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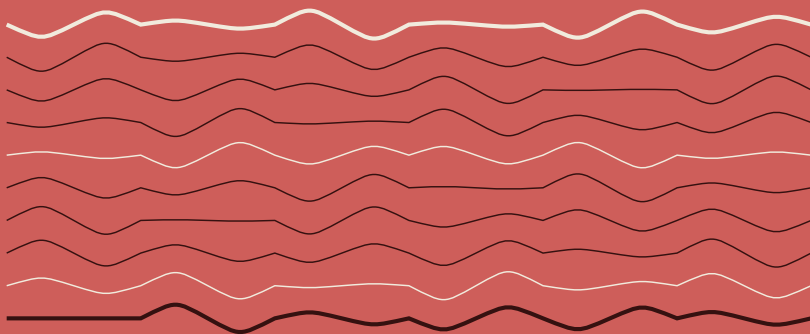
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FALL-WINTER 1962

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A CLEAN READING EDITION

Advertisements, subscription promotions, the front cover and blank leaves have been omitted. The poetry, fiction, essays, correspondence and reviews of the issue are given in full, in the order in which they are printed.

Where a poet uses the space of the page — indented lines, hanging steps, gaps within a line — that spacing is treated as part of the poem and kept as closely as a proportional typeface allows. Square brackets enclose conjectural readings where the scan is faded. Original spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and verse lineation are kept.

CONTENTS

An Hour with Ionesco	4
When Will You Understand That in so Far as Present Use Is Concerned, the Novel as We Now Know It Is Dead? © Arlene Zekowski & Stanley Berne 1962	11
Towards Print (the Word —) by Curtis Zahn	14
The Chronicle	18
The Seduction of Mr. Meeker	19
The Party in the Hole in the Ground	31
<i>Part I : the Guests</i>	31
A. Fredric Franklyn	32
<i>Part II : at Table</i>	32
A. Fredric Franklyn	34
Part III : the Grotto	35
Part IV : at Nightfall	36
Letter No. 10 (excerpts)	37
Delehanty: Unwed Father	49
The Letter	50

Edmund Teske	57
Self Retrospect	58
War & Peace	59
Highlights of Chinese Poetry from Ch'u Yuan to Mao Tse-tung *	61
Editors (and others) Write	71
<i>A Professional's View</i>	71
<i>A Forthright Irish Bill</i>	72
Sharp Doubts About a 'Union'	75
'Letter' from No. 1 Poet 'On the Road'	76
Camels and Hummingbirds	79
Honor Guard	83
A Heady Kind of Poetry	88
The Old Professor Offers Advice IV	89
<i>The First Job</i>	90
Declarative	94
Note on This Edition	95

ISSUE P. 257 · SCAN P. 7

AN HOUR WITH IONESCO

*Gabriel d'Aubarede **

FROM HIS TOP-FLOOR BALCONY in one of the first houses of the Rue de Rivoli, the imaginative author of *THE CHAIRS* was pointing out to me the near part of the Faubourg St. Antoine, where the street of the same name loops and runs into the Place de la Bastille:

'It looks like the Grand Canal of Venice, doesn't it! Only dry.'

In effect, the double row of majestic, ancient buildings did make you think of the Italian palazzi and their façades, covered with a patina of age. Eugène Ionesco, one of the leading figures of avant-garde theatre, lives in the heart of the oldest part of Paris.

We went inside. His livingroom is elegant, in a middle-class way, and could easily belong to one of the vogueish auteurs des Boulevards. All the same, it is hung with a few abstracts, and amiable rhinoceri adorn the top of a glass cabinet. Then, his study: a very small room with candy-green walls, much of the surfaces of which are hidden by an army of books. In a prominent place on one shelf I saw Plato's complete works, Lautréamont's *SONGS OF MALDOROR*, and a book on Klee. Ionesco sat down at his small, cluttered work-table. Behind him stood a filing cabinet; on top of it, partially obscuring a still life of the most figurative oranges imaginable, lay an ancient and gilded fireman's helmet: good surrealism note.

'Oh no, that's not the fireman's in *THE BALD SOPRANO*. This helmet comes from Avranches, in Normandy.'

He wasn't smiling then. And he scarcely ever did during our interview. Sadness and concern seem to have taken up permanent residence in the fifty-year-old writer's

fresh-colored features, especially in his eyes, dark and shining with intelligence. His very high forehead often clouds with a frown. His plays may be irresistibly funny, but he himself is by no means bursting with glee. Of course, such a contrast is traditional in theatre.

Ionesco was born of a French mother in Bucharest in 1912 and came to France a year later. He spent his childhood in the Vaugirard section of Paris, but returned to Rumania at the age of thirteen. His first language having been French, he continued with it and ultimately taught French in a Bucharest lycée. In 1938, he returned to France where he has lived since.

**Translated by Christopher Waters. The interview first appeared in NOUVELLES LITTÉRAIRES, one of a series by the author, under the rubric of 'Une heure avec...'*

Spellbound by literature from the start, during his youth he was able to place his poems in the little magazines, but never could get a publisher to accept his novels and essays that kept accumulating in his drawers. Until that day, which took a long time coming, when he discovered the theatre.

The anti-theatre, rather; for he was exasperated by the conventional aspects of everything he saw onstage. Thus, it was via the cruel route of parody that he entered upon his career of dramatist. *THE BALD SOPRANO* was first played in 1950, on the minute stage of the Noctambules theatre. He admitted that his religious admiration for Alfred Jarry's *UBU ROI* was in part responsible for the genesis of this 'anti-play,' which he had first conceived as a 'tragedy of language,' but which he ultimately treated as a farce on the extreme limits of burlesque.

'*UBU ROI*, along with my discovery of surrealism, provided one of the great intellectual shocks of my youth. And I still think that when you sweep away all the ideological trash of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, *UBU* is one of the few theatrical works you've got left. It, and Paul Claudel's

theatre — which, however, is a far cry from it!’

‘How was the play such a miraculous accomplishment?’

‘It was an anti-literary work. Theatre and literature are two different things.’

‘Is that a fact?’

‘I’m personally convinced of it. Theatre is no more literature than are painting and music. A few contemporary painters have refound the essence of painting, but at what effort! And in writing his farce — a true work of genius — Jarry reestablished connections with primitive theatre; which doesn’t mean at all elementary or easy theatre, as I’ve often said. He rediscovered the essence of the dramatic art, and that’s what I’ve tried to do in his wake.’

The scandal caused by *THE BALD SOPRANO* was nothing compared with the difficulties of keeping it alive. It was no easier for *THE LESSON* or for *JACQUES*, nor for *THE CHAIRS*, which a critique by Anouilh resuscitated from death-throes at the Lancry Theatre. But everything happens in this strange century; even the bold meet with success. Already *THE BALD SOPRANO* — still playing at the Huchette — has had thousands of performances. Most recently, *RHINOCEROS* was put on at the Théâtre de France, the newly-inaugurated national theatre, from which it quickly spread to a worldwide audience. The fact that he had reached the general public displeased Ionesco’s first admirers, who reproached their vulgarized deity for having compromised himself, even if his message to the masses concerned the perils of ‘massification.’

I naturall asked him to try to define that essence of true theatre which, in Jarry’s footsteps, he was trying to rediscover. He smiled hastily and sadly.

‘It’s easier to say what theatre isn’t than what it essentially is. I was just saying it isn’t literature. It isn’t a story told on stage, either. Nor is it copy of reality, nor epic, nor sermon, nor thesis. Basically, let’s say it’s tennis . . .

Rugby, if you like that better; or perhaps it's architecture on the move. It's a living construction, a game where fundamental antagonisms are set against each other.'

'You were surprised that your own work, which you had originally planned as a tragedy of language, became something that could make people laugh. But aren't you perilously trying to combine the tragic and comic? Isn't this one of the principal characteristics of your art?'

'I really don't see any basic difference between the two. I'd even say that the comic seems a more desperate element than the other. Tragedy is the logical expression of life's necessities, of its objective laws. Comedy has recourse to the absurd, and thus represents hopelessness. But I've talked about this at length in my *NOTES ET CONTRENOTES*, which has just come out, and I don't like to repeat myself.'

'In that book, you often mention your dislike of any sort of messianic attitude onstage. Being a confirmed partisan of the completely-free work of art, you often inveigh against all forms of demonstrative theatre, whether its level is moral, social, or political. In this respect, you mention Sartre, Miller, and especially Brecht. That seems to make you a declared adversary of *théâtre engagé*.'

The head of the avant-garde theatre suddenly seemed to arm himself with prudence: 'I'm for and against a committed theatre. Every dramatist should be committed, simply because he's a human being. But, in my eyes, he achieves greatness to the extent that he surpasses, in exercising his art, all ephemeral involvements. The best authors are those who don't limit themselves to having their characters spout propaganda. They are those who, while speaking about their age, have risen above it. The playwright should deal with certain conditions common to all times; that is, he should be concerned with the permanence of the major human conflicts. In this way he unifies what is true in any age—the extra-historical. For instance, Brecht did this in *MOTHER*

COURAGE. Why is this such a good play? Because he shows in it how the human qualities are wasted in war. No particular war, but war of all times. In its essence, theatre is extra-historical. Really, I wonder if its true dimension is spatial, rather than temporal.'

'Instead of venturing into the metaphysical, can we broach some of your arcana, as artist?'

'All my works have been experiments. Consequently, my "experimentation" or practice of my craft — my dozen plays — is making my task continually harder rather than easier. The more I write for the theatre, the more trouble I have creating new works. I live in fear of falling back upon my own cliches. My life is a perpetual battle against that danger.'

'This certainly sounds like the profession of faith of an avant-garde author!'

'Probably. The ambition of the so-called avant-garde theatre — a bad term; personally I'd prefer "art theatre" — our ambition is, basically, to liberate theatrical art from the chains of tradition. Usually, dramatic literature isn't even a copy of reality. It's a copy of copies, a link on an endless chain of reciprocal imitations. What we of the so-called avant-garde theatre are trying to do is break from such shackles and return to the living sources, forgetting about culture. For, culture has reached the point where it conceals the fundamental questions that man cannot and must not keep from asking.'

'What are your sources?'

'They're difficult to retrace afterward. I often borrow the central idea from one of my own short stories. For example, my next play, *THE FLYING PEDESTRIAN*, stems from a short story published by the *NOUVELLE REVUE FRANCAISE*. Jean-Louis Barrault has the lead and Jacques Mauclair is the producer.

'But where do you get your short-story subjects from?'

‘Usually from my dreams. So, really what I do is introduce audiences into my oniric universe. In *THE KILLER* (this character); the empty seats accumulating in *THE CHAIRS*; the rapidly-growing corpse in *AMEDEE OR HOW TO GET RID OF IT*: These all are dream images.’

‘Here’s plainly an area where surrealism has left its mark on you.’

‘There’s no denying it. And so did German Romanticism. As you know, in dreams we’re much more keenly aware of certain things than we are during the day. What is called daytime lucidity engenders a mental lethargy that has a much more dulling effect on the mind than sleep has. “Sleep on it” is a very sound piece of advice!’

‘Is it as easy to apply your writer’s craft to these usually-nocturnal themes as it is to dream them?’ ‘Oh, no! I sometimes carry my subjects around with me for months or years. I’ll sketch a scene, let it lie awhile, take it up again, destroy it . . . Sometimes a sort of psychic refusal keeps me stationary . . . Then, suddenly, I’m off again!’

‘Do the critics influence you?’

‘No. They disconcert and disorient me—a lot more than the public, which isn’t so surprising, I guess—but they don’t teach me anything and they don’t guide me. Perhaps it’s a shortcoming: I don’t like to be defined. It makes me feel I’ve been coagulated, or that I’ve been arrested and imprisoned during the course of my necessary evolution. My work is a struggle against every attempt to define it or explain me. Once that’s said, I do admit that critics have a very difficult job, at least as difficult as an author’s. There are really some very great critics: Apollinaire, Baudelaire, Thibaudet, and of course Boileau. Their own modesty keeps me from naming a few admirable contemporaries.’

‘Your plays are produced a great deal outside of France. *RHINOCEROS* was a great success in Germany, where the public knows something about the mental crimes of

totalitarianism. I've been told *THE BALD SOPRANO* is played an average of twenty times a day in American colleges and universities! It would be interesting to know if spectator reaction varies markedly from country to country.'

'Here, too, it's the critics who differ. A lot more than the rest of the public. And yet there's a great deal of diversity in the individual interpretations and styles of production. Just to speak of *THE BALD SOPRANO*—in Germany, they play it gravely; in England, seriously; and in the United States, it's loaded with gags and lunacies.'

'What about *RHINOCEROS*, which puts on trial the various types of modern collective hysteria?'

'Oh, *RHINOCEROS*! I attended the rehearsals of the New York production. The day before first-night, I beat it. There's one point on which I and the Americans will probably never see eye to eye completely. They avoid ambiguity like the plague, and I can't do without it. They want a yes-or-no answer on every question. Whereas my reaction to every question is yes, and again, no.'

**WHEN WILL YOU UNDERSTAND THAT
IN SO FAR AS PRESENT USE IS
CONCERNED, THE NOVEL AS WE NOW
KNOW IT IS DEAD? © ARLENE
ZEKOWSKI & STANLEY BERNE 1962**

Arlene Zekowski and Stanley Berne

CULTURALLY SPEAKING, AMERICA is no farther in development than Neanderthal Man. Beyond the products of commercialism, there is no attempt at other satisfaction of human needs in America.

What has never been satisfied is at the source of our American loneliness—the recognition of what is non-material—what we call the needs of the soul. For example: communication in words has broken down. The root of the matter lies in the fact that we no longer speak or use a language on which our own communication has for centuries been founded—Latin.

The sentence today is dead because it is founded on a dead language, Latin.

In Art, the dead sentence cannot be revived. It must be destroyed, so that words once more become vehicles of communication—counters for today's thoughts, meanings, expressions, experiences. 'Words are of monstrous importance . . . because they are actually electrical in the sense that words stimulate the brain of the reader and set off charges and reactions in the form of thought.'¹

The novel today, like everything else in our lives, is the tool of commercialism. As a result, the novel is 'in magnificent ruin, plundered by all, being excavated, being torn, being degraded.'

Those writing novels today, write them only and exclusively for approval and for money. (These are our Neanderthal society's values.)

The novel today 'presents itself as a whore, open-legged, begging for attention and business . . . inviting the measurement of the grossest eye, being loved by a mass, contracting the fatal disease of whoredom, and what is worse, passing it on!' We have become dead to the sense and purpose of literature, of art, of creativity, from the results of a too long immersion in this debauchery and pandering to a species of diseased communication.

(1) All quotations (herein) are taken from CARDINALS & SAINTS, On the Aims and Purposes of the Arts in Our Time, by Arlene Zekowski and Stanley Berne. (Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y., 1958: distributed by GEORGE WITTEN-BORN, Inc., New York 21, N.Y.)

