

BACHY



5 1975



BACHY

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A READING EDITION

Certain Indian tribes . . . use the same word for "dancing" and for "working" . . . since in their scheme of things dance and agriculture serve essentially the same purpose . . . The growth and prosperity of their crops seems to them to depend as much or more on the correct performance of their dances . . . than on prompt and proper attention to the soil.

Ernst Cassirer

THE MAGAZINE

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BACHY is a semi-annual journal dedicated to the discovery of previously unpublished artists of worth. A major portion of our pages is reserved for relatively unknown contributors. We publish all kinds of material — except sentimental, academic, or metaphysical-bullshit. We are interested in all literary and graphic art easily reproducible in black and white (no color). Poetry, fiction, essays, reviews, plays, photographs, line drawings, cartoons, musical compositions, costume and set design for the theatre — all are acceptable. Payment is in author's copies. Reporting date is about eight weeks. We are not responsible for return of submissions unless they are accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscription price: \$4.50 per year. Single copy price: \$2.50.

ABOUT THIS EDITION

——— This is a complete reading text of the fifth issue of *Bachy*, published in 1975 by the Papa Bach Bookstore on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Los Angeles. It was made from a scan of a print copy, transcribed page by page from the page images. The page follows the magazine's own arrangement — the contents set as Papa Bach set it, the heavy display face of its section titles, its habit of spelling page numbers out in words, and its Bach device, cut from the cover of this very copy. The reading text departs from the original in one respect: *Bachy* was composed in a sans-serif, and this edition is set in a serif, which carries verse better over a long sitting. Each contributor, and each poem, begins on a fresh page.

Words in teal brackets are editorial reconstructions — a character or word that could not be read from the scan and has been inferred from context, from the facing page, or from the magazine's own back matter. There are 11 of them. [?] marks something illegible that could not responsibly be guessed. Everything in black was read directly off the page.

The copy is tightly bound, so the inner margin runs into the gutter and character accuracy falls away there: right-hand pages lose the first few characters of a line, left-hand pages the last few. No whole line or word was lost on either side; the damaged characters were recovered by magnifying the page images, and the few that could not be are marked.

Four leaves of the scan are duplicates — printed pages 51, 52, 131 and 132 were each photographed twice. The repeats have been dropped. **No leaf is missing**: the printed sequence runs unbroken from page one to page one hundred fifty-one.

Bachy was a magazine of pictures as much as poems. Nine portfolios ran through this issue — photographs by John Findlater, Jan Gealor, Susan R. Rubinstein, Kim Canazzi, Byron Petrides and Steve Cohen, line drawings by Mary Trainor and Lorayne Lipps, and animal drawings by Jeanne Harvey. The artwork is not reproduced here. In its place, the list overleaf records every image and where it stood.

Printed typos, eccentric spellings and compositor's errors are kept as they were set. Beyond the bracketed reconstructions, no editorial matter appears once the text begins.

This edition was set in TeX Gyre Pagella, with contributors' names in Bonum after the magazine's own display type. The Bach device is the magazine's own, taken from the cover of this copy.

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THE ARTWORK

None of the pictures in *Bachy 5* is reproduced here. What follows is a list of the 44 images the issue carried and where each one stood, so that this reading text can be held against the object. Page numbers are the magazine's own.

Front cover — a heavy black brush/scratchboard portrait of J. S. Bach in his periwig filling the page, with "Bachy 5" set very large in a heavy calligraphic serif beneath it.

Inside front cover A blank leaf.

Title page — the same inked Bach head at about one-third size, centred above the title.

Masthead page A lanky, grinning man in a baggy jacket and enormous flared trousers and clown-sized shoes towers over a tiny figure at his feet, thrusting up a pennant lettered EXCELSIOR, captioned along his shoe-tops "A BANNER WITH A STRANGE DEVICE".

Scan page 10 A blank leaf.

Page 4 A pen-and-ink caricature of a grotesque, jug-eared head with a polka-dotted floppy hat, dark glasses and a lolling grin, its long neck rising out of a checkered tablecloth-like base.

Page 13 A soft-focus photograph of a young woman in a wide-brimmed hat seated inside a car, her face framed by the windshield and steering wheel as she gazes out at the camera.

Page 14 A photograph of a small parking attendant's booth plastered with signs — "NO CYCLES or CAMPERS," "STOP," "NO HEAVY TRUCKS," "PARKING \$1.00" — standing on empty asphalt beneath the vast timber scaffolding of an overhead structure.

Page 15 A photograph of a barefoot young woman in a vest and shorts sitting on a low brick garden wall beneath a gnarled tree, ferns crowding behind her, her head bowed and one arm resting on a raised knee.

Page 16 A photograph of a nude woman huddled in the bare corner of a room, knees drawn up and arms wrapped around her ankles, her

	<i>long dark hair falling loose as she looks toward the camera.</i>
Page 24	<i>A black-and-white photograph looking past the enormous foreground tire of a semi truck down a receding row of parked tractor rigs with chrome exhaust stacks on an empty asphalt lot.</i>
Page 25	<i>A black-and-white photograph of two long-haired girls leaning on a ledge in bright sun, one biting on a thin stick, the other in a striped tank top hugging a folded towel and squinting at the camera.</i>
Page 26	<i>A black-and-white photograph of a brick wall painted with the huge white word MARS above a white double-headed arrow sign.</i>
Page 27	<i>A black-and-white photograph of a turbulent cloud-filled sky streaked with light flares and a bright starburst, framed at the left by the curved gooseneck and hood of a street lamp.</i>
Page 41	<i>A brooding black-and-white seascape in which a bank of storm clouds hangs in layered bands over a dark ridge of mountains while the last light glazes a flat, empty shoreline in the foreground.</i>
Page 42	<i>A silhouetted mountain range, one sharp peak rising at the right, doubled perfectly in the mirror-still water of a lake beneath a luminous dusk sky.</i>
Page 43	<i>Close-up photograph of a young woman raising an Asahi Pentax to her eye, her ringed fingers around the Super-Takumar lens, in whose glass a tiny figure stands against a striped sunset sea.</i>
Page 61	<i>A woman in a sundress, seen in near-total silhouette against the blinding white glare of an open doorway, one arm braced high on the jamb and her skirt flaring in a half-turn.</i>
Page 62	<i>A high-contrast photograph of a woman swathed in sheets of gauzy translucent cloth, her head thrown back and her long crimped hair spilling down into the black ground.</i>
Page 63	<i>A nude woman photographed from behind against a dark grainy field, her long hair blown out in a bright halo and a length of sheer white netting sliding off her hips.</i>
Page 64	<i>A close portrait of a young dark-eyed woman with tousled hair and a bare shoulder, printed with a rough black brushed border.</i>

Page 65	<i>Seen from outside through the panes of a double-hung sash window, a nude woman kneels on a bed beside a drawn curtain, a pull-ring dangling from the blind above her.</i>
Page 66	<i>A grainy, solarized image of a woman in a long white dress holding a wide flowered straw hat behind her back while a second figure in white bends toward her against a bare wall.</i>
Page 67	<i>A small dark-uniformed figure stands on a concrete platform beside a wooden ladder, arms flung up as streamers of white paper unfurl through the air over the brush behind, an old tire lying on the wet asphalt in the foreground.</i>
Page 68	<i>A dark-haired woman in a white tank top, her eyes shadowed with heavy makeup, reclining against embroidered brocade cushions and gazing down at her own hands.</i>
Page 79	<i>A crowded scratchy-pen political fantasy: a bearded giant in a spangled cape looms over a flying saucer lettered "PROGRESS" trailing a tiny American flag, while at centre a bemedalled potentate in a jewelled crown speaks into a microphone under a balloon reading "MAH FELLOW PETROPAVLOVSKINS..."; a banner across the platform reads "HIS IMPERIAL HIGHNESS PRINCE VOOKA THE FIFTH SPEAKS TO A CAPACITY (ADORING) CROWD."; signed "Trainor".</i>
Page 80	<i>A loose single-line drawing of a bug-eyed man in a suit recoiling with his hand up as a snarling, sharp-toothed television set with arms and rabbit-ear antennae leaps at him, its cord still plugged into the wall socket.</i>
Page 81	<i>Six spot drawings of a small suited office man carrying a cardboard box, hand-lettered: "I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU PEOPLE FOR ALL THE NOTHING YOU'VE GIVEN ME OVER THE YEARS." / "I'VE KEPT IT ALL IN THIS BOX. I EVEN HAD IT INSURED." / "ON SUNDAYS I PUT IT OUT ON THE WINDOW SILL TO GET SOME SUN." / "AND ON WEDNESDAYS I ALWAYS PUT FRESH PAPER ON THE BOTTOM OF THE BOX... USUALLY THE CLASSIFIED ADS." / "IT MAY SEEM LIKE A LOT OF BOTHER FOR NOTHING, BUT I NEVER HAD MUCH OF MY OWN BEFORE AND... OOPS!..." — the box tumbling</i>

away and the last figure standing empty-handed; signed "TRAINOR".

Page 82

A skinny bespectacled little man in a baggy suit stands hands-on-hips facing a huge bald bull-necked man whose mouth gapes open in a shout while a second squat man cringes in front of him; signed "TRAINOR", captioned "WHY DON'T YOU EVER SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, HARALD?"

Page 83

Three sketched encounters between a wary young man and a grinning street vendor with a tray of goods, each captioned in hand lettering — "HE SAID, 'TAKE ONE.' / 'THE SUPPLY IS MORE THAN AMPLE' / 'NO.' I INSISTED, / AS WITH PRIDE I RESISTED, / BUT STILL HE PERSISTED / TO TRY TO GIVE A FREE SAMPLE."; "HE SAID, 'TRY ONE.' / 'THEY'RE MORE THAN DELICIOUS...' / I WOULDNT. / AND THOUGHT I REALLY SHOULDNT. / AND SAID I REALLY COULDN'T. / HE ADDED, '...NOT TO MENTION NUTRITIOUS'"; "HE SAID, 'HAVE ONE.' / SO TO HUMOUR HIM I TOOK FOUR / AND LET HIM UNDERSTAND / HIS GENEROUSITY WAS GRAND / AS I SHOOK HIS HAND / AND POCKETED TWO MORE."

Page 84

An impossible totem of men in enormous laced sneakers — a tall thin man clutching a smaller grimacing man who in turn holds another, the stack rising into a pair of vast trousered legs topped by a tiny figure far above.

Page 85

*A grinning tuxedoed host in mid-gesture stands astride his evening-gowned wife, who lies flat on her back on the floor in pearls while two tiny guests wait far off at the door; hand-lettered title "THE HOSTILE HOSTESS", signed "**Trainor**", captioned "DEAR, WOULD YOU CONSIDER RISING TO GREET OUR GUESTS?"*

Page 86

A bespectacled woman in a sleeveless shift, seen from behind on a hilltop, throws back her head and shouts at a rayed sunrise over cartoon mountains and scalloped clouds; her speech balloon reads "BEAUTIFUL."

Page 91

A finely stippled pen drawing of an Arabian horse's head and arched neck in profile, forelock tumbling over a large liquid eye, the muzzle dropping toward the lower left corner of the page.

Page 92	<i>A slashing, scribbled pen-and-ink sketch of a cowboy in a broad hat clinging to a plunging bucking bronco, dust boiling up around its hooves.</i>
Page 93	<i>A violently energetic pen sketch of a rider pitched forward over the neck of a rearing, twisting horse, its tail flying and hooves scattering scrawled clods of ground; signed "Lipps."</i>
Page 104	<i>A high-contrast black silhouette photograph of an amusement-pier tower and its skeletal latticework crane arms rising against a blank white sky above a dark hulk of rooftops and railings.</i>
Page 105	<i>A photograph looking out to a grey sea through the black silhouetted pilings of a pier, barnacle-crusting posts cutting the horizon into vertical bands with surf breaking behind them.</i>
Page 106	<i>A photograph of a surfer in silhouette wading out through the shallows with a board under one arm, the backlit water exploding into hundreds of starburst highlights.</i>
Page 124	<i>Two long-horned oryx lock their rapier horns head-down in a duel on bare, stony desert ground, their striped flanks straining as dust and pebbles scatter around their hooves; signed "J.HARVEY 73".</i>
Page 125	<i>A clouded leopard, printed sideways on the page, creeps head-first down a shadowed tree trunk amid foliage, its dappled coat and long spotted tail vivid against the dark bark; signed "J. HARVEY 73".</i>
Page 126	<i>A lone African elephant strides through short grass, ears spread, trunk curling back beneath long pale tusks, its wrinkled hide rendered in fine pencil shading; signed "J.HARVEY 73".</i>
Page 137	<i>Two black-and-white photographs — above, a nearly black night scene where a shadowy figure stands amid scattered points of light; below, a young woman smiling out of the cab of a van beside a huge pin-up poster of a woman in a slipping gown.</i>
Final leaf	<i>The word "Bachy" set as a giant vertical logotype down the left of the page.</i>

Charles L. Johnson

MUSIN' ABOUT LIT

Me 'nd a buncha farmhands had got outta th' house one night 'bout a year ago, I reckon, and after complementin' a few assorted farm animals we was all together in the back of the barn, wore out, soakin' up some eighty-cent wine, and bullshittin' about literature.

