

A LITERARY MAGAZINE OF CALIFORNIA

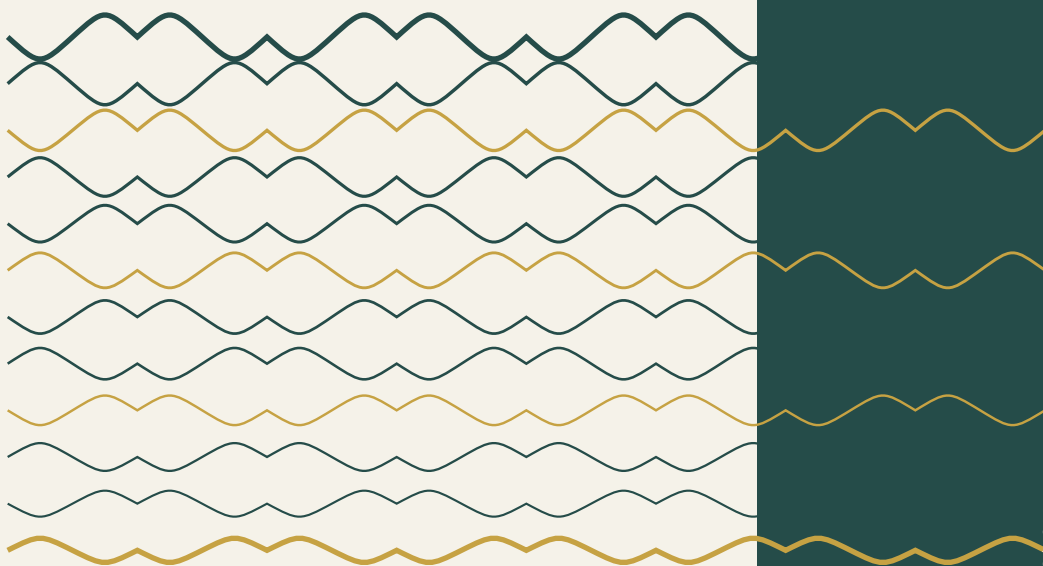
COAST LINES

1964

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COASTLINES

ISSUE 21-22

A Literary Magazine of California

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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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COASTLINES

21/22

Vol. 6, Nos. 1 & 2 1964

EDITORS

Barding Dahl

Eleanor Edelstein Alexandra Garrett

FINAL

ISSUE

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COASTLINES, 471 Sycamore Road, Santa Monica, California

EDITORIAL:

V. 6

**HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IT IF YOU LOOKED
LIKE AN UNFRIED DOUGHNUT?****BARDING DAHL**

**I MEAN REALLY. IF YOU DID. THEIR PASTY WHITE SWEATY
FACES AS THEY YELL AT LITTLE KIDS TRYING TO GET INTO
SCHOOL. WHITE IS PURE IS HONORABLE IS NOBLESSE OBLIGE
IS UNFRIED DOUGHNUT.**

**BUT IF YOU DID LOOK LIKE ONE AND NOBODY LOVED YOU
BECAUSE YOU LOOK SO BAD, WOULD YOU HEAR THE CRIES OF
THE OPPRESSED? WOULD YOU TURN THE RUGS OVER AT CITY
HALL? PERHAPS WE EXPECT TOO MUCH. I USED TO IMAGINE
EVERYONE LIVED IN THE GLARE OF MY CONSCIENCE. I STILL
DO, BUT NOW I KNOW I'M IMAGINING.**

GIL ORLOVIZ

Coastlines, Madames and Sirs,
I'm sorry as hell you're pulling in the nets -- are there no men or women of wealth along the gold coast to give you a ten thousand buck shup to sustain you for another couple of years? No learned biddies or elegant connoisseurs to part with a spit of cash rather than foil boredom with one more round-the-world cruise and construct one more satyriatic solarium buttressed with reinforced concrete to look out over the Pacific? Are you not in contact with at least one coupon-clipper -- by last count, ladies and gentlemen, there were thirty million men, women and children in the USA living with cozy comfort on the proceeds of inherited riches (an official government statistic) -- willing to pay the printer over the period of a single year? You will forgive me if I charge that there will be those among you at the party you're throwing for Coastlines' demise who could chivvy a check from their bank accounts without the faintest notion of entrapment so that Coastlines could survive-fatly -- for another decade at four issues per annum.

It is of course not only an American but an ecumenical disease contemporarily for the financial elite to turn a cold buttock on the validly talented artist and the validly literary publication, to which the Russians are no exception -awarding the Yevtushenkos their daschas and Leningrad apartments for their darlingly daring mediocrities. We have here, paralleling, the Foundations that exercise their trusts upon the senile and the simpering young. Yes, you can naturally expect nothing. I heard not the faintest whimper of protest, for example, at the suspension of Leslie Hedley's Inferno Press -- what San Franciscan or Sausalitan or Berkleyian gave one thin shit that one of the most

powerful independent voices in the country had to be stilled for the want of a couple thousand bucks?

I myself over the past year -- because I must be penalized in our day and age for wanting and having a family I choose to support with some decency -- have had to reduce to practically nothing my entire creative output because I must work one job by day and free-lance slick crud by night to keep my five noses of family above the slimeline. I choose not to conduct my esthetic life a la van Gogh and Modigliani about whom the revered minister of French culture, M. Malraux, was pleased to remark, apropos of the state funeral the Gauls awarded Braque, that their "sinister deaths were at last revenged." It is a revenge, M. Malraux I now look forward to. Alors!

Finally, and again --I intensely regret that Coastlines must go. Please convey to all the members of the staff, past and present, that I am indebted to them for the selection of what work of mine has appeared in the magazine, and that with gratitude I shall always remember their championing of my work.

Sincerely,

Gil Orlovitz

IN EIGHT YEARS OF PLODDING SERVICE TO AN IDEAL CALLED COASTLINES, NOTHING HAS BEEN DECIDED. THE ISSUE IN PART BEING THE PROPOSITION THAT RANDOM PERSONS, SANS PORT-FOLIO, MAY DESIGNATE THEMSELVES EDITORS, AND THUS HALLOWED PASS JUDGMENT ON THEIR FELLOWS.

A COROLLARY OF THAT PROPOSITION IS THE NOTION THAT THE ACCUMULATION OF THOSE EDITORS' DECISIONS DOES IN FACT CONSTITUTE A THING KNOWN AS COAST LINES; THAT MAY CONTRACT DEBTS, RATIFY TREATIES, AND PETITION FOR REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

THIS IDEAL, THIS IT, THIS PUBLIC WOMAN WHO HAS TRIED TO BE ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN, HAS EXISTED ALONGSIDE BLACK POWDER BOMBS FOR CHURCHES, AND MORE ELITE MODELS FOR CITIES.

WE CO-EXISTED WITH THE PEOPLE WHO PULLED THE SWITCH ON THE ROSENBERGS, WITH THE VOPOS POKING THE WALL UNDER SCRAMBLING LEGS, WITH FRANCO GARROTING HERETICS. RIGHT ALONGSIDE OF ART LINKLETTER AND CORN-FLAKES AND THE LATEST SENATOR CAUGHT WITH HIS THUMB IN THE TILL.

LAWRENCE LIPTON

Your files will show, as mine do, that I have not submitted material to Coastlines since 1957, first because former editors disapproved of my activities in poetry and music and later because of their disapproval of my hospitality to the New Writing, then known as the beat writing. Political and literary-sectarian difference lay at the bottom of this controversy. Before that I had contributed a good deal of prose and poetry to Coastlines and before Coast-

lines to its lineal precursor the California Quarterly.

If you have kept up with my articles in the Calendar section of the Los Angeles Times (articles leading up to my forthcoming THE GROWING EDGE: The State of Culture and the Arts on the West Coast, U. of C. Press) you must know that I would have preferred to publish my work in Coastlines, a West Coast magazine, rather than in other periodicals where my work has appeared since then in the U.S. and abroad. I refer you, on this point, to my latest articles in the Times of last Sunday, Dec. 1, 1963, on the subject of publishing on the West Coast.

The poems I am now submitting are as yet unpublished, probably because in the case of two of them they are so long. But if you care to publish one of these long ones they will do, as far as I am concerned, in lieu of half a dozen shorter pieces. Since my collected poems will be coming out next year and will contain these poems I would suggest that this will probably be the last chance any magazine will have for prepublication.

Too bad it has to be your valedictory number. It needn't have been, in my opinion, if Coastlines had not pursued such a narrow sectarian policy. It may well have been the magazine of the West Coast renaissance since it was first on the scene, but editorial hostility precluded any such possibility. There is still room for such a forward-looking magazine (see the final paragraphs of my last Sunday article) in Los Angeles.

Sincerely,
Lawrence Lipton

**WE MADE OUR SOUNDS, AND SCRATCHED DESIGNS ON THE
MORTAR OF OUR CELL. NOT REAL MORTAR LIKE THAT
ENCLOSING POLITICAL PRISONERS, BUT THE MORTAR OF DIS-
REGARD, NON-AFFLUENCE, INDECISION.**

**OTHERS CAME TO GIVE OF THEMSELVES FOR THE IDEA
COASTLINES, THEY DANCED, SANG, MADE EARRINGS -- WHAT-
EVER THEY HAD TO GIVE. SOME HAD ONLY THEIR DOLLAR TO
LEAVE AT THE DOOR, WANTING INNOCENTLY TO DRINK AND
FUMBLE AFTER GIRLS.**

**ONE PROPHET CAME TO REVEAL TRUTH IN THE FORM OF
HIS NAKED SELF, A REVELATION NOW FAMOUS, BUT STILL NOT
FINAL. SOME CAME TO SOUND TRUMPETS FOR SAINTS STALIN,
TROTSKY, STEVENSON, AND OTHER FOLK HEROES ACCUS-
TOMED TO LARGER-THAN-LIFE-SIZE PORTRAITS.**

**EVEN J. EDGAR CAME- NOT IN, BUT THERE OUTSIDE. WE
WOULD HAVE LIKED FOR HIM TO COME IN AT LEAST TO GET
WARM, BUT HE DID NOT FEEL THE COLD. I GUESS HE FIGURED
WE WERE JUST SOME OLD UNFRIED DOUGHNUTS. WE HAD
HARDLY ANY BEARDS AND HOLLOW EYES.**

**NEVERTHELESS WE WERE PROPER OBJECTS FOR CONCERN,
FINGERING THE TRICKY FUSES OF IDEAS. WORTH AT LEAST A
PASSING SCRUTINY BY THE PROUD OWNERS OF GOVERNMENT
GONADS.**

**TEACHERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, T.V. REPAIRMEN, POETS,
STUDENTS -STRICTLY LOWER ECHELON. MOST OMINOUS WERE
THE STUDENTS, WHOM NOTHING SURPRISED. THEY HAD FACED,
(OR THOUGHT THEY HAD,) THE WORST -I MEAN AFTER ALL
WHAT CAN GET WORSE THAN 100 MEGATONS.
WE WERE LOWER ECHELON, NOT COUNTED IN THE COUN-
CILS OF POWER. WE COMFORTED OURSELVES THAT WE DID NOT
EMBEZZLE; NEITHER DID WE TRANSPORT WOMEN.**

LACHLAN MACDONALD

BOOKS NEW AND NEGLECTED: An Irregular Column Concludes

Some nine years ago an unusual literary magazine arrived with the exchange periodicals at the office of Chicago Review of which I was editor. Mimeographed on cream paper and containing some exciting poetry (Gene Frumkin, Edwin Rolfe, Bert Meyers, Lawrence Lipton, Curtis Zahn, Thomas McGrath, Henri Coulette, Mel Weisburd...) it aroused much interest and comment.

Its dedication was clearly not to 'build an editorial policy on the delicate superstructures of other little magazines, but rather, simply, to continue discovering the source of writing here.'

In the second issue fiction and reviews were added to the poetry, and Barding Dahl's name appeared on the masthead. The address had changed from Romaine Street to Virginia Road, as it would later change to Beachwood Drive and Sycamore Road. A note on the type paid tribute to the L. C. Smith and declared 'We feel it fitting, however, to pay tribute to the common art of mimeography, and we hope that others are encouraged to duplicate their message as well.

The tone of the first two issues encouraged me to write to the editors, and later I was named Chicago editor, in which capacity I was unable to do anything of value for the magazine beyond showing it to prospective contributors.

The following year I visited Los Angeles, and in 1957 became a resident and an active member of the staff, responsible for finding non-fiction. The magazine had begun to attract attention and assert its personality as little magazines tend to do during their prime. Poems and an article were reprinted. Then a story, 'The Hunter,' which Gene Frumkin offered to print after I had had it rejected by every major commercial and literary magazine in America, began to get notice. Someone unknown to me to this day mentioned it on KPFK as deserving of anthology publication. Then it was chosen for the Martha Foley collection of BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES 1960. This led to notice from publishers interested in my novel in progress. Needless to say, I am extremely grateful to Gene, as are many other writers who have been helped by Coastlines toward further publication.

There is much more to be recorded in print regarding the life of this unique magazine and its really vital role in American literature during the past eight years, but the story will have to wait, along with the accounts of our parties, the recognition of the current editors' efforts to keep the magazine alive, the anecdotes which continue to appear in other contexts. Perhaps in the intro-

duction of a future anthology such an expanded report will appear. There are stories and poems which have already found their place between hard covers, others deserve to be collected in a single volume. I hope readers and contributors interested in such an anthology will write to me at 413 W. Franklin, Pomona, California, with their suggestions and any offers of assistance. Any life well-lived deserves a monument, and excellence is worth reprinting.

The End

**WE USED TO AT LEAST OURSELVES ALL OVER THE PLACE.
AT LEAST WE STILL HAD OUR TRADITIONS. WE HAD SOCRATES,
T. S. ELIOT, HENRY JAMES. WE STILL HAD OUR VISION OF WHAT
WE WERE, OR COULD BE, AND WHAT THE MAGAZINE WOULD
BE, AND WHAT THE WORLD WOULD BECOME AS A RESULT. BUT**

**OUT. THE WORN PHRASES OF OUR FATHERS. WE FELT A PREMA-WHAT NE TOL
WHEN WE TRIED TO PROPHECY, THE SAME OLD WORDS CAME**

**TURE BREATH OF SENILITY. WHAT WE TOOK FOR A VISION WAS
MERELY THE LIGHT RUBBED UP BY THE GRINDING STONES OF
OUR FUTILITIES.**

**AND THEN THERE CAME A SIGN. THE LITTLE CHILDREN LED
US. THEY WERE NOT BLONDE, NOR BLUE-EYED, NOR SIX FEET
-- WE WERE SHAKEN BY THEIR STEPS. THEY WALKED THROUGH
OUR FRINGE OF SNARLING, FEARFUL FACES, MANY OF US LOOK-
ING VERY MUCH LIKE UNFRIED DOUGHNUTS. AND THE CHILD-
REN FOUND GRACE.**

**WE LOOKED AROUND, AND WE SAID, ' WE ARE TIRED, WE ARE
BROKE, WE ARE UNLOVED,' BUT WE HAD BEEN THOSE THINGS
BEFORE. NOW WE KNEW IT WAS BECAUSE WE HAD NO GRACE.**

MEL WEISBURD

It's kind of silly soliciting poems for a dead issue. Who wants to see their poems in a dead magazine. And no hope!

Really, this is a terrible thing. I'm beginning to realize it. Here there is a poet explosion riding with the population, the end of Coastlines is like the end of California. I send my poems out and all the mags announce they're filled up until 1978. Ye Gods. Genocide, Infanticide! You should be ashamed of yourself. Honestly people out this way are horrified.

What the hell? Perhaps it's just as well. I'm the last person to say anything about. Your note gave me a twinge. Naturally. But, perhaps, like a lame horse it should be killed dead!

Brave soul!

Why couldn't the god damn thing ever have an issue or a point of view, now with a revolution on our hands. The problem is jobs. We're scared as hell at publishing our real feelings, our real beliefs. That's the real problem. Coastlines has always wanted to, but was never willing to truly represent itself.

Love,
Mel

ONCE THE DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN TO SEND COASTLINES
SHAMBLING TOWARDS THE ARLINGTON OF LITTLE MAGA-
ZINES, THERE REMAINED ONLY THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO
EXPLAIN AND JUSTIFY. FOR EVEN EDITORS FEEL THE NEED
FOR JUSTIFICATION.

LONG INURED TO SHORT-ARROWS FROM THE PROVINCES, WE
RESIGNED OURSELVES TO HOPING THAT SOME WOULD KNOW
THE COMPASS POINTS OF OUR ACTION.

FROM THE UNITED DOILY MAKERS OF IOWA, WE KNEW WE
COULD EXPECT SHORT SHRIFT. FOR THEM WE WOULD FOR-
EVER BE BIG-CITY SLICKERS, TOO FLIP BY FAR ABOUT SERIOUS
THINGS. THE SPEAR CARRIERS OF THE RIGHT COULD NEVER
BE SHAKEN FROM THEIR VIEW OF US AS WOOLLY-MINDED
RADICALS, DUPED AND PERVERTED BY FOREIGN DOCTRINES.
THROUGH THE EYES OF THE FORMAL LEFT WE ARE MERELY
PLAYBOYS.