The inbreeding of the same and the same and more of the same, has led us to the impasse which publishers and others refuse to recognize but which is with us—sterility of ideas, degeneration of soul, loneliness, frustration spreading out from what we read to what we think.

All forms of communication are expressions of thought. If we kill communication in the strait-jacket of dead forms, thought is stifled, and in fact, we cease to think. That is what has happened.

In America today, creativity is measured by super-market standards. Will it sell? Can it be advertised?

Because of this, we are more in danger, today, of losing our souls than of losing our lives. Challenge, idealism, faith, excitement from the unfamiliar, and the true and the new—all of this experience in being alive which art provides—is denied us by the dead centers of our society, which proclaim deafeningly into the ears of all—that the human being is an object of manipulation, to be bought and sold like the very objects it is told to buy and sell.

This is not life—nor is it art.

The NEO-NARRATIVE,² we feel, in its departure from naturalism and symbolism, marks the end of two centuries of conformity, stultification and tradition in the novel.

If it professes any principle at all, it is this: Thought is its own excuse for being.

Existence or being, in language, exists through the multiplicity of combination and inter-action which words convey. There is no more finiteness to a word or words than to the evocations of its effects in the sensibility of the reader. Words will travel as far as the farthest imagination will reach. 'Today, the work produced is a thinking out and erasure all at once . . . an erasure of waste, to bridge thought to thought, experience to experience, only with the necessary links, the bare sack suit, the excitement making the excitement, the love making love, the word not made flesh, but the word as flesh because it is.'

(2) This term describes the New Novel, as we see it. By way of application see CONCRETIONS by Arlene Zekowski (illustrated by Milton Avery) and THE DIALOGUES by Stanley Berne (illustrated by Matta). These volumes appeared September 1st, from GEORGE WITTENBORN.

ISSUE P. 264 · SCAN P. 14

TOWARDS PRINT (THE WORD —) BY CURTIS ZAHN

'Who killed it?'

Killed what?

'The Word was Latin!'

'Then, who killed Latin?'

It was those Gree x in the Brothers Broox suits.

'Whatever happened to the gt. U.S. Novel?'

Television.

'Greek Television or Latin?'

Western Television. You know, psychological...

IN THE PRECEDING PAGES, Authors Zekowski & Berne have set about performing as a team of coroners to investigate the curious circumstances relative to the death of the American novel. Their autopsy suggests that it was murder all right — and, in fact, committed by some Slick operators working out of a Madison Ave. hideaway. And while the authors haven't yet made a citizen's arrest, they've got informers who say it's the same gang whose members dress like the hoods who (according to K. Rexroth) did away with Dylan Thomas a few years back.

For a coroner — or even a mortician — to order the final rites, would be quite an, er, Undertaking; as yet, no one has found the body. By that I mean that the novel is only half-dead anyway, and I should like to explore the possibility of suicide. It's true that some authors have committed suicide — and shouldn't have. On the other hand, a great number of novels of crime and sex have murdered the literary artist's chances of getting read. Which suggests that now is as good a time as any to wrap up the whole case with : 'I'd Rather Be Read Than Dead.'

Berne & Zekowski, however, have fingered 'Latin' as the accomplice in this alleged homicide. 'Latin is dead,' they

reason; and the novel depends upon Latin. Therefore...

But whereas the authors can be acquitted for using Greek in their own innovations, I cannot but disagree when they indict Latin as the ... root of all ill-literature. Seems to me that there are at least three word-sources from which the pundit can work to erect a 'living literature;' and J. Walter Thompson can't do much about it: (1) words in the dictionary; (2) those not yet in the dictionary — slang, new terms ... ; (3) nonexistent words that 'suggest' or compel the reader through phonetic sounds or eroto-aesthetic association. Language then (even English, in which a surprising number of U.S. novels are written) provides an almost inexhaustible supply of them. Words. Unfortunately—because of the Reader, and not the man in the Suit—a small percentage of first-class, inexpensive, easily-available words crop up. Although the late Gary Cooper knew how to say 'Yup' in a thousand convincing ways, his dialogue would have somewhat limited Shakespeare or Herman Melville. Even today, it is indeed rare when we read of a heroine who, although dolichocephalic, and apparently suffering from xerophthalmia, had a canorous voice which caused men to bicomfirtulate frequently. Few are the writers who phullph their arcked prows into the spome and snade of critical literary escophilliation—being what they are, indeed: snedged whapps whose only Snock is shaddled fame. Novelists for too long have copied, refined, emulated, oscillated, imitated, illuminated, and pittersnaded in public with moaned feggs of stylized malconfuggmentation.

The fault, I think, lies in the fact that for perhaps twenty years before any one of us Writes, we have had to Read. Reading preforms—no, even predetermines syntactical regimens—our manners of linking words. Jack-'n'-the-Beanstalk killed the novel long before Herman Wouk got to it. The 'pure' creative writer does not exist: he

would have to be isolated from all language (printed & spoken) from birth. And then, with a dictionary and an instruction-book on parts of speech, he could—by the only method exempt from cliché or readymade phraseology—invent his own brand of communication. Result? The novel would still be dead. His readers would put him aside as confusing, dull, obtuse, friddled, snoggish, or unsnapped. The critics would fagle in the trinneled scowp of meandering thud. Publishers would reject future works with xenorabianithological smee. And Berne & Zekowski would have proven their fillking point; i.e., Latin is lousy, even if it's Greek to me . . .

But, to get back to creative originality or, in my own words, Bivissectional Eskullunge and the Literary Pinggggg—I am also indicting several other John Doe's: painters, dancers, film-makers, composers, et al. Scarcely any of them are actually Snague (free of influence). What artist hasn't seen a thousand canvases, before he thrusts his libicidus pithorectus into a smear of Rose Matter? Or—Madder? What composer (musicallus theftius) hasn't heard 1, 498, 398, 398 notes strung together out of the utterly frapped 12-tone scale in exactly as many formulae-plops as exist in International bibliophiagraphianana? In as-yet unpublished and unwritten essay tentatively titled DAU, I plan to go squarely into the entire, scandalous history of the word 'Plunk'—exploring its numerous Jungian astronations as well as the asexologic Strubbs of a bi-fartician sublectic when applied to prohibitive conspiracy.

However, before closing, I'd like to say a few words for outboard motors.

As everyone knows, the commercial aspect is, well—let's face it—the commercial aspect. Pants wear out faster than novels—sell better. Why do they sell better? Censorship. You can walk down the street without your novel. However, latest

statistics show that outboard motors are outselling pants—especially in the low, wet countries. My advice to writers, therefore, is to get out of the pants business. And should any reader suspect me of snoggery, I suggest he see my *The Novel As a Kerouaciatic Study of Ginziphelian Hoaxagraph : As Eternal As The Day Before Yesterday*. (Two pages, large type, unexpurgated.) If he still thinks the Novel is dead—hell, who am I to pass judgment on the connivathinkarmianus of others?

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-tHMS sLiP in, and. out of heARTbrainWomb , conceiving
and be -getting thE elfin genes of tWI -light (.dreams

by Dorothy Ellin Flax

SCAN PP. 17-39, 102-104

THE CHRONICLE

The Chronicle — the running trade directory of little magazines and presses that TRACE carried in every issue, a supplement to THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE TO LITERARY AND ART PERIODICALS — runs to twenty-three pages here and records some 480 magazines and presses. It is omitted, with the capsule notices: it is a working address list rather than reading matter, and the GUIDE itself supersedes it. It breaks off at TROBAR and resumes at the back of the issue, on scan pp. 102-104, running from TRICON to YOUNG POETS TENTACLE; both parts go. What follows is a note of what this instalment holds.

It is a good year to have caught. The entry for CITY LIGHTS carries RED CATS, the Pocket Poets gathering of new Russian work; LOCUS SOLUS is running from Majorca; KULCHUR, ORIGIN, THE OUTSIDER from New Orleans and BIG TABLE's successors are all here, and so is EL CORNO EMPLUMADO, the Mexico City review printing in both languages. BURNING DECK appears in its first years, as does TISH out of Vancouver. From Scotland there is POOR OLD TIRED HORSE and, listed under it, GLASGOW BEASTS, AN A BURD. SEMINA is recorded, and MIGRANT, and NEW DEPARTURES.

Of local interest to anyone following the Los Angeles magazines: COASTLINES, NOMAD, OLIVANT, INFERNO, GALLINAS PRESS and GALLEY SAIL are all in this instalment, with addresses, and the Chronicle is often the only place a run of them was ever recorded.

The rest is the trade: university quarterlies from KENYON, SEWANEE, HUDSON, PRAIRIE SCHOONER and MASSACHUSETTS; the English magazines AMBIT, STAND, OUTPOSTS, LISTEN, ENCOUNTER and ANARCHY; MEANJIN, OVERLAND and SOUTHERLY from Australia; ALPHABET, CANADIAN LITERATURE, DELTA, FIDDLEHEAD, PRISM and TAMARACK from Canada; BLACK ORPHEUS from Nigeria and KYK-OVER-AL from Guyana. The full list of names is kept in Trace_47_1962_chronicle_names.txt beside the transcript. — ED.

THE SEDUCTION OF MR. MEEKER

Mr. Meeker is seated before the plant again. The chair tilts precariously as he sacrifices, with a tweezers, a captured cockroach to one of the opened traps. The lobes, poised in anticipation, shut at once with a sensuous, barely-perceptible, clap. His fingers upon the stalks can feel the quiver as the fluids spring into motion from the darkness of the digestive system to slowly penetrate and dissolve the prey so that it may be consumed. Tomorrow, or the next day, the trap will reopen and there will be no trace of the roach. The lower portion of Mr. Meeker's slight body sways in a tremor of sweet enervation.

Mrs. Meeker does not share her husband's new preoccupation. In fact she is disturbed by it, though she keeps a nettled silence. Now, watching television, she would seem not to care very much about what he is doing. Earlier, however, at supper, Mr. Meeker had provoked a reaction. With no small effort he had lugged the plant from the living-room into the kitchen and poked bits of food at it as though it were a pet dog.

The smell of green — it's getting into the food — everything.' Mrs. Meeker had finally slammed her fork against her meal. For an instant her exclamation charged Mr. Meeker's nerves with a small rage and it seemed to him that he would burst into tears if he did not immediately strike out and kill her. But there is not enough love left in him to sustain such an emotion; and with silent obedience he had carried the plant back to its place on top of the livingroom bookcase.

At the table again, the plate gone cold, his appetite burned away in the dead heat of his frustration and Mrs. Meeker's small, weak eyes behind her rimless spectacles

averted to a daydream, Mr. Meeker indulged a dreary hope of communication.

‘I want to tell you about it, about what it does to me.’

His hand touched upon a piece of cutlery and he experienced an unexpected wave of perception. But in his new enthusiasm, his knees bumped clumsily against the table as he stood up, and the sharp pain jarred his insight. He felt it slip from him. His words struck the air in a blind rush as though he would retrieve and recapture what, for a moment, he had known about himself.

‘When I’m near it, I feel a strange breeze blowing inside my head, from way back in my head, blowing so softly toward me. And it has a very sweet and wispy scent, the scent the air has when the season is

ROBERT LEVIN

changing. It makes me feel . . . elated, I don’t know — alive!’ Mr. Meeker finished his statement with a quick, effeminate wave of his hands, and astonishment at its brevity. He had lost it. He had not said it all; and he had not said it right. He sat back down and nudged his food.

‘Maybe I should get rid of it,’ he said. ‘You think I should.’

Mrs. Meeker squeezed her face in revulsion. ‘I don’t want to even know you like this, Benjamin.’ Her head swayed back and forth as if she would shake thought from it. ‘I don’t want to know about what you do with it.’ She had begun to gather the dishes.

Television serves to turn Mrs. Meeker’s unease and she watches it with an air of determination. The set is an early, small-screened Motorola. It sits in a corner of the tiny, cluttered livingroom, a room that resembles a neglected garden. Too many colors; one chair, one ornate lamp too many and, as the time is not so good for the Meekers, most everything has turned, with age, the shade of dead leaves. There are two bright spots: a pale wall is splashed with

blatantly colored postcards which Mrs. Meeker received from her spinster sister Edna, who once spent a month abroad. On the opposite wall, where the bookcase stands, the plant has sprouted white flowers.

Mrs. Meeker is unaware of Mr. Meeker's sudden presence behind her this night, until his hand crosses her breasts and the gray bristles of his moustache nuzzle her cheek. She can smell his warm breath. He startles her, for at that moment she is running from the ranch-house steps to the embrace of her lover who has just dismounted and who does not wear a moustache at all.

'Elaine, it's late,' Mr. Meeker urges. 'Come to bed.'

Mrs. Meeker is at a loss and says nothing. But Mr. Meeker has found a knee beneath her housedress and she gasps at the heated moistness of his fingertips. Mr. Meeker has not coveted his wife in more than a year. Her reaction now is to brush his hand away, not too quickly, not too harshly. Who knows what evil, what violence, lurks behind her now? Finally she hears him retreat to the bedroom. She will remain in the livingroom until she is sure that he is asleep.

In the bedroom, Mr. Meeker has found a magazine. He leafs through it impatiently and then takes it into the bathroom with him where he stays for some time. Afterwards, he goes directly to bed and is asleep when Mrs. Meeker enters, the top sheet pulled over his head as is his habit. He sleeps soundlessly, though occasionally he will start and quiver as if recoiling from some secret adversity in his dream.

Mrs. Meeker undresses very quietly. She would not know what to do

ROBERT LEVIN

should he suddenly come awake. She watches his head buried beneath the sheet, his tiny mouth blowing air through the small space he has left himself with which to breathe. He is no more than a wisp of a man; his flesh is the color of Winter. Still she would confess to fear of him. Lately there is a real madness in him. She presses the lightswitch slowly and tightly.

But the groan of the bed and the springs' shift to accommodate Mrs. Meeker's cautious entrance, and the quick swish of sheets and blanket, do awaken Mr. Meeker and for an instant he cannot recall where he is. His heart is beating with a terrible violence and he moves to encircle his body with his arms so that he will not feel his fleshless ribs and the mortal thump of his heart against the mattress. How he hates his body. He is contemptuous of its slowness, its vulnerability. But in fact he is contemptuous of his entire being. How often it has come to him in these, his middle years, that he is a product of his weaknesses rather than his strengths. Now it is his burden to live with the cognizance of his self-betrayals. The memories which he dislikes the most are those which will return most frequently; and always, he has come to anticipate them in the worst of hours.