"Shee-yit," said Jacky Ted; "They aint nuthin' I like more'n one uv them writers what got hisself a good--and I mean *rilly* good--light style, wifout a whole pile'a goddam mult-eye-sillabik combinash'ns, but at th' same time 'ats got movement, and imaginash'n, all in th' same swoop." And 'long the while as ol' Jacky Ted was describin' all this, he was a'puttin' hisself right good into th' gestures which went along t' support his claim: he slapped his leg on the important words, like 'rilly' (important to him, leastways), and 'movement,' all th' time as he was keepin' one hand wavin' and flowin' like a bird--same's that there style he was tellin' us about, y' might say.

Loony Joe was th' next guy to interject a notion in the proceedin's. Now he wadn't crazy a'tall; all the fellers called him that 'cause he was so dam good at imitatin' somebody what was. Like the time he sauntered into the new store in town, owned by a feller named Ed Jackle, and took some pork and beans off'n the shelf. He stood there a'lookin' at the can and a'kissin' it for nigh onta fifteen minutes. Ol' Ed was almost in tears not knowin' what to do, when Loony Joe hauled back and throwed the can through the winder and ran out yellin' "Mamma jus' loved them beans, she jus' loved 'em!" Ed couldn't do nuthin' but wait till he got his breath back. "Them head doctors aint worth a flyin' fart," he said.

"By doggies!" whipped out Loony Joe; I'll hafta agree wi' JT, but still you'uns all know that he's hardly scratcht th' surface. Hell, they's a lot

more thangs we gotta take into considerash'n." He swigged long and hard at his bottle, swallowed deep one last time, 'n kept goin'.

"'Cause," he said, "if'n you don' watch out, you gonna end up wif a mess'a crap that flows too easy." And lookin' Jacky Ted right smack in the eye: "Runny bowels, JT, *runny bowels!*"

And on that'n we dam near spit our teeth out from laffin'. Joe'd sure'n hell nailed Jacky Ted up 'ginst the barndoor on that piece'a humor, but Jacky Ted he'uz just as choked up as all us others. Besides, he knowed that we wuz broke up over Loony Joe's repartee, and not over no insuffish'ncy ownin' to his position. Anyhoo, we must'a went on cacklin' for more'n five minutes afore we got settled down again enough fer to git back on the track.

"Hee hee," giggled Loony Joe as he whapped Jacky Ted on the shoulder. "Jus' thank a bit 'bout the whole uv what I said, JT--and th' resta y'all, too. Now didnt I say movement. . ." And on that we couldnt hep but bust loose with one more big simultaneous hossloff, but Joe kept a'goin'.

"And pathus. . .Pathus! That's it, dammit, that's th' stuff what kin hold them. . .them *runny bowels* together!"

More laffin' and shriekin', as y'might imagine. Just so's we could keep this thang frum gettin' drove into th' ground, I decided to pop up and put my two cents worth in.

"Hell, it seems like both you guys is right; I mean, you caint let yer style just peter down into nuthin', and I reckon how pathus is pret' near good's anything to give a little body to y'narrative." I spit into a pile'a straw over in a dark corner, took a pull on my bottle, and went on.

"Now for example--skippin' over for a sec to another genre--take a look, as I suspect most 'uv you have, at some'a them movies of Charlie Chaplin. There's 'bout a classic a case as y'd wanna find, right?"

They all nodded they head and 'lowed as how that 'uz pret' much it; since everybody 'peared to be settlin' down, I kept talkin'.

"One more thang," I noted, "y' kin have a nice, flexible, dynamic lightness to y' style, and y' kin have a real good expresh'n of pathus, but b'jasus, if'n you caint git 'em together in just th' right proporsh'ns, you gonna shit plum in the middle of th' old nest!"

And a good thang they's calmed down and gettin' a mite sleepy from the wine, 'cause that last allusion of mine--which I didnt thank about till it 'uz too late--could'a got 'em off the track agin. As it wuz, they just smiled a bit and nodded th' heads once more.

"OK," I kept on, "now for a good book example let's take, uh. . .naw, not that'n." (I wuz a'thinkin' of some'a Evelyn Waugh's stuff, but then decided that since I'd already mentioned Chaplin I'd just as well git me a example of sumthin' not hum'rus.) "Eh. . .hell, how 'bout, oh, *Cheever*. Yeah, I know he's gittin' to be more 'r less passe', but they aint no two ways to it that he shore kin turn a feller clean upside down in the battin' of a eye with his changes a' mood. Aint I right? --aint I?" And to give the guys a little smidge of critical leeway, I threw out a couple a' other names--Donny Barthelme and Sam Beckett, authors what had gone and ground they style inta grit to put emphasis on how fickle man's predic'ment wuz.

Most of 'em 'peared to be in agreement, and it looked like Billy Turkle was a'fixin' to comment, when the most godawful whackin'-crackin' sound, right along with a squishin' sorta THUMP! made us all sail right outta our drawers. We jumped straight up and run to the other end of th' barn, where they wuz some horses stalls.

When we got that part all lit up, to the man we almost puked our guts out: there, lyin' half-in, half-out of a stall, and wif the side of his head bashed in like a rotten punkin, was Roscoe Fizdale. We'd all been thankin' thru th'whole evenin' that Roscoe seemed to be hittin' the booze a little bit heavier than the rest 'uv us, and it looked like we wuz right, and now th' whole dam session had all come to no good.

What'd happened was a double-combination of the 'fects of that wine. Ol' Roscoe, atter he'd got all woozy, finally had to go take a piss; on his way back in through the dark part of th' barn he'd staggered a little and tripped, fallin' on his butt sidewise into the stall where we kept Ahab, the biggest and meanest goddam hoss in the county--in *everybody's* opinion. T' make it short, Ahab simply drawed back an' put a hoof 'bout a half-mile into Roscoe's head, smashin' his skull like a jellybean, and, as we found out later, breakin' his neck t' boot. (Them dam coroners have really got it for completeness, if y' know what I mean.)

And lordy, lordy--wadnt that the biggest fuss that could'a come swoopin' down on the place in a hunderd years! We wuz all's green as shit, queasier'n a billygoat in a 747, tryin' to make some sense outta the whole shebang and halfway sober up at th' same time. Jacky Ted grabbed a couple a tow sacks and sorta covered up what 'uz left of Roscoe's head, whilst Loony Joe run over to the house to call the sheriff and a ambl'nce. When he come back, it hit me that we hadnt thunk to call his wife, and, oh god, his mother, who's a'pushin' ninety and was probably gonna get wiped out by the news too. Well, they wadnt no two ways 'bout it, it had to be done; so I ambled over to the house, draggin' my feet and hatin' what I was obliged to do.

"Harry Ann," I said, tryin' to keep my voice fr'm soundin' like a stranglin' turkey, "ye better git over to the barn soon's y'can--theys been a accident wi' Roscoe. . ." 'N I knowed she seen right into th' meanin' of what I was a'sayin', 'cause she dint ask nothin', she dint make no comment; they was just a rightout silence, then a sound of suckin' breath, and the phone went dead.

And as fer Roscoe's pore old mother: I thank it's Eliot what said one time, "In th' room wimmen come 'n go, talkin' about Michael Angelo." No, she didnt pass away when they finally told her, but it shore helped to fry her brainpan up. Just at any old time she'd totter into th' kitchin, mutterin' some sorta craziness, and them females all'd chime in with they goddam wailin', chantin', moanin', and praisin' of

Roscoe, like he 'uz a legendary figger, or a genius of talent. (They wadnt nuthin' he'd actually done much, save write a farm column for the local paper from time t'time in which he tried--mostly unsuccessful, I reckon--to promote a scheme for puttin' wheat thrashers to work in the wintertime as powerpaks for artificial kidney machines. I fer one never could rightly make it out.)

Needless to say, none of us never got over that night, and always when we'd git together t'talk about literature, or whatever, ol' Roscoe always be in the back of our minds.

CONTRAPTION

And so we finally got the thing plugged in and cranked up; the motor was running decently when one of the side mountings split and the center rod slid back some 3", allowing two bolts to shear off and an oil leak to develop which finally caused the lower two motors to conk out; the auxiliary chains could actually do very little--we tried pushing the left side with our crowbar devices, and for a little while we figured this would work, but soon came the realization that unless a sliding apparatus was *welded* onto the cage, all of our efforts would be for nothing. This was done, much to our relief.

But unfortunately our respite was just that, for by now the thin wires holding the main panels inward were stretched to the breaking point, and it was only too evident that when one (or both) of these wires went, the whole shebang would be left teetering over the chasm of nothingness. So, holding the retainer bars at their farthest point, we managed to pull down the cover plates a bit, thereby transmitting some 40% of the tension formerly on the main panel wires to an area considerably below the focus of stress--now the only thing left to worry about was whether or not the one remaining wing nut was going to have the karma to take all that punishment and make our kismets more felicitous, down to the last worker. Of course just then was when the bloody wing bolt popped its one hitlerish wing nut, dropping .0362 lbs of finger-splitting-good ironlets down the intake hatch into the central mechanism chamber, where said irony was transubstantiated into myriad teeth-chewing and otherwise humiliating specks of machinistic destruction. Forthwith came the complete cessation of the functioning of 1) the number one valve, and 2) the number two valve. At this juncture, needless to say, our present and future dependence on the water-injection part of the system was *hors de* the question.

Question: Could there possibly be an alternative to having someone stick their arm under the jammerswitch in order to give a

much-needed squirty of Oilus P. Oilus to the thirsting inner parts, an act imparting potential sorrow stemming from the fact that upon occasion the non-descript-yet-impressively-powerful 2.7-ton rocker bar would come swinging down extra far (for no particular reason--though we suspected it was due to those by-then-displaced cover plates), thereby exempting any such limb for all purple practices from ownership/connection with the host body? (end of quest.)

Answer: No way. Sumbitch's gotta be oiled, and *mucho pronto compadre*. Result: We lost an arm at approx. 11:30 last night. We were racked with indecision as to whether or not the amount of oil remaining in the can--inside with the arm--would balance and/or fight against the added grit contributed by the ground-up oilcan, though we suspected that fatty tissue and grease from the (reluctantly) donated arm might tip the balance in our favor, for a change, and for a while.

OK, valves one and two out, cover plates displaced, no water-injection system, and assorted organic and inert debris adrift within the conglomerate--aside from this, we were overcome with hope that things would work out, for everyone could see that the main cable was still securely attached at both ends, and the beanstalk pulley rising out of sight above our heads was still functioning, at least as well as anyone could expect it to under similar circumstances.

Without a doubt something was going to have to be done about the rear bushings, for they had begun to rattle like an overworked Model-A, and we didn't have to look to tell that there was danger of the drive chain getting caught if one of those bushings happened to pop off. There was only one solution to this problem (aside from shutting the whole works down--at this point a subtle, unfeasible proposition), and that was to give a blitzkrieg blow to the bushing clamp mit der ballpeener each time the pivoting camshaft hove the setup into view. Now was definitely a time to maintain a deathgrip on said hammer, for if this particular chunk of iron *cum* wood were inadvertently introduced into the innards, it would be instant sayonara production

line, and no mere nitty-gritty as with the lamentable episode involving the tin oilcan. Fortunately it only took a few whacks to put the bushings back into their proper place. A few people began to wonder, however, if the hammering mebbe hadn't put a potentially bothersome dent or two in the heat rotors, but the majority of us were of the opinion that such was not the case and that the third-degree burns sustained by one guy a little later when he brushed against the casing were not a result of defective rotors, though this couldn't be proved for lack of time.

