

A LITERARY MAGAZINE OF CALIFORNIA

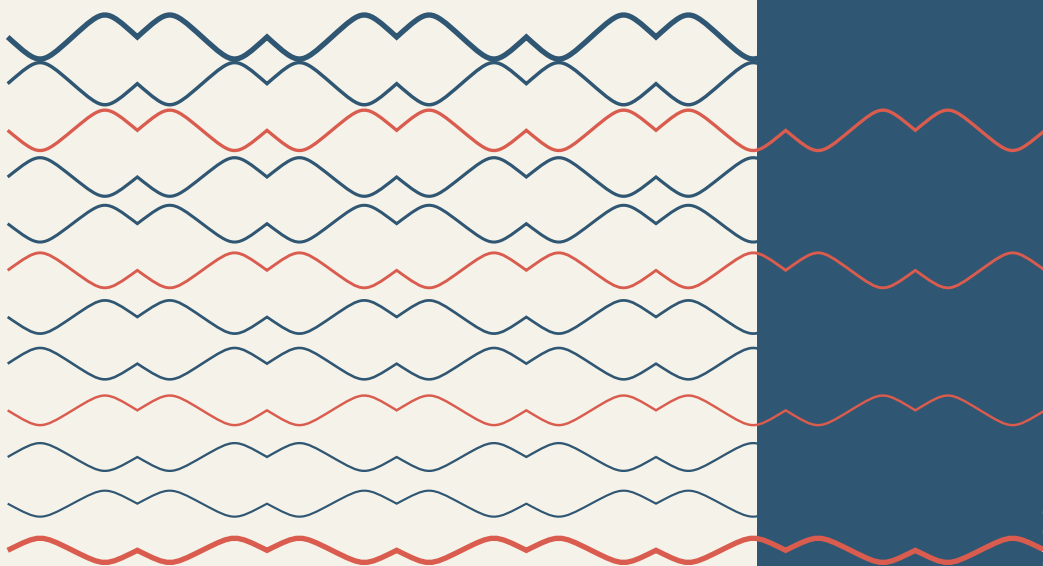
COAST LINES

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ISSUE 20

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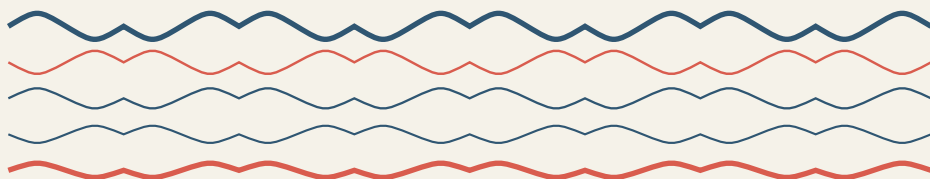
1963

EDITORIAL DETAILS

See the following masthead page

A CLEAN READING EDITION

The text is reset in clean type from the issue's archival text layer. Original page divisions are retained for reference; complex and display pages are rebuilt positionally in clean type. The original scan remains the authority for damaged or uncertain readings.



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David Lemon

COASTLINES*Vol. 5, No. 4 1963***STAFF**

EDITORS: Barding Dahl and Alexandra Garrett

POETRY EDITOR: Barbara Harris

FICTION & ARTICLE EDITOR: Barding Dahl

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JACK ANDERSON has a B.A., in drama from Northwestern, an M.A. in English from Indiana. Poems in many literary mags including *Antioch Review*, *Coastlines*, *Colorado Quarterly*, *Massachusetts Review*, *San Francisco Review*. Until recently he was assistant drama critic of the *Oakland Tribune*. 'I was fired from that position because of my participation in the 1962 General Strike for Peace. I am currently unemployed.'

MICHAEL BENEDIKT has edited a volume of twentieth-century French drama for E. P. Dutton & Co. to appear this year. Poems and translations have been in *Poetry*, *Minnesota Review*, *The Nation*, *The Sixties*, and elsewhere. His collection of poems, *Changes*, was published by the *Fresco Chapbook Series*.

CHARLES BUKOWSKI writes us and we quote in toto: 'good to hear y've taken WARBLE IN in yr arms for COASTLINES, and I am listening to something on my radio, my red radio, and the horses have been running pretty good; in fact, if they keep running this way I am going to do nothing but lay around and love and drink and eat and love and listen to the good music and the good life, and maybe write a poem or 2 when I have indigestion or run out or liquor. Biog? I am insane and old and drivelling, smoke like the forests of hell, but feel better all the time, that is worse and better. And when I sit down to the typer it is like carving tits on a cow a great big thing. Then too, I realize I gotta run in the Latin, and the poise, and the snob and the Pound and the Shake, and hello hello hell-anything that makes the thing run, hurrah! But I am thin as a fake, so I often write a bad poem written mostly by myself rather than a good poem written mostly by somebody else. Though, of course, I cannot swear by this. Examination and re-examination. Why try? Those who sit constantly in symphony halls adore creation but cannot create. I go to the racetrack where they also have bars. All hail the mad gods who have created these fine spinning things.'

Practically speaking (and this is the hardest way for me to speak), I have been published in many of the littles, and being fairly mad but not fairly silly or gnawing for the whore-buck, I have not sent to the bigs', as some like to call them. 3 collections of poetry published in chapbook form: *Flower, Fist and Bestial Wail* (Hearse); *Long-shot Poems for Broke Players* (7 Poets Press); and *Run with the Hunted* (Midwest Poetry Chapbooks).'

JEAN BURDEN has a long list of credits including the *Borestone Mountain* anthologies

can be found in *Poetry*, *Virginia Quarterly*, *Saturday Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Epoch*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Southwest Review*, *American Scholar*, *Chicago Choice*, *The Critic*, *Experiment*, and other magazines.

SISTER MARY GILBERT has a first collection of poems to be published by Bobbs Merrill. She has a poem in the *Borestone Mountain* anthology, and a story in *Martha Foley's Best American Short Stories* taken from *Virginia Quarterly*. She can also be found in *Northwest Review*, *Sewanee Review* and many other magazines and anthologies. Her second book of prose was published by Bobbs-Merrill in 1962. She teaches journalism and English at Holy Names College in Spokane, Wash.

MENELAOS GUSKOS, born in Chicago, spent four years of his childhood in Greece. Recently he has traveled throughout Europe, Canada and the U.S. He teaches English and Greek at Berlitz in Los Angeles. A translation of his is being published in the *UCLAN Review*.

JOHN HAINES lives in Fairbanks, Alaska where he took out a homestead in 1947 'We scratch a very precarious living from this piece of ground'. He studied to be a painter, but has been writing poetry for twelve years. He hopes to have a book of poems in print in the next year or so, and has been published in *The Sixties*, *San Francisco Review* and elsewhere. 'Married. No children. 2 dogs. 1 weasel.'

GEORGE HITCHCOCK has stories in three different anthologies this year, here and in England. His most recent poetry is in *The Sixties*, *Plumed Horn* and *The Paris*

Review. His play, *The Busy Martyr*, is the 1963 New Play selection of the South Eastern Theatre Conference. He has seven produced plays, is a Stanley Award in Playwriting and a Contemporary Playwrights Award winner. He is the editor of San Francisco

R. B. IRVINE we quote. 'A West-coast Canadian (Vancouver B.C.) Accountant (an honest if unadventurous profession) by trade. Married. Two children. I reluctantly sat out the war in the airplane industry (somebody had to stay home and make the things). After selling to Redbook, American, Macleans, This Week, I am pleased and proud to have "made it" into the upper echelons of quality.'

JASCHA KESSLER has a manuscript of poems ready for publication. His poem "Budapest, 1956", in this issue of *Coastlines*, has been translated into Magyar and will be published in a volume, *Jail Poems*, being put out in Vienna by the newspaper of the Freedom Fighters. He has translated a number of Hungarian poets into English. He has written the libretto of an opera which will be given a world premiere at the New York City Center this year. He is working on a novel, and has a volume of stories to his credit. His novella, 'An Egyptian Bondage' is currently in *Olympia* No. 3.

DAVID LEMON is a very good artist and has done several covers for *COASTLINES*. He lives in Berkeley.

MYRON LEVOY is working on a full-length play and revising an earlier one. A short play appeared in *Mutiny*, a verse-play is to come out in a book of plays being done by Standard Publishing. He has had poetry in *Antioch Review*, *Chelsea Review*, among others.

DAVID LYTLE writes, 'I don't have any interesting biographical information, because I am a sane and normal person who has a wife and two children, and who teaches at a state university.'

F. X. MATHEWS is teaching English at Colby College in Maine. He has been published in *Antioch Review*, *Epos*, *Midwest*, *Mutiny*, *Impetus*, *Chicago Choice*, *Discourse*

NANCY-LOU PATTERSON lives in Ontario where her husband teaches at the University of Waterloo. She herself has taught at the Seattle University, has two daughters and two cats, and her work as an artist has been exhibited in Seattle and San Francisco. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry Northwest*, *The Canadian Forum*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Chicago Review*, *America*, and the *Beloit Poetry Journal*.

MELVIN ROSENBERG was 'Born Detroit, 1925. Educated after a fashion. Ran away from home at 22. Settled in Whittier where I am employed as athletic director in an old folks home (really!). Working on a novel. Better send eight extra copies with my complimentary ones. I have lots of relatives and two friends?'

PRISCILLA SHAMES 'practises poetry (like yogi) in Santa Monica. She is a poly-mother (1 guy and 3 dolls) a patientwife (Henry), and a pstudent (U.C.L.A.). She has published in *Chicago Choice*, *Pacific Northwest*, and the *Ladies Home Journal*:

ANN STANFORD has had three books published, the fourth, "The Weathercock", will be published by Talisman press this year. She received the Borestone Mountain Award for a poem that appeared in *Coastlines*. She teaches English at San Fernando Valley State College.

FELIX STEPHANILE is editor and publisher of the *Sparrow Magazine*. He worked twelve years with the New York State Dept. of Labor. He is currently teaching English at Purdue. His book *River Full of Craft* was published by the New Orleans Poetry Journal Series. Hearse Press did a brochure of three poets, called '9x3' of which he

ROBERT SWARD has a recent volume of poems out, Putnam in London. He is one of the editors of *Epoch*, and has poems appearing or due to appear in *Poetry*, *Paris Review*, *Quarterly Review of Literature*, *The Nation*, etc. He teaches at Cornell.

JON EDGAR WEBB 'Editor, *The Outsider*. Known for one novel "Four Steps to the Wall" (Dial Press), but have ghosted 30. "Devil, Devil", Is one of a selection of my short stories in the theme of "love and lovers" I'm preparing for book publication. Am also into a Deep South novel with interracial overtones.'