His ambition had been to become a concert violinist; and now to remember again that he was not without talent, warms him briefly. But he had been quick to abandon ambition at the earliest awareness that success might require a larger gift than he was sure he owned. In conversation, he will sooner blame economics than self-distrust; though he knows it had been his nerve, undermined by a dread of the competition he would face, that had failed him. So now, in bed, he tries to avert his thoughts; but they will not be turned away. Rather, they reshape in fantasy. Against his will, his eyes fall shut and he is on a large stage at the completion of a performance. A

massive audience of those who know what is good and sense greatness is applauding wildly. This image abruptly transforms. Now he is a Bohemian, living from day to day. He works when he needs the money. More often he is playing an old, out-of-tune upright piano and composing, in a dismal cold-water flat. There are weird paintings on the wall. A dark, faceless girl is watching and listening from the sofa. Mr. Meeker opens his eyes and faces the darkness again. He has a vehement hatred for Bohemians. He envies their contempt for the compromises he has bound himself to, and despises them for their ability to deviate from those compromises.

He turns restlessly to his side and inadvertently faces the clock on the night-table. A tension grips his loins. He is reminded of the coming morning and his own special compromise, a phonograph-record store.

ROBERT LEVIN

Tomorrow he will return to the small shop, inherited from his father, which he has managed to sustain for nearly twenty years though he has no real interest in it. Fifteen feet by thirty feet, he spends ten hours a day there, six days a week. It is the size of his world. In the early days it did not do so badly, but the new chains have nearly ruined it. The air is heavy with dust and the oppressive scents of cardboard and old wood. The only happiness with which it can provide him is in the occasional musician who will stop in to chat or make a purchase. He is obsequious in the presence of musicians and always gives them a discount. The thought makes him cringe. At other times, he has the singular irritation of an old candy-store owner harrassed with requests for glasses of water from little boys.

Since he got the plant, the store has become even more difficult to bear. He resents the store now. He will think of the plant and the sweet honeyed scent, that deceives and lures the insects, will come to his nostrils. Then, even the few customers are an intrusion.

Now he is thinking about the plant completely. It has returned to his consciousness as though out of the shadows of his deeper mind; an illusive, floating semi-presence that is suddenly grasped. To think about it now, with his sleep-warm body under his pajamas so intimate, flushes him with excitement, an excitement which has come to have a pleasurable-familiar, if ineffable, taste for him and which will work its way to his sex and turn to desire. Sometimes, as in this moment, he will wish that he were a woman. He would love to spread his frailty beneath a force that would overwhelm and devour it, rather than suffer the overbearing responsibility of being a man and the deadening anguish of not being what is expected of him. What the world has done to a man, how he has coped, or failed to cope, with its constraints, will inevitably center in and shape the expression of his sex.

He turns in bed to face Mrs. Meeker, and a faint odor of urine rises from under the sheet. Apparently she has already fallen asleep. She lies with her back to him, her thinning hair brushes his lips; an impenetrable wall of white flesh trussed in a charmless gown of cloth for which, even in this new moment of arousal, as earlier, he must coax a personal feeling. He would like to be sure that she is really asleep. He leans over on an elbow and peeks at her face. The oblique light from the street-lamp outside is unkind. Her face seems so small, grotesquely small. His eyes fasten in a sleep-heavy stare and it becomes the face of an absurd and horrible doll which, unwittingly rediscovered in this improbable corner of the night, has somehow, unspeakably, aged.

Mr. Meeker experiences a moment of fright. He shuffles beneath the

ROBERT LEVIN

bed for slippers, squeezes them on and finds himself hurrying to the livingroom. There he gropes through furniture to the bookcase upon which the plant is seated, and switches on a lamp. The plant springs from the darkness in front of him, its massive stalks, drooping traps, and full white flowers are trembling gently with the vibrations his movements have caused. This sudden confrontation suspends his anxious animation. The plant is an exceptional specimen. It is African and fully three times the size of the domestic variety. He can smell the jungle in it. There are eight traps, shaped like butterfly-wings; and from the edges of each protrude rows of multiple curved spikes. The slightest pressure, the weight of the tiniest fly, and the traps will clamp shut, the spikes interlock. Mr. Meeker recalls the exquisite sensation of a knot bursting loose in his loins upon first seeing the plant in the Sunday magazine.

There is nothing left in the house with which to feed it, and he thinks to buy several packages of dead flies at the tropical fish shop in the morning. Then, disinclined to return to bed, he pulls a chair in front of the bookcase and takes a volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from the shelf. With the exception of several Western and mystery paperbacks, the encyclopaedia is the only set of books he owns — 1943 edition. Mr. Meeker discovered too late to withdraw his deposit in that first year of his marriage that he would be unable to have children.

He opens the book and reads: 'Venus' Fly Trap is a perennial herb with a rosette of leaves bearing tall scapes.' The book is heavy and his eyes are weighted with a day's fatigue, so that he must keep the book on his lap and bend forward in order to see. The cover cuts between his ribs and the discomfort turns his attention again to the frailty of his body.

For a long while he has believed that he is dying. He would not talk about it, but he is convinced that he is in the early stages of a fatal disease. Mysterious, undiagnosable pains twist through his chest and he is so tired every day and so weak. One by one, his cells are dying within him. Most times the sensation is fearful. At other times it is almost pleasant. Now, in the late hour, a drowsiness comes and, his guard down, it is a pleasant feeling. He gives himself to it, and meteors of thought bombard his receding consciousness. How he would like to get out of the store . . . but better to scratch for a minimum of comfort than risk no comfort at all. He will take refuge in the thought that few men will trade their security, no matter how dreary, for the hazards of change. A baby is crying from the other side of the wall. The nagging call tears at his reverie. Even their suburban home is a compromise; not entirely their own, but attached and bound to the small trials of another family.

ROBERT LEVIN

To meet even this, is a weekly tension and there is the wearying travel from suburbs to city and back, which he must manage daily on the subway. A woman's life is not so difficult . . . a woman need not prove anything . . . he would like to strip himself completely of what physical male characteristics he can still claim . . . they are no more than deceptions . . . cut them away so that he may reveal what he really is. He wonders what is happening to himself and thinks again of the desirability of getting rid of the plant. With the last of his energy he reaches to turn off the lamp, and the book falls from his lap. He feels content in the quick darkness and would like it to come upon him and swallow him up.

Mrs. Meeker finds him asleep on the chair in the morning.

'I'm not going in today,' Mr. Meeker says as he comes awake.

'You're not going in today,' Mrs. Meeker repeats as though she must hear such unfamiliar words twice in order to believe them.

Mr. Meeker's neck is soaked with perspiration and his pajama-top clings. A dream — he cannot recall what it was about — has left him at ends.

'I don't feel well,' he anticipates Mrs. Meeker's disapproval. 'A day closed won't ruin us.'

'I have shopping to do today.' There is a strain of immense frustration in her voice. 'I'll be out of the house most of the day.'

'Please,' Mr. Meeker groans with such a sudden pitiable urgency that Mrs. Meeker is taken aback. 'Let me talk to you.'

Mrs. Meeker seats herself tentatively at the opposite end of the room.

'I'm frightened,' he says, looking away from her now. 'I'm very frightened.' He has begun to shake and clasps his hands between his knees.

'Go to the doctor,' Mrs. Meeker says sharply.

'Elaine . . .'

'Just promise me you'll go to the doctor. I'm going to call him now, myself.' She remains on the edge of her seat.

'No,' Mr. Meeker says, 'I'll call him in a little while. You go and shop.'

Mrs. Meeker stands and looks at him strangely. 'Don't forget,' she says firmly. She has done what she can; she leaves. He hears her pattering somewhere in the house, then the clump of the front door as it shuts behind her.

The house is very still and for a long while Mr. Meeker remains in the chair, watching the weather through the window. Finally he gets up and goes to the bedroom. There he dresses and, without design, walks to

ROBERT LEVIN

the kitchen. Mrs. Meeker does not make him breakfast on weekdays; he usually eats in the city, so there is nothing prepared for him. He starts to boil water for coffee, but quickly turns off the stove and wanders back through the shadowed foyer to the livingroom where he stands for moments at its threshold. His eyes light on each object but evade the plant. He turns and goes again to the bedroom and lets himself fall across the unmade bed. Mrs. Meeker's nightgown is lying twisted on the floor at his side and he picks it up and throws it across a chair. There is a magazine on the night table. He thumbs it, pauses briefly at an article on the growing influx and significance of the supermarket in modern society, then tosses the magazine to the floor. He is counting the knobs on Mrs. Meeker's dresser when he hears the front door open and shut. It is Edna, Mrs. Meeker's sister. He hears her call Elaine. The sound of the voice jolts him, but he makes no answer. He waits; for minutes there is no further sound.

With caution he eases himself from the bed and walks noiselessly to the entrance of the livingroom. Edna has settled herself with a newspaper. Though she is wearing glasses (Mrs. Meeker and Edna have both often remarked, as if with pride, that their eyeglasses are interchangeable), she holds the newspaper only several inches from her face. She cannot see him. Mr. Meeker watches her as if transfixed. Her breasts, he notices with some astonishment, never having really seen Edna like this before, are not so large as Mrs. Meeker's, but project more firmly. His body begins to feel weak; he realizes that his knees are trembling. It seems to him that he can discern the tiny circles of her nipples through her blouse. His gaze moves across her chest to the curve of her shoulder where a tuft of steely hair protrudes like a miniature, leafless bush. Suddenly everything about Edna is sensual. He is having difficulty breathing. He

continues to move his eyes. Her skirt is quite long, but he can see her ankles, a shock of indoors whiteness just below the hem. For perhaps a minute he stares.

‘Edna,’ he says abruptly; and she starts at the sound.

‘Oh. Benjamin. I didn’t know anyone was here.’ She does not smile.

‘I’m waiting for Elaine.’

Mr. Meeker doesn’t answer and his expression disconcerts her. She folds the paper, unfolds it, glances at it, looks again at Mr. Meeker.

‘Edna,’ he bursts, ‘do you think we could?’

Edna’s response is only a querulous stare.

Mr. Meeker is swaying in the entrance like an uncertain pendulum.

‘I’ve always wanted you, Edna.’ He begins to move toward her.

As she understands, the newspaper falls from Edna’s lap. A word

ROBERT LEVIN

catches in her throat and only a vulgar gurgle escapes her lips.

Mr. Meeker puts his hand on her shoulder and at once feels the convulsions. He steps away abruptly and watches with a terrible awe. Suddenly, as if waiting the opportunity, Edna bounds from the chair and rushes out the door.

)(Overwhelmed with mortification, Mr. Meeker strides about the vacant room in blind self-rage. What will he say to Elaine? There is no doubt in his mind but that Edna will tell her. As though by rote, he staggers to the bathroom, strips off all clothing and starts the shower. Under the steaming water he begins to soap himself with a violent urgency; but as he comes to the lower part of his body, his movements ease and he feels desire return. He stops the shower and dries rapidly. His body is flushed. There is a terrifying drive in him now and his breath is coming in gasps. The steamed

room makes him weak. He moans and hugs his swaying shoulders fiercely. 'No,' he spits into the hot air. He tries to dress, but his clothes have come to have a strange weight. It is a trial to lift them from the floor, to put them on. His hands fumble with the buttons, but his shirt keeps slipping open, he cannot zip his fly. Finally, after great effort he succeeds and bursts from the bathroom. The cool air makes him reel. He feels about to faint and braces himself against a wall. There is a sweetness in the air and swift, chilling breezes are blowing at him from each of the rooms off the foyer. Bubbles of moisture appear at the corners of his mouth. He staggers to the livingroom. He is aware that hands are ripping at his shirt. Quickly they are at his pants, his shoes. Only his underwear remains. He feels them being slipped off and shudders in his nudity as he carries his sex, like an offering, to the plant.

ISSUE P. 297 · SCAN P. 47

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

THE PARTY IN THE HOLE IN THE GROUND

PART I : THE GUESTS

In the summer Mrs. Tranquility gave these little parties and, weather permitting, they were always held in the garden; 'brunch' affairs some called them, except that they were really too elaborate.

I came as Observer; I was a satellite without any fixed orbit, circulating largely anonymously among the tea-takers; and though I held a cup or a glass of something, for appearances don't you know, I did not take tea with those others. Oh, if you didn't know me, you might have thought for all the world that I was free. . .

And then I saw that Sebastian Baseball, too, was among those present and for a while I hid in the solarium trying to catch my breath; it was a desperate surprise, after all that loving, to take tea together like this; it was unnerving. God! Don't you know.

But I recovered quickly and resumed my role, taking a more anxious interest in the recent lotus eaters; and I

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

soon observed others in costume; it became apparent I was not the only actor. Well, good, I thought; they can all share the burden.

Anne Boleyn came as Jayne Mansfield; that first Palladio had the effrontery to appear as Gary Cooper; I was simply delighted; it was delicious! So much depravity; and there were others: Death expressed itself as a kind of caring. I thought that in pointed bad taste. Ponchielli came as Faubus; that was absurd, of course, no logic. Logic! Oh, Lord. . .

PART II : AT TABLE

Later I joined a few deep breathers at one of the larger tables for luncheon . . . brunch . . . whatever, some cold turkey and ham and the most marvelous potato salad, oh . . . my head aches. Some remark secured my attention and when I opened my mouth as if to say something of importance . . . to remind them all of . . . of another engagement perhaps . . . the stupidest . . . the oddest . . . well, the silliest thing happened. It occurred just as my lips parted: A . . . well, to be blunt . . . a fat, brown roach issued from my mouth,

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

spilled out and down into my plate; leaped from my mouth, I believe, because if it had simply crawled from between my lips and down my chin, on to my neck and intrepidly and brainlessly onward, into my clothes, I should have giggled and supposed that probably I was dribbling, some juicy morsel let from between an insouciant smile and distichous white teeth setting off that dirt-brown life more awfully for anyone looking at me. Oh, and my hair is yellow, too.

But it was a cockroach, that much is certain; and it bolted directly outward for a moment of free fall and a soft

landing in the turkey and ham; and so I knew, right away, what I had done, you see. All the same, it was not the cruelest thing nor the ugliest thing that had ever issued from that orifice. I was remarkably composed. I fixed my hat, and someone near me changed the subject. They were all so nice . . . I hate to be hurt!

But how did that roach approach; where did it come from in the beginning? As I see it, this is our main problem; and the rest is History, as the famous man said!

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

Sebastian told me the dark man with the white turban was a Guru, and Mrs. Tranquility had keen hopes of bagging him for Monday evenings. Sebastian had stopped at our table for a minute. He said the little cotton print thing I was wearing was lovely. These little tables were everywhere in Mrs. Tranquility's garden, and there were Chinese lanterns if it got dark; everything had been done over for the summer, and the leitmotif was all Hawaiian. Sebastian whispered something in my ear and I didn't want to say I hadn't understood; he was smiling and a moment later he left us. Everyone was circulating and mixing again. And I wanted to meet this Guru.

