

A LITERARY MAGAZINE OF CALIFORNIA

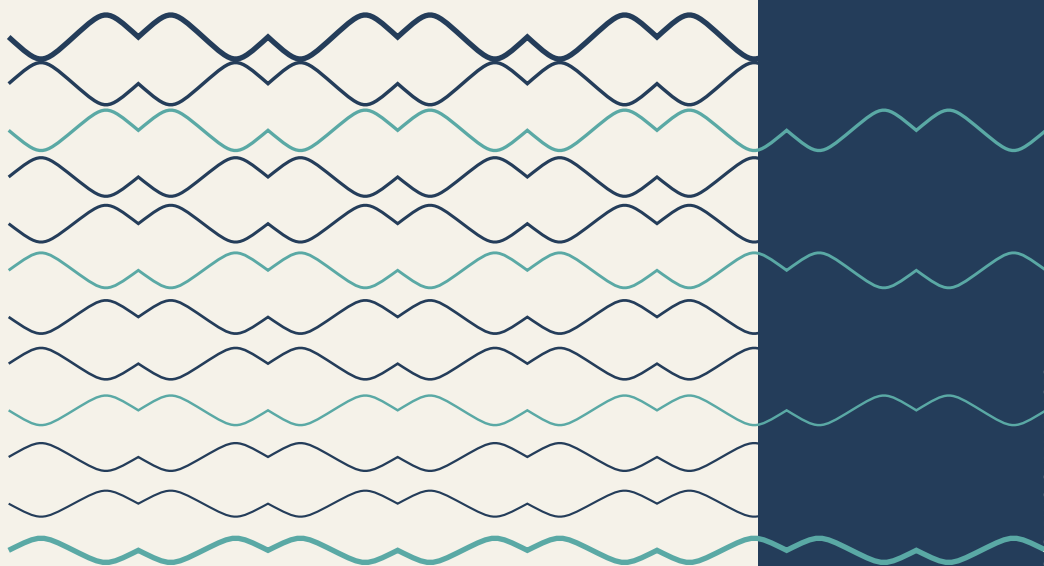
COAST LINES

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ISSUE 10

A Literary Magazine of California

Spring–Summer 1958

EDITED BY

Gene Frumkin

A CLEAN READING EDITION

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CONTENTS

FICTION

Time of the Blue Guitar	<i>Robert Eskew</i>	8
A Girl, a Dream, an Accident	<i>Curtis Zahn</i>	23
The Voice Behind	<i>Tom Poots</i>	40

POETRY

The Garden Prospect	<i>Peter Yates</i>	3
Four Poems	<i>James Schevill</i>	15
En Route	<i>Jack Anderson</i>	18
Two Poems	<i>Ruth Finer Mintz</i>	19
Revolt in Manhattan	<i>Grove Becker</i>	20
Two Poems	<i>Scott Greer</i>	21
Ah to the Villages	<i>Thomas McGrath</i>	34
Two Poems	<i>Barbara Gibbs</i>	35
Poems About Houses	<i>Jed Garrick</i>	36
Parabolic Egypt	<i>Ralph L. Kinsey</i>	37
To My Catholic Daughter	<i>Henry Birnbaum</i>	37
The Last Damned Nazi	<i>Ralph Treitel</i>	38
A Dream of Days and Long Nights	<i>Lewis Turco</i>	39
Three Poems	<i>Louis Johnson</i>	46

BACK MATTER

Notes on Contributors		2
-----------------------	--	---

ARTICLES & EDITORIAL

Lysergic Acid and the Creative Experience	<i>Mel Weisburd</i>	27
Blunderbuss what's going on up and down the coast		53
Editorial: Hark, Hark, the Laugh!	<i>Gene Frumkin</i>	55

REVIEWS

The Epic Restored	<i>Mel Weisburd</i>	48
Ballad, Wit and Nonsense	<i>Ann Stanford</i>	51

ART

Cover	<i>David Lemon</i>	
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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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GROVE BECKER teaches guitar in Monterey and Carmel, Calif., and has appeared in *Saturday Review*, *Patterns*, *Miscellaneous Man*, etc.

HENRY BIRNBAUM is at work on a long narrative poem, *The Instantaneous City*, parts of which have been printed.

JED GARRICK has appeared in a number of little magazines, and writes from New York.

BARBARA GIBBS will have a volume of poems, *The Green Chapel*, published by Noonday Press this fall.

SCOTT GREER is now Professor of Sociology at Northwestern University; a former Los Angeles resident and teacher at Occidental College, he has been widely published.

LOUIS JOHNSON is a New Zealander much-published in this country; his latest book appearance is *The Night Shift*, which he shares with three other New Zealand poets.

RALPH L. KINSEY contributes from Navarre, Ohio.

DAVID LEMON contributes his fifth *Coastlines* cover; a resident of Berkeley, he recently had a one-man painting and drawing exhibit at the Streeter Blair Gallery in Los Angeles.

THOMAS McGRATH's most recent publication is a novel, *The Gates of Ivory*, the *Gates of Horn*.

RUTH FINER MINTZ is presently in Israel where she is doing graduate work in Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

DORA M. PETTINELLA lives in New York and has had a number of poems and translations published in little magazines.

TOM POOTS is 26 and trying to market a novel while at work on another one.

JAMES SCHEVILL's play, "The Bloody Tenet", recently had its Chicago premiere at the Goodman Theatre and has been published by Meridian Books in the anthology, *Religious Drama*. He has just finished another play, "The Empress Norton", and is working on an opera libretto.

ANN STANFORD's latest work, *Magellan: A Poem to be Read by Several Voices*, has just been published by Talisman Press.

RALPH TREITEL studied under Ransom at Kenyon College and had his first poem published in *New World Writing*; now working on his second novel.

LEWIS TURCO is attending the University of Connecticut; has appeared in *New Orleans Poetry Journal*, *Antioch Review*, *Arizona Quarterly*, etc.

PETER YATES is co-chairman of Poetry Los Angeles, which sponsors a monthly reading of poetry by various poets.

CURTIS ZAHN conducts a writer's workshop at Malibu Beach, Calif., and has been widely published.

*The Garden Prospect**Peter Yates*

This is to be the Orangery, and the clipped yew beyond.
 All the forms have been revised, the hedges trimmed in line.
 Sleek and with sharp ears the wakened owl, fearfully blinking,
 queries of the undergrasses. The butterfly
 uncoils his honey-lacquered tongue.
 His beauty is the ripened green of my garden.
 It is the end of summer, the plants gone to weed.
 Here I shall light a fire and from my window
 see the maples blazing and then after snowfall
 attend bleak winter and watch whither spring renews.

File me in the pages of your book of
 precious love. File me under Sleek and Jaded.
 File me under Not Much Longer, Not a Good Insurance Risk.
 After me the revision, after me no more accountability.
 Set me in the direction of a retired man headed south,
 leaving the top of a table rapidly filling
 with incongruous, documentary grandchildren,
 wife-eyed, father-featured.

I can see Europe at last and care not.

Set me, darling, on the one road homeward, darling, beyond the no returning.
 I have heard enough and made my decisions.
 If it is of any consequence, I have signed in and signed out,
 paid and am now drawing my insurance pretty penny.
 I have been a good citizen and marked time.
 Began bold as Browning and end eerily an existentialist.
 Whatever it is, it is of my time.
 My youth a broken rapier, my maturity an imaginary mistress,
 my age a transfer to yesterday's bus.

The Dinosaur at Quitting Time

I have visited in the racing cities
 conceived by peace out of autonomy; have stripped in military offices.
 I have known that history was being made while I was busy
 and believed, crawling between sheets, that one way or another I might make it.
 Am I also an exception to the rule that nothing happens
 except accidents, fiction of an imaginary lust
 to be past and present at once?

After me, what delusion?

Before me, I am told, the lichen, the dinosaur consorted
 in the way of nature, and what went on went on
 changing. I have made my pile and will lay on it.
 Raising my extension I dial a number, and nobody answers.
 The office is vacant. It is after quitting time.

The Eye Cast at History

Can it be that in another century and place
 there was peace, order, method?

O rapidly the rose

is twining up the trellis

That a great queen between unsatisfactory
 remorsees diligently managed, that a king
 was not an ass? I fear we clothe them more kindly
 than their courtiers, who saw the body undressed.
 Oh, the queens who slept with kings, what did they know
 of political economy; and the kings who slipped from queens,
 what did they know
 of equalitarian humanity?

The pitiless philosophers philosophized
 by the stream of the moment, solitary and more. strait
 than rulers, product of the three ways meeting
 of less regally bedded but more aristocratic genes.
 Is it there that thought and therefore tragedy begins?

Oh, a dude descending a staircase

or a prize beef-bull at stud...

What do you know! What do you know?

I commend me to my ancestors, I commend me
 to my great-grandchildren and strangers,
 and to theirs and relatives by marriage,
 a bourgeois society of cousins.
 I commend me to be examined by those shrubbery moralists,
historians, biographers, myth-makers.
 Here I deplore and categorize their inventions.
 Nomad garrulities chute, spitting and rumbling, past my hedges.
 These days preserve nobody; nobody preserves letters.
 Documents, the pride of centuries, now have a term.
 File me in the dead file, among the unappealed decisions.

The Laughter

Over there the little
 female fountain I laughingly
 mounted bronze in my garden
 drily laughs at me.
 A lizard creeps by the footstone.
 Comedian and heir of reptiles,
 which of us shall inherit my garden?
 The windows have been washed clean.
 All things that in their day shall come to cleanliness
 or crawling, yet few shall be seen through,
 yet these reside in me.

And a little staircase upward,
 where I pause waving good night to the company,
 may lead me to my bed.

The Wisdom

By what grimness unprovided
 of celestial imaginings
 do I turn to my garden? There
 everything is fair, or may be, under the eye of the gardener.
 Shall a book counsel, or an orange? Where is greater sweetness?
 Will excitement turn me out or do me in?
 Is there only wisdom for a wise man? I do soberly ask that
 of the little bronze bird perching on the basket
 of my bronze companion. Genius of affirmation,
 is your smile meaningful? May I turn safely from mankind
 to you? Did the hand of a master make you,
 or a spoiler, a makeshift?

Here, retired from my office,
 in the house of my retirement, confronting my green lawn,
 I am reduced to wondering and melancholy.

Work ...

but enough of that; work, but satiety; work
 Has been the opiate I have consulted for my wisdom.

The Power

I who include the cosmos,
 history, geology, who know the paths of the stars
 and their nature that is not as men made them
 but as men know them, I sit on my lawn

before autumn, between the Orangery and the garden,
 before winter that shall drive me in and enfeeble
 the precious remnant of my light from afar off.
 I summon electricity more certainly than the occult,
 knowing that when I summon it will come
 and that what I see by is not mathematics.
 Latin will add no substance to my verses
 nor Greek to my sophistry. Buddha will not explain the infinite.
 If I go on my knees, I must fear to be superstitious,
 but forlorn if I do not.

I am reduced to cry to my light:

How far, how far you have brought us!

You who have led us through the red sea,
 where is the desert ending?

Is it you I should cry to.

or to a germination as precise as meaningless,
 an order germinated in the good nature of a chemistry?
 The procession of the religious, the philosophers,
 sweeps silently by me and over their heads swarms of atoms
 and beneath their feet no solid, and from their mouths
 contradictions. The pageant of a glorious destiny
 eludes me like music, its reasoning like the voices of the fugues

Bach made who believed in one God.

I can do no better; and must that satisfy me
 in my passion, in the quiet, comfortable garden
 between the Orangery and the clipped yew?
 Must I shudder only and die...

The Pain

The pain of living, for the lives shut out from life,
 is not less by the value of the best-sellers that console them.
 The sick mind in its excrement crouches nearer God
 than a good man at his sacrament.
 And a man who is right before the eyes of the world
 and justified by his contentment
 defies charity and justice.
 So be wrong. Be wrong!
 But the good man justified in his contentment will say,
 "I have earth and heaven."
 Must I shudder and die...

The Denunciation

Each day
in eyes that cannot see
the sun dies again.
In minds that dream
Phaeton crosses,
 and the horses of the chariot of the sun
are given names.

In eyes that see
nothing is visible but the equation
of an order that succeeds.
In the foreseeing
 imagination
there is beginning
and end, or progress
or not, as the fit finds him.

In the rejecting
closed eye of the God-possessing
is the iron of virtue.
I shudder and die.

The Concluding in Prosperity upon a Roman Theme

It is time for dinner and for action.
 Leave contemplating to the divinities of the garden.
 Come, my friend, let us pull ourselves together
 with a concoction of good liquor,
 so that our appetite may be apt to the occasion
 as our conversation to the presence of good women.
 Leave the lizard, the dry fountain statue,
 the clipped yew and the rushed garrulities beyond,
 all things questionable and disorderly.

Let us savor our ripe taste
 at a good table, trusting in sleep without nightmare
 and a wakening at morning.

TIME OF THE BLUE GUITAR

Robert Eskew

It was reading about Billy getting killed that way that brought it all back. I don't know whether I thought about Billy first or Zabe. I guess it was Zabe because he was still alive somewhere and Billy was dead. A lot of things had been dead for a long time and Billy was the last chance to bring them alive again. But the whole thing was charcoal now. Billy, the box, the amp, the whole sound, the source. So much accidental charcoal. The fire had burned and now it was out. Billy was dead smoke, split for good, and the rest was a handful of quiet ashes.

Zabe wouldn't know about it for awhile and I thought about him, wherever he was, and I could see it like it was Cinemascope and I was front row. A piano bar with a bunch of drab drunks soaking at the edge, gulping that fantastic little printed card like it was a straight shot of 100 proof International Celebrity. An ounce and a half of lie, out of bond. The Duke says. Johnny Green says. Twentieth says. The world agrees. Mr. Ten Fingers of 1954. Mr. Downbeat of '55. The gods agree. Who needs Bartok or the other B's or even Gershwin? Zabe the champ and not a challenger in the house.

See the hands now, bored with the keys, opening three bars in on the most ancient standard, stealing the bridge or skipping it, doodling in fear before the hang-up of a clean close. No song, no tune, no beat. Nothing but a scared background for the voice leaking out like so much frustrated gas about the cork of a fat cigar.