EDITORIAL: Archie and the Ninth Dry Hole

Barding Dahl

No rain this season. Farmers shaking their heads. Who asked them to be farmers. Little mag editor. Nobody asked him either.

Going around trying to get book stores to carry you. Contempt lying like limpid pools in their flaccid eyes in their gelid stores. The impossible has Your contesion. On beneath the in one sad of mack siop fun in stan.

Might as well accept it, grin fungusly, phosphorously. Lie down dismally in the path of Juggernaut Mediocre.

Coming home you feel for warmth, a sign, small flags announcing though in last place you are somewhere in the flotilla. A number of ominous brown envelopes. A weight on the rainless day. Scraping at you with their SHOULD

YOU FIND THE ENCLOSED STORY UNACCEPTABLE YOU WILL

FIND A RETURN ENVELOPE. Your contributors, let's wipe a tear.

They're rooting for you, they know what it's like, getting out a dinky mag.

NORTH AMERICAN SERIAL RIGHTS ONLY! Our scheme for a big killing with the South American rights gone smash.

Cold coffee. Radioactive cream. Krushchev says when all's said and done it's a mighty fine wall. Fingering the brown envelopes. Idle notions helping you stall. A marker in the sky, way out there, the break-even point, reach and reach. Then you could have a secretary, at least part-time. Students glad to get a dollar an hour to break into the publishing game. Wig them with a dollar and a quarter.

YOUR SNIDE COMMENTS ON MY STORY WERE MOST UNWEL-

COME, WHY CAN'T YOU JUST SEND THEM BACK, Looking out your window, millions are looking out of windows. You are different, you are a little mag editor. They'd never know it to look at you, but that's the beauty of it, incognito. No sign on the door, no diplomas. Self-made, you're there because they can shake the tree all they want to and you're still there. They are not there. They are sniggering at stale jokes at stale cocktail parties. You are in the vanguard, a regular spearhead. YOUR REASONS FOR

REJECTING MY STORY ARE TRIVIAL TO SAY THE LEAST. I

HAVE GOTTEN HANDWRITTEN REJECTIONS FROM THE BEST OF THEM. WHO ARE YOU TO -

Crops drying out. Brown envelopes drying out. Private visions worthless unless made public, enacted in the formal laws of excitement. Like canned movies on dusty shelves, inferior to the bored shufflings of clerks. In impotent need of a projector, and when it comes you are already too old.

Only a little mag editor, and you mapped empires. The burden of tolerant smiles from friends who have already made their deal. Are you really crazed Are you really the Castro of the magazine world, hunting for Henry Luce in the canyons of Manhattan. Does he really demand your privates on a platter for his paycheck. IT IS NOW SIX WEEKS SINCE I SENT YOU

**MY STORY, ENTITLED, 'A SURPRISE FOR ARCHIE' I REALIZE
A BIG MAGAZINE LIKE YOU MUST BE SWAMPED WITH SCRIPTS,
BUT I WOULD APPRECIATE -**

Trapped with Archie by the vast cunning of authors into dancing out the last full measure, the author knowing in his heart he is counting on our polite surprise. Archie and we are too polite to dissent, for in the little mag world we are all alright, politically. That is to say, we sit down though gingerly next to coloreds. We throw away our votes on Democratic candidates on pretext of not throwing them away on an honest man. Archie knows his business. Properly surprised. Heads for his niche.

And the Archie's of MGM, and Doubleday, and M.C.A., differing in nimbleness and salary, join hands with their counterparts in the little mag world. Art is only makebelieve. Transport within reason. Protest within reason. Love within reason. In youth we take pride in private lunacy, dismayed later by the shock that everyone else seems to be playing the same game. There is an appalling, one may say an absolute, lack of personnel in the chart room.

**I THINK YOU ARE FOOLISH NOT TO PAY YOUR CONTRIBU-
TORS. IT WOULD AMOUNT TO (I'M SURE), A VERY SMALL PART
OF YOUR PUBLISHING BUDGET, AND IT WOULD MAKE SUCH A
DIFFERENCE TO THE WRITERS. IF YOU WANT PROFESSIONAL**

WORK YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO PAY FOR IT. But we may say, must in all honesty say, the little mag world seethes with hate. It is not overstating the case to say that passions run deep among our people. It our enemies (who are everywhere,) do not cease their machinations against us, we will issue the ultimate ultimatum. We will go so far as to blast them with an even more scathing, damning, pulverizing editorial.

Sadists are attracted to the jailing profession. What may we say (then) of the little mag editor, taking his ease in an arbor of nettles. Small wonder his laugh rings hollow, his handshake slips. Nervous coughs for creditors, unbelieving excuses to contributors, spreading measly shreds of hope before anthologists and writers' conferences, Abjectly arranging his cravat before the concordat of fat cats.

For if you are not with us, you are certainly against us. With us in our greased careen to blank acceptance and waffle-iron faces, against us in our (important) plan of surprising Archie, whom everyone else was so sure could never be surprised again.

For, like maids, butlers, and all categories of men Fridays, having not and wishing much, we keen with appetite. Preening our worn livery, we wait in the wings for an unscheduled cue. Scheduled, perhaps, to pass all our days in those wings. Darkness, dust, an easy prey for maudlin tears.

But on the few boards that are given us, the words come tripping, measuring, cutting the cloth that covers our ideas. But our cloth, our ideas, nothing made to order, never two of a kind. Indignance laid aside, we accept our humble station. For though a butler may be a tiger in dreams and on his night off, he is never far from the trappings of his trade.

We grumble, and sweep the way-station for future greats, learn to feign

gratitude, like granny mouthing thank-you's for a remembrance card. Playing our small trumps in the game of picking front-runners, those giants forever straining after huge explosions of the blood, even on their knees still sifting to isolate the unique virus of their name.

We envy, for a butler is after all a butler, and we are surprised. By smaller things than surprise Archie -- no miraculous encounters, no violent slaughters that sum up so beautifully, no changes of heart that smack of magic. We deal in the small coin of reportage, recounting voyages of the heart with faithful exactness. Thus it was, or really seemed to be, and no one may alter the stacking of the bones. PLEASE RETURN MY MANUSCRIPT ENTITLED

**A SURPRISE FOR ARCHIE I SENT IT TO THIS OTHER MAGAZINE
AND THEY KEPT IT SO LONG I THOUGHT THEY HAD LOST IT
AND SO I SENT IT TO YOU AND NOW THEY WANT TO USE IT
YOU WILL UNDERSTAND I'M SURE AS IT IS ONE OF THE BIGGER
PUBLICATIONS.**

Duo

*The moment we have wished nearer
Has arrived and nearly passed.
We are boarding the boat together
Satchels combined, trunks one,
Seagulls shying themselves at us.
The Captain is shinnying up and down
The poles to set out flags.
Tugboats are honking geeselike.
Why, it is a little melody they
Are making, the song of grief
And abject misery which
Has followed us everywhere so far.*

- Michael Benedikt

George Hitchcock

On the afternoon of the 30th of April the presiding officer of the Third District Court was confronted by a prisoner named Julius Kadel. The case was simple -- the psychiatrists' findings were unanimous and Kadel's relatives, no doubt aware that commitment to a public asylum was a benign solution, had offered no objections. All that remained was to examine the prisoner and sign the necessary papers.

Yet when, in response to the bailiff's prompting, Kadel arose and faced the bench, the presiding officer felt a moment's misgiving. The prisoner was a small man, by trade a ship's carpenter. His head and both arms were so swathed in bandages that neither hands, ears nor chin were visible -- all that could be seen were a nose swollen by blisters and two large dark eyes which seemed to plead for understanding. The magistrate decided to take unusual care with the case; he had a low opinion of psychiatrists and was convinced that his own insight and native compassion were superior to their analytic methods.

'Julius Kadel.'

'Reporting, sir'

'Step up closer.' The presiding officer was a heavy, elderly man with white hair and horn-rimmed glasses; he spoke in a voice befitting his gravity, a soft, deep, weary voice which perpetually lingered on the threshold of a whisper, a voice in which the vowels seemed a consolation and within which unexpected sibilants shimmered and disappeared.

'You have been in this court before?

Kadel shook his head.

'I have a long memory,' the presiding officer said softly. "Many people come through here but I don't forget them."

'Not me,' Kadel said. His eyes, which a moment before had been so overtly pleading, were now lowered. The presiding officer was used to averted eyes and, despite his naturally tolerant disposition, always put it down to guilt. But in this case there was something else as well; it was almost as if each of them had recognized a certain bond between them, a bond which Kadel was now reluctant to press.

'I shouldn't hold it against you.'

'Not me,' Kadel repeated.

The presiding officer picked up Kadel's dossier and leafed through it. The courtroom was silent save for the whisper of the onionskin paper under his fingers. At last he spoke again, this time in a voice which rippled with irony.

* Apparently, Mr. Kadel, you set fire to your own clothing.'

*To my nightshirt,' Kadel corrected.

* I see. To your nightshirt. And your reason?'

'Eh?'

'What was your motive?'

'In burning my nightshirt?'

Kadel shifted from foot to foot and then said, still without looking up.
"I had heecups."

' Hiccups?"

' Yes, heecups."

The presiding officer brought the tips of his fingers together and stared pensively over them past Kadel and into the almost deserted courtroom with its dark walnut panelling and imitation tudor arches. Somewhere in this explanation there was a compelling and perhaps poetic logic which for the moment escaped him but, he was sure, must reveal itself to patient insight. So after a moment he asked,

' And your hiccups are gone?"

Kadel ignored the question.

*I had them day and night,' he said with a quick burst of energy, ' but mostly at night when they came in gallops. There's a great flood of sinfulness abroad in the world.'

· Indeed there is,' said the magistrate, ' but it is not likely to be reduced by self-immolation.'

Kadel now raised his eyes and looked directly into his and the magistrate felt, obscurely, that he had won a victory. At the same time he became aware of the pungent smell of disinfectant and involuntarily shivered.

· It's better to frighten yourself than to frighten others, Kadel said.

' But in the course of frightening yourself, you set your bunk afire and endangered the lives of everyone on your ship.'

* I regret that,' Kadel said simply. ' I miscalculated.'

* And surely, the magistrate continued, 'there must be other ways, less dramatic ways, to cure the hiccups.'

Kadel shook his bandaged head stubbornly.

'No, Your Honor, it's the human condition. Fire's the only sure way to burn away the dross and slag we gather about us in this life. I lived a wicked life, Your Honor, a life full of tiny itches and prevarications and when I wanted to go to God clean as a white bone I found I was breathing heecups. You can never lie down among angels with the heecups.'

