, the lighted bulk of mills, And the living killed in their streets. In the frostblue flames. Of the handloom weaver's rushlight, the heroic shadows leap Mellor at Cartwright's mill Jones on the hustings, crying Curses on coining men Ben Rushton at Skircoat names That merge with anonymous shadows, shaping that Man who crowds Every room of the human house, clears the bric-a-brac, stands Warming the winds of space at his compassionate hands.

The End

NOTES ON THE POEM

The poem is "spoken" from Halifax, where I live, in the industrial no of England, center of movements which came to a focus in nineteenth century Chartism.

In the Overture I recall several of the figures who represent for me both the confusion and the moral earnestness of the movement Tom Paine and William Cobbett Robert Owen, author of *The New Moral World* Cooper, a Chartist poet who ended in confusion and isolation Charles Bradlaugh, the stubborn rationalist who won great support from the workers later in the century.

I next recall the abortive Leveller mutiny during the English Civil War This is the point of climax in the English Revolution, when the bourgeoisie having humbled the aristocracy, turned savagely upon the left wing. Contemporary accounts of the death of these forerunners of the people's cause are deeply moving. The end of one is described thus: "The third, being also a Corporal, was brought to the same place; and without the least acknowledgment of error, or show of fear, he pulled off his doublet, standing a pretty distance from the wall and bade the soldiers do their duty, looking them in the face till they gave fire, not showing the least kind of terror or fearfulness of spirit."

Piltdown and Swanscombe are two English sites where very early human remains have been discovered.

At the conclusion of the Overture I recall Arnold and Lockyer, two other Leveller soldiers martyred in Cromwell's purges Holberry, a Sheffield Chartist who died as a result of maltreatment in prison, and whose funeral (like that of the other three) was attended by a great

popular demonstration and Linell, a worker killed in the demonstrations for free speech in Trafalgar Square, London, in 1887.

One or two references are made in the rest of the poem. Blackstone Edge is a high moor between Yorkshire and Lancashire which was a favourite rallying place for great demonstrations of Chartists from both counties. In the Fourth Part I recall George Mellor, a leader of the Luddites or machine-breakers, active in the Halifax area, especially between 1810 and 1815, one of whose most famous exploits was an attack upon the mill of a Mr. Cartwright at Rawfolds': Mellor was later executed for his part in the assassination of a hated employer. Ben Rushton was the most prominent of the handloom-weavers' leaders in the Chartist movement in the West Riding of Yorkshire a local ex-preacher and weaver himself, he expressed in his biblical language the quality of moral revolt to which I have referred. Ernest Jones, a young aristocrat and friend of Marx and Engels, was one of the local Chartist leaders.

In the Fourth Part also I make use of a key phrase from an article by William Morris, written for the May Day issue of Justice in 1896, shortly before he died.

E. P. T.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 56 / SCAN PAGE 58

A Legend of Huehuetonoc

B. Traven

A LEGEND OF HUEHUETON

In the state of Oaxaca, in a little village of dusty streets and palm huts, lived an Indian who made baskets out of bast and fibers gathered in the immense tropical bush surrounding the village. He worked squatting on the earthen floor of his palm-roofed portico. The material used had been well prepared for its purpose and richly colored with dyes which the basket-maker himself extracted from native plants and insects by a process known only to the members of his family.

His principal business, however, was not making baskets. He was a peasant who lived on fifteen acres of infertile soil yielding corn and beans after much sweat and labor and constant worry over the best distribution of rain and sunshine. Baskets he made when there was nothing to do in the fields; he made them to better slightly the small income from his little farm.

In spite of being just a plain peasant by profession one could clearly see from his little baskets that at heart he was an artist. Each basket was covered with the most beautiful ornaments, flowers, butterflies, birds, squirrels, antelopes, tigers and a score of other animals the wilds. The amazing thing was they appeared on the inside of the baskets as well as on the outside. Not painting, but by weaving only were the highly artistic effects achieved, and without ever looking at any sketch or pattern. People in the neighboring town who bought these baskets would use them sewing or to decorate tables or window sills, or to hold little things to keep them from lying around. Ladies used them for jewelry or flowers or little dolls.

Whenever the Indian had finished about twenty of these baskets he would take them to town on market day. He would be on his way by midnight because he owned only a burro to ride, and if the burro had gone astray the day before as happened frequently, he would have to walk the whole way to town and back. At the market he had to pay twenty centavos in taxes to sell his wares.