"Just killin' it, Dad, so don't look for nothin'. Group scene's the only thing that swings. Got me a boy, see. On the coast. Amp guitar, man, like the one what built it, like never you heard. Sinatra digs him for a Vegas. thing so I say "Swing, Billy boy." He's mine, six years now, but I don't hold him. "Swing, Billy boy," I tell him, " and tell 'em Zaby sent ya."

And the thing under his hands gets sick and dies on its back in a cold chord. But there's one born every second and the hands busy themselves again under the sound of the fat cigar.

' Hear Billy, Dad, and you've heard. Gonna make it again, you know, after the loaner. Him and me and Preach on strings and my kiddie with the wide beat. This is just for time, man. Open here in four for six, then break New York for the season. The thing swings, Dad. That you gotta hear.'

And the counter voice, laced with smoke and juice, cuts through with a kind of automatic reaction to where it is and what it's paying and says, ' Can you play...:

'Dad, I told you. I don't play requests. This is for time. Be a good kiddie and wait for Billy boy. You got enough for now. Wait, man. Save yourself. Later does it.'

And Billy boy dead like last night's barbecue briquet and Zabe out there

dreaming at the other end like it was for real. And I remember how it all began.

Down fresh from the north with the skins and a few bucks and a thought or two about a feel and a sound that wouldn't grow up there in Rainland because the cats were soggy and it seemed like they had an unwritten law against it. Down and in a joint called Peter's because an old bongo buddy wore the suit in the place and it was just too sober early for any player alone in the fours with nothing but an empty pad. In for a couple and to dig the house band name of the Zabe Elmore Trio.

Had the couple and the words with Coop and through it all the house band swung, better than the couple, the one on the house or the two dozen I wanted but couldn't make the bread. Swung in the keys, in the tall strings, but mostly at the very bottom in the sky blue box that belonged to Billy. Billy was the band and Zabe was his boy and the little printed card on the piano was a beautiful lie.

Coop made the intros at the break and Zabe asked it like he was more afraid than anything.

'Where you from, Dad?'

'North and east lately.'

'Swinger or tea time kiddie?' The world was black and white, obviously.

'Player, like most,' I said, watching him watch the bartender fix his coffee with brandy, like he was paying for it.

* The Coop here says you blow,' he said.

'Like I say, I play.'

'You look like a green kiddie,' he said, looking me up and down.

'All that rain, you know?'

Studied me a moment over the fixed coffee steaming his glasses, the close eyes slightly crossed.

'You with or without?' he asked.

'You asking me to blow?'

'Your choice, Dad. We got it made already, you know?'

'Snare's outside,' I said, remembering the sound and wanting in the worst way to lay out under that blue guitar.

Coop smiled me out and said, 'Who knows,' and I came back and set up and met Preach and Billy. I introduced myself. Zabe was light on formalities.

'Cut the names, Dad. Meet on the beat, that's all. And wide, man. I like it way out wide.

We met and it was a cute little thing on 'Easy to Remember.' Tricky intro between Zabe and Billy with a couple of accent breaks to tip it up a little. It fell off smooth into Billy's first chorus and it swung high and lovely like a public playground at high noon in the middle of summer. Billy was full on and Zabe was hanging close, mostly for me. We swung it down through Billy who carried it like a king and into Zabe who had something to prove. He leaped a few after about four but nobody tried to hold him. He was up to Billy mostly and it was enough. I hung tight and lived it like a dreamer, hearing Babbo Jenk's words. 'Man, when it's right, you know it. The rest is token.'

And it was right. Preach proved it, his cadaverous fingers singing something miraculous and Billy coming against him with the amp off until it got explosive. Then Zabe jumped on the fuse with a bunch of little Basie chords and it strutted along strictly beat for eight, then out with Zabe and Billy holding hands like a couple of sweet lovers hating to say goodnight.

We'd made it and we all knew it. It was that sense of wondering why in hell it had all stopped. Zabe turned to me, his glasses off and his eyes more crossed with the excitement but his voice measured against its will.

'You blow, Dad. You blow okay. Just keep it wide. Wide like I like it.'

I kept it that way and we played out the hours until the world got a little bit bigger with a different sound and at the end Zabe said it.

'Dad, it's like I can't pay you yet, but you put on the suit and make it for a week for tips and wait out a change. After here I'll book as four and we're in. I'm a weird cat, Dad, but you blow. Just keep it wide and I love ya.'

It ran more like four and tips weren't even beer but it was worth it, mostly Billy. It was genius at cost. Zabe knew it but Billy couldn't have cared less. Zabe lived in the world and dug it but Billy lived in a blue guitar. It was paid for and nothing else mattered.

Intermissions were a revelation. Zabe would cut for the nearest silex, then shove into the bar for the brandy fix, grinning and muttering, 'I love ya, Dad,' through the fat brown cork. Then back through the crowd like a sprung monkey, puffing and waving and tipping his glasses at everybody from the bus kid to the dad and doll in number one booth with the fourth jug of Mum's fresh in the big silver bucket, until he'd plop down at a prosperous looking table, dump his ash in the dregs of the relish bowl and exclaim, 'Wha... you still here? Crazy, kiddies. You swing, I tell ya. Rest of the house is square but you kiddies swing. I dig.' All eating and drinking would cut with the shock but Zabe wouldn't see it. He'd mug over the smoke, suck at his cup and launch into his two favorite subjects --Zabe and Billy boy.

'Mine, Kiddies. Digs me only. Found him pumpin' petrol in Fresno, blowin' between racers, you know? Took him fast and made him go like now. Loyalty, Dad --he's it!' The eating and drinking would start again in self-defense but the voice would whip on, reciting the little printed card and crowing about Billy's fortune and debt. Not even the juke got in the way. Nothing broke it but an empty cup that no one cared about filling except a bored bartender who had a weakness for an A-1 con man.

But in the music room it was different. Preach and me would corner with a brew, the spot out, and Billy still on the stool, nursing one himself, and dreaming on the blue box all of the quiet sounds that lived with him like the blood that ran through his skinny little frame. Preach dug it closer than me, I know, but I felt it and I've never felt it quite the same since. It had nothing to do with Zabe or the house or even me or Preach, except at the bottom and there it meant all of us. Just Billy alone in the blue saying a lot of torn up things that couldn't be said any other way. Zabe was so much brown smoke and thunder. Billy alone was air and light and the sound of a river, born

with it and trying to get it out for anyone who needed it. And it was hard to tell if anyone knew they did.

I'm not saying Zabe didn't dig Billy the way he was. It's just that he needed him so bad the weird kind of frantic fear that he'd split on him cut the real appreciation. But in his own 'Dad-like' way he loved him.

Like the time during the first week when we hit the union for my transfer. I met Zabe at his pad up in Laurel Canyon. He'd sung about it all week Wild sort of castle with a world view and a pool on the side sort of jazz. It was wild all right. The boxer pup saw to that. A smelly shack he 'owned' by virtue of the case he paid on it a thing called rent. And the pool .. well, I don't know. Zabe said it was there. But I was the least of them to scale a small Everest to dig it. But for him it was there. It was that important.

The place was crawling but he loved it for one reason other than the pup.

like it i you matta kand thas nunhene set make later one Then

nobody askin', Billy moves in with a towel and the box, sayin' nothin', and we swing for weeks until he sees the edge fall off me and he cuts, sayin' nothin' again, and I can make it alone. Billy does this for me and I ride out safe. I don't know what else but this, I swear.'

And I believed him because of Billy.

Things got bad after my four for tips. The house soured on Zabe and he tasted it and got desperate. Only he didn't level. He said they'd picked up two more, maybe three, and the agent had us booked after that. Billy wanted to know for sure. He was down on Zabe and had an offer. He always had an offer but this was the first time he'd let it sink in or out.

It started with Zabe saying why don't he flip that stool and mingle some, talk it up, let the cats know he's alive. Billy blew it and slammed Zabe for lying about him, for blowing hot to the crowd. 'Play, man, and cut the gas,' he warned him. 'You got no truth in you off the keys.'

And then it came, after Billy turned down the offer over a contract Zabe showed him. The paper was smoke and Peter's hadn't picked us up for even one. Billy listened quietly and that last night waved a Greyhound tab for Fresno under the stogie and split without a word. Zabe went pale and quiet and stayed that way.

Weeks later and pounds lighter we booked into a far joint that cost us our bread in gas. Billy was going to make it all along, Zabe said, but he'd got sick. Preach had a letter saying he was swinging his own group in Frisco but he never showed it to Zabe.

We made the gig by house standards for several weeks with a fair sound but Zabe never opened up. All he talked about at the tables was Billy-boy-his, and he never stopped watching the door. He'd conned a chick in the meantime and it kept him cool but he never opened up, like Billy had the key. Like Billy had everything except the chick and the pup.

Vegas was next and he got excited. It sounded bad. Big room against the bar and the tables and the clatter of silver. But Zabe was up and for the first time he forgot about Billy. He was a wheel in Vegas. He'd been rolled out a dozen times. He dug trying for hard thirteen.

It was better than Preach and I had hoped for and Zabe stayed up, the chick and pup with him in the name of his love. The town had almost forgotten. There were too many laughs to remember and nobody was broke anymore and best of all, Zabe didn't hold the loot this time. Something gave and forgave and Zabe stayed up.

The top was the night the three of us pooled a deuce each and turned Zabe loose on the tables. He hit everything like he had Internal Revenue carved on his arm and in two hours we had four bills apiece. He wanted to go all night but we talked him out of it and we started driving for kicks, the top down and all of us breathing stars.

'Man, we got a sound,' Zabe said. 'We swing all around. Can't miss with kiddies like you underneath. I dig this night is things to come. Hang with - old Zaby and we'll swing the clock around. Wow, I'm up, man! I'm real up!'

We drove in silence awhile, his arm around Preach in the middle and his hand mussing my head alongside. And then he jammed on the brakes.

'Gotta call Billy, man. What's wrong here? Gotta call him, that's all. Gotta get back. Nothin' in the way now. Gotta swing Billy back. Just gotta!'

We tried to stop him but he whipped the car around and headed back to town. He called Fresno, Billy's folks, and got the old man deep in the pillow. Screamed, 'Wake him up! Get him here! Got news! Got everything!' And then the old man cut through to him about Frisco and he hung up in the middle. Preach said we knew it but didn't want to say but he didn't hear. He just walked away and we let him go.

Next night it went all to pieces. He'd beat the chick half to death and she'd split on him. And about tune three he turned to tears and said he couldn't play. He was bawling right there at the keys with no sound to cover and Preach and I panicked. But somehow he played through, a whisper that made no sense, and the next set he came back loaded and stupid gay. He held on for three nights and then just didn't show. We skipped the first set and came up with a sub for the rest. A few complaints but a week went by and we were still hung.

Set two Saturday night we're anxious as hell, full of rumors about the union, when like a brat with a new toy Zabe pops up at the bar below us, a fat, melon-hung broad laying all over him, and orders a malt glass full of orange juice like it was sunkist all the way. We made it through the set and jumped him right after. He's placid and grinning with a twelve inch cigar roaring between his dirty teeth.

'Easy, kiddies. All's cool. Dig this. Baby and me made it in Reno. We're all cuttin'. Paid off the week, just like that. L.A., man -tonight. We got it made. Cover with this.' He sticks out a couple of twenties. Records, man, a plush house for kicks, the whole bit. We don't need this jazz nowhere. Pack, kiddies. We're swingin' out and Billy's waitin' at the other

Preach and I started to say something but he gives us a slip of paper with a Beverly Hills address on it, then splits in a blast of smoke and the ripe gas

of the broad's hot perfume. 'Later, kiddies. Day after tomorrow. But late now, baby. Don't bust our lunch time swing.' And disappears into the clatter of silver and bone and the click of well-oiled wheels.

Back in L.A. we call but no answer and a week goes by, then two, and then Preach sounds me and gives me an address and says this is it, according to Zabe. We show and it's like he says, even Billy's there and a pool on the side. The broad's for real and she's painted green. We all get a beer in a dirty glass. Then Zabe takes over and I watch Billy.

'Here's the action,' he begins, polishing a two-carat star on his left pinkie with a paper napkin. "My old lady and me, Baby here..? He bites into her thigh with his thick hand and she flinches respectfully. "We're formin' a sort of corporation with her old man and once we're off an' swingin', you get taken in and we cool it clean. Records, TV, guest shots, the ace, kiddies. No pain no more. Nothin' but slidin' here on in, dig? '

I dig Billy and he's watching a fly on the rim of his glass.

*Take a week or so to make it, you know, but once we swing, we never stop. You kiddies just hang on for a deuce or so and you got no more worries.'

'How, Zabe? 'I ask foolishly.

'You hungry, kiddie? 'he says.

'It ain't that. You got it in writing?'

'I'll put it there.'

'Now? "

'I told you. In a deuce or so."

'You tell me a lot of things, Zabe.'

'You nailin' me, Dad? How 'bout that? What about you, Preacher.. Billy? You want paper?

Preacher drank off his beer and Billy watched the fly strutting the rim of the glass.

'What's with you, kiddies, hey? After all I done, thought about for you, and here you cool on me. I don't dig?"

Billy was the first to get up. Zabe got up to meet him.

'You're with me, Billy boy, ain't ya? Ain't ya, huh? Course ya are. Now look, if it's loot, why, man, I can pay anything you ask. Just don't split, Billy. Anything, honest, but don't cut now. This is it. What we always said. Right here, Billy. Don't you see it, kiddie?'

Billy looked at him gently.

'Just dropped in 'cause you asked, Zabe. I got no eyes for nothin' else.'

'C'mon, man,' Zabe said, getting frantic, 'you just don't pick up. Stick and think about it some and we'll blow a little and it'll all come back. It's all for you, kiddie."

'Come down, man,' Billy said. "You just don't make it up there, that's all.'

Zabe closed in on him but Billy pushed him aside and walked out the door without a word. Half hysterically Zabe turned to Preach and me, saying, 'Go, man! We don't need you nowhere! What say, kiddies? More for the rest of us anyway you look at it!'