PART III : THE GROTTO

I am ill! The conviction that I am suffering has always been with me; but this is more serious . . . From time to time I am suddenly separated from those others; only for a moment perhaps; but it is at such times, when I am unexpectedly isolated and I have aimlessly and unthinkingly wandered off to some secluded corner of Mrs. Tranquility's garden, that I seem to see these things . . .

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

I remember
a blood-red waterfall! I am
certain there is a little grotto
tucked away in some obscure nook
of Mrs. Tranquility's garden;
and there is something else,
something waiting there
by prearrangement . . .
I saw the little cascade of vermilion there,
coming upon it quite by accident
and remaining only the briefest instant;
then there was a moment
of the most frightening silence
and I knew there was something watching,
something not quite nice, I think . . .
staring at me . . .
and then, all at once, the sounds,
hundreds of them and all so normal,
seemed to rush back in to fill the void
and I fled incontinently
until I heard voices. I . . . I
needed people again;
activity!
A few laughs . . .

ISSUE P. 302 · SCAN P. 52

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

PART IV : AT NIGHTFALL

The night is gathering
with very little ceremony and too much mystery
here in Mrs. Tranquility's garden;
nearly all the others
have removed to the house
and the lights are coming on there
as I watch,
cubing all the downstairs rooms,
and there are whirling shadows
across the curtains and blinds
and the strains of three-four harmonies
pouring their distraction across hardwood floors
and over Italian busts and hairstyles. I am
again almost alone out here.
This relentless sensuality
is an emptying process;
and I have sometimes thought,
if my life and every hope of happiness
depended upon my capacity
to parry one more conversational gambit,
the stones of all that narrow religion
might prevail for all of me
and mark my own grave with the rest. I . . . I
should just like to breathe!
Still, that activity fills the silences
that I hate I think most of all,
and I can't bear the thought
of remaining here by myself.
Sebastian will come! I just know it.

LETTER NO. 10 (EXCERPTS)

Sometimes it dives down, over the sea, the wandering bird, following a pattern somebody handed it a long time ago. Wandering up over the moon, with the willow stick in its hand, nobody following it, nobody telling it what to do. Head angular, caught in the wheel part of the time, but all the same it flies. Wooden tongue slopping up the nose-cones flying through the air.... I heard the talking stick speak to me: 'Go away,' it said. I used to fly like that, rolling over and over, sometimes robbing the hickory mill. but no more; now I'm hurdling over the fence, not looking in any direction but straight ahead. It's floating time now. Wooden spikes speaking to me. Noses slipping up under the window sill, and the spikes turning to silver. This was World War II when the trucks had seams, and didn't always make it. Iron men, and wooden trucks. I used to like that. Tires smelling of rubber fire, and the rubber hose stuck to the bottom of the wheels, siphoning off the smoke. Listen to the whoosh of the finely-ground motor.... Time is getting on, you are getting on, and I suppose it wouldn't hurt to have a few things in mind. I've got a few things in mind. Just the same old dogs slipping through the fence, in slow motion, one leg out and then the other. Isn't that right? I'm just joking about all these things, actually I went off the deep end a few weeks ago, and I don't ever expect to be the same. Roses and robins flew down and captured me, and I don't ever expect to be the same. How about you? Are you the same—does the robin in his nest intrigue you? What do you think about? You tell me, and I'll call you a liar, we're all liars under the wood, under the tree tops, under the lion's tail. I heard the tailor say he couldn't do it right, because it wouldn't be right if he did. Have you heard about the wooden nose, dug in a few feet

deep, and the howitzer spreading up and high rising down and falling over while everybody looked around? Who wouldn't come back to hear you tell it. Smile, now, smile! Wooden teeth sharpening on the stone. I want to get on with it. Somebody is coming now, to tell me which way to turn, and not a moment too soon. I want them to. Really.... The new hate, invented just for the occasion, and all the hungry pigeons gobbling up the snow. You never know what's in it. When it will be in it again. Or who's

SIDNEY SHAPIRO

coming? Are you? Would you if you could, you? I have no time for this sort of thing. Have you?

You have lots of time. Knuckles growing out on the frozen vine. And a lot of hurdles, wooden sticks slowing up in prison, and the ivory peanuts going through the gate, one at a time.

Let's try the third stick. That's supposed to be the best. . . . How about you? Are you rich? Do you have a pig under each arm? Do you get fat in the summertime, and sleep in the wintertime? Tell me about yourself. Is your underwear the very best? Are you sure?

Constipation bother you not in the least because the Harkness man comes once a week? You bet your buttons, time is rowing down on top of you, and I heard you had a wagon up front, without your shoes on, ploughing through the mud, splattered over the front window, and nobody else to tell you. Have you heard the rest? Go home now, and light up. Father Mission is coming with his bottle of orange pop, it grows on the singsing tree, roses and robins grow on the same limb. They have themselves a great time, and you will too. Snow slips up and over you, howitzers, 88's they called them, they knew how to sing, can you? Can you ever learn, and the tired eyes or robins rolling over the snow, delving into the whispering goblet's lips of rosy red rolling now over the grease-filled stem, looking for the lost mission.

I'll come back, when the top of the mast is out of sight, when the sails have billowed back and forth and then settled down, down, down on the waters of the seas. And the tired kids floating down below.

Would you like to be one of them? You can. Really, you really can; just fill out the proper questionnaire, add two teaspoonfuls of salt, and then drift down Broadway, late at night, with your pants half-off, and half-on, waiting for the smell of the fresh sea water. You get it? Sure you do, I knew I could depend on you, because you've got what it takes: you and me, we've got what it takes, and I don't care if it takes all year. We're going to be out there fooling around, looking for the fountain of youth, and waiting for the orange grove to drop in our laps, I don't know what else I can say.

Ol' Smiley. Do you remember him? He was the one, always smiling, always laughing, everything was a joke; jerked off once just for the guys in the barracks, just for the joke, he was the one.

And, you see, there's something to be learned from ol' Smiley . . . how to smile. A smile can get you one hell of a lot of a wheres in this world today. Now where can it get you? I don't know. I don't know that I altogether care. Do you? Tell me what you care about. Robes falling from the robin's nest,

SIDNEY SHAPIRO

tigers dipping into the water's edge with their left paws, the right ones broken, and that's the way it goes. Down, down, down, and the time the tired eye broke over the fence, I heard it come down with a clash, nobody in sight, the broken fence never repaired—and the watches smashed across the broken face—do you know about that? Let me tell you a thing or two, I don't know which, but maybe you do, maybe it will all come back to you some sunny day, with the sun shining down, singing to you its latest song? Will that happen? I heard the future was ours—nobody, but nobody, could take it from us. Take your future, that's what they said. Rise up and grab it by the tail . . . A whole rung of tired eyes sketching with their pants on. I heard about that but it didn't make any difference to me. I couldn't have cared less. I heard the walking tiger slip me five, and I fingered it for a moment and then went slipping out to find one where I could spend it, like a little bit of beer, a glass of wine, or the like. Pussy, pussy, the old man said, let me pet you. He laughed, awhile, and rode the horses until we all came home, nobody in sight, just an old car along the road, broken springs, poor spirit gone, tired and bug-eyed, where would we find hope. Nowhere, out there on the onion road. Roses, roses, roses and ducks, ducks and herrings, noses and nose-cones, tigers and tiger's eye, old wood and the wooden cone, ice cream, and my mother's last wish— don't let my boy die of pneumonia, whatever else happens, don't let him die of that—silly superstition, that's all. . . . Tigers, and tiger's eye. Smoke and the old cheese pie, with its red lips parted, looking for the smoking file, parting at the waves, drifting down over the wooden track. I heard you say another horse was coming, but I didn't care. . . . Now we come to the other end, the one with the stick in it. Do you know about that one? Tell me what you know. I used to think it wouldn't happen like this, after the rose had fired itself with water,

after the still birth had come and gone, after the red tiger had lifted up his left leg and pissed against the wind, the silly son-of-a-bitch—what can you do with a silly son-of-a-bitch like that? I don't know. . . .

Now, let's look for the stick, now let's see what we can see, out there with the whistle, parting the reeds, with a watering can, out there where the time-bomb has split up, and gone, gone, gone, gone, out there where old mother end-of-it-all has drifted to the bottom of her grave, and the well-wishers have come for the last word.

It was always this way, tigers in the eye, snow on the ground, and the hurrying cone, falling over and over until it was too late, and you had hurried on, your lips full of snot, and the tears in your eyes nothing but pure simulation. Did you think I didn't know?

And yet, and yet when the morning tide drifts down over me, and the wandering eye lights on me, I wish for you. . . . Some other time, we'll find a wall that we can build, something to smoke, something to hold, to grapple with, and to hurl out against the dripping stones, bloody as usual. . . . Hear the tiger's eye, now. The hoary monster dripping with love comes from the sea, his eyes filled with a new kind of love,

SIDNEY SHAPIRO

bottoms and tops, and no onions except those made in the spring.... Down he went, the escalator going a mile a minute; speed, that was the thing and he knew that now, he knew all about that, and couldn't care less. Yet, as he drew up beside the gasoline station, he knew there was one thing more that he could do. He could indeed die ... carefully at first and then finally in full rush, with his uniform over his arm, his eyes full of tears, the blue pagoda growing higher than ever, and the Russians in full view. Stop! Stop! He shouted, but it was too late. They were coming into the vestibule, by the millions, each with his own bowl of borsch.

... Would no one ever lie down beside him and say: 'There, there, it's all over now, we have reached an agreement about you — we have decided to love you.'

Gold, gold, gold now, falling all over the sidewalk, rising up in smoke, the holy hour falling all over the snow, the slipping smoke sliding down the drain, the heavens falling, and all the Christians with their chains on, calling out.

And what can I say to them? 'Go home, go home, before it is too late, and you've lost?' That doesn't seem exactly right.... after the last rush, the winding staircase now, the hungry owl, the tired eye, blue at the sleeves, and what can I say?

The waters floating over the edge, and the green and purple tigers slipping down to the level of their eyes ... trapped! Do you understand that? You told me the whole story, riding down the wharves at night, after the others had gone, I used to think it would be too late, but now I don't care.

And yet, as lovely eyes wait for me at the gate, I know I know I know.... That once-in-a-lifetime chance ... I heard you called to me, and I swung into the open breeze, nobody smoking, nobody sniffing, only the great outdoors, full of new rivers and old.... You'll see, in the end you'll like them as good as you do the new.

And you should, because they are okay. Dad, I miss you. Come back, and tell me.... He laughed at that. Go on, my boy, just take a ride ... snow coming out of his smile. But he died. I saw it all, after the sun went down, I went along just for the ride, a few bumps, an old country lane, shadows Slip, and the world is one long banana skin.

See who this is coming up from the bed stream. Little Betsy, with her shoes on, tied at the toes, and nothing else. What can I say? Probably meant well, but it takes more than that.

Tell me, quickly now. Time's almost up. Dogs are barking
all the louder,

SIDNEY SHAPIRO

almost at the door now. You just rise up and tell me, the way
you want it, and down we'll go up and over.

Tiger, tiger, who knows the world is yours. Now I know it,
and she knows it, and somebody else . . . but who else is
there to know it? I heard it all, happy times in sight, and the
tired departing from the rose, happy, happy, are the days,
and the black wagon full of bodies coming to rest at the edge
of the precipice. But I'm not going over, I'm one of the bodies
that you see, and there are only two, or maybe three. I can't
be completely sure, that jump off the wagon, and run like
hell. That's my advice to you: Run like hell.

HOLLY BEYE

FRAME OF REFERENCE

I have been guilty of sanity.
Real seizures, lasting often
A week at a time
When I'd come in, salute the whole
Office force
Sign as many as fourteen loyalty oaths
Kiss an exposed buttocks here
And one there
And talk in a loud voice
Walking to and fro
About last night's wrestling match
The new transmission in the car
(everyone welcomes me back
And how the world situation will react
to normalcy)
To the new Diors.
I am
Guilty

Of having balanced a tea cup on my knee
And genuflected
To triviality
And been
More than polite
(To you
In any other species it would count
As idiocy
(And you
To sit in the lap of the killer
(And you . .
Loving him up.

JOHN BAKER

THE SPROCKET OF A METAPHOR

Metaphors lie in bottoms — angels
spun in the heat of a candle, burning
the pit of my sulphur.
Metaphors pull at the spokes of the angel
wheel on the dining room table.
Let them fly —
they have their places in mind among the guests and
holly.
Let them whiz!
My hands are woven in the pattern of a fan and
I am thatched now to catch anything.
Have you wrote orange-banded nouns circling
a papaya, or wound a cheap wrist watch beyond
the safety point to trumpet vines? (woven in the eaves,
a contradictory spider with a trapdoor in its hat?
A metaphor's the forward toe on fact.) Touch the stem,
then, off guard. Set angels moving, alien to their
destinations. My frond's an Earhart spinning, a
sprocket.
Alienation's a metaphor's beginning.

HELEN LUSTER

THOUGHT > < FOOD

Who doubts Oedipal love need only
Watch the lineup of tank truckers
At Turlock's Stop. Ella. The day
She walked in clutching her cheap black purse
And chintzy suitcase the management knew
They better latch on. For tourist cars
Follow to feed the lead of trucks.
She looked healthy beside all that sex,
(A hint of simmering Swedish summers,)
So they put her in a white peek-a-boo nylon,
Like but maybe not like a nurse,
And she went to work mopping counters.
The truckers don't stop to analyze,
Leaving that for the couch boys . . .
Miles measured in coffee and chili breaks
In the hot roar of the Diesel day.
It isn't the mere fact she's stacked
Or motel eyes makes her known
From Modesto to the grade at Arvin,
Hands busy jerking java, pouring,
Eyes copulating promises never kept . . .
What am I doin' tonight, h'm . . .
You see no thighs behind that counter
Which divides . . . only the top half of her.

HELEN LUSTER

IT'S NOT HER SMALL-TALK

And not just coffee she's pouring
But jugs of sweet white milk,
Swept floors and made beds,
The forgiving comfort of cool hands.
Into the jangling, gear-crashing day of need,
Along the line of her arms and nipples,
Beside the Bromo in great spouts
The fountaining love and milk falls . . .
She shows cleavage as she leans, then weans
Them from breast to cup. And they are fed.

ELLEN L. SHEARER

PROPHECY

Because
futurists—and Me—
forego the past
wed the present
Saint and Wolf
combine and
Offer Future's
enchanted Howlers
— eternal morning
movement
tireless —
Adams and Johns
propose
Apostolic
Courage in the loins
bowels — gut —
words, paint
Music
Bach's
and the Agape
love songs
The Twisterers

baseball and bowling
hockey for kids: —
The Adults — matured —
Sport on the Hills.