Lack of time, because without warning the driveshaft had slid a little too far on the backstroke (a worn bearing, probably), and just like that three studs had snapped and their tips gone flying out like mauser bullets through the checkholes, one tip coming to rest suddenly and violently inside the skull of the assistant foreman, who at that moment was standing with his back to everything swearing at the control panel. We scarcely had time to clear him from the area when the whole kit and boodle began to shimmy and hop like an overbalanced washing machine in a laundromat; with one rhythmic albeit vicious hop it managed to crush the foot of a worker. How the damn outfit kept on functioning was anybody's guess, though we suspected that the bearing that had become worn was unevenly so, and consequently *most* of the driveshaft motion was within tolerable limits. By jamming wedges underneath each part as it lifted up, we were able to eliminate the hopping and reduce the shaking to a straining vibration, one which left doubts as to whether or not the casing would be able to hold out as long as necessary.

Body and bodypart count was now as follows. Fingers lost: two, from one final hop obliqueward by disoriented beastworks before last wedge was driven in; shinbones fractured: four, by dint of rocking after previous deviation, said motion catching a chorus line of workers at "present monkeywrenches" and ready to exert various and sundry tightening influences; personnel deceased: one, as per above-described stud barrage.

Just as we began verbally mulling over the possibility of applying cessative tactics to monsterboy and thus commence phasing out the day's destruction, down from above comes el telephony message saying's how because of our vital & malfunctioning link in the old producto chain, one-half of the sanctum upstairs was lying idle and the other half up to their pits in goods which were steadfastly mountaining due to the defective pivot point downstairs, namely yours truly & co. ("OK, will do best to remedy situation with minimum loss of life and tissue. Out.")

So the cables were tightened to the point of embarrassment, valves were opened for discussion, rpm's were tickled into even greater frenzy by the goosefeather of the control lever, and as one we all began to walk at a crouch, superkeen ready to dash, dart, pounce, and fly from splitsecond to splitsecond in order to escape the presence of omnifarious catastrophe. Pygmy-like, we trekked through the forest of noise and danger, daring to approach the alien thing in our midst from time to time so as to attempt to ease and appease it with an adjustment here, a resetting there, an occasional offering of oil, and an increasingly-frequent sacrifice of human flesh. We were the reluctant captors of something that could not escape its confines, but which nonetheless could scarcely be prevented from becoming master of the very tribe that entrapped it. This eclectic denizen, this Frankenstein kept alive by electrical impulses flowing through telephone wires, was slowly replacing our thought patterns with the emanations from its own mind.

At some point we became at least subconsciously aware of something which would have frightened the rivets out of our seams had it not been for our unswerving concentration on keeping things going: it was almost as if metal Moloch was striving--with a degree of success--to maintain itself alive through some internal force of its own. A few of the oilers thought that certain parts, when they were discovered to be near breakdown, seemed to have an excess of oil, though the problem would indicate that there should be an oil deficiency. We were constantly on the watch for loose nuts and bolts

on the scanning plates--but when a loose plate would have tended toward the release of a main piston, resulting in total stoppage, not once did we find anything to be tightened. Little by little the idea grew in our minds: the gravity of the never-ending mechanical difficulties was best measured by damage done to personnel, not by diminished efficiency of operation.

Though deaths were infrequent, the list of corporeal parts sliced, mashed, sheared off, and otherwise separated from the body or mutilated in place grew like the checkoff list at an autopsy. Indeed, there were almost enough components to fabricate a new body. But ol' bronze Beelzebub just kept doin' his dooty.

Then, another call from up there--but an agreeable one this time. We were almost at the brink of equilibrium, that is to say, the total production line was approaching the notion of a smooth flow. And within our environs we could also sense a balance of activities, a coordination between man, scientific savage, and medical authority--the latter being an indispensable appendage in order to neutralize the malevolent effects of our centerpiece. Before long, the arrival of replacements and the return of patched-up casualties was promising to equal the centrifugal movement of the injured carried off after donating something of themselves to machinehood. We still had to keep a close and unblinking eye to operations, nor could an occasional bash or amputation be prevented, but things were beginning to level out now, and we felt happier.

Granddaddy Grindanpuff almost seemed to be humming now. A feeling of pride began to spread among us, especially among the few of us who had actually been there from the beginning. Jokes were cracked; some people even brought up the subject of going home. We heard few complaints from upstairs. Still keeping our guard up, we talked and took turns resting. And we were curious as to what the new people coming in would be like, as time went by.

Bob Rippy

Parkview Emergency Room

The starched nurse and that smell that must be
built in—that's all there was of hospital.
A typewriter pecked like a fat hen
at the name of a salesman giddy with band-aids.
Others watched, endured what they must, were still.
My wife miscarried neatly.

We woke to sounds like wind at first,
like far, impending ghosts—a grief
foreign to this clean place. They came:
the ambulance driver, the child
he held, its blackness now a damp ash,
the woman, her lingering man.

But it was she who held us, fixed
us with her sound. Grief turned her face
to oil. We suddenly remembered
things—a drink down the hall,
fingernails, keys on a ring. . .
(I counted my keys again and again.)

In the new quiet she was all
I heard. A flute wild and quick
at first, drawn tight, then easing thin
and high as clouds on a windy day.
No one moved. No one breathed.
I watched my hands grow old.

Then a second sound, deep as a wound,

the man's voice, cracked, slipped on itself,
and smoothed into a rich brown moan
to counterpoint her song. A clean,
an elemental sound like animals
past fear might make when only death remains.
And I waited for my wife and
some miracle to work. And closed
my eyes so I could see their song,
commanding more than love or faith,
rouse the child, pull whatever strings,
polish him back to black again—

or if not that, then bouy his
stillness like a twig on a rising
wave, past our dumb and proper heads
through cold and proper doors,
past hope, past grief, past even love,
past all sound but theirs.

Kites

I resent the monopoly on flying kites
That young boys have. Or took.
Or perhaps just claimed like salvage rights
When we lost the feel for wind-taut string.

But that's long past, now kites are theirs
As if they alone can match tail to wind,
Can coax kites off a telephone line,
Can stop round dives by running up.

And when March brings the good winds back,
The mindless boys will wind string out
And in again till manhood comes,

While grown men, sick with windless lives,
Would trade years to fly on string
Anchored by a kite to the stable sky.

Searchlights and Two Dogs

The dogs no longer guard the lights.
Looking down from this window, I
see only ruts they wore: one going
with the fence and road, run deep,

two more that cross to guard the rear,
a bend for water and food, one
circle for sleep. The rest
is green this March after rain.

I watched how they stayed with their path,
moving always south along Mt. Vernon,
with traffic, crossing to the back
to lose themselves from me a time

in lights, then out again to bark
the bus away or kids on bikes
with sticks to ring the fence.
How their mouths on the fence would bleed.

The lights haven't sought a plane for
twenty-eight years. They mark shoe stores,
laundramats. They wait. Tires sag.
A mild rust forgets old wars.

But in black rage the dogs kept
their charge. As they did one night when boys
drew straws. The short one had to climb
past sleep, touch a light and run.

No one knows what woke them—shoes
squeaking on wet grass, his pounding breath.

Their first sounds must have wedged
his cry in his throat, loosing it
only when they were on him, their teeth
and eyes sparking the dark. When he died
all sorrow turned to rage
at dogs that got a chance to be.

So they were killed. The street below
is quiet but for cars. Busses
stop unmolested. The searchlights
are safe in the indifferent grass.

But I—I wait for dark to hide
in. I climb their fence, our fence.
For what they were, I find the ruts
with my bare feet. I quicken,

going south along Mt. Vernon,
back, deep in lights that shine only
for me, then out again, panting,
the hair on my neck stiff with rage.

BESSIE SMITH

It's been forty
five years since her
man went away.

Tonight I played
her songs again,
twice through. It's late.

Wife waits in bed.
How do I tell
her now I want

to sleep alone?

Paul Brooks

RANDOM NUMBERS FOR A SLEEPY DAY

number 1 was a cryer
 a gnasher
 a basher of songs
angel
 of thy will be done

number 2 was a faker and skipper
counted down from heaven
to his face
to new and none
 the fancy dancer

number 3 was dead
and a socket of posters
celebrated in gas
 wet odors
he was fast death and old rites
hello
and meeting below of sand devils

number 4 was a double glass of sight
and foregone
setting his sail for sight
 left scene and stage
out of number to night

number 5 was 5
 and

gone

Anne Valley Fox

THE TRAPDOOR WHORE

(i)

My feet and ears are pressed
to the trap door. They pack with dirt.
I barely breathe. listening
to footsteps: insects dropping
from leaves, fish slapping water,
loaves of bread falling softly.
I choose a step that scrapes the earth
like a full coffin, wait
for his knees to buckle above me and
Open! Close again! Ah!
he crashes into my arms.
I bite his lips: He thinks
it's a new kind of kiss. If I move fast
he catches his last breath.
I scheme against my neighbors. I want
them all. I desire no-one.

(ii)

There are days when no-one comes.
I wait like a bomb to be delivered.
I try not to call myself names tho rust
creeps from the faucets.
I scour the kitchen, shake out
the sheets, scales falling like eggshells.
Fingers streetwalk my limbs.
My body feeds on itself.
It is not enough.

(iii)

The men come to me weeping.
I hold them, they bathe the stones.
Dollarbills pile around me in green satin
snowbanks. They fill me with tears.
I hold still, death passes faster
when I lie down for him.
It's a load off their minds to find
they still feel: They leave me
with butterflies perched on the boughs
of their emptied hearts.
I kneel on the mattress for gravity's lips
to suck me clean. Doubts surround me
like dumb children.

(iv)

Sometimes I walk the streets
with a red-tipped cane challenging someone
to fall in love with my blind feet.
I pretend to be what I am.
My eyes are ground to pools
of glass in the first of their stares.
My negligee tears, I trip
in my veils: what fool would dare penetrate
these chiffon lips?

(v)

I carry my trap on my back.
Landslides surround me. I have no home.
I am the door in the private passage
opening and closing.
At night when they whisper my name
and their wives stand on elbows tracing
the tunnels their lips make,
I can't sleep either:

My body is locked in too many chests.
They can't let me go. My bite,
their secret hope, swells
to enslave. In my nightmares
a stranger frames my face
with his petrified fingers. He utters
my name. I fall asleep
and wake up buried in someone else's grave.

lazarus & the mute in the sunrise

the world
begging for lancing & the aching
moon a wolf in your belly you slashed
an arterial anger over
the household

returning i found
your blood bullet holes & plugged them
with laughter.
"calm down hysteria"
"cover your eyes" they said "stop it."

"he's lying there pale in an X"
your friend said.
i knew your hands were sliding
like silk down the throats
of canaries.
the tongueless god sings his hosannas
thru fools

"life's a false alarm"
you told the chinamen
stumbling thru a garlic & perfume dawn
toward the hospital

next to you the man
in his bed & the hands of the nite
physician have witnessed
your madness.
yours is the fury of stones
weeping inconsequentially down
in the river

tonite i saw a rainbow
arching out of the mute's mouth.
the god is gentle-hearted.
he warns you in your own indelible ink
dispatching the moon
to read by

follow the tracks they are stitching
into your wrists.
come home. the red sea
lightens the stone
that sinks down inside it

Gary Ligi

THE THIRST

sometimes at 12:01 a.m. the thirst comes on
like a slow-slashed tom
set thrashing in my throat
with all the bars locked up
for fifty miles around
the bootlegs gone to sleep
behind their loyal dogs
the cops along the road with radar set
to pull down anything
that moves
my woman gone
and the tree-frogs dying one by one
to feed an owl

and me with 87 cents
a quarter tank of gas
an empty house and ten or twelve
rejections trying not
to listen to the final silence
of the tree frogs

god
I need a bath
I'll take a couple of breaks
and move somewhere
where the bars stay open
all the death filled night

THE MAN WITH THE OWL

A man with FUCK YOU tattooed in black
On the back of his right hand
Stopped to buy some beer
At the seven eleven

He had an owl on his shoulder
Bird piss and shit stains
On the collar of his shirt

While he walked one way
The owl looked the other
Its two eyes set like hunger
Behind the slits
In the flat middle of its face

"What the hell are you looking at?"
The man with the owl asked
He wore a couple of freshly stitched wounds
Like an extra set of lips on his lips

"I'm looking at your owl, what'd you think?"
I said and when he smiled I watched
The old scars surface like the mouths
Of fish all over his face
He had a green SHIT etched above an eye

"You buy him?" I asked
"Nah, I caught him took me three days and nights
Nailing the little fucker
He's still a little wild sometimes" he said
And showed me a chewed up ear

"You want to know about the words?" he asked.
He had these words all over him
And not a picture anywhere

"Nah" I said
"You got a real nice owl there"
And paid for my beer
My wife was waiting in the car

Kate Ellen Braverman

EARTHQUAKE SEASON (RACHEL'S STORY)

They are bound together by catastrophes. The part of his mind which organizes sounds into distinct categories sleeps. It has been years since he needed newspapers, magazines, radios. He knows Rachel will tell him.