Preach got up then and said, 'Forget it,' and walked out. He was gone before Zabe even dug it. The door slammed and I was the only one left. Zabe didn't even know I was there. He turned to the broad who hadn't said a word but sat there with her face looking like 'glad' in caps. He hated her right there but he didn't have the guts to say it. I got up and he turned on me like I had a knife in my paw.

' You don't remember long, do ya, Dad?' he growled.

'Too long, Zabe,' I answered slowly, ' but only the good things.'

' Float, kiddie. I've had you, but good!'

I floated and left him standing there in silence, rubbing the ring and wondering where all the sound had gone.

That was the last time I ever saw Zabe but I did see Billy and Preach about. We all heard rumors that he'd put the broad on the skids in Vegas, went bust on a disc, got run out for the hard thirteenth and wound up scuffling in New York trying to remember where it all went bad.

He really knew but he couldn't do anything about it. And we always talked about those five at Peter's for tips and a lie. And we couldn't get the sound out of our blood. We tried it together with other hands but believe it or not Zabe was always lacking. Billy knew it better than any of us. And we carried it with us on all the gigs like punks with a first love hung in our hearts. And as long as Preach and me and Zabe and Billy were about there was always a chance, even though we thought we didn't want it. But it was always Billy, really, because he had the thing to say and we had the swing to let him say it, all except Zabe who thought he could buy it for himself.

Now that Billy's split for good there's no more chance and wherever Preach is I think he feels like me. About Zabe, he's got nothing now but the little printed card and no Billy to sing over the lie. We're all split for keeps and there's no more use thinking about it. We'll breathe other stars, Preach and me, 'cause we got to. But Zabe'll never make it once the word sets in. He'll flip somewhere in the middle of a goofed up bridge or an all alone chord and no one but us will dig he's nothing but a nowhere jazz junkie hooked on the smoke of a long ago blue guitar.

Four Poems

*James Schevill**Death of a Cat*

A sultry, summer evening, the children playing jacks
in the hot and grimy garage
 under the yellow eyes of their grey cat,
when the rubbery jack ball
popped like a bubble into the street
 And the cocky cat after its red-streaking path.

Brakes scrunched, the cat shot up like a spark,
hit harshly over a tilted ear
 and the cross-legged children screamed
at the driven death of their pet;
while I hauled a hose to clean
 The clotted pavement stains I thought of an ancient legend.

In the Irish Golden Age three fasting clerks on pilgrimage
sailed hungrily off to sea,
praying with soft and folded hands
their serene faith in God's care.

But the young clerk said in his caution,
 * I think I will take the silence of my small, grey cat."

On the rocky shore of an island they beached the boat
and kneeled to speak the Psalms;
the cat crept to a wild wave
and snatched a salmon from the foam;
 still the clerks doubted the Lord's hand
 Until the fish began to burn upon a sudden fire of coals.

Kneeling shadowy on the oily pavement I saw
some jelly of the cat's lost brain,
a little mound of curious cells
clinging against the asphalt veins
and fountainhead of lashing water.
 Only the hose's full fury washed the cells away.

The myth of the showering, supernal claw grew old
in the grey silence of evening,
lost in the glittering air;

*though as the water smashed the cells
they flickered in tingling twilight*
Like sparks snapping through the foam of a fire.

The Baron of Bulk

*The baron of bulk
Bent over the jabbing, hydraulic drill;
Stripped to the waist his skin shone
Like polished leather,
Hot and heavy
With a shimmering shake of muscles.*

*The sidewalk crowd
Watched and idled in the searing sun
When eighteen years of feminine fragility
In white office dress
And tortoise shell glasses
Asked timidly: ' Mister, let me run that.'*

*A huge, sweaty hand
Pushed up his goggles from dirt-stained eyes
And his teeth cracked like a click beetle:
* Lady, I gotta muscle
This tough rammer and
You ain't got enough tallow for candlelight."*

*The idling crowd laughed
And the girl melted away in a bright confusion
While the baron of bulk hunched to his work,
Dreaming a fleshly woman
The size of his fancy
With a brimming, breakaway bounce to her gait.*

Gambling in Las Vegas

Each neon night the house bank roll is \$500,000.
 Business backlashes style, white spot on the crap tables,
 Watch the whip shot, 'Up jumped the devil,' cries the stickman.
 Spinning roulette rolls placid as a paddle wheel
 While paternal managers caution the credit limit,
 Build for the gambling widows a bleachers gallery,
 Where they loll in a fire of filtered cigarettes.
 Swang go the slot machines, jingle the jackpots,
 And the silver cartwheels roll from the blonde cashier.
 The house has a hundred hunting eyes casing the chiselers:
 Floormen focus on droning dealers and cardsharppers,
 Pit bosses, bulky bulldogs, peer at the floormen,
 While the housemen, intent from their high ladders,
 Devour the air with their sucking mouths like hagfish.

In Sharp Moonlight

* The everlasting eyes of Pierrot...-Hart Crane

*I come home in sharp moonlight,
 Past lovers timeless in time,
 Through kissing figures of memory,
 Thinking of Pierrot's mime.*

*On the corner a girl in jeans
 Necks in a yellow hot rod.
 Her boyfriend with ducktail
 Pecks at her, birdlike odd.*

*This is no city for Pierrot,
 White face over his pantaloons,
 His love a mask of midnights
 Over the commercial noons.*

*Naked dummies gaping from a store
 In the light's white lassitude,
 Hear skidding tires rip at
 The chords of a carnival mood.*

*And yet it is all the same:
 Lovers meeting at the whistle's hiss
 Of midnight when time stops
 And Pierrette comes in to kiss.*

En Route

Enclosed within the air-conditioner
(Streamlined and diesel), among the scotches and
The sodas and the sway beneath the floor,
We are Olympian in safety glass
And stainless steel: not Joves (we throw no lightning),
But demigods. Beyond the tyrannies
Of ticking time and jagged ends of space,
We note the metamorphoses of things:
A man, a stone; a stone, a house; a house,
A hill; a hill, a mud-hole -- what's the difference?
Immune to this, we light a cigarette
And flip the pages of a magazine.
Outside, our doubles hurry off to work.
They are like us, but mutable: they kiss
Their wives goodbye and melt from sight, while we
Remain, the models for these changing shapes,
Fixed forms inhaling antiseptic air.
Idle, we pass through industry:
The factory is a box with men inside,
A black container guarded by barbed wire.
The instant drops away indifferently,
And, offering no comment, now becomes
The cemetery climbing up the hill
Where, laid among the pious monuments,
A bouquet withers at the Virgin's feet.
The world in flux glides past our eyes; we feel
Neither curiosity nor fear,
But laugh and rattle ice cubes in a glass.
And while the finite sun is burning out,
Our light glows cold and hard unceasingly;
We have no day or night, we do not rise
Or fall or change from then to now -- we are:
Pure being never ripens, never rots;
We move, but stay the same; around us swirls
A Proteus. We scratch our heads as earth
Chameleons from day to death; we chat,
We buy another drink, we smoke, we yawn
And feel the ennui of Elysium.

- Jack Anderson

Two Poems

*Ruth Finer Mintz**Pain Is a Pleasure I Will Not Keep*

*Pain is a pleasure I will not keep,
 I taste her and put her away.
 I know she is ancient as subtle sleep,
 I know she was born today.*

*Pain is a pleasure my need must meet,
 I cradle her in my arms:
 Yet could I trample her under my feet
 I would grind her to dust for a charm.*

*Yes, beauty is born out of pain and life:
 But always she cuts the breath:
 And dances about with a whetted knife
 And chants for her lover death.*

*And I have no lover in death at all
 Although I am going to die:
 And I shall not run at his final call
 And I do not like to cry.*

*Oh I can eat pain for my daily bread,
 Eat pain if I must and forgive:
 And lie down to sleep with demanding death:
 But I shall rise up and live.*

*Revere House and Square**Boston 1956*

*Brown wooden house
 Still clean and upright
 On a dirty street
 Among fast crumbling brick -
 Within you still stands,
 Silent now, the wheel
 That turned taut thread
 Into the homespun cloth -
 Cloth for the naked
 Vulnerable hope
 Of this our day.*

*Only in memory
 The running footsteps
 Leave this doorway
 Echoing alarm.
 For now we come as they
 Reflected in the dusty panes
 Of squalid shops.
 What gleams? - The silver
 Coin across the counter
 Bright as bayonet.*

*Within the nearby square
 Old men in shabby coats,
 The sold and resold Europe
 Still upon their tongues
 And in their eyes -- move
 Checkers on the squared off
 Battlefield.*

*The horse of freedom
 Rears but stands.
 Both horse and rider
 Are congealed
 In gilded bronze*

Revolt in Manhattan

One April afternoon
 in a penthouse garden blooming tidy private patterns
 thirty floors above the common fields
 a ragged woodchuck, peasant lout
 from some dirty pauper plot,

Strutted the costly guarded loam,
 halted at the rarest camellia,
 seized the stem, O bent
 the priceless treasure,

Popped the curled colors into his mouth!
 He leaned at ease by the looted stalk
 munching sacred scarlets.

- Grove Becker

Two Poems

*Scott Greer**·Valses Nobles et Sentimentales'**for San Novit*

Black and golden the leaves careen
From the great fountain, the dying tree,
Caught in the wind of the music, turning
Gracefully and eerily.

The stasis of midnight: over the floor
Of the ballroom waltzing, borne on the wave,
The brilliant dreams of humanity
Gold against darkness, whirling away

Through tall doors of eternity
(The golden stuff has withered away
To delicacy, to faery lace --)
Through doors like the skeleton leaf

They pass and are melted away
All the brave figures of musical Autumn,
Drifted away and lifted away
In the fall, in the dying Fall.

*The last cold light wherein you lay
Stripped the flesh to fate and bared,
Far from the semblance that we shared,
The terrible beauty of the clay;*

*The force of life in the thick aorta
Drifted away before the eyes
Through the cold flaw, in the broken wall,
Humanity was lost.*

*Humanity that carried you
By lieder, harpsichord, and love,
Far past the hours that were your due
Only to break you down*

At last, at last, when you joined the waltz.
Over the air in the gay midnight
When women laughed and danced with you

That was the hour Death approached
For the golden stuff had withered away
In a fury of golden flame

Through tall and elegant doors
Your soul was called and lead away
While here in the ballroom the long strings sang

And Death so merged with the dark backdrops
(Only one dancer had left the floor)
Few really knew you had gone away
As the women turned, and the waltzes roared.

At Three Rocks

for Dorothy

The road is choked with alder trees and alder stumps
(It does not matter, it goes nowhere)
Pale adolescent green, green air in gentle clumps
Shivering against an early sun
Still smoking with the dew, still trapped in berry vines.

Now slowly the ripe vacation-sun ascends
The salt-silvery terraces of fog and green and sky,
Slowly the sunflowers crisp and slowly
The late rhododendrons, a pale and ragged pink
Flash in the sunlight of the memoried woods.

And now she returns through summer to the cold spiced
Summers of an earlier time,
A year, ten years ago? No one can say,
Surrounded by the maze of dripping green and berry vines.
The morning surrounds her like a halo of young days:
This is the place, and this the time.

She sees the flash of rhododendrons virginal
Pink among the green, and sees the child
Pale adolescent green, green limbs and silvered green
Against the greater green, the upward-arching forest there.
The road is choked with alder trees and bleeding alder stumps;
It does not matter, it goes nowhere.

A GIRL, A DREAM, AN ACCIDENT.

Curtis Zahn

Absolutely, they said, but what else can we do about it, and I whispered Nothing.

" If we don't, they will, and if they do, that's all.

· Meaning, drop --' one of them told another one.

* It, said the other.

The committeeroom consisted of three. Walls. And five. Cabinets. And here, in alphabetical rows were pictures, trophies, photographs and stuffed Hungarians. But the walls; shunned by drapes, sterilized by floor to ceiling white lead, they named but one impurity." A sign. Giltframed. Small. Underplayed. Perhaps oversimplified. It said, No.

I glanced wantonly at the girl and she said, ' try me.'

Why. You wondered?

' If we don't, then they will, and if they do, then that is all?

If they, you asked, what?

' Drop it,' she answered lazily, ' the bomb."

Nothing.

After all, had changed. The Multitudes still turned to their electric lights for illumination. They knelt for praying or picking up stunned sparrows. They reached for the highest shelves, displaying -- if women -- the promising stretch of windstruck yardage. They; made frequent, apologetic trips to their bathrooms, and they supped daintily, as though the act were a vulgar revelation of the animal. And slept standing up, in order to be Ready....

I thought, why should I try. Her?

They pressed their question, dropped; ice-cubes into their drinks and rotated their glasses clockwise for the cooling. And then said. " Certainly it's inhumane, surely it's dangerous, but you got solutions? '

' None,' I told them, ' every day -- none.'

You have got to be realistic about the whole thing, she said, the girl said, this she said.

' Face Fax,' the chairman said, spelling it that way.

'No matter, the ugliness,' a first lieutenant seconded.

* Not a time for dreamy idealism! Away with white doves wearing falsies! Beware of Quakers carrying briefcases.'

This. Was the quiet, loaded power of voices talking in chorus. From individuality all of them had sped, facing you as a statistic. ... It's either them or us,' the girl warned. Her expression? Owls surprised by flashlights in attics. Must there, I never inquired, always. Be a winner, a loser?

· When God made the world he set it up that way,' they chanted in unison, ' the Almighty wanted it to be so?

The girl undid her top button. Now, having arrested my attention, she added, quietly, 'maybe the good people won't be hurt by fallout. Maybe it's only the bad ones. Maybe some kind of justice we don't know about. Maybe God or somebody' She suggested a smile; I took it, but could give her none in return. Maybe the people struck down by it here and there are really the evils. The goods are spared --

Maybe, you said. The tongue was dry, for the water was escaping by other channels. Maybe, you said, but if this is true, then we've a contract with the Devil. Cost plus. We're supplying him with war materials --

'Oh, no-no-no, no-no,' they said simultaneously, 'supplying God with war materials.'

You glanced at the motto on the wall if you were I and saw that they were correct; No.

*God is an ally of ours, the girl whispered.