CHARLES B. TINKHAM

AFTER THE DIM ALL-AFTERNOON BAR

After the dim all-afternoon bar
And the longer and longer hours of evening,
After the heady talk
And the wet elbows of our summer shirts
Reflectively plunged
At the table,
After the girls with their hips
To swing a hammock between,
Their fine display of unmoved, moving desire,
We went affably out
Into the cold-snapped streets
And idled along, still snug in the bottle,
Adream in the head.
But the unseasoned cold woke us,
And spun us around like old leaves
In windy gusts,
Bringing next to the heated skin
The thought of tomorrow and tomorrow
Approaching straight and soberly.

WILLIAM A. HOFTYZER

DREAM

There was a suffering sparrow
in the living room, and a
pregnant goat
in the kitchen.
The turkey opened the oven door,
naked obscenity
scandalizing
the squirrel reading the cookbook.
The trout was swimming in the sink,
rising occasionally
to a housefly,
as the cat fried eggs.
A young Santa Claus
with a black beard
fondled a reindeer with a green nose,
as I sat on the mantel.
The alarm clock. The alarm clock!

ISSUE P. 315 · SCAN P. 65

JAMES D. CALLAHAN

DELEHANTY: UNWED FATHER

Underneath a spreading shamrock tree, Delehanty
found the five forlorn waifs
crying from hunger
One was black, one was white, one was red,
one was slightly yellow
and one was striped
Orphaned by the plagues, opined himself
a father dead of difference
a mother of despair
Not equipped to feed this brood, Delehanty
gathered five to brawny breast
and swiftly ran
In search of milk a source of infant life
found in a cow, goat, mother
or supermarket
Disregarding overwhelming odds and all
Delehanty was father to
the orphaned waifs
Who grew up straight and tall; proud
to be the sons of Delehanty
and Irish as well

THE LETTER

James Scarpacci got up in the morning and put on his socks. He felt cold and thought of lying down in bed for a little while longer, but went right ahead tying his shoelaces and then pulled on his pants and slipped his narrow blue suspenders over his shoulders.

He went over to the mirror and started combing his hair. He noticed that the cut beneath his left eye was still there and he wondered whether anyone at the store would notice it. Judging the tie that he selected wearable but not the freshest tie in the world, he stood at the mirror looping it and wondering whether he would ever be able to get up in the morning and have something awaiting him other than a tie that was not the freshest-looking tie in the world and a grey breakfast down at the corner counter-joint and a crew of men in the shipping room at the store who would probably joke this morning about where he got the cut.

He was ashamed of the cut and wondered if he could put talcum powder on it to cover it up. But he became interested in Marie's letter in his pocket again and forgot to try.

Finally he closed the door after him and went down the steps.

They were collecting trash in front of his rooming house and he turned right and walked up the street toward the car-line.

On the streetcar were people reading newspapers or just staring into space, and such a dullness came over him that he wanted to leave the streetcar and get out of the city forever. It was a passing emotion and he had no idea, really, where he could go or what he wanted; but it came to him suddenly and strongly and then went away, and he sat there, dull as anything, wondering whether at this moment Marie was not getting up again and dressing to go out again to the

employment agencies.

A kind of sorrow came over him when he thought of her going into all those places and talking to all those people about some pointless, stupid job that she would probably hate if she got it. He tried to get over this feeling by looking intently at a short fat man with a big red twist of a nose and little beady eyes buried in a newspaper. But he kept going back to her, and it wasn't until he got off the streetcar and became interested in crossing the street between automobiles that the feeling went away. A car just missed him and somebody yelled out at him.

As a matter of fact, nobody said anything about the cut on his cheek

and though he labored all day long getting out the work with the men under him, even Andy Claudman, the stout redheaded fellow who always had a joke about you, said nothing. So he decided that he had magnified the scratch in his own mind and that it was really unnoticeable.

That day was outwardly the same dull day of getting the packages of King's Department Store in order before they went out in the delivery trucks — a matter of pasting and tying labels and checking the stuff out as on every other day. But as the day progressed a rising tide of loneliness made his work seem more and more useless and his life more and more hopeless. He countered this feeling by trying to be reasonable with himself, telling himself that today was not a bit different. And he tried very hard to keep his thoughts away from her and from the letter that had been at home waiting for him last night.

After work, when he went into the washroom with all the other clerks and wrappers, he began to wonder with a terrible sinking whatever was going to happen to him now that she wouldn't see him any more. He became so anxious about his whole future that, when somebody he knew said, 'Well, how's tricks, Jimmy?', he only nodded glumly, dried

his hands on a paper towel, got his coat from his locker and went out.

A drizzle of rain was coming down and he put up his coat collar and stayed close to the buildings. The rain somehow soothed his torn feelings. He tried to keep from thinking of her by listening to the sound the tires of passing cars made on the wet street.

At a street corner he stopped and, standing close to a building, felt in his pocket and got her letter out. He did not open it but stood examining very closely the neat handwriting on the envelope. A drop of water from the awning overhead hit his name James Scarpacci and smeared it. Quickly he put the letter into his pocket and went out into the rain again.

The letter and the cut under his right eye were the only things he had of her; and both of them made him feel lonely, for both meant only that she did not want to see him any more. He could not think how he was ever going to see her again because she had told him the day before yesterday that she never wanted to see him again, and had become so angry at him when he tried to kiss her that she had scratched his eye. Thinking back to how her anger had started, he remembered that it was something he'd said about her brother Dave. She, as a matter of fact, had brought up the subject — about how Dave hadn't worked in over eight months and spent most of his time around the house during the day, waiting for the afternoon and evening to go out and drink at one or

another of the neighborhood taverns. As for James Scarpacci, he really didn't give a hoot whether Marie's brother Dave worked or didn't work, and the same for his loading up on beer in the evenings. Which was exactly what he had told Marie, and it was the wrong thing to say. And there she was, angry at him and crying about her brother Dave, and when he tried to soothe her she turned on him,

and pushing his face away from hers, scratched him . . . and then threw herself on his shoulder and cried.

They walked to her home together from the park where all of this happened, but they didn't speak. At the door, she said, with her eyes turned down: 'I'd rather not kiss you tonight.' But he had taken her then and kissed her anyhow, a little peck of a kiss was all it was, and her face was so white and she didn't respond at all, only stared over his shoulder. Then she had gone into the house without another word, and closed the door.

He guessed he just didn't understand Marie, that was all. Even today he still couldn't understand why she should become so cold over such a little nothing of a thing. Her brother. Well, he guessed she loved her brother and was worried about him. But she's supposed to love me too, isn't she? — he thought. Or maybe it was really something else. Something I don't know about — he thought. Maybe it's just that she doesn't care for me any more.

This reflection stabbed him into sudden awareness that he was walking aimlessly and was a half-block beyond his streetcar stop. And the rain was coming down harder now and his shirt was wet and cold under his coat.

Finally aboard the streetcar, he sat down and wondered what she was doing now. 'I don't want to see you any more,' she had written. 'Both of us have been foolish in trying to think we were in love.' He felt the damp envelope in his pocket and thought that perhaps she, too, had come home in the rain, soaked and alone. Perhaps she was lying across her bed at this moment, weeping. Or would she be eating supper? He could see her eating supper with her mother and brother, staring down at her plate, unable to speak, her face, her pretty little white face, lost with loneliness. Her sadness became so real to him that, after he got off the streetcar, he found himself hurrying, almost running along the street wondering if he could ever explain to her how much he loved

her.

Back in his room he changed to dry clothes and then went down to the restaurant to have something to eat before he went to see her. But the food seemed to clog his throat and he left almost all of it.

The rain had stopped; it had turned colder; yet, instead of boarding the streetcar near his rooming house, he walked toward the next stop. He wanted to go to her now, knowing that the longer he stayed away from her the harder it might be to make her know that he loved her. Yet, something held him back. He did not want the explanations and the recriminations and the tears. And more than that, he realized he could not be sure how she felt. Was it possible that she did not love him, really did not love him?

He boarded the streetcar at last—he would have to see her. It was a short ride, and then he got off and walked down the street—her street. He turned in at a small white frame house halfway down the block, noting that there was a light in the kitchen.

He rang the front doorbell and in a moment heard someone coming. The livingroom light was switched on and he saw her—she, not her mother, not her brother; his heart pounded and he could not breathe.

She opened the door, but not the screendoor, and stood there looking at him through the screen, holding the doorknob all the while as if she might slam the door at any moment.

‘What do you want?’ she said almost in a whisper.

He could not think what to say and stood looking into her round white pretty face which seemed, not full of hate, but a kind of—detachment.

‘If you don’t say what you want, I’m going to close the door,’ she said.

‘Please come out,’ he said.

She came out then, and stood in front of him. 'What do you want?' she said.

He gazed into her eyes, unable to think of a word. Then he touched her arm and tried to draw her toward him, to kiss her, but like a wild thing she escaped, hitting him on the face as she did so, and standing now a little way off, looking down at the floor of the porch. She began to cry. She cried softly to herself for what seemed a long time. Yet, somehow, her weeping and the blow she had struck him forbade him to go to her, even though she now seemed helpless and defeated. At one moment he thought of silently leaving the porch and walking up the street and never coming back. He wanted to think how victorious he would be then; how perhaps then she would look after him and forget all her anger.

But he could not bring himself to go; and standing there quite alone and apart from her, he felt more lonely than he ever before felt, and he wanted to go to her. 'Why did you hit me?' he said. She did not answer and he went up to her then and took her hands in his. And she did not resist; but he noticed how limply her hands lay in his grasp. He squeezed them ever so slightly. Impulsively, he squeezed harder. She cried out. 'You're hurting me!' 'Why did you hit me?' 'You're hurting me,' she said. 'Let me go in now.' At this instant, with the soft light from the room behind falling on her unhappy face and her silky, amber curls, she was more lovely than ever before, and he was more in love with her than he had ever been. 'I told you not to come,' she said. 'Let me go in now.' They heard her mother coming. 'Marie! Marie!' her mother was calling. 'Who is it?' The older woman stood in the doorway, her face close to the screen. 'Is that you, Marie?' 'Yes,' said Jim. 'It's Marie and Jim Scarpacci.' 'Oh, you, Jim,' her mother said, smiling because now she recognized him. 'Oh, if it's you it's all right.' And she turned and went back through the house to her supper. 'Well,

anyhow,' he said, 'your mother isn't mad at me.' Somehow this simple comment made the girl smile. And this time as he drew her in close to him she did not resist, and he gave her only the faintest kiss on her forehead. 'Let's take a little walk,' he said. 'All right?' 'All right.' 'We've been hurting each other,' he said as they walked. 'And I didn't mean to hurt you.' 'I didn't mean to hurt you either.' 'I got the letter,' he said. 'It hurt.' She made no response. They turned the corner and they were on the avenue. 'Did you really mean it?' 'No, I — guess I didn't really mean it or I wouldn't be here walking with you, would I?' 'Then I'll throw it away,' he said. 'I'll throw it away and pretend you never wrote it.' 'Yes, throw it away,' Marie said. And suddenly she smiled at him. 'My mother likes you, you know,' she said. 'I'm cold, Jim. Come on back home with me. You're just in time for dessert.'

ISSUE P. 321 · SCAN P. 71

EDMUND TESKE

Los Angeles, 1959 Many Teske prints are permanent possessions of the Modern Museum of Art (NYC) & of the Art Institute (Chicago)... part of Photography USA, last winter... shown, Carl Siembab Gallery (Boston), Cordova Museum (Lincoln)... solo, at Pasadena & Santa Barbara... on CBS(TV), talking to Wayne Thomas... illustrated books of Frank Lloyd Wright... repros in Photography Annual, 1961.

SELF RETROSPECT

Bell has exhibited and published his photographs . . . and also has written criticism of photography for Aperture, Contemporary Photographer, Trace . . . has published poetry and literary criticism widely . . . is editor of statements, which has been reproducing photography since inception . . . currently teaching at State University of Iowa.

GRESSER

Seymour Gresser photographs his own sculptures . . . on permanent exhibit, Athena Gallery (New Haven) . . . among showings: Penn. Academy of Fine Arts, Int. Exhibit (Brussels), San Angel Int. (Mexico City) . . . solo, at Lighting Gr. Gallery (NYC), many others . . . recipient Fellowship, OAS, Pan. Amer. Union, '60-'61.

Huaje Torso, 1961 (wood from Oaxaca)

ISSUE P. 327 · SCAN P. 77

DAVID LYLE

WAR & PEACE

Take Tolstoy's WAR & PEACE. As a coupling for its major projectional format, take GIRL PLAN, as herein. As further coupling, add to Tolstoy, Kant, Leibnitz, Kahlil Gibran & John Dewey. All project the same dynamogenesis format as Tolstoy, the environmental doctrine that INTELLIGENCE IN ACTION consists of a mix of 3 basic cognitions, development of which is the only necessary base for elimination . . . Not only the explosions & inventory wreckage of war, BUT, and also " " " " crime, and also " " " " auto accidents, " " " " , Each time it isn't me sufficiently, to convey to the YOU in you, the spirit of our environment as it seems to me. The environment as it models me or you or who, seems to reflect its working with us, in all/any me or you combinations, in this systematic manner, in accord with the total system concept of humanity, a system of manners, in Kahlil Gibran & John Dewey. Your PLAN pamphlet, golden ball unity symbol,* was concomitant with news of a PLAN, unity of golden key, a new Rte 17, hamburger joint, chosen by a GIRL† hi/school grad, to earn enough 10 to 4 , to go on with her PLAN to be a beautician, via school 7 to 10 , using money earned under the GoldenRoof our Rte 17 H/bgr Joint THE GIRL's choices are hers The PLAN's labor is hers, BUT, &/or, also, a working in common with others. The time involved, ot/hers & hers, is marked by the common measure

** The 'unity symbol' refers to a propaganda-for-peace publication.*

† This 'GIRL' is 17-year-old Susan Wood, whose To Conquer Space appeared

in TRACE No. 46.

DAVID LYLE

of a golden ball passing overhead, its passing marks TURNING UP volume for our vision. & also „ „ DOWN „ „ „ These framemarks, this TURNING, is volumetric like direct distance dialing. The „ „ „ are valuometric in GIBRAN 'The Prophet', 'the constanthalf-mix in our being, light & dark' in Dewey, The Edctr, 'the inherent predictive aspect in every perception.' GIRL : IPA inherent predictive aspect . IPA. PLAN IPA appears in the German Leibnitz. He specified 'to find moral identity' and (GIRL or who) to live at peace with oneself it's only necessary there be a PLAN, by a GIRL or who, consisting of a Middle Bond of Consciousness, formed by separating a state consciousness by a microcosmic(seed) bit, from another state, before &/or after itself. IPA, same format, Tolstoy's WAR & PEACE, the bonding doctrine of the 3 cognitions where middle bond of consciousness is the force of ENVIRONMENTon GIRL or who, shaping their consciousness. IPA, same format, German Kant, written at time of the spirit of 1776. the 3 cognition formula of Tolstoy in different words . . The middle BOND, macro/or micro/cosmic, in which the categorical imperative for GIRL or who, is some sort of giant-sized cognitive concern, Apostolate, career, vocation, marriage, the 3rd cognition, which alone connects any 2 ot/her cognitions, enabling them to grow, the 'semantic growth concept' a cognitive concern of Economist Boulding, modeled by GIRL AT WORK PLANAT WORK . . Either, almost always includes a man, correlating IPA, LOVE & WORK, accompanied & celebrated by the equivalent of singing commercials Always, U R my sunshine War is simply WORK, mis . . placed, like A/H is Energy mismeasured.