Rachel's telephone calls are sporadic and deadly. She always seems slightly out of breath, pulling herself away from machine guns and barricaded streets to share the latest horror with him. Without her ritual questions of personal injury and damage would he have known the floors rolling in a sudden, downhill dance had been a 6.2 on the Richter scale earthquake? He would never have understood the real meaning of bombs in Belfast taverns without her. Or that Fred Hampton had been shot dead in a drugged sleep in his own bed by a combat detachment of police.

"You have not heard?"

Rachel assumes he is the only completely unaware person in Los Angeles. The unanswered question lies between them. If he knew, wouldn't he be there? In Eastern Africa with emergency supplies for six nations bloated by famine and drought. He should be printing pamphlets in midnight basements and organizing in Bolivian tin mines. He had failed to join the last parade and be gassed and clubbed on the streets of Chicago in '68. He had been found lacking in Catalonia, and later, in Churo Ravine with Che.

"I have not left the television all day," Rachel began. "They are slaughtering Jews in Munich again."

Gordon had not heard. He hears nothing but fragments from ripped open pieces of days. There are footsteps on the street below his window. And flies that buzz around his shoulders and leave behind a

fine web of sound. Sometimes there are faint sirens from an indeterminate distance. In the mornings, he hears doors closing.

"You have specifically designed ears. They screen out the reality of the age."

She stood poised near the stove boiling water for instant coffee. It was the middle of the night. A satellite relay brought each exploding moment into their living room. Perhaps it had been three men near suffocation in a wildly erratic spacecraft. Or a farming valley turned into a churning, muddy lake by a broken dam. Maybe it had been villagers armed with stones and sharpened sticks staring into the streamlined, featureless face of a tank. Always, refugees and survivors stood thin and broken in front of cameras and limped slowly past Red Cross trucks. "You don't hear," Rachel informed him sadly. She was too tired to be bitter.

Gordon had stared into his mug of black coffee. He had not heard the slogans and boots crashing in thundering formation on German avenues. He had missed the mad tap dance of man against machine in Hungary and Prague. He did not hear in 1936, in Spain, when he allowed Gary Cooper and Lorca to die for him. And before that, in 1491, when he marched mathematicians and astronomers before the Grand Inquisitor.

There are sins within him beyond the hope of expiation. Rachel has pinpointed their location. They are knotted in his fibers and cells, embedded beneath his flesh. When he takes a deep breath they rattle in his lungs. Illness is an illusion, and disease merely the final lost battle with morality. Hands that did not rise to protect and comfort begin trembling, grow weak. Inevitably, the body collapses, appalled by its uselessness.

"Come," Rachel summoned him with one word. It was early in the morning of the first day of the Yom Kippur War.

It seemed that there was nothing left of him in their house. The gate had been repainted and swung shut easily on new brass hinges.

The furniture had been rearranged. Now the piano faced a window. Shelves had been added to bookcases and housed new ceramic statues. Stacks of record albums were piled on the floor. She had replaced his paintings with rectangles of tie-dyed cloth.

"Batik," Rachel said, following his gaze from the wall back to her face. "A people's art form."

He could see the threads of her new personality carefully put on display. It was her method of relaying information. Rachel was asking if he could handle her new candles, her bath salts imported from India, the postcards from Bora Bora, Iran and Milan arranged in a hand painted tray. I have explored and grown without you. These are the flowers of my liberation, exotic, rainbow colored, and rare. Glancing in the bedroom he saw an African mask hung above the bed. He noticed a long necklace of sea shells on the night stand. She was telling him that black men, Indians and Orientals slept where he once did. He found himself studying the pattern of her bedspread.

Gordon sat on a corner of the sofa. She had changed her perfume, her brand of cigarettes and her whiskey. Lisa was in school. He had left nothing behind. Perhaps he had never lived there.

"This is Armageddon," Rachel said. She positioned herself in a doorway. Her knee was pushed through a long slit in her dressing gown. Her eyes were swollen from crying. Watching Rachel mix drinks and answer telephones he tried to think of something to say. It seemed she had become a nerve center in a vast network. Fund raisers gave her complete reports. Somehow she had been entrusted with information about secret troop movements, supply flows, material losses and casualties. He watched her make hurried notes on a pad of scratch paper.

"Do you know when there will be a ceasefire?" she demanded. "I'll tell you when. When the Israeli Army marches through downtown Cairo and Damascus you'll see the fastest U.N. ceasefire in history."

Gordon thought she was probably right. Later, in his apartment, he remembered meeting Rachel shortly after the Six Day War. They met in a park near her house then. He had been there before her, had always been early for her. He watched Rachel cross a short expanse of thick, trimmed grass. She had looked at him only once as she walked.

"I'm emigrating to Israel," Rachel told him.

They were sitting on a park bench. Perhaps there had been bluejays in the branches of nearby trees. Maybe children in bright blue and red jackets were being pushed on swings.

Rachel had pulled a large map from her purse. Leaning toward her lap, brushing her shoulder with his arm, he could smell her body through her new perfume. Rachel indicated an area circled in pencil. He studied the proposed disembarkation point.

"You are surprised by my commitment?" she mused. "Of course you are."

Rachel lit a cigarette. She studied an area of grass somewhere between his shoulders. She had camped out in a tent in a field of mud in Washington with a contingent of impoverished blacks. In San Francisco she had shouted "Hell no, we won't go" with a million and a half demonstrators. He nodded his head and stared at the map.

"I want Lisa to grow up in her homeland. It's a genetic thing. You would not understand." As an afterthought she looked at him abstractedly and added, "Left entirely alone, the child would speak fluent Russian."

He does not understand. Isn't it the Russians who make the tanks and missiles and arm the Arab mobs? He watches Rachel belt her jacket and walk back to her car. Slowly, the sunlight recedes across the lawn.

Gordon knows that they will never discuss the emigration again. Their conversations are constructed upon events that pass quickly and are immediately replaced. Over the years he has learned that

their telephone conversations and occasional meetings are mere momentary aberrations. When the smoke settles, the ashes cool, and the bodies are counted, all that will remain are their Sundays.

Every second Sunday Rachel brings Lisa to his apartment. She rings the bell once, proper but assertive. Demure, but with an edge. I am a woman who does not ordinarily ring doorbells but you have changed me. If I knocked once, and I am essentially that kind of woman, you might not hear me. There have been Sundays when you did not hear me. I have stood with your daughter on this thin strip of sidewalk in this chaotic, torn part of the city, waiting for a man who does not keep hours, or days, or years. And you have seen my postcards, my new decor. Surely you understand that I have finished waiting for you. Or anyone.

Gordon waits for the doorbell and rushes down the stairs. There have been mornings that arrived, unnoticed. Sundays of tangled clothing to be grabbed from chairs and floors and tossed into closets. There have been mornings of fumbled introductions in the hallway when he always forgot the name of the woman who had shared his bed the night before. There have been Sundays when he opened the front door, still buttoning a shirt, to find Rachel and his daughter gone.

"I did not think you were home," she told him.

He was lying on his bed, conscious of the weight of the telephone, the color, the length of the cord, the plastic pressing against his cheek that was somehow reproducing Rachel. Through the miles of twisted wires he deciphered her code. You are a man who cannot be trusted to know the days of the week. A man who cannot be trusted to care for his child even two mornings a month. But why should hours or days mean anything to you? We have a completely different conception of time. You are forever locked into a cycle where a man's home is the distance he can ride in seven days. You think in centuries. Your boots are bloody from tearing through dusty villages, pushing

serfs to the side of a dirt road with your fine leather toe. And I owe you less than you have already extracted.

"I was home," Gordon said.

"I couldn't have known that."

Rachel breathed slowly, evenly into the phone. It was he who had called her. Following the edict she had rendered unto Caesar his due. Nothing more was required. She hung up.

Gordon opened the front door. It was late morning, the sun warm. Rachel wore a heavy wool coat buttoned to her neck. There are methods of showing a stranger standing near a car door or glancing from a half-opened second story window that one has not always lived in mild climates.

"But don't you see? No, of course you don't see. How could you?"

It was another winter in another place. Perhaps New York. Rachel had wanted a certain type of coat.

"The cold means nothing to you," she had explained. It was when she still explained things to him. "For you, winters are sleigh rides, the rituals of Christmas, the family in front of a stone fireplace, gifts, feasts."

She had stared at her reflection in a full-length mirror. Looking directly at the sleeve of the new coat she said, "It is not ostentation." Then sadly, dismissing a complex and delicate thought she added softly, "It is something else entirely."

Gordon had followed Rachel up the stairs, discreetly, one step behind her. He had walked into the living room before he noticed his daughter.

Lisa is all that remains between them, tangible, indisputable, the sole evidence of a life once shared. He thinks that she barely grows, is somehow in limbo, stunted by their abrupt confrontations and long silences. When Lisa removes her jacket he searches for the sudden

appearance of breasts, rings, locket, a roach clip or a fraternity pin. He looks for the exposed and dangling clues of her half-formed personality. It is all enticing and alienating, he decides, too simple and much too heavy a burden.

Lisa places the small beaded pocketbook on her lap and slowly crosses her legs. This is what Rachel meant, curled in a chair, telling him about a pencil dot that had magically begun to breathe. Now the pencil dot selects record albums and keeps secret documents buried in the folds of sweaters at the bottom of her drawers.

Gordon feels an inexplicable anger rising within him. He wants to grab her pocketbook and scatter the contents across the rug. He wants to see the implements of her kind spread out, stark and deprived of context. Slender, purse-size vials of perfume, FDS, joints, tubes of vaseline, pills, obscene seventh grade Valentines.

But then Rachel would show them the implements of his kind. She would point to the cluttered drawing table under the window and the stacks of unfinished, undated drawings piled along the perimeter of the room. She would show him the jammed desk drawer filled with evidence of his disorder. If she chose she could show him the deeper, darker disorder she had found. The secret camouflaged path between nerve endings where he kept his riding whip and skins from his last fox hunt. The place with the list of his fugitive war criminal relatives. All the gray places from all the winters when he feasted on mutton, while roads and rivers froze, and in the poor town the shepherds and blacksmiths died in their sleep, one by one.

Rachel clears a place for herself on the sofa. She pushes aside ashtrays, sheets of paper and empty beer bottles. Slowly, Gordon realizes that they are waiting. When something is expected he finds it difficult to speak. The machinery of his mind grinds down, and shuts off. Now he stands mute before them. He is the congenitally weak son of a third rate baron. He is the profligate, failed at Latin. The drunkard, stumbling over a new decree. The taxes have been insufficient. The fields have yielded a poor harvest. There are reports

of poaching. I have been too gentle with you. You will bring to me one thousand pounds of silver and your finest, ripest wench. I am off to the forest now, and my quarry, the quail. After the ball you will all assemble here again. That's right. Barefoot in the snow. What this province needs is a little old-fashioned human sacrifice.

"Have you had lunch yet?" Gordon asked.

Rachel and Lisa regard him silently. He feels awkward and uncomfortable, somehow on display. It has always been a stylized drama with Rachel. He did not know until much too late that dialogue must be carefully delivered, that posture contained a lifetime of information, and that tensions could be fought out in the quiet between passages.

"We're not having lunch today, Daddy."

The nature of the play had been revealed. It was a mystery melodrama. The first major clue had been presented. The seconds seemed clearly outlined, separate and loud, measuring his capacity and experience. He knew he would be found lacking.

"Lisa is having a party later," Rachel said. "We'll have to leave soon."