What's the matter, I asked, afraid he'll hear you?

She undid her second button. An act unselfish, for the war effort. Id like to try you now, you heard my voice saying.

· For the good of the cause,, she said.

'In line of duty.'

I wondered, watching and waiting. The members of the committee had known group therapy, and they remembered modesty, and began walking away on invented errands. Several excused themselves for the bathroom but you knew that there was but one for men in the entire building. I helped them then. I suggested that the night air was fresh and beautiful, perhaps not at the moment dangerous. I told of the imaginative paintings hung crookedly in the hall. I mentioned possible coffee in the catering room. Their voices underwent small adjustments, and their feet tramped self-consciously away. Alone. And girl.

I looked at her, but she was already looking at me so I looked at the motto and said, 'yes.'

*I really can't, you know-

·It's okay, you told her, we'll just talk."

What would you like to talk about?

What would / like to talk about?

Yes, what would you like to talk about?

Well, I'd like to talk about fallout.

It rhymes doesn't it?

What?

Talk about/fall -- out.

And then I said, 'everybody talks about fall -- out but nobody does anything about fall - out.'

We're not manufacturing parts for the Devil, she insisted, and I knew she was sincere, for her cigarette went out.

I said, God didn't make hell. Hell is run by a separate organization.

' Well, then -

nThen we're helping hell. God wouldn't touch the stuff. He's love, God.

But is it really so wrong, really, she asked? I mean, she said, we are

helping God by helping the Devil punish the bad people. What's the big difference? Why not help make Hell a terrible place -if it needs help -- so long as you and I and the rest of the chosen people won't be there? God's got his hands full as it is. Any little help we can give him --

It was new, it was a cold abstract, falling onto the sidewalks from a second-floor window. It was as though you had been reborn below the belt and moved upstairs.

* Besides --' she had pulled her skirt up to where I usually wore my belt.
' Besides -- it's quite obvious --

What was obvious in a darkened room?

' Obviously the Almighty is unable to do the job alone. Let's face it."

You were seeing it without facing it.

Perhaps there was a time, oh, no -- yes -- a time when God was the most powerful man in the world. He could do it! Do it! Now he's like England -

There will always not be an England, I knew. Still, it was an oddity, the hot fact of Junior Leaguers serving canteens to the boys, peeling doorbells, peeling for charity functions and always lined up for the wrong side - war, violence, aid to the losers in violence. Walking backwards through history on high heels then. Collecting money for your heart while asking it to be shot at. Aloud you asked, ' like England?'

* Finished. Passed by -- outbuilt. Like a tottering king, God."

The committee continued to go to the bathroom.

She told about the Hydrogen. She imagined cost-plus. She thought of money and promised that there was enough to buy God if he was at all for sale. If not, the nicest thing anyone could do for him was to make him a present of the hydrogen bomb.

You told her you didn't think Congress would go for it.

But why?

Her legs, glowing in the new dark now, were beginning to blind my reasoning.

I said, 'you're suggesting we should give away our precious secrets? Risk having them used against us later??

But this was different. But God was on our side.

Nevertheless it was a risk. The Russians might talk him out of it. They might steal it. They might outright take it away from him when his back was turned.

' Hell,' she said. Her hand struck fire as it rubbed her leg. ' Why -- you're right! Yes!'

The motto which said ' no ' I noticed, was gone.

' God would be hurt if he overheard us,' she whispered, and the effect was false intimacy. I wondered if her legs were contagious..

Contaminate me, you whispered.

No, she whispered, I can't --

Contaminate me -- please --

No. Let's talk. I mean whisper.

What'll we whisper about?

Let's see. Well, anything. We could whisper about fallout again -
What about fallout?

Some fell on me.

I know.

I know you know.

How did you know I knew?

I knew that you knew when I came to the discussion tonight. I read my metabolism in your eyes. I sent out signals and got them back. The committee knows that I know that you know.

Then, they knew that she knew that they knew that she knew that you knew. Somebody had talked --

I said, 'I'm sorry that you're sorry I'm sorry.'

Her cigarette, greenly glowing, exploded with minimum damage. You wondered why they had preferred to do the walls with white lead instead of red-lead. So many unknowns! And each with hurriedly improvised answers. I said that I had a feeling about God's feelings because he was feeling her now.

'Feeling -- me?'

'Yes. Your thoughts respond to the touch because he is turning you over and over in his mind tonight, like an oozing bird over a spit.'

"Then he knows -"

Certainly he knows.

'I wonder if God got any on him?'

Any what?

'Any -- you know.'

This, you exclaimed, was possible. God is everywhere. There is so much of him. Almost certain to have been burned, especially the lower parts close to New Mexico.

'My God! Then he can't have children! He might die! He might even be dead!'

I nodded. But it was an accident, of course --

* An accident! 'Furiously she was rebuttoning herself. Her skirt had been snatched down abruptly. As though a shade were drawn against the light.

'An accident! That would be unforgivable!'

You reminded her that God forgives.

'How can he forgive if he's dead?'

You reminded her you've got to be realistic, it's always been this way, a few must be sacrificed so that the world can go on. It's, it's, it's, well, unfortunate -

'God was expendable,' she said loudly, sadly.

I glanced suddenly at the wall and caught the motto offguard. It said, *maybe.' There was nothing more to be done now until the committee returned for the questioning. My wristwatch had dissolved but I knew that it was almost time.

LYSERGIC ACID AND THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

Mel Weisburd

Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, a synthetic ergot alkaloid, is one of the several types of hallucinogenic drugs that have been coming into experimental use in the study of schizophrenia and mystical and creative experiences. Some experts believe that Lysergic

"schizophrenic" whereas mescaline is primarily 'hallucinogenic. As a subject of an experiment here in Los Angeles I seemed to have experienced both. Actually, I first went through a period of anesthesia, withdrawal, euphoria, and in the day following, severe depression. The effects of the drug were accompanied by a slight difficulty in coordination which lasted for six hours. Although my normal senses returned to me in the two days following, I still retained a sort of cineramic vision. At least for me, this experience, which was the happiest day in my

1. LSD demonstrates beyond a doubt the true realisms of the sense perceptions and the renewed possibilities of both the child-like imagination and mature wisdom.
2. Experience is born from a common source, and all significance is simultaneous and equal.
3. Human values are primarily aesthetic.
4. The values of human existence are not abstractions, but are direct reactions to the basic experiences of our sense-perceptions. These sense perceptions can only lead to moral precepts based on an affirmation of life.
5. The drug only brought out my truthful self. For someone else, these truisms might not apply, and for still others, the direct opposite might obtain.

* *

Six tiny spheres of lysergic acid diethylamide - 150 micrograms -- so tiny that they lodged in my teeth before I could swallow them. Dr. Irving commented that he thought I was resisting the experiment. I explained that as a child I swallowed pills only with great difficulty. He said he thought that was significant. At this early in the morning I couldn't have been more indifferent to the thread of analysis. As a matter of fact, I had never been to his office at this early in the morning, and I was already taken by the unfamiliar aspect of these familiar surroundings. The office was damp and had the dusty smell of carpets. The lounges were cold and clammy. His desk was unarranged, as if there had been a seminar here the night before, followed by coffee. There was already a little touch of conspiracy here, perhaps, because, just off the foyer another analyst and patient were in session. At any rate, despite my fears, I felt as if I were in competent hands: incisive competence in the book shelves, emergency competence in the recovery rooms, unabashed competence in the ugly morning light of his fashionable waiting room.

Dr. Irving seemed impatient. I was perhaps his one-hundredth subject. He,

himself, had fumbled with the pills, they were so small. Do whatever you feel like doing,' he said, ' walk around the room, read, write. Do whatever you like.' And he sat down to read. He looked up every now and then to ask whether I felt anything. I said I felt nothing.

After about 50 minutes the chill intensified. It was in my veins now, cold and viscous. I began to feel as if I were being prepared for surgery. There was, for instance, that peculiar salt-like, blood-tasting nausea produced when one takes a barium salt injection for an X-ray. My gums and teeth also became anesthetized as if from novocaine. My jaw and bridge-work enlarged, and I felt embarrassed by a decided feeling of prognathism. I had neanderthal features. Then my lower jaw seemed to disconnect from my skull as if it could be mechanically detached and manipulated, like the head-piece of a knight's armor.

It seemed as if I could have sat for hours, weary, but sleepless as well, watching the Venetian blind and Dr. Irving glancing up at me from time to time as if to make sure that I was not yet a hazard to myself. The room was dark and the sunlight cluttered through the Venetian blinds on the window. Dr. Irving was seated at his desk, but on the dark-side of the room. I had to observe him through the stream of morning light. Nothing was changing -- except I seemed to capitulate to something -I was staring without thinking. as if what I saw went through me like X-rays, or better yet, that I had two retinas in each eye: one which registered and the other which photographed. Or that I saw a sort of variegated ivy of shadow images, like the double exposures of three dimensional movies, before you use the 3-D glasses. Except, that I saw the room and Dr. Irving and the street outside the window in their single outlines.

I was annoyed at Dr. Irving's suggestion that we go and have some tea at a coffee shop down Wilshire Boulevard. Going out was like diving into an ice-cold pool. I would never have made the decision, if it weren't for Dr. Irving. Nevertheless, we went. Outside the sun was shining, and Wilshire Blvd. was merry with all colors and styles of automobiles. There was a smog nesting in Wilshire Blvd.

At the counter I noticed that the ceiling of the coffee shop rose to cathedral heights and that I had the feeling of being squashed. The Negro waitress who came to take our order rose above me, gigantically beautiful. Her eyes were large and swollen, brilliantly enlarged. The blood vessels in the corners of her eyes were a deep coral red. There seemed to be an almost intolerable pressure behind those eyes. There was a dexterity in her pupils, a dexterity that came from terrible experience, terrible fear. Otherwise, she had a lean and documentary look.

She was waiting for my order, but I could not gather myself. Impatience seemed to flare at her nostrils. I felt like backing away, but I could not move. I managed, however, to give her my order for tea and toast -- or rather it was my habit speaking as if through centuries. Don't worry how you look,' Dr. Irving assured me, ' you look quite normal to others.' But this was no assurance, certainly everyone in the coffee shop must be aware that I had a birds-eye view of him. There was not an attitude or mood of the waitress that I

could not avoid observing with great detail and with much embarrassment, as if she had disrobed before me in public. And not only was I confronted with the magnificent detail of all of the faces in the coffee shop, but with their strange language. Nuances which were ordinarily subtle and discrete leaped out of their contexts, as if I had overheard conspiracies. A phrase, a word would amplify itself into a major theme, just as background music in a movie anticipates impending disaster. I became a most daring accessory to everyone's crime. One was in great danger to be so close to the innermost jungles of people in that well populated coffee shop.

Outside, the sun filtered through the smog, but I was still cold. My clothes hung on me like coarse damp muslin sheets. My body now was quite petrified, I seemed to have lost sensation, especially the sensation of a filled stomach. Yet, I felt preserved and protected. When we reached Dr. Irving's office, I saw the sunlight flooded in the leaves of grass. It was like a photo-reconnaissance flight from which I mapped the rugged insect terrain. Each blade of grass was a flashing green followed by a yellow pantomime of a blade, as yellow as Van Gogh's cornfields. It seemed now that anything that grew possessed a surplus of life, that it overflowed to fill a complementary portion of the spectrum, with its image. At this point I was suddenly aware that while the grass drew my attention I had somehow lost Dr. Irving. That I was distracted and that it would take centuries before I could speak to him. I was aware, though I could not resist it, that experience was discontinuous, and yet simultaneous. Dr. Irving was now sitting close to me with his feet crossed just next door in another world.

Just then a woman came up the walk. I do not remember what Dr. Irving said to her, but he seemed to speak to her personally. His familiarity with her seemed almost adulterous, and all of the sexual implications of what he said were articulated simultaneously. As if all double meanings were now in the public domain. She smiled and laughed at what Dr. Irving said. I began to giggle convulsively, tickled by the distortions in the conversation. Somehow, we were all three communicating in short wave. Dr. Irving was the signal, and it made no difference what he said. And whatever the signal, I would receive it on whatever gorgeous frequencies vibrated through me. Still there was the devastating undertone that I was the butt of a private joke hidden in the hibiscus; the secret of my whole experience, laughed at, with no one in all of the wide world to let me in on it.

After she disappeared into the building, I attempted to organize my experiences so I could talk to Dr. Irving, but without success. I seemed to have a minute memory. Dr. Irving asked me what I had been observing. I said the 'grass'. But I could not explain anything more. He said then, as if showing off his grasp of both unity and discontinuity, that a new biochemical theory holds no distinction between animal and vegetable matter and that all forms of life are vegetable, and that the earth itself was the common environment of what we think of as a dichotomy. Another socialist exercise, I thought. But the theory was truth at the moment. It seemed as if the deepest intelligence of my mind wanted to synthesize, to unify cats, dogs and onions. I was in the center of the godhead like a plane in a thunderhead.

I finally asked Dr. Irving what would in all normal reality be a trite and embarrassing question, 'What is reality?' It was not, however, a philosophical question. I simply wanted to be oriented to get my bearings. And yet the question was philosophical in the sense that I did not need the directions, I was not going any place. Not requiring the direction, I only desired with curiosity the experience of orientation for whatever it was worth. 'Why, this is reality,' he replied. 'Yes, yes, I know this is reality, I replied, 'but I mean before, was that reality?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'but now only more so.' I couldn't keep up with it any longer. 'Signal Blinkers,' I replied, as if I were telling him to go to heaven in one of those automobiles. 'Oh, you get a kick out of the blinkers,' he replied.

We then went into his office and I reclined in a lounge chair. Dr. Irving then moved off to talk to a colleague somewhere in the suite of rooms. Now my body was really numb, as before, but with some difference. My insides were not quite focused in my skeletal cavity. It felt, almost, as if I were being manipulated electromagnetically. The effort required to move my body whispered through invisible muscles over great relay systems. Silent digestive processes telegraphed phenomena in my vision. I closed my eyes and saw a sailor waving his semaphores from a yawing ship at a great distance away. I saw blasts of light reverberating purplish clouds and plumes of smoke; red lightning, as if traced from the blood vessels in my eyes. Line drawings: white, red, and purple faces and eyes upon velveteen black. Gigantic proletarian murals. Often I would see a pillar of light against a blackened horizon, like an atomic blast. And this, the world of light and dark, I viewed with my hands cupped to my closed eyes as if through the eyepiece of a cinemascope.