He stared at the magistrate as if by strength of his gaze alone he could set up some resonance which would make him understand, and the magistrate felt his raw gaze more than he could bear and lowered his own eyes, thinking at the same time that it was ludicrous for him to be affected by a lunatic's eyes.

* Let us keep to the point,' he said. ' We cannot here be concerned with your putative relationship with angels -- he paused to take in the court reporter's appreciative smile -- what I want to know is why you felt that the suffering you have obviously undergone was to be preferred to a simple case of hiccups.'

'Simple!' Kadel protested. ' You don't know my heecups! And I tried other ways. I put corrosive on my tongue but it's the wrong organ and not properly responsible.'

"I see."

' With no effect?

*No, Your Honor. I needed a great fright and fire's the only way. A shirt of fire burns away the felonious thoughts and leaves the soul open to healing breezes.'

The bailiff laughed. The presiding officer gave him a reproving look and said, ' We will preserve order, please. There is nothing to laugh about in the sufferings of the human soul' He turned again to the prisoner and said kindly, ' Go on, Mr. Kadel.'

*Thank you, Your Honor,' Kadel said gratefully. And then, moistening his cracked lips with his tongue, he continued, 'It's the sickness that's abroad everywhere, it torments us all like pepper under the bark makes a pine tree writhe. Even the rivers go sick from it and need a frightening to drive the dirty scud from their pores so they can breathe again. We mortals are no exception. Your Honor, living begets sand in our veins, cruel itching circumstances and vapors and gases scratching to get out.'

*I have often observed it,' the magistrate said drily. It is the taedium vitae you are describing.'

' Eh? '

' Continue, Mr. Kadel.'

' Would you spell that, please? ' asked the court reporter.

The magistrate sighed and said, ' You may omit that from the record.'

"I hold them in until I'm like to burst,' Kadel went on, 'and then some morning get up and study my shoes to put them on and it all comes leaking out of me in whoops and starts. Like a geyser it is, so many sinful gases clamoring to get out and there's no holding them, try as I do. And I tell myself, Julius, there's a great bolt of lightning somewhere in heaven to cleanse and purify you if only you can find it.'

' A vain hope,' the magistrate observed.

'I believe not,' Kadel said. 'But I can't wait till Armageddon for the discomfort I'm in which is immediate and galloping through me like horses. It takes a nail to drive out a nail, Your Honor. And there by my hand is a folder of waxed matches to lay the itch in a fright of conflagration.'

He stopped as if no more need be said and stared up at the magistrate,ed up at the his brown eyes unblinking and steady on the old man's face, almost as if he were looking through him at some ghostly judge who sat behind. The presiding officer stiffened in his chair. He had felt a familiar, premonitory pain in the lower part of his back. He rapped lightly on his desk with his gavel and said in a low voice, "I believe we will recess for ten minutes'.

These sudden recesses -- * intermissions', the bailiff called them - were nothing new. In recent years the magistrate had suffered both from kidney-stones and a prostate condition; he found it difficult to remain on the bench over half an hour without pain and the necessity to relieve himself, and at moments of excitement his attacks were even more frequent. Against them only a wall of detachment, a stubborn resolve to remain uninvolved, could protect him, and this physiological need was at constant war with his unflagging curiosity and compassion. He was old and sick and yet he could

not accept the emotional resignation which alone might have made his illness supportable.

In the lavatory he stood before the urinal and underwent the customary torture, a pain so unrelenting and intense that when he was finished he leaned for a moment with his forehead pressed against the cold tiles of the wall to regain his strength. He had been foolish to become involved in Kadel's story; for every minim of sympathy he extended, he must pay in grams of pain. Yet something about that impassioned rhetoric had touched him. One found fragments of the truth in unlikely corners and it was not without reason, he reflected, that the Greeks (whom he greatly admired) had chosen a madwoman custodian of the Delphic revelations. "A great bolt of lightning to cleanse and purify you! Had he not himself sought all his life that naked and purifying illumination? Sought it first in the image of Justice blinded, and when She had failed him, still pursued it in the hope that some unexpected bar of music, the face of a child, a ray of light on a woman's arm, might reveal in an instant those shattering truths which elude logic? He felt a glow of warmth toward poor, singed, demented Kadel. It had been, certainly, their essential brotherhood as searchers which had given that bandaged face its mysterious familiarity. For there were depths within depths, the magistrate thought, wheels within wheels, if only you persisted in the search for them.

*Ah, the inexplicable human soul,' he said and then, aware, that he had spoken out loud, looked about him in embarrassment. The lavatory was empty.

He readjusted his gown and, with his usual bear-like shuffle, returned down the corridor to his chambers. As he reentered the courtroom Kadel, the court reporter, and the solitary onlooker once again rose and as mechanically seated themselves when he took his place on the bench. Far overhead a fan began to turn in a recess in the ceiling.

· Court is in session,' the bailiff said perfunctorily.

The presiding officer took his horn-rimmed glasses from their case and mounted them on his nose.

'Mr. Kadel,' he said. The prisoner rose. "Let me put you a hypothetical question, Mr. Kadel.'

'Steady as she goes,' Kadel said briskly and saluted.

· If the court were to take this matter under advisement - that is, if I were to defer an opinion on your case for the time being --

Kadel stared at him blankly.

'He means that he might give you another chance,' the bailiff explained.

'Thank you, bailiff, the magistrate said with a dry smile, 'but I think Mr. Kadel and I understand each other without your kind intervention. Don't we, Mr. Kadel? '

'Eighty-five per cent."

'Which is above the average of human intercourse,' the magistrate commented with a glance at the court reporter who chuckled dutifully.

*My question, Mr. Kadel, is whether you feel that you have sufficient self-control to refrain from such drastic medication should your hiccups return.'

Kadel hesitated, then began in a loud voice: 'Mortal man is a battleground -

The presiding officer interrupted him. 'I think the question can be answered yes or no.

· Maybe it can, Your Honor, but I got to find my own way around the foc'sle and I've no ready negative or positive to hand.'

'Then as simply as you can, please.'

Kadel struggled within his cocoon of bandages. 'I'm coming at it,' he said, 'but it's no easy chore. I'll try to make myself worthy to live peaceful among my compatriots, without riot or flame or other unseemliness, but there's higher powers than you nor me involved in this and if we disregard them in framing a quick response they take a terrifying vengeance.' He paused and then added, 'A vengeance on the mighty in their seats of grandiosity as fierce as on the hut of the humble.'

himself losing patience at his higher powers The magistrate felt

* Surely you know the Powers, Your Honor?'

· I do not, Mr. Kadel, or I should not have asked.'

*Then I've mistaken you for another,' Kadel said with vehemence, 'for when I come into this courtroom I said, Julius, there on the bench is a human mortal has been in the cold and strangling grip of the demons as well as you. It's the eyes, Your Honor, they enter in at the eyes and go out by the same manner of egress, leaving behind their sorrowful tracks like the wakes of ships. And once they've possessed a mortal and inflicted on him their tormentuous sufferings and furies there's no mistaking him for ordinary. I saw it in your eyes, Your Honor, and afterwards the face, for they ride a man with whips and spurs and it leaves its mark -

"That will do," the presiding officer said, rapping his gavel smartly. And to the court reporter he added, Please note that I find the witness unresponsive

'So noted,' the court reporter said.

"The suffering spreads --" Kadel continued but at a sign from the presiding officer the bailiff pushed him back into his chair where he fell silent.

The magistrate cleared his throat and in a monotone, almost as if he were reading it from a paper, repeated the usual formula:

* Julius Kadel, on the finding of the psychiatric board I am committing you to the state hospital for the insane; there to be detained until such time as competent medical opinion declares you fit to rejoin society.' He took his pen from its stand and began signing the commitment papers. The pen scratched and tore at the loose paper until he laid his other hand over it to keep it from sliding.

Kadel stood up slowly and asked in an uncomplaining voice, Is that a summary of your opinions, Your Honor?

"It is," the magistrate said and beckoned to the bailiff.

· Sabrard watch reing for duty sir the bail took him by the ply,

and led him away

There was a long silence in the courtroom. The court reporter closed his notebook and began to pick his teeth. The magistrate took off his glasses and wiped them on a bit of linen. Then he stared out through the half-opened windows onto the deserted street until it almost seemed that he had fallen asleep. It was the bailiff who, on returning, noticed that his hands were clenched so tightly on the desk before him that the knuckles were as yellowish-white as old parchment. He glanced quickly at the magistrate's taut face and asked, 'What is it, sir?' and then, 'Can I get you a glass of water?'

'No,' the presiding officer said. 'It will pass. It will pass.'

Warble In -

*warble in the blackbird of my night
through pitchblend breathing,
and may the counties raise their taxes
and the axman itch in his sleep:
warble in the blackbird of my night,
and may the armies dress for dancing
in the streets, and young girls
kiss the fruits that fill their bellies;
warble in the blackbird of my night,
grunt and groan your Summers down,
pick at lillie stems when
cancer's heart burns love;
warble in the blackbird of my night,
warble in the note,
my country's tall for falling
the rust of days
from Moscow to New York
adds a terror of hours
but I do not complain
the ten thousand kisses
or the sticks and stones
or broken Rome,
but I wait your note,
my fingers scratch
this sunlit table.*

- Charles Bukowski

Budapest, 1956

Regime falls on regime, a flood of stones
pounding the horse plains, burying strangers
and beloved together in the cause
of no community and of no life
but one -- the way of flags, standards of death
displayed by hordes riding always without hope.

Scorned, denied, banished from today, the hope
of thought broken where these broken stones
crush the choked, smoking streets: a place of death,
children killing, children killed by strangers,
no quarter for thought: yet hope still, still life
makes way among the ruins and seeks a cause.

Killing or killed, we will not yield our cause
to them nor they to us, there is no hope
of settling the ways of passion with life:
out of old ways come civil streets and stones
to pave and build, but out of life strangers
with fire hot in their hands come bringing death.

Ungentle then these crossroads, filled with death,
enfiladed from all sides in no cause,
to no end: we foreign and they strangers
firing in darkness and blind with the hope
that sunlight lights the others heaped on stones,
that hatred's nights no longer rake this life.

Stairs blasted, riddled walls, the garden's life
of peace unhonored by gardeners whose death
is sowed and reaped with force among these stones:
on every hand neglect -- neglect of cause,
ends neglected while time wastes and dear hope
rots with neglect -- a waste where strangers

wander unmeeting, avoiding strangers
who would ask for lights or the time: ' Your life,
your life! Give us whatever you would hope
to have or save or take! You are lost! Your death
is here, now, forever! and for your cause
you must die and be buried under stones!?