Each basket cost him between twen and thirty hours' work, not counting th time spent gathering bast and fibres, preparing them, making dyes and colorin alike in their design. Each was an inbast; and for this work he asked dividual piece of art.

centavos, the equivalent of 5½ U.S. ts. It seldom happened, however, that uyers paid the full fifty centavos asked r four reales as the Indian called it. e buyer bargained, calling it a sinful rice. "Why, the whole thing is nothing ut ordinary petate straw. You can find ps of it wherever you look; the jungle • full of it," the buyer would argue. Such a little basket, what's it good for yhow? If I paid you ten centavitos for you should be grateful, you should • my hand. However, I'll be generous is time, I'll pay you twenty-but not e green centavo more. Take it or run So he sold finally for twenty-five cenvos, but then the buyer would say, Now, what do you think of that? I've t only twenty centavos change on me.

at can we do about that? If you can ge me a twenty-peso bill, all right, u shall have your twenty-five fierros."

course, the Indian could not change twenty-peso bill and so the basket went That basket-maker had little if any ledge of the outside world, else he uld have known that what had haped to him was happening every hour every day to every artist all over the Id. Such knowledge would perhaps ve made him very proud, because he Id have realized that he belonged to little army which is the salt of the and which keeps culture from g away.

had in his life made several hunof these beautiful baskets, yet so no two of them had ever been found Often it was not possible for him to sell all the baskets he had brought to market. Naturally he did not want to take them home again. In this case he went peddling his baskets from door to door and he was treated like a beggar and had to swallow insults. Occasionally he would get no more than ten centavos, and the buyer, usually a woman, would grasp the little marvel and right before his eyes throw it carelessly upon the nearest table as if to say, "Well, I take that piece of nonsense only for charity's sake. After all, I'm a Christian and I can't see a poor Indian die of hunger since he has come such a long way from his village." This would remind her of something better and she would hold him and say, "Where are you at home anyway, Indito? What's your pueblo? So, from Huehuetonoc? Now, listen here, Indito. Can't you bring me next Saturday two or three turkeys from Huehuetonoc? But

they must be heavy and fat and very, very cheap or I won't even touch them. If I wish to pay the regular price I don't need you to bring them. Understand? Hop along, now, Indito."

The Indian squatted on the earthen floor in the portico of his hut, attended to his work and showed no special interest in the curiosity of Mr. Winthrop watching him. He acted almost as if he ignored the presence of the American altogether.

"How much that little basket, friend?" Mr. Winthrop asked.

"Fifty centavitos, patroncito, my good little lord, four reales," the Indian answered politely.

"All right, sold," Mr. Winthrop said in a tone and with a wide gesture as if he had bought a railroad. And examining his buy he added, "I know already who I'll give that pretty little basket to. She'll kiss me for it, sure. Wonder what she'll use it for?"

He had expected to hear a price of three or even four pesos. The moment he realized that he had judged the value six times too high, he saw right away what great business possibilities this miserable Indian village might offer to a dynamic promoter.

He started exploring this promised land without delay. "Suppose, my good friend, I would buy ten of these little baskets of yours, which I might as well admit right here and now, have practically no use. Well, as I was saying, if I would buy ten, how much would you charge me apiece?"

The Indian hesitated for a few seconds as if making calculations. Finally he said, "If you buy ten I can let you have them for forty-five centavos each, sefiorito gentleman."

"All right, amigo. And now, let's suppose I buy a hundred of these useless baskets, how much will they cost?"

The Indian, never fully looking up to the American standing before him and hardly taking his eyes off his work, said politely and without the slightest trace of enthusiasm in his voice, "In such a case I might not be quite unwilling to sell each for forty centavitos."

Mr. Winthrop bought sixteen baskets which was all the Indian had in stock.

After three weeks in the republic, Mr. Winthrop was convinced that he knew this country perfectly, that he had everything and knew all about

the • habitants, their character and way life, and that there was nothing for him to explore. So he returned N ooyorg and felt happy to be once m in a civilized country.

One day going out for lunch he p a confectioner's and looking at the d play in the window, he suddenly membered the little baskets he bought in that faraway Indian villa~ He hurried home and took all baskets he had left to one of the b known candy-makers in the city.

"I can offer you here," Mr. Winthr said to the confectioner, "one of them artistic and at the same time the m original of packages. These little bask would be just right for the most exp sive chocolates meant for elegant high-price\! gifts."