To open my eyes, as to change any state I might happen to find myself, required a major revolution of will. The thought to do so came half-formed, only to be immediately forgotten, then thought of again. And then there was a time interval between the thought and the action permitting an onrush of new distractions.

With my eyes open again, it was like looking through a new and special eye piece. It might have been a telephoto lens, with its peculiar distortion of depth of held, flattening the background, or a powerful pair of binoculars, with a slight quality of astigmatism. Or it might have been a microscope through which I observed the rock-like strata, in a sliver of wood. Or it might have been polaroid glasses diffracting blue and green light. It was through this latter instrument that I sometimes observed a pastel green halo forming in the shade around Dr. Irving's features. Each of these 'visions' comprised a complete and distinctive reality, holding to its own requirements of natural law. In this way, the four walls of the room would be dissociated into corollary dimensions. Thus the Venetian blinds streaming sunlight were governed by the slats of solar fire and the moon-dark bars, an imposing penology. The opposite wall, on the other hand, with its framed medical and university degrees, dissolved in a kind of cool tubercular light; a divine illness that the medical world would never diagnose.

And if distraction held me inert, so did activity. It seemed as if I would

run forever across tremendous units of time and space, farther and farther into interiors, into basements and closets, into private therapy rooms, recovery rooms, crashing outwards into the curving yields of the outdoors. Restlessly on my feet, I would sometimes be sidetracked into special channels of time and space. The change in sensation produced in each room by its light, texture and size, existed for its own sake. It was sometimes as if I were in a tesseract, as if I were in a supremely designed building whose entire plan I would never comprehend or whose rooms I would never completely see.

After a while --I cannot say 'a while' either, time was not recognizable --the immediate past did not disappear from forgetfulness, but was something seen, heard or felt that withered physically away from the new impression. It was not the past of memory, but the echo, the halation of a current effect: the doubling, tripling images seen; I felt as if I were being pushed out from the head of a mushroom; the fading experiences squashing and dropping away with the driving effect of music. The future did not exist, except in an inexplicable yearning.

After a while, Dr. Irving returned with the woman. We sat around and talked. There were some jokes made at my expense and some comments about my 'pro-dromal' symptoms. I criticized them for wasting their time structuring, since the whole business had been planned. Why all of this sophistry? Dr. Irving ignored me and continued to tell some professional jokes which illuminated the difference between psychiatrists and psychologists, as if to mediate the scene with levity. Had I been able to retain the levity, before he ran amok in burlesque, comedy and deep philosophical introspection, I might have explored it like a dark continent. Even a flat statement would send me into uproarious laughter, as when later during the course of the 'experiment' I sat morosely in a chair contemplating the effects of the drug as they wore off, he dialed the phone, and after one and a half centuries said rather urgently, 'Hello, hello, Encyclopedia Britannica? No, well I'll call back later.' I died with laughter, and it seemed as if there was a tremendous audience laughing with me. Couldn't he see that we were already here in the deepest, darkest Africa, here in the superabundance of life, of knowledge, catalogued and indexed by its own laws, here where everything is at the rock-bottom of arbitrariness - here even in his own biochemical unity of animal and vegetable. "The Encyclopedia Britannica," indeed!

I was dizzy now, with the three of us, from moving through rapidly changing topographies of conversation, dizzy from free-falling like Botticellian angels into spirit atmospheres.

Dr. Irving suggested that we leave, take off in his sports car and head for a park. This time I did not feel confined to my own inertia. I was eager for experience.

If the first three hours were a taste of the power of consciousness, the second three were to bring me in touch with its living secret. Outside, the vicissitudes of my experiences died down, and in the sunlight I began to explore the nature of existence itself. In the alley, I heard two kids yelling in a room on the second story of a building. The voices grew sharply in volume

until I heard an entire gym echoing with scores of children's voices. Suddenly there was a pool there among the kids, and they were splashing, laughing, talking, screaming. I felt the father and the son of the germ plasm brewing in the warmth of the sun on the ocean and the amniotic fluid of the great mother of morning in the sky! Now, I could almost touch and speak to my own childhood, heal it, and kiss myself.

Then we climbed in the sports car and rode off like itinerant angels. At first, I held on for my dear life, for it seemed as if we were flying. I turned to Dr. Irving to warn him that he was going much too fast and noticed that his face had been streamlined. As he shifted gears, the motor roared and stampeded like a hundred unharnessed stallions. We seemed to flash by cars like mammoth whales. Dr. Irving's determined 'drag-race' look aroused in me the literal feeling that he was straining at a gnat. 'Don't worry,' he said. 'I'm not going as fast as you think I am. We're only doing around 30: 'Really?' 'I said, holding tight to my hand grip, unsure of my invulnerability. 'Well, how do you like this, isn't it wonderful?' Dr. Irving barked. 'Yes, yes, it's fine,' I said still worried by the pavement which rushed at us like a tidal wave. "This is it, you have it now!" he said. "What?" "The common pathways of all human experience. This is where we all came from." 'Yes,' I replied. I could not make sentences, but I was deliriously happy to know that my suspicions were correct. As we stopped for a light, I reached over the door of the sports car and pounded my pipe on the asphalt. 'Knock on wood?' he asked smiling. 'No, no,' I replied, 'knock on earth!' 'That's right,' he replied. I might have said then, 'How are things on earth these days?' for despite my knowledge and intimacy with many planets, I had an extremely warm regard for the earth. It was like being back to your hometown and standing on the precise spot where you were born.

We were on Olympic Boulevard which, like all six-lane boulevards in Los Angeles, was sick with nervous stop-and-go traffic. But now Olympic Boulevard was Olympia, a great Sunday-driver pageant moving in vehicular streams to and from the cities and beaches of beatification. And suddenly, with the logic of a heavenly-wise wish, who should appear but a guardian angel formed in the likeness of an old girl friend, high on a motor scooter. Her fresh wind-blown face radiated the quintessence of the power of recognition, the sublimest nostalgia imaginable. In our matter-of-fact glance, there was not only the recognition of a friend, but the pure principle of kindredness. I had an overpowering warmth for everyone I knew and with everything that lived.

When we arrived at the park, we began walking towards it. 'Yup, this is it!' I remarked as if marking the place of my ecstasy. The air was unbelievably fresh. 'Wonderful,' Dr. Irving answered, 'You're supernatural now, supersane.' He patted me on the back. 'Just breathe this air. Isn't it wonderful? Here, look at this tree. What do you think of it?' "Supernatural,

the wide sidewalks, the rows of leafless, sinewy sycamore trees, all of these underscored with living emphasis, the word. 'Supernatural,' no division in nature, no separation of myself from anything; everything whole, everything integral. And in this fulfillment of existence, all desire was lost. Imagination

did not exist either, for that was an instrument of a falsely conditioned mind forced to manipulate pseudorealities, forced to endure the conflicts and the distortions of the flesh. Possession was ridiculous, for you possessed nothing. Vanity and egotism were frivolous for you were not an individual, but the infinite power of the germ plasm of the race. The body was a mere pedestal to hold experience. Death, therefore, was nothing, nothing at all, for life was indestructible.

I did not always hear Dr. Irving when he spoke to me, except when he took a wistful philosophical turn. When I returned to him, I came through, I don't know how many worlds, to a place and time I guessed to be earth. A place which in my sweetness, I could not be rude to. And in attempting to be considerate to my poor companion I wrenched what I thought was the

I said, 'capitalism and socialism make absolutely no difference at all. It's mold capital most significant of the useless troubles of the earth.' You know, Dr. Irving,

the germ plasm that counts. Don't let them fool you.' 'I know,' Dr. Irving replied, 'you're absolutely right,' as if he had also overturned his soul, as if he had also run smack into a channel of yearning, dropping his ludicrous role as experimenter.

As we entered the park, the volume of all my senses was turned up, and the natural world came into greater focus than I had hitherto experienced. Arras were drawn beyond the wings of my vision; the panorama of a complete garden world opened up to me. The geometry of this world was generous with green curving spaces: alcoves, like filigreed monasteries of shade; sand areas dissected into children's provinces; roman courts of bronzed tennis players sailing and leaping up in slow motion in the gentle breeze; trellised bushes which rose like pillars or hung from the sky. And what ever was large and colorful trumpeted itself like a Breughelian festival or Tchaikowskyan bravado. The baseball park was a setting for arcadia. Knights in blue-polished armor and purple flowing sashes and white glinting stallions might have galloped from one end of the park to the other. The world was nostalgic, the warm distilled juice of everything good I had ever experienced.

We walked around and around that ball park, exploring the senses. There was nothing to seek or discover any more. All that one wanted was here, realized in emotional fulfillment. My body barely touched the earth, seemed to drag itself like a spent parachute. I do not recollect looking at myself, seeing myself, imagining myself. I do not remember memory or pain. I only experienced the forms of life pushing and contracting in the spaces of my vision. The cypress tree, the cheeks of a scampering child puffing up in succulence and growing red, and the face of an old man that grew into a remarkable leather. The old faces which relaxed in youth, the bark of a tree which deepened into grand canyons. And the people -- they were all royal families in baroque ensembles whose voices murmured softly and carried great distances.

I believed what I saw implicitly. But this is an afterthought. Belief is one of the machines of self-justification. When one is impressed with such clarity, with a certainty that is objectified wherever one looks, vanity and pretension everywhere dry up. All energies ranged efficiently through the complete

transparency of my vision. No living thing was obscured or darkened by civilized opinions or by overshadowing institutions. Wordsworth and Vaughan and Traherne and Blake and Coleridge, they had it, and even Dylan Thomas, who drunkenly had it, but never understood it.

'It's like an orgasm,' Dr. Irving suggested, " like an eternal orgasm.' And yes, yes, he was right, by everything that is holy and sexual. That constant feeling of abandon, of giving oneself up to a driving force that exuberantly fructifies in every living thing; that selfless exhilarating releasing flight; that cool, damp breast-milk feeling of satisfaction in my throat and lungs.

And here, in complete innocence, I was in the garden again, and I would never leave, hobbling with Dr. Irving across the broad glittering silk bottoms of LaCienega and Wilshire Boulevards, helpless and idiot-like in the teaming parades and pageants of the world.

Ah... to the Villages

Leaving the splendid plaza and the esplanade --
 The majestic facades of metropolitan unease --
 Let us to the vast savannahs of despair
 Repair; and let us seek
 The panoramas of malaise, the continental anguish,
 The hysteria and the nausea of the villages;

Somewhere -- perhaps where Omaha, like a disease,
 And the magnificent, brumal names of Fargo, of Kalamazoo,
 Infect the spirit with magnificent ennui --
 A baroque splendor attends our small distress:
 We dress in the grand extravaganza of cafard.

Still, there will come evenings without true discontent --
 The sparrows loud in the dust and the crows gone cawing home
 To the little wood; the lights ending at the prairie end -
 As the divine and healing dark comes down --
 The town reeling with unreasonable content.

In the one-horse town they have eaten the house -- allons:
 But soft! here are not only the megrims of small forms
 And the subliminal melancholy of the central square.
 Take care; for here you find

An intermontano anguish in the wind that sings you home:
 Here is a false front distinguished as your own.

And contentment is momentary in the villages.

- Thomas McGrath

Two Poems

*Barbara Gibbs**The Intellectual Ladies, to the Poets*

Not for nothing are flames called tongues,
Being tongue-shaped, often forked,
 And being transformations.
 Wood to flame is as body to word.
 You are poor lovers, or the only good ones,
 To whom to kiss is to do,
The phallic tongue having more wit
 And subtlety than its brother.
To be ravished so is easy - and not.
 Our bodies have stricter functions,
 Would follow our minds
 Not to smoke and ash
 But as kite-string is uplifted by kite.
 Yet we take limited pleasure
 In your non-utilitarian light and heat --
 Never quite understanding,
 Content for a while to be warm
 And feel the glory on our faces.

No! Let's confess it.
 Wouldn't we give a dozen ordinary lovers
 For one of you
Who make sonnets in prose or verse
 Extempore, above our heads,
 Wherein we catch a secret
 And flattering meaning?

*The Creation**(Fire, Air, Water, Earth)*

On the fourth primal day He rent
 The universal tegument
 And scattered the bright sherds abroad
 To warm the spaces of the void --
 For sun by day and stars by night.

Chaos, the Old Infinite,
*Who on the first had gone to sit
 Beyond the unbroken skin of fire
 And mourn the universe secure
 Crept back through the interstices.*

The sherds God wrapped in cloudy dress

Through this curtain that we might see
*And be blessed in their harmony
 The circles of the heavenly fire*

-- Prefiguring us in His care
*Who on that day were hardly there.
 Now all upon their orbits moved
 As though the whole creation loved:*

The magnetism of the fire

Drew water upward unto air
*To consummate a marriage there
 And drop its seed upon the earth
 Bringing the vegetables to birth.
 They mutely praised Ens Entium.*

*The sixth day He created Adam
 Of mud and breath to worship Him.
 'But I'll temper this one,' He said
 And of the brightest substance made
 A perfect figure of desire.*

*The test: how Adam would aspire
 To know the principle of Fire.
 It danced upon the famous Tree
 And spoke: * Thou shalt not eat of Me
 But gaze upon the distant skies*

To slake your curiosities!
And God set Adam in Paradise.

Poems About Houses

*When you write poems about houses
 (the wind tonight is long Sibelius)
 you always remember to put in the sun
 yellow as custard on the rug
 and the castled comfort of carved oak
 and the glass all Venice by candle light,
 you always remember when you write about houses*

to mention beds white - soft as Leda's love
and how the wine catches the hearth flame
(there are no stars tonight, dear friend, not one).