What is fit for stones is fit for strangers:
our only good cause going from the life
where men find death, where slaves can only hope.

- Jascha Kessler

*Connoisseur of bitter waits
And much sweet disappointment
Harlotry within her gates
Abused, amused she joins men*

*Soulfully as of good song
Appears that smile of wisdom
Mockery's hands, female, young
Unkind, cruel if she gives them*

*Generous portions of death
Or sleep triumphant each night
Murderous dream bringing health
And crowned though dimly with light*

*Farewell and hail human trash!
As if those lips, once clothed, lived
Marvel! She's charmed with the lash!
And gives, those breasts, as though loved!*
- Jascha Kessler

God and Grandmother's House

When I stayed overnight at my grandmother's house
I slept on the cot in the back room
Where the old sewing machine was
On which my grandmother made all her dresses.
Sometimes I would lightly touch the pedal
And play an organ
With a hummingbird's whirl.
On the wall was a picture of a frowning old man
With a long white beard and big black eyes
Which followed me whenever I moved.
I was scared of him, for he looked like God.
On the other wall mottoes were tacked;
One said, 'Fear not, little flock,'
And another, 'I will make you fishers of men.'
I thought of the woolly bearded disciples
Standing on the river bank
Pulling in men like trout
And scraping off their sins like scales.
I hid beneath the covers, safe

From any dangling bait or outstretched trotter,
And crossed myself
(Although I knew it was a popish thing to do
And Luther's Hymnal sat on the dresser,
Black with red-tipped pages
Almost as solemn as scripture itself;
I never dared to open it.
For fear the man in the picture would bawl
'Ein' Feste Burg' all down the block),
And prayed to the sewing machine
Because it was my friend,
And secretly to the devil
Because he was red
And uncomplicated.

Now that the house is let out to lodgers,
I see too many men too much alike,
Too neatly stitched in their ready-to-wears
Cut from a store-bought pattern.
The devil no longer looks like a lobster,
But lurks in dark corners where the cobwebs are,
Prompts girls to drink the lysol,
Men to shoot their wives,
And sits at the councils of the godly.
Now that the hymnal is mildewed in storage,
I flounder about, I am on the hook,
But see no angler on the shore,
No face in the empty picture frame.
And if I cover my head and dive
Beneath the pillows, it is because
No one at all is watching me.

- Jack Anderson

*All flowers come to your nose
Broken through the earth,
Buzzing new to the birth
Of scent, they do not go
To be smelled, but to close.*

*Do not be late to smell the rose.
There is a time, there is a time.
The sun is set to mime
The petals turning in to wait
For some young morning, and the snows.*

*The sky is always in the west
These days, it bellows to the ant,
Then in a moment, turns to taunt
And fall to the unfelt breath.
Turn up and let him play the guest.*

*Why do rumpled clothes disturb you,
Drive you to the galleries?
Then drive you back to rend and seize
The unpalsied hands
Which can make your eye see blue.*

*Lovers lay along the mound.
Their ears seethed when speech died
Which put them in the world again, and sighed
To stun their ears
Now trembling to the first sound.*

*The symphony melts in the field,
But crows caw everywhere.
Bluebirds in the city bare
Their beaks, resound their flight
To the wind, then yield*

I drew an orange slice and laid
It in my mouth. Sweet
It runs down all sides. I greet
The flow easy in my mouth
And let the flavor fade.

I go to the orange tree
Full from the earth that sucked
The rivers from the sky, and tucked
Its life into cornerless skins
That give their life to me.

Your breasts are heavy in my hand
Draw them, and my warts are bare
To rub on elms, and lose the care
Of velvet on the sand. Fall on me
Your breasts are heavy in my land.

Your fingers drive my body mad.
I feel my body fused
From fingers that excused
The mark. I too drive deep
Into the flesh, once, when I was sad.
- Menelaos Guskos

I

Fragrance falls from the rose;

*icy rain,
the east wind scatters
a thousand seeds -*

*Light of all things,
you fade.*

II

*·This lovely body
gone to slime and ashes ' -*

*Through the decaying
window I watch
the funeral rites;*

*I breathe unearthly incense
and I hear far off
the still, sad note
of an empty forest.*

III

*Desolation on the wind,
a cry of absence;
in the darkness,
hands that have turned
to earth
lay their dust at my feet.*

*No one comes to awaken
the throneless king.*

-John Haines

DESIGNED GUYS' BRAINS

R. B. Irvine

I mean here I am back home in Saskatoon and I liked Vancouver fine, my job and the beaches and the mountains and all and I wouldn't have had to leave the place if my brains had worked good enough to keep me out of this mix-up I got in with my landlady. What I did was let her get ideas in her head about me and she was nice enough looking -- Miss Benson her name was -- but old, she must have been all of twenty-eight or nine and I don't go for that stuff like some guys do. You'd have thought I could handle myself even though I was in a state of total emergency at the time, getting another guy out of a jam his brains had got him into, the fellow I shared the room with in her apartment, his name was Max McDermott and one hell of a nice guy I was ready to do anything for.

The heat was some to blame --at least it was hot for Vancouver. Id worked overtime down at the garage so it was nine when I got home, sweating freely. I saw our light on from the street which was surprising because Friday was one of Max's night-school nights. Running up the stairs I grinned to myself saying maybe they'd thrown the little bastard out for getting in an argument and trying to break the place up. But just the same wishing it was the old days before he took up with Shirley, the girl he was going with, and he was waiting to come along with me and Dot to the Paradise Ballroom that night.

It wasn't quite dark yet outside and he only had the one light on -- the fan-dancer lamp Miss Benson won playing Bingo and gave us for our room. So at first I didn't see much except he was at the bureau in his shorts, getting something out of a drawer. I said, 'Hi, you little bum,' and dumped my windbreaker down and went to the cupboard peeling off my shirt for a quick shower and change.

When he answered, ' Do you think the world was made in six days? ' which was what he did, the words made no sense whatsoever and I said, ' What?'

With my back to him, I didn't notice what he was doing which was moving his shirts and stuff out of the bureau to a suitcase standing open on the bed.

'How about being saved? ' he said.

I heard the words but I didn't catch on. I grabbed the first thing that came into my mind to try to be funny with. Kneeling down to untie my shoes, I said, ' Who from? Miss Benson been after you again?'

I said that because that's the cock-eyed way a guy's mind is made, you know, semi-automatic like the transmission on a car. I was thinking about Dot and how after being at the Paradise we'd drive out along the beach and park with a mickey of rum. My mind was in that gear and so what came into my head was Miss Benson. She was a trained nurse and okay as a landlady, she kept the place clean and let us keep our beer in her refrigerator but she was too friendly and always making excuses to bring us things to the room

The next thing he said was, 'How about surrendering yourself to God? and I still didn't get it. I thought it must be a gag of some kind he'd thought up from seeing stuff painted on rocks like The Wages Of Sin Is Death, you know the kind. It never occurred to me he really meant religion. In two years we'd talked about pretty near everything in the world, lying awake until light sometimes. But we'd never talked about religion and that stuff. I figured he was about the same as me --I'd nothing against it, I just didn't go for it. I figured people went to church for some reason I didn't know, like the way they go to horse-races for some reason I never understood either.

So before my mind got changed into the right gear and able to pay attention properly to the tone of his voice, I said, ' God's okay, I guess, but if he has you to save He'd sure have a job on his hands'.

I felt the silence and turning around to throw my pants on a chair, I got my first careful look at him.

There was something wrong with his head. It was the wrong shape. He'd cut his hair off. It was cut clean down close but rough and jagged. A home-made do-it-yourself crew cut.

Max thought a lot of his hair. He combed it up high in front and at the garage he wore a hat to keep it clean. It was the color of cigarette ash - his name was Max McDermott but he thought his mother had been a Polish girl which would explain the color of his hair and also the mouth and eyes and eyebrows which were straight lines ruled on a flat face.

He was as reasonable a guy as they come which I knew after sharing a room with him two years except he was inclined to blow his top easy.

Generally all you had to do to handle him was just take things quiet.

The window was open and down in the street there were roller skates and Indians playing. A truck roared by. A girl was singing on Miss Benson's radio down the hall.

*I want an answer,' he said with his teeth clenched.

It was then I saw he was packing his suitcase on the bed.

I still hadn't got any sense. I said, ' Where the hell do you think you're going??

Max didn't answer. He threw down a sweater he was carrying and jumped me, slugging with both fists, but I had sense enough to know right away he wasn't sore at me but at something completely else and went after me because I was convenient, that's all. And if it would help him any to work it off trying to beat me up, that was okay, it was up to me to oblige. I was his friend. I was bigger, of course, but he was a strong quick little guy and he took me by surprise. It was a couple of minutes before I got him under control, not until we'd rolled around on the floor panting, half under the bed in the dust and out again with the table upset, crash, and the alarm clock and a bunch of his magazines and some beer glasses and Miss Benson's fan-dancer china lamp in pieces on the floor. He wouldn't quit and wouldn't quit until I finally began to get exasperated. There were limits to obliging someone by letting them try to kill you. I didn't want to damage him any by, for instance, pounding his head insensible on the leg of the bed, so I got

my fingers hooked in the chain he wore around his neck, figuring to choke the fight out of him. But before I tightened up, it was all over as suddenly as it started.

I untangled my fingers from the chain and let him loose.

'Im sorry,' he said between gasping for breath, and I said, 'Okay, kid, also gasping.

My arm had got cut rolling on bits of the fan-dancer lamp but not bad.

Max sat on the floor a minute in among the magazines and stuff, getting his breath. It was darker now the light was bust but not too dark to see because outside the window there was brightness in the sky over the roof-tops and also there was a street-lamp opposite.

'What's it all about?' I said, righting the table and picking up bits of lamp. " Watch out with your bare feet in this stuff. What happened to you?"

'I socked a clergyman,' he said.

And he got up off the floor and went on packing his suitcase and told me about it.

The trouble started because he wanted Shirley to go on an all-day picnic with him Sunday and she wanted him to go to church with her instead.

He'd put it to her when he called to walk her to night-school. Walking her to night-school and home again was about the only way he got to see her. They worked different shifts but mostly it was because Shirley's mother brought her up strictly.

He went to night-school because when she started in at the office at the garage he was just one of the dirty-coverall bunch that stared in through the glass at her and she pretended they weren't there. One day, on his day off, he followed her home and then by playing detective he found she went to night-school. He figured a grease-monkey rated zero but a fellow-student might be different. She would see he was serious and meant to get ahead. It wasn't hard for him, actually, because he was interested in things like engineering. He was that kind. He always had a bunch of science magazines lying around the room.