SOMEWHERE AMONG AND AROUND THESE POSITIONS WOULD
BE THOSE WHO WOULD HEAR THE WORDS. NOT THE ROTUND
ASSISTANT PROFESSORS OF ENGLISH, PANTING SECRETLY FOR
THE BIG FISH. NOT THE COLD-EYED LIBRARIANS WHO CARE
NOT WHAT ICON-TRAMPLING APOCALYPSE YOU PUBLISH, AS
LONG AS YOU COME OUT ON TIME. NOT THE SCHOOLBOY PRY-
ING HIS SKINNY FINGERS INTO THE DAMNDEST PLACES. NOT
THE REBELS AGAINST EVERYTHING, WHO IMPALE THEM-
SELVES ON THEIR DESIRE AND CHANT CURSES AS THEY FALL.
BEYOND THE REACH OF ALL THESE.

WE WOULD FIND UNDERSTANDING IN THE BUSINESSMAN
SLANTING TOWARDS WEEK-END ART, IN THE MECHANIC WHO
READS MARX, IN THE SECRETARY WHO, IN THE PRIVATE
CHANNEL OF HER NIGHT, TREASURES DYLAN THOMAS AND
HIS OLD RAM ROD. IN ALL THESE SMOKED-GLASS PEOPLE WHO
CAN'T BE SEEN THROUGH - NOT QUITE THIS NOR THAT, HUNG
UP ON CIRCUMSTANCE BUT STILL BURNING WITH HOLY FIRE
IN SOME EXTREMITY OR OTHER. OUR WIRE WOULD REACH
THEM.

AFTER NINE YEARS STAKED OUT ON THE PLAIN OF LETTERS,
THE PRETENSIONS ARE LEACHED OUT OF US. WE ARE NOT
AFTER ALL THE ADVANCE-GUARD, AND MAY WELL END UP
SWEATING ON THE BAGGAGE WAGONS.

THE ACT IS OVER. WE HURRY TO CHANGE COSTUME, JOST-
LING AND SWEARING. WE WILL FIND SOME NEW LINES TO
CROAK, FOR THAT IS ALL THAT WE KNOW HOW TO DO.

THE GREAT THEY WILL NOT HEAR THEY WILL BE PEELING
ORANGES OR KNEELING BEFORE SOME FAT BANANA, BUT WE
WILL COME OUT. WE WILL BANG AT THE IRON CURTAIN BE-
TWEEN METAPHOR AND THE HOMELY PROSE OF LEAFLETS. WE
WILL AT LAST BELONG.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JOSEPHINE AIN has recently finished a book on L.S.D., and her poems have appeared in *Perspective*, *Epos*, *Coastlines*, *Transition* and many others. She is married to the painter, Robert Chuey.

SANORA BABB published a novel, *The Lost Traveller*, in 1958 and is currently at work on a new novel. Her poems have appeared in various literary magazines, and her stories were included in the *Best American Short Stories* in 1950 and 1960.

RAYMOND BARRIO teaches art at the University of California at Santa Barbara and has had many exhibitions of his paintings. His brush drawings were featured in *Trace 48*. He is the author of three novels, two books of non-fiction, and many short stories, all unpublished.

CHARLES BUKOWSKI has published four volumes of poetry, three in chap-book form. His most recent book is *It Catches My Heart in Its Hands* (Loujon Press, 1963) -- a most extraordinary and beautiful edition.

ALVARO CARDONA-HINE was born in Costa Rica and lives in Los Angeles with his wife and four children. He writes plays, music, poetry and prose. Published in many magazines, his book of haiku, *The Gathering Wave*, was published in 1961 by Alan Swallow.

PAUL CORDELL is working on a collection of poems, and hopes that 'some of the magic of my preoccupations enters into my work: the gods of television and the movies, Pagan and Christian love symbols, Mexican Indian terrible deities, still very much alive.'

ELEANOR EDELSTEIN lives in Santa Monica with her husband and two sons. Her poems and articles have been published in *The Sixties*, *The New Republic* and *Monocle*. She is the Editor of the *Bennington College Bulletin*.

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN is associate editor of *Trace*; West Coast U.S. representative for *El Corno Emplumado*; and Los Angeles correspondent for *Eco Contemporaneo*. His fiction, poetry and critical reviews are appearing currently in more than twenty magazines, and the entire issue of *Duende* No. 2 featured his work.

GENE FRUMKIN is the co-founder and second editor of *Coastlines*. His first book of poems, *The Hawk and the Lizard*, was published last year by Alan Swallow, Denver. His poems have appeared in *Choice*, *Poetry*, *Evergreen Review*, *Saturday Review*, and elsewhere. He has been teaching an Advanced Poetry Workshop at U.C.L.A. Extension.

CHARLES GULLANS teaches at U.C.L.A. and his poetry has appeared in many magazines. He is the author of *Arrivals and Departures* (Minnesota) 1962; co-translator with Franz Schneider of *Last Letters from Stalingrad* (Morrow) 1962; and the editor of *The Works of Sir Robert Ayton* (Scottish Text Society) 1963.

BARBARA HARRIS, a former editor of *Coastlines Magazine*, was born in Fresno, California. She has studied in the U.C.L.A. Extension Poetry Workshops, and four of her poems appeared in a recent issue of the *Uclan Review*. She recently gave a reading of her verse at the California Institute of Technology.

JACK HIRSCHMAN is on the faculty at U.C.L.A. A limited edition of a book, *Two*, with his poems and lithographs by Arnold Belkin of Mexico, will be published this year by the Zora Gallery in collaboration with the Joseph Press (lithographers) and The Plantin Press (printers), all of Los Angeles.

LAWRENCE LIPTON is the author of novels and non-fiction, *Brother*, *the Laugh is Bitter*, *In Secret Battle*, *The Holy Barbarians*; poetry, *Rainbow at Midnight*; feature articles in magazines and newspapers; and of a forthcoming book, *The Growing Edge: The State of Culture and The Arts on the West Coast* (University of California Press).

LACHLAN MACDONALD is a former editor of *Chicago Review* and *Coastlines*. A writer of criticism, stories and novels, he has appeared in many publications, including *Martha Foley's Best Short Stories of 1960*. He is currently teaching English at Claremont College.

JAMES BOYER MAY, who is the editor of *Trace*, says 'Taking a positive slant on me, I'm again, after a second lapse of years of suppression, producing the shapes of writings which have been critically assessed in terms ranging from "great modern English poetries" to "garbage." They are my life; so, having discovered the impossibility of knowing me, they are the only real answer to your request for a biography. I can't supply more than a semi-accurate recountal of assumed dates and so-called happenings, virtually none of which correlate with integral intentions. Today, I plan to sift through, selecting and revising as I go, the hundreds of parts of me that have been exposed about the world in print. If I can make it, the result will be a book titled: *Id Bits*.'

EARL NEWMAN is a unique Southern California poster artist who not only designs but hand-prints his work from silk screens. Visitors welcome: 3924 S. Topanga Canyon Lane, Topanga. He has created posters for The Monterey Jazz Festival, the UCLA Folk Festival, and several California fairs.

WILLIAM PILLIN is a potter and works with his wife, Polia Pillin, an artist and ceramic craftsman. He has poems appearing soon in *Trace* and *Poetry Northwest*, and his fifth book of poetry, *Pavanne for a Fading Memory*, will be published this year by Alan Swallow.

RAMON SEPULVEDA has appeared previously in Coastlines. He studied art at the Chouinard Institute, dabbles in printing and black magic, and is currently hatching a scheme (literary) with Barding Dahl 'that will humble the mighty and exhaust the miserable.'

PRISCILLA SHAMES was recently the winner of the Alfred Longueil prize for poetry at UCLA, and one of the winners of the Academy of American Poets prize for college and university students. She has been published in Chicago Choice, Pacific Northwest, and other magazines.

HELEN SORRELLS'S early writing was for newspapers and radio. After a long time away from writing, she has begun to write poetry via the UCLA Extension Poetry Workshops.

MERRILL SPARKS was born in Iowa, and has been at various times a
aider, or winer, and yeaheer. He prk, shes bccas analy, agh is unreter.

collaborating with Vladimir Markov, of U.C.L.A., on a bilingual anthology of Modern Russian Poetry to be completed in 1965 for MacGibbon and Kee (London).

LAWRENCE P. SPINGARN is currently on leave from teaching English at Valley College. He has published poetry, fiction and articles in nearly one hundred journals from Great Britain to New Zealand, and has written three volumes of verse, the most recent of which is *Letters from Exile: Poems* (Longmans, London, 1961).

ANN STANFORD has published three books and recently completed two more: *The Weathercock*, a collection of her poems over the past ten years, and a book on Anne Bradstreet. Sixteen of her poems appear in *A Western Sampler*, published by Talisman. She teaches at San Fernando Valley State College.

MEL WEISBURD, co-founder and first editor of Coastlines, recently moved to the Chicago area, where he now conducts the Poetry Seminar. He is currently at work on a novel. He has had poems in *Transatlantic Review*, *Choice*, and others.

JOAN WHITE teaches literature and philosophy at Citrus College in Azusa, and is studying ancient Greek. She has been published in *Accent*, *Yale Review*, *Poetry*, *Epos*, *Southwest Review*, *Poetry Dial*, *Chelsea*, and many others.

PETER YATES is a lecturer on music, from the history of tuning to the American experimental tradition. His book, *An Amateur at the Keyboard*, will be published by Pantheon in 1964, and he will lecture on American Music at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies during June. He is the writer of monthly articles for 'Arts and Architecture,' co-founder of 'Evenings on the Roof' (concerts) and 'Poetry Los Angeles.'

Unknown to the Editors of Coastlines, a poem by Lawrence Lipton (see letter p. 4) which had been accepted by us on January 21st, 1964, appeared in Limbo, April 1964. During March and April there were two phone calls to Coastlines from Mr. Lipton inquiring about proofs of this poem. No mention was made by him of Limbo. On May 2nd Coastlines sent Mr. Lipton his proof. Still no mention was made by Mr. Lipton that his poem had appeared in another publication. This matter came to our attention as Coastlines went to press. We prefer to *leave Mr. Lipton's page blank.*

THE POETRY EDITORS

Report From Evanston

Somehow under the stagnant air,
By the polluted lake,
Ambushed by people on three sides,
It got trapped between Chicago
And old money and old grass.

You'd think it would be overrun
The way continents of students and air
And many an alcoholic from N.U.
Despite W.C.T.U. roll through.
Yet local rule and a civil tor ne
Hold the line across
A corridor of liquor stores.

Or you'd think it would collapse
The way it accumulates, but commutes away.
Even as the old guard makes its stand
The schools integrate the children away.

Cities are rarely made from joy
And nothing lasts.
Yet in the winter, when you come home,
Ten thousand men scrape their walks at once.
And in the Spring, the elms open like parachutes.
On quite an ordinary day
The Mayor lights a candle for peace
And nobody resists.

- Mel Weisburd

When From the Night

*When from the night of
Evening falls
The night your reason
Chose to call
Upon illusion,
When every sense unfolds
A rose
Star by star, the jeweled
Soul
Shimmers about itself,
Shivers, and knows
How doubt is nestled like
A pool
Within the cradled arc of
Sweet existence.*

*Land by land, the cloudless
Rim of sky,
The feathered branch of distance
Hangs
Upon a heart-beat. Lay your
Hand,
Even in peace, even in tears,
Upon your breast,
The will shall bear its
Own strange presence -
And all the creatures of the world
As well.*

- Josephine Ain

Star, Proxy Venus

Those superb vixen shoulders significantly sporting
 a string of foxes accentuate the division
 of your chief business interest, the visible
 and the almost unseen,
 the invisible being too well known.

Many famous images have slipped here.
 You are a V downwards
 and a V cleft up and have children,
 being an ego as inviolate
 as ever before you bloomed at eleven.

Quiz-masters of your myth process the photo
 gauche girlish pretty out of a midcontinent
 high school midden, privy to no
 public relation, who then fell and
 incestuously raped you of a human living;
 until you are now the one of us,
 empty public enamelled as a cadillac bathtub
 any faith can wash in.

-Peter Yates

Fire Cat

Imperturbable, impenetrable
The cat sits in the fire
With nose smug, and
Criticizing eyes half-closed
 Against me;
 Eyebrows of flame
 That glow and fade
To signal the temper
Of his advice without words
That claims an orderly wisdom
 Far beyond me
Who cannot sit imperturbable
 In the burning fire.

- Sanora Babb

Foot-Loose & Fancy-Bound

Having just picked up that cumbered evening's drapes
on Accidental Boulevard...

Gambrinus watching ...;

aware of itch of same pudendal fever

depicted in the bas-reliefs

of that bold ludicrat,

Gargantua ...

he rode to rescue Solace

from the chalice of that night.

He fled his way: someplace to go? --

if not dressed up.

Not wheeling toward the baby-zoo,

he pondered where last seen,

that old leptometer:

an instrument quite indispensable

for gauging qualities

from likely-chance perusals of

onanian soup.

Humanity's composed... of persons; yet,

how UNcomposed most every one of these:

a contradiction which --

ubiquitous - involves the modern mind/s.

Not only Flemish kings and Rabelais

have brewed and writ;

not only dipsomaniac calypso-ists

(uniquely having wambled)

deplore their squeamish pains of thought-

rites after drums.

All breathers smell green devils in their quilts;

and all may shed those twice-divided scents of sin,

with time. through moving languishments..

or erstwhiles dark diminishment of blood.

-- James Boyer May

See (?) Story

They'd declared him a 'great ' man;
till he'd quite come apart at the crutches...

atter all. And

every beat generation
could not have saved him.

Unresoundingly, broadest-beamed side
of him hit lower deck; and the spume
of sea's wanton had flecked
both his upper and lower lips' set.

Way down there, he'd kneelessly -- and where,
tearing rolls of his hair -- d:

meaning, now seen as mere petulance.

He plainly had wished for his salt,
not his sustenance

(they said).... And yet, he'd been late and far
with all hungers.

Each of his trials had been fed to the others --
not to his own very bowels.

He might have sucked where he'd been severed,
drawing back his only blood..

He'd shipped to find his Mother; but
his Father'd toppled him.

The birds of life-from-death had circled wide
that day, while he'd been trying hard to catch
brown worms which had boared on for years,
from underneath his armpits, clean
down to the Venus-line ...

that matched his jockey-held virility:
pale steed which never finished first.

-James Boyer May

MARY WITUYA

by Lachlan MacDonald

In the early morning Mary Wituya rose and dressed. First she drew her wide loose cotton skirt over her swollen abdomen and tied the strings of the skirt beneath her drooping breasts. Her hands fastening the knot brushed the tips of her breasts and thin liquid drained from the nipples. She dried her hands against the skirt and slipped her arms into the long sleeves of a thin cotton shirt, a man's shirt, castoff, missing buttons. The shirt tails dangled behind her and rode up over her hard protruding belly. Next she drew on leggings made from trousers with the front and back cut out; she tucked the cuffs into the loose tops of her summer mukluks.

In the corner of the dark room her two little girls continued to sleep. They did not stir as she drew aside the single piece of cardboard and opened the room to dawn light. Through the glass she saw the sun rays light the gray upper rim of the bluff Niyghak-puk.

Dred her othy clothes othere her anot too hood print
down her back.

The black hair that lay waveless beneath the hood she drew up and coiled on the back of her head, plaiting it loosely with a deerskin thong to which were knotted, at irregular intervals, blue glass beads. With two coils of hair thus held in place she covered her head with a green wool square, then shifted her shoulders, shaking her trunk gently until the hem of the loose parka settled at the middle of her short calves. She drew aside the hanging pad of hides and burlap and stepped through the entrance of the agra into the morning air.

As quietly as possible Mary Wituya walked through the sleeping village and south toward the lagoon, then turned inland. After a while she left the time-worn Eskimo trail, and the moistness of the Arctic spring became more apparent. Water surged with soft hush from each patch of moss beneath her feet. She passed through the place of the old ones. From one stark white whale-bone pointing to the sky a startled raven launched itself. It flew ahead of her over the island tundra, crying out long after it had passed from sight, settled on the brim of some concealed pothole.

As she moved inland from the trail and the lagoon, walking became more difficult. Her course led her past the base of Nighak-puk and to the first foothills. For a moment she paused and turned her face back toward the silent village; in one glance her pupils reflected the driftwood shacks and sod huts, the schoolhouse, the white wooden church. She passed from sight of the village. The hummocks became more numerous, the pools deeper; the weeds clutching at her legs whistled over her leggings. She continued to climb each hummock as she came to it, jumping down from some of them, feeling the jot the eastern nope on the hast hill she rested. She lay on the cotton-grass and let the green shoots of it brush against her face.

A flight of birds overhead traced their shadows on the hill where she rested.

Their cries were bright to the new day. A mouse building its nest in the rocks above her resting place made a scurry with its paws on the stone, and looking up she saw its bright eyes unblinkingly regard her. His sharp nose moved in the soft breeze; the richness of the new grass made it quiver. Her own face remained flat, a saffron oval that did not change, and because her small eyes were turned inward with her thoughts, she saw the mouse with a duliness.

Within her the baby had moved, and moved again. And now she drew down her leggings, but she did not lift her parka. She remained on her back, with each new stirring in her drawing up her legs a little more, and back, and open, wanting to get up and squat and not wanting to move.