There was so much to evaluate and so little time. Always, so little time. Never owned a watch. Couldn't sleep in a room with a clock. And even after they began to spend weekends together Rachel insisted he pay her by the hour. She was always ready to pose, to settle into a chair at any moment and look at absolutely nothing, not his brush stroking the canvas or his face when he stood back and studied his work. She posed effortlessly, without fear of what he might discover and expose. He touched her from across the room with his brush, traced a pale raised vein in her leg, found a fold of loose flesh, a scar. She challenged him to look deeper. Don't you know we are all flawed? Blind men put us together from old scraps. We are not born. We are manufactured in burnt out sheds behind train depots. It is amazing that we function at all, sit up, put on socks, work

cash registers. Later Rachel looked at the painting impassively and said nothing.

"It's my birthday, Daddy."

"Of course it is," Gordon replied, startled, seeing his daughter clearly for the first time that day. "I know all about your birthday. You're a Sagittarius. Do you know what that means? Well, there are four categories representing the elements. There is Earth, Air, Water and Fire. Sagittarius is a fire sign. It is ruled by Jupiter, the planet of power and authority."

He realized he was talking too fast, exhausting his knowledge, racing toward a wall of silence. He had taken Rachel to meet his father. A long meadow began at the foot of his father's garden. Spring had come suddenly, late in the season. While they slept the backyard and fields had blossomed. They walked in a light morning wind, flushed with damp cold and awe, Rachel between them. Their feet cut a path in fresh grass.

His father had paused on a low rise. He leaned against a tree trunk, seeing how ice and storms had changed the contours of the valley.

"I've been renewed here," his father said simply.

"You would be." Rachel had also stopped walking. She seemed to be frozen in mid-step. Pale yellow and purple wildflowers twisted around her ankles. "This is your natural environment." She tilted her head to indicate the valley ringed by small, rolling foothills. "I come from a very different place, though. My people are from the cities. We are more at home with metal and stone."

His father had not known what to say. "You have beautiful eyes," he told her finally, "eyes that could open up and swallow the world."

Rachel laughed. "I have eyes of the ghetto. All my people have eyes like this. Each generation our eyes grow deeper, darker, more suspicious. It comes from changing money in alleys. It comes from searching for maniacs in the shadows. We are like the white moths

stranded in the city that turned gray within a generation. Do you understand?"

Gordon doubted that his father had ever understood. His father had been a simple man.

"Simple?" Rachel had repeated, infuriated. "How nice to have the luxury of simplicity. It's one of the exquisite pleasures of the master race."

Gordon looked at Lisa and said, "Sagittarius." The word hung in the air. He looked for an action to propel him across the room. Pulling down a book from a shelf he motioned his daughter to his side.

"Here," Gordon opened the book. "It's all in here. Do you want to see? It says your mystical gem is the turquoise. You know what turquoise looks like? And it says that the best day of the week for you is Thursday. Your best color is purple. And, let's see. Nine is your lucky number. Do you want to read it yourself?"

Gordon handed the book to his daughter and glanced at Rachel. She was thumbing through a magazine. The battle had already been decided. He was a man who did not even know his daughter's birthday. Rachel turned a page, ignoring him. She had never been a butcher. She had always preferred the short and exact commando operation. She would let the decimated troops straggle back to spawn another generation of peasant soldiers. Only barbarians, Cossacks, Arabs sift ruins for survivors.

He remembered that Rachel never went after stray pawns either. She never played standard openings or bothered with a real end game. Their matches were decided with the major pieces intact, in full view of God and State.

Rachel glances at her wristwatch. It must be a prearranged signal, he decided, watching mother and daughter prepare to leave.

"We won't be here next time. We'll be out of town," Rachel said as she walked down the stairs.

He waved back to his daughter. Rachel let go of the front door, obligations completed. She owed him no more explanations, no more geography and history lessons.

"The places my people come from have been wiped off the map," she said once, perhaps explaining everything.

He remembered that when they moved to California she had packed only one suitcase. She left no forwarding address and telephoned no goodbyes.

"You burn your bridges behind you," Gordon said when they left the city.

"If I find myself stranded, I'll invent a new way out. That's how we created the modern world." Rachel leaned back in her seat.

They raced the highway through the heart of the country, taking the length of a state in an afternoon. Rachel drove as if they were being pursued, one hand on the wheel, talking through rushing wind about drunken horsemen and crazed mobs.

Gordon can remember her words, but not the context. The context was something Rachel always had to explain to him.

He poured a drink and sat at the kitchen table. He unfolded an old newspaper and began a crossword puzzle. A child's game is hopscotch. Codas are ends. A hill nymph is an oread. A bird's claw is a talon. But there is so much he doesn't know. A noted American merchant, beginning with an "R." And what a large python is called. And who was Chief Justice in 1836. There are people who know such things.

The problem, he realizes, is that he does not know enough. He rolls the newspaper into a narrow club and begins swatting flies. In Rachel's measured silences and in all the tests of their marriage, he never knew enough. He had let days and years spill across him. He had settled for a simple geography of seasons, shifting color patterns,

light reflections, shapes. One long relentless moment spread out and become a lifetime. Gordon poured another drink.

"You're like a farmer," Rachel said.

He was in the backyard of their first house in California. The backyard had been allowed to find its own rhythm. Sunflower plants grew as tall as young trees. All along the edges of the yard fibrous flowers reached for the sun.

Rachel stood in the shade of an apricot tree. She squinted across the space between them. She was saying that there was something wrong with the house. She saw things that even he, a painter, did not notice. The walls were a clever gray masquerading as white. Smoke escaped from the fireplace, a classic, indisputable sign of faulty construction. It was imperative that things be corrected. A house was more than functional and ornamental. One could read the private history of absolute strangers by the pattern of the wallpaper.

"You're like a farmer," Rachel said again.

Gordon was surprised. "I enjoy this work."

"Why shouldn't you? They never took your farm."

Gradually Gordon comes to understand. Rachel teaches him. There are cataclysms just beyond detection near the barbecue. Fuschias cannot be trusted, their parachute bodies contain miniature weapons, listening devices, a battalion of trained insects. Mowing lawns is work for a peasant, a man who can suspend judgments and let afternoons spread across his chest and groin while bombs are manufactured, Mexicans beaten on street corners, and blacks taken randomly to prisons. In their backyard it is earthquake season. Revolutions erupt near the gate. Craters form and meteors fall among untrimmed hedges. At sunset, a village sinks in a napalm mist near his feet and is washed away by rainbirds.

Gordon stands in the middle of his bedroom and finishes his drink. Suddenly he jumps up and aimlessly thrashes the air. Flies leap from

their hiding places and settle nervously on the closed windows. Then, meticulously, one by one, he smashes them against the glass. The bodies can be scooped up, still warm, with bits of drawing paper. Or the bodies can be left in the sunlight on the windowsills to turn midnight blue and brittle. The process is effective for a few moments at a time and can be repeated at intervals indefinitely.

Gordon considers the killing of flies. Shadows slide across the floor and reach out for the walls. He thinks he hears fire engines passing. The streets fill with wailing sirens. Perhaps the city is in mourning.

He stands on the corner near his apartment. North of the city the canyons are burning. He thinks that the peninsula looks exactly like a volcano.

Gordon is slow to answer the telephone. Walking up the stairs he realizes that his feet are much too large and heavy. It is possible that he will not be able to fit them through the doorway. He runs his hand along the bedroom wall fumbling for the light switch he cannot find.

"You do not know?" Rachel's voice seems soft.

In his bedroom it is midnight blue. The fly bodies are midnight blue. The walls. Rachel's voice. The air. The skin on his arms. Something is expected from him.

"What is it?" Gordon asks finally, prepared.

In a whisper, Rachel tells him.

Bob Greenfield

The Loneliness of the Long Distance Telephone Call

I won't beat around the bush: Here it is: Reproduced in Full:
The story I never told to you!

O, I told it all right, it happened, the walls heard,
somebody on the other end of that unaccepted long distance
collect telephone call heard it, you better believe that —
I made sure of that, I screamed it into the mouthpiece
and somebody got the message before the phone went clunk:
But, like I say, here it is straight from the horse's
mouth & don't give me any more of that shit about
cliches: I need my cliches like a glove needs a hand,
ships & rudders: love & marriage & horse & carriage

I, standing in the telephone booth outside the Lucky
Market & placing this long distance telephone call to you,
or, in your absence, whoever will receive my lungs—
whoever you are, it happened— Good Morning, Mrs.
Calabash — & she said, no dice, won't accept the charges

I shouted into that little telephone
BUT I'M DYING! SHE'S MY WIFE AND MY SWEETHEART MY
MOTHER MY SISTER MY DAUGHTER MY FRIEND
AND MY LOVER — I'M DYYYING!

O, I said more, but the phone went funny
the operator fell into a linguistic swoon:
"the party will not accept the charges,
the party will not accept the charges,
Sir, would you puh-leez deposit one dollar & seventy-five
cents — this is your operator speaking — that would be

one dollar & seventy-five cents for the first three minutes I'm sorry, I cannot connect you until"—clunk

I remember walking back to my motel room out of money except for that check nobody would turn into cash because my driver's license was expired, I had no bank account & how could they cover my check without a bank account when I already had a beard, long hair, no job, & didn't know one famous rich man in the whole city — and once I'd cashed it what good would that one-hundred & sixty-seven dollars do me that I'd earned working 80 hours a week in a bread factory to prove what a decent chap I was — I say, what good would one hundred & sixty-seven bones be for a fellow—yours truly—who was spending every last nickel on cheap whiskey for the remission of old soggy memories.

(But let me ask you something, dear reader, Do other workers bring their biographies of Dr. Johnson to the job and study the works of Freud on their ten minute coffee breaks to keep from burning the city of Chicago to the ground?

No, goddammit! And when that teutonic nurse told me sanitary regulations require a shave and a haircut — and no beards, thank you, no loose feathers in the Empire of white bread & mumbled superciliously under her breath about long-haired-hippy-freak-college-communist—inspired-beatniks-from-california——

I ask you,

Did I quote the Book to her on Samson & Delilah?
Did I spring the Nazarene Oath of Allegiance on her,
About what all old hairy Jehovah Himself, the great
I AM THAT I AM, said about the preservation of
The-Very-Hairs-On-Your-Head-Are-Numbered?

Did I lay Holy Scripture in her lap
to justify the ways of God to bread factories?
I did not.

I said, Lady, where I come from, which is Los Angeles,
California, in case you forgot—in Los Angeles, Lady,
you gotta have long hair if you expect to get it on
with a woman, cuz the women in Los Angeles
don't dig wigs or fritzies, they want something
they can wrap their fingers around like horse cock
or long hair. (I didn't tell her about my bald chest.)
And I said not a word about those millions of
loaves of bread that came tumbling like manna
from the sky upon the swarthy, bearded heads
of the ancient Israelites & upon the open fleshy
tender tits of their women — no, I just stomped
out of her office with this crazy check in my pocket.)

But I was just now telling you that I was walking
back to that motel room
with the last of the whiskey under my arm
because that goddammed check was still uncashed
and my rent was done for
and the instant nirvana telephone call down the drain
so I decided it was All Over —
But, yes, one Final Note before my Last Exodus

From this Veil of Fears —
That's what this poem is about
How it all came clear to me like moon at midnite
I'd sit down & tell all with the pen
in the grand style, epically,
wringing the juice of tragedy from my whiskey brain
explaining explaining explaining
Explaining All
And I did — all one thousand words of it.

And when I was finished I tore it up into very tiny
pieces and threw it away
flushed it down the toilet
just in case
just in case I changed my mind
and lived through it
and what if somebody found that note
what if She found that note
and I was still alive
and I'd have to explain it all
that, yes, I did it — I thought the dirty deed
I believed it in the bottom of my blood

But, no, I didn't plan the denouement
And I tell you now
that when I walked into that hospital
and the shrink said,
"Boy, you got egg on your face"
and they loaded my blood with mellaril & thorazine
until the toxic triggers screamed death-dream
into the hole of my brain
But, as I said at the beginning,
I won't beat around the bush
And I lost a good poem
Because I was afraid I might change my mind
and never make it to the belly of that whale
at the very bottom of the Pacific Ocean:
And I alone am here to tell thee.

