

A LITERARY MAGAZINE OF CALIFORNIA

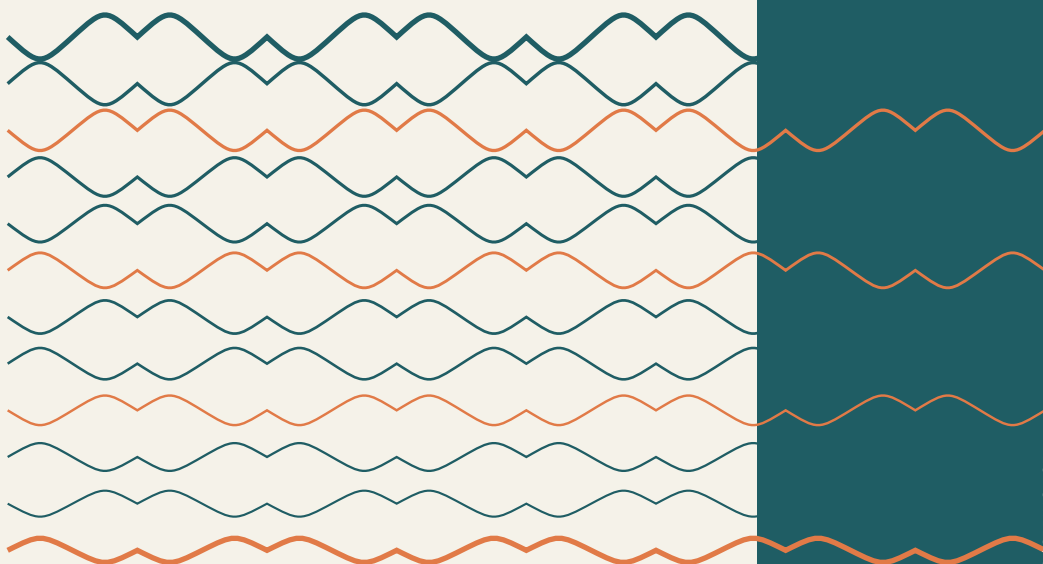
COAST LINES

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ISSUE 4

A Literary Magazine of California

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EDITED BY

Mel Weisburd

A CLEAN READING EDITION

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Coastlines, 1753 Virginia Rd., Los Angeles 19, California

*The End of Summer**Chester Aaron*

"Die!" Joey said, "I shot you, damn it!"

Roman was about to protest but then conceded. He grabbed his stomach, groaned, doubled over, and pitched forward, tumbling and sliding down the side of the bank until he reached the edge of the Connequenessing Creek. He lay there, arms and legs stiff, in as true a picture of death as he could present.

From the top of the bank Joey gazed down with proud contempt at the body. Then he watched the bushes near the body, hoping other members of the victim's gang might expose themselves. But no one appeared. Joey sneered. He stuck his cap-pistol inside his belt and tried hard to think of how he might resurrect Roman so he could shoot him again. But that would betray all this as being part of a game. Joey didn't want that betrayed yet.

If Kearney or Jughead or some of the other kids would only happen along now. But they wouldn't. They were home for supper. Joey fingered his gun, wanting to shoot again, to kill someone again. He wanted to see the body topple over the edge of the bank and slide down to the creek. But Roman lay where he had fallen, and he wouldn't move, Joey knew, until ordered. "Get up," Joey shouted. Roman got up and started climbing the bank. Joey pulled his pistol from his belt and readied it, intending to fire the moment Roman's head appeared above the top of the bank.

Roman slid back once or twice as he climbed and once he yelled that he was stopping to catch his breath. All the while Joey waited, his pistol drawn but held at his side. His chest ached when he breathed now and his heart seemed to pound in his finger-tips. He forgot the summer heat and the clammy air that had kept his clothes glued to his body all day. He ignored the gnats and flies, risen so early from the marshes, buzzing about his ears. This was real. This was not play. Roman was not a boy in jeans from Pennsylvania, he was a German soldier. Joey was not an eleven year old boy, he was a man, an American soldier. Joey crouched.

Over near the new viaduct a train hooted, twice: the 4:00 express to Pittsburgh. Joey's legs quivered. Pretty soon the whistle... there it was, the whistle at the mines. The day shifts would be quitting now. Joey groaned. One more shot, that was all he wanted, one more shot before the day ended and he had to go home. He slowly raised his pistol as he heard Roman grunting. Trigger-finger taut, Joey knew now how his father had felt when he'd sneaked up on the German sentry, a story his father had told again last night on Eddy Fenton's porch. Joey thought of his father coming home from the mines and he saw himself, after dinner tonight, on Eddy Fenton's porch, with his father and all the grown-ups, describing his killing. Then, with his legs seeming to melt from under him, Joey realized how ludicrous all this was. He wasn't a soldier, he wasn't a man, he was a boy pretending to be a man. He sighed and his body relaxed. When Roman's head appeared above the top of the bank, Joey, his pistol hanging loosely from his fingers, turned and walked away. "I gotta go home," he said. "It's supper-time."

patient explorer making his way through a ate ming jungle tad the fiot likey

Fenton's store Joey sat on a milk-case, wondering which of the boys would be the

the sky. The weather-man had been predicting rain for three days now. If it rained today it would cool things off, and th~re wouldn't be so many flies.

With his legs out, his feet braced against a porch-post, Joey watched two flies settle slowly, sluggishly, brazenly, onto his sticky jeans. He cupped his fingers and started to raise his hands, to catch the flies, but the sweat that was sealed inside his armpit threatened to overflow if the armpit opened. He lowered his hand onto his chest, feeling the T-shirt clammy under his fingers. He leaned back against the front of the store and his eyes traveled the route they'd become accustomed to travelling the

macadam road in front of the store to the railroad ,a hundred yards away, beyond that to the reservoir, and beyond the reservoir to the viaduct.

concrete and the viaduct had been opened to traffic. Now, through the almost pal-neelee and the viaduct had been It was two weeks exactly since the final wooden forms had been removed from the

pable heat, the concrete still looked new, the way the skin had looked on his arm when the cast had been removed late in August. Joey grinned as he thought about the arm. He'd broken it one evening in June, three days before summer vacation had started, when he and Roman were sword-fighting with baseball bats. He had been sure his vacation would be ruined but it hadn't been.

He'd started going swimming a week after school had ended. He'd had to hold the cast above the water, and he'd had to swim on his side all the time, and, after they'd finished making their tin canoes, he'd always had to be careful to keep the cast out of the water when his canoe capsized, but he had managed, and he had loved it. In the eyes of the other kids the large white cast, and then his defiance of the doctor's orders, gave Joey a unique respect and glamour he'd never had before. Exploiting his role Joey took to wearing a black sling, and then, every night, when he and the other kids raided the yards of the company that was constructing the viaduct, he replaced the black sling with a full length black sleeve he'd cut from one of his father's sweaters. That, his father told him, was how they had done things in combat. Joey, because he was now the leader as well as because he could not carry anything, won the role of the scout.

Bent low, treading carefully, Joey led his gang in and out of the company's yards without once getting caught. While the company's guards played poker in their shanty Joey's gang loaded gunny sacks with nails and hammers and saws and lumber. They made stretchers of the lumber on which they carried enough tin and tarpaper and tar to build several cabins in the woods during the summer and several fleets of canoes. Leading his men out of the yards, Joey's head swam with visions of himself as a wounded rifleman leading his patrol through a dark and alien countryside seething with bloodthirsty enemies. It had been a glorious summer.

But then, late in August, three weeks ago, Joey's cast had been removed. The night patrols lost their lure for him. Two weeks ago, when the construction company had packed its equipment and had moved away to its next job, Joey had been glad. Free of the need to lead the gang he could sit on the porch with the grown-ups and listen to their stories. As each man told his story, whether it took place in the jungles or in the Alps, Joey became that man. In the last few days, when the kids asked him to come play in the woods he'd always managed to find an excuse to stay at the store, because during the day the men who worked the night-shifts came to gossip and reminisce.

"Hi, Joey."

Joey turned his head. Roman had come around the side of the store and onto the porch. Joey was peeved that he'd permitted himself to be taken so unawares. "Hi," he replied.

Roman sat on the porch and leaned back against one of the posts, his legs stretched out before him. His sneakers, worn through at the toes and heels, were bound about the arches with black friction-tape. Though only twelve years old his body was already moulded with the firm muscular slabs of a mature athlete. It was burned a dark mahogany by the summer sun. "School," Roman said, "in two days."

"Three," Joey said, "counting today." Neither of them said anything for a while. They wiped their ribs free of sweat, they shielded their eyes, and they groaned. "Three years," Joey said, "in three years I'll be fourteen. My old man's gonna let me quit school. I'm gonna work. Maybe in the mines with him, maybe construction work. Then, when I get eighteen I'll enlist."

"Whatta you wanta go to work so soon for?" Roman asked, his eyes on the new viaduct.

"It'll make time go faster. I wanta enlist, then. .."

"Whatta you wanta make time go faster for?"