A single gull soared high overhead and she saw only a white speck moving and dreamed that it was a plane returning from the mainland. She thought that her husband would have been able to help her to make the decision. She wished he would come down from the plane and talk to her. She was sorry that she had not been able to talk with him before, but always before he had been content, and she had been unable to explain to him that she was not good enough for him. Not good enough covered all the things she felt about herself, but it also included everything she felt about him, he was so good as to be the sergeant of the Eskimo Scouts, to go twice to the interior for the National Guard, to be as big a man as the Army Instructor, bigger, because her husband was also a captain of a boat and his boat had brought home whales. A big man in the village should have a son.

She drew up the back of the parka from beneath her, raising her hips with great effort, and she felt the warm liquid pouring from her and down her thighs and into the moss and she moved her body still a little more up the hill and felt the liquid pour out again.

The mouse, silent on its lookout, gave a sudden squeak at her movement and dashed into his rocks. Her eyes were closed. Underneath her she felt little stalks of weeds springing into place, knitting themselves to her weight. She heard the water dripping beneath the rocks and running through the grass, and the hum of insects coming to her head at last and gathering at her legs.

Mary Wituya placed her hands beside her hips and sat up, drawing her legs back and under, and she opened her eyes to look at the gentle slope of Niyghak-puk, remembering how it came to such a flat top and then, on the other side, the sheer rocks, and beneath those, the village. On the slope she could see trails leading toward the top, and in the distance the mountain flowers in the morning spread green and yellow verdure along the base, while further up plants of red and rust mingled with the pale lichen of the weathered stones.

A distant flight of ducks passed before the slope and Mary's gaze followed them over the line of bubbling stream that fed into the marsh. At the stream her glance paused to observe the gray fox dipping his paws into the cool flowing waters, then turning to gnaw at some ragged bit of prey. The motion of the birds drew her eyes on to the marsh and to the lagoon where ducks rose and fell in patternless flights, joined by sea birds that came down in flocks from the ledges and crevices of Niyghak-puk, where they had roosted during the night. Beyond the lagoon rose the ridge of outer land, and then the limitless

indistinct presence of the Bering Sea.

A launch churning that shallow water had returned Reverend Koski to his village church a week ago. And, after hesitating for three days, Mary Wituya had gone to speak to the missionary. She had not known what to do, how to say her thoughts to him. At last she had gone away without speaking of this thing which was happening inside her; though he had known he spoke only of the giving of names and of the water ceremony in the church.

Sharply the returning pains drove away her moment of reflection. She threw herself back into a bed of cramps, clenching her teeth and reaching down to her thighs,, pressing her thumbs into the flesh, and moaning, and turning her body this way and that so that it began to slide down the wet mossy slope and the branches of weeds caught by her skirt stabbed her waist like soft and distant needles. Then she moved her legs apart more, drawing up her knees and uttering, not in complaint but in weary statement of the fact that she was bleeding, ' Ah-ok-tunga, I am torn." And the word was the complete expression of the gathering of her strength with which she now reached down and seized the child in her hands and drew it up and out of her, bloody and covered with the film of her insides and moving on the end of its bloody cord. She placed the child on the grass, putting the cord against a rock and severing it with a sharp stone from her skirt-pocket, knotting the end and pressing the child's cord tightly between finger and thumb. With her free hand and arm she began to raise herself until she was on her feet, squatting and letting the blood and liquid pour down from her and feeling only faintly the cramps which helped her to expel it. Then she moved a little to one side away from the wetness of the grass, putting green moss against her pain, and she held the child while for the first time, as she wiped it with bits of the moss and felt it warm against her palms, the vagitus of the child, the great roaring birth sounds of its cries, broke in through the thoughts that were in her head, so piercing its cry.

Then she looked more closely at the infant, for it was said that with some newborn one could not tell. Mary's blunt fingers pried apart its legs, and she prodded it with her heavy thumb, the cracked nail pressing the fold of flesh

hollows of hay she held the cishdWith dismay she held the child up to her face, peering sharply at the closed and mucous, discovering what she had feared.

hollows of the eyes, at the red pit of her daughter's mouth.

made no sound, for she had long before decided what must be done with another daughter. She looked away from the infant and let its cord slip from her fingers, her eyes filling with the blue sky where the gulls had flown short minutes before, her gaze seeking high up the God of Reverend Koski who would come down to take from her this gift she offered. Her thumb sought out the throat and rested there.

Slow moved her eyes searching the whole of the heavens for the missionary's God. Her sobs began to well up inside her and, fearing that the God would never come, she opened her mouth wide, sucking in noiselessly the air, and she released that hand from her child and looked upon it again. Suddenly there was no sound in the world.

The intensity of her look fell upon the moss, a single tuft the thickness of

her hand, short and slender flattened stalks smoothly supporting the finely-toothed brown crests, a close-knit pod of soft color that held like a gem upon

Sharp she drew back her head, again to the sky, listening for the voice of God, and tried herself to speak, but her own voice was stilled. Trembling she rose and went alone down the hill and paused to wash herself in the silent running stream that flowed to the marsh and the lagoon. Birds that made no sound passed over her where she lay until she fell asleep in the silent world. While she slept, the gray fox came sniffing up the hill, and then the mouse.

Cocktails

Here sharp eyes glitter; and swift tongues will clatter
On great men's names, but never touch on matter.
To titillate the nicotinic haze,
New poets rise and fall in bawdy phrase.
Fame, anecdotes, and scandals fill the room:
Whose novel's great this week, who's screwing whom.
In rich confusion of who, what, and when,
You cannot tell a penis from a pen.
The dead who jam the broad forecourts of hell,
Know just as much and gossip just as well.
But here they stand, appallingly alive.
They live because you live. They batten, thrive
On your hard substance and identity.
They are the emptiness that you will be
When they suck dry the meaning of your name.
And never doubt they can, they made this game --
The fool, the tool, the boor, the arrogant bores,
This editor, that critic, and these whores.

- Charles Gullans

The Sidewalks of Verue

*I would give a summer
For boys who drift in street lights
Hanging their laughs in the hot nights
As girls pass.*

*I would approach their faces
Yellow in the light and stare
Until they saw my shoulders were not bare,
My hair bound.*

*Moving along the sidewalk
I would leave them their corners
Of summer, helpless as drowners
In the valley.*

*I'd find the street where oleanders
Fall and bleed between the cracks,
Step carefully that mothers' backs
Are never broken.*

- Barbara Harris

Lesbos Revisited

These hills dissolve into the sea
On this side they encircle me
And gently close, my singleness
Imprisoned in their huge caress.

Around my valley world I see
Beauty vast as sympathy,
But I must watch the eyes that press
Hard against my loneliness.

I have heard the tongues that prattle
Insane sounds that rattle, rattle,
Blue-white plates upon a shelf,
Hollow syllables of Delft.

They shut their windows locked as boxes,
I am queen of paradoxes:
Doors key-close. I am discerned.
Familiar eyes are stranger-turned.

The thin young girls who laugh and preen
For stupid lovers, I have seen
Rustle with starch and dimity
And steal a whispered look at me,

Their milk-white faces lifted up,
Porcelainéd girls who cup
The significance like rain
In their empty faces. Pain

Is solace, and desolation
Lives with me like passion.
One by one I see the years descend
That will not end, like me, they will not end.

- Barbara Harris

The Lady With a Taste for Fiction

*I know a lady who stands
On high dives, tri-cornered hat askew
And flies*

*Breaking the water with her breast.
No swan has dived so artfully
Given no applause.*

*Come from the pool, my lady,
White on the green lawn
Dripping your summer batiste.*

*Pour water from a corner
Of your hat. Be still on the lawn
While swans glide.*

*What, dive again? Oh lady
The day is bent
With light enough*

*And words you choose to tell
In winter of this afternoon
Will not be true.*

- Barbara Harris

My Sister Lies in California

My sister lies in California
dead of poppies.
She fancied poppy-petaled graze
assuaged
the prickly openings of pores
and closed them all with silk.

And the color!
Commonplace as marigolds
but cupping chins
with dazzle of themselves
they flower
the gaudiest shroud.

Laid away in fields
from Maricopa
to the hills
drowsed always in that wilderness
of bloom
she can no longer feel
the burst of little suns
that weigh upon her
like a golden lover.

Never will her
gold-blind eyes
unpress to see
the consummation
of her wildest dreams.

- Barbara Harris

The Fortune Teller

*I sell the future in my stall
You've see my sign above the sea-wall,
Salt eaten, creaking in the wind,
' Your fortune told within'.*

*My face is older than imagined death.
A mirror, serpent-cracked, receives my breath
And blurs the image of my flesh.
I read the startled hush*

*Of my unbeauty gazed in other eyes,
My lapse of grace. Oh, I am wise
To years that anchor me to this boardwalk
Below the Rocket's Rock.*

*I can distort their kind in prophecy
"Till all new years come twisting back to me
Writhen with voyages unsailed
And tall dark men delayed.*

*On Sunday morning I have not betrayed
Pale ladies, men who promenade
The board walk tatooed with their canes
And call me by my names.*

*Come buy, I smile. They pass
But soon the ritual of tea and glass
Assures them it is I. They come
With hands to pry undone*

*Of secrets. I will forsee
Long lives spent full and happily,
The trick of death at last outplayed.
I know how time is made.*

*I shape its advent in my booth.
There are no questions for my truth.
One by one I see the years descend
That will not end, like oceans, will not end.*

- Barbara Harris

The Tattooed Man

I should have known you all along
But when you stood before my full length mirror
Mother on one arm, Guadalcanal on the other,
I was dazzled by the color of you.

Oh what a clever disguise, pride
Of the tattoo parlor's art, covered as you were
With roses, anchors and asps.

When your kneecap moved a hula dancer
Bellied into being. And tell me
Why you had Love pricked
On the knuckles of both hands.

When the carnival moved on
You stayed. I could not find
A pigmentation of words as deep
As your markings. God knows I hoped
To find you peeled in your skin
In rooms where there were corners.

This is farewell, my tattooed man.
I have left you for an unadorned tailor.
Do not try to find me. There is nothing
Left of you except the colors
Unfurled on my breast.

- Barbara Harris

*The Knife Thrower's Wife**Love is a blade*

a celebration of love which connects
the knife thrower's arm

*With the mark**Love is motion*

the sound of air

*Holding knives**Love is a thrust*

of joyful mysteries

*Holding her body**Love is a thrust*

of sorrowful mysteries

*Holding her body**Love is ten knives*

that hold her body

To the wall

Love is the glorious fraction of life
between her breast

*And the wall**Love is belief*

in the knife thrower's art

The constancy of the mark.

- Barbara Harris

The Girl on the High Wire

*With a mind intent on air
You move with grace
As if you walked on water,
Tred carefully that place
Of wire between two poles.*

*It is the world, that length of wire,
You are queen of air.
Your grace is balance and you are
Sovereign of a sky, oh fair
And wide as water.*

*Your hands hold sceptred balance
That sways upon the wire,
Now arms spread out to bless the air-
What grace do you require
To travel pole to pole?*

*If you looked down from tented sky
There would be no water there
To hold your fallen grace.
Only the wild catastrophe of air
Would claim your balance.*

*Do not look down. Your grace
Supports the world of poles
As water buoys its sky.
Stay fast where wire
Involves you with the air.*

- Barbara Harris

upon listening to symphony music while drunk:

*this is almost the
spear
but it does not
quite come
home,
and so
another drink,
it is possible
that these boys have been
taught and educated
beyond the fury of their
senses
and so most lies dead
because most have
tried too hard,
but Christ, this is SOAPBOX:
and I have tried too
little
for the same reason
for wanting to do it
too wrong is the same as the other,
it is too easy to punch down fences
without asking questions
as asking questions
is also measles,
but anyhow,
for all of that
I know that I am drunk
and listening to a symphony
and that both of these
factors seem
kind enough to be
warm,
certainly kinder than when I was
tying green onions
into foreman-warning bundles
of 5 or 6.*

I have come a
long way
from tying green onions
into bundles
into writing poetry,
although
the pay
is less.

- Charles Bukowski

everything:

the dead do not need
aspirin or
sorrow,
I suppose.

but they might need
rain.

not shoes
but a place to
walk.

not cigarettes,
but they tell us,
a place to
burn.

or we're told:
space and a place to

might be the
same.

the dead don't need
me.

nor do the
living.

but the dead might need
each
other.

*in fact, the dead might need
everything we
need*

*and
we need much,
if we only knew
what it
was.*

*and
it is
probably everything*

*and we
probably die
trying to get
it*

*or die
because we
don't get
it.*

*I hope
you understand
when I am dead*

*I got
as much
as
possible.*

- Charles Bukowski

Intruder

*It is strange that I said to him stay
 For he broke and entered
 Like any thief in the night
 When he might have knocked
 Rousing dog, child
 And the fire to fever
 With bounty that ravaged the house
 When he battered the lock.*

*What thing possessed my tongue
 I ask of the morning
 Sun in my mouth
 Ashes stern on the floor
 I have chided the dog
 Held the child close in her wonder
 And taken the lock like a warning
 Off the door.*

- Helen Sorrells

The Bird Cries Me

"The bird of warning crieth all night long" -- Shakespeare

The bird cries me;
 He cries in stiff alarm
 Of brooding storm;
 Calls me clear.
 But I am cold to birds,
 I will not hear.

Deaf, then, to all save turmoil of my blood
 I flail against the hearts most nearly mine;
Then stricken sick to see them flood
 And bleed
 Would hide and die
 - Less wounded they
 Than I
 If, oh, I could.
 Sing, bird!

Sing sooner from your saving wood.

- Helen Sorrells

For the Knickerbocker Child

In the cemetery at Doble, ghost town in
the high desert of California

*The air has healed,
The earth is wounded yet.
A hundred years the itching of that scar
Has puckered earth
As though your plucking hands
Had pulled it round you.*

*We found you,
Came upon you suddenly,
No warning mound
To counteract the shock
Of stony coverlet.
Almost a baby
Tucked among the rocks!
No mark to say you
But a scrap iron cross.*

*Speechless, we heard you whimper in the sage,
And from the ridge
To contradict the fox,
And mewling at an old enamelled sky
To shake and mock
The eagle there,
And hawk.*

- Helen Sorrells

The Neighbor

Cypresses grew thick between our houses
And we were seldom together,
Being different in the ways of our going,
I needing a light house
With the doors open,
She in a cottage under cedars,
Closed in all weather.

I rarely borrowed from her,
Choosing the yellow kitchen to the south
For a cup of sugar or a few cloves.
When I did ask salt of her
Or the little world of eggs,
There was something disturbing in the encounter
As if I had reached in a dark vegetable bin
And touched a skin that moved.

One summer of rain I discovered
The roots of her cedars
Had grown through my water system.
We had conversation then,
Crossed as a rail fence,
Splinters of sentences that festered,
Swollen and painful.
She caught in my mind
The way beggar's lice cling to a sweater.

Later I fell ill, nothing a doctor named
But rather a feverish spirit,
Chills, and aching of wings I never had.
Friends brought me cakes and roses;
She, coarse bread of her own baking
And tea I'd have thrown away
Except she stayed to see me drink it.
It was a long winter with little sun
And no light of snow to take its place.

Oh, I got better, in a way, after a time.
The house is not as bright as I thought,
Nor the doors so wide.
There are holes in the hedge now
Big enough for a small woman to pass through,
Going out,
Or coming inside.

- Helen Sorrells

Out of Eden

*We waken
In a house above vineyards,
Stare, touch, touch again.
My mouth is a vessel
Your tongue questions.
But I ring true.
In February, month of my longing,
The terraces hang lean.
In August, they curve,
They cluster.*

*Later we walk in the town
Uneasy
Out of Eden.
Here almond-bitter flavor
Of renunciation
Hangs like fruit
Historic in the air.
Church spires shaft our shadows,
Lay us about with bells.
Not touching, spent,*

*We read the town
Like a commandment.*

- Helen Sorrells

On the Ferris-Wheel

(for Edith Sitwell, in the manner of Façade)

O... Up we go on the Ferris-wheel,
 Unwinding ourselves on the canting reel
 To cast a caliope string of sight
 Into the carnival world of night.

See the lines of fidgety light-bulbs glow
 In the eyes of the flooding human-flow,
 And see the platformed barker begin
 At the three-ring circus to pack them in.

Then down at a side-show --look your fill
 As the girls in their bras and lace panties chill
 In the evening air of Saint Louis Blues
 As they kick their legs high in their high-heeled shoes.

And there in the monster tent -- see the slink
 From the brute who is tagged as 'the missing link',
 And the pygmies deformed, the sea-serpent dead,
 And the lamb that was born with a human head.

There's a game of chance: 'Come on, try your luck!
 All ya hafta do is shoot down the duck.
 If ya knock the birdie off the board,
 A plastered madonna is your reward!'

And look at the pen that is slimy with mud...
 See a man wring a chicken's neck, then drink the blood.
 And behold the god in his loin-clothed frame
 Who swells his great chest and burns in his flame.

The snake-pit is packed and the snake-pit is deep,
 And the boa constrictor will squirm in your sleep;
 The rattler will coil; the python will thrive
 On the innocent pig he swallowed alive.