He figured it right. Shirley made friends. But nothing more. No parties, not Saturday nights or any other. Having to take her straight home was one of the things he liked about her.

When he brought up the picnic business, he was sitting in her kitchen, watching her ironing. And he was wanting to kiss her. Mind you, he didn't tell me that but it stands to reason. She wasn't exactly my type, the glasses and all, but Max had it bad and must have told me a hundred times, lying awake at night, how cute she was. And I guess she was cute at the ironing board with her cheeks pink and her dark hair ruffled. Maybe she wasn't pretty but she looked good -I mean old-fashioned good - honest and loving and simple.

Max was wearing a pink shirt and his pale blue twenty-four dollar slacks. The kitchen smelled of spice cake, he told me, and it made his mouth water and that made him embarrassed and that and wanting to kiss her made him not know what to do with his hands.

'And you know what I thought?' he told her. I got it all figured out. You

and me, we'll start early and drive to Bailey's Cove and hire a boat. There's a little island up the sound, all trees and moss and rocks and nobody on it. We'll take our lunch.'

He wasn't done but stopped so she could say how swell it would be. But instead of that, she said, 'But I couldn't come, not for all day on Sunday. There's church'

Max should have played along but he wasn't thinking straight because he could see the whole thing in his head, the trees and the moss and just the two of them there and the blue water. And he'd kiss her, maybe.

'They'd let you skip church just once, wouldn't they?' he began to argue. 'Know what? We'll light a little fire and cook hamburger.'

* I was thinking you might come to church with me,' she said.

'Me? Go to church? Oh, now, Shirley -

She'd got shy and looked at him through her eyelashes. That was one of the things he liked about her -- the way she was shy. He hadn't ever kissed her. She wasn't that sort and that was another thing he liked about her.

The trouble was he didn't know she really went for religion. A fellow and a girl don't talk of such things much. He knew she went to church and sorted old clothes but he thought she did it to please her mother who was a nasty old woman if ever there was one.

'We've never been to church together,' she said. 'You always work Sundays. Mr. Webster -- he's the minister -- I'd like you to meet him. And Mother has been asking.'

What she was doing was telling him she was getting ready to be in love and marry him and be his dearest and best wife forever and this was the first step; he should come to church. It would make him regular. But Max didn't recognize what she was telling him because he'd planned the picnic and was thinking about how after eating the lunch, he'd lie with his head in her lap in the sun.

'Some other time,' he told her. He'd come some Sunday in the winter, he said, but this was the only chance of a picnic. He could go to church anytime.

'Church is more important, she said.

He got sore then because he wanted to kiss her so badly. He hated that church like his worst enemy and said, 'Aw - church. What does it matter anyway?'

Shirley said, 'Going to church is most important,' and he said, 'You could skip it just for once,' and then he bust it wide open by saying, 'Stuff about the world being made in six days. What would you miss?'

That tied it. Shirley said it wasn't stuff, the bible said so. And Max said the scientists had proved it took six billion years to make the earth. So Shirley quoted the bible and he said how could she be fooled by that stuff? He'd lost all his sense because he couldn't bear not to have her come on the picnic. Finally, he said, 'Shirley -- honey -- please come Sunday,' and got up and put his arms around her and tried to kiss her because kissing her would end the arguing, he thought, and also he wanted to kiss her so badly.

She said, 'Let me go,' struggling. 'Let me go,' and she got a hand loose and gave him a smack on the face.

He let her go and she turned and ran out. And he ran after her. He couldn't bear to have such a thing happen. He called, Shirley, come back, but she kept on through the hall and upstairs. He followed, tripping over his feet on the stair-carpet. And at the top Shirley's mother met him. She was carrying a bird-cage but whether it had a bird in it or not Max didn't notice.

He'd had a run-in with the old buzzard once already that evening. When he arrived at the front door to call for Shirley, he was feeling so good he slipped on a trick false pair of bulgy blue eyes he'd brought along and when the door opened he began in French, ' You care to buy zee book about zee bees, Madam? ' or some such thing because with his eyes behind the false fronts he didn't see at first it wasn't Shirley but her mother. She hadn't any use for people who talked with a French accent and wore false eyes. The living-room in her house hung with mottos like, ' Surrender your heart unto the Lord,' and ' With prayer shall I praise Him,' and stuff like that. She withered Max properly but finally allowed Shirley was home but not ready and he could go into the kitchen if he wanted.

Well, later on, when she met him at the top of the stairs with the bird-cage, and they could hear Shirley locking her door, he got frightened by her. He said she looked at him as if he was some kind of ugly animal she was on guard against. And the next thing he knew he was out in the street with his night-school books left in the kitchen and he didn't remember exactly how he got there.

He hung around a while waiting for Shirley to come out so he could walk along with her and set things right but she didn't come.

And finally he decided the thing to do was to go and see this Mr. Webster, the minister at Shirley's church. ' I figured I'd better,' he said, telling me about it. ' If religion could be so important to Shirley maybe there was something about it I didn't know. I could join the church, maybe. If I joined up, she'd see I was sorry and that it was all a mistake. So I went to see him. I found the address in a drug store.'

It was the night-school trick over again and would have been fair enough except, like I said, Max blew his top easy if not handled right.

dark. TheBy the time he got to this part of the story it was quiet outside and getting dark. The roller skates and Indians had been called in to bed. Miss Benson's radio had another girl singing or maybe it was the same one. They all sound alike.

The suitcase on the bed was packed and the lid ready to put down. Max was putting on a tee-shirt.

*I'm sorry to leave the place in a mess,' he said, ' but I want to get three-four hundred miles by morning.' He said it as if he was finished with his story.

*Tell me about Mr. Webster,' I said.

He didn't answer for a minute because he had the tee-shirt on back-to-front. When that was fixed, he said, ' I didn't mean to hit him. Only he kept saying I should surrender and lay my sins on God and not explaining anything so a person could understand.'

So far he'd talked pretty straight, making everything reasonably plain though leaving out details. But now, when it came to Mr. Webster, he mumbled and repeated himself and didn't make sense some of the time. I guess maybe he didn't remember any too well just exactly what did happen.

Mr. Webster was thin and middle-aged. The way Max put it he looked like he was rusty. He was in the little church office just finished a service or something. There was a half a ham sandwich and an empty coffee cup on the desk with some hymn books and more colored texts, like Shirley's mother had, on the walls.

Max explained he was a friend of Shirley's and come for some information. 'This business of being saved,' he began, all ready to listen carefully. 'What does it mean exactly?'

He was ready to listen but you can't blame this Mr. Webster for being caught off base a little. It must have been confusing to have a prize-fighter type like Max, dressed in pale blue pants and a pink shirt and his hair combed up high, come busting in asking questions about God.

Mr. Webster said being saved meant repenting your sins with a contrite heart and surrendering yourself.

Max said he repented his sins, all right, and he was ready to surrender but how did he do it? How exactly did a person go about surrendering?

Well, Mr. Webster didn't seem able to give any exact information, at least nothing that suited Max. He said Max should pray and open his heart to the light and seek grace but you have to remember that Max was excited and not in any state to understand anything easily no matter how clearly laid out.

Telling me about it, he got exasperated all over again and I felt sorry for Mr. Webster. I could imagine Max sitting up straight and getting less and less able to understand anything and Mr. Webster not knowing how to talk his language and not knowing, either, that you had to take it easy with him.

'How do they expect me to surrender myself when they can't tell me how?' he said to me. 'Mr. Webster said to lay down my sins but I don't know how to do it.'

He moved to the cupboard and came out with a pair of pants on a hanger.

'What happened finally?' I asked.

*I had a funny feeling. I felt sort of - sort of full up inside only that wasn't it either. I can't explain. Anyway, I went to take his arm to try to make him see how important it was. All I meant was to make him understand how badly I needed to know and would he put it in plain English like - like -- well like an automobile handbook, for instance. You know, things put plain. Take off the gasket. Tighten up the bolts. But he shook me off and first thing I knew -- but he wasn't hurt. He got up right away."

I watched Max pulling on his pants. The next question might have been, 'Why did you cut your hair?' but I didn't ask it. He wouldn't want to tell me. A thing like that is private. Anyway, I thought I knew. After what happened there would seem no time any more to waste fooling around with fancy-combed hair. Blue pants and pink shirts would be things a man shouldn't be seen dead wearing. He'd grabbed the scissors, also, I figured, to serve himself right for having fouled things up.

Things were certainly fouled up but not so bad he had to leave town. In the morning things would look different but by morning he'd be three-four hundred miles away unless someone stopped him going. Someone meant me.

He should wait till morning, I told him, and see how things looked then. 'In what way will they look different?' he said and I didn't know except things do sometimes. So then I said why didn't he play along and go to church and it wouldn't hurt him to sing hymns. 'You don't have to keep it up all your life. After you're married you can taper off, sort of.

That was a bum suggestion and right away I was sorry I made it. He said very politely, "That would be crooked. I don't want Shirley that way'.

The politeness was worse than if he'd hit me. Shirley was no dance-hall pick-up. "I'm sorry," I said. "Excuse it."

Just the same, he shouldn't go. Particularly after failing with Shirley. He'd turn to dance-hall stuff again and this time for keeps not for Saturday nights only like it was before he met her.

So I said he was running away and he should stay and fight and I said maybe Shirley would meet him half-way. And I said he'd got her in a jam with Mr. Webster and he should stay and help her out of it. I called him pig-headed and a yellow-belly and I might just as well have talked to Miss Benson's budgie-bird.

He had answers to everything and what it boiled down to was that he wouldn't pretend he was religious and Shirley wouldn't be happy married to someone who wasn't.

The night air on my bare shoulders made me shiver. I thought for a second of how mad Dot must be at my not coming for her. But Dot didn't matter.

Max stood by the bed, buttoning his shirt. His eyes and eyebrows and his mouth were straight ruled lines and I couldn't make out if it was the light from the street-lamp or something else made his face white like paper. He pulled out his comb and raised it to his shaggy head. He put it away again quick.

The thing to do was phone Shirley and tell her to come around and stop him. But I didn't know where she lived. There were a million Smiths in the book.

I guess I thought of Shirley then because without actually noticing I'd heard a girl's footsteps on the pavement down below. I was sitting by the open window. Anyway, there was someone knocking at the door and Miss Benson called, 'Mr. McDermott'

* She was after me once already with some chocolate cake when I came in,' Max whispered. 'I said I had a stomach-ache. Tell her I'm asleep.' He stepped over to the cupboard and went inside it out of sight.