"Ah, I'm sicka pretending things. I wanta grow up. I wanta be a man. Everything's real then, you don't have to pretend. I don't wanta play at bein a soldier, I wanta be one, for Chrissake."

"Bah, my old man's forty somethin and he says he wishes he was twelve like me. You get in the army you'll be wishin you was back here on the porch, or swimmin, or pickin berries."

"Not me!" Joey thundered. "Not ine, by God. If God came down here and stood right there on the steps and He said to me, 'Joey, whatta, you want most?', you know what I'd say? I'd say I wanta be grown up, right now. Today. Right this Goddamn minute."

Roman waved his hand at Joey in a signal of disgust. "You're nuts."

Joey didn't reply. Impressed by his own words he had started day-dreaming again, wondering how it must feel to be a man, to live your own life, to not have to answer to anyone, to enlist in the army if you want to, to take a job in California if you want to . . .

He watched a swirl of dust rise from the road and charge the porch. As it gained momentum both he and Roman closed their eyes against its impact but before it reached them it tripped over one of the steps and collapsed. The breeze that had hurried it came on, cool, with a mist of dust and a scent of rain. The breeze faded and the heat, like a bag filled with a million buzzing flies, closed over them.

Roman reached into the back pocket of his jeans and pulled out a faded ballcap. He put the cap on his head and pulled the peak low over his eyes and he squinted out at the viaduct as if somewhere out there stood a pitcher winding up to throw a fast curve.

"Here comes Jughead," Roman said, nodding toward the road. "He gets any fatter they're gonna can him and sell him for lard." Roman chuckled at his own humor. Jughead, wearing a dirty sweatshirt with the sleeves torn off at the armpits, came up the steps. The flesh on his arms flabbed back and forth as he moved. "Jughead,"

Roman said, chuckling again, "you know what Joey just said? He said you get any fatter they're gonna can you and sell you for lard."

Jughead whirled and grunted and slapped Joey on the stomach and stepped back,

Joey rolled away and stood up. He thumbed Roman on the head and said softly, "You said that, not me.

"Aw," Roman said, rubbing his head, "can't you take a joke? What's eatin you, anyway? You've been runnin around like you got a fart crossways ever since you got that cast off."

Jughead, satisfied, sat back on the porch. All three boys, silent now, gazed in the direction of the viaduct. A fat tear of sweat slipped out from under Roman's arm and trickled down across his ribs. A fly settled at the shore of the trickle and Roman reached around to pick it off and hurl it onto the porch. It bounced, dead.

Joey reached over and lifted the fly. He held it in the palm of his hand. He wondered for a moment how old the fly was and if it too had wanted to grow up. For a moment there was a quick heavy pain in his chest. As he looked longer at the fly he felt an abrupt revulsion from it. He tossed it away, making a face and shivering. Roman laughed. "Ugly little bastards, aint they?"

"Here comes Kearney," Jughead said.

Kearney came up the steps, carrying a long lean willow switch. He wore nothing but a pair of jeans, the pockets of which were filled with tiny green crabapples. Before greeting the other boys he impaled an apple onto the tip of his switch and whipped it through the air. The apple sailed high and disappeared. Having displayed his prowess, Kearney sat beside Jughead. "It's gonna storm," he said. "The old man said you can pick the flies right offa the wall in the barn. That's a sure sign of rain."

"Maybe it'll cool things off," said Roman. "And talkin about coolin things off, let's go swimmin."

"I'm game," Kearney said. "Joey?"

Joey nodded. "O.K." Then, anxious to break free of the mood he had been falling into, he jumped up, stomping his feet, as if such vigorous action by some part of his body might infect his mind. "Let's go," he said, "let's go."

Jughead said nothing. Joey punched him on the arm. "What say, Jughead?"

"I don't know," Jughead said, looking at the sky. "It's gonna storm. Anyway, I don't like swimmin in the creek anymore. There's glass and tin and stuff from the viaduct. It aint safe."

Whooping and laughing, Roman and Kearney grabbed Jughead's feet and spun him

as they pulled him, teet hirst, off the porch. He landed in the dirt but dragged the other two with him, down on top of him. Joey stood there, watching them wrestle. He wanted to scorn their play but he also wanted to join them. He started to walk away and then, with a whistle and a shout he took a run, grabbed a porch-post, swung around it, sailed through the air and landed on top of the others. He sat there, bouncing and shouting. Then they all got up, sweating and streaked with dust. They punched and chased one another down the steps and along the road toward the Connequenessing Creek. Once they reached the creek they walked upstream, toward the spot in which the boys from their town had been swimming for three generations.

When they came in sight of the willow trees that marked the swimming hole they

all started running and undressing at the same time. Cheering, they dove, one on the heels of the other, into the brown water.

After they ducked one another they started playing water-tag. Joey, trying hard to have the fun the others were having, shouted louder than any of them, but his interest lagged. He paddled beneath the drooping willow branches. The others, knowing what he intended doing, followed him. Hidden there under the boughs were the canoes they and other boys had made from tin and tar they'd stolen from the construction company. Each of them found his own boat and pushed it out into the middle of the creek. Joey and Roman and Kearney raced for the lead, all three of them using their hands as paddles. Jughead reluctantly paddled after them.

Shortly after they started out it began to rain. The first drops fell hard and far apart, then, abruptly, it was no mere scattering of drops but a steady drumming down-pour.

Shouting and laughing, the boys continued downstream. Jughead, infected by their excitement, caught up and exchanged war-cries with them. They raced one another with the current and then against it, they had contests to see who could hold their boats crosswise to the current for the longest time, they tried to stand erect without capsizing, and they picked sides and had tipping-battles. The breeze, fast and cool at first, became a cold wind that swept the rain across the surface of the creek. The boys kneeled or stood in their boats, laughing into the wind and swinging at the rain with their fists.

"Hey, Joey," Roman shouted, using his cupped hands as a megaphone, "that's where you shot me." He pointed to his right, to the top of the bank thirty feet above the water. He pointed to the shore, where the creek met the bank. "That's where I died." He laughed, then the sounds of his voice were cut off by the wind. Joey, standing in his boat, balancing himself, looked up. From here, in the water, the bank looked higher and steeper than it had from the top. He was about to suggest they turn around and go back when Jughead rammed him. His canoe rolled over, and as he went under he heard all the others laughing.

It took him about five minutes to get his boat out of the water and set on top. It took him but a minute to slide over the edge like an eel and into the boat. By now the other boys were out of sight. He paddled furiously after them, thinking, as he came around each bend, that they would be there before him. But they weren't. He noticed, with a faint apprehension, that the banks were rising higher and steeper as he proceeded. He began to wonder if perhaps the other boys hadn't climbed the banks and hidden from him. He was about to turn back when, coming about another bend, he saw the new viaduct up in the air above the creek, spreading across the creek and the banks like the belly of some terrible monster. And there, directly ahead, were the other boys, sitting their boats crosswise to the current. They had gathered close against one another. In spite of their efforts to move back upstream they were drifting slowly toward the round concrete pilings that came down from the belly of the viaduct like enormous legs.

Joey caught up with them. He reached out and held onto the edge of Roman's boat. Roman was holding onto Kearney's. Bowed against the rain and the cold wind the boys sat in their boats and shivered. For the first time a blast of thunder shook the earth and sent its tremors up through the water. Their boats rocked wildly. A bolt of lightning slashed across the small bit of sky they could see, turning everyone's skin to blue and red.

"We gotta go back," Jughead said. "I'm cold. The cops see us naked down here under the viaduct they'll run us in."

"Yeah," Kearney said. "I'm cold, too. Let's go back."

"We can't go back," Joey said. "The current's too strong."

"We gotta do somethin'," Jughead said. "Our clothes is back there."

"Let's go on down," Roman said, "past the viaduct, to where the banks are low. We can crawl out there and walk back

"Naked?" Jughead said. "The people in the cars can see us. The cops ..."

Joey watched their panic like a bemused father. He looked up to the top of the banks, about fifty feet above. The viaduct was another fifty feet above the banks.

"I'm goin down," Kearney said, his voice shrill. "I'm cold. It might rain all day and we'll never row back." Kearney pushed Roman's hand off his boat and started downstream. Jughead and Roman turned to follow him.

"What a bunch of babies," Joey sneered. "Afraid of a little rain. If you're cold, come in the water. It's warmer in there." And without another word he dove out of the boat and into the water. Roman seemed to debate, but not for long. With an ease born of a summer's practice he slid over the edge of his boat into the water. "It's

Kearney, his body trembling, his lips blue with cold, looked uncertainly at Jughead, who, as he sat in his own boat, kept one foot in Roman's boat and one in Joey's, to keep them from drifting away. "Go ahead," Jughead said, "I'll hold your boat."

Kearney paddled up to Jughead, who, by now, was against one of the pilings and was being held there by the push of the current. Kearney let Jughead catch the edge of his boat and then, with a grunt, he flopped out of the boat and into the water.

The wind had dropped and the rain was a slow but steady drizzle. Through the rain the banks loomed smooth and glassy.