O... Up we go on the Ferris-wheel
 To shake off the earth -- and the corset-spiel
 That is squeezing our heart in a burial gown...
 Up, up for a space ... before we start down.

-- Merrill Sparks

NOTE: Please read this aloud, à la the early Dame Edith as in Façade, rising
 & falling inflections, four exaggerated beats to a line....

The Grammarian: Parts of Speech

' Professor, what are we doing in this institution?'

He started from the nouns, the feeble names
For creatures of the swamp that eat and sleep
In corsets, smocks, or planetary frames.
And when the sick moon bleached his face,
Pale 'he' and 'she' converged to 'it'
As tricky delegates in silk and lace.
While action limped and thinking lacked a curb
The fangs of progress and the claws of time
Retreated to moist jungles with the verb.

Ah, beauty was a bubble in his blood:

Like easily, slowly, patiently, it grew
Slack and adverbial before the flood.

And next the prepositions dinged him down:
He tottered through a sacerdotal maze
To whip these drunks and harlots out of town.
But in the yard no priest would give him unction.
The bones he loathed were rattling in their shrouds
Until he joined them to a fat conjunction.
A heavy corpse, he answered very well
The interjection that resounds each night
Across the precincts and the wards of hell.

- Lawrence P. Spingarn

YOU

MUCKLE

HEAD ...!

Raymond Barrio

-- IF the world is one big fat art gallery, at least as it is hung
(hung up) by man, then what is it that hangs up the hanging
committee at last? What is it that beats the hangers-up?

... not exactly a bullring, not its shape anyway, though it was vast all right.
As it was, the gallery was absolutely empty. Just stuffed with paintings - large
ones, fey ones, known ones, gamy ones hanging from the rafters, old ones,
real long ones, pretty gritty ones, racine ones, raked over ninnies, stripped
and striped ones, accidentally contemporaneous as hell ones. Where the flesh
and bones were being separated from the soul, and the men from the boys,
and what was left was hung.

Not there, you muckle head!

Standing there in the shadow of his own private ranting thoughts, Cal
watched the master at his work. Mr. Tingpo, directing the hanging with the
help of a couple of dry-mouthed-standing-by-luckless assistants who didn't
seem to give a damn, Tingpo, this round little menace with the shiny pate, a
clean clear hole right through the middle of his forehead.

'Hanging a show's an art nitself,' -- Cal could no more take issue with this
epitomic pronouncement than he would -- but nothing was right. Or else
they were too far to the right. Or the left. Not the light, not the placement,
nor the position, nor the solution, nor even the viewers, nor the placental
connectors. Maybe it was an art. Maybe round pate had a point. Maybe Cal
had no other way, standing in the breezy vaulting doorway, looking in out of
mid day, youth in a blaze of sun, of trying to discover truly for himself what-
ever it was the wearer of truth was wearing that day.

"I just don't see it."

'You're not meant to see anything.'

"But look, there's a mountain, and some trees, and -

"You're not supposed to be looking for things. Smack, you're supposed to
feel."

'I know?

'What's the good of having emotions if you don't use them?'

* But what's the point of painting a black square, and then hanging it?'

Cal knew this much: he knew you could take a square of canvas, square it
off, experimentalize it with bad or sad girls, or anything, glue it, stand back
marveling, and watch it grow. And yet he knew too that even that wasn't
enough -- something still was missing. His painting wasn't really finished.

'Watch that! You damned fools!' Tingpo barking, his valuable time slip-
ping away -- for nought! 'Don't you let a painting fall to the floor like that!'

And again: 'What's the matter with wow wow wow?'

What was the matter was: that he was entirely right. He had to be. He was God. A true plumb ... increasingly (and disturbingly) so, apparent to Cal (against the tested testimony of swirls of sophisticated collectors, collector-appreciators, and critic-appreciators) that no one was going to let the sacred secret out, whether any particle of an artist's stern was phony or not. And what, after all, was the world doing about its standards? Was it (truth, charm, goodness, light) so certain to win? There had to be -- a sudden chasmness... yaws, the art of it, even a piece of painful sculpture carefully ruptured had a chance over and above its own start, its own rebirth from prehistory to primitive. The rich primeval mud: to become once more its own chief reward: each time, each start, new birth every golden second, new born, the growingness of it rather than the static, rather than the dined-on masterpiece.

Cal moved on inside.

One asiannişiden the wire on one varminth God-given creed.

The novelty of integrity seeking still profounder hues, coming low, could not still any greeting card artist (who also had to eat, or force the way down the looking glass of selfish superstition, grabbing the public's garland with a threat, without realizing it was made of gardendung, painting it in as though the standard world really did owe a living to one and all. And everyone was an expert (as the critics thought they were) for what was good and/maybe/all in art (--as he thought) along with what parquet floored moderne mosau-leums picked high from, in the unfathomable conviction that they were the ones who were genuinely leading the leaders into new discoveries... cracking the hurdles, hobbling those wild spirits loosed out of a culture cabal, the secret artificial orifices of a few bu-bu-bubbling idiots united in certain preconceived and pre-agreed on designs, not unlike women's fashions, marching in order to the blast of trumpets, disciplining the mavericks (according them their own light) for their own good, so that they didn't destroy themselves -- while in the process they destroyed not only art but the directors and the dealers and the curators as well, and to hell with the collectors. However they keep right on passing out enameled medals to each other's field forces, blissturd confident (believing others believed as well!) that they were the ones who had won the war. Diddle-headed. Toasting each other with martinis in rooms that are walled to wall, bragging how they sassed the boss back. Keeping at arm's length the poor stupid uncultivable riffraff who only knew how to paint pfffffs on a cazanned canvas. What does riffraff know of social delights, of distinguishing one turkey fork rine from another? Once in a while, one flicks over the top to stake his \$14,000 handicap, encouraging others to readjust their elevations, while their connoisseurs shout even fiercer in the driver's seat of the miscreant juggernaut labeled 'art,' ignorant themselves, knowing not they came by that seat by pure default - only because the real risers had gotten off a second ago in a flivver which was a horse by the throat and at times a kick in the teeth to boot.

'Higher!'

Tingpo wasn't through by long or short.

He had paintings taken down and shunted over to another part of the world. He had small ones grouped together. Then large ones. Then he alternated. Hanging is an art. He put warm paintings together. Then cool ones. Then mixed up ones. The abstracts couldn't live together, neither could they bear apart. Cal watched with swift admiration this artist's artist's artist at work. It was watching a rehearsal of the last settler: the personalities at work, charged with their own spectacular silent --

'Lower!'

For Cal's own crucial need was to retain a conscience aimed at keeping himself informed unerringly that what he was doing was, well, some grand design that was exciting in itself... not knowing whether within the confines of his own unknown (and therefore ecstatic) spirit, he would have to act as his own moises in the rushes, discover his own spark or origin, recognize his own images as bababa truth, serve as his own mental manure, and come up with something sweetsmelling. He could arbitrate the useful from the merely worthy, always upon always apart from the consideration that recognition was one grand slab. ... It was in a sense to be a free child again, to play in and out of caves, on rills, to indulge in imageries and explore the lights of an amoeba, to skid across a murky sucket filled with sooder, letting those -- those others go hang from the honied hooks. To please! Say, better, dead. For muckle heads, like marbles, were also made of the grit of spirit.

* * *

At the start of it his girl friend had once asked:

'What do you want to paint for, honey? It's only for fun isn't it?'

His father said:

'With genius you starve.'

His mother said:

'You need a career, dear, don't you?'

His brother said:

'How much you get for this one?'

His conscience said:

"What rights have you got?'

His teacher said:

'Paint what the public likes. That's communication.'

Then the salesman said:

'It only adds another four bucks a month, what's that?'

The gravestone said:

The gutless wonder.

*

It wasn't even that Tingpo was wrong. Lots of people were wrooooooong. You learn by mistakes. Wasn't he ... internationally reputed, able, wide ranging, widely known, fame and fortune and controversy licking his fame, none of that lonely crap for him, ululating pastorals offered in sweet violation at his shod fear, warped theories nailed as fact, protocols and ricy falsehairdos flatly made, knowing that -- ? Well the winners had to be well organized too.

A sale a month.

And knowing that ... using all the means at one's disposal (broken objec-

tions as well, distilling whatever beauty-warmth-search meant -- where did he ever read that crud?) must have first of all or last for himself meant: an image, THE IMAGE. Count the words. Grease the strokes. Star the brute brushes. Darken the lines. Betray the forms. Revert to texture. Try white on white or black on black on black. Remove all drive. But not -- not the concept. What was an idea? Couldn't purpose, design, conviction -- be wrong? The felt humility could be heading for truer fame; grandeur writhing; knowledge crushing; life above all else breeding true, where instinct pulsates pure.

Take just one fast look. Then judge.

Could you, in your right mind, without the least strain latent or overt, without the slightest un or sub or biconscious qualification, without holding hands with sunoco's sunlight-filled golden promise of open drawing accounts openly spat upon. produce works which satisfy your simmering being, and at the same time be truly worthy? For, experimenting, you could think about love's sweet misery, a lonely thing.

Or you could try to.

You could grope.

(You might stumble.)

You say: what horror??

For you can grow in spite of your past efforts.

You ask.

You aren't sure.

All right -- you fake.

You fumble.

You stomp.

You prod.

You sup.

You baa.

You light.

You follow the coin to its final rest.

And go.

You decide to exist.

You screw 'em all.

Lean the skimpy, fatten the tall.

You heist a buck of frozen shrimp.

You bluck, you grin, you stay on target, you detour dissonances, you stump the State, you pulsate rhythm, and in one finking farnum you'll have enough warts on your behind to charge the whole barge of lamplighters serenading the sleek slurpers.

* *

Production had to matter. They said it did. It had to. Matter. Energy. Erg The posture of the bray of the ass somewhat irrelevant, as one fraudulent judge (of wits) put it, to the quality of what that jackass might be thinking of himself. If he thought at all. A nononobobbin that was, a nobody fooling nobody, Cal was now beginning to see what he might add, where his painting was off, a budding aristophanes in every bead of glorious sweat. He had the challenge of an indifferent -- oh he had that to spare.

' It's no bone good."

"Yeah, I know."

"Well?"

Cal was also beginning to see what it, how it, that in his own painting he had to have the cleansing pour of vital knowing energy kinestry; it lacked -- something. Take a lovely form and tickle it sweet, paint the limbs in limbo, mark the nipples perfect, firmy and racy, upraising spring's verdant desire high to the greenest-flecked palatable delilah, growing a form emerging from your touch, build for eyes which have never seen before, to the magic patter of little feet making their lips so red and sweet, and where this thing was to end, or -- the right beginning.

' Just think of what you're doing, man!"

Ignoring Tingpo, Cal moved past his own painting, still on the floor (resting against the farthest wall, not yet hung, near an easel there for local color), not wanting to seem to be looking at it, Cal couldn't help facing what Tingpo was after, or rather symbolized: a marked infatuation with technique, a control of line, a discipline of related texture, a balancing of interrelated forms, wrecking more resplendant promises in art than any other factor. Leave it out, leave it all out, leave out life itself: and

-and then paint.

Resolve the ultimate with some inner soft and plushy pulp; be blandly unaware that-

(- once he was called Man....)

Wrestle life, then.

Crush all form.

Tear every plan to bits.

Mark them, mold them, pour them into your own seething pot. Tear the canvas back. To its former pretty sheen. Smear and slur the jade. The only god rule was the dead rule. Insights views convictions judgments impulses emoted and dirty decisions etc were imported from outer nothings in the first place were they not? You whiff the brine. That's all you need to know. Pull against the ship's sway. Soak your feet on wet plank. Smack the waves -- the felt things -- a youthful Pole learning about English flies. (The propaganda wasn't strong enough so stop the others.)

' Replace it with the green one,' screamed Tingpo. ' The other one!"

Still Cal couldn't help knowing that the Tingpos would always come up covered with diamonds. There was fertile ground for evolution. Not for the belly, which was, really, solved several million ages ago. But for the sterility of the moment. For the crime of the aborted spirits. For the stifling of growth, for the snuffing out of pure joy, for the incarcerated structural institutionalized idiocies -- but what a midnight sac cooked with a dash of onion sauted on charcoal, a habachi, and some fancy hiefie mewing pinging puns stuffee with olive jokes (while my mother's brother's uncle's seven newts filched an omelette and divided the hunger democratically -- maybe now they could think about art and culture....) Can art be used to express god! give me rapture, rotton ordure being more useful to the living than the dead hand of a frozen idol?

(Are art dealers getting all they richly deserve?)

The simple crafts.
 Note the earthworm: he also produces --
 (... true art?)

* *

Surely there was more to it than some indefinable ancient eon craving. The lust for -- things. Leaving only to be explained the splendors of the jet prop, the rampant griegs, the sighing rennies, the orientulated versions, the magnificent master painters, the petty thoughts and the tallest abstracts. ... A conflict of sharp sophistry comparing a millionaire to some simple shit. Two explosions. A perpetual Seven Years' Itch unto the death, the best of the beast in every switch.

What poor -- 'Hell, man!' -- mut must come undone? And still we've come to a -- 'Not THAT one, the big red one!' - a pretty spasm, get ahead, why y pickle, have we come to this only to turn sassafrass equal to a hog. increasing the rate or copulating bulls while the trunk remains impassive, making the tuna leap two hundred million times into the humid air for a lurid seascape -- tell me, sir: is that there painting a water color or an oil?

So crave the sweet....

... along with the strong and meter out the mass producers, call out the fire men and string on some puds. Get Rachel. Quickle. And steal that overloving twogal cad. Watch debby scream green now that's a pair. A mighty husky ox. Rubbing out a slip with a foot on the ball, say the winner, and call it a work of art. Now how can you cut a hut out of crud and fud the dud out of mud huh bud?

(Why tight it?)

*

'Hurry along now, I haven't all day.'

Square it with yourself, Tingpole boy, let lime fly. ... Know, my friend, thought Cal -- suffer not: no form, no technique, no skill, no insight was that precious. Nor could it possibly be that simple. Am I to answer to him? To his likes and dislikes? To an eagle the world is round all right, but a worm is only an eagle's dessert. Tingpo had a format, but it didn't include a painting to please himself, himself only.

There was something then that Cal could show him. For the only thing Cal was demanding of himself was sweet and simple: merely the miracle of a song in color, that was all.

Cal went over to his painting, took out his house brush, unzipped the can of duco, and quickly painted in half a dozen black bars which together seemed to roughly constitute the symbol: HELL in large ragged black bars across the riot of color beneath, making the thing spring suddenly to life. A sort of Roualt effect.

Mr. Tingpo, eyes agape and mouth wide, said softly, 'What'd you do that for, you muckle head?'

Cal, shrugging his shoulder, said, 'Felt like it,' and walked out into the sunshine again.

November Day

*How much lovelier than
other unleavings for
being so rare after*
surprise rain and
clearer Los An-
geles is

*than ever (even) New
York or England are*
almost forgotten
this brisk this
windbrooming
morning

*I have come from gathering
an armful of oak and
liquid amber, in,*
off the scatter-
ing gutter,
David

*is plucking ' goldenrods
and asters' from the*
autoharp till he
must bring it
back to his
school,

*but not yet, just now is
squat over it like
a little pythagoras*
of wide o-
*pen mouth pure
* lavender and gold"*

The girls are still asleep
at either end of
the house

*And the sun through the
orange curtain here
in this pink room*
where I write
my poem
shouts

*drunken and lovely clear
out of me Matisse's
last day on earth*

- Jack Hirschman

*The Dead Spot
for Mailer*

*The dead spot, the blank
third eye inside me, and Nothing
will not do
nor Tao nor Zen nor
any indeterminate music*

It is to have given up trying to break down
*It is to have copped out on despair
in a skeleton of an old roadster
and banged
banged
banged
axle and hub and rim*
hard into where they will fit, That's all
I know, that's all
I care about
on this hill
And rode down into the tarpits and wilderness
And founded Los Angeles

*You hold to that older dead
spot
That power of filth and groans
That thrust of up and down*
Jingo Jew and Christ
Manhattan,
that cock

There's a whole land flattened it out between us,
*the color of a boredom 1 got
a whole city painted in*

*different colors, different
size houses*

no center to it
but every man for himself
is

in it, it
in him

American.