Neal Spiegel

PILLOWS MAY BE ASSAULTED

four females landed
on a two bedroom apartment
separated from my study
by less than eight feet

Rosemary played house
on an Azore island
Cindy fled Queens in
pursuit of a degree
Long Beach lost Diane
Sally traded Chula Vista
for the Bullock's bra
counter

Rosemary needs another
recipe box
Cindy caresses plants
Diane prunes
a hospital grapevine
Sally's blouses
often unbutton

they would let me treat them:
liquers
for chinese vegetables
chauffeur service and shermans
earned staccatto giggles
from Diane

one night a hungry poet
brought some beer
and hoped
for a sample
of Rosemary's feast
she growled
JUST BECAUSE OUR
STOVE
AROUSES YOUR NOSE
DOESN'T MEAN
YOUR MOUTH
CHEWS OUR STEWS!
when I found the warm beer
on my welcome mat
I wanted to buckshot shred
tits
instead
I named a plump pillow
"sally"
pounded it
with a tennis racket
and four oboes blasted
from the bottom
of my belly

sally's rug

no pubic hairs tangled sally's
 bruin blue polyester
 shaggy soft toilet rug

every Sunday she shook it
 ferociously
then slung it over
 the cold balcony rail
 stabbed with wire bristles
 and brushed
 sixteen to twenty
 sturdy strokes for each
 a trained thoroughbred
would have hurdled steeples

Jack Crawford, Jr.

today i have used bleach

today i have used bleach to try
to get some spots out of my sheets. it's
the first time i ever used the stuff.
the whole apartment smells of it. i strung
the sheets out on the hedge.
they are drying. dazzling
white, pleasant to the eye.
laying the sheets over the hedge
my hands felt the cool wet
of them, the wrinkles smoothing out
under my fingers. and then coming inside
and thinking of them out there. it
gives the sun something to do: to
dry them. and it gives me a feeling
that the sun and i toil in common.
we have shared an experience and the sun
is busy, drawing the moisture out.
in a sense, i have assigned a task.
the very sun acknowledges me. my eyeblink
sends waves to sirius and beyond.
i am pleased. i go from room to room,
my nostrils distended with odor of bleach.
the sun draws moisture from the sheets.
i think of showers falling somewhere--say,
at night into the sea.
i think of showers falling in broad day,
making a rainbow. i think of someone
high up in an apartment in a large city
going from plant to plant with a watering pot.

i think of sheets drying in the sun.

the garbage

i just took the garbage out. it's
twilight, that kind of magic
that comes at the end of a day's
brilliancy. i
lifted up the lid and put the garbage in.
i was in sneakers. the ground felt good,
soft after the rain. the leaves were wet
in the gray light, and my small
automobile, too, wet
and in the last light shining.
i carried the garbage crooked in my left arm,
the biceps quickening slightly,
the left hand against the texture of the bag,
knowing what was in the bag, such as
two unreturnable bottles, the rind
of half a grapefruit (which i
had enjoyed), the empty can
which had held peach halves, very
peach colored, in thick syrup. i
had worked the canopener round
the lid and tipped it out, then
lifted the can to my lips and sucked deep.
and other things in the bag, et cetera:
e.g., a soap wrapper smelling of ivory.
i like the way the soap floats. push it under
with your finger, it jerks right up.
it had been a hot day. now it was cooling.
when i came back from the garbage can
around a fountain of flowering spiraea
the air breathed me slowly up my shirt sleeves
and in between my buttons crept into the hair
on my chest. i felt it there.

in the west, half up the sky,
i saw a sliver of crescent, a new moon,
and in its arms the dark body of the old.
and i went into my house and closed the door,
and took another brown paper bag and fluffed it open
and put it in the cabinet beneath the sink
to begin another trip to the garbage can.
the gray light is fading as i blow my nose.
the heavens will be dark tonight.
i sit at my typewriter and begin this poem
about the garbage and the new moon.
and here i bring it to an end,
not too late, i hope, and not too soon.

poem coming

i'm thinking i'd like to write poems
as easy as turning over in bed or
moving in a woman—and let them come.
i have no stomach for sailing to byzantium,
or to pace like Rilke's panther
in some perfect symbolic frame. let them be, and
well done! joy be!
i want to get at life with less strain,
recognizing, of course,
that art must be
and must not yield, and lovely, lovely,
sings the golden bird.
i think a poem should breathe
and go like taking breaths and like
motion. like turning over in bed
or putting the feet over the side and feeling the floor.
or like the hand that, moment to moment,
feels a woman, saying the words
as the hand moves, as the heart beats, as
breath goes in and out through open lips.
as small cries rise. the poem coming.

Bob Flanagan

SPANISH STAIRWAY IN BEVERLY HILLS

open my mouth
say "hi" eat cake
"how ya doin'? how ya been?" hope
nobody saw me wipe my mouth on my sleeve
"pard' me, 'xcuse me" i say
"love that shirt" finish my cake
put the paper plate in a trash bag
walk in circles
"pard' me"
through clumps of people
"where's my jacket?"
walk around
to the wrought iron railing
one brown shoe on the edge of the steps
the red-tiled floor
the spanish looking stairway
 in the middle of beverly hills
my car parked on some side street
frost on the windows
hard to see
the rear-view mirror needs adjusting
my face in the rear-view mirror
white icing in the corners of my mouth

2 OLD LOVE LETTERS, A POEM, AND JOURNAL NOTES/ CUT-UP AND REARRANGED

ice float penis clinic/ i was raisins and apples,
me blender full of *was* and *mistake*/ my squeal-i
expected/ i howling, asleep on little dimes/ until
UP THE WHOLE PROCEDURE!/ like that with you deep
kept pillows curled/ and it was all over. . . i don't
burn- i ponder, upon you the schedule, ribs my fingers,
the realization: oh i *IT* for eight, about two weeks,
crying on 21 days, takingness or irritate, have a
period, then beg (or very near with) (what a hassle)
etc., angel we cannot pill belly at lunch time/ when
all open, all were, we were/ we laid in bed. . . the
afternoon/ on top of blankets/ pursuing quiet ends/
i'd love to have an evening, plants, draw you, not
cough so much/ i might even (once would be enough). . .
we were, you are an excellent person

Tristine Rainer

BEYOND THE GATE

I know the gate as I know my own body, each grey, faded redwood plank, each unfinished ridge and splinter, the rusted iron hinges which hold it to the stone wall. The high wall extends into the horizon on either side, an occasional yew tree softening, obscuring the perspective. I know each insurmountable inch that the gate rises above my arm's reach.

I can easily lift the iron latch from its cradle, but still the gate will not budge. It seems to be locked from inside, and there is a large keyhole beneath the latch. I am waiting for him to arrive with the key. I have been waiting a long time.

The gate. The wall. The yew trees. Everything looks identical from both sides. I remember the other side. I remember too well.

She was a woman, as I recall, of long golden hair. In her face something was missing, some small portion of ugliness to make her interesting, to set off her features. In that face there was no pain, only a childlike naivete.

I remember how Carine spent her days, aimlessly, riding the cable car to and from the Bay. (She knew all the conductors and always rode free.) She held the bar with her right arm and spread her left arm and leg over the street like a wing. The wind pushed against her flimsy dress revealing her unhampered breasts, high and round as flying saucers, and her long thighs, curved as an Arabian jumper's. She literally flew from the cable car while it was still in motion, landing in traffic with the abandon of the elect.

Later in the day, she walked from shop to shop visiting friends. She posed for artists. Sometimes she meticulously painted her own watercolors and gave them away—butterflies, mermaids, serpents,

aquatic eyes, and sentient plants. She nearly always smiled; the only sorrow she ever revealed was when a boyfriend moved or a pet died.

Her room was on the third floor of an unrestored roominghouse, with long dim corridors and stained carpets. It was small, but there was a window overlooking the street that flooded the room with sunlight in the afternoons, and the rent was only forty dollars a month. This much she could generally borrow or earn by working for a week.

Carine had painted the walls of her room "remember your childhood little girl pink" and hung batiked silk banners from the ceiling. The banners undulated, so that the wall of the tiny room seemed to breathe. The smaller batiks were studies of shapes and color; but the largest was a portrait of Carine herself as Cynthia. The moon-white goddess shone triumphant and naked against the dark blue material; her wild silvery hair sung and billowed whenever a breeze wafted through the window.

On the wall opposite Cynthia hung a batik of the goatherder, Pan. The figure of the silent piper permeated the room with music; there was no radio or stereo to deafen his song. At the window Carine had positioned a glass prism, so that as the sun crossed the sky, rainbows traveled from object to object in a mobile solar collage. It lit in succession each day a purple orchid in a water glass, a bouquet of feathers from tropical birds, a sparkling silver ball hanging from the ceiling (which caught the rainbow in its diamond facets and sent it spinning in tiny specks of color), a portrait of Carl Jung, thick volumes of occult research (including a complete collection of Madame Blavatsky's treatises), an old print of oriental cherubs, faded photographs of unknown women, now dead, a mylar mirror on the door, and several carefully annotated astrological charts.

Beneath Pan a kingsized mattress stood raised on a makeshift platform. The spread was handwoven with snakes and half moons in an intricate pattern. The bed actually formed a kind of altar, which

was intentional, for it was here that Carine performed her nightly ritual with the shadows. She had the gift of prophetic dreaming.

Carine dreamt every night without fail, and in the mornings she lay in bed for a good half hour, somewhere in a luminous cloud, recalling the dream, living it out for a second time. Then she would rise and follow the dream through for a third time during the day. The third, and ultimate, run was like the grand opening of a new play. Somewhere behind her head, Carine could hear the audience rustling in their seats and sometimes applauding. The third runthrough was also the most exciting because the unexpected would always happen. It was as if the director had, at the last minute, whispered new stage directions, changed an actor's make-up, and retouched the sets.

I remember how the director went overboard in the matinees. It always seemed in the daytime performance that the lighting was too harsh, the actors nervous, and the scene changes awkward. The director's greatest weakness was his anxiety to convince the audience, and though he added verisimilitude to the performance, he did so at the cost of grace. Worse yet, the actors picked up his anxiety and invariably improvised new lines to fill in the silences, so that by the third run there was always too much dialogue.

But Carine was satisfied. Living out the same experiences and sensations three consecutive times in twenty-four hours kept her in a tingling state of *deja-vu*. Even the most trivial incidents had for her a numinous quality, and just behind her mouth she always felt like laughing at the contradictions. She might dream about entering an apartment for the first time, where the walls were covered with chartreuse and vermillion squares and where a long-whiskered calico cat come up to speak to her. But when she for the third time, came into this apartment, though the furniture was exactly the same, the paintings on the walls those of the night before, the glimpse of the bay from the window just right, there were mistakes which made Carine want to giggle. The bright squares of wallpaper carpeted the

floor as a rug, and the calico cat was entirely missing except as a whiskered man with large amber eyes.

Or Carine might dream that she was walking through the woods when a centaur, with a long, flowing mane, trotted up to her. She threw herself upon his back and rode with him to his secret cave. There they lay on the soft grass and began petting the squirrels and racoons who shared his hideaway, gently, until the petting became lovemaking, with the animals as passive participants.

That day she saw him in the park. She noticed his long brown hair and their eyes met. Without a word they drove to his house in his new bronze Mustang. He was a cartoonist and his bedroom was full of sketches of odd forest animals.

Unfortunately, Carine's dreams foreshadowed troublesome incidents too. The worst were those in which accidents occurred. One time Carine dreamt that a desperate woman jumped off a tall building downtown, and, as the woman was about to hit the sidewalk, she landed on a businessman who was on his way to the office, and killed him, too. When, in the day, Carine again saw the woman fly out the window, she could no more stop the inevitable crash with the man below than God himself in his divine foreknowledge. More terrible yet, in cases like this, time became extended; the woman would seem to tumble in slow motion, and Carine would be frozen in impotent knowledge of the man's fate for what seemed an eternity.

So there were disadvantages to Carine's gift, but she had never once wished to give it up. She was somewhat surprised, then, when one October night, she had a dream which could not be re-enacted in the day. The dream was quite unusual because there was no sound and no sight in it. It was simply a sensation which lasted the night through, the sensation of rushing, at an undefineably fast speed through blackness, rushing first as if in an invisible car over invisible roads, and then running without legs over hills and through pastures, blindly running as one runs backwards, seeing only with the eye in the back of the head, which is not seeing at all but only sensing

direction. All night she rushed through this space, running, it seemed, toward the sea, sensing kelp in the thick, black air, though there was no land, no trees, no roads, no earth, no water.