I dragged on some pants and opened the door, saying, *Sh --I'm sorry but he's --

There was someone with her. Shirley. Just as white-faced and desperate as Max himself. I wasn't surprised Miss Benson let her in. When we rented the room she said No Visitors but of course you only had to take one look to see Shirley wasn't the kind of visitor she meant.

'Hi, Shirley,' I said and then I told them Max was getting dressed and

would be right out and went on about how we were in the dark because we broke our lamp and now the ceiling light was burned out and could we have a new one. That got rid of Miss Benson for a while.

'Max,' Shirley called, looking past me through the door.

'What was it you wanted? Max answered muffled inside the cupboard and polite like she was a customer down at the shop.

'I want to talk to you for a minute.'

'I'm late. I'm sorry. I got no time to talk right now I'm afraid.'

Shirley paid no attention. 'I wanted to find out what it was made you - made you.' She couldn't go on with it. She tried a fresh start. I couldn't understand exactly from what Mr. Webster said on the phone to Mother, so I came. They don't know. I came out the back way. I thought I could go and see him tomorrow and apologize.'

Max didn't answer.

After a second she went on, 'If you'd only listened instead of getting angry. If people won't listen how can they understand?

* I did listen,' Max said from inside the cupboard.

'If you'd just come to church,' she said faltering.

'It's no good,' he said. 'I'm just a --' He changed his mind about something he was going to say. 'I wouldn't understand these words like surrender and be saved. They sound like hooley to me. Or maybe you could tell me. Can you explain surrender and be saved in plain English a guy like me can understand? Go ahead. I'm listening.'

The sarcasm hurt Shirley. 'I guess I shouldn't have come,' she said.

'Just a minute,' I said to her, thinking fast. 'Max -explain how the - the automatic transmission in a car works. Explain it to Shirley here.'

'Why there's the planet pinions and the --' He stopped.

'You understand planet pinions?' I asked Shirley.

'No, she answered very low.

'You're not making yourself clear,' I told Max. 'Put it in plain English so the lady can understand. What's a planet pinion?'

'How can I?' Max said after a second, 'When she doesn't know anything about automobiles?

* And you don't know anything about God,' I said.

'I know the world wasn't made in six days,' Max said. 'The scientists proved it.'

Max had often talked about what he read in his scientific magazines. It always seemed to me as screwy to say the earth grew by itself out of hot gasses whirling around as to say God made it. Both propositions were queer. 'Where did the hot gasses come from in the first place?' I asked. *Who started them whirling?

Max said he never heard and I said, 'You never heard because nobody knows. The only place they could have come from was somebody made them. God made them. Who else? And if he was that smart he could cool them down and make them into the earth in six days if he wanted.'

*That's just it,' Max said. 'You mean to tell me God made the whole thing and has time to pay personal attention to me when I pray? You mean

he has time to stop and let me lay my sins on Him, whatever the hell I'm

Shirley said, 'Oh,' drawing in her breath.

'Calm down,' I said, meaning Max.

'Calm down yourself,' he said. 'God can't hear. The earth's just a speck of dust stuck off billions of miles up.'

I began to itch to grab hold of him and shake sense into him. "You don't know what God can do any more than I know," I said.

'Phooey,' he said, stirring in the shadows, no longer interested. "If you'll excuse me now, I got to go."

Shirley said, 'So you really are just a hoodlum.'

'That's right.' Max's voice couldn't care less. 'Just like Mr. Webster said.' He moved to his suitcase and came into the light from the street lamp.

'What happened to your hair?' Shirley cried out. 'Max. Your hair.'

He didn't answer. He grabbed up the suitcase which he hadn't shut properly so of course it spilled his shirts and shaving things and socks and all on the floor. He knelt down to shove them back in, still not saying anything.

Shirley passed by me. She knelt on the floor with him and put her two hands one on each side of his head, saying, 'Your hair. You cut it off? She touched his head, saying, 'Dear Max,' not knowing yet what it was exactly that happened but knowing it happened because he loved her. 'Dear Max,' she said, comforting his head with her hands.

Max stopped shoving clothes in the suitcase. He turned and grabbed her. *I tried to talk to God,' he said in a hoarse voice and he didn't have any dignity or pride or anything else left. 'I prayed to Him. Honestly I did. On the bench waiting for the bus. But He didn't hear me.'

'Yes He did,' she said. 'He heard you and He told me you were in trouble and I should come.'

I slid out and shut the door behind me. They'd start kissing any minute.

And then, after getting Max's brains sorted out and operating again, my own went haywire.

It seemed to me the important thing was that he and Shirley had to be left alone for a while. Miss Benson had to be stopped from coming back and busting in on them with a new light no matter what. It was my duty to keep her away. Which actually was okay as an idea, it was the way I did it wasn't smart.

I went along the hall and found her still scrabbling around in cupboards, couldn't find a new bulb. Max had taken Shirley home, I said, and then to have a reason for not going back to the room myself for a while, I said why didn't she and I have a bottle of beer and I'd tell her what happened. I never noticed how easy she was to persuade, I was too busy thinking how smart I was the way I was handling things. I didn't take into account it was the middle of the night almost and all I had on was a pair of pants, not even socks. I never imagined what type of thoughts I'd start thinking and what would happen.

All I can say is if they made cars work the way they make guys' minds, the streets would be piled to the lamp-posts with wrecks.

Love Poem

*My wizard, or should I say,
 My whizzer-boy, coming at me
 with your great bull-roarer
 unslung, your eyes vacant
 with love trance, ready,
 my whizz, to perform the ritual dance.*

*Today, heaven is untouchable.
 We can't reach it climbing
 the sacred fig tree, bean stalk,
 nor the blue stone mountain.
 We can only crawl sidewise
 towards ourselves in bed, pridewise,*

*Playing the one-toed God and the Pole-
 star burning a hole in the sky.
 But we'll never reach heaven.
 All the ladders of love can't mount
 higher than the crib in the next room,
 the morning newspaper, and my broom.*

*We can try to turn this bedchamber
 into Aphrodite's temple.
 But, doodle boy, mythology's
 for afterwards, when resting side
 by side, we defy reality and time
 and call our love eternal and sublime.*

- Priscilla Shames

On Finding a Dead Bird in the House

*I walked through feathers
 and they rose like smoke.
 I snatched at feathers
 and they flew like ash.
 How could one small thrush
 carry on its bones
 this plush,
 this multi-colored down?
 Was it some eagle
 shrunk to garden size,
 or did a moulting angel
 leave behind this symbol
 of a false demise?*

*The cat observed his sin
 with pride; I wept
 to see this native of wild oak
 and sky,
 lie plucked and torn,
 with wings pulled wide
 and beak too thin.*

*Nor was I sure what died,
 nor what it was I swept
 through feathered clouds
 beyond the door and out of sight -
 one bird
 or seraphim -
 or song,
 or flight.*

- Jean Burden

Torch Song

The voltage drops across the various resistors. Physics 4
 on blackboard during poetry reading.

Here in these broad, enlightened lives
 with no illumination,
 electrically predictable,
 forever insulated against the shock of recognition
 and sealed by the Underwriters Laboratory,
 the poet strikes a match.

The pine-torch flare
 of what you are
 burns, neither safe nor sane.

· When will he throw the switch? ' they ask,
 restless inside their arbitrary darkness,
 * Step up the dwindling current in the wire,
 transforming us with energy and vision?'

The leaping flare
 sputters and flicks
 its burning pitch
 into the deadened air.

The contacts were in order;
conductors, regular;
the circuit, closed. And surely our resistance
must generate some heat.'
They yawn discreetly, knowing you for a fraud.

Slowly the torch
swallows its own red heart
leaving a trail of scorch
to mark the flickering hour.

- Sister Mary Gilbert, SNJM

The Point of Ritual Death

At ten Aunt Agnes rattles the coffin lid
of my small room; I rise, unholy hermit
of the dark staff, and we drive out to water
geraniums on Uncle Henry's grave.

Inadequate erections in the park
and merely ornate urns fertile of fungus
proclaim in understated rhetoric
the bleeding lance and the communion cup.

Her heart trumpeting pilgrimage, Aunt thinks
of love, perhaps, the golden apricots
spilling their fruit upon the rain-wet earth,
and dumps the water on his shrinking ruins.

No blossom stirs. But some lascivious shape
some squiggling insect lurches from the grave.
I do not think Aunt Agnes sees; I dream
of violent death upon a broken mattress.

As always at her ceremonial teas
I slosh the sacrament into my saucer;
all elegance degenerates. So now
I know no death beside my own, nor what
vision it is she summons from the grave,
whose gay ghost sprouts beneath her water-can
leaping to humid life again, as she
straddles him, sleek and potent, in some hotel.

- F. X. Mathews

DEVIL, DEVIL

Jon Edgar Webb

As the days went going by and he as usual awaking each morning to clown or fun-quarrel, Ella got to feeling maybe the boy doc was wrong, that Jim, husband lover, was not going to go any quick minute, he was too damned unruly yet; so it must have been just a little one hit him not a big one (she'd had several like it herself, and she even got so she could talk right out about it like with the weather: hot day today? stop complaining, it's hotter in hell --not malicious, just hope-joking; till finally he irked out of her what the welfare M.D. had whispered, then got her nail-biting nervous the way he started pantomiming the end; it seemed helldamned sacriligious the way he clowning his emaciated aliveness through imaginary variations of the death-throes, the slapstickness of each beyond her senescent brittle-taut sense of humor; and irked and more irked she got herself beginning each day backing off into the stark cold-lighted past to sidetrack the haze of aging Now which suddenly, the young M.D. had said, could be there shut off like a lightbulb flickered dead (for him) (for her too for that matter, she told herself-- but the past now under any sort of verbal digging into she found bearable to face only slapsticking about it the way he did the any-moment cadaveric present, but couldn't slapstick long when spit-mouthing into resentments long buried alive; so the joking evolved into sly subterfuge playing a word game inquisition into the years long gone, a spite-playful near serious and then all serious compulsive love game of hacking recriminations; a game he displayed old-man proficiency at, gleefully beating her to her nostalgic knees each more-alive day in and day out, until finally she got fed up and began talking real mean at him. But got nowhere. Like this hellish-hot summer morning in their bed-kitchen flat the minute Ella began spitfully upbraiding him for something done stupid, ugly or drunken twenty thirty years ago he burst out cackling as usual sharply alive. 'You devil,' she said, and let out a cackle herself. 'But it's not going to be much longer, is it? You heard what the welfare man said? Ha ha.'

'Man? Ha ha and ha,' he said back. 'And another ha, you flap-buttad hag. And keep your damn teeth out of my coffee cup.'

'You heard what the boy doc said, heh?' And bent her wizened face low over his wizened face looking up at her from the lumpy pillow, his watery bright blue eyes tirelessly hopping about taking her in.