I know a dark stair landing where once a boy
clenched his first fist
and whispered 'I don't believe'.
I know a black closet where a whipped dog
crouched all night,
and a large sun-dappled room
with a Renoir above the fireplace
where a straight man stood
and said a word that helped to start a war.
*When you write poems about houses
these things should be remembered.*
-- Jed Garrick

Parabolic Egypt

Since last in the 12th month of my temperate land
I stood to white stars ranged battalions deep,
Considering heaven and the year shortly to climax,
All things have come to pass, and nothing. Sleep
Still dulls a little the edge of care, dreams
Weather no less illy the storm of waking, night
More than ever a mystery is dearly loved. Space
Bends upon itself, following its charted plight
To infinity. Beyond the horizon, faintly marked
With planetary symbols, Pharaohs pursue
Their wars again, and every star mirrors
A sphinx or pyramid in its Nile blue.

Parabolic Egypt, curving the centuries through time,
Returns to take the children of the Lord to task,
And Moses springs, a different man and voice,
From every hill, and no place in the sky
A Red Sea where the knowledgeable fishes bask.
- Ralph L. Kinsey

To My Catholic Daughter

Dear child of mixed intention,
The flowers gently cloistered at the wall
Repose their still solace on the shade,
And Saint Francis bends his silent grace
Above our quiet Sunday pilgrimage.

You hesitate beneath the arc of faith,
Then turn your youth into the apse
To enter the intoned mass of grief,
Beyond my love and intercession:
 Alone among the stations of the cross.

I am divided by the image of love,
Yet I have no sorrow turned to stone,
Only the sin of growth and decay
Turning truth to infidelities:
Processional without repentance.

I stand within the cathedral of patience
And look up from these inscriptions
To meet your eyes and innocence.

The sun heals the breach between,
And you return your hand to mine.

- Henry Birnbaum

The Last Damned Nazi

What regrets, no regrets, no shame or pride,
 No hatred or good will, it is all in the past,
 Events, and I am as indifferent to them
 As to the day I shall die.
 Those noble few who believed themselves martyrs
And those who screamed before death,
 Those I sincerely despise -- but for the mass
 I feel nothing, no sentiment, nothing,
And I live and go my way in quiet
 Which I expect may surprise you: Would you like me
 Nestled in hate in some hidden corner;
 Or piously declaiming brotherhood and peace
 And my disavowal of all those horrors?
 No, it is all in the past like a silent film
 Except one scene comes back, an unpleasant task
 Given to me a few hours before evening,
Before I was to meet a friend
 To trade him for his cache of cigarettes.
 I was given a couple of lovers, two French,
 To take to the woods to bury. All right,
 That is the price you must pay in war.
 All right, I was anxious to hurry -- but not, no,
 That I was worried I might miss my appointment.

Still I pushed them, those two, those French,
 And made them perspire in digging the ground.
 No, I do not remember this to impress you
 With a point of my moral shame. It was theirs,
Theirs was the shocking dishonor.
 For before the instant of my duty
 They fell down upon the ground
 And made their love.
 No, the grossness of their love
 Will never leave my mind.

No, in their case I have no regrets.

- Ralph Treitel

A Dream of Days and Long Nights

Out of the broadleaf oak I shot her:
 That cherry colored sprucewold's daughter.

Then plunged she into a veil of water
Crying loud cries of hurt and shame
For this deed I'd done to her again.

And the trail that she left on the evening fog
I followed until I heard her laughter
 Running in trickles through a hollow log
 With hoofbeats of minutes following after.

My lips quoted thirst for the bloodroot's sap
 When I found her beneath a lichen rock.
She offered me drink; I bent to suck
 From the flesh she offered me for a crock --
 Drew new sustenance from her cherry pap.

Again she fled, between grains of loam.
I followed until she had led me home
 Deep in the caverns of rockiest night.

She made me a bed of the maggot's blight,
 Lay down beside me to sleep and dream.

The last thing I heard through layers of shale
 Was the sound of her sister falling from oak
 And another man's footsteps treading The Lake
 In search of a dram of the bloodroot's ale.

- Lewis Turco

THE VOICE BEHIND

Tom Poots

It was a sunny day for Mrs. Fitch's garden party. Lizzie Fitch herself all decked out in a stupid looking sundress, showing the cleft of her breasts and the roll of her buttocks. And all the time she's running around waving a martini at somebody, calling names off the frantic top of her voice. The garden was loaded. And right in the afternoon, everybody drunk. Because it was Lizzie Fitch's annual. The payment and pay-off of her social debt for the season.

'Stanley! she screams at me. Stanley, Stanley, darling. You did get here from school. Wonderful. Wonderful.' And I leaned in for that big bosomy gin and vermouth kiss which was more or less planted on my eye in the confusion.

'Yeah, I just got in,' I said. 'I took a cab from the station.'

'Well, you just forget all about school,' she ordered. 'Come, come, you've got to see Julia. And after that she can take you around so you'll get to know everybody.'

'Well, I'd like to wash...'

'Nonsense,' she cried, alarmed. 'In this dusty garden? You look fine, Stanley. I realize you're still sober, dear. But you do look fine.'

I was being dragged by the hand through a managerie of sack dresses and mail-order smiles, bald heads nodding down Lizzie Fitch's cleft and birdlike hands flying out to wave at us. A few people I knew, the Basteds, the Hartleys, yelled, 'Stanley, how nice!' and just watched in tipsy amusement as Lizzie Fitch dragged me into the arbor behind the garage.

'You wait,' she said. 'You do want to see Julia, don't you?' Her face looked shocked.

'But naturally.'

She was gone. I still had my suitcase in my hand. I set it down on the flagstone and lit a cigarette listening to all the voices keening out in the sunshine beyond the peach trees lining the arbor. Then Julia stepped into view around one corner of the garage. She was wearing a Mexican multi-colored skirt and a white blouse off the shoulder. Her sandy hair picked up the sunlight and heaved it at me. Her eyes picked the blue up out of the sky and melted it to sapphires. But then she walked toward me with that silly smile on her face and I remembered she was an idiot.

'Stanley,' she said, much like her mother. 'What a surprise.'

'Didn't your mother tell you I was coming?'

'Lizzie? Don't be dim, Stanley. Lizzie never tells me anything!'

She flew up then, pressing hotly against me and she bit my neck so I kissed her. What the hell, I thought, I'm here. That must prove something. Why not enjoy it?

'Stanley! Did you bring any records? Any Rock-and-Roll?'

* Julia, you haven't..

'Yes, I have, Stanley. I just -- just love it.' The last she managed to say seductively. And who cared, I mean seriously? Oh, I suppose I could've cared physically. And did. I mean, she kind of gets the gyroscopes spinning in the pit of the stomach with her real French wine-soaked voice, when she puts it on. But now, Rock-and-Roll! In my suitcase was a new LP of The Pines of Rome. So I kept my mouth shut.

'Stanley,' she said, squeezing my hand. 'Let's say to hell with the party. You've just come from college. You don't want to be involved with all that.'

I just looked at her stupidly. Was she nuts? All that femininity with the older suave look floating around the garden, in air which smelled like gin-flavored rain. And I didn't want to be involved?

'Sweetie, you've been at girl's schools too long,' I said. 'You know Lizzie'd come after me with an axe if I didn't shake and shimmy myself around a little bit out there.'

'Oh, what for!' She pouted. Then smiled. Then stomped her foot.

'Come on,' I said. 'Let's go into the garden.'

'But I hate it, Stanley. I want to be with you.'

'One martini and you'll love it,' I said. What in the devil was this 'I want to be with you' routine? Had Julia flipped her lovely lid? Who's hand did she think she was holding anyway? But then of course, when we entered the garden, and I saw Lizzie standing in the stone fountain up to her knees in water, I immediately blamed heredity. We met everyone very quickly. But Julia, who must have been in heat or something, had a one tracked mind.

'Do you remember last year?' she asked, pushing me toward the arbor. 'How we slept out under the peach trees all night?'

'Julia,' I said, trying to be firm, nodding to a woman I wanted to know better. 'What's the matter with you? Are you crazy?'

'You've got to go to the arbor anyway,' she said, still shoving. 'You left your suitcase there.'

So we went and I was reminded in detail of the year before. How it was. Was it really and truly the first year we'd noticed each other. And how bombed we'd got and slipped over to the peach trees in a jumble of laughs and hiccups. And also what happened. And how the sky looked in the morning. And how Lizzie, who'd fallen asleep in the hammock on the front porch, hadn't known a thing. Mr. Fitch was dead, so he didn't know either. But when alive, he must have been terrifically worn out. And this year Julia was more like her mother than ever. When we finally crawled out of the arbor we got my suitcase into the room over the garage where I was scheduled to sleep that night.

'Let's never go anywhere again,' Julia shouted. 'Let's never ever never leave this beautiful room!'

'It's a barn,' I said. 'You're either stinking drunk or you're nuts.'

'Maybe just a dabble of both?'

* All right. But let's go downstairs.'

Music started up on the lawn.. It was the usual four-piece combo Lizzie hired annually from one of the local taverns, the same colored band. When the bass started in whanging, Julia leaped in the air.

'Come on,' she called already on the run.

'I thought you never wanted to leave this room?'

'Later,' she said. 'You want to miss the music?'

So I followed. I ran out into the garden after Julia, lifted a martini off a table and watched the men who were drunkenly trying to set up white folding tables and chairs. So far only one guy had succeeded. Julia had that table occupied. She was waving at me to hurry up, a bit disturbed that I'd not arrived there with her. But it was worth it. During the music she was quiet. She wouldn't dance. She wouldn't talk. She sat and stared and went white under the boiling afternoon sun, trying to keep her mind on the beat. Others were sunstruck or spinning, whirling their bodies over the grass, the young and old mixed up in the timelessness of Lizzie's bacchanal. Men dancing with neighbor's daughters, boys dancing with best friends' mothers. Even a few married people dancing together. But Julia just sat. Her temples pounded blood through her head in time with the music. Lizzie was all over the place. And in exchange, the men she danced with were all over Lizzie.

Then that part of it was over. The beat-music stopped. It wailed to a halt when the sun got the best of the musicians and they were forced to retire to the bar. Even so, it was still middle afternoon. And it was a very lively party. The flowers were trampled here and there. And some guys were snoring it off in the bushes. But it was definitely a very big success, because there was always something doing. Like when the music stopped there came on a colored ventriloquist with his colored dummy. Real sharp dummy! And it looked a lot like the colored boy who was doing all the work too.

Just like, say, they might be father and son, or maybe even brothers. But man, it was a gasser. He went from table to table, also talked to some of the people in the shrubs, making everybody laugh, and then he too started taking it easy. Finally he was just sitting on an old box beside the hedge, looking passively down into the yellow trumpets of daffodils, like maybe if he looked hard enough he expected them to make music. He was all sweat, kept wiping his rich brown forehead with a startling white handkerchief. And the dummy, which somehow looked tired too, was settled on his lap.

I wanted to go talk with this boy. So I looked at Julia who was still leaning on the table, her head resting on her hand. 'Julia?' I said. She didn't budge. I gave her a poke. She slumped down on the table. She was asleep. Can you beat that? Asleep! Right in the middle of Lizzie Fitch's Annual Garden Party, her daughter, a smaller edition, was sound asleep. I decided to take advantage of my freedom and stroll off for a while. And leaving her there, unconscious at the table, I felt I'd just picked my body clean of ten thousand leeches. My blood was my own again. I thought. I thought I could do what I pleased. Enjoy myself. Get off for a while away from Lizzie, from Julia, from the Basteds and the Hartleys, from that screaming afternoon and its social insanity. And maybe I could've gotten away too. Been free and unbothered by the whims of others' lives. If I'd chosen another man.

But I chose the most unlikely, figuring there would be safety in that. I chose the ventriloquist.

*Do you work in the same tavern as the band? '

He looked up at first as though he didn't understand. Then he smiled, showing a thick double row of ivories. He looked rather neat in his beginning-to-get-shiny blue trousers. His jacket was off, lying in the hedge. The dummy was dressed to kill in a Spike Jones plaid suit and electric bowtie. That dummy

resemblance between flesh and wood. They no longer looked related. Like- they really looked ridiculous. And it was then, right there, I stopped seeing any

Julia, the dummy was an idiot. The guy wasn't. He looked like he knew everything, deep down, inside-out, like with one look his eyes probed your- with mind. The kind of guy who knows and knows and knows.

'Nope, I don't work with the band, he said. 'Mrs. Fitch send you over? She want me??

*To hell with Lizzie Fitch. You see that? ' I pointed to Julia. He nodded, still wiping sweat, still smiling. ' Well it conked out."

' Mighty pretty,' he said. 'Your gal?'

I ignored that. That Julia? What a dame! with so many advantages at her disposal it seemed to have messed up her brains. But then our families were the same. She was my kind of girl -- they said so. What can you do? 'How long you had Rupert?' He'd called the dummy Rupert in his act.

In the background, all behind us, the party was wildly gaining momentum with a second wind. The combo had struck up music again.

'I've had Rupert a long time,' he said, moving the dummy into position on his knee. "Kind of like a wart you get and can't get rid of."

I looked at Julia, getting what he meant.

' We was chopped from the same tree,' Rupert said.

I laughed. It was very good. The colored boy didn't move a muscle in his throat or face that I could see. And that voice! It was like the dah-dah coo-coo voice of a squaresville dumbbell.

' Well, Rupert,' I said. 'How do you like the party?'

· Murder,' croaked Rupert. "This is a mad mad town, man."

' Well, Rupert, what's your employer's name?'

'Bernard,' said Rupert, smartly. ' Bernard George Washington Thomas Jefferson Lincoln Carver.'

I looked quickly to the man's face. It was frozen in that cool grin, the white teeth still flashing in the sunlight. There was something about the way he'd said that -- or made Rupert say it. Like a laugh was darkly behind it, but you couldn't hear it.

' You always lived around here? ' I asked.

' Oh, not me, massuh! ' Rupert said. " Ahm from Dixie! ' "

Again there was a strange force beneath the words -- they didn't jive out right.

' Can you sing? ' I asked.

' Yassuh. Ahm very fine on Strange Fruit?