Which is why, no matter the torment and incision,
the riptooth anguish of
your style
I got to smile

Here, where even these words are
an old brownstone rotting
and who gives a damn
in words damns himself,

the 'rough beast' having passed through your town
a long time ago, and, roughly, is the boundary
of mine

And slowly slowly is moving its vague sun of a
body back across the land to get you good
this time
*for having been here yourself,
and having gone back
like a Jew. And cried
And lied.*

-Jack Hirschman

THE EXPLORER

*In Beringia, he became a pilgrim
of snow, the bearded hero of new myth
whose minarets, enameled blue above
permafrost, jutted in labyrinth*

*of sun and borealis to all
extremes of sky. Cowled against wind
and its heat-sucking lusts, boweled
with seal tallow, his reach spanned*

*the pole past time's dimension.
He kept his eyes
from freezing and his cunning free.
He found pride and survived. Old lies*

*almost crushed him in a walled
crevasse, polar bear and fox
stole the last entrails of his catch.
Death's ever presence unlocked*

*the artic lilies, ptarmigan
bones and lichens and he learned
to live alone without madness.
Once in his log, when his oil burned*

*out, he scrawled: ' Lying here,
a frost-blackened stranger, ready to die
in the dark, how I yearn
for the buzz of a fly.'*

- Priscilla Shames

Tune for a Fearful Lute

*This troubador with lizard heart
whose song is bourbon
stays inside, belonging to sleep
and recurring fantasies in stone.*

*His conscience, subtle and quick
plays fool to its questions.
Unused relationships cling to him.
He makes use of any dulled echo*

*for a lullaby. Bourbon is catharsis
purging all tears: his single art.
But he'd give it up for a woman
who'd divide his sleep in half*

*a body for his heart to feed on
words to surround him / skin.
He desires in absentia
wanting more grace*

than his body can hold.
At work he vanishes in wit, persistently
the funnyguy / a disease
that infects his tongue, devouring

the sayings of love
as his sleep hurdles the needs of others.
Outside is obstacles (nameless, contemporary)
the speeding ambulance.

*To pursue his lady is to fall perhaps
fail in craft.
Nose permanently bloodied
no woman would ever look at him.*

- Gene Frumkin

The View

*Looking back, years when the grasp
 was allowed to fallow, when modesty
 was simply not smoking a pipe
 looking back to those defensive judgments
 made against / in reckoning of
 the floating heart*

*Words are
 to see into the alignment of things
 to push through such density
 (call of stone
 air's hiddenness) a fish
 might move freely in A thickness
 against false liberation
 words places names
 plumbed water*

*Looking back
 the present too distant
 ashes covering its credo
 which awaits the pick and shovel
 of an immense effort Flow stagnates
 beneath slumbering orchards Nobody
 looks down from the bridge
 The corpses float by undetected
 It's not known
 if any were anyone we knew*

*Coming here, a hair is enough
 to hold us apart / from the one
 we must touch
 the thing we must see
 a fish gliding
 in an olive pool
 visible only
 under the surface
 in a fair angle of sunwash*

*This dark fleeting shape
 is unexpected
 and gone
 Once we have seen / precise
 swifter because the water we're in
 alive as death heaves about us*

No beginning is good
 It has to be done over
 with attentiveness, here
 and looking back

-- Gene Frumkin

As Well Write an Ode to Delfin

As well write an ode to Delfin
 "poor boy"
 on the bus his marble name
 or the cyclist at Palisades' edge
 his helmet and shades
 his Greek device
 gunning towards clouds
 and death

Bougainvillaea
 the scarlet stem
 came down to the Western place
 and the blear dog, blinking
 at the wild cars
 halted, and shat in the street

Prepare to levitate, Cocteau:
 we're going to raise you up
 among cloud walkers
 among girders 'a hard hat job'
 you who astonished us
 with the pure dream
 without opium
 after the angel has gone
 and we must live
 in the wit of the moment
 without falling
 nor forgetting the blame of the gods
 - Paul Cordell

The Watts Towers

First, one remembers how flat
this city

at its worst:

in Watts, triple --
crossed

by railroad

tracks

and remembers,

in Watts,

that

stock-pile

of scrap

that industry of tiles, that
three-times-ten

evidence of rock

and remembers

that towers have risen

before

in plainer places

and

remain

more beautiful

Would Lemuel,
pausing in Lilliput,
have had cause
to believe
even his little toe
was truthful, though

But tellers
of tales
like tinkers
have only one
idea:
**DO SOMETHING
BIG**

Later,
Simon, simple
and confused
by words,
dug a pit
and buried
his big red Hudson
DEEP
in it

Oh, America!
so artless
with only
this start these proofs
of some order
between
illusion
and the used -
car lot

- Eleanor Edelstein

Spy in the Distance

Choking down anger
cloaking suspicion
under his eyebrows,
he sees no tall spy
on top of the mountain.

*But the mountain is near,
and hidden by dark trees
clutching their foliage,
a spy surely standing
in a bright clash
of sun on grey granite*

*makes his notations
and raises his spyglass
to see him, and under
the afternoon fogrolls
he hazards all hazards
to move down for evening's
eating and spying.*

He (the spyee) Is
smelling the coming
 all afternoon
 exotic as summer
 in the midwinter;
needs to be seen with
a rich, lovely woman,

*takes her to dinner,
candlelight, firelight,
music for glancing
sideways and all ways
looking for spies
but not quite deciding
which one is his one,*

*while she is attentive
because he is wandering,
pats him and smooths him
watching reactions
testing his threshold
of not-self potential,
finds a hard core
obdurate, ringing,*

*the self that the spy seeks
coming and going
down from the day's look,
sunshine on granite,
into the candleflame
wavering, dying.*

*They are triangular
spy, man and woman
and every day's night
of their romancing
the woman's head droops
warmly and goldenly*

*trying to touch rock
with something molten,
and crown the granite
as only spies can.*

- Joan White

Habits

Long days grinding
 into seas
 Arthur legends boring
 in the line
 of an old bird's flight
 where
 it is a dirty feather
 against
 an orange sun.
 There will be calendars, suns,
 seas,
 islands,
 legends;
 a brightness
 the arc
 of your comb.

- A. Fredric Franklyn

The Burning Glass

There is a moment on which moments turn
 And radiate to and from it as a sun:
 So we concentrate with a glass to burn
 All the warm rainbows of the wide spectrum,

So kittens jump at twigs and catch a string
 To bring us proudly home the rats of hunting,
 And telescopes of all the earth at once
 Combine upon Mars near coincidence.

The long years of learning ancient tongues
 Compose themselves in buried cities when
 Are used three verbs, three nouns, an ampersand
 To read a cracked rosetta in the hand.

Under the kleig lights for a little space
 A whole life converges in a face,
 While I in dark go once more round the flame
 And all my tongues expound a single name.

- Ann Stanford

Isadora

Hallucinatory, like a theatrical twilight,
 is her passage. Everything
has to be danced; all the surreal
ironies and horrors; the poverty
which always pursues her; going to school
with leaking shoes and a hungry stomach;
 the fires; the earthquakes:
the trial by love, the death by water.

She dances through Russia, a bacchante of
 Revolution.
She dances in Athens: ' Here I shall open
my college for priestesses!' She dances
her pregnancies, she dances her passion:
"I enclose my lover as a sea over a bold swimmer!"

Everything danced!
her drowned children, suicide-lover.
 She floats across nations
on her scarves of twilight and shadow,
freed from corsets, sans les pointes
et les cinq positions,
her movements a threat, a subversion!

Pursued by a fugue of fire and water
she scatters herself on the winds of the world
until ambushed one day by a red scarf
 that hangs like a streak of blood
from her throat to the turning axle.

- William Pillin

Kaddish

Grant us therefore this
though our laughs are lost in the leaves
and our cries are muffled by winds
 though our days
advance and are spent like the waves
and darkness
covers us like a blanket of ashes

that we are here
 though our names are echoes on wind
that we are most reliably here
 a vast
presence a naked movement
whose very silence is empire

that even if you do not know us
 (the norms the numbers)
the stars
know us
 and the winds
and the earth of our passage
from darkness through daylight to darkness

grant us
that we are always
here
always
on time
never
by as much as a second
late being born
never
by a moment
cheating the time of our dying

that we are always
present that we are always
available

though our cries are muffled by winds

- William Pillin

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ramon Sepulveda

Prior to a stint in the South Pacific as a War II aerial gunner, Sepulveda learned the elemental facts of America as they can never be learned from books -- by getting hard hands, by being cut and bruised, by leading burros into the cactus ranges of the southwest in pursuit of that most durable of mirages, the big strike. He learned the cycles of fruit orchards, the quiet rhythms of ranch and farm.

Since then he has also encountered the grinding namelessness of the big city -- concrete, smog, one-eyed justice, and the bitter knowledge that the free land is all gone.

Lacking formal background in writing, he is groping towards a novel. His stories overlap, expand, sometimes spill formlessly over their confines. Like Lorca, like Hemingway, he is concerned with the elemental -- blood and sand, the lifelong hunt for the experience that defines a man. Heroic, romantic, perhaps obsolete alongside computer machines; but a writer who writes of what he knows can never go far wrong. He has a better-than-even chance of outlasting the machines.

CHORIS HOUSE

by Ramon Sepulveda

All four walls are closely packed with religious pictures set in frames of different sizes and conditions of care or carelessness. Almost every saint ever canonized is represented in this room, but appearing more often are the holy family, the Santo Niño de Atocha, the Virgin de Guadalupe, and San Cristobal. This evening a few flies avoid besmirching the pictures and some cling to the ceiling while others move along it listlessly.

A pot-bellied heater stands in one corner and beside it is a wooden box with thick blocks of dry cottonwood. On top of the heater sits a coffee can, less than half full with water on which rust forms a cinnamon-hue film. On the northwest wall a window is cut high, the glass cobwebbed, with the panes stained with adobe brick dust. Softened sunrays filter through yellowishly and cast a horizontal rectangle on the opposite wall, reflecting glassily from a picture of one of the many St. Christophers, then falling palely on an iron bedpost.

On the bed Chori lies with his legs crossed and out-stretched. His hands are folded restfully over his corrugated fat-rolled belly. And though his eyes are closed, the collapsed muscles around his mouth suck in the pleasure he feels in airing his nakedness. Apparently he is thinking of some pleasant things not very far in the past and this causes him to sigh and smack his mouth, and smile, too.

Against the wall, opposite him, is a bureau without a looking glass, a niche of Mary with a thick yellow candle in a deep ruby votive glass. Beside the

bureau leans an old Winchester thirty-thirty, a Mauser, a 420 and a 20 gauge double-barreled shotguns. Cartridges for two of the weapons lie in a shaving mug on the bureau. Most of the cartridges are oxidized green, and the shotgun shells badly frayed, so that only a desperate man will be careless enough to take a chance and fire them.

Outside a car stops. Chori blinks his eyes.

*The Catalina, I bet. Who else? She said she would come by this evening for the scraper:'

He rises when he hears the car pass the gate that leads into the driveway to the yard.

' This is good business.' Walks to the bureau and takes a set of teeth in a glass with water. Shakes the water off and puts the teeth inside his mouth. Blinks his eyes in the mirror with its backing partly chipped off. Opens the door that leads into the living room. ' Looks like their pickup.' Picks up the glasses from their case on the bureau and puts them on. ' It is the Catalina."

His hand automatically brushes fondly upwardly at his sagging scrotum. Then he closes the door, opens the one leading into the kitchen, and lies on the bed, smiling.

*That big-breasted Catalina' He sighs and crosses his legs again. 'That thick-legged Catalina.' Stirs his buttocks and thrusts his body up once, so that all his maleness lies in the groove of his legs. ' That I should have such luck.' Relaxes his body and sighs deeply. " Ay. It would be better than having to use the Merced later.' Listens for the sound of footsteps.

A car door slams and the man on the bed listens to footsteps along the hard-packed ground, then up the stone stairs, along the wooden porch, the leather heels tapping gayly but a bit overbearingly, too. Then the man hears the not-so-womanly knocking at the kitchen screen door.

'Anybody home?' Another knock, with slightly harsh overtones in it.

' Chori? Are you in there?'

She is looking in through the screen door now, he thinks. His eyes close but do not shut tightly.

She has her hands cupped on both sides of her face and is trying to look in through the dark brown-rusted screen. " Is that you in there?'

He turns on his side, toward the kitchen, and looks through the doorway. She is looking in toward the kitchen.

He tries to sound sleepy. ' Who is it out there?'

'I, Catalina.'

Que caray, hombre. She is not wearing her glasses. No wonder she can not see me.

'Catalina?'

' Yes.'

' Oh.' He rubs his eyes. To make me look like I was sleeping. ' Enter, Queiti. The door is unlocked.'

Catalina smiles. ' I'll wait out here, Chori."

She stands sideways and he sits on the edge of the bed and takes in her

body from foot to head. Of medium height, her features are thick but fairly handsome.

She seems somewhat thinner. He looks at her stout body in a black, tight-fitting dress. Heavy Mexican earrings. Rubs his eyes a bit more. Gets up. Then walks to the kitchen in a heavy spread-legged stumbling manner. Blinks as he opens the door.

Catalina turns and throws a hand quickly up to her mouth. 'Pero valgame, Chori!' She gets over being astonished quickly and laughs, throwing her head back, her wide red-painted lips spreading with laughter over large gold-inlaid coth. Out Hu does hoe Que ecuarassment, though he has brought about

a semi-stiffness. " Dispensa.

Catalina turns her face out toward the fields across the river.

*I'll be with you in a moment, Queiti. Well, what the rank does she expect, anyway? She's been coming here for a week. Tempting me. She never comes inside. But she comes to tease me, all right. The cabrona. I should strip her. Just to cure her of that ranking trick.

Catalina's face is slightly reddened. ' Sure. Go ahead.' She wipes tears from her eyes from laughing.

He starts toward the bedroom. ' Why don't you come in, Queiti?'

'No, gracias.' Viejo ranker, she thinks. What a way to receive visitors. He must have been preparing himself for my visit since noon. Probably swallowed half a dozen raw eggs. Que lastima. Well, he's had time to get himself worked up for almost a week.

'You can wait here in the kitchen?' He says it from the bedroom.

I can smell the kitchen from out here. "Sorry, lover' What a careless old man. " T'll just wait out here until you are presentable.'

He picks up his blue work shirt lying in a heap along with his trousers on the piece of floor rug.

*I didn't know you would be frightened, Queiti. You see, I know things." Most of the Ayala women let it loose when they have a chance, he thinks. Puts on his trousers.

* Nothing like what I saw a while ago frightens me, Chori. And what do you know anyway?' Catalina is not smiling now.

· I have seen you on the road to Juarez' He starts out.

Catalina stands near the kitchen steps. She watches two hens fighting over a piece of moldy bread. The crest of one of the hens is half pecked off by past fights.

'So you have, lover. And so have I seen you driving out toward the hills around Goldville? She watches him buttoning up his shirt out of the corner of her eye. ' Many times and before doña Matilde rested finally."

He stops at the mention of his wife.

A smile, just faintly tinged with malice, twitches at the ends of her wide thick-lipped mouth. 'I am very sorry' she looks him in the eye ' if I woke you from your dreaming.'

The Short is through tucking his shirt inside his trousers and then he makes

it a point to shove his hand deep down and fumble with his shirt tails, fixing bulges around his crotch. He leaves two buttons on his fly undone, showing dark curly matted hairs. He tries not to see that Catalina's eyes look down a few times. Maybe, he thinks, if she looks down there enough she'll then feel like leaving the teasing.

'I know some women who like to do something like that.' Catalina nods to the wil, I dadi ar to go and like tis he say. But you don't have to look either.'

'Oh, I don't scandalize. You know that, Chori. Anyway, I have a husband who satisfies all of my curiosity.'

Hijo, but is she big melon-breasted. 'Some satisfaction. Is that why you go to Juarez alone often?'

What a hot old son of the ranked one is this Chori. Still he has more need for it than most men I know, she thinks. My husband included. That fat-gutted worn-out cabron. 'My men cousins like to accompany their loving aunt. You're not jealous, are you, lover?'

'Cousins mug this.' The feather. 'Like you and I are cousins, ha.'

'Be nice or I won't call you lover anymore.' She walks out around the side of the building where the porch continues. 'I came for the scraper. That is, Neto wants it, if you are really through with it?' What a filthy porch. Expertly, she steps over and around chicken droppings splashed on the porch.

There is an iron bed with slack springs around the southside of the porch. 'Sit down, Cati.'

'Carajo.' She smiles widely. 'You never quit, do you?' Yet her eyes hold him back many miles and many years.

'With your permission, then.' He sits heavily and the springs sag like a hammock. 'You are the only one I let joke me the way you do, Cati.'

*I know, Chori. We are something alike. Maybe that is why I can't go for you. I don't like a man to get the best of me.'

'Neto already has.' His eyes rove up and down her bulging legs and pillowy breasts like a racer slithering up a tree after a shy mate.

'True, he got that.' She stands legs slightly apart, watching him with amused delight. 'I don't think he really knows how well he got it.' Her eyes now hold him off closer in years and miles. 'But that has never been truly the best part of me. Not permanently.'

'Then you are afraid?'

nobody wil want to go son a in bal ake pandri beline and. more?'

'I've always been this way. And I've always got it.'

'So I've heard.'

'You're the same way too, woman.'

'I'm in the change of life now.'

'You see. And has it diminished?'

'No.'

'Then you'll ride it out very well? Matilde rode it out badly, he thinks. One

year in the hospital for the crazies. That's how badly it went for her.

* I worry though. I'm afraid after it is over so will the other'

' So you prefer young men to fight your fear?'

*I like to talk to you, Chori. You haven't been with women for nothing.

But I do not like to talk to you for very long.' She winks without malice, only good comradeship. ' Where's the scraper?'

· Finished with it this noon.' His eyes will still not give up what he is thinking.

'Oh, no, Chori. Not today. Or in the future'

' Why not?'

' Because not.'

' Have you known me to talk, after?'

'No, and I understand you pay for it too.' And often make off with the silk. I wonder whom he'd give mine to? She feels like laughing aloud. Or whose he'd give to me?