*Aaaaaaaghh,' he went, faking a groan. The eyes rolled upward, he gasped, his mouth fell open, his upper plate slid out over his lower lip -- and he lay there still.

*Ugh,' she said and slapped him smartly.

He sat bolt upright, the plate ricocheting down over his bare ribbed chest to on top of where she had slapped him. And he yelped, 'I told you don't never do that, you hear?'

She snorted, holding back her laughter. 'You don't like that, hey? Kinda hurt your itsy-bitsy, eh boy?'

He flopped back on the pillow, the hurt from below all over his waxen whiskery face, but in a minute his eyes again were up and about as usual.

She got up from where she'd been sitting beside him on the sagging ragged bed and innocent of her halfnakedness clickclacked ladylike on aged heeled slippers to the two-burner gas stove next to the window. She lit the fire under the coffee pot, then peered across the airshaft at the pitted dirtybrick wall of the adjoining walk-up, and she had a pleasant impulse to spit, but she hadn't had her coffee yet and her mouth was dry. She often leaned out over the cracked windowsill spitting down and watching the spit fall, fall until it became a smack on the cement so far below her waning eyes no longer could see all the way down --it was like peering into a piece of nothing, it was no longer even misty down there.

*La-la la de da, she hummed and poured two cups of coffee, shook in gray squirts of tinned milk and returned to the bed.

His nimble eyes hadn't once left her and as she sat back down the devil look was in them bright and shiny.

'What's to eat?'

*Fried catstools with champagne,' she replied, and the words dribbled out past her lips along with half a mouthful of coffee.

'What's to eat?'

She let out a cackle. 'Get out and get a job, old soldier, and I'll wear my fingers down getting you a man-sized breakfast.'

He stuck his tongue out at her. If I get a job who's going to carry me to work? '

She yanked the tattered sheet down to his knees knobbly as skulls. 'What's the matter, boy?' she shrilled, and more coffee splattered from her mouth. 'Used to carry you a long ways, but them was the good old days -- hey, love?'

He jerked the sheet up quick. 'You dried-up, hen-legged herring,' he snapped, 'and what have you got?'

'Got what you want yet,' she sniggered. 'Got what the old man can't do any more,' she sang.

He struck out at her digging bony fingers into one of her withered breasts like it was dough.

*Damn you, you devil, she gasped and banged his hand away, then slapped him again hard.

'Slut!' he screeched. 'You do that again and I'll --'

'Heh, heh,' she tittered, 'you couldn't throw yourself out the window -- that what you wanna do me??'

'Go to hell, he said still in pain.

'Been there already enough.' And chirped, 'Couldn't, could you?' And bent down fast sucking air into her juiceless windpipe, her mouth open wide close to his ear.

He butted her face away to dig a fingernail into his earhole lifting his head from the pillow to shake out the crackles cutting through his brain, and he blazed, 'Bitch, I'll outrattle you if it's the last thing I ever do! '

"And it might well be that,' she grinned over a vacant gum, then jerked back

before his fingers could sink into her breast again.

His head plopped back in the pillow, his jabbing hand curled up on his chest exhausted.

" Drink your coffee," she said.

His eyes stared up exploringly into hers. ' Well, why don't you lie down?' 'What for?'

' To lie down. Does it have to be what for? '

And when she just stared down at him, sitting up stiffly, he snapped, 'You old boil on the neck, you don't hate me any more than I do you.'

' Hate you? I don't hate you.'

'Just yourself, huh?'

' Me? Why should I hate me? It's you who hates me, remember?'

' Go jump.'

Had told him in the fear of knowing in the bawling N.Y. tenement night tight-clutched in bed grief-sexless a week after the boy doc had whispered the ultimate (which he by then had irked out of her) with no definite time (but definite), just soon any minute -- told him meaning it in the terror of looming aloneness: the minute he took off she too would take off. And he'd backed away: "Take off?" 'Yes.' 'How?' ' Out the window? ' That what I'd be doing -- huh? Taking off? " Didn't mean it that way.' ' Goddamned if you didn't,' and he'd raged, clown-weeping: stupid! -- crazy! --a hell of a dirty thing to say! But next morning cackled why wait? Go ahead, nut -- jump. You'll be falling out one day anyway, spitting -- go on, jump. Behind the cackling enraged, her making him feel so deadgone inadequate, helpless, like in coffining out it'd be a case of fiendish desertion -- and he'd pounded on that, and shed pounded back, "No, it wouldn't be --no, Jimmy -I was just kidding, hon." "Go to hell," and began then denouncing life, ridiculing her and death too, behind tearful Em Kelly, mute Felix Adler and lofty Lou Jacobs, all in a way acutely unclownlike for a clown as devilish as he'd been since the day they were married: devilish that is in a mischievous way, and not like now as if all of the past was not worth talking about, and the present a thing dirty and obscene to abhor or to slapstick about in unholy pantomime or wicked not-give-a-damnness; and this too became a part of the game: go jump. No meaning really, at least not for her inside any kind of comprehension, just like any Go to hell to anyone inside your life. So now, grinning and playing the game, she said back, ' Go jump yourself.

' Really hate me, don't you? '

' I don't hate you a bit.'

'Not a bit,' and tried to grin with her. ' Love maybe?'

' Who knows, dear -- give me a little time. Don't rush me - please.

' When you slap that way you think it don't hurt?'

' I bet it does. And just what did you do once titty-one years ago, and only four days after we were married?'

"I don't have the misfortune to recall, and looked bored - then interested. 'Four days after? -- musta been something I couldn't've done if we weren't married yet. That it?'

· Worse, you devil --and me sleeping, an innocent girl bride four days married.'

'Well what?'

* A pail of hot water, you devil. And I mean hot?

He remembered and said, ' Oh that."

' Right on top of my kewpie doll -- what you used to call it. What did you do that for, you dirty louse??

'Louse? I should've put a match to it."

' Burned the damn hell outta me,' she reminisced bitterly.

"There was no hell in you, you cold-butted icicle.'

' What did you do it for, heh? '

'I just told you."

' Talk in riddles, you old bastard -- go to hell yourself.'

Thinking about it the grin came, and his eyes pitter-pattered up and down her halfnaked body to end up playing tag around her veined lopsided breasts, the grin reflectively complete.

Neither spoke for a while till he let out a snort. 'Burned you? --it wasn't that damn hot.'

' It hurt here, in here, she said, clutching at her left side.

As if awed he stared at the nipple sticking out between two bony fingers reddening as if it were being strangled.

'Four days married,' she hissed, looking upward. ' And me sleeping. No wonder I never had no feelins.'

'Now the excuses come --a fine time.' And snickered. You had the feelins alright, only they was mostly misguided sort of --always had a umbrella on you when the sun was shining.'

' Riddles, you old fool -- that why we never had no children? '

* Phoo. And don't start harping on that."

' That why we got no grandkids to look after us? '

· Don't look at me, old lady?

' No use now, eh? -- that why?'

' No, it ain't why,' and he jerked his head up, stabbed. ' Go dig a grave and fall in, you wombless --

'Wombless? ' she cried, stabbed too. 'I never denied you and you know it!'

* Liar, you denied me every damn time since the night we got married! "

' Denied you? And wanted to scream. ' Why you dirty lying devil! '

' In your belly, your goddamned belly,' he spat back at her.

She glared at him and her fury got her to shaking so the rickety old iron bed began shaking with her.

' Belly?'

His explosive retort hushed out the bed's creaky chattering: ' Who jumped up and ran for the hose every time the iceberg melted? '

Also hushed her fury.

And broke down. 'I did, I did! ' But couldn't weep. ' Why did you let me - huh? Why, Jimmy?'

' Because,' mimicking words he'd heard often, ' God made me clean and I'm going to keep clean.'

' Dammit, why didn't you hold me? -- much your fault as mine.? And saw his grin back.

' Just a fuddy-duddy old bed-breaker, eh? '

' Who?'

' Me, you poor old sweet idiot."

She eyed him suspiciously.

' Finally don't make sense, heh? '

'Heh, heh.' And from habit picked up the hand creeping at her and held it against her navel.

'Ah," and he kept grinning. "Kiss me now, huh?" Shook her head coyly.

He puckered his lips out and of a sudden, the grin gone, his whiskery waxen face went dead to her. 'Come on, sweetie,' he wheezed, trembling, come on, don't be bashful.' Playing again.

Devilish herself now touched her chin to a jerked-up shoulder. "I ain't bashful.'" Get in here then! -- get your damn clothes off and get in here!' And she froze. The devil was making fun, and the coyness congealed to ice, the stiffened spine took hold, but still she sat there chin to shoulder feeling inexplicably wanton -- till she saw he was trying to bring back the grin, not his usual immediate far-offness reflected in a frozen rage frown but a little boy begging with quivering upturned mouth, and mistook it. 'Are you crying?' -- amazed.

' Crying? -- I'll be goddamned. Get in here, will you? '

' Why?'

'Ella, I'm asking you."

God, how she needed to see him grin like before, not whimperingly - like a man, genuinely, even insultingly -- for his own relief too; and she let her limbs loosen and at once felt her icy pose collapse in its own saturated vindictiveness, let go his knotty hand to bend over him so close she could not see his face, except inside her, that young starved face of a long time ago; saw his bridegroom eyes lecherously burning her to shame, and the shame grew bigger and brighter like a flame as she got in naked under the sheet, and of a sudden became two flames licking down over her underneath his prying obscene hands (what a dandy he'd been in uniform with the girls under Pershing) enveloping her in one prickling mass of stricken shame down over her outraged -- daddy, help me --kewpie doll, and on down her beautiful girl-bride's legs; her breasts snapped upward taut and firm and she puckered her red mouth to kiss him... but too late, too late, and was ludicrously smooching the Oh God emptiness within her, a shriveled womb and atrophied tubes, and a shame on me (he dangling frantic above her); and her lips squirmed out of the pucker, the dream went ping and her breasts sprawled again like scantily-filled waterbags under his grating washboard chest (the springs creaking relentless) - and her mouth went open, opened wide as if in a scream against his puffing purplish lips, sucking air rattles into her gagging throat ... and couldn't a bit understand it, why she was doing this (Oh God) terrible thing to him, poor soul, mocking death rattles into his mouth that had jerked fast out of the pucker. 'Bitch,' he gasped, and she felt his fingers digging like needles into her breasts.

Twisted from under him. 'Look, hon --look what you did, she whimpered, staring down at what his fingers had done.

'What?'

'Well, look."