I blushed, feeling the heat in my face. It wasn't going right. Maybe it was meant to be funny, but I just happened to know that song like Josh

White used to do it, and those none too pretty lyrics, conjuring up a hellish pastoral -- black bodies swinging from the trees, eyes bulging -- southern trees bearing their strange, dead, fruit. What was all this suddenly doing here anyway? I came to talk, not play booby with a dummy.

'I don't get you, Bernard, I said.

The boy shifted his weight. 'Why that's only dummy-talk, mister.'

'But it's not funny,' I said. 'Ha! Ha!'

'Please don't beat me, massuh, Rupert chimed in, his wooden mouth clacking in perfect time. 'You all got to realize I ain't got a brain in my head. Ahm just a dummy.'

I nodded. I felt miserable. But I couldn't crack Bernard's smile. I couldn't get him to talk without the dummy. And the dummy was saying too much. The band was beating the blood-rhythm. Bodies whirled on the grass. The sun was lowering in the sky which was turning orange. Julia had awakened. As I left the ventriloquist she rushed up to me.

'Stanley! Stanley, darling, they're serving the food!

They were. We took a table. There were sandwiches, celery, pickles, black olives, coffee, salads, charcoal-burned hamburgers, and more and more mar-

on the grass. The food was very good and it might have had a sobering effect if the coffee wasn't so lousy. It was undrinkable and the only other thing to wash the stuff down with was martinis. Consequently the party kept on as hectic as ever.

'Im wide awake!' Julia announced, leaping from the table. 'C'mon, Stanley. Let's rock.'

I tried. I really tried. But I was not in control of myself. My head said yes, but my feet said no. I collapsed into the hedge and sat there looking out at the spinning world, the twisting, turning, men and women, wrapped in the flimsy cocoons of their duds. The men were losing their ties, the women were losing their minds. The air was writhing with giggles. And suddenly in that fire I saw the flame of the sun turn red. Lanterns went on and Julia was wiping my forehead with a cold rag.

'Get out of the bushes!'

She was staring idiotically down at me.

'Nonsense. Bring me a drink.'

She vanished. The hedges were comfortable. The colored boy, Bernard, passed by with his dummy, heading for one of the tables. 'Hey!' I yelled. He didn't hear me. 'Hey, you!' He stopped, looked, flashed that double row of teeth which suddenly reflected the red dying rays of the sun. In that light his skin was blacker, richer. 'Hey, come here.'

'What you want, boy?'

'Talk to me,' I said stupidly. 'Talk to me.'

'It's Rupert do all my talking.'

'No. You,' I said firmly. 'I want you to talk.*'

'Why, massuh,' said Rupert, his wooden mouth moving up and down in his imbecile face. 'You don't like me? Oh, massuh, massuh.'

'Stop it,' I said. 'Stop it! What's the matter with you!'

* Ahm just a lil ol' pickaninny,' Rupert said.

' Why do you hate me?'

"Ah swear, you jus' all afluster,' Rupert said. " You wouldn't laugh at poor lil ol' me, would you?

' Bernard, I said, sitting up. · Who's laughing at you that you don't want to laugh? Tell me that!?

'Don't pay no mind to a dummy,' Bernard said. ' You get used to one after a while. Jus' like I did.'

Julia was running up with a drink, a martini in a water glass. She looked very fiery and worried like she had a fever. And she flopped down beside me and took the first drink from the glass before handing it to me.

'God!' she said. "It's glorious!"

' It's lousy,' I said. ' It stinks.'

The ventriloquist and his dummy were amusing Lizzie and the Hartleys. They laughed wildly. They beamed on Bernard and showed their teeth and laughed and asked questions, questions, questions, howling at dumb Rupert's answers. They were delirious with that idiotic Rupert. Such a funny dummy! ' Oh, isn't he a darling!" But as I watched, all I could feel were the subtle barbs of Bernard's voice. The quicksilver of that hard mind behind the dummy's dah-dah syllables. The boil beneath the wooden mask. And the hate? No, I wasn't too sure.

' Stanley, Stanley,' Julia cried. ' Kiss me."

We snuggled down in the hedge. People were whirling along in front of us. It was warm, nice, sweaty. The sun had set and all the lanterns were sparkling. Shining stars, luminous pearls strung out through the ruptured garden. Blinders! That's what they were. Blinders. That's what everything was, suddenly, blinders! All a cover, a rotten screwy facade, fantastic and frenetic. But why? Why? What, I wondered, violently, feeling my own blood spin into my head, what did it cover? The lights and Bernard's dummy. And then -- the words seethed in. Hate. Contempt. Hate. Contempt. But it was terrible revelation. It was useless explanation. Lizzie Fitch would probably not believe it. The Hartleys and Basteds probably would not believe it.

* Let's go to the arbor, Stanley,' Julia said.

I slumped deeper into the hedge. I was stuck with a mouthful, a brainful, of revelation and there wasn't anything to do with it. It was choking me.

' Stanley?'

'You're an idiot, Julia!'

' But I'm your idiot, Stanley. You make me talk, make me live."

It was so.

We went to the arbor, the laughter and Bernard's voice, behind us.

Three Poems

*Louis Johnson**Man in Arms*

*The man behind the visor scowls,
 And has, for all his iron eyes
 And attributes of the machine,
 Some human, vulnerable parts:
 His suit aside, perhaps he howls
 Beneath some window for the sighs
 Of one fair lady to redeem
 The corselet from his heart.*

*But now, astride the steed of flame,
 Valiant with pennant, shield, and lance,
 A different action, different view
 Of cold reality presents
 Him with his cause -- to write his name
 Scarlet on dragons -- lead the dance
 Of rapine to its rendezvous
 And pay to Death his compliments.*

*How small, divested of his skin,
 Must not deter the purpose now:
 Armour or mask are both the means
 To don another man and shine --
 A different creature - set to win.
 Unbending as the lettered law,
 Two-fisted, and two men in one,
 Perhaps his mission is divine.*

*Lacking a cause, perhaps a suit,
 Perhaps a mask may substitute:
 Or, looking with a double face
 Convert to Honour dour disgrace.*

The Mood of Rain

Looking out of the window is looking out
 on the landscape of the nature of the heart
 where only the inanimate -- the great tree --

spells or shapes itself like a capital
 letter: and for my punishment or for
 expression of illimitable grief
 steady and sullen falls grey rain.

What business has the bird, hidden in foliage,
 to chirr? Response as automatic as my own
 inclination towards pen and paper
 having observed some matter in the world
 to bring to black-and-white-accounted judgement.
 And I recall the journalistic precept --
 to find a story in one's own backyard
 when nothing other offers.

And I recall that further axiom -
 wisdom of the ancient Chinaman --
 that one need not become a traveller
 to know the world -- its ways -- which can be seen
 seated at one's own window.

And surely there is misery in rain
 sufficient to imagine it my own.

The Birthday

The old man is a greyer stone this year
 on the morning of his fiftyseventh birthday:
 a sputtering gaiety among defining
 clocks, the blessing fingers of grandchildren:

and it's a small score in the accountancy
 of history: rather a private matter
 with little jokes, familiar knives and cups
 and the same circle of faces to justify:

the tokens are scarcely a harvest - rather
 a minor festival of little people poised
 between the murder of years in time
 like a wave at the end of worlds

that will rise, engulf them, drown
 the eyes and all the tables of smiles,
 the hands, same cups and faces saying
 (in spite of skies that fall our father.

The Epic Restored

THE DARK SISTER, by Winfield Townley Scott; New York University Press, Washington Square, 1958, \$3.95.

It is probably true, after all, that there is no progress in poetry; that 'progress' is both an irrelevant and irreverent proposition for poetry anyway. Because the landmarks in the contemporary period of man --despite the 'progress' made in space junk -- are so few and far between, one is inclined to view the formative poetry of the time in terms of energy gradients like imagination, honesty, liveliness, tone, range, etc., in order to say that, 'in the technology of poetry, we have made such and such progress'. But that is because where poetry is almost dead, we can measure a kind of voltage of renewal, or a single quality, like when we say the 'San Francisco Movement' is 'lively' or that the 'Beat Generation' is 'beat'. But where we have poetry on an all-or-nothing order of greatness there is absolutely no progress with reference to history, since the absolute limit of poetry is humanity itself, and in humanity there has been no progress. If poetry is anything at all, it is kind of a 'place', an ordered jungle where all of the energy gradients are thickly merged into undeniable illusion and vision. It is a place, moreover, that is unforgettable, a place, alas, that only a few poets have had access to. Whatever the deficiencies of the Dark Sister, W. T. Scott has found that place, and in it, he has just about garnered up the poetic gold of this decade.

In the Dark Sister, as in many great poems, it is not the message in particular that is so strong, but the way of telling a story. Scott gives us just another story in a long line of bitch busters. Freydis, his heroine, is like all the classic bitches in literature; she is both antagonist and protagonist. Her lust for riches and power is the essence of the Viking drive; her ambition and ruthlessness are the moral disintegrator of everyone with whom she comes in contact. Her power of womanly persuasion is undefeatable, strong enough, even, to influence her steadfast half-brother, Leif Ericson.

The story of this narrative poem could be reduced to a capsule. Freydis cons Leif into permitting her to use his encampment in Vinland for the purpose of gathering and bringing back valuable wood to treeless Greenland. Leif, now old and respected, is resting on his laurels for 'Vinland has paid us. / It has paid us in wounds and many deaths and in money.' Freydis wants to make a quick, but hazardous voyage to avoid the Indians and to reap the wealth she needs to become respectable ... 'You'll see me grow a dame of home and church, / Lavish in good works. dreaming of time to come / When the men of our race shall increase and sail forth / to take that land, / Build it and stake it ours.' With Ericson's reluctance, she proceeds to manage the affairs of the undertaking, as her good-natured, but cuckold husband, Thorvard, consents to all. She acquires some Norwegian partners, in order to double the capacity of the wood she intends to bring back with her. She then plays brilliantly upon the trust of the owners of the Norwegian ship, Helge and Finboge, by withholding her family's heritage of the knowledge of

the rong mOre phey e onal and, aar, intange, lies collusion the where.

sabotage and subversion! Helge and Finboge increasingly resign themselves to the calculated risks they must take with this Viking woman. Then everything happens. Freydis becomes pregnant, the Indians attack, Thorvard cuts his throat, Helge and Finboge are destroyed, Freydis goes mad, and Leif, back in Greenland, philosophizes.

With this theme, Scott cuts a swath as wide as the voyage, into the poetry of motivation. Part of the symbolism in the Dark Sister can be seen in terms of this aborted attempt at discovery and empire. Columbus discovered America by accident, but made the most of an opportunity for a political system geared to imperialism. The Vikings, on the other hand, struck out deliberately and impetuously, for what they could get for their barren Greenland. Why didn't the Vikings return to reap their prize? Gudrid knows that Vinland is not for the Viking, in her impassioned address to Leif and Freydis... ' Some / trick of the sun / Gentles its uttermost kingdom and lures us into it / as if it were | A shining paradise beyond the black cold sea. / Those who go in / Are netted with a silken skein of light, move as / dreamers in dream, / Fancy themselves gods of a sort come miraculously to / an earth-garden of Valhalla · The Viking voyages were virtually barehanded summoning an explosive, desiring, husky, and superstitious ambition. Only the wise, like Gudrid, or the experienced, like Leif, could understand the limitation of the barehanded in these elements. Leif Ericson had spent himself in this quest garnering up honors, riches and respect, only to settle in the mold of conservative wisdom. ' A sailor weary of the sea; explorer of the soul only; / sure of his last windfall.'

Freydis, on the other hand, is the insatiable, demented ambition. Her desire demands satisfaction beyond the moral and physical capacities of men. Venting destruction, she kills off, forever, the wild and beautiful vision of a rugged race.

Of course, the ambition of Freydis goes considerably beyond the mere corruption of purpose. Freydis' heroism can only be properly seen in that geography of a frustrated woman who must compensate not only for her bastardy, but for an unendurable castration complex as well. Her goad is to stabilize herself in the unchallenged virility of Leif Ericson, below whose manliness or godliness, all men are something less than men. In this, there is also a notion of incest.

* Ill kiss those angry wrinkles on your forehead as
though I were that tender wife
You never stayed long enough ashore to get, and now
are too rich and lazy to.'

And in this aspect of near royalty and the stigma of bastardy, she appears as a miscegenation of the gods --to the Greenlanders and the Norwegians alike, a Valkyrie.

While the theme of the poem, as in most of Scott's works, is certainly neither novel nor original, one is overwhelmed by his peculiar ability to sustain an intensity. He has written one of the most successful long poems of the

century with natural ability, and a discipline that is so third-natured, as to lose the sense of art. In these times, poems are either metaphysical gymnastics so exhausting as to resist extension into human areas, or they are monotonous satires, which cannot be dramatized for the clichés. In the *Dark Sister*, the dramatic force of the poem drives out of the wilderness multitudes of hard, beautiful, heroic passages which virtually wash, crack and creak on the page. The poetry has strength and certainty, not the subjective virility and cocksureness of other poets these days writing inverted epics. This poem is external to the poet, as if it were revealed in an historical transport, to which his skill must be completely subservient. Scott serves his poem well with an accurate imagination welling up, no doubt, from his own nostalgia for New England. He writes in an almost thoughtless economy with no let-up in intensity. His dialogue is truly a poetry of conversation. The sense of organic poetry is never lost, even in the long descriptive scenes, with their hewing assonances and alliterations of raw discovery.

Birch among beech against oak into pine and the
wind-flood through them always
 Like a land-tide, a golden surf shoulder-deep
 like a noon ocean,
 Like something the sea begot when the sea was scoured
 by light and earth made,
 Earth lifted to winey-wood as the waters fell
 withdrawing, withering
 From flowering of land between the wind and the light;
 This latest land; this newest earth - strident in
the causeways of the west.

Scott has the range, and almost the reach of a great American poet and, as his previous works testify, he has the gift of, the obsession with, nostalgia. It is his virtue and it is his fault. For we ask, what could such a poet do, assuming such a poetry could be applied, to the themes of the twentieth century? (Progress again). We don't know. We do not know if there is a place, or even a possibility in the times for such a poetry. Viking voyages are no longer made barehanded, but with a thickening mechanical abstractness that insulates and separates man from his senses. Thus we have given rise to monotonous chants and great rebellious statements, or to poems which are woven like an artificial physics. I can't begin to define the 'place' of poetry. We are too used to searching for obscure and esoteric fragments of the place, of accreting influences towards 'new poetries' of fabricating audiences and cueing potential reviewers. The place is perhaps the independent man and the individual poet. And this is Scott, something more than the dedicated poet.