"Don't let down here," Jughead warned.

Joey laughed at his childish caution. He let his feet down and stood there, the water to his chest. He waved his arms about, taunting Jughead.

"Watch," Roman said, "watch me, I'm drownin." His white teeth gleamed in his tanned face as his words came out with his laughter. He flailed both arms in the water and, rolling his eyes and holding both arms over his head, he lifted his body out of the water to his hips and let himself sink straight down. All the others laughed and Joey started to dive down to do a hand-stand when Roman's head shot above the surface. His mouth was twisted and he made a strange groaning sound. The other boys burst into appreciative laughter.

"I cut my foot," Roman said. They laughed louder. Joey looked to see if Jughead were angry, but he was laughing too. *"I mean it," Roman said. "I did."*

They all laughed again and splashed him with water, and Joey did dive under. He stood on his hands, kicking his feet above the water, for several seconds. When he came up Roman was pulling himself over the edge of Kearney's boat.

"Hey," Kearney shouted, "get in your own damn boat." He grabbed the edge and pulled and it rolled over immediately and sank. Roman reached out, pulled Joey's boat loose from Jughead's foot, and drew himself over the edge.

"Not mine," Joey said, starting for Roman. But he stopped. Roman was in the boat. His foot extended over the edge, tilted up. It looked as if some underwater beast had chewed away the entire heel of his right foot. Blood was running down the calf of his leg and down along the side of the boat, spreading a red cloud over the water.

For one moment the boys stared at Roman's foot. Then Kearney cried out, "Let's go home!"

the edge and the boat turned over on top of him. As he swam out from under it his body collided with Jughead's boat. The boat tilted. Water rushed in over the rear and it settled slowly to the bottom, with Jughead still in it, standing stiffly erect, the water to his neck, his arms over the water like wings. "Don't walk across the bottom," he shouted.

Both Joey and Kearney, nearby, were treading water, keeping Roman's boat afloat by balancing it from opposite sides. But the current was dragging it slowly around the piling now. Roman seemed unaware of this. He was holding his heel and squeezing it with both hands, as if the pressure might stop the blood, but the blood was spurting out between his fingers and running down his arms, fading from bright red to dim pink as it was washed by the rain.

"We gotta get him up on the viaduct," Joey said. He let his feet down. "Come on," he said to Kearney. Kearney let his feet down, slowly. Joey turned his head. "Jug head!" But Jughead, mumbling, was gazing up toward the viaduct. Joey shouted again, "Jughead!" This time Jughead obeyed. He took a deep breath, let his body rise up out of his boat, and he swam to them. Then, his lips tight, he closed his eyes and let his feet down. When nothing happened, he sighed. "We gotta carry him," Joey said. Jughead opened his eyes and started to protest but before he got very far Joey and Kearney grabbed his hands. Intertwining their fingers the three boys made a seat for Roman, who eased himself out of the boat, his bleeding foot held stiffly above the water. As they carried him he continued staring down at his foot and at the blood flowing out of his heel and down the back of his leg. Out of the deep water the boys, still holding Roman, balanced themselves in the narrow shelf of ankle-deep muck where the bank met the water.

"Let's go," Joey said, with a thrill he had never known before, not even this summer.

They started up the bank, carrying Roman, but they took no more than a half dozen steps before they slid back again. "We better put you down, Rome," Joey said. Roman said nothing as they deposited him but he stood with one foot in the muck and the other foot lifted above the water, staring at the blood. "Let's go," Joey said, leading the way.

He dug handholds and footholds with his right hand as he climbed. Roman followed Joey, holding onto his left hand and onto Kearney's, directly behind him, Jughead, last in line, tried his best to keep Kearney from sliding back. "I knew we shouldn'ta gone in the water down here," Jughead wailed.

"Come on," Kearney said, giving him an extra pull. As he did his own feet slipped. Kearney, without thinking, grabbed Roman's leg, and all four boys came sliding down the bank to the edge of the creek.

They lay there in the muck and the water. Then Roman stood up, his one foot held above the water. A gray slime covered all of his foot except the heel, which was a bright glistening crimson. He would have fallen had Joey not caught him and held

him erect. Roman waited and the other boys, saying nothing, got up. They started climbing again.

The rain had washed away all the evidence of their first two climbs so Joey had to dig new handholds and footholds. As he climbed he recalled the story his father had told about landing on D-day, in Normandy, and how they had had to scale the cliffs to get the German guns. Wait, wait until tonight, when Joey would tell this story.

Grunting, pushing, tugging, they succeeded in climbing fifteen or twenty feet, when, with a shrill cry, Jughead's feet slid in the blood-smeared clay beneath him, and all four boys came sliding down the bank. They lay at the edge of the water, in the muck silent, watching Roman's foot. He was holding it above the water but, as they watched, he seemed to lose control of it. It fell slowly and then dropped without a splash into the water. A red cloud appeared immediately above the foot and encircled Roman's leg. For the first time Joey felt a pang of fear, almost of panic.

Kearney stood up. "Let's yell," he said. "Maybe someone'll hear us." He yelled, weakly. Joey yelled, louder. Then Jughead and Joey and Kearney yelled and whistled together and jumped and waved their arms. When it became apparent that no one would hear their shouts Roman said, quietly, "Let's try the bank again. I don't feel good."

They tried, again and again, but each time they slid back down the clay that now had a faint pink tone to its gray. Finally, they lay at the edge of the water, panting. Jughead sat up and drew his knees together and lowered his head in his arms and started weeping.

"I'll try it alone," Joey said. He got no more than ten feet before he came sliding back. With a curse he tried it again and for a while it seemed he might make it. He got to within ten or fifteen feet of the top, far beyond the point any of them had gone, when, with a moan, he came sliding back. The momentum of his slide carried him out into the water. He swam and crawled to where the others lay, his body spotted with clay. He stood up, his arms hugging his waist, trembling. He gazed down the stream and up the stream and then up at the viaduct. The rain had thinned to a barely perceptible drizzle and the sky above the viaduct was beginning to clear. Joey sank to his knees and sobbed, "Rome, Rome."

With a wild shriek Roman leaped up and charged the bank. Moving with the grace of a wounded deer he went up the bank, bounding from one point to another, sliding back and catching himself and then charging on, leaving bright little pools of blood on the clay wherever his foot had been. Halfway up the bank he stopped moving forward and stayed in one spot, his legs pumping. They slowed and then stopped. He looked down at the boys and gave a faint cry. His arms moved in what appeared to Joey to be a wave. Joey saw his outstretched arms and lithe body balanced there on the hillside. Then, like a wounded deer, he went to his knees, toppled over, and came sliding down the bank. Joey watched him coming. His arms and legs flopped and he rolled over twice. He shot past them and went out into the water. Joey rose and waded out after him, followed by Kearney. With their hands under his arms they brought him back. They lay him on the shelf of muck at the edge of the water.

"I'll go get someone," Joey said. He moved out into the water and started downstream, swimming with a slow tired stroke. Kearney and Jughead stayed behind. Joey looked over his shoulder once, and saw them sitting there, beside Roman, watching him. When he looked back again they were out of sight, behind one of the concrete pilings.

An hour later, by means of ropes thrown down from the rails of the viaduct, Roman's body was drawn up from the creek.

The police kept the cars moving on the viaduct but there was a crowd of people gathered at the rails. Down below, in the creek, Joey and Kearney and Jughead, wearing swimming trunks Joey had brought back with him, treaded water. Several men were in the water with the boys. Joey watched Roman's body rise, gray now against the sunny blue sky.

Roman was buried three days later, on Monday, the first day of school. Joey and Jughead and Kearney were excused from classes so they could be pall-bearers. On Tuesday they had to go to school.

Tuesday night, after supper, Joey and Jughead and Kearney and several other boys went to Eddy Fenton's store. They and the miners and Eddy Fenton all sat on the porch, staring, silently, out across the macadam road and the railroad tracks and the reservoir to the viaduct, its arches silver in the red September dusk. Joey sat a few feet from his father. He kept shaking his head. Summer was over; school, autumn, had begun. Winter was a month, two, three months away. Oh, if summer were just beginning again, if he and Roman were sword-fighting again, if ... but summer was over. The great red sun dropped behind the viaduct and the hills as if it could never rise again . . . never, never .

I

Six Poems

Vahan K. Gregory

Eagle

Aquila Chrysaethus

He is a symbol; is always regal:
His talented flight can stun a valley.
He has never felt silly; if his eyes
Make a mistake they don't apologize.

What is the core of his masculine pride
As it curls thru his claws on a crag!
(if it happens he is a girl it's no shame)
He can jump over the mountain. Does he brag?

When his underwear itches he scratches.
If his wife takes off with a flier from Butte,
He does not care what his cute pals will guess.
He is autonomous; boss in his business.

Shrewdly adapted both for pajamas
And pulling holdups, his beautiful suits
Are all homemade. Wears boots but is barefoot.
Magnificent even when under arrest.

On tons of altitude lies his address.
He is above his crude society
And it isn't because he's conceited:
Has great vision - & seven foot wingspread.