The confectioner examined the kets and found them extraordinaril well suited to a certain line in his bus ness. Never before had there been an thing like them for originality, prettin and good taste.

He shrugged his shoulder and sai "Well, I don't know. If you asked m I'd say it isn't quite what I'm after However, we might give it a try. It depends, of course, on the price. In out business the package mustn't cost mo than what's in it."

"Do I hear an offer?" Mr. Winthrop asked.

"Why don't you tell me i~ round figures how much you want for them? I'm not a good guesser."

"Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Kemple since I'm the smart guy who discovered these baskets, and since I'm the only rson who knows where to lay hands more, I'm selling to the highest bid-. r, on an exclusive basis, of course."

"Quite so, and may the best man in," the confectioner said. "I'll talk e matter over with my partners. Come ck and see me tomorrow and I'll let u know how far we're willing to go."

Next day when Mr. Winthrop stepinto Mr. Kemple's office this gentlen said: "Now, to be frank with you, know art when I see it-no getting und that. And these baskets are little rks of art, they surely are. However, e are not art dealers here, you know t. Therefore I've no use for the kets except as packaging for elegant rench pralines. I can't pay for them hat I would pay for real art. After all, ey're only wrappings. A fine wrapping, rhaps, but nevertheless a wrapping. So re is our offer, take it or leave it a Har and a quarter apiece and not one Mr. Winthrop made a gesture as if had been struck over the head. The confectioner, misunderstanding •

involuntary gesture of Mr. Winrop, said quickly, "All right, all right, reason to get excited, no reason at. Perhaps we can do a trifle better. t's say one-fifty." "Make it one-seventy-five," Mr. Winrop snapped, swallowing his breath d wiping his forehead. "Sold. One seventy-five apiece free at rt of New York. I pay the customs d you pay shipping. Right?" "Sold," Mr. Winthrop said also and deal was closed. "There is,-of course, one condition,"

confectioner said. "One or two hunbaskets won't do for us. It wouldn't worth the trouble and the advertising.

I won't consider less than ten thousand, or one thousand dozens if that sounds better in your ears. And they must come in no less than twelve different patterns well assorted."

"I assure you that I can make it sixty different patterns or designs."

"So much the better. Can you deliver ten thousand by October, let's say?"

"Absolutely," Mr. Winthrop said and signed the contract.

All the way back to Mexico, Mr. Winthrop had a notebook in his left hand and a pencil in his right and he was writing figures, long rows of them, to find out exactly how much richer he would be when this business had been put through.

"As soon as I arrive in the city," he muttered to himself, "I'll pick up an American guy down on his luck, and I'll get him for fifteen, well, eighteen, damn it, let's give him twenty a week. I'll send that bum off to that goddamn lousy village and have him establish his H.Q. there so that he can hustle production and take charge of the packing and shipping. A clean-cut business. It'll go like honey on hot cakes. They've practically no weight, so the shipping won't cost much. Let's say five cents apiece. No loss for breakage or leakage. No special export tax on them as far as I could learn. If there should be, let's say five cents, stamps and all. Now, how do we stand?

"That Indian offered me a hundred for forty centavos apiece. I won't spring the ten thousand on him right away, or he might get foolish notions and steam up the price. A deal is a deal, even here in this ~odforsaken republic. Republic, doing so by saying, "Perdoneme, pa cito, I have to take advantage of the light, it soon will be night."

my eye, they haven't even water at night in the lavatories. Perhaps I can knock off five centavos more and get them for thirty-five. Anyway, to be on the safe side, let the price stand at forty. Forty centavos Mex is, let me see, well, the peso is actually eight and a half to one, so forty centavos will be four and sixtenths cents in genuine money. To this I must add five cents U.S. for packing and shipping. Then I'll have to add, let's say, six cents for overhead and there'll be enough left for paying something extra here to a shipping official and something extra there to an express agent to speed up transportation.

"Now, let's see. For unforeseen expenses, we'll put in another five cents our money and that will put us entirely on the safe side. Now, let's sum up the whole goddamn thing. Where is that damn pencil again? I had it right between my fingers. Ah, there it is. Ten thousand he ordered. Well, well, there we got a clean cut profit of fifteen thousand four hundred and forty genuine dollars. Sweet smackers. Fifteen grand right into papa's pocket. Come to think of it, that republic isn't so backward after all."