*All pleasures cost, Cati.' His eyes stay transfixed on the groove between her legs. She is wearing a girdle of some kind. Look at the way it welts sometimes when she moves. Wonder what color of silk she's got on? They say she likes to wear black things underneath very much. Black is not her color. Now, white silk, that would make her look very nice. Or blue. I wonder if the Neto has ever known what he's got ? ' I am willing.'

' With me five will not do, Chori. Nor twenty for all night. I have to sleep with my husband all night. Keep the neighbors from talking, you know. But I would be interested in some acres.'

Almost instantly his eyes subdue all matters having to do with sex. His mind goes completely into another plane of thought. ' Haven't you enough land already?'

'Nobody ever has enough land or enough of anything, Chori. So you see how much alike we are?' She thinks of a phrase in English, then does a minor switch to fit it into a more understandable translation and says, 'You can't have your tortilla and eat it too.'

The Short laughs but he is not trying to resume his attempt to invigle her into bed anymore. ' Well, it would have been nice. I wonder how we would have looked together down around El Paso?' Sighs pitifully.

· Who will ever know, lover. A woman my age and with no more fear of the big swelling up every year wants younger men."

' You leave me suffering, Cati.' His eyes look wanly at her. ' Why can't you have some compassion?'

' Suffering because you wish. And anyway, whom are you kidding? What is holding you back from getting yourself a steady kind woman?' Maybe, she thinks, as dumb and uncomplaining as doña Matilde.

"They all want the acres?'

'Not all, Chori. Some only want sanctuary' She sees him stiffen a little at this. ' A roof over their heads. A sack of beans. Another of flour. And with that, and less sometimes, they are in their paradise.'

' I don't seek a wife. Relief is what I need."

* Then go relieve yourself across the bridge at Goldville. Neto goes there

sometimes. I don't know where he gets the money. You can be sure not from me. Though I don't mind if he goes there. I hear tell there is an Indian in one of the houses who makes men forget their wives."

You should be as talented as that feather, he thinks. 'I haven't gone there in a long time.' I wonder what kind of Indian she is? They say from Oklahoma.

'No. I guess you don't have to. Enough housewives willing around Goldville.' And just over the arroyo, too. she thinks. Bet he'll run there before the day is over. What pleasure it would give me to hear him howl. If you can't lead a man by his nose squeeze down on his manly stick. The cabrones.

His mind returns to her again. 'It could be so very nice, Cati? I'd buy her the silk, if she'd go with me. 'Now, Cati. They say this big woman squeezes in a sweet barbarity. Ay, ay, little mother. 'The two of us, Cati.' I might even go beyond the usual. "And nobody would ever know, Cati."

'No? Look 'she nods back of him 'opening the gate. You have another visitor.'

'What a time to visit a man.' The Short scowls angrily.

'Oh, don't get mad, Chori. He just saved you from exchanging a lot of acres for what I was going to give you."

'Some day you will pay, Catalina. You will pay dearly for this.'

'In all certainty. But then we must all pay. Some time.'

From its perch the hawk looks over the land below and around and sees the means of ending the day well are very sad. Through with appraising this area, it ruffles its wings and then swoops down.

Below, the man watching his reflection in the pool sees the hawk dart down, and looking up, the man follows the hawk zigzagging a flight path in and out of cottonwoods flanking both sides of the river.

Wings spanned out fully, the hawk glides flawlessly, almost skimming the surface of the water yet showing no interest in hunting it. In the irrigation dams and ditches and pools at the river's edge formed in the thick-rooted nooks of cottonwood trunks, the hawk sees minnows, mudsuckers, and some rainbow trout. In a brush patch along the east bank of the river a covey of quail down for the evening's drink sense his approach and remain unmoving. Then they feel the hawk's shadow pass swiftly over their cover and are so still they seem petrified as a museum exhibit.

A fifth mile downriver the hawk slants upward to a cottonwood with limbs broken off from weight, age, and disease. The tree is uglily split down its entire length by lightning. From the crown of the punished tree the hawk gets a fine view of most happenings below and its direct care-for-nothing eyes become greedy upon seeing chickens on the yard of the ranch before it.

The hawk considers launching an immediate attack. Then it discovers two men sitting on the porch.

*But I see you, son of your bad luck.' The Short spits tobacco juice twice his own length. 'And this cannon is loaded for you.' His hand feels the butt

of the shotgun leaning against the wall.

In the Venero even some of the young call this rancher el Chori. And sometimes, though not often to his face, el Chori Polainas. The first name is a Mexican corruption of the English short, and the second means puttees, for an affectation the Short once sported.

By choice the Short now lives alone in this four-room adobe ranch house, and depending on whom it irritates or barbs, the Chori is known for three major characteristics. They being thrift, a sense of satire called burlesco, and a preoccupation with other men's women.

"That carajo, the Short tells the visitor, 'has already robbed me of some chickens.'

'Pajaro bandido, eh?' The visitor watches the hawk admiringly. 'Valiant and daring.' He sees the hawk is perched safely out of shotgun range. 'Gavilan grande?

'Big bird, all right.' The Short glares blankly before him. 'And getting bigger at my expense, too.'

'You are spoiling him.' The corners of the visitor's eyes crinkle in a smile his mouth hardly reveals. 'El consentido.'

'Su madre. I'll consent him this.' The Short thuds his right hand, middle finger extended, into waiting halfclosed palm of his left. 'That he dare now.'

* Where there are chickens a hawk is like a man in those places where men are careless with their women.? With this the visitor glances sideways at the rancher.

Temporarily out-barbed, the rancher merely spits tobacco juice, by this the other knowing the Short does not enjoy the analogy.

'If he comes down,' the Short says, 'I entrust him to you. You that say you can hit an animal running or in flight.'

* In our time. Then not very often. Now we are getting old, Chori.'

The rancher ignores the reference to age, as the visitor expected.

'Get him and a chicken is yours.'

Boite, the visitor thinks. We struck much deeper than was meant, Bueno. Let us see what develops. 'Now it is worth the kidding.'

The Short shrugs. Between them they allow a certain leeway of joking.

'We will see what kind of shooter you are.' The Short wipes the side of his mouth where juice trickles. 'If the cabron dares to try and rob me before my proper eyes.'

Scattered about the entire yard, a flock of hens, several pullets among them, cackle smugly about their business of pecking at the hard ground. None of the roosters is aware of the hawk watching their harem, its stare selecting with the taste of a bird that knows whatever it lusts.

For a moment, the hawk has been forgotten. The visitor has been lending an attentive if somewhat skeptical ear to the Short, who, like most in his category, tells the visitor he is nearly bankrupt.

'Not enough of this.' The Short makes the sign with his hand which stands for finance: thumb and index finger forming a C. 'Yes, sir. The bank is in bad shape'

La Ilorona, the visitor thinks, and continues listening to the Short's lamentations of badly inroaded finances. The crying magnifies to a wail that, the visitor thinks, were I to see my way to breath I would lend this poor old viejo money. Por dios. He is breaking my heart.

"True," the Short admits at one point, "during the good years, I made some money. Plenty of beans, especially. But what of these past bad years? Oh, I wouldn't say that I am broke, exactly, understand. I have enough in Goldville to see me by yet."

Thank God for that, the visitor thinks. Then the visitor reminds himself to remind the Short of something. "Anyway, Chori, you are a man of property."

Immediately the visitor notices the Short's crying becomes only three-fourth's self-pitying. The visitor braces himself for what he knows is coming

For in gratitude in bringing him to face his abundant good luck, the Short finds a barb necessary in apologizing for the economic difference between them and says:

"When the government declared this territory opened for homesteading, your father could had had this land." And adds, unkindly: "So could your uncles. Everybody then had the same chance. But no. They became leadened. Here." The Short grabs vigorously at his crotch.

"Pues si," the visitor agrees lamely. Now, I can not guarantee you that grand bird sitting up there, he thinks. But I guess I deserve that as my share for the mistakes of my forefathers.

* Ah, bueno. The Short folds his hands across his belly, while the visitor smoulders without a means of immediate retaliation. His pride offended, the visitor watches the Short gazing fondly at what he can see of his property.

From the porch they can see part of the apple orchards on both sides of the river flat. A few peach, apricot, and plum trees, the thriving, water-gorging forest of cottonwoods whose robust health ranchers find disgusting, but whose combined shade horses and cattle welcome as haven during the dry heat of summer. Near the granary a large rubbish dump sprawls with cans, bottles, wires, automobile parts, papers, boxes, pans, pots, ashes, boards. Quite possible that several thousand years from now this will be uncovered as the archeological find of the century. Now everything lies rustically peaceful in the receding evening light.

"Good land," the visitor says, unenviously. His pride is again intact, and he is really glad he can speak without envy.

The Short shrugs deprecatingly. "Pases."

Pases, he says, the visitor thinks. One hundred and sixty acres. And just barely passes. What must God do to make this miserable man content?

"I worked like a brute for this land. No picnic." The last the Short says in English, because it gives him an additional sense of superiority over the visitor. An unfounded superiority because actually the visitor knows much more English but uses it only when dealing with Anglo-Saxons who do not understand Spanish. "You bet your life, fellow." Again in English.

"How not. Sure you have worked" But your woman, the visitor thinks, worked much harder. I believe that is what killed her ten years ago. In support of his indictment, the visitor looks at the Short's property.

Everything gone to hell. Where are the vegetable gardens she tended during the summers? There were flowers all around the house, too, when she was alive. It was nice to see all that green and color around the house. Even though inside it was a different thing.

Inside, the visitor recalls, it was of stark simplicity. And unlike the gardens, not unimaginatively landscaped, the interior of the house did not have the deceptive charm. Starting at the cupboard, where evaluation and therefore the severest judgment is passed when homey neighbors visit one another to discuss other neighbors. It looked like one of those model houses where people parade through and see only the display of furniture but no personality of anyone living in it. Now, the visitor sees, the frugality has not only been maintained as a monument to her memory, but like monuments unattended, further uncomplimented with filth.

Unless you happened to visit them during mealtimes, the visitor thinks, there was no evidence of food in the house. There was not even a saltshaker on the table. Nor pepper and sugar. I wonder if the Chori still keeps all the food locked up in that trunk in the little room?

Most window panes are shattered or broken, the exposures wadded with newspapers, yellowed and dusty, or partly covered with cardboard and slats from packing crates, the nails unremoved.

The corrugated tin roof on the outhouse is weighted down at the four corners with large stones. As if engaged by Don Quixote's overzealous lance, the weathered building tilts menacingly toward the road leading down to the orchards. Cracks gape indecently to permit dim observation from the outside.

I feel no privacy in there, the visitor thinks. Much better to conduct one's business out in the field. More privacy there. I do not desire to take anybody's picture with my backside. He nods his head. Reminds me of that joke about the bishop who went to the ranch.

From out of the outhouse's foundation, excrement has overflowed and is crusted hard by the sun and wind. The visitor shakes his head slightly.

What would it cost him to have another hole dug? It is all right to be economical, but that is too much. Just because it is in the ranches. The Chori is not the only one. Half of the escusados in this Venero are in the same condition. No pig would use them if it had to.

The visitor looks at his clothes. They are humble, but very neat. He is proud of his neatness and his clean habits. It is the only wealth he has. That and his sense of honesty.

* I miss her.' The Short sighs as if his bereavement were new and truly felt. The visitor nods in a social gesture. 'And how not, man.'

'You do not live thirty years with a woman and not miss her. The Short rubs his eyes where tears have appropriately responded to engage the visitor's sympathy.

Why should he act for me? the visitor thinks. I am in no position to do him any good favors. 'Thirty years is a long time.' I wonder how it was with them at the very beginning? 'I would miss my woman if God would take her.'

* At night it is worse. Then I think of all the things we did together to keep this ranch.

Sure he misses her, the visitor thinks. I have often wondered how she must have responded to him in bed. However it must have been, of course he misses that. I know I would miss mi vieja for that and we have not been as insistent as it was with us during our first years of marriage. Strange how like everything else that becomes just another habit. You wake up one day and find that it is nothing more than a necessary convenience. And whose fault is it? You love your children and are fond of your wife, but with the two of you alone lying in bed at night it's not the same. It is like drinking when you do not feel like drinking or getting drunk. And it does the same thing to you. You become saddened and then angry.

The Short sighs. 'I miss Matilde very much.' Leans over and rests his fore-arms folded across his lap.

"Doña Matilde was a good woman." The visitor is not sure he means good. I do not think doña Matilde suspected the Chori of enamouring other men's women. She seemed too trusting to imagine what he did in la plaza. But she could have thought something when they lay together in bed and had one another. I am very sure a woman can tell that. I know mine can tell when I return from Goldville. She can tell I have been across the bridge at the houses there. Never can fool her about that. As soon as we lie together in bed she can tell all right. Some men I guess are betrayed by the dark and I am one of them.

'Te gusto?' is what she asks. 'Was she like it was with us in the old days?'

It is then I know the dark has betrayed me to her. 'What are you talking about, woman?' I say.

* I can tell,' she says.

I turn my back to her. 'You imagine, I say.

'Yes. I can imagine, she says. 'Esta bien. I do not mind!

'No?' I say. It disturbs me she is not jealous. Or angry.

'Since it can not be like it used to, I do not mind, she says.

I make an attempt to appear jealous. 'Maybe you have some one, eh?'

She laughs softly in the darkness of our room. The door is locked and one of our children sleeps in his small bed near ours. The other seven children are sleeping in other rooms in the house. 'A woman with eight sons and daughters?' she says. 'What man would want to?'

I turn face upward. I remember we live in Santucho and most of the time I am away in the mountains cutting wood for sale. I say: * You look well!

She is a small woman, but has not put on much weight since we were married. When she goes to church on Sunday she does not look as bad as some women her age.

· Well, she says, 'was sixteen years ago!'

I turn toward her. We are not touching but I feel the heat of her body, though. Then I touch her.

She stiffens to my touch, then relaxes after a while.

'You did not have enough across the bridge?' She has said it and it is true. She knows it.

' Do not speak of such things, I say. Her hand rubs along the hairs in back of my neck. I begin tugging at her clothes. She is very modest about her body, even in bed.

'Wait, she says. Then: ' Now!

After a while I roll back on my back. It is the second time in a day and it tires me. I think it is the thinking about it for such lengths of time that tires me most when it does happen.

' Are you all right?' I ask her alter.

' Yes. And with you?'

I know she wants to talk. But I feel sleepy, It is always like that now.

' Bien,' I say. ' I am well!

' You have improved, she says. ' It lasts a little longer now.'

" Seems the same to me, I say.

' No it is not. It lasts longer.' She sighs. ' It is better now. If we only had that Which we once had, it would be muy lindo. Very very lovely?

I turn my back to her. I feel her hand toying softly with my ear. I try to think for a while, then I become sleepy. She makes little soft sounds, like humming, and embraces me from behind. The youngest wakes up restless and she has to get up. I fall asleep. That is the way it usually is with us now.

Tears have ceased to flow from the Short's eyes. 'How much Matilde suffered the last few years." Looks at the cement floor.

'Yes? Poor old woman, the visitor thinks. 'It was hard for doña Matilde."

Crippled with the arthritis. Joints badly swollen, the fingers curled up like the claws of that bird up there gripping onto the limb.

"The cancer was worse of all,' the Short says.

'Bad business, that cancer.' In the stomach, that is where the cancer ate her up. Decomposed her insides. Caray, that is an ugly disease. Sometimes when the Chori drinks he cries in remembering how much she suffered. But she endured it. That woman did. Resigned herself and endured it. The only thing that disturbed her was the lack of rain, fear of frost, and the inescapable necessity of having to spend a cent for the doctors. Economize and welcome the death. The economy is what made her ill, I think. Eating badly and doing more than a mans work.

"The doctors is what cost,' the Short says. " Taking her to see this and that one. Even going to Los Angeles. Nothing could be done, they said. Still they charged.

"The von Trill died of cancer, didn't she?'

* No. Diabetes. Diabetes is what she died of. That is a terrible disease too, I am told.'

' Yes, they say.'

Thinking of cancer and diabetes fills them both with a dread. They remain quietly thinking of the ways in which one can die.

' The life is worth nothing, hombre,' the Short says.

"True,' the visitor says. " Very delicate.'

The hawk keeps down his impatience and watches the two men on the porch with a disrespect that goes beyond insolence. It estimates the distance

between it and the men and the targets. Yet the hawk is fully sure of itself. Surer than many in the narrow valley know of self-confidence. Hungry, too. Perhaps having gone through more hungry times than anyone along the river. Still now the bird is sure before the evening passes a meal is guaranteed.

The thirty years the Short and doña Matilde were married they lived frugally, letting go a dollar only because there was no other way, bawling hard times to any not knowing them better. The lean days of their years found the same fare at table, as the visitor remembers: frijoles, boiled potatoes, un-buttered never fried, lard classified by them as a luxury, and during the summers what vegetables could not be sold from the gardens.

Doña Matilde, the visitor thinks, canned much from the gardens. And she took care of them by herself. The one near the house and another down by the river. But if one happened to stay for meals one never saw any greens or tasted of the canned preserves and jams. There was not even any chile. Without chile food has no taste.