His furious face would crack if he laughed;
Has serious taste, likes the noble life:
Swallows it whole and when he is finished
He gets his picture published on flags.

VAHAN K. GREGORY 13*Sunday: Plaza De Toros**for Jerry Boyd, Matador*

Crowded trip to Tijuana is wadded
 With pinnacle precious peril and joy.
 My nerves ride my arteries bareback
 I wonder will sun or the wind win my name.

As I and the arena become man and wife,
 A door opens and death taunts my vanity.
 Fear flies low, drops a bomb on my brain.
 My courage strikes a light and starts over.

The Symbol struts forward, stops, and we stare
 Thru each other's windows. I cultivate
 My position, make my cape his purpose,
 Feed his terrible desire with myself.

My manhood becomes directly involved

With his intricate, half-ton wish to live.
 His house is horror, his horns drip disaster.
 He snorts, advertising handmade ghosts.

My secret child runs home to mother.
 My neophyte teet complain, need to take wing.
 Torito bows, lets slip the dogs of war.
 My history tears thru my eyes, and smiles.
 /

*Elegy: Soldier**(Gonokorrhea)*

Light years have sailed to shade since he played
 Marbles and filled his Oedipal strait.
 His planet faded to another space
 And left him behind with his thumb out.

When his calendar's war dropped into his ears,
 His birthday propped his name on the line
 Which plundered his sunburned valley of pearls
 Before he could wonder why he saw fear

In the reach of sycamore for the sky.
Found his denominator was this cliché:
Coffins draped with responsible flags
Come in boxcars stuck with tags.

Perhaps it was he lost his head at Seoul
And ran around it for twenty seconds,
Blood from the gusher of his neck playing pool
In the hole where his face sat blinking its eyes.

His picture on a mantel is dressed for battle,
Smiling, cocky, held up by his gun.
But few saw him stacked on a ramp at the post office
Mailed back home in his Christmas-colored package.

Ob

Thronging alone down trail thru the fears
Of last winter's lecherous New Year's Eve
My eyes on the prow for a permanent home
Were blowing kisses in constellations

When they found themselves on a carousel
In the hills of a face's fine horizon
Peering over beer at a clever party
Sampling its grief with an auld lang syne.

We leaned together & our smiles got married,
And I laid out my luck in a hero's grave
For she had come like a plane from Chicago,
Taking a train back with her tomorrow.

Dove in the pool of her charm like a suicide,
Mellowed my name at her personal flame;
Her wide-eyed garage acknowledged that my
Red-headed longing lodged a legal claim

To the window light of her singular fire:
Wired her strange head briefly to mine,
Made flights of gracious vowels rise
Behind the frenzied clouds of our eyes.

VAHAN K. GREGORY 15

Ella Mae: toujours gay

Ella discovered this earth to be sour;
 Could locate no pit to pot her love.
 Changed her hills, parted her trees,
 Dripped like a terrible tear down Time

And everything continued going wrong.

Fear is here she chiselled on tables,
 Saw herself lying in bars while passing;
 Drew graves on walls, got lost in speakers,
 Made it with vipers (a rotten drag) .

And things got worse, as they always had.

So shovelled ashes over her tomb,
 Unable to pile the good acorns on it;
 Gave up trying, grew fangs on her sex:
 Now terrible Ella is wonderful Mike.

Whore

The world is her oyster.
 Her circle is social, her kingdom is come.
 She outlines her tale, then presents her case
 In bed; swallows his pride in the end.

Her booth is bizarre, unusually roomy,
 Set on a hill out of sight of the sun.
 It is used as a glove for unused love,
 A grave for the kids that always die trying,
 And more often than not it shows in her eyes.

As she takes it into her head to make money,
 Motto she loves by is business is business.

*Reactivated Man**Curtis Zahn*

For the duration of that hushed, hesitant, ominous night they kept taking it apart and putting it back together again. A shy moon came and went undramatized into its sterile, white stage; the surf called to us monotonously above the murmuring of

parts fell coarsely, hugely upon the yellow mud walls as the Doctors worked-I wondered, even in my delirium, that there had been so much that was wrong. And I remember the voice of Alice Greene, everywhere in the low, taut room; now coming bubbly and soaped from the floor, then swooping down to brush the perspiring brow with a swallow's kiss. Often the canaie hesitated and died as she passed close to steal its air, and the psychiatrists permitted themselves to fix each other with feverish glances...

"J.E.-I think we've got it this time, J.E."

"Yes, of course."

"Really I do. I really do think we have it."

None of these men trafficked in semantics. Like birds of the open fields they shrank from language as though it were built upon the slippery dread of refrigerated lard, a thing to be avoided at all costs, including the present. For theirs was a science devoid of sociology; they communicated in the odd, clinical language of the day, and their spokesman- Protessor Girlslain swung his Phi Beta Kappa key in ominous, counter-clockwise circles while he dwelt among statistics, chemistry, physics. The "it" referred to was, of course, the suspected source of my ailment-the conscience. I had agreed to reward them exorbitantly if the thing could be removed. The operation was then illegal but we had arranged by prior agreement to meet in the old adobe thirty miles from town--a property run by a quiet old woman who'd been an anthologist and was no longer given to unlicensed conversation. She understood perfectly my need, and volunteered that she also would have undergone a similar operation were she younger.

"It is late now, too late. Besides, the thing really died in forty-two the day my husband sold our thirty-eight Studebaker and reported for induction."

"He was killed in the war?" My voice rode the night on the thin treacherous strings of decaying guitars. It was the apology of all of us that live for those who died. It played first violin for the Doctors; for men who lived by severing people's guilts and using the money to build swimming pools for their children's children.

"He was in the war killed. I held his coat for him. I urged him out of it and he never came to occupy it afterwards."

"Oh, crap," Alice Greene said.

"Forget the war," Girlslain said, "it's all over. Forget the war," he said.

There were these words as I was wheeled through the narrow, low, leaning doorway and past the mud walls which flickered yellowly as she stood to one side, smiling

down, coming at me in a voice whose rasping tones oddly took the visual form of casket hinges.

* * *

"I believe that it can be done without surgery." Professor Girlslain was insisting, "I confidently expect to rationalize the patient into amorality--a kind of sociological oblivion--"

"Oh, Doctor!" Alice Greene seemed to shrink the room with simulated admiration.

"Afterwards I-or rather, we shall apply the moral justification." He affixed the widow Greene with a conditioned smile which, I felt, caused us all to feel unclean. "When the patient leaves this room he shall be capable of anything. I include murder in my boast."

The surf seemed to listen. Near the window, a mouse bolted from its hiding place just as an owl fell from the rafters, thus achieving extinction. A coyote cast its peculiar voice upon the airwaves and the world seemed to reach for the gun at its side.

"Murder?" Alice Greene asked.

"Murder!"

"Murder." I thumbed the expression thoughtfully and found myself adding, in a voice borrowed from the widow, "Oh. Doctor- "

"It is really exactly nothing, really." Girlslain obviously was a man long bored with public response. "Of course " he focused his eyes for the simulation of doubt, "Of course, the patient may not wish to go this far. Perhaps he would be content with arson. Burglary--"

I said nothing. One does not go to the analyst with preconceived notions. One does not go to be cured of a headache, for one is apt to discover that there had been no head with which to ache. Rather, one presupposes the problem, one enters the church with hat clasped to the buttocks and is willing to light the candle, or click the heel, or recall, perhaps, his unscheduled, concealed thoughts when, as a boy, he entered the Men's Restroom in the town square.

"Have you got the money?"

No, I had remembered to forget the money.

"One does not forget." Girlslain recited the information with droll omnipotence, but I caught the flash of the gold key as it twirled violently.

Doctor Sleeve repeated the phrase. The old woman lit another candle. In the yellow light the other Doctor--his last name I never knew, a man they referred to as "Norm"--apparently was playing with some object that resembled a yo-yo. And now Alice Greene warmed the motors of her altruism. She assured them that I had twenty thousand dollars in the banks. I had come to them of my own accord and was willing to pay. Above all, I was a creature of utmost integrity; my regard for the welfare of others was legend; I could not kill moths. I gave half my income to the teeding of European refugees; I donated my services to a Neighborhood House in a slum area. Certainly they would get their money. She herself would see to it.

"And how do we know that we can trust you?"

"I don't know that you can, gentlemen."

The room suddenly beat against my ears with a crazy laughter which contaminated first Doctor Sleeve, then Girlslain and finally all of us. And the candles flickered while we shook and shouted. And an owl bounded clumsily from the rafters and

two mice darted from the couch, paused mid-floor, then floated across the stones to become lost in the debris that choked the fireplace. From somewhere I thought I detected the tune of some Brahms concerto, played upon the harmonica and of course badly. But now the surf came to us suddenly angry, reminding us of our task; confessing in its tortured tumbling that aggressions had been stored up for some time.

"Why do you ask us to perform the operation?"

An odd tone had caught the emergency. I said, "because I loathe high income taxes."

They passed this around among themselves. "Go ahead, then, have your little joke. You are the one who pays. Then have your little joke."