He found his Indian friend squatting in the porch of his jacalito as if he had never moved from his place since Mr. Winthrop had left for New York.

"How are you, my good friend?" The native rose, took off his hat, bowed politely and said in his soft voice, "Be welcome, patroncito. Thank you, I feel fine, thank you. Muy buenas tardes. This house and all I have is at your kind disposal." He bowed once more and sat down again. But he excused himself for "I've got big business for you, friend," Mr. Winthrop began.

"Good to hear that, senior." Mr. Winthrop said to himself, "N he'll jump up and go wild when he 1 what I've got for him." Aloud he "Do you think you can make me thousand of these little baskets?"

"Why not, patroncito? If I can twelve, I can make one thousand "That's right, my good man. you also make five thousand?"

"Of course, senior, I can make thousand if I can make one thousand "Good. Now, if I should ask you make me ten thousand, what would say? And what would be the price each? You can make ten thousand, you?"

"Of course, I can, señor. I can as many as you wish. You see, I am expert in this sort of work. No one in the whole state of Oaxaca can them the way I do."

"That's what I thought and th exactly why I came to you."

"Thank you for the honor, patr cito."

"Suppose I order you to make me thousand of these baskets, how m time do you think you would need deliver them?"

The Indian, without interrupting • work, cocked his head to one side then to the other as if he were counti the days or weeks it would cost him make all ~hese baskets.

After a few minutes he said in a sl voice, "It w;ill take a good long time "Quite right, jefecito."

ake so many baskets, patroncito. You e, the bast and the fibers must be very ry before they can be used properly.

hen all during the time they are slowy drying, they must be worked and hauled in a very special way so that while rying they won't lose their softness and heir flexibility and their natural brilliance. Even when dry they must look:

resh. They must never lose their natural properties or they will look' just as ifeless and dull as straw. Then while hey are drying I have to get the plants nd roots and barks and insects from hich I b(ew the dyes. That takes much 'me also, believe me. The plants must be gathered when the moon is just right r they won't give the right color. The lice and other insects I pick from the plants must also be gathered at the right • e and under the right conditions or else they produce no rich colors and are 'ust like dust. But, of course, jefecito, I make as many of these canastitas as u wish, even as many as three dozens you want them. Only give me time."

"Three dozens? Three dozens?" Mr.

inthrop yelled, and threw up both ds in desperation. "Three dozens!" repeated as if he had to say it many es in his own voice so as to underd the real meaning of it, because for while he thought that he was dream-. He had expected the Indian to go y on hearing that he was to sell ten usand of his baskets without having peddle them from door to door and treated like a dog with a skin disease. So he took up the question of price 'n, by which he hoped to stir up the ian's ambition. "You told me that if e one hundred baskets you will let have them for forty centavos apiece.

at right, my friend?"

"Now," Mr. Winthrop took a deep breath, "now, then, if I ask you to make me one thousand, that is, ten times one hundred baskets, how much will they cost me, each basket?"

That figure was too high for the Indian to grasp. He became slightly confused and for the first time since Mr. Winthrop had arrived he interrupted his work and tried to think it out. Several times he shook his head and looked vaguely around as if for help. Finally he said, "Excuse me, jefecito, little chief, that is by far too much for me to count. Tomorrow, if you will do me the honor, come and see me again and I think I shall have my answer ready for you, pa tronci to."

When on the next morning Mr. Winthrop came to the hut he found the Indian as usual squatting on the floor under the overhanging palm roof working at his baskets.

"Have you got the price for ten thousand?" he asked the Indian the very moment he saw him, without taking the trouble to say "Good Morning!"

"Si, patroncito, I have the price ready. You may believe me when I say it has cost me much labor and worry to find out the exact price, because, you see, I do not wish to cheat you out of your honest money."

"Skip that, amigo. Come out with the salad. What's the price?" Mr. Winthrop asked nervously.

"The price is well calculated now without any mistake on my side. If I have to make one thousand canastitas each will be three pesos. If I have to make five thousand, each will cost nine "Bueno, patroncito, what is the difficult to understand? It's all simple. One thousand canastitas cost pesos. And if I have to. make ten thousand, in such a case I can't make them for less than fifteen pesos." He returned to his work as if he were afraid of losing too much time with such idle talk.

Mr. Winthrop thought that perhaps it was his faulty knowledge of this foreign language which had played a trick on him.

"Did I hear you say fifteen pesos each if I eventually would buy ten thousand?"