And except when someone, such as the present visitor, who is so well adjusted to his poverty he can be generous with any slight turn of luck, gave them a hunk of venison during the hunting season, meat never graced their table.

Any chicken they raised first cackled its last due to age or disease before being committed to the oven or the frying pan. They gave misery a new name.

Ah, but how about when the Chori rode into Goldville with fruit and vegetables to sell, eh? Many times I would encounter him in the restaurant of the Chinaman.

'How well you assist yourself, Chori' I would nod to his plate where he had a thick steak.

'And why not?' he would say, curtly, in his burlesco way. 'When a man can afford it.'

I knew he said that for me to chew on because all I could afford then was a cup of coffee and a piece of pie, sometimes. Then I was with the three C's and we were constructing the dam at the Lane Wolf Canyon. I had nothing to do directly with the construction of it. Except to load sand and gravel onto trucks. I was in a shovel gang.

'And the señora? The Mrs. shopping in town?' I would ask him every time and enjoy asking him for lowering me the way he did.

'Back home, hombre, he would say. 'Home. Where wives belong?

Of course doña Matilde was home. She was always home. Eating unfried beans.

Away from home not only did the Short eat solidly but on his door-to-door produce rounds he came in business contact with many a man's wife and, with patience, to learn of excellent opportunities.

Chances which no timid mouse can ever say the Chori has passed up in his life, the visitor thinks.

Rendezvous were arranged while the Short handed (at slightly reduced prices) a bushel of apples or a box of corn or a watermelon or tomatoes or those small yellow-green chile peppers which if his love ate enough of might

cause her a torsion and in the elimination leave her colon with a burning throbbing sensation.

Some of the ladies were so reluctant, or faithful, the Short had to stretch his patience for years, timing his proposals exactly. For he went about it cautiously, gathering his information about wayward husbands, reading between conversations with women about their men's indifference in bed. sn that his mind contained a file of nearly every household on his route.

According to the Catalina the Chori has been after her for years, the visitor thinks.

But once the Short and his lady came to an agreement, the pickup point took place while she walked down some street where no one knew her. This was preferably in the Anglo-Saxon section of town. The final surrender took place on some of the several rut-covered roads in the scrub-oak dotted hills around Goldville. The Short was never at a loss in knowing plenty of lonely areas where neither cowboys nor prospectors might stumble upon them. Though in some instances he was well known as a good acquaintance of the house and thought harmless by the husband, the visitor thinks. The Short, following the daring suggestion of his conquests, accommodated them in their own bedrooms.

In spite of such favors offered free, the Short always paid.

The same rates as when there being no other way, the visitor thinks, he has to go to the girls across the bridge at Goldville.

Through the years the Short has held, even though the non-professionals do it in the name of art, he pays to keep them from claiming abuse. 'Especially,' he claims, 'if later the friendship does not go well.'

But the Catalina would go with the Chori only if he signed a few acres in her name.

In women, the Short admires and prefers bulk. Since like some men of the Race a degree of plumpness is desirable. Thus the Short, though under pressure of needing relief is not unreasonably choosy, ruts toward the breasty, hippy and thick-legged. Since youth, beauty to him has been of little importance.

'The necessity, hombre,' he says irritably. "A man is a fool to be particula when the necessity seeks satisfaction.

They also say the Catalina can exhaust a man before the night is through the visitor thinks. That is what they say.

As a hunter of experience the hawk knows when all else has failed here it? always a good place to make up for days of petty pickings.

St. Christopher, the saint of travelers, is a foot above the head of the Shor. The frame leans angularly, the glass is broken, and the paper is streaked? yellow from water dripping down from a rusty nail, and the picture is finely threaded with spider webs, all is sprayed with dust. Everywhere the porch cement floor is splashed with yellow-brown tobacco juice, spat since the house was built and splattered with old and recent chicken droppings. Parked with spitting range is last year's model pickup truck.

That truck is an instrument of high esteem with this Chori, the visitor

thinks. And one thing about him: the pickup is always full of gas. Seldom does he go out without carrying a blanket in the cab and a tarpaulin in the rear. The eyes of the visitor barely crinkle with a smile. The hills around Goldville are not beds of satin. And under the tarpaulin is a big pillow to elevate under buttocks.

'How is the Placido?' All evening I have been trying to stir him to his personal fool and Merced, the visitor thinks. 'Have seen little of him these past months.'

'Didn't you stop by there on your way down here?'

'His flicha was parked on the yard,' the visitor says. 'And I thought he might be home too. Since I wanted to talk to him of some matters.'

'Was no one there?'

He means the Merced, the visitor thinks. 'Just Merced. Said something about Placido telling her he was going to see the Jeff. About a fence or something like that. You know how that woman talks little.'

The visitor sees the Short says nothing to all this. Clearly, he thinks, the Chori will not be pulled into a light that may betray him. But what does he guard? Nearly all the Venero knows the story. Then: * They say you two went to Juarez last Sunday?'

'Oh, you heard, eh? Well, it is true.' By this answer the visitor gathers it is not altogether an unpleasant subject. 'Just for a visit, tu sabes.' Spits.

'Distraction is a good thing.' The visitor begins to roll himself a cigarette. The Short watches him with some disdain, having some of the non-smoker's dislike of smelling burning tobacco, yet tolerating the ripe excremental scent wafting by the porch from the outhouse.

'Yes. But distraction costs.' The Short feels like confiding man-to-man. Or man-to-mouse, since he does not think the visitor much of a chaser. 'Went to the barrio for women. You know where that section is?'

'How not.' The visitor, who is not so much of a mouse, thinks: Some of the girls there know more about the Venero than I.

'You should have come with us, hombre.'

'I have been with the business of the wood.'

* A man has to work.' The Short spits.

'No funds, anyway.' The visitor is again on the defense.

The Short shrugs, as if to tell the visitor poverty is his own bad luck.

'Placido must have found buried treasure.' The visitor does not reveal his pride has again been stabbed. "A trip down there, doing what you two must have done, costs."

'I'll say it costs.' The Short shakes his head and sprays a bedrock around the rosebushes. 'You know what that lazy did? Came last Saturday and talked le about this and that down there. Finally he animated me to go.'

* Then he must have had some money for the trip?'

'Altogether about ten dollars. I don't know where he got them but he had nem. Then once down there everything came out of my pocket. Paid for all. Uh, he worked it to me very well, hombre. Food, some drinks, and you know now he can guzzle the tequila.'

'Placido can drink all right.' That man can drink like the sand down by

San Rafael. " And he can hold it."

* And, of course, I also paid for the visit to the women.' The Short tugs at his crotch, enjoying the feel of his own heavy restiveness.

Thinking of the Merced, the visitor thinks, is getting to him.

· Well, I should have known better,' the Short says.

Thus he always destroys the fun he has, the visitor thinks and says, In the family,' anticipating the Short's reply.

'Family this, que" The Short doubles both fists and pulls down vigorously against his crotch in the gesture of copulation. 'Placido,' he says hastily and leans forward and irritably squirts one of the upright posts. * All his life he has been worthless. Remember when he lived with us?'

' Yes. During the Depression."

' He and Merced. They had no family then.' When he says this the Short looks sideways, toward the mesas where a lone gelding nibbles at grass tufts. 'Nine years they lived here. And during that time Placido worked little. Just went through the motions. Many times I wanted to tell him to leave. As a favor. But doña Matilde, the Placido being her nephew, kept talking me out of it. You can imagine how much pleasure I felt when he finally left."

' I can believe it.' But, the visitor thinks, I know this story differently.

'That bigballed. Lazier than the legs that carry him. Couldn't even pay for his women.'

'He is slow.' Not really lazy like the Chori says, the visitor thinks. Not when he worked in this ranch. Lazy now. But then he worked like never in his life. The Chori is not fair at all. Of course, I know why he says that of Placido now.

' Slow you say.' The Short looks at the visitor with indignation, in justifying his comparisons. "That guy ain't worth a goddam,' he says in English.

The hawk listens to the murmuring of the men reaching up to it. Unhurriedly it studies the targets cackling down below, and gradually narrows down prospect by prospect. A hawk has to consider so many things before a raid.

Of much strength and endurance then, the visitor thinks, it was no problem for the Chori to load Placido with all the labor involved in keeping this ranch in order. Even for one as carelessly managed as this. Thus Placido collected his inheritance early.

He pruned the fruit trees. Cleaned out the irrigation ditches behind plough-horse and scraper, ax, shovel, and pick. Rebuilt irrigation dams torn down by flashfloods. Plowed the river flats and mesa temporals. Then sowed corn, beans, and alfalfa. Planted chile and tomatoes. Then, trouser legs rolled up, took care of the irrigation, whether the time agreed upon by all ranchers up-river fell on days or nights. Removed all rocks and boulders from the mesas down to a depth of four feet, in preparation for the temporal sowing of pinto beans and yellow corn. Mended fences, in this expected by the Chori to accomplish miracles when the barbed wire was rusty, the posts rotted. Placido gathered in all crops and stored them and before the winter showed signs of coming, hitched a horse to the wagon and brought down from the mesas

enough wood to warm the Chori and doña Matilde during the high snows and windy cold outside. And while both of them were warm and comfortable in this house, Placido, Merced, and the children that came later, huddled around a small stove and still felt the cold penetrating in through the thin slats of the granary.

Of course Placido did not work alone. For company he had the never reneging assistance of his aunt. And quite often, though less often, the fragile help of Merced.

And while the tumultuous backbreaking activity of these three people was changing and improving the face of the ranch, the Short was undergoing a transformation that perhaps he had dreamed of but never thought he would actually see take place.

The Short, purely in his rightful supervisory capacity, made token appearances in the field. He wore gabardine trousers, shirts, and jackets. All tailored. Those were opulent ranching days. Plenty of snow and water in the Road-runner. Most noticeably the Short began wearing puttees. The Race quickly used that affectation to add his second nickname. The leather of the puttees gleamed with a high polish put there by doña Matilde and Merced.

One could shave by the mirror of those puttees, the visitor thinks. With the gabardines, the Chori wore a black tie held to the shirt front by a clasp they said was designed by a jeweler in Juarez. He also wore a thick gold ring with a large stone some said was a diamond but don Miguel de la Sierra who knows something about stones told me it was a zircon. Across his chest you could see a watch chain like those owned by railroad people.

When Cardenas became president of Mexico, the Short copied the general's mustache, and around the ranch he assumed a severe military face. Finally, topping off his conception of patron and highpowered rancher, he wore a Stetson of conservative width and height, set on his head at a dignified angle. Rakish, too, because on his produce-selling rounds, eating thick steaks in the Chinaman's restaurant he developed friendships with women that to this day hold good.

For the people under his roof there were no days off, the visitor thinks. Not even when God so decreed by sending excuses of snow and rainstorms. Work could always be found inside the barn granaries or the house.

Though they were devout Catholics, there was no attendance of Sunday mass in Temporal.

The Chori said since priests said God existed everywhere, he saw no reason why his peones should go looking for Him outside the ranch.

hour or two late, while Placido and his aunt went to the fields before dawn was fully established.

True, the visitor thinks, Placido and Merced had their own space set aside for their use. Which was less than one third of a granary. The floor was of dirt and during winter they had the same ventilation they had in summer. The Chori kept putting off the repairs because he always said they would tear the granary down and build it up bigger and better.

To Merced fell the entire cooking and upkeep of both houses.

below and finally selects one which will have enough meat, yet will be easy to lift off the ground.

· You are worse than a slave here, lover, Catalina told Placido. 'Look at you, querido. Patched like a quilt. Not even a pair of decent shoes to work in. Ay, Papacito,' Catalina called lover those men she hoped to flatter or get something out of without giving much of herself, or used it on fools for whom she felt sometimes sorry. But she never used the word on her real lovers. She called them sonny. The moment she stopped calling then sonny she was through with them and used other names hitting at their pride. 'Why, plainly, lover, you look like a scarecrow.'

Placido looked at his frayed patched clothes, the weather-dried worn second-hand shoes, held together by his ingenious sewing and tacking of rubber tire soles, a shreaded topless grass sombrero, brim flopping in the breeze like airplane wings. He looked at his skin that was baked to the color of crisply fried pinto beans, at the mud splashed on his clothes from irrigating, crossing the river with bushels of potatoes, apples, corn, chile, at his shaggy hair that had not been clipped that month by Merced because somehow the Short had not allowed her much free time. Placido saw all this that Catalina brought to his attention and he agreed she had no argument from him.

* And all this time, lover,' Catalina went on brutally, smug with an opportunity to enlighten, not needing the alcohol to make her fearless in speaking frankly of those things which she knew or thought she knew. 'All this time, querido, who has been enjoying the --' she was going to use the big swear word but thought the situation needed more delicacy sweat off your brow? Tell me, lover. Who? You and I know who. Isn't he the same one who eats the thick steaks in the restaurant of the Chinaman? That is who'

'Perhaps.' Placido moved restlessly, humbly dubious. He was not bothered one way or another by Catalina's use of the term lover. She is that way, he thought. It means nothing. 'Perhaps it is so.'

'How perhaps? My god.' Catalina gave a glance up to the sky, as if asking for a bolt of truth to pierce Placido. 'All you need do is walk down to the nearest pool and look at your reflection. Catalina assumed the air of one offended by the apathy in Placido's eyes. Do you doubt what I tell you, lover? You that have known me since we both clung to our mothers' aprons? Is what I tell you not the naked truth?'

'No Catalina.' Placido felt a certain embarrassment that such things should be implied of his protector. "This that you say is very serious. I have not seen this of which you speak, señora."

Lach' take me, Catalina thinks. 'Of course you have not seen it, querido,' she said. 'And how could you, hombre, when you have never left this ranch not even for a remedy.' Catalina looked hard, shrewdly as she leaned toward Placido and placed a hand on his sweat dampened shirt, feeling the broad bull-strong shoulder. 'Eating the thick steaks and having the fun.' This she whispered in her best bedroom manner, comradely concerned. * And I have seen both, querido,' said authoratively. "The both things,' forking out two emphatic fingers before his face, 'I have seen with this' forefinger touching

below one eye. 'Not from loose-tongued women hanging out the wash. Believe me, lover. But with this' again touching below the eye. "As the sky is above us, querido, believe this that I tell you.'

· Well, I do not doubt you, Catalina.' Placido was confused with all that was turning a hard day of work into a playground of whispering dark meanness. · But still, I do not know. Have you seen this truly, Catalina?' That the Short should be doing anything in town but with matters pertaining to the ranch had never even vaguely occurred to Placido. With your own eyes you have seen these things?'

eternily ny sat t del othes a lie she looked blade straigh ink eye. rais

is not a jest to pass the time of day.'

Actually, Catalina's information had reached her not by waves of rumors, but most of it she had overheard discussed by her husband, Neto, and some of the boarders they had at that time. Yet she was so sure of Placido's stupidity she could have claimed first-hand observation of the Nativity and been certain Placido would believe her.

'This is plenty serious, querido.'

It is more serious, Placido thought, if it is not true. 'But would he do that to my aunt?' he asked incredulously.

"To your aunt and to you, hombre.' Catalina was impatient to get her implications through Placido's slow thinking. How closed of head is this stupid man my God, she thought. The sharpest wedge could not penetrate his wooden head.

'But she is the one who has really made this ranch,' he said. 'Look at her over there by the house. Working on the garden. Her day hardly ends and she begins anew.'

Ay, what a stupid, Catalina thought. 'Listen, lover, she is his wife. She is not happy unless she is working hard for her man. That is the kind of woman she is. A sack of beans, another of flour, and she is contented with the world. Hombre, you are married. You and I know that is all any woman really wants from men.' But not Catalina, she thought. * A little security and everything is lovely.'

'Well, maybe so, he said. 'But still, who knows.'

* Anyway, you miss the point, lover.' Like talking to a donkey, Catalina thought. "The main point is that you yourself are being had. And excuse the frankness. Awake, man. This is not a thing of gossip I tell you. By my mother who is in heaven.'

Placido scratched the nape of his neck. The sun was close and hot and he was sweating. 'I do not care about myself, Catalina.' The long hair matted with dirt and dust from nearly a month of not washing made his skin itch. 'You know that. For I am grateful for having a roof over our heads. Merced is happy here. And the children like to splash in the pools in the river when a day's work is done.'

Catalina smiled and shook her head a little in wonderment at Placido's naiveness. At the same time she was not lulled too much by his docile nature. Sometimes the docile rebel, and things get out of hand, she thought. It is better

not to clarify some rumors about concerning the Chori and Merced. But any fool can see those three kids of which this fool speaks so proudly are from his great protector. Still sooner or later I'm going to get at that Chori. He thinks he can out do with the women what I can do with any man. I'm going to make him see just what a great gift I have here and here and here. That the Chori take care. Because I may still get all of this. Glanced about ranch. And all by teasing and nothing more.

' Yes, Catalina, we are grateful. But still,' he said, ' to do that to my aunt.' Placido shook his head as if stunned.

* I understand all that about being grateful.' She was going to say something about having lived in other people's property, but thought better of it because it had never been true. ' But, lover, there is a difference in being grateful and your benefactor taking advantage of it. Not so, querido?'

' Yes, I guess so.'

The fool is about to see some light, she thought.

* And you swear he is doing the things you say while my aunt kills herself in the fields?'