"The money is used for armaments. Armaments will be used for war. War will destroy me."

Alice Greene suddenly found herself unable to avoid greatness. "He is not a masochist. He doesn't like paying taxes for this end."

The Doctor called Norm stopped his yo-yo in mid air. "And the operation_ " slowly the toy began to move downward.

"The operation will enable the patient to pay his taxes without the excruciating pain common to all over-active consciences." Alice suddenly spanked the walls with laughter. "In short, he wishes to achieve amorality."

* *

And so we had ridden bicycles from different environs to this sacrificed farm with its sad, tall, sterile blue eucalyptus trees. Each of us in his particular route must have passed vinestrangled fences that night, and sent small animals from our wheels, and

arrive. A maroon Rolls Royce had passed me about half-way and I wondered if the elderly lady in the rear had had her conscience removed. The chauffeur had saluted; he had used a kind, protected smile, and the thought occurred that this was an odd outcome nowadays for one who had graduated from Harvard.

"Miss Greene--will you bring me the patient's behavior pattern ..."

They were making it official. They would like to think that their interest in the girl was absurdly conditioned. They were unaware that she wrote Confession Stories and interviewed the celluloid great with astounding financial success; that she earned more money writing verbosely than did they by their listening to the confessions of patients. For they knew only that she was designed along the graceful principle that femininity goes out here, and retires there; they agreed silently unto themselves that when she walked, everything about her moved with a glad rhythm. It was a biological

"He has no pattern, Doctor."

The information fell hard upon the ears. I began a laugh, only to realize that my sense of humor had been clamped back so that it overlapped the temper.

"He had a pattern in 1945."

"It was removed, June, forty-six"

"The fools didn't they replace it with anything?"

Alice laughed. "This man is a stylist. He invents his pattern after the fact."

They stood about, swinging their keys and storing up resentments. The old lady, bored and impatient, seized a broom and began sweeping figurative owls out the door. I lay upon the couch under the weird umbrella of triumph while Girlslain stared at my sense of humor, now in a jar of alcohol on the mantle, and marvelled silently at its resemblance to the Biological Urge which had been carelessly left exposed. There'd seemed no reason to remove this so long as they were to sever the conscience anyway. Furthermore, there existed a shortage of Nylon safety pins this, and the fact that Sleeve had neglected to sterilize his textbooks.

"Hydrometre working properly?"

"Properly, Doctor."

"And the spark plugs?"

"Filthy. Absolutely."

With relief I began to understand that they were discussing Girlslain's car while they worked; it provided something to keep the interest alive, it broke the monotony. Sleeve reached for his number seven knife and admitted that he was interested in the new Russian automobile. The other Doctor believed that power steering sounded exciting...

Still, Girlslain hesitated. He moved slowly to the window which clung to its glass, and he watched the pounding sea a quarter mile away across windswept dunes, and though it was night and the moon brilliant among occasional white clouds, he commented that the fishing boats seemed unusually close to shore. Then, sliding his Phi Beta Kappa key into a rear pocket--presumably so that it would be unable to see what he was about to do he turned on me with surprising vigor.

"Why did you quit a job that paid four hundred a month?"

"It was war work."

"Ha!"

"He feels that unless everyone refuses to participate in war--" The words were from widow Greene again, riding her greatness in the dark, acting as my interpreter.

"Ha!" Girlslain had raised a sly hand. "But everybody doesn't refuse. Hand me the torch, Miss Greene."

* * *

One seems to move horizontally into and out of worlds that ignore each other; time delicately turns, and begins to feel its way backwards into memory. And the listener is a parade standing still while archeology marches past, throwing over its shoulder the exoskeletons of events that were good, evil, guilty, frightened, shameful, triumphant. The eye informs on the reclamatory gland, and the reclamatory suggests that one may smoke a cigarette, even while the lungs may be temporarily in a glass case.

One is embarrassed riding the couch--in this instance an old horsehair with enormous black buttons, some of them chewed by mice; embarrassed at idleness while three

men and a nurse and a girl must work at renovating. There is the suspicion that the thought must cross these minds:

"Is this one really worth it? Were it not for the fact that he pays us--"

And one's own: "I don't really deserve all this attention, fellows..."

"Oh, josh."

*I'm, just an ordinary person who happens to be luckier than some guys, that's all...

"Button it up, J. B."

"I have contacted the subconscious, Doctor...."

"Good. Give it a bath and then hang it over the fire that's it next to his memory so we'll not forget..."

Suddenly one is aware of an ocean's freedom, one feels a bombing plane pass sight-lesly in the aky, and wonders d worn the perlar brasion of armed mi ghe illno longer start the guilt glands working. upon the stone hearth.

"He had an over-enlarged Recall."

"They usually do." Doctor Sleeve pushed the needle. "Now do you believe in paying an income tax?"

"No."

He pushed farther. "Should America feed the world--"

"Definitely they"

Girlslain shorted out the words with his scalpel. I felt something give. I suddenly felt...

"Now! What should be done with teachers who refuse to sign the Loyalty Oath?"

"Imprison them!" The voice was harsh; for a moment I could not claim it as my own.

Doctor Sleeve looked serene. "What about their families?"

"Let them starve."

"Hah! And do you still want to feed the world?"

"Do you think I'm insane!"

Professor Girlslain swung his key. "Gentlemen, I believe that you shall find the operation has been a success."

* * * *

Daybreak had begun its reluctant move towards the adobe, and the first birds, the first rabbits, materialized among the trees. And now objects that were solid began to claim shadows, and these shadows grew strong, asserting themselves into the surf's newfound voice; into leaves that could cause sound. And the Doctors shook hands with one another and thought of breakfast, waiting not impolitely for me to retire from their agenda. And Girlslain himself gave me his hand, and in it was the envelope containing a bill for fourteen hundred and eighty-five dollars,

"Some of it's for labor, some for parts," Alice explained

"But there is more left over than before you began."

"Watch your semantics," Professor Girlslain warned.

"There are the Guilt Complex and the Recall." I indicated the jars on the hearth. "And my conscience. An entire conscience intact. As good as new-

The Doctors achieved simulated laughter. "And who nowadays is going to come to us for an installation job of that sort?"

"They're a drug on the market," Alice added thoughtfully, not quite certain what she meant.

"Fourteen hundred eighty-five bucks," Girlslain said, adding hurriedly, "dollars, that is, of course.

"Tomorrow," I said.

"Tomorrow is another day."

"Yes, tomorrow--it will have to be another day."

And I felt suddenly, dreadfully happy as I gave them my back and closed a door on their protests, and started towards the city, marvelling then at the new, eager feet upon which the liberated man moves. Even so, when I came across the Rolls Royce parked a quarter mile down the road I stole it and drove the remainder of the trip.

I never went back to the Doctors for a check-up because of some instinctive fear that they might resort to violence. Professor Girlslain in particular seemed determined to get his money and when, months later even the police were never able

Palm Springs, California, that | convinced him of the futility of his determination; ing some kind of ridiculous, unbecoming humility.

"I need the money badly."

"That is unfortunate" I detected no authenticity in my voice.

"You've got to admit that the operation was a success," he said.

"I pushed a man overboard in Atlantic City for seven dollars and twenty-five cents." I said.

"You've been spectacularly successful in real estate deals. Obviously, without the operation."

"Obviously"

"Then why don't you pay me the money?"

"Why should I?"

I watched him turn dejectedly away, and then stop, and then, "doesn't your conscience.. " But his question died in a sudden laughter that seemed to roll upon us, a drenching, illuminated thing that sang in our ears and floated upon the nearby pool; a series of sounds launched by ourselves. It grew big and spontaneous, with his laughter running into and out of mine, an octave higher but nonetheless authentic. For we realized that the two of us were alone in the world now, and the part of me Girlslain had been trying to reach was in the glass jar on the mantle in the old adobe where it belonged; the candle could hesitate and die as the moon came and went into its sterile stage. But to each of us an enemy had been lost forever.

Celebrity

Take this jeweled hand but do not hold it:
 We bear to be touched momentarily if at all.
 This palm has held London and Paris once
 And this, New York. You that have never had it
 Cannot conceive the weariness of triumph,
 The unrelinquishable weariness.
 There are in the world similar hands -- a few;
 We avoid meeting; such weight is unmanageable.

May in turn perceive our graciousness bends. we perceive. , being jeune and intelligent

The habits of greatness are so swiftly learned
 Yet stay unalterable, my dear young man.
 Oh yes, we need you. Let us admit we need you
 Everywhere momentarily. Be numerous.
 But don't allude to others' indiscretions
 In all those memoirs which insinuate
 The sort of bread these hands once broke upon
 And what haired thighs these stiffening fingers stroked.
 How much we must forget to smile, to sleep!
 The more you think you know the less you know,
 And even this we have said you have imagined.
 We who were young, poor, arrogant, insurgent,
 Are -- what else can we say? -- are old and famous.

N. M.

Walking over the loma and down to the arroyo
 In the windy weather of the year the time the world
 Melts to spring and here dries thin in the smashing sun,
 I might have descended cliffs of the moon to an old sea floor.