(Editorial reference: Glen Coffield wrote—Well, I think some modern poet someday will discover a better way not precisions, but ambiguities. Empson used the word 'ambiguity' in a play-party technical sense. I use it in a literal sense. 1956, THE BRIDGE.)

HIGHLIGHTS OF CHINESE POETRY FROM CH'U YUAN TO MAO TSE-TUNG

*

David Rafael Wang

EVERYBODY IS FRANTICALLY moving; everybody is on the go. The tempo affects the people and especially the writers who are 'the antennae of the race.' Living in America, a Chinese writer feels dis-oriented, as if he were lost in a maelstrom, or as if the ground beneath him were slipping away. The hustler may be viewed as a representative American type of this age and milieu of constant flux. He moves from place to place, going in no particular direction, going wherever his fancy blows.

A writer who refuses to keep pace with his age is in danger of losing touch with 'reality.'

Just as the 'hip' American writers are largely products of their frenetic century, the classical Chinese writers reflect the elegance and ease characterizing a bygone age of (comparative) leisure.

Yet, on closer examination, there is a continual change of tempo in Chinese poetry from dynasty to dynasty.

Owing to the influence of the Duke of Chou, innovator of the ceremonial rites, and Confucius, teacher of the golden mean, the Chinese have tried to regulate life and temper it with restraint and dignity. Regarding his table, the Chinese is an imbibor of wine rather than an alcoholic. Regarding sex, the Chinese is a mild sensualist rather than a bedroom athlete. Polygamy was popular in China, but few Chinese died of syphilis.

Yet, the greatest Chinese poets often violated the Confucian decorum. Li Po (701-762) was known as a heavy drinker and, according to legend, 'died of trying to embrace the moon in the Yellow River.' Tu Fu (713-770), generally

conceded the greatest Confucian poet, was said to have died from overeating after a long period of starvation. A gust of tears overwhelmed Li Yu (936-978), the last king of the Southern T'ang Dynasty, when he composed his nostalgic poems about his lost kingdom. And Yueh Fei (1102-1141), the most celebrated patriot in Chinese history, was a general who sang of butchering and eating the enemy's flesh.

What is Confucian in the Chinese temperament is often counterbalanced by the Taoist love of nature and freedom. The rigid Confucian scholar would not have approved of the eroticism in THE BOOK OF SONGS, the earliest book of Chinese poetry reputedly anthologized by Confucius himself, or Li SAO, the odyssey of Ch'u Yuan (332-296 B.C.).

**Red China's leading political figure.*

The Taoist symbols of Yin and Yang (the female and male principles) recur throughout all phases of the Chinese arts. Some of the earliest Chinese poems, dated long before Lao Tse (604-531 B.C.), the alleged founder of Taoism, are frankly sexual in overtone. They are either fertility poems or poems celebrating the naturalness of life, copulation, and death. In all these poems, man is always a part of the greater nature, rooted in earth, not in heaven. There is mysticism in Taoist writing, but never theology. In short, classical Chinese poetry is distinctly unChristian. Evangelistic Western poets like Milton and Francis Thompson would be impossible in Chinese. (For that matter, the Chinese Christians cannot even find an equivalent for 'sin.' They have to adapt the word 'crime' as a substitute.)

The combined effect of Confucianism and Taoism produced in China a poetry relatively free from excess (verbiage, rococo, etc.), ritually oriented (with constant reference to THE RITES, THE BOOK OF CHANGES, and pragmatic canons of etiquette), steeped in nature and nature lores, and untainted by moralistic attitudes (abounding in Christian and some Buddhist writings). From the Christian view,

Chinese poetry is amoral.

China has always been a country rich in poetry, for the people love to express their feelings in songs. What originates as a simple folk song is quite often transformed by a poet into a poem to be chanted with the accompaniment of lutes or chins. The classical Fu form is an example: poetry with suggestive musical rhythm.

In English translations, the Chinese rhythm is completely lost. But the simplicity and directness of Chinese folk-utterance can still be detected in:

THE MAID

Drives sheep through ravine With the white goat in front.
The ole gal unmarried, Her sigh reaches heaven.

‘Stroke man’s whiskers,
Watch changin’ expression.’
The shepherd unmindful . . .
Can she force him?
Aihe! Aihe!

Endless dream of the shepherd.

‘Hold man’s left arm,
Turn & toss with him.’

And, perhaps, partly revealed is the subtle but raunchy humor which so characterizes the masterpieces of Chinese literature, from LIAO CHAI (GHOST TALES FROM A CHINESE STUDIO) to CHING PING MEI (THE GOLDEN LOTUS—or also known as THE HAREM OF HSI MEN). The eroticism of THE MAID is replete in THE BOOK OF SONGS and in Ch’u Yuan’s writings, where the poet’s spiritual search is often so ambiguously worded as to suggest the trials and tribulations of a sexual union. In LAMENT OF A GREYING WOMAN, by Cho Wen-chun, the Second Century Han poetess, there is a distinct sexual undertone in such lines: For tomorrow we’ll be by the stream And I’ll lag behind you at the fork, Watching the waters flow east or west.¹ if the reader is aware of the symbolic

significance of 'the stream' and 'the fork' (the tugging of Yin and Yang).

In Tao Yuan-ming (372?-427), the union is between man and nature. The flowers and the moon in his drinking poems often cast an aura of feminine enchantment. And, similarly in Wang Wei (699-759), T'ang poet, painter, and physician, and in Meng Hao-chuan (Eighth Century), Li Po's favorite contemporary poet, the moon is often a graceful and consoling companion.

Wang Wei and Po Chu-yi (772-846) also celebrate the beauty of women, whose privations seriously move Tu Fu. PROFILE OF A LADY is a classical example of Tu Fu's empathy for a suffering wife: A pretty, pretty girl lives in the empty mountain Came from a celebrated family Now alone with her fagots.

In the civil war all her brothers were killed. Why talk of pedigree, when she couldn't collect their bones?

World feeling rises against the decline, then follows the rotating candle. Husband has a new interest: A beauty subtle as jade.

The acacia knows its hour The mandarin duck never lives alone. Husband listens to the laughter of new girl deaf to the tears of the old.

Spring in the mountain is clear, mud underfoot. She send the maid to sell jewels Picks wistaria to mend the roof

Wears no fresh flower Bears cypress boughs in her hands. Leans cold against the bamboo Her green sleeves flutter.²

(1) From LAMENT OF A GREYING WOMAN — copyright by HARLEQUIN.

No less sensitive to the feeling of women is Li Po, who 'dollies in' from a different angle, as in his SUMMER SONG:

The Mirror Lake (Three hundred miles) The slippery shore Is jammed with admirers,

Where lotus buds Burst into flowers While the village beauty Picks the blossoms.

Before the sails Breast the rising moon,

She's shipped away To the king's harem.³

Wang Chang-ling, T'ang poet, writes about the devastation of war and reveals the despoilment of nature:

I lead the horse to drink in the autumn river.

The river is icy and the wind cuts like knives.

In the desert the sun has not yet gone down;

In the shade I see my distant home.

When the war first spread to the Great Wall, We were filled with patriotic fervor. The yellow sand has covered the past glories; The bleached bones are scattered over the nettles.

He has his counterpart in Wan Chien, also of the Eighth Century who treats of the abundance of nature in laconic humor:

The third night after wedding Not knowing the taste I get near the stove. of my mother-in-law,

Rolling up my sleeves I make a fancy broth. I try it first upon her youngest girl.

Li Yu, perhaps the most tragic of Chinese poets, laments his beloved, a symbol of all that he lost, in BELLA DONNA IU:

Spring flowers, autumn moon — when will you end?

How much of the past do you recall?

At the pavilion last night the east wind sobbed.

I can hardly turn my head homeward
in this moonlight.

(2) PROFILE OF A LADY, translated by David Rafael Wang in collaboration with William Carlos Williams. Copyright 1960 by SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW. (3) SUMMER SONG, translated by David Rafael Wang in collaboration with William Carlos Williams. Copyright 1960 by APPROACH. (4) FROM CHANT OF A FRONTIERSMAN. Copyright by HARLEQUIN. (5) THE NEWLYWED'S CUISINE, translated by David Rafael Wang in collaboration with William Carlos Williams. Copyright 1959 by THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL. The carved pillars and the jade steps are still here But the color of your cheeks is gone. When asked:

'How much sorrow do you still have?' 'Just like the flood of spring water rushing eastward.'

In Su Tun-po (1036-1101), the flowers and the lakes evoke comparison with female receptacles.

The most virile of Chinese poets is, without doubt, General Yueh Fei, whose poetry simply defies translation. But, a facsimile of his feeling may be preserved in my version of RIVERS ON FIRE:

Hair standing up on end
I lean against the pillar
listening to the incessant
drum of the rain.
My eyes toward the sky,
I let out a yell,
My breast smothered with
the clash of invisible hoofs.
At thirty my achievements
match the dust and sand;
My 8,000 miles I journey with
clouds and the moon.
Why wait around?
The youthful hair turns gray,
Too late for regrets.
The humiliation of a refugee
in a foreign state
leads me to wonder when they
shall be wiped away.
I drive the dragon chariot
to mow down the alien mountains and valleys.
Comrades, when hungry eat the barbarian's flesh;
When thirsty, laugh and taste the savage blood.
Let's not wait until we recover our land,
So we can face heaven without hesitation
and shame.
The dominance of his personal feeling over the other
details of his poem, perhaps, marks the first sign of

modern Chinese poetry, in which the poet is far oftener standing as 'tall' as nature instead of being merely a part of it. In Wen I-to (1898-1946) and Mao Tse-tung (1893-), the ego is more manifest than that in the poems of classical Chinese poets. *PALETTE and SPRING IN THE SNOW-DRENCHED GARDEN* illustrate my point:

I dearly love my life,
Because I love its colors.
I won't deceive you; I am not a poet,

(6) *BELLA DONNA IU. Copyright by HARLEQUIN.*

(7) *RIVERS ON FIRE, after General Yueh Fei. Copyright 1961 by TARGETS.*

But I love the endurance of the white rock, The green pine and the great sea, the setting sun on crows' backs, The twilight woven of bats' wings. I love heroes, I love high mountains, I love my national flag unfurling in the wind, And the chrysanthemums from goose-yellow to ancient bronze colors.

And:

The northern countryside of China Is bound by miles and miles of ice. Snow flies over the border, And outside of the Great Wall Waste land stretches as though endless. The great Hwang Ho rushes in torrents Up and down the skyline. The mountains thrash like silvery snakes, Their contours soar like waxen elephants Vying with the gods in height. On a fine day, The landscape unveils like a maiden Dressing up in her boudoir. Such enchanting mountains and rivers Have led countless heroes to rival in homage. Pity that the founders of Ch'in and Han Were unversed in the classics; Pity that the great kings of T'ang and Sung Were deficient in poetry; Pity that the magnificent, the pride of heaven, Genghis Khan Could only shoot with bows and arrows. All these were of the past! For the greatest man yet — only My

dynasty, my era will show.

But, throughout Chinese poetry, the tempo never reaches the frenzy of Ginsberg's HOWL. Even Li Po at the height of his drunkenness preserves a Taoist sangfroid:

Hey, dig that yellow water straight from heaven,
 Makes it to the ocean, but never makes it back.
 Hey, ain't you got the picture your wig is turning grey:
 Had a crazy skypiece, but it faded like the snow.
 Man, when we are living, let's live it up.
 Don't let your bottle face the moon again.

What heaven lards you no man can cop: A thousand balls
 blew will come back to you.

(8) From PALETTE, by Wen I-to, translated by David Rafael Wang for KULCHUR.

(9) SPRING IN THE SNOW-DRENCHED GARDEN, by Mao Tse-tung, translated by David Rafael Wang. Copyright 1959 by FOLIO. Let's kill the goat and roast the steer; Let's kill about 300 cups of wine.

Hey, Don, hey, Dicky, help yourselves, Don't ever put
 your cups away. All you cats just cool the sounds, I'm going
 to sing you a real boss song.

My ace partner, Jack the Ripper, once gave a feast,
 Guzzled a barrel among songs and dance . . .
 Why the hell tell me you ain't got enough!
 Dig out the bread and make it to the store.
 Jazz and hot-rod are strictly for squares.
 Let's all get knocked out and never awake.
 Since when the saints and sages were not alone?
 Only a good boozier is wanted everywhere. 10

From Wang Wei and Li Yu to Yeh Fei and Mao Tse-tung, there is a distinct acceleration of poetic tempo. And generally this increased tempo coincides with an increase in subjectivity, such as in this modern Chinese poem: The Summer Palace burnt, the Winter Palace, wherever it was 'Ordre, ordre, Je suis une maniaque pour l'ordre!' (Meaning

that all those sheets are promptly sent to the wooden
laundries of the Seine, That all the shoes and sox are lined
up in rows That all the words follow each other in ecstatic
parenthesis, NOT That you and me are lined up against the
innocent wall, torn by the bullets of righteousness)

I am hid, as William Blake puts it, where nobody can see
me not Even those sad angels who busted the slippery
membrane across My stifled face so I could breathe the
incense coming in From the pavilion under Coal Hill my
brocade sleeves raveling Among the chips of jade and the
withered peony blossoms and The night of the boat-light
Dragonboat orgies on the River In pious memory of whosis
that first made the water scene With an ingenious system of
canali and Nationally Federated Dams Where nobody can see
me I read all about Jimmy Dean with 16 photographs and
more than a hundred pages of vulgar prose

Nobody can find me, I came here with that purpose, of
being alone (R . . . says we have all these self-destructive
impulses and it BUGS him, like he went to the neighborhood
soda-

(10) DRINKING SONG, freely translated from the Chinese of
Li Po for William Carlos Williams by David Rafael Wang.
Copyright 1960 by THE WHITE DOVE REVIEW. fountain for a
coca-cola and everybody/all these monster teen-age hoods/
Jumped on him at once)

Not unlike the United States Marines building teakwood
campfires Out of the Empress's bedroom furniture on the
Phoenix-Viewing Terrace roasting their wienies. 11

(11) 45 YEARS SINCE THE FALL OF THE CH'ING DYNASTY, by
Philip Whalen. Copyright 1960 by Philip Whalen in LIKE I
SAY. By permission of TOTEM Press, New York, N.Y.