The following day, Carine dwelled on the dream as she watched a friend rehearse for a new play. The characters wore black leotards and the stage was actually a large round pit below the audience. Her friend played the part of an actor making his escape from the director of a Theater of Cruelty who tortured his performers for the sake of pure drama. Actually the character's attempted escape was part of the director's plot. At the end of the play, the protagonist was caught at the very spot from which he had run, and toward which he had unknowingly been running throughout the performance. At this precise moment, the film on a movie projector, set up on the side of the cavernous stage to show black film on a white screen, flew off the reel, a signal that the play was over.

Carine was amazed even more than usual at the ingenuity of her dreams to anticipate the future and went home happily for another night's adventure with the shadows.

The following night, for the first time, she slept without a single dream.

There was nothing extraordinary about the next day, and Carine was so busy scurrying about to borrow the rent, that she didn't give her empty night a second thought. Nor did she worry the second or third night of dreamless sleep. It was autumn, the air was balmy and clear; children were peddling yellow and orange flowers on the street corners. Carine assumed that life was so beautiful just then, that her dreams chose not to distract her.

But after a dreamless week had passed, Carine began to miss her night life. So she followed a formula she had learned from a white witch, sure to bring dreams. She dressed herself in a pale gown, knelt at the foot of her bed in the light of the full moon, and chanted three consecutive times:

Mother the Moon

Visit your daughter

Bring me relief

Pierce through the blackness

When I'm asleep.

As she finished the chant, a specter of a cloud floated across the moon's pearl white surface. Carine crawled under her handmade quilt, rested her face on her palm, and immediately fell into a deep dark sleep. No light reached her until the morning, when she realized, with a quick pang of fear, that the chant had not worked.

But the prism was shedding its rainbow colors on her face; she could feel the sensation of yellow on one cheek, red on her nose and blue on the other cheek. She decided to go make love with a friend she hadn't seen for several months, a clinical psychologist. Carine just thought this would also be a good opportunity to ask him about her dreamlessness.

Carine always felt comfortable at Jerry's penthouse; all the windows were like portholes, the bedroom contained a round waterbed, the chairs lamps and tables in the living room were shaped and arranged as circles. There was something roundish about Jerry himself, though he wasn't even plump.

Jerry was always pleased to see Carine; she had a talent for arriving without warning, but at exactly the right moment. He would turn his phones on automatic and bring forth his round antique pillbox, always filled with one type of white powder or other. They made love more as friends than as lovers; it was part of the lazy Saturday afternoon.

They both lay on their backs spent, Carine draped across Jerry's stomach like the unbaked dough of a hot-cross bun. She looked up at an empty sky through the glass dome over the bed. A crow traversed the blue hemisphere with its flight.

"Jerry?"

"Ummmmm?"

"I'm out of dreams."

"Me too."

"No, I mean I don't dream at night any more."

"You do, you just aren't remembering."

He put his warm hand on her white belly.

"No, I always remember my dreams," Carine insisted, "I'm not having any."

"Well the worst thing you can do is worry about it." He began to take on a professional tone and then stopped himself. "It's like trying to come. The harder you try the further it retreats from you..... But you don't know what I'm talking about, do you, love child?"

"Yes, I do," Carine replied, a bit piqued, "But I don't think it's that. I think I've lost my future."

"The perfect example of the here and now," He touched her flushed cheek with his finger tips.

Carine ignored him and said flatly,

"It means I'm going to die."

Jerry worked with Carine to discover what buried part of her personality she was trying to kill off by repressing her dreams. He tried hypnotism; he tried bioenergetics; he tried voice dialogue, but through all his efforts Carine became increasingly depressed. She became only more convinced that she could not dream because she had no more future.

Gradually Carine began to lose her energy, like a starfish out of water loses its phosphorescence. She smiled less often, she dropped her astrological research, she withdrew from her friends, she found herself crying unexpectedly at the end of a trolley ride. She even lost

her rosy, girlish coloring, and a small wrinkle appeared in her forehead.

Still she tried to keep up her old life, now filling it with more activity than ever before. She went to public concerts, to free lectures, to the opening of her friend's play. But mostly she began to wander the streets, especially when the fog blew in from the bay. In the early evening, when people were hurrying home to be with their families, when the expensive seafood restaurants began to fill the salt air with the aroma of butter and clams, when warm lights were coming on in studio windows, Carine would walk, empty-eyed through the misty streets.

On one occasion an attractive woman with straight black hair and a guitar case under her arm stopped Carine with a maternal smile.

"Do you have the time?" she asked in a rich sherry voice. Whereas before Carine would have struck up a friendship with the woman, went with her to a coffee house for cappuccino, and offered to draw up her chart, she now stared blankly at her with leaden eyes, and answered dully, "No," while continuing to walk in the fog.

Carine walked and walked. She walked every day. It had been months since she had had a dream. She knew she was going to die. By now she was searching for her death. She sought death as the living seek the perfect lover, the perfect mate. But she had no dreams to give her the clues where to find him, how it would happen. For the first time in her life, Carine began to experience the insecurity of an unknown future, the sense that with each step she might fall off a precipice into a black chasm.

Gradually Carine's sense of a future disappeared altogether and she began to remember. Somewhere his image lay already complete, somewhere she already knew death.

She began to recall the boundaries of his kingdom. He owned half of existence and it was only necessary to learn two principles in order to find him. She must avoid the light and she must learn to travel

backwards in time rather than forwards as she had always done. It was only a matter of remembering.

She set goals for herself as she walked. Before she reached Grant, she would have remembered his clothes. When she turned the corner at Market, she would recall exactly the position of the stars that would tell her the date of his coming. By the time she turned to walk home, she would have completed his physical description. Now she had the rhythm going. With each step she remembered one of his features, the purple silk cravat he wore around his neck, the moroccan shine on his laced shoes, his dark long hair, his full sensitive mouth. She recalled his small, sharp teeth, his narrowly cut suit, his hands like a woman's, his tiny feet like a child's, his body that of a ten year old boy. Beneath his eyes and around his nose, she noticed that the skin was sallow, darkened, the only sign of his age. And the eyes themselves were strange; the black pupils seemed to overflow into the hazel iris, while the shape suggested something vaguely oriental.

She turned around in the middle of an alley with the vision of his eyes distinct in her mind, drawing her. A gust of wind coughed at her from the bottom of the hill, pushing her along, back to her room. Now she remembered how he would come, on a dark night like this, when she was out walking. She would have left the door unlocked for him as always. He would smile to himself at the ease with which the door seemed to swing itself open at his touch. He would turn off the blue bulb she had left burning, light the candles she had been saving, and lie down to wait for her on the raised mattress. Her pillow supported his neck as he caressed the knife, the handle of carved ivory, expertly fluted and curved. He ran his thumb along the edge of the blade, and glided it along his sallow cheek as if it were a razor.

"I've been expecting you," she remembered his voice, his speech perfectly manicured like his fingernails, "You're exactly as I dreamt you. Perhaps a bit taller than I imagined. It's all happening again. Can you feel it?"

Carine opened the glassed door with its broken pane, which led to the ground floor of her building. She climbed the carpeted stairs quickly. Her heart was pounding. It was all she could hear. The wild joy of knowledge was pushing against her throat. Pleasure and pain, fear and excitement mixed together as she saw the warm glow of candle light seeping from under her door. She opened it softly; the bed was empty. He must be in the closet. Terror, this was his dream. He was directing. She turned to close the door, locked it from inside. She remained motionless, transfixed, facing the door, staring into the mylar mirror which hung on it. The thin metal sheet was badly creased from the last time she had moved and her figure was distorted in the reflection as in a fun house. One hip of her blue jeans bulged in a hump, and the stripes on her sweater rolled like waves.

Somewhere she heard the rhythmical pounding of a drum and a flute faint and silvery. That was all. She stood perfectly still. Then she thought she saw something move above her head—a raised arm disjointed, scattered itself in the mylar. The colors of the room shivered, darted like fish, then bled together with the movement of that arm, slowly, so slowly. She looked for the knife, silver reflected in the silver; it was invisible. The clenched fingers on the handle danced like living protoplasm, now growing a peninsula in one direction, now forming a lagoon in another.

As the hand with its invisible blade descended, Carine saw her own face, pulled like a Munch's head to one side, her distorted mouth open, distended with fear. Suddenly, the shivering silver shot out to catch his face and pulled it next to hers, made it part of hers. It became a monster head with three eyes, a long mouth on one side like a cartoon balloon, a mass of rushing, crawling skin, wriggling snakes of hair, spasmodic octopus limbs, which severed themselves and grew back again.

I remember it as in a dream; it becomes confused near the end, pieces are missing, and everything seems to fuse. All I can recall for sure is the sense of terror and the image of a knife falling through the

monster head, severing it like a piece of fruit to the stem, hair pouring like juice to the ground, and then a pomegranate seemed to explode. Red seeds landed everywhere, blossoming immediately into living geometries, metallic crimson shapes invaded the last human colors of brown and flesh, carmine rivers spread, grew, moved like mercury over the shimmering silver.

But it is peaceful here, too peaceful. The same light breeze continuously touches my bare arms, never withdraws its touch. It is dusk forever; beams of violet light stream through the floating seaweed tresses of the trees. I sit on the stone bench, no more than twenty feet from the gate. It is hard, cold marble. I cross my legs, uncross them. I sit perfectly still, my hands in my lap, allowing myself to drift away into a state of nothingness. Everything disappears and I find relief from my memories. Nothing.

When I return, it is impossible to know how long I have been gone. The pastel beams in the air still move aimlessly like dust. I walk again to the gate. I look down the path which follows the wall to the horizon on either side. I can see nothing. Hear nothing. I know I must begin to anticipate, to imagine his coming with the key, to dream my life when he releases me. But I still remember too much. I should forget. I should look forward to him when I go into the nothingness, imagine his face, his eyes, his hand with the key. But I see nothing. I can only feel danger, sustained, the moment of fear continuous.

So I wait. I wait until I can anticipate, until he will come with the key.

Bob Webb

TRAVELS NORTH IN FEBRUARY, 1974

-- for Doug

OUTBOUND

Pausing in Gorman
Two friends waiting Spring--
Snow on the hills.

Taft in late rain
Next year's food
Is tiny green leaving soil.

Past Shafter the sun shines
The light is wasted,
Wildflowers refuse to bloom.

Tumbleweeds crushed on wire fences,
Given their freedom
They would roll to the sea.

Blackbirds dip from haystack to well
Tumbleweeds cross our path--
On the road again.

Barbed wire along the road--
Who would stop now
To pick his barren trees?

In Stanislaus County
The sky is blue
Though the name is snowbound.

SAN FRANCISCO

Street lights turned on
We do not notice--
Like advancing age they appear.
Lawyers leaving marbled schools
Briefcase full of girlie magazines--
Each dresses correctly.

Fir trees withered brown
Against the curve of freeway
Who's concerned if they fail?

Seven sets of hills and sea
I am despondent today
Like Tam within the clouds.

A patch of blue over Tam
Inside the gray shroud--
I wonder, can it be seen?

Fogbound in the Golden Gate
The sun shines
On Sutro plum trees.

I wait in the court,
His law school interviews--
Importance is fleeting.

The savings bank
Gives one paper for another
Only cypress are green.

Tonight I return

Flying at altitude
Over all my poetry.

Lovely women beside me
I stare into writing
When I look up they are gone.

INBOUND

Flying south at night
The blackness speeds by--
Home so quickly.

PRAYER FOR SENTIENT BEINGS

Among these novelties of books
starched yellow pages
stacked aside under
low ceilings,
pipes exposed,
steam heat warping
bindings,
found here the
Registry of Merchant Ships,
found here
the steamship
Atlantic Sun,
tanker,
found the tonnage
gross and net,
length, breadth
and draft
and horsepower,
2800.
(mildewed,
like height
and weight
and bust measurement
of pin-ups in old
magazines)
37 crew
and where built
and when,
Chester
Pennsylvania
1920. . .
found the last registry,

1938

(sold to Italians.
wrote a letter once,
received reply on
airmail, flimsy
"sold to Mexicans,"
they said)

Found none of you there,
nor Uncle Johnny,
encoding truth
for the mysterious
wireless;
found none of you,
Dad,
fallen on the
gas-soaked
deck
(split your rib,
I guess)
spent a month
in the hospital
at Panama;
couldn't find if
you were
seventeen,
eighteen?
didn't find out
if pretty nurses
peeled you
bananas
on the veranda,
didn't find out
if loneliness
slunk away,

nor how much
you weighed
going in
and coming out,
nor if one
special
nurse
stripped from her
white uniform
in darkness
to come to you. . .
You could have
made a novel
from that,
everyone expatriate,
Panama expatriate
far away
(I always envisioned
the hospital
adjacent to the locks,
you convalescent,
watching the mules
pull our battleships
across the isthmus. . .)