And parasitical suck in the cedars like green sea-sponge,
 Flecked pink, emblem of kisses, polyp-building, coral --
 Budding, mistletoe writhed to its skeletal achievement.
 I saw on the sand two lovers knotting their naked sprawl.

I saw moving steadily, earth into sky, like the conjugal
 Hyphen a single plane bagged heavy with seed of death.
 Amongst these and upright with my choice I chose
 Where to be lonely to learn to tell mountains from clouds.

--Winfield Townley Scott

(Two Poems)

Six A.M.

An early city shows the signs
Of human morning-after faces.
The streets are long-drawn, haggard lines
On cheeks where age reveals its traces;

*The windows have the sordid tinge
Of eyes debauchery made bleary,
And butts and dirty papers fringe
The curbs, as of a man too weary*

*To wash and shave; and yet by noon
The town, like a recovered muscle,
Will be on its toes with a bawdy tune,
Hep to the world and full of hustle.*

--Lori Petri

A Question

How does a zephyr so it and warm as you,
Breathing my name as gently as you do,
Billow the bay-locked waters of my soul,
To toss this tortured craft without control
Or ken of bright-seen starways, drifting free,
On the seven seas of sensuality?

--Robert S. Martin

Raccoons of the World

Velvet masked bandit with witch dwindled hands.
Waddle pacing in the cackling group,
Why this snaffle quarrel?
Ignorant, or innocent, of hero conditioning
United you can easily burgle
Any man-made mechanical fastening
And glut on fanciful comestibles.

What do you care for opposable thumbs?
Ring-tailed wondercat - bread rinser!

-Melissa Blake

How Do I Love Thee, 1955

How do I love thee? Let me count the money.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach when feeling out of sight
For the ends of making a buck
I love thee to the level of extended credit
Oh quiet need and sexy fiscal flip.
I love thee purely as men strive for cash.
I love thee freely as they compound interest
I love thee with the passion of corporate ravings
In my old griefs, and with my childhood savings.
I love thee like a shovel. Oh I dig thee!
With my lost saints... I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears of all my life. ... and, if your stock splits.
I shall but love thee better after merger.

--Wallace Rena

*You and Contemporary Poetry**George Abbe*

Free verse is a technique that permeates almost all of modern form. We have broken out of the circumscribed; the chained cadence and the heavy, frontal rhyme have been flooded away by four primary influences: the rise of journalism and mass reading with their natural concomitant, the worship of the vernacular; the speed-up and telescoping of language to match the tempo of society and better serve the Divine Right of Advertising; the break-away from authority in all phases of life; and the growth of psychology, which has unloosed the genie of repression-versus-expression, the insight into self-discovery-through-spontaneity.

The desire to be original, of course, had its part in the Hopkins and Amy Lowell experiments; and where one intensified the poetic effect, the other may have vitiated it. But both were feeling the urge for liberation from forms of gentility and traditional literalness, exactness, and order-the obvious and the dull. Due to them largely, we have gained greater subtlety in modern form and technique more shadings and exact distinctions, which always mean greater closeness to truth. Where the classical oversimplified, and thus tended to make trite and mediocre, the modern calls on the thought below the surface, the ring of individual iron.

In line with this rebellion of inwardness and the unique there are all manner of other shorthands and telescopings and scramblings of the recognizable. In Celia Dimmette's "The Lamb" we read:

In the storm, you came
Small one, the near
Muzzle, soft ear.
Wavering lamb,

We bring you from
The cold and stark
Stable of dark
Into our room,
Cry audible.
Newly you wake;
Stranger we stroke,
Be warm, grow wool.

a Conder that sudden bet our cue dudle: Bul termal kepresentation could have two effects: First, if the writer simply means "your cries audible," it says it in such intense form that the intensity of the emotion is aided. But there is another gain: the reader can also take that "cry audible" to be the hortatory mood, a command, an entreaty--suddenly made by himself, the reader, in an access of sympathy. This ambivalence actually enriches the reaction, for the heart and mind can encompass both

experiences at once the literal idea of the lamb being brought into the room and "crying audibly," and the sense of his own heart, the reader's, exclaiming to the lamb: "O lamb, cry out, audibly, so that we may know you live and rejoice in your new-found life." Thus participation is increased; the violating of syntax, the short-cut compression have enhanced the beauty of the whole poem.

In addition to this kind of streamlining, parts of speech now take on new and startling roles. The verb may become the noun, the noun the verb. For example, note Alex Jackson's poem, "Television":

A dial twists;
centuries of invention spin back and forth
in a kaleidograph of miracles, no less fabulous
than water turned to wine
or Moses splitting the Red Sea,
hour after hour the parade
from cave to grandeur
from heights to sponsored scream.

This boxed triumph over epochs
could be a redwood
majestic enough to touch stars;
in the packaged protoplasm of Sell
it becomes a greenhouse shrub
carefully cultivated, pruned and nurtured
to sprout magnificent blossoms
of soap.

The word "Sell" functions as a noun.

And in the last stanza of "The Surgeon" by John Barron Mays, we read:

"Some day another's hands must close his eyes
And priest him unto death; till then he works
And trusts that someone other works through him
Close as a shadow to his healing hand.

The word "priest" acts very efficiently as a verb.

And in like manner we may have an adjective performing as a verb or noun, a pronoun as an adverb.

The reason for this, of course, is that the modern poet is more concerned with getting the idea across with whatever word is most recognizable, in the form most economical and easy to take. It may seem lax; but it does aid compression and effect. Surely "And priest him unto death" is more convincing than "And like a priest reconcile him unto death" or "draw him unto death." In the syntax of modern poetry there are many gaps, there is much short-cutting.

What else would one expect in a civilization where we read, as we flash by: "GO SCHOOL SLOW"? Our minds have long since accepted it as a label, an automatic

symbol, an ideogram which creates the reflex: "Go Slow: You're Coming to a School," --unarticulated in the mind, and therefore needing no coherent language to convey it. Or in a world which without hesitation accepts the big sign I saw over a new restaurant:

"Dinner Air Conditioned"

No effort was made to differentiate the parts of the idea by size or punctuation: the words were just strung together. But the jazzed and fragmented minds of passing citizens, accustomed to such hieroglyphics, readily substitutes the idea of the inside atmosphere of the total restaurant for the misleading idea of food on a plate, and caught the bare, fleeting intention of the words on the hard prongs of their haste. Which was all they cared about. Accuracy, reflection, nuance of meaning in such a world are admittedly difficult: but this kind of impressionism in advertising, these gesturings and snatches of sound indicate a reality of daily mood and reflex which in the interest of fidelity must be carried over into an impressionism, a compactness of poetry.

*

Impossible though subtlety may seem to be in a society so high-strung and incoherent (for to capture shades of idea and emotion the mind needs time, calmness, concentration), nevertheless, subtlety is the very essence of modern poetry, and this includes its form and technique. By the use of nuance the modernist contributes to the relativity and individuality of fact--and the metre and syntax, the technique and form are correspondingly in flux and singular. We have an excessively wide range of forms, and in that we add to the richness of our growth.

At one extreme, we have the tight, exact rhyme scheme of Theodore Roethke's "The Sloth":

In moving-slow he has no Peer
You ask him something in his ear;
He thinks about it for a Year;

And then, before he says a word
There, upside down (unlike a Bird)
He will assume that you have Heard

A most Ex-as-per-at-ing Lug.
But should you call his manner Smug,
He'll sigh and give his Branch a Hug;

Then off again to Sleep he goes,
Still swaying gently by his Toes,
And you must know he knows he knows.

At the other extreme, the long, rolling, uninhibited lines of Robinson Jetterson quote a portion of his "The Deer Lay Down Their Bones":

I followed the narrow cliffside trail, halfway up the mountain
 Above the deep river-canyon. There was a little cataract crossed the path,
 flinging itself
 Over tree-roots and rock, shaking the jewelled fern-fronds, bright bubbling
 water
 Pure from the mountain, but a bad smell came up. Wondering at it I clam-
 bered down the steep stream
 Some forty feet, and found in the midst of bush-oak and laurel,
 Hung like a bird's nest on the precipice brink a small hidden clearing,
 Grass and a shallow pool. But all about there were bones lying in the grass,
 clean bones and stinking ones,
 Antlers and bones: I understood that the place was a refuge for wounded
 deer; there are so many
 Hurt ones escape the hunter and limp away to lie hidden; here they have
 water for the awful thirst:
 And peace to die in; dense green laurel and grim cliff
 Make sanctuary, and a sweet wind blows upward from the deep gorge.
 -I wish my bones were with theirs.

But that's a foolish thing to confess, and a little pitiful. We know that life
 Is on the whole equally good and bad, mostly gray neutral, and can be
 endured...
 Should use it all. Mine's empty since my love died Empty? The flame-
 haired grandchild with great blue eyes
 That look like hers?--What can I do for the child? I gaze at her and wonder
 what sort of man
 In the autumn of the world...