- M. W.

Ballad, Wit and Nonsense

ONCE MORE TO TOURNEY, by Ewart Milne; The Linden Press, 9 St. Anne's Close, Highgate West Hill, London, N.6, 96 pp. 7s. 6d. net.

The subtitle of this book by the Irish poet Ewart Milne, is 'A book of ballads and light verse, serious, gay and grisly,' and this pretty well covers the content. The poems are written with a wit that on occasion may be more serious than some other people's serious verse. But at other times they seem done just for the good old Rabelaisian fun of it.

Of the latter type, the title poem is an example. So is the ballad ' Cockles and Mussels,' where a swimming party is broken up when

The tide it swep in
While the four were at play,

And the frocks made for dancing
 And the Trinity hose
And the bell bottom trousers
Were devoured by the waves.

The moral I think is
You should never be found
In the juvescence of the year
Running stark naked around -

Or like Molly and Angela
And B. Barnacle and friend
You may have to get home
Covered only by hand --

Besides this straightforward type of ballad, there is much nonsense, or near-nonsense. This is a difficult type of writing, for it must convey some kind of sense, either of meaning or word or rhythm pattern, while pretending to be non-sense. In 'Here We Go Round the Shamrocky Bush' Milne succeeds in a good spoof, but in many other nonsense poems he reaches no plane of agreement with the reader.

There are parodies in the book too, one of the merriest being ' A Ballad of Christmas Days ' which ends:

The Twelfth Day of Christmas we took our Christmas Greetings down,
 And traded them to barrow boys we chanced to meet in town,
 The price was made and all agreed there was little cause to fear
 We'd get the same cards back again on Christmas day next year.

This ballad, being based on the original song, has a formal structure lacking in many of Milne's poems. By formal, is not necessarily meant a traditional stanza framework. What is meant, and what is lacking sometimes in this book, is the feeling that the poem is a complete and rounded unit. Sometimes it drifts on into impotency, when a quick stop would improve both the form and the preceding content. The ability to stop, important as it is in

all poetry, is most important in poetry which has its *raison d'être* in its wit. One example of failing to stop soon enough is 'A Nursery Rhyme of GBS' which begins cleverly and briskly, but in the latter part tapers into repetitive nonsense.

Another aspect of the failure to stop soon enough is the quick change in the last stanza or lines to matter not related to the main body of the poem. While this might be a means of contrast if used effectively, in most cases in this book, it is a distraction from the merit of what precedes. This is true in 'Poet, Learn Your Trade,' a warning to the poet that 'you mustn't be sexually successful' that includes a stanza of parody on the theme of many Restoration poems, that is, 'a travelogue of your lyric's wellmapped body.' But the last two lines go off on an entirely different tack and end with a trivial pun.

Milne uses puns throughout the book with varying success. Sometimes they are such strong ones that they become characters; as in the fight in a pub between the lion and the unicorn, where there is 'not a sign of Victor who / had caught the morning boat / or else he had sore throat.'

Here and there in the collection are poems of lyric force -- 'The Girl in the Train,' 'Mr. Nobody,' and the poem beginning 'Ah well, the poor fella, sure he's gone.'

But this is a book to stand on its wit, and of the various tourneys, "To You Who Are About to Be" is one of the best :

To you who are about to be an occupied country
(where invader has never yet or not officially set his foot)
I confess to no anxiety about the bare fate of your territory
considering how it seems too soon or else too late for that

Besides a limit's known to what a man can do to hills and valleys
-- why even should he turn out tough the toughest of the bunch
you can always make contrivance to distract him from your orchards
such as by playing tig or patience or inviting friends to lunch

But I trust there'll be no need for shifts and such evasions
nor any cries for help O help in an invading bridegroom's rout
and as the band strikes up I firmly hope unlike some occupations
though not loth to show him in you will be loth to show him out

Milne is praised in the introduction by J. M. Cohen because 'he has a voice of his own. It is a colloquial voice, one sometimes rough, sometimes careless, and sometimes garrulous. It is hard to accept such lines as 'if you please you old tease / for there cometh a breeze' even in the name of individuality.

It would be well if Milne remembered the old saw about brevity and if he had resisted the temptation (and how few poets do!) to include too much. It would then have been easier to see that the collection includes much light verse of merit, and vigorous and lusty wit.

- Ann Stanford

∴. What's going on up and down the coast

THE VOICES OF THE PURPLE

On the west coast, in Los Angeles, at least, vocal works continue to dominate the scene, though with considerably less notoriety than previously reported in Blunderbuss. New names and 'word artists' are cropping up, like Ken Nordine who is appearing with the Fred Katz-Paul Horn Quintet at the Los Angeles Jazz Concert Hall. Their offerings range from free-association monologues to humorous satires. Nordine's album, *Word Jazz*, was recently voted number three among the top jazz albums in a nation-wide Disc Jockey poll ∴. Perhaps one of the brightest vocal performances came from Langston Hughes at Herb Cohen's Ivar Theatre, April 18 and 19, with Ralph Pena and his band. An excellent performance from a poet who belongs to the jazz medium more than anyone else. Hughes read from his works in three sets including blues and Dixieland poems, cool sounds and bop poems and gospel and religious poems... Langston Hughes and Tom McGrath are also cutting a record under contract with L. Lipton... McGrath is also scheduled to record for Folkways Records with Don Gordon, Naomi Replansky and the late Edwin Rolfe whose poems will be read by another reader... McGrath has also been turning out some fine performances at Cosmo Alley (a solid part of the Unicorn Empire, owned by Herb Cohen) with the Ralph Pena band. Also at Cosmo Alley reading Sunday evenings were Curtis Zahn, Stuart Perkoff, Kenneth Rexroth, Sid Gershgoren, Bob Dorough, Jerry Reynolds, Don Nelson and Frank Evans.

HURRAH FOR SOMETHING!

In the wake of the Rexroth-Lipton team and company at the Los Angeles Jazz Concert Hall (see *Coatlins* No. 9), came the Patchen and Ferguson team whose performance represented the first significant attempt at jazz-poetry in Los Angeles. The Ferguson Jazz Sextet has not only digested the essence of the jazz movement, but has succeeded in accommodating the voice as instrument, as if all of Rexroth's theorems came true. Both Ferguson and Patchen have considerable facility: the band sometimes comes in parallel to the poem, as if both the poet and the band were saying the same thing; or the music comments during the silences of the poem extending whatever conceit or metaphor or literal meaning Patchen has just conveyed; or the music filters through in a surcharge of emotion. Patchen has a moving, beautiful voice.

SANS MUSIC

Poetry readings on the west coast continue sans music at the twin centers, Poetry -- Los Angeles at Barnsdall Park, and the Poetry Center at San Francisco State College. In L.A. it's been Kenneth Patchen, Bert Meyers, Zack

Walsh, Carl Larsen, Vahan Gregory, Stanley Kurnik, Thomas McGrath, James Boyer May, Lawrence Spingarn, Josephine Ain, Curtis Zahn, George Abbe, Ann Stanford and Lawrence Lipton. Curtis Zahn, in particular, deserves a special note for his effective T.V. satire, '5-4-3-2-1, performed with a four-voice chorus, which led off with Jerry Reynolds. The San Francisco Poetry Center has also been host to numerous notable poets including Yvor Winters, Kenneth Burke, Thom Gunn, Leslie Woolf Hedley, Stuart Perkoff, Ann Stanford and many others.

PACIFICA FOUNDATION

The Pacifica Foundation is getting set to put its FM subscription sponsored station on the air this summer. Its first broadcasts are being eagerly awaited by a starved community, since local FM has become increasingly swamped with commercials. Pacifica's stations will be completely devoid of commercials and will offer high-powered programs similar to those presented by KPFA in the Berkeley area. Poetry, of course, will be heard along with music rarely played on even the most effete FM. Program director is Guy Daniels, publicity director is Gil Orlovitz -- now barnstorming the country. Send your ten dollars charter subscription to Pacifica, Box 504-F, Altadena, California.

MISCELLANY

Coastlines' cover artist, David Lemon, down from Berkeley with a splendid exhibit of his works -- in color too! --at Streeter Blair's ... CL staffer, Barding Dahl, has had a novel accepted by Ullstein Publishers, Germany. The Book: *The Mask of Darkness*, deals with the lower depths of Mexico City. First publication will be in German, a form of proxy exile, and is scheduled to appear in September ... Poet Vahan Gregory and his wife Joyce have opened a coffee shop, the Capriccio on 1738 No. Highland in Hollywood. Tell 'em Coastlines sent you... Norman Cousins, editor of the Saturday Review, in town April 26, spoke for the Committee For A Sane Nuclear Policy at the Moulin Rouge... New Directions is out with Ferlinghetti's *Coney Island of the Mind*... Greenwood of Talisman with Ann Stanford's, *Magellan* ... Alan Swallow with Don Gordon's *Displaced Persons*.

EAST COAST RENDITION OF WEST COAST DIVISION OF THE MUSE

Coastlines is totally unembarrassed in applauding the first eastern definitive publication of the Los Angeles Movement (sic!). Evelyn Thorne's forthcoming issue of EPOS will be loaded with the talent of this area, including: Joseph Joel Keith, Harold Witt, Thomas McGrath, William Pillin, Scott Greer, Gil Orlovitz, James Boyer May, Gene Frumkin, Bert Meyers, Helen Nonam, Mel Weisburd, Stanley Kiesel, Archie Rosenhouse, Carl Woods, Carl Larsen, Curtis Zahn, Charlotte Marletto, Valma Fehling, Ann Stanford, Lawrence Gurney, Edna Anderson, Zack Walsh, Bernice Ames, Ruth Forbes Sherry,

Hank Abel, and Alvaro Cardona-Hine. The issue will also contain linoleum cuts by Polia Pillin. Order now from EPOS, Lake Como, Florida.

AND A NOTE TO READERS

In the past year we have jumped from 40 to 48 to 56 pages which is an unprecedented leap for an independent magazine. It is not that we have become more prosperous, but that the quantity and quality of the material we receive has markedly increased and improved, respectively. Don't ask us why, it's something like the contradiction of inflation and recession. We have gone to England for a printer, which has helped, but we have also received such charming letters from bookdealers as :

Thanks for your invoice No. 4592 3-9-58. However, I should like to point out that I settled up the old stuff at the time with someone who claimed to be your representative, and got a receipt from him, and the promise not to bring in any more copies, since the hi-jacking by the Berkeley bums and bohemians who flock into my store there goes on at a fantastic rate, and why should I be responsible for it?

The fact of the matter is, not all bookdealers and newsstand operators are paranoics. Some like to maintain stands that are complete and representative. Little magazines do not have access to the big distribution companies that profitably distribute girlie mags. If you want to know, Coastlines has an excellent potentiality which it cannot exploit for lack of subsidy, capitalization and investment, but it has existed for three years on a person-to-person basis. You can help break the system by contacting your favorite newsstand or book-dealer. Tell them you want to buy Coastlines at their stands and that we will mail Coastlines directly on a consignment basis. They can have twenty cents on each copy they sell.

Editorial

Hark, Hark, the Laugh!

Poetry has taken a turn for the better. Its icy lips are thawing; its pulse, at times, gives evidence of a lively beat. The Patient has been observed to laugh despite continuing frequent attacks of debilitating elegance and tepid irony. While Poetry is no spring chicken and doubtless cannot compete with the comic strips, there is information indicating a good recovery. Most significantly, Poetry seems to want to live again.

Discarding my white gown and any sort of clinical approach, I want to make clear that this optimism rests on nothing more substantial than an im-

pression. This impression is that there is being published today a greater abundance of serious poems worked out in a humorous way than there were three years ago -- perhaps even one year ago. An example of the kind of poem I mean is George Starbuck's *Huck Finn (Somewhat Tidied Up) Is Banished to the Back Shelves*, which appeared in a recent issue of the *Saturday Review*:

Thank you, Sam Clemens, for your little fable.
*We make as much allowance as we can
 for time; and as a crude Samaritan*
 you did some good to lay it on the table
 that spite of dirt, chains, tar and feathers, man
 is man, or isn't, as his soul declares --
 soul, that speaks any tongue or accent, wears
 full choice of colors. Well, as much as we're able
 we thank you, Sam Clemens, for your little fable.

I

Thank you, Sam Clemens, but the times have changed:
*we need a grander affirmation now:
 history a la Harriet Beecher Stowe,*
 in which no race was ever so estranged
 it cost a boy his few truths to learn how
 a two-legged barnyard beast with its blocked tongue
could cry the only manly sense among
 its masters. Words of praise can be arranged
 to thank you, Sam Clemens, but the times have changed.

An earnest poem, a starkly truthful poem, dealing with no less a tact than the complexity of our time in which the simple truth is no longer enough. But it is done with so light a hand and one, incidentally, so apropos Mark Twain, that we might almost believe the poet had nothing more ambitious in mind than a jumping frog contest.

The increasing publication of poems such as this (I now don my prophet's robe) adumbrates, I think, a broader human base for poetry. The poem written with a humorous gestalt is more congenial to the average literate person, because less cerebral, than the one that depends on the ambiguous irony or the one that fades out with a tricky image which is supposed to illuminate the entire poem but usually illuminates nothing (for by that time, the poem is beyond light). Great humor (or the comic spirit), endures because it is complete seriousness, while the delicately-wrought formal structure that is too lifeless to be serious endures only fortuitously: one good smack shatters it, turns it into a joke.

Most of us possess the propensity toward humor; we also, most of us, possess more than that: an inclination toward song or lyric or the wide-embracing poetic philosophy. Most of us want to be stimulated to the highest pitch we are capable of reaching. The serious-humorous poem cannot do that but it may be the bridge to a fresher, more profound and more inclusive poetry than we have had since the second big war.

- Gene Frumkin