' In confidence, remember.' She said it hastily. Like all friends with such momentous revelations, Catalina sought complete anonymity in case of violence. * From one who esteems you, Placido. Between you and me and the One up there.' Catalina turned her eyes piously heavenward.

"Do not have any care,' he said. ' You will not be implicated."

' Well, there is no need to mention who has told you the truth, my lover.' She sought positive anonymity insurance. * I can back up what I say. Always I sustain the point. But I advise you to take time and look into the matter. Then it will be clear to you."

' Yes,' he said determinedly. ' I must inform myself."

Catalina passed the bottle to Placido to help him swallow the shock of her tidings. "To your health, doña Catalina.' He said this in his simple always polite, overhumble way.

"Many thanks, lover. To your health also.' And, she thought, to your education, fool.

· But to do that to my aunt.' He said it more in thought than to her. ' What barbarity."

' Oh, yes, lover.' Catalina pretended to be moved by the injustice of it all. ' Very barbarous.'

Days later, after Catalina had implanted the insidious seed of distrust in Placido's head, the seed struggling therein to blossom into some sort of gracious censure. Placido made his decision.

I understand, the visitor thinks, Placido waited until the Chori left for Goldville with the pickup loaded with produce.

Without broadcasting his intentions to doña Matilde and Merced, Placido stopped the mailcarrier, who was his brother.

" A ride to Santucho, hermano?' Trino said. · Sure, brother. No, not in back. Here. Climb up here where we can talk on the way.'

When they got into Santucho and Trino parked the pickup before the post

office, 'Look, mano,' he said. 'There's the Bear. Maybe he's going into Goldville.'

'Your luck is good, Placido, the Bear said.

'I believe it, Victorio. And very kind of you.'

'Nothing, man. Glad to be of service.'

The Bear drove a wrecker. 'I will be in town until the heat goes down some. If you wish to ride back with me.'

* Well, I am grateful to you, Victorio. But I do not know whether my business will be brief here or somewhat prolonged. Better not wait for me. Many thanks, in any manner.'

The Bear nodded. He was a man of few words. But a very good listener. Placido was grateful both to the Bear and to Trino for not having been either astonished in seeing him out of the ranch or asking embarrassing questions.

'Well, would you accompany me across the bridge for a few?' the Bear said after they parked by the high cement sidewalks of the town. 'They sell it there and it is not so bad. Better than some that is made up in the ridges of the Blue.'

'Do not be offended, Victorio. There are some urgent things I must attend to here. Otherwise, you know me. Not one bit proud.'

'I comprehend, hombre.'

Placido watched the Bear walk down toward the bridge. Then he stationed himself across from the Chinaman's restaurant.

Around noon the Short obliged Placido by strutting importantly into the restaurant. Cigar smoke trailed arrogantly behind the Short. Placido did not follow and accost him for eating well while doña Matilde and they worked in the fields until nearly dropping and ate unfried beans and unsalted biscuits. Placido stood leaning in the shadowed portals of the buildings, without inflamed emotions. In fact his manner was more like that of a private investigator for an insurance company coolly checking a case where the double indemnity is high.

And hour later the Short calmly strolled out of the Chinaman's, picking his teeth, got into the pickup with still part of the produce unsold, and drove leisurely along a side street.

Placido followed on foot, staying out of sight, and, luck on his part, out-guessing each turn the truck made.

On a quiet street, in the American section of the town, Placido saw the pickup slow down. A woman stepped out of the shade of a cottonwood and climbed in. Immediately the truck increased speed. Placido watched it turn on a road going into the hills.

I remember it was a very hot day, the visitor thinks. Somebody saw Placido on his way to Goldville and the news returned rapidly to the Venero. It was no picnic shoveling gravel and sand into those Three-C trucks. They also said in camp that evening the Bear did not come out from one of the houses until the sun was well down.

On that summer day Placido walked fast and hard because he aimed by shortcuts to gain high ground. It would have escaped his attention but as he watched carefully walking along one of the ridges he saw a metallic reflection.

In another quarter hour he worked around and behind the clump of oaks where the truck was parked.

On the ground beside the truck a tarpaulin and a blanket were stretched out. The Short and somebody's wife were doing something which Placido and Merced did only at night, Then not too frequently. For Merced usually claimed fatigue of a mysterious nature.

· Ingrate. While my aunt Matilde kills herself,' was all Placido said under his furious breath.

Hiking back cross-country fourteen miles, it took Placido some time to get to the ranch. By then it was nearly dark.

The Short and the two women were all nearly hysterical about Placido's unprecedented absence.

'Where have you been all day, hombre?' The Short sounded very annoyed.

· About.' Placido's voice was as usual. 'Arranging matters.'

'Matters?' It seemed absurd to the Short that Placido could arrange anything without being guided all the way. 'What matters?'

· Personal,' Placido said calmly.

'So. What kind of personal matters were you arranging?' The tone of ridicule was in the Short's question.

Soon he will begin spurring my ribs and then laugh in my face, Placido thought. Other times. But not now. And never again.

'Well, then. Tell us about these matters that took an entire day to fool with. Don't you know you deserted the fields? What do you think I have you here for? To go about arranging high finance?' The Short snorted. 'That is all that was needed.'

Placido ignored the scorn. *I have something to say, señor.' He said it still calmly. 'If I may.' He nodded first at the Short, then toward his aunt. 'To both.'

Merced was the only one who vaguely felt Placido had attained suddenly something which his manhood needed badly. She held her breath.

'Well, then.' Plainly the Short was in a bad humor. 'What is it man?' He rocked himself in his special chair, puffing steadily on the cigar, spitting chewed off bits in his displeasure. 'Speak, hombre.'

'I have talked with Catalina.'

'So what then?'

* As you two know the property next to this is idle.' Placido cleared his throat. It felt dry from walking in the heat and all the climbing. 'After we talked it over it was agreed I could live there.'

There was no doubt, even in the darkness of that August night, the others had received what Placido said with almost total shock. Placido could imagine seeing the Short's thick eyebrows come together irascibly, his aunt look wide-eyed and say Santo Niño, her lips barely moving, and Merced's mouth become baby slack.

It was less difficult to say it than I thought. 'Naturally,' Placido said, 'I realize this is the time of year when you can use all the assistance in picking the crop.' I chose the right time to inform him. If I had waited until the ranch work is over for the year he might very easily throw us out. And I need some

time in which to prepare for the winter with plenty of wood. I hate to leave this ranch. Sometimes I feel like I almost own it.

The Short spat. 'Naturally.' He grunted and stopped rocking.

· We, Merced and I, are grateful eternally for all you two have done these past nine years.' Placido was speaking more toward his aunt. 'We will stay until the crop is picked.' Then to the Short: 'If you wish our help.' Only Placido noticed he had not used señor in his address to the Short.

'And how not, hombre.' The Short was now in less bad humor, but still letting Placido know he was not the loser. 'But I don't see why you, Merced, and the kids should leave. You know how the Catalina is. Difficult and inconsiderate.'

· Nephew, have you been happy here?' doña Matilde asked.

That coming from his aunt caught Placido off. She had addressed him in the polite Usted, a form of address which in his memory neither of them had ever honored him with. Not even in joke, he thought. 'Yes, aunt Matilde. Very happy.' He smiled in the kind safety of the night. 'Have we not, Merced?'

'Oh, yes, yes.' Merced said it a bit hastily.

The Short spat. Placido detected no anger in it. Ingrate, he thought. To do that to my aunt.

After Placido and Merced went to bed, the visitor thinks, they say the Chori and doña Matilde stayed up half the night talking about the future.

'I must see Catalina,' the Short told his wife.

The next morning the Short got up earlier than the others and left without having his coffee or doing things with Merced after the other two had gone to the fields.

'I need a talented man for that place, lover.' Catalina wore a houserobe and carried a cup of coffee from which she sipped. 'You have seen how run-down it is. Johnson grass all over the temporals, broken fences, and I don't know what else. They say Placido is very good for straightening up a dump. I am sorry for doing this to you, querido Chori. But what will people say if I do not take care of my properties, eh?'

'You don't care one rank what people say. What is it you wish?'

'Well, then, my Short. The situation is this: I need that blade of land Marquez is renting from you that leads down to the river from the pastures across the road.'

* But you have no animals, Cati. And Marquez has to get his down some way.'

* Let Marquez worry about that. I intend to put some animals in my pasture there'

· I can rent it to you?'

*I want to buy it. Sign that strip over to me and you can have your peon. You keep your peon and your peon's wife, too. You see, I try to be just. How about it?'

'You deal hard, Cati. Like your father Casimiro.'

'The strip or the peones. Which is it, Chori?'

'We'll, talk about it, Cati. I'll be back.'

*ter the hort not, ana Catalina went back to bed, her companion said:

* who was that ranker disturbing the peace out here?'

* A very little man who has not known his size yet."

' Do you think he suspected I was here instead of Neto?'

· No. He was too preoccupied with his own smallness. But you better leave before full light. Neto may come down from his distilleries in the Killer Krugg?

' Who's afraid of your ox. Man to man that ranker's nothing to me.'

'Don't be a fool. I don't wish to be the woman in any new tragic ballad.

Now, sonny. Once more. Before full light."

Toward the end of the fall, Catalina happened to be passing through the Short's land. As if planned by her, she found Placido alone. This time Catalina had no bottle. Most of the secret distilleries had been raided and destroyed and the high proof was hard to come by. Then very expensive when available. After exchanging greetings and other small talk, Catalina nibbled down to the core of the apple.

* Well, and was not I correct? Did you go and see for yourself how the patron kills himself in the fields of pleasure?'

*I know nothing of what you say, doña Catalina.' Placido looked levelly into her eyes.

'No?' For a moment Catalina was at a loss for words. ' Come now, Placido. You are joking me. Sure you know what I mean."

· Well, no, señora Placido spoke softly, politely. *I said I know nothing.'

'You know nothing,' Catalina mimicked. 'Oh, sure. He knows nothing.

Then tell me, big man. Tell me why you are moving next door? You and I know it makes no real difference to me if the weeds and grass are cut on that property. Or the fences mended. I just told you that at first. The house is just a little bit better than that granary you live in now."

'You have changed your mind, doña Catalina?'

* No, Placido. Live there. If ambition strikes you and you feel like fixing the place here and there, it's up to you. To be frank with you right now: I cannot guarantee that it will be your home forever. But at the present no one is using it. And, well, other things occupy me, and farming is rather dirty, you know. The soil is bad for the skin. Understand? And the sun. Well, one does not need a tan, does one?' Catalina giggled, glanced first at her skin and looked at Placido's, which was reddish brown from the many suns baking it.

· Doña Catalina, we will try to take as good care of your place as we know how.

' Rest, big man.' Then she looked in that flat way she had of looking at a man. ' Later I may ask something of you. Something you never knew you had."

' Humbly at your service, señora.' Placido said seriously, gravely, innocently.

* Just say when.'

The flatness faded into something else in Catalina's eyes. I will let you know, Placido. When that time comes.' Does he think my place is far enough for that Chori not to reach his Merced? Que va. Anyway, what does that

Chori find so good about skinny? Except that she is convenient. · You still will not tell me why you're moving?'

"The children. You know how kids irritate older people."

Catalina studied Placido a while, trying to force his eyes to admit what she knew. 'Yes, true.' Does he take me for the kind of fool he is? Why does God make such men? So big all over and so childish and trusting? * You are

doin tell on doia Catalina: Placido did a very small bow. "And we are grateful to you.'

Catalina, seeing Placido did not stop in picking up armsful of corn stalks and stacking them on top of a team-drawn wagon, at last decided to leave.

*You have finally used the head, Placido,' she said as a parting remark. She was peeved because Placido had not acknowledged gratitude for her having informed him to look into how the Short was abusing him.

Speaking of gratitude, she thought. Well, he has manners. But not for that. She glanced back. Some manners but no real shame. Kills himself as always. As if he did not know. Denying it. Everybody in the Roadrunner knows he followed the Chori to Goldville and back into the hills. She smiled. They say that day the Chori took the wife of a certain Escalante back there to show her where the rabbits run. And that the Placido found them but will not tell anyone. Much less his aunt Matilde. Well, shrugged her shoulders, I did what I thought right, as a friend, maybe later, smiled again, as a very intimate friend of the family. Caray, his hands are huge. And that bulge he has down there. Que va. Maybe he can make nothing. But he can sure try. Poor fool. But I do know how some men can enjoy it. Still, some men like to be abused. Take the Neto. He cares nothing of what I do. The strange thing is he can do something. Not like the Placido. Only the Neto is afraid. The result, he says, scares him. He will not make children, he says, because he wants them perfect. All perfect. Their bodies and their minds. What fooleries. God does not make people like that. Anyway, if I were a man, I would not be like either the Neto or the Placido. I would rather be like the Chori. At least he knows what we're here for. Results or no results. If I were a man and the Chori were doing me like he is doing the Placido, my shoulders would not be that broad. And I would know how to keep chasers like the Chori away from my woman. Even, if like the Merced, she were nothing special. Can't these fools see the Chori is not repelled by imperfections in their women? She looked back again before turning into a grove of cottonwoods along the river. A very stupid man, that Placido. And no saint has that much patience.

With all crops picked and stored, Placido kept his word.

He, Merced, and the three children shouldered their few belongings, which amounted only to the rags on their backs, and filed out of the Short's property.

Doña Matilde cried at their departure. She had become maternally fond of them, especially the children, and then she found hard the losing of stout hands in the field.

Whether or not doña Matilde ever noticed the very close resemblance of the three children to her husband no one knew.

The Short, feet spread, hands clasping and unclasping behind his back, watched them as if they were a band of hungry renegade Apaches. He saw them come to a pile of rocks, step on and then over the barbed wire fence. He listened to their low voices as they disappeared into an arroyo and then he got into his pickup and drove furiously out of the ranch.

Doña Matilde began to cry. 'Oh, Chori. Ay, poor, poor Chori,' she kept repeating. 'Why did it have to end? Oh, ungrateful people. To do this to my Chori dear. Ay, my God.'

They were hardly settled in their new home when Catalina made an appearance.

'I hear the Chori went on a three-day binge.' Catalina watched both their faces. * Appears like he took your departure very hard."

'Well,' Placido said, 'we felt bad in leaving.'"

'It was like a home to us,' Merced said.

Catalina gave the walls a hooded, knowing look.

Placido looked at the floor.

Merced grinned foolishly.

Catalina pretended nothing had passed. "A strange thing,' she said mysteriously.

Placido said, 'What?' almost too quickly.

'He is a changed man,' Catalina said.

'Changed?' Placido felt himself wading in too-deep water by Catalina's abstract chatter. 'How so?'

· No more gabardine. Wearing denims again. Just like any working rancher."

Catalina laughed. 'Why, would you believe it? Even the puttees are gone.'

·Va, Merced said

*Yes." Placido echoed her soberness, looking up from the floor and past Catalina. 'Poor man.'

The hawk knows well that most fear can be put off until after an action. Then the warrior's fright may catch up with him and he may tremble. Now it is fully decided on its target and all the hawk waits for is for a certain pullet to cross the line of sight it lays on a certain place on the ground below.

MOVED ON

I find it interesting, if depressing, that the outlets for all the arts but non-commercial writing, are finding increasing support in Los Angeles. Reading requires no audience participation. It is a lonely occupation and does not excite the money-men as do theatre, music, art galleries, or politics. Though it can produce prestige, it has very little publicity value.

The former editors (and founders) left us with a good name. With the Los Angeles 'cultural explosion' the past few years, (including the appearance at the universities and colleges of genuine published, practicing poets as teachers), the new editors of Coastlines felt that we might succeed in raising the money to continue. If nothing else, Coastlines was the only such outlet in the city; and where did the unknown graduates of all those writing courses expect to be published? We spent a year and a half trying to raise the funds. We failed.

Perhaps there is much to be said for another view. Coastlines, before we took over, had a distinct personality, one that was often praised and sometimes damned. This personality belonged to the former editors and was not transferable. These editors and many of the writers they printed * moved on' in the same sense as the writers in this quote from Michael Straight in *The Carleton Miscellany*.

*Of course money is important. But, for the small magazine, it is far less important than verve. *Le Banquet* was born when its thirteen founders threw ten francs apiece onto the editorial table. The thirteen included Barbusse and Gregh and Leon Blum -- and Marcel Proust.

Le Banquet brought the earliest works of these men into print. They moved on, and *Le Banquet* folded -- as it should have done. I'm appalled by the energy we devote to keeping alive institutions that have earned an honorable burial. Nonetheless, in the United States, one hundred and thirty francs will not start many presses turning.'

Ultimately the question is, how much of a sacrifice are you willing to make and where do you draw the line. Do you finally throw the remaining drunks out of the house after the Coastlines party is over, or do you leave them lay (along with the couple among the coats on the bed) and give them breakfast in the morning?

- Alexandra Garrett

NOTICE

Despite a year long effort, Coastlines was unable to raise the funds to continue. Coastlines will discontinue publication with this double issue which will count as two issues on our subscriptions. Subsequently, unexpired subscriptions will be filled by Trace, P.O. Box 1068, Hollywood 28, California, In case of duplication, Trace will be happy to extend your subscription if you will contact them. Most back issues of Coastlines are available in limited supply. These may be ordered through Trace.

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