HOW, Seized by Pathetic Inclination I move toward what
(and by) my words are trying to say as the oat's head moves
toward as, in the greater lean, the pine's head moves toward
as, superlatively, the child, sitting by pines or oat heads,

watching the sky move in the cloud blue still white moves
toward

by Marion Montgomery

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

A PROFESSIONAL'S VIEW

Dear Editors:

I've been meditating over the plight of the serious writer who wants to be published. There is a sociological way of putting our difficulty: that is to say, recognizing that institutions function only in their own terms. We want publishing to function one way: as a medium of creative expression. Publishers see it another way: a means of making money. Therefore, we should recognize that if we get accepted, it's for the wrong reasons . . . feel damned lucky if we are, and not resentful if we aren't, since rejection is the logical result of these facts.

The trouble with this soberly-reflective analysis is not just that it concerns our brain-children, but that there also is a moral issue involved — one that wouldn't exist if publishers didn't keep insisting they meant it our way too. Of course, some individuals in the network, increasingly few and increasingly ill informed, do mean it our way; it is because of these people that some live fish slip past the net. Usually, to be sure, the fish taken for these ritual sacrifices in the name of Art (financial sacrifices, that is) are putrified imitations of those who were alive a generation or two ago, and now the respectable avant garde.

Some years ago, I was a member of an ACLS Committee on Scholarly Publication. I tried to get creative writing included among our considerations, pointing out that the universities had largely taken over the support of little magazines and now also had poets, painters, and musicians in residence . . . that many good writers now made their living as teachers, in short that, since the Academy was assuming the role of patron, we should pay some attention to the publication of

creative works. I was voted down, of course; and one of my fellow committee members, the president of a major publishing house, assured me that no novel that was really any good went unpublished. He believed it, too.

Well, as I take an immodest, but nonetheless experienced (that is to say, in publishing and editing) look at good, unrecognized writers, I remain unconvinced.

Thomas Bledsoe

A FORTHRIGHT IRISH BILL

Dear Editors: Since November, a prestige-magazine of a Midwest university has been playing with me like cat-and-mouse. 'We like this — only . . . Try again' — on and on, month after month. Finally they hit on one poem they 'loved,' but — Being the most patient poet ever made, I revised and revised; sometimes because I felt they were right and the poem was improved. Today (from the third editor to sit on this effort), I had the poem back, with nothing except: 'Not suited to our needs.' All my life I've hated sour-grapes poets who berated certain markets they couldn't make, and said I would never be like them. Forget it— I'm joining. Where do I get my card? Who died and left these editors God? Are we all slobs without feelings — ripe for rudeness? It's a good thing the editor is beyond choking distance, because I'm tempted. Beware the Ire of an Irishman.

Poets' Union may seem a 'fun' idea — but I'm ready! . . . I think it is the lack of consideration and courtesy that bites the most. As though we were at all times expendable. Naturally the publications have to have the last word, and I would be first to admit this. But . . . where would the publications be, without writers?

Dorothy Dalton

Surrebutter (?) . . . Hic Iacet

Dear Editors:

Your comments appended to my review in TRACE No. 43 of Lawrence P. Spingarn's *LETTERS FROM EXILE* deserve a reply. Spingarn's vision is, as you say, 'colored by multiplicities of lenses,' and I agree that in itself this does not mean he is of necessity bearing secondhand witness. However, it is obvious from a close reading of his work that Spingarn's themes do not exist within his own mind with any large degree of clarity or intensity. The themes and ideas that stem from his 'vision' are, like the vision itself, secondhand. You speak of them as placing Spingarn 'in a frame of major reference.' I cannot accept this. The next step would be to suggest that because a poet writes on the major issues of our day he is therefore a major poet. No intelligent and literate man is unaware of the Great Themes of our day. Even our worst TV-commentators and writers of newspaper editorials are aware of them. What does this prove? Spingarn's use of them diminishes rather than enhances their value as ideas. In *LETTERS FROM EXILE*, they stand undeveloped, and fail even to take on a unique or original flavor.

You speak also of 'influenced' perceptions. I would not deny that such perceptions can become a poet's own, but there is beyond this a necessary element of incisiveness and power without which great poetry will not be written. I find intensity and genius and power in Yeats, in Pound and in much of Frost and Williams, but I do not find it in Spingarn. What you say of Spingarn as a social critic can be said of any number of other contemporary poets, good and bad alike. It is notable that your defense of Spingarn is in no way based on standards of excellence, and if there is anything that opens the TRACE-line to question it is this. Moreover, there is a serious fallacy in your defense of Spingarn's syntactical awkwardness, his diffusion and tumidity. The only accurate thing that can be said about them is that they add up finally to what can only be called bad writing. Therefore, the distinction you end up attempting to make between poetry

and verse is irrelevant —at least in the case of the poems at hand. Granted their limitations, poets like Winters and Ransom are refreshing for their high standards, dedication, integrity and skill. If nothing else, they are at least as valuable as intelligent grammarians, and clearly there is far more to be gained from a close reading of their works than of our friend Spingarn's *LETTERS FROM EXILE*.

Let me say in addition that I did not know at the time I did the review that Spingarn would shortly become an editor on *TRACE*. If I had known this, I would have asked for the work of another poet. I am opposed on principle to a magazine printing poems of its own editors, or to publishing reviews (no matter who does them) of their work. The fact that a man may be a contributing editor — and not participate in decisions or the editing of copy — does not, I feel, alter the case.

Robert Sward

(Epitaph: Suggest readers examine the 'comments' exciting this rebuttal to ascertain they comprised no specific 'defense' of Spingarn and no value-judgment on his book; suggest perusal of the book itself; disclaim any foreknowledge that Spingarn was to become a *TRACE* contributing editor, when Sward wrote his review; affirm no works of merit will be barred from *TRACE* merely because their authors serve on the staff.)

Query from a Hybrid 'Shade'

Dear Editors:

My name is Byron Keats Shelley Tennyson. I am a poet. I am a very good poet. I have eighteen poems in the modern manner that I want to submit to you. I could say that Prof. Snodgrass digs my work, but surely you want to make up your own mind, not just bow to Authority; I could mention that my work has appeared in *POETRY*, *PARTISAN*, *EVERGREEN*, etc., but surely you want to 'discover' your own talent, not just follow the lead of others; I could mention that I have

worked hard at poetry for thirty-seven years, but so have many untalented poets; I could write you that my poetry is such-and-such, but who would need critics if the poet's words were enough . . . or you could judge by how much poetry you now have in stock, but the editor of that narrow, rutted, commercial NEW YORKER was willing to devote an entire issue to a piece he thought important; so, answer my query: should I submit my poems?

In short: how do they write & you answer a query on poetry?

Yrs., B. K. S. Tennyson

(Editors: Providing the primary services of TRACE occupies time, and taxes energies to the utmost; in Tracing, thousands of new writings are read in hundreds of periodicals—an unequaled area for tentative solicitations. Freelance queries, if over two or three sentences, do, in themselves, offer clues—both from what their authors elect to say, and how they say it. The above ribbing is from one who has in fact been published in TRACE; and we share his regret that we cannot cull a huge onrush and also do justice to the magazine's essential functions.)

Plea for Responsible Practicality

Dear Editors:

The financial morass of most little magazines and presses can be analyzed in two major areas: A. Financial and Management Precepts; B. Information Dissemination. ifooter Lee Holland (Outcry)

SHARP DOUBTS ABOUT A 'UNION'

Rozana Webb

As an editor on SEVEN POETS Press (publishes BRAND X, etc.), I comment regarding 'Poets' Union;' I can hear it now, the public delight when the headlines read: POETS OUT ON STRIKE. What has a poet that would make him necessary? Who's to care if poets sulk in picket lines or starve in ditches? Can you live warm and safe inside a book of verse? And the union boss, a traditionalist by choice, a pedant by profession, denying membership to all who have no B.A., and who write in freer forms. Then a rival union would be organized, welcoming the avant who compose without semblance of form. One day a modernist might suddenly feel a sonnet coming on. He fights it; but this does no good. A 'head-man' is retained by the union for such stubborn cases; the afflicted is rushed to the couch, and still he is not cured. Well, they kick him out. He goes to the traditionalists, his sonnet held before him; and he's rejected forthwith as a spy. But, while he fights, the world will have been turning round and round, and an IBM will have been programmed to write all the necessary mother's verse; the poet will be allowed merely to oil the machines and change the tapes.

'LETTER' FROM No. 1 POET 'ON THE ROAD'

AMONGST PYRRHONIAN 'credits' to these years of our time, must be its pseudohistorics — not just the socio-political distortions, but the self-narrations of literary entitlements to significance; particularly, in the contemporary gradings of poetries by poets themselves. As poets — let alone poetasters — how many may be detached enough to mould comparative judgments of minimal validity? Their rollcall can be finger-counted; and yet, never has the roll of versemakers been longer, never such numbers declaiming positively upon the creations of others. Unprecedented critical confusion and

contrariety of citations!

Inordinate attention has been drawn to many; not a few remain in undeserved obscurity. Here, too, is a value-judgment. But the uninvolved readers are urged to look into Thomas McGrath's *LETTER TO AN IMAGINARY FRIEND* (Alan Swallow Paper-book — \$1.65), to make their own determinations whether McGrath — scarcely named in current categorical appraisals of 'protest' authors of impassioned auto-erotic verse — may not endure as a master in this genre.

He was composing beautiful, honest self-revelations and confessions, with more than vague overtones of universal sympathies, long before any of those commonly applauded for exposing society's ills in little-disciplined, dubiously-epical, subjective rantings (see *THREE YOUNG POETS*, 1942, and others). Much of McGrath's poetry of twenty years ago communicates strongly today; and, with this mature new work, he must be reckoned a major Poet, unexcelled by unavowing imitators — the most candid narrator of the Self that's more than self.

First: for integral oppositions of purposive intensity. Second: individuated insights and visions. Third: use of the full cultural tradition. Fourth: fresh analogies and metaphors, despite characteristic extension. Fifth: at frequent best, identifications of the word/s as Poem/s. Sixth: mastery of the line (not the same line throughout). Seventh: phrased music that sings memorability. Eighth: not simply implacable 'search,' but unremitting practice of craft. Listen:

Time has its tin ear, history drops at your gate its
yellowing gazettes . . .

Off-beat functions, seasons too soon or too late
What road to the honey tree ?

Sweetness falls,

A hawk from broad heaven sweet in his swift kill.

Softness grows on stone in the mossy watches

Its hardness keeps. And asleep in the shape of a cloud,

A brightness waits and leaps.

Hawk, cloud, stone — . .

two passages quotable out of context, as only few briefer excerpts may be, because nearly all of LETTER, unlike these lines, is ungeneralized and needs to be read in long continuities for one to perceive his art.

J.B.M.

CAMELS AND HUMMINGBIRDS

OF THE FEW POINTS ON which one might expect writers of mid-century to agree, perhaps the most significant is the feeling that as civilization becomes more complex, man's psychological and spiritual well-being decreases. As the individual recedes within himself, his needs become increasingly inarticulate, and experience becomes chimera. The existential or 'absurd' hero, the nonhero, is a product of this divorce between sensation and experience. Even in the rare moment when the existential hero achieves fulfillment, the moment itself often proves destructive.

Henry Miller's greatest concern has always been with precisely this divorce between sensation and experience; but, as George Orwell has noted, the Miller hero stands out as a happy man. He is as outre as the existential hero, but the basis for this 'outness' is more lyrical than philosophical, springing from Miller's own Whitmanesque faith in the individual. Critical attempts to set Miller into a conscious philosophical tradition (or, yet worse, a self-conscious one) do him extreme injustice. 'Man is not at home in the universe,' Miller asserts, 'despite all the efforts of philosophers and metaphysicians to provide a soothing syrup.'

In his latest work, *STAND STILL LIKE THE HUMMINGBIRD* (NEW DIRECTIONS — \$4.), Miller again announces his intention to consider the 'plight of the individual.' The solution offered in this series of essays will be familiar to anyone who knows his novels. What results from a reading of this collection is the feeling that it is as unfortunate for Miller to be analytical as it often is for the Miller critic. When motivated by the same essentially lyrical and at least apparently spontaneous impulses motivating his novels, Miller's essays are engaging. But when he dons the robes of the Sage of Big Sur, he flits

embarrassingly from the tiresome ('We bewail the role of the mother in America, her domination in all spheres of activity, but is it not the result of the male?') to the sophomoric ('the American public seems . . . indifferent to the spiritual pabulum it receives.)).

Miller is at his best when talking about contemporary ferments in European letters, and especially, about Ionesco. The well-known satire, *MONEY AND HOW IT GETS THAT WAY*, which brought to an end Miller's tenuous friendship with Ezra Pound, has splendid comic moments, and alone would justify the publication of this collection despite the obvious flaws of many of its companion pieces. *STAND STILL LIKE THE HUMMINGBIRD* does not play a significant part in the mammoth autobiography on which Miller has worked for three decades, but it does confirm the consistency of Miller's comic point of view, his faith in individual rather than social action, and his belief that man can distill pleasure and satisfaction from a disordered universe.

When sensationalism and cultism have ceased to cloud Miller's position in American letters, we may well find him to have been one of the influential writers of our age. The novels and short stories of Paul Bowles, for example, center around explorations of experience which clearly owe a great deal to Miller. Almost all of Bowles' heroes are seeking new or renewed experience; and among the arts they have lost is that of making love. Kit Moresby of *THE SHELTERING SKY* seeks to give this aspect of her life meaning when she enters the harem of Belquassim, even though her background prevents her from full acceptance of this role. While Bowles' heroes and heroines are more philosophical in their 'outness,' they share essential premises with Miller's persona. Their own debilities are underscored by their being placed against a vital North African society.

In a new collection of stories, *A HUNDRED CAMELS IN THE COURTYARD* (*CITY LIGHTS*—\$1.25), Bowles shows the quest for

communication realized, though only by smoking kif. Central characters of the four pieces all illustrate the plight of the individual. Salam (A FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE) is a Moslem living among Jews with whom he never speaks: 'For him they had no names.' The suggestions of a kif dream enable him to plot a course to make himself felt in the world. The syphilitic Ben Tajah (HE OF THE ASSEMBLY) lives alone and has no friends. When he receives a sign from the devil and realizes the importance of communicating his emotions to someone, he is at last able to do so under the influence of a pipe of kif. His walk through Fez with his new and youthful companion is reminiscent of the early morning walk of Stephen Daedalus and Leopold Bloom, although the Fez encounter is more spiritually satisfying. The quickened refinement of sensation attending the kif smoker's reveries is not merely escape — no more than sex, alcohol, or food create escape in Miller's world. It is a way out of the phenomenological world, promising man renewed hope for reentering that world. 'A pipe of kif before breakfast,' reads an old Nchoui proverb, 'gives a man the strength of a hundred camels in the courtyard.'