He was bent over on his knees, chest against them, cheek on the slipless pillow, panting -- glanced at the blood and the maleness venom went out of him, the clown too; but humiliated, he had his pride, he said, 'I see,' smiling, remembering the coffee on the stand next to the bed. Felt a streaking jolt all down his left arm but he sat up shakily picked up the cup and before she could duck emptied the whole cupful over the wrinkled, lip-sunken face. 'Hot like this?'

'Bastard,' she said and closed her eyes tight. Said it softly, just couldn't get true mad at him the way he was smiling, and such a little trick it was after what she'd done.

'Damn it, I got to go."

And heard him getting up. Opened her eyes and saw him hunched down looking like a plucked rooster his claws pulling the pot out from under the bed. 'I mean go,' he said, and began to fall. And when she got to the floor kneeling beside him saw him sprawled on his side like a piece of contemporary sculpture, one leg paralyzed in the air, his head under the sloping bed and his right hand clutching the pot lid against his chest. The pot had turned over and he lay heaped in the feculent puddle.

'Jimmy honey!'

'Honey ha,' he squeaked.

Tried to lift him.

* Let me be dammit -- I got to shit and I'm shitting.'

She wouldn't believe it till his plate slid out between spit-frothy lips, even then thought hoped he was laughing in slapstick pantomime at what he was doing (like a diaperless infant), the way his mouth was stretched taut, his eyes staring clownishly upward like the eyes of a stuffed owl.

Said damn and gave him a slap, and another, and knew sure then when he didn't budge and she cried out, 'Damn you,' and began beating both fists down on him. "You dirty devil,' she wailed. 'You dirty devil!'

And she jumped up and ran to the opened window, but could get only one skinny leg out over the windowsill, the other wouldn't come up off the floor. It was nailed to the floor, it seemed, and she sat there astraddle the sill, not wailing now, just mumbling, 'Devil, devil...

So she sat there and was getting comfortable, and as she mumbled a big ball of saliva formed in her mouth, a nice one worth spitting. But wanted it bigger, so played with it, pushed it around and stopped mumbling, and abruptly jerked her wet face downward and spat, and didn't move, head cocked sideways, waiting.

And listening greedily for the smack -thinking off-stage back into her rage: Horse's ass, that damn coffee was cold.

The Window

** Thou hast a double kingdom*
and I am set between.' Etched on the glass

Now two dawns rise -- the locked interior sun
That wakes good morning, and the forest rung
With doves' halloo -- grow into light's arrival.
The same pulsation shivers on lands spread
Beyond this glass and creeps across the red
Carpet, and joins tracery on the wall.

Two kingdoms lie beside this boundary
Jointed together like the ripened peach
Ready to break into the streaked and yellow --
Two shapes composited till now as one,
Yet each divided toward its destination.

Even as I, between the room I see
And that expanse of woodland that may be
A window's myth, untrue on which to close,
Move through a doubleness of hemisphere.
Nor does a solid sorrow give such tears
As the imagination gives to this:

If I dream out on darkneses that wheel
At the day's end, where out of change the still
Round of eternity rubs the half of time,
Through panes of cutting glass that must dispense
With both the hills and room and difference
To make duality again the same.

- Ann Stanford

*He made an M with seventeen humps.
 He walked on it and found nothing.
 On the tenth he planted three trees,
 And on the others grass and flowers,
 And on one built a small hut.
 Then he made a T and crossed it seventeen times.
 There he hung his wash
 And a big clock.
 On the bottom rung he found a lonely girl
 And made her his wife.
 They lived on top of the T in a penthouse.
 One day he saw he had begun a colony
 And he called it Empty.*

- Melvin Rosenberg

There Are Things

*All over there are things that think.
 Think.
 Stones in the shape, and not in the shape,
 Of brains. Flowers with, yes, and without
 Furrowed foreheads. Lice, plant-lice, rat
 cat
 Lice. Oh, and University deans --
 They think. Psychiatrists and garbagemen.
 They think. Is it a question of what?
 No, it is not. It is a question
 Rather, of genius, the sheer and simple
 Thinking of things. I am, love them
 wholly
 In themselves. It may conceivably
 Then be true. Therefore. Even be true.*

- Robert Sward

Indian Dances and Canoe Racing
Public Invited

We are more burned than we are naked,
carnival-painted and belled at the joints;
our backs are younger than any likeness
stung in impromptu booth-flash kisses,
photographs for twentyfive pennies,
bursting the bellies of our hungry wallets,
black-mouthed girls with inkblot eyelids
found before day in the chastened ferns.
Nobody can copy the shouts we wrote
on the walls of the air in the ferris wheel;
we nursed out cut lips on cotton candy,
and danced in jeans with our buttocks feathered.

Hurt by thirst and robbed by jalopies,
we all must die when the beer-runners fail.
We have barked our knuckles on the salmon's hides,
putting their eyes out for breakfast food;
let us submit to the bitter tines
of insatiate salt water that forks us like fish,
let us drag out the adze-ruffled prows
of our grandfathers' heavy brine-swamped canoes.
Let us burn quickly, lest we be stripped,
disembowelling our picture collections;
let us dance like unplucked birds,
lest our identities leave us, picked clean.

- Nancy-Lou Patterson

Poem for S

When you look at me
my hands turn proud;
 as affectionate as two ponies
on ten hooves,
 I trot toward the door of your sex.

I wait to be learned
each time you smile,
the way chlorophyll marches in order,
 like an ancient cave-drawing
newly discovered,
 under the microscope of your glance,
which is to say
 I am a pony offering you sugar.

I become a Spaniard
 because you picked me for a guitar,
 and you hear my electric bones.
They flash in the night.
What dances
is a colt in the shade.
 I become a rustler at your barn, or
 you make me a handsome Spaniard
on a white horse
in a grade B movie.
It is permissible
because I feel like money.

I dream of my hope for the world
as a man on a saddle
 riding through strange country.
That is the only reason you are like leather.

For you
1 play cards in the sunset with two friends:
 one, your imaginary brother,
and the other
an uncle of mine with the smell of wine in his beard,
some big fat man with chuckles for bullets
 whom little girls feel brave to,
 because of the smell of his pipe.

But who will polish you in a poem
when I am dead?
I need at least four centuries
to hone you right,
that knife I carry.
The trouble with you
is that
you like to imagine
the landscape for a kitchen:

*fennel,
those blooms
of the beet*

that are so hard to find
but taste so good in an omelette.
This is not the business of the world:
some hard-boiled eggs will do.
Though they are not kind.

Now what can you solve
but the patch in my pants?
Who gave you the right?
We have been sad so long
that when you are happy
I feel
like the first days of the French Revolution.
Why won't you stop pitying bachelors
and indulging in fancies
about the talk of the birds?
I wish I had given you kids
so you'd stop being Mother to worlds.
And, please!
will you stop smiling
at people in a bus?

You have no right here.
Read Kenneth Grahame's Wind in the Willows
and go to sleep.

Some day, when the war comes,
everybody will shoot you first.
That is why I scold you: forgive me, forgive me.
- Felix Stefanile

The Graveyard

*I lean on the stone,
late, in dull Autumn,
overcome by the crush
and chaos we exist in.
I lean, for God's sake,
going over those stories
and justifications
that won't work; I lean
on arms as thin as grass
and watch the warm snow
proceed with its slow
and unpreventable
velocity, like flesh
O trying to come back,
on the dates of graves
and worn and sad words,
the now as well as then;
but there are stern rules
that govern our behavior.
The clouds fly and fade,
and out of the deep mist
thru the bare oak trees
glints that brown moon:
horrors of chastisement!
I move among the graves;
my face is old, and with
the cry and smear of time.
I move like stone, like war.*

- David Lyttle

Pieces for Harpsichord

Out of the leap
Of love
Come the archangels,
Sinners
And singers
*On the rise of the light trapeze;
Out of the lovers' limbs*
Their forms emerge,
Flyers and tumblers
Leaping through hoops of flame
In the red antic
Circus of the sun.

Out of this flesh,
This stranger,
Come the archangels,
Luminous, floating,
Trailing to smoke.
From this flesh
Chained to a slow wheel,
I see you chained
To your corner of the dark.
Out of this flesh
I walk
As far as you.

Come with me
To prayer in the fields;
Hurry with me
To the angel blowing fields,
And bring with you
No sound
But the touching leaves.

Come with me
To the altar of the fields;
Carry with you, as gift,
Your body's song,

*And under the skin
Of the sky
Lie down with me.*

*Run with me
To the holy, trumpeting fields,
And raise, by incantation,
Temple walls;
Come with me now
To the naked, dancing fields,
For this is the Sabbath day
Of exaltation.*

*Of such is the kingdom,
That witches shall enter,
The wise shall not.
Of such is the kingdom
That madmen shall enter,
The wise shall not;
Forever, the wise shall not.*

*Of such is the kingdom,
That whores shall enter,
Beggars shall enter,
Tumblers shall enter,
Fools shall enter,
But the wise shall not;
Forever the wise shall not.*

*Of such is the kingdom
That the least, weak, ugly, lost,
Most lone,
Most therefore brave,
Most therefore filled with singing
Soul erect shall enter;
But the wise shall never enter.*

Trees crossed,
 Fields stretching white canvas,
The hills bare
 Revealing again cathedrals,
Blood in the windows,
 Saints on the sun's thin horses
 Riding slowly homeward.
Deep in the lakes
Like jewels
The fish lie frozen,
Knowing no hunger
 Forgetting again the need,
That, in its time,
 Will send them into the morning.

Trees crossed,
The rings in the tent,
Empty,
Nets down,
The aerial gear, slack;
 A jewelled belt lies lost
In the dark arena.
The trees are crossed;
 The tumblers have gone,
Forever.

- Myron Levoy

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Although carrying our fair share of serious freight on salvation, fall-out, and the connivings in our segregated city, COASTLINES enters its eighth year of publication, daring somehow to honor the lowly flowers of the field, the crazed visions of bearded and bootless prophets, the prune-purse verdicts of scholars. The writers gathered under our banner are reluctant to lend themselves to labels or slogans, yet they speak in their several voices in the tradition of the little magazine -- at worst a paddling through muddy water, at best a freshet signalling Through the shrill cries of creditors, the snarls of our unpaid contributors, the gimlet stares of book vendors, we raise high our daffodil in foolish confidence Of the hundreds of writers to appear in our pages, a number have been singled out for reprint in such places as the New York Times Book Review, Martha Foley's Best American Short Stories, Evergreen Review, Frontier, Best Articles and Stories. One of our poets received the coveted Borestone Mountain Poetry If you agree that independent little magazines are worth cultivating and enjoying (like daffodils), won't you support COASTLINES now? For three dollars you will

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