And, in between, a poem such as "Beasts," by Richard Wilbur, where the regu-
 larity of metre gives form, but the rhyme is lacking: I quote the first stanza only:

Beasts in their major freedom
 Slumber in peace tonight. The gull on his ledge
 Dreams in the guts of himself the moon-plucked waves below,
 And the sunfish leans on a stone, slept
 By the lyric water;

Or "Buick" by Karl Shapiro, where, again, the lack of rhyme is no impediment,
 and the individuality of poet and experience is contained in expression neatly balanced
 between firm physical outline and freedom:

As a sloop with a sweep of immaculate wing on her delicate spine
 And a keel as steel as a root that holds in the sea as she leans ...

* *

From these four illustrations, we can see that the hard and fast rhyme is used to
 convey the satirical and ironic, the light or the humorous; that the more intense the

author, the more passionately concerned, often the further off he seems to withdraw from the obvious rhyme, the tight rhythm and technique. In "The Sloth" we observe the light touch, satire and sarcasm, and we remember Gibson's "Thaw" and "Billiards" where close rhyming carried the same moods; and we can infer that many of the best contemporary poets who use the older, hard-and-fast rhyme forms are often enjoying the objectively deft, ironic, or facetious at such times are seldom serious or elevated in the manner of former poets who used these mechanical means to unveil their most profound earnestness. Now this may or may not imply that subconsciously the modernist is deriding the more hoary technique along with a subject-matter that amuses him--but it is certain that he looks upon exact pattern as no longer the fetish pleasure; but his

individualism is at stake, and to borrow the mechanics of past ages is to be dull and outworn; and when he reveals most ardently the personal psyche, the believing man, he cuts adrift from structure, and enjoys most that abandoned journeying that is like the pioneer's (for each must discover himself in wide wastes and in his own way) where freedom to be the self creates its own form, out of the tang and tilt of strange diction, rebel idiom, explosive sound and libidinous rhythm--all leaning and skimming and swarming across the great unfolding, forever-changing vistas of his own inward consciousness. As Robert Francis put it so eloquently, in describing a flight of birds: "Freedom that flows in form, and still is free."

CREDITS

"Television" by A. Jackinson, from Epos Magazine; "The Deer Lay Down Their Bones," from "The Sloth" by Theodore Roethke, from Flair; "Beasts" by Richard Wilbur from Ceremony, Harcourt and Brace; "The Surgeon" by John Barron Mays, from Epos Magazine.

Reviews

AS IF, by John Ciardi. Rutgers University Press. \$3.50.

PERMIT ME REFUGE, by Edwin Rolfe. The California Quarterly. \$3.00.

In the poetry of Ciardi and Rolfe the reader's senses touch the pulse of the living world, particularly the human world; he encounters in each poet the gentle heart actualized in print, simply and vividly. If the reader is any follower at all of contemporary poetry, he may be startled, not because he has found two poets who are kind, but because their kindness is visible, is paramount

in allegorens obsce he s make i need of gyne helded aythin heed it a holesyor allegory or obscure syntax. It is reassuring when Ciardi says in

I think perhaps this woman is my child.
But right now what do we do with thirty pounds
of uncleaned mushrooms? If I let her be
she'll stay up cleaning them till one o'clock
and be all aches tomorrow. I get a knife;
and here we sit with the kitchen table between us,
one pile for root ends, one for the cleaned sprouts.

How comforting to discover a poet in this completely unheroic position, with no invocation, no

he might almost be you or me!

Yet these lines of Card'i's are by no means his best; only the simple power of their statement, joined with the meter, preserves them on the level of poetry rather than good prose. Card'i's gifts are much greater; he has imagination, wit, humor; he can turn a deft phrase with the best phrase-turners of the Elegant School; above all, he has a profound vision of human dreams, problems, sorrows, and it is here that he surpasses many better known, but lesser, contemporaries.

His five love poems, "To Judith," beginning:

Men marry what they need. I marry you,
morning by morning, day by day, night by night,
and every marriage makes this marriage new.

are among the most moving in all poetry, and his "Elegy" for his father speaks in a sincere, light, sad tone-avoiding sentimentality-that is the essence of a fine poetic voice.

As If, containing most of Card'i's choice previously published work as well as many new poems, pulls no punches, his world is not all sugar and milk; there are the gall of death, people the poet does not like, treated sometimes with acerbity, sometimes with polite distaste, always with craftsmanship. Ciardi's satirical lines are well balanced with the humorous lines, and the lines of love; though "till their damnation feed them, all men starve," Ciardi's world is catholic (more with the small c than with the large), embodying good and evil, and withal a world worth living in.

I practice the man in all,

clutching the world from the world to praise it.

The poetry of Edwin Rolfe, who died in the spring of 1954, is not as well modulated as Ciardi's, his prosody is not so finely wrought an instrument; on occasion, he will be unnecessarily repetitious, will corrugate a stanza with too many parenthetical phrases instead of writing smoother lines, will choose a word that is merely adequate when, had he searched a little longer, he might have uncovered a superior one. Still, in the best poems of this Rolfe attains a standing in the highest echelon of twentieth century poets. "Many an Outcast, posthumous volume *Mystery II," "A Poem to Delight My Friends Who Laugh at Science-Fiction," "Dawn Song" and "Bon Voyage" are poems that would do credit to any poet's reputation.

Rolfe's last poems exhibit less tenderness than do the works of his previous volumes; he is more

concerned with political persecution, with calumny and injustice, so that, more often than in his earlier writings, he uses irony. He is less quick to praise, although he never entirely condemns. Even in a bitter poem like "Ballad of Good Intentions," which satirizes an informer, Rolfe is more pained than angry, for, to him, an old friend is dead.

You killed your own scope, sad stranger, lost friend.
 My affection is dead; it's too frayed now, and grieving.
 And that was your crime; in the noon of your life
 you resigned from the living.

And in a poem, "Catalogue of I," whose origin in Whitman is obvious, he writes:

Who fears inclusion in this catalogue of I
 is useless, valueless, deserves to die.
 Yet he, my doomed and unloved brother,
 is also I, is also I.

Although the Whitman influence is still present in these last poems, it is much less pronounced; Rolfe was beginning to develop a tighter, more visual imagery, a greater condensation of meaning. The sonnet "Bon Voyage" is a good example:

ermit me refugeand resture me whatever path you tak
 carry
 as a ship creates its own unending wake
 or as rails define the direction in a train.

Permit my memory refuge: but not the recent years
 when grains of dross obscured the bars of truth.
 Delve deeper back in years to your first youth,
 passionate, clean, untarnished by small fears.

And if your conscience truly bears my memory,
 rekindle if you can the dying candle-light:
 let the wake not lose its contour, nor the bright
 reflected sun waver as the rails glide by.

My wake and rail attend you, welded and wed,
 through the blind tunnels of the years ahead.

then thire of indrie Dabi Sies, the em oh at nd the son hot antime peat.that adumbrate his untimely death, Rolfe achieves

Two Novels of Timothy Pember

Since World War II, novels reflecting a left wing political opinion have fallen into disrepute, not only because of the tensions between this country and the Soviet Union but because often the writers, in their desire to communicate their point of view, became impatient and forgot that literature and propaganda were two entirely different things. The results were often stories dealing with the problems of the working class containing wooden characters clicking through situations which seemed born out of pamphlets rather than real life. It is only natural that these books often played into the hand of right wing critics who could attack their opponents on formalistic grounds as well as political. They could easily say that those who write from the standpoint of dialectical materialism are so limited in their outlook that it would be very rare indeed if their writings could be really literature.

This attitude towards the left is dangerous insofar that it overlooks the fact that good writing can come from any source, and that by hastily dismissing the writers of the extreme left as hopelessly monolithic, it, wittingly or unwittingly, strikes at freedom of thought, a prime essential in the production of good literature.

That is why two novels of Timothy Pember, *The Needle's Eye* (published by Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947) and *Swanson* (Harcourt & Brace, 1951) ought to be scrutinized. Both of them won good reviews if not the wide publicity and sales sometimes accorded books of more dubious merit. They are nevertheless artistic successes because Pember in writing them shows a painstaking care for style and structure which takes priority over the message he tries to get across. He even goes so far as to create a sympathetic protagonist who does not share his point of view, and will either have him reach the correct Marxist conclusion only partially (as in *The Needle's Eye*) or not at all (as in the case of *Swanson*).

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Pember is the way he ends his novels. Being aware that the dialect ebb and flow of life has laws of its own which do not always conform with human wishes, he allows a certain ambiguity to mark the end of his stories. The effect is a very tricky one and may cause an unthinking reader to think that the book is unfinished. Actually it is Pember being realistic. Seeing life as a continuous process, he knows that no resolution of a problem will tie all the loose ends together. In *The Needle's Eye*, his young hero, Harold Wick, makes the transition from a rudderless, introspective young man unable to fully understand his middle-class surroundings to a worker and a member of a radical party in a very quiet and unobtrusive fashion. When the book ends he still has some of his old doubts and as a human being he will still have to undergo many crises and conflicts before he becomes fully realized. The reader may wonder why Pember does not allow for a complete awakening, why the faith is not more fully embraced. It is quite possible that Pember would answer that life is not like that.