"That's exactly and without any mistake what I have said, patroncito," the Indian answered in his soft courteous voice.

"But now, see here, my good man, you can't do this to me. I'm your friend and I want to help you get on your feet."

"Yes, patroncito, I know this and I don't doubt any of your words."

"Now, let's be patient and talk this over quietly as man to man. Didn't you tell me that if I would buy one hundred you would sell each for forty centavos?"

"Si, jefecito, that's what I said. If you buy one hundred you can have them for forty centavos apiece provided that I have one hundred which I don't."

"Yes, yes, I see that." Mr. Winthrop felt as if he were going insane any minute now. "Yes, so you said. Only what I can't comprehend is why you cannot sell at the same price if you make me ten thousand. I certainly don't wish to chisel on the price. I am not that kind. Only, well, let's see now, if you can sell for forty centavos at all, be it for twenty or fifty or a hundred, I can't quite get the idea why the price has to jump that high if I buy more than a hundred."

dozen. Ten thousand cost me so m time and labor that I could never them, not even in a hundred years. a thousand canastitas I need more than for a hundred, and I need more lice and more plants and roots and for the dyes. It isn't that you can into the bush and pick all the th· you need at your heart's desire. root with the true violet blue may me four or five days until I can find in the jungle. And have you thou how much time it costs and how m hard work to prepare the bast fibers? What is more, if I have to m so many baskets, who then will look a my corn and my beans and my goats chase for me occasionally a rabbit meat on Sunday? If I have no corn t I have no tortillas to eat, and if I gr no beans, where do I get my frij from?"

"But since you'll get so much mo from me for your baskets you can b all the corn and beans in the world more than you need."

"That's what you think, sefiorito, 1 tle lordy. But you see, it is only the co I grow myself that I am sure of. Oft corn which others may or may not gr I cannot be sure to feast upon. Sup all Indians like me were to make bask also, who then do you think would gr corn and beans? We would all die cause there would no longer be any f to be had."

Mr. Winthrop, seeing fifteen tho and dollars slipping through his finge became desperate. He refused to give u He bargained with the Indian for

he tore out leaf after leaf from his notebook, covered them with figures and explained to the poor peasant that he could be the richest man in the whole district.

The Indian, with a genuine expression of awe, watched Mr. Winthrop writing down these long figures, doing all these complicated multiplications and divisions and subtractions so rapidly that it seemed to him the greatest miracle he had ever seen. Mr. Winthrop, noting this, misjudged the true meaning of it. "There you are, my friend," he said, "that's exactly how you're going to be. Four thousand, four hundred and fifty American dollars, and to show you that I am your friend, I'll throw in a bonus. I will give it a round five thousand pesos, and The Indian, however, had not thought a moment of four thousand pesos. Such an amount of money had no meaning to him. He had been interested solely in the ability of Mr. Winthrop to write rapidly. "So, what do you say now? Is it a yes or is it? Say yes and you'll get your share this very minute." "As I have explained before, my little boy, the price is fifteen pesos each." "But, my good man," Mr. Winthrop said to the poor Indian in utter despair. "Where have you been, on the road all this time? You are still at the same price as before." "Yes, I know that, *jefecito*, my little," the Indian answered, entirely unconcerned. "It must be the same price because I cannot make any other. Besides, *senor*, there is still another thing which perhaps you don't know well. You see, my good lordy and caballero, I have to make these *canastitas* my own way and with my song in them and with bits of my soul woven into them. If I had to make them in many numbers there would no longer be my soul in each, or my songs. Each would look exactly like the other and such a thing would slowly eat up my heart. Each has to be another song which I hear in the morning when the sun rises and when the birds begin to chirp and the butterflies come and sit down on my baskets so that I may see a new beauty, because, you see, the butterflies like my baskets and the pretty colors on them, that's why they come and sit down, and I can make my *canastitas* after them. And now, *senor jefecito*, if you will kindly excuse me, I have wasted much time already, although it was a pleasure and a great honor to hear the talk of such a distinguished caballero like you. But I'm afraid I've to attend to my work now, for day after tomorrow is market day in town and I have to take my baskets there. Thank you, *senor*, for your visit."

And in this way was New York spared a deluge of these exquisite pieces of Indian handiwork. And thus it was that American garbage cans escaped being filled with torn and crumpled little canastitas into which an Indian had woven his unsung songs.

Translated into English by

ESPERANZA LOPEZ MATEOS

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