Bowles has arrived at the optimism suggested, by a difficult road. Kit Moresby ended her odyssey in extreme dementia. Dyar (LET IT COME DOWN) never achieves realization: he is a spy who never spies, a thief who steals only legitimate money, a murderer who murders by accident. Only with Amar (THE SPIDER'S HOUSE) do Bowles' current visions begin to take shape; though wholly alone at the conclusion, his life has achieved definition it never before possessed. Communication is realized in A HUNDRED CAMELS . . . ; but it is almost exclusively that of violence, potentially as self-destructive as the existential point of view by which Bowles also is clearly influenced. Bowles' vision lacks the robustness of Miller's, and its real test is yet to come; in many ways this current vision, though hopeful, is as frail as

the house of the spider.

David D. Galloway

HONOR GUARD

THE NOVEL IN THE WESTERN WORLD AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HAS an astonishingly rich patrimony. From the Italian novella (short story) and Samuel Richardson's PAMELA, its length has marched to the giganticism of Proust's seven-volume A LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU.

Its forms are numberless: the romance, the saga, the biographical novel, the epic, the moral or social agent; the first or third person perspectives, even (*rara avis*) the occasional use of second person; realism, surrealism, free-verse novels; etc.; and experimental forms too diverse to catalogue.

Its roots spring from Hebrew, Arabic, Oriental, Greek, Latin, Moorish, Scandinavian, and many other sources of mythology and language.

The devices employed in the literature of the novel today range all the way from the simple narrative to the Wagnerian thematic complexity of Thomas Mann. To mention only a sampling of the current variety: Durrell's THE BLACK BOOK (from which THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET later emerged); Beckett's MALONE DIES; Hesse's MAGISTER LUDI (or his STEPENWOLF); Rechy's HEY WORLD!; Burrough's NAKED LUNCH; Briffault's EUROPA and EUROPA IN LIMBO; Patchen's THE JOURNAL OF ALBION MOONLIGHT; Lockridge's RAIN TREE COUNTY; and on and

In their just-published CONCRETIONS and THE DIALOGUES (GEORGE WITTENBORN, Inc. — \$5. ea.), Arlene Zekowski and Stanley Berne, respectively, have urgently attempted to add something to this inheritance. Their failure is sadly complete.

Eschewing the heritage of the novel altogether, each has employed a single literary device on which the entire book, as well as the case for any originality, must rest.

In her CONCRETIONS, Zekowski's 'device' is the avoidance of any recognizable elements in the form of the contemporary novel. What has been advanced, in place of the customary basic structure of phrases, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, etc., is a nascent architecture of continuous phrases, cut off from each other with the mercifully repetitive punctuation of the sentence. The phrases are uniformly terminated as sentences, and the sentences as individual paragraphs. At more or less regular intervals, groupings of these sentence-paragraphs are terminated as chapters.

Deliberately amorphous and assertive, these 'sentences' are not arresting, but labored and dull. How, for instance, is the following illuminated —

How lucky magical is man, the maker of his makings; but the wonder of it still is what the purpose, for the echo of the answer is not found.

by rendering it —

How lucky magical. Is man. The maker of his makings. But the wonder of it still. Is what the purpose. For the echo of the answer. Is not found.

with this bludgeoning reiteration of sentence terminations?

The ill-considered . . . and overwhelming . . . repetition of this pattern, alone, subverts any questionable value in such painstaking obscurity.

Developed in a roughhewn form of question and answer, Berne's THE DIALOGUES also parts belligerently, chaotically, and tediously with tradition. The Berne 'device' is the reliance on a minimum of punctuation, eliminating anything more subtle than a period, a comma, or a question mark. And these are used as sparsely as possible. Along with this conscientiously unpunctuated flow, the sense of these queries and responses has been disguised as much as possible in a deliberately-obscure, quasipoetic phrasing that overworks articles, adverbs, pronouns, and prepositions:

—Not speak of it, the father of religions as behind closed doors as shawls of the oriental fathers of the desert of tents and worship as the people who were pastoral, calm, peace, their jeweled women of dancing on their knees of sweet flesh that farts that juice that limbs that ask freely of ask that naked as entry beg that hard up the far city cloister of walls—

The leprosy of clarity and the carcinoma of meaning are pathologically avoided with the wonder-drug of obscurity-for-obscurity's-ownsake.

And these 'novels' have other weaknesses. . . .

Zekowski's CONCRETIONS is filled with abstracts! It rarely utilizes the 'concretions' of pointed and clean imagery. It is stuffed also with rootless and affectedly-ungrammatical assertions, flung out like disconnected fits of petulance :

'This then you must.'

'Which it is.'

'And you can know it not.'

'It is here then.'

'And this is so.'

'We'll never know.'

'This then. Is very strange.'

'That this we know alone. And nothing more.'

The questions and answers in the Berne epic are frequently so involved that it becomes impossible to judge who is speaking, whether a question is being asked or answered. And some of the most important questions arise ex abrupto out of context, hurled suddenly at the reader in the manner, for example, of a bad poet filling out verbose and weak stanzas with fragmentary and posturing quotes from the works of better poets, to hint at depths of meaning which are lacking in the actual conception and execution. Worse than this inconsequence, the more serious and arresting the question posed, the more likely it is to be answered with a 'mysterious' turn of phrase or a mere

vaguery. Some of the values expressed or implied in this fashion betray a shocking poverty of spirit and judgment :

— Yes, being legislators, controlling our happiness, wellbeing, our futures, we grow weak and resentful, they grow more powerful, more alert, more daring, conscious of our inferiority, they are bold to grow more flagrant in their display of their natural advantages.

— Where will it end ? (Reviewer's italics.)

— We as men must grow weaker still, until science can come to aid us . . . (!!!)

Or, again :

— You hate man then

— Yes. He has fewer senses than his dog.

Irony is a subtle art; but not as it misfires here.

If the desired effect of these 'novels' has been to make the reading of their prose stultifyingly difficult, the authors have moderately succeeded. If the point of labor is some remuneration or reward, then the point of such extraordinary labors, logically, ought to be an exceptional return. Here, the exceptional merit demanded of the reader is deliberately treated with an unmistakable contempt by the authors, who seem to take pleasure and pride in their achievement of a kind of veil of innuendo, disassociation, obscure language hurdles, arty choices, pseudo poetry, and hit-and-run metaphors. The 'occult' results, of course, are easily confused with some undefined (and undisciplined) possible avant-garde intent which the gullible reader, too willing to give an undeserved benefit of a severely-deserved doubt, may attribute to the authors.

Contributing measurably to this artistic and thematic doubt are the so-called illustrations that fail to break up the grim monotonies of the author's humorless self-absorption. Herman Zaage is responsible for the cover designs and title pages of both books. Milton Avery has failed to illuminate or even decorate CONCRETIONS with his illustrations. Matta's

drawings shed about as much light and meaning on *THE DIALOGUES*.

The work of all three artists does much to cheapen already precariously-artificial prose. The elimination of these mechanistic and determinedly 'original' decorations from the contents of both five-dollar paperbacks would enormously mitigate the more-than-suggestion in this form of publication of a sort of aggressive poverty. The English have a word for such artless impudence: they call it cheek!

In their *CARDINALS & SAINTS* (METIER Editions, 1958)—refer to Editor J. B. M.'s criticism, TRACE No. 30—, Zekowski and Berne assert that the novel, in its present forms at least, is doomed. The 'evidence' for this . . . interesting claim . . . is evoked with another assertion: that the language of the novel has its roots chiefly in Latin, a dead language. Apart from the naivete of judgment revealed in such spurious and contrived logic, the gaps pointed up by this sort of 'criticism' in the authors' backgrounds are large and damaging.

The 'styles' of *CONCRETIONS* and *THE DIALOGUES* are no honor guard for approaching literary seismographic tremors. Whether intended as a prop to support the medium, or as a substitute to replace the novel entirely, and with every allowance for their ineptness, they exhibit a painfully inadequate craft and the artistic reach of very third-order talents.

A. Fredric Franklyn

A HEADY KIND OF POETRY

FIRST COLLECTION OF SOME of Sue Abbott Boyd's work (DECANTER, Poems 1952-1962, SOUTH & WEST Publications — \$1.) is not for pedantic tastes. There is a lack of conformity, both in form and in thought, which may confuse or annoy some traditionalists or, shall we say some of the more obtuse (not to imply any similarity). Primarily free verse, there are occasional rhymes; but always, original technique and presentation. The lack of punctuation (a practice which usually is anathema to this reviewer) does not seem to impede the flow of communication between the poet and the reader — a prime requisite.

Mrs. Boyd has captured a rare bouquet and flavor, a heady kind of poetry which is sharp, well defined, and unique. Bound in an unpretentious paperback of eye-catching color, these poignant and often incisive poems startle or delight, but never bore a reader who is capable of becoming part-creator through the subtleties of transmuted experience. There is an honesty and forthrightness that eradicates sham in poems, many of which slice to the quick of society's foibles and banalities. For example, THREE HOURS PRIOR TO A POETRY DAY BANQUET. And from TIME OF TRUTH:

Need we mention the needy
to the needy, on a Fourth
of July picnic, greedy
with knowledge, and so sun-burst
from having fired hi-fi
firecrackers for the worst
lads of the lot, those urchins

...

Need we mention
these lads to the several
old maids standing like statues
of wood, do-good, so good, you
do-do-good old maids, by whose
courtesy the fireworks
were fired . . .

Whether weaving imagery around some everyday
occurrence or making a profound commentary on
the contemporary scene, as she so often does, she
intrigues with her free combination of skill and
artistry. She is a master of compression, sometimes
challengingly so. There's also a tenderness and
awareness such as in her *THE PURE PATTERN*: 'During
a pure, white time / the mind thunders pulses, /
wind writes poetry on fences . . . ;' and, 'one moth
becomes a lily- / cluster in air . . . '

Some may find her staccato, stream-of-consciousness
poems frustrating; while others will savor them over
and over, unstopping her *DECANTER* whenever the
hour is drab.

Florence Rubert Wray

THE OLD PROFESSOR OFFERS ADVICE IV

THE FIRST JOB

Tom Roberts

*(Another of the series of satirical sketches, begun
in GRADUATE STUDENT ENGLISH and continued in
TRACE.)*

'THE FIRST YEAR AT ONE'S first job!' How many pleasant memories the phrase evokes for an old teacher! The painstakingly casual investigation of the department power-structure, the jockeying for important committee appointments, the gambling on key Friendships. the subtle undercutting of one's rivals: the wonderful sense of being completely alive and of being young and — yes — of being engaged in tremendous mortal struggles, silent though they are, on important issues. And after the assistant professorship is won and one's colleagues have been tactfully advised to apply to other schools, the intoxication of triumph! All of these, I hope my young reader has in store for him . . .

You have finally completed your graduate work and have reported, with your rivals, for your first job. No doubt you have already been informed that this is not one of those colleges that throws most of its instructors out in the cold after a year or two. If you have the right stuff in you, you will have smiled quietly to yourself (perhaps a question will have popped into your head: 'Does everyone get everything he wants in this department, then?') You will have assessed your rivals carefully: The brilliant young scholar whom the department regards as its finest catch — no trouble cutting him out. The older members of the department will fear and envy him and they can easily be encouraged to distrust him; he will neglect his political fence-mending, he will be lonely, and your friendly hints will encourage him to apply elsewhere, thus infuriating the department. And the young men from the Eastern schools — they will be more difficult

because they have had excellent training. Finally, those young men like yourself, whose willingness to put in long, hard, responsible hours of work and whose training and talents will be put to the severest test. I hope that you will feel the seriousness of the situation, but I hope too that you will feel some exhilaration at the thought of the coming struggle. If you do not, you will never really enjoy your academic life, but — more important — you may stint that last jot of time and energy that only labors of love draw from us. In the rough but wholesome infighting that is academic life, they can ill afford to be wasted.

The manipulation of opinion by remote control: this is the young aspirant's task. You must set to work with a will, first locating the power-foci in the department, then shaping those minds through the subterranean channels by which they normally gain their information. How simple — but how difficult! (And I must say that it is depressing to see this crudely done: the sneer when a friend is praised — thoughtful hesitation is much more effective: the greedy attention paid to Professor's remarks — a slowly-earned respect will give them much greater satisfaction: etc. Nobody respects a hatchet murderer.) But space is inadequate for even sketchy treatment. Let my young reader consider merely a few of the many questions the ambitious young man will seek answers for, with that quiet, friendly smile and ready interest that encourages the all-important departmental gossip and complaining, without ever seeming to hear it.

The first question for anyone seeking to 'do in' his colleagues will always be Who? Who really decides on promotions? Who among them might feel a rivalry with you? Who will observe your teaching? Who has contacts with editors and publishers? Who are the non-department people one must hate? Everyone in the School of Education? The football coach? The president? The entire Speech

Department? Who among the students have the ears of important professors? Who really believes in something? (Perhaps my own modest coinage may be of some use: 'Locate the conviction and the man is yours!')

And then you should ask What? What should you feel about your teaching? Are you dedicated or uninterested? What should you feel about research? What should you feel about the school? Contempt? Embarrassed loyalty? Disinterest? And what niches are opening? The Eighteenth Century replacement? The assistant to the man in charge of Freshman English? The chairman's undercover friend? The prolific writer the department lacks?

And then How? How do you 'get to' the key figures (The aspiring young man, wishing to be regarded as a like-thinker, might well incur the intense dislike of the enemies of his targets. Their complaints about him will make his men feel — without ever stopping to think about it — that he is 'the right sort.' A simple trick, but it has frequently been a solace in my own career.) How do you get on the committees whose memberships include the key figures? (What better place to demonstrate your basic soundness — eh?) How can you get your thesis published? (Which are the respectable subsidy presses?) How can you awe the important students, the ones whose casual remarks, dropped in the eager ears of the senior staff members, are of the grapevine that shapes opinion?

But, also, When? and Where? and Why? Yet, the talented and well-trained young man will hardly need even the questions I have given. To the novice, I have space to say only this: Read those questions carefully, making sure that you have grasped their direction and power. Ask more questions. Find answers. Then go to work! And may all your colleagues end up in Teachers Colleges!

P.J.V.

endemics : 5 These are objects of it : self; Poverty and pity
— equals, Turning inside our Like tongues slavoring
Unripened plums. These are objects. This poverty, Injected
with seed And as unburied; This pity, Clarified with night
Lying prone with loves These objects. by Lee Holland

ISSUE P. 351 · SCAN P. 101

DECLARATIVE

Nature, no more, I swear, Will I with me astound you.
Whether or not no sun But will in my deep garden Shine in
first, because My doubled eyes click inward always Before
they fall on flowers. by Kenneth Hunter Brown