It is important to realize that *The Needle's Eye* is also unique in that it is a love story which does not make a fetish of love. The hero tries to find in his love for the radical socialist's young daughter some solution to his problems, but discovers that only when he has convictions of his own is it possible to consummate his love in marriage. It is interesting to note that in this story, violence and passion are kept down to a minimum. Using the pattern of the English garden type novel, the flower beds and the afternoon tea create a softening effect making more real the turbulent elements in the novel, such as the physical relationship between the two young people. Even the political side of the story is carefully muted. The angry evicted tenant hurling a rotten egg (it misses, thanks to Pember's discretion) at the estate owner's grandson, the casually mentioned prison term that the radical socialist once served and the off-stage brutality of the police

"The rect the reader de bourgeois is arded a ta.

reader can think as he reads.

Swanson oddly enough is more turbulent. Though the more violent scenes are still kept off-stage, the book seems to this reviewer livelier. Perhaps the setting has something to do with it. The

Needle's Eye took place in England in a quiet countryside setting; Swanson in West Coast U.S.A. where experiences, instead of being properly introduced, have a way of bumping into people, and this is precisely what happens to the middle-aged ascetic, Humphrey Swanson. Unwittingly, he has shocked his oversolicitous landlady, and has to serve a prison sentence of sixty days for indecent exposure. This blunder costs him a promising career as a university professor and forces him to take on jobs that are totally unsuited to his temperament. He also experiences love and a genuine contact with humanity, but is unable to cope with either of these adequately. The end result is that the book closes with Swanson trying to prevent a robbery for purely sentimental motives and in definite danger of being mistakenly sent to prison.

The note on which this story ends is deceptively negative. But in some ways it isn't. Humphrey Swanson is not altogether a hapless victim of society. He is simply the ironic example of the manse in the these Sometime has aerined to hate said me echoes be
 the hero of Henry James's The
 manity.

These books may not altogether properly present the cause that Pember advocates, but they are literary art. If they have weaknesses, these do not arise out of dogma. They are weaknesses that normally arise from an overly precise skill --a skill which not only conceals the message but which can, if not carefully utilized, obscure the heart.--T.V.

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CONTEMPORARY POETRY

RACCOONS OF THE WORLD

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THE SYNAGOGUE

COLLECTED POEMS OF
WALLACE STEVENS

AS IF, PERMIT ME REFUGE

AT THE STATION, SOMEONE
ALWAYS SAYS, THE SI-
LENT

THE EXILES

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OH, SUNDAY: PLAZA DE
TOROS, WHORE, ELLA
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**A PLUG HAT FOR THE
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TION**

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THE PERPETUAL BOURGEOIS
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ESCAPE

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**SONNET TO R, MARY, MARY,
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MY LIMITED SCOPE

CIRCUS ON THE HILL

RAIN

MALIBU COVE

SIX A.M.

HOW DO I LOVE THEE 1955

**NIGHT-PRAYER FOR VARI-
OUS TRADES**

(untitled)

A NET FOR VENUS

**AND IF YOU DON'T SEE
WHAT YOU WANT, CON-
SCRIPT'S SONG, IDIOT
JOE PRAYS, POEM**

**DOWNTOWN BETWEEN
HOPE AND FLOWER,
THE ART OF DENTISTRY**

N.M., CELEBRITY

**THE MEETING OF MOUSE
AND MIND**

CHESTER AARON was a member of the Huntington Hartford colony in Pacific Palisades. His Trace, Poetry Public, and Sparrow. Mr. Abbe's works have also appeared in the Atlantic Monthly,

Mie Sures he as Beis fred in of the most bautis i of the Alten coatel contences.

MARIO CASETTA is a poet and artist who now lives in Geneva, Switzerland. Some of his VAHAN K. GREGORY has appeared in Statement and Martha Foley's Best Short Stories, 1953.

He is now working on a collection of short stories and poetry. One of his stories will appear

CHRIS JENKYNS: this versatile artist has illustrated numerous books and magazines, directed and designed brochures for industry, animated films, and is the winner of many awards. He is

ROBERT S. MARTIN writes that he is well established in a small business, and that he is now

LORI PETRI: apparently no note on this contributor can do her justice. She has appeared in

WALLACE RENA: rumors have it that he is a former elephant salesman in-of all places-El of which is Mr. Whittier and Other Poems. He is a contributor to many magazines and a winner of

the Shelley Memorial and other prizes. Formerly from New England, Mr. Scott now lives in

CURTIS ZAHN has published a great deal of non-fiction in such periodicals as Holiday, and has

recently turned his hand to short stories, TV plays and poetry. Mr. Zahn conducts a writers'

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play, the Cowbank, was produced at the University of California
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fornia Quarterly.

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in Coastlines 5.

now working on the animation of Petrouchka with Stravinsky.
able to relax to do some writing.

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THINK OF WALLACE STE-
VENS, FANTASY X: OF
MUSIC, THE SQUASH**

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LITANY**

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MENT
REACTIVATED MAN**

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Thomas McGrath, Don Gordon and Meridel LeSueur.

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Los Angeles 28, California*

Coastlines-Forum, a non-profit non-political public affairs organization to encourage individual growth in those activities not now served adequately by mass communication media. Without being narrowly partisan, we look for new forms in the arts, in political education, and in science. We are conservative in the sense that we try to retain the best traditions, and we are radical in our demand for development and restatement of the universal problems of existence.

Some of the approaches we take are:

1. Programs and socials where films, contemporary dance, poetry readings and other art forms are presented.
2. Publication of Coastlines Literary Magazine and various information bulletins.
3. Political forums at which major sides of significant issues are represented.
4. Interest groups such as modern dancing and writers' and actors' workshops, to allow individual participation and creativity.

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News Notes

The month of February was particularly active for Coastlines inasmuch as it merged with what was formerly known as the Community Forum of Los Angeles. The merger will make it possible for Coastlines to reach a larger audience, and to bring contemporary literature closer to readers normally uninitiated to the literary magazine. It is expected that the magazine will be strengthened by its associations with groups of other young artists. The Coastlines-Forum of Los Angeles so far consists of Coastlines, Mel Weisburd, editor; Community Forum, Len Harris, coordinator; Ways of Mankind, Al Himelson and Maxine Vance, in charge; The Contemporary Dance Department, Joan Kerr, Mark Rose, and Larry Warren, in charge; Theatre and Program, Barding Dahl, coordinator; Arts and Crafts, Enid Fisher, in charge. Coastlines also cooperates with any friendly artistic endeavor undertaken in Los Angeles. Programs during the month of February included film showings (The City, Nanook Of The North, Night Mail, and W. B. Yeats, A Film Tribute) and dance performances, Martha Schlamme Concert, St. Valentine's Party, and Ways of Mankind discussion group. Programs being scheduled in the near future include a St. Patrick's party, a public debate on "The Right To Work," poetry readings, art exhibit, and performances by the drama group.

Coastlines has been published without backing, investments or patronage of any kind, and has been financed for each issue through fund raising community programs, sales and subscription. The fact that four issues have been published attests both to the response and community need for a magazine. All labor, editing and contributions are donated. Sponsors for the magazine at this time are needed, and all persons interested in supporting the magazine and to receive credit for sponsorship in the magazine should contact the editor. All sponsors will receive reports of financial conditions, promotion activity and editorial policy, and will be able to participate in the publication programs of Coastlines.

Contributing editors, advisers, foreign representatives and correspondents are needed to staff the magazine. Contributing editors and representatives may solicit material from their respective localities, submit correspondence, reports, articles and reviews either on assignment or on an unsolicited basis. Writers interested should contact the editor in writing.

Statement of Editorial Policy

Coastlines publishes short stories, poems, articles, reviews, correspondence, essays and art work both in experimental and traditional forms. While skill, reason and good taste are the primary criteria for selecting material, the editors will discourage works which are simply propagandistic, exhibitionist or sterile. Generally speaking, political articles which are liberal and humanistic will be welcomed, but the editors are opposed to any regimentation of literature by economic pressures or political factions. Short stories will be selected on the basis of literary merit, and breadth of individual and social experience. Fiction, especially, should serve to resolve problems convincingly or point up clearly the problem to be solved. Poetry should be lively and should communicate directly emotionally, or intellectually, without evasion or obscurity.

We believe that there is a place in the world for the intellect, since the intellect is necessary for the perception and interpretation of what is going on around us. Although we feel the intellectual should defend and advance his position, we are opposed to intellectualism which is primarily pedantic. We encourage the creations of the mind that are motivated by compassion and social purpose.

It is our intent to depict through literature the transformations that are occurring in our age and to fore-shadow as much as possible the coming culture. We keep our eyes open to the coastlines of the future, the unexplored continent of time which man is able to sense only in the instinct of profound creation. We are confident the serious poet and writer have something to say and we will do what we can to help them be heard.

THE EDITORS