You should have
told me
about her;
I can't find
her hair,
the moisture
on her body
in these jaundiced
dry pages
haven't been cracked

since '44. . .

can't find Uncle Johnny,
can't hear his Morse
tapped over wireless,
you watching,
rolling with shorebound
swells
to hear the crystal set
crackling,
all night conjuring
ships' passing voices,
shoreside radios;

you stayed up the nights
in drifting seas. . .

and I can't find Hans,
whiskered salt
you photographed
after the hurricane,
can't taste the
strawberry sundae
that filled a
craving your first night
in port
(was it
Chester
Pennsylvania?
was it a
strawberry sundae?)
I can't see
the tubes' glowing
in the radio,
nor the cabin's look,

nor the captain's face
nor the storms at sea
(why was he,
that Hans,
the sailor you saved
inside you box camera?
where was he
when he was 17
and you unborn,
and where I
that night
in Pennsylvania,
Chester
down in Panama
long ago?
and why can't we
hold onto ourselves
and the tastes
of cravings
satisfied?)
soul may be no more
than memories
of mourners weeping
and black ink words
fading under
strangers' gaze,
then gone;
when the being is lost
the corpus is nothing,
it leans against
a warehouse
propped up on sticks. . .

what's left at last
are photographs

and memories
of memories told to
children,
simplified,
thus incomplete
and insensible
to fact. . .

the tiny moments
gone make me sad
and angry,
not the dying
but the leaving;
the sorrow of
nothing
come to nothing
again,
the passage
of men
and ships
and seas. . .

I have your
duty release,
official paperwork,
black inked lines
and signed by you;
but the ship is gone
(Yucatan mirage, somewhere)
and Johnny's gone,
lost, and there's
no novel from that
scenario
you told me in
childhood

(I don't even know
where the hospital
was)
and those white
aproned nurses,
daughters of
Baptist ministers
gone too,
leaving tiny lines
only on old
forms,
telling nothing
of breezes from
Ecuador
nor all else
that's passed through.

Al Austin

EXPLORING NAPPI'S DUMP

copper and nudist magazines
coppertoned nudists, whole natureproud families
and tough shafts of rubber insulated copper, snipped clean and shiny
by Jersey Central Power and Light.
It was our saturday morning gold rush
poking broken fishing rods through
the flapless (boxtop missiles) boxes and watermeloned dirt. over and
overturned couches pouches stuffed with catseye marbles and
nineteen-forty-three pennies that were never copper. bobby pins,
green spoons, wet matches and balls of cat fur—chromeplastic
remco wheels and dismembered dolls. Then-
"Rip the lining!"
pink black cracknailed boy fingers
find the fragile seams, exposing the quieter hiding places of family
things. Lost Found. The couch, a big beige goose, gutted
"To the stacks, researchers!"
sorting sifting the piles of looks
and lifes. kicking the saturday evening post in its norman rockwell
and scan-searching for sex on the cover of reader's digest. sunday
supplements, unwanted want ads, seared sear's catalogues and
dead people's phone books. christmas, christmas, christmas cards
—but always beneath the surface of america the Golden Nudist
served brookside tennis and sang songs around the campfire,
buried deep beneath the eyes of garbagemen—skindeep
professionals
"Turn the page—turn the page!"
and the page would be turned
the hairless newstand modesty of the

cover fading by the table of contents, dissolved by the editorial. a
perpetual centerfold of naked beaming daughters, mothers,
grandmothers, great-grandmothers and great blue skies
playing tennis and kissing the sun
and we'd gather around that magazine,
and while the tide turned and while the creeks grew full and rushing
and the marsh damp with winter closing, we'd kneel hard pressed
to find a lousy dry communion.

"Here comes that fucken Nappi in his bulldozer!"

"Let's get ta hell outahere!"

"Vroom-vroom-vroom!"

hidden low in the swamp weeds with
baby mice and freak watermelons, swallowing laughter as Nappi's
wave of
dirt advanced upon the dirt—pushing a million dollar housing
development over the bowel movements of jersey bungalows,
civilization's icing on the garbage cake.

"Shit, I wish we had—"

"Look, I stuck it in my pants."

"Look, mice, look!"

swamp weeds transformed into looming
sunbathing forest—oh christ, marching through the pines, the green
green bristling pines, singing blue songs and feeling like dirty
gods. the trees would break, we'd fall beside the earth
in the clearing, the edge of the
forest, the Golden Nudist Girl would pick berries and our hearts
would pound the dead and rustling leaves.

"Turn the page."

let's move closer

"Turn the page!"

closer

"Turn the page!"

closer closer closer closer closer

"It's getting—"

darkness and cold come so easily on

the edge of winter in the east. the cocoon of light and warmth
unravels, a stomach growls. a boy runs in the shadows that grow
inside of him, the shadows of a thousand hungers, a thousand
heats

heat, the heat, the oppressive summer
heat and the throbbing southern swamps crawling from television
sets into dark rooms. our skins burning and that stinking sweating
music throbbing, throbbing, throbbing in a head of heats that
wouldn't sleep

squirming for sleep
and a dick hard with dreams and piss
eyes laced with mucus squinting at the
bathroom light. half visions of monotony in a speckled mirror that
smelled of old spice and ajax. trickling silently down the slopes of
the bowl while confederate crickets crawled up your spine—

And God Bless America don't forget
to flush the toilet
stumbling through the television room,
their eyes closed faces snoring. the beer spilled gently from jelly jars.

the test pattern blinked and hummed, somnambulate
confederate crickets dead for the night.
the fight for sleep, the fight into sleep—
the melting mooring unbuckling of the mind. grasping for the dream
chute

past radios and the vomiting of sick fords homeward bound,
intersection downed. drifting across a remarkable sea to the islands
of the Golden Nudists, slicing melon waves and pineapple
whitecaps while time becomes yours and the world is contained in
a brown palm.

"Nappi, Nappi?"

No, like a good Christian you're in church on this fine
Sunday morning. Your dump is mine. Your gutted Pontiacs, your
rusted bedsprings, your rats and splintered eggshells—
the sweat of night curls round a beer can,
daylight in the anal forest

Wednesday's garbage?
Thursday's garbage?
Friday's garbage?
Midnight? National Enquirer? True Confessions? Police
Gazette? Esquire? Sun Lovers? Photogenic? Adam? Man? World?
National Geographic? Playboy? True? Sextoons?
Nappi, I'm getting a hard on
Your garbage is giving me a hard on
Your paper women paper words are giving me
limp-legged across the buried swamp
on cheap black sneakers while the seagulls fly in from the east.
clambake castle mounds, scarlet shining smiling—gulls exploding
in a squawk of feathers, rats scurrying across the sabbath retreat
Friday's garbage—
Who was this man among five-thousand? This transient
collector who unconsciously played the pimp—was he leading the
junior choir in We Three Jolly Fishermen? Was he placing Nappi's
children on the Arc?
he made a sandwich of his dirty
books. between the newspaper bread of tuesday and wednesday they
lay, like layers of canned meat.
he tied the package in kite string
doubled back with a double bow
I cut it with a penknife
the strings snapped clean, then fell
limply to the four sides. sunday, monday, tuesday—
Tuesday.
The Golden Nudist: Issue Number Thirty-Eight.
the Golden Nudist on a silently
embalmed sunday morning. alone with the slender limbs, the dream
face that promises eternity, breasts and lips that engulf you in their
beauty, and the whispering whispering flowing hair
Nappi's dump vanishes
the world vanishes
just the turning pages, the naked

turning pages, a paper score of paper love. beads of lake water
glistened on her shoulders, the gentle curving shoulders that were
as distant as the sun and as close as page five. on page eighteen a
fawn nibbled salt from her hand, in whose eyes was innocence
more secure?

impossible to stand, trembling, sinking
to the dirt, knees, glass imbedded dirt. above and around towered the
castles of garbage, defenseless shitheaps of twoeyeball networks,
grand unions, two guys from harrison—sun tan lotion oozing
across green bread, milked cartons blistering pissing sponges,
great cardboard walls—all conspired to block the sun and lay
shadows on my Golden Nudist—the babygirlwomen that scalped
my mind and punched her holes in my chest

twisting to light her,
flapping papers on the ground eye
scalloped gloss

Lovemate—

Lovemate?

he had bought a new one.

the sun dimmed

rapidly

on the cover a silk armored woman

balanced her act on a thin metal chair. her skin was loose, soggy. black
patent leather diamond shoes, black gauze underpants, black
embroidered bra. she grinned redly swallowing her teeth. her legs
signaled victory to the mother arms

One second, Golden Girl, one second

inside she swept floors and licked the bathroom sink,
fondling pipes and faucets and spouts merrily. lust like a second
skin, an odor a shape that crawled down your leg. the upstairs
make, the milkman's my man's break, horse rump patter, banana
skin sucker

on page twelve she took the globe between her legs.
on page thirteen a million pages and a million miles from the

Golden Nudist one-hundreth of an inch of two-dimensional pulp
caused the insides of a boy to explode

"Hey boy—what the hell you doin' out here?"

he was less than fifty-feet away. the seagulls
screeched and took flight. there was no exit—just piles of garbage.
I couldn't run. rigid beneath darkening hurricane skies. Lovemate
beneath the left foot, the Golden Nudist under the right—wangler
jeans shadow wet with what could have been blood

I waited for Nappi

"Don't you know this is privit proptee, boy?"

"I wasn't doing anything, Mr. Nappi. . ."

"You was here, weren't ya?"

"But, I—"

"That's trespassin'. Don't you know that?"

"But, but—it's the town's dump!"

"It's the town's garbage, boy, but it's my
dump! This whole goddamn swamp is mine! I
own it—you understand that?"

I nodded and shifted uncomfortably

Lovemate rustled—Nappi looked down

"Hey, how the hell did you get my—get yer ass off
this dump right on now! Shit. . ."

the warm, summer laden rain was beginning to fall.
carbons, play money, and church programs swirled before the
storm. I ran toward the creek and the splintered driftwood bridge
and the dirt street leading to my bedroom. soon the Golden Nudist
would be gray twistedmush—but it didn't matter, nothing
mattered except the white blood

the bulldozer roared as the wind carried
the salt from the sea to the earth

Frances Dean Smith

WALKING HOME

I like to go where it's wild,
next to the fence,
and hear the freeway hum, thrum,
behind the oleander.
There's glass there, broken;
there's bottles piled in cases labelled, "Carnation."
There's streaks of dust across the concrete, traces
of a gone wind.
The moon turns her face away.
I look, through chain-link lattice,
at drifted cardboard, leaves,
a flyer for Madam Nervosa, the one who will solve every life problem.
This is my home, I know:
There is nothing for me.

- April, 1972

Mike Rose

**HOLLYWOOD MEETS MARC CHAGALL ". . .and
the gods**

of the world were shut in the lavatory." *

****Anne Sexton***

—for Jamie, Vicky, Wendy

So I sat, Bogart, fedora in hand,
tossing half-lidded glances
at the piano girl,
ready for Casablanca,
ready, too, for all the bourbon
this cabaret could pour my way.

Bogart,
 fedora,
a double shot. . .

I took a Mitchum turn from my chair,
and walked to the bathroom
with an appropriate roll of the hip.
But there
golden mums
juttied from bowls of chipped porcelain,
urinals sang lullabies in brown stain and orchids,
and the faucets leaked daisies .

.
. .
. .
yellow/white daisies.

my chair,

this puzzle,
tulips in tile. . .

Grabbing a cluster,
I cast off my Casablanca coat and fog
and pirouetted, Nijinsky,
through doors through crowds
to land in toe-shoes,
a prince on a piano stool:
Entrechat!
Then, winning her hand,
I gathered up my quarter notes,
and flew backwards out windows
over cafes and picture shows
to court her,
an airy ballerina among the stars,
with handsprings,
moonbeams,
and
 (say the words)
 say the words!
washroom
lilies
and
watercloset
mums

THINKING OF YOU

When we met,
I was working at Condolences and
You were sobbing over What You Mean To Me.
Your note came with the afternoon crates of Grief,
So, at the 5 o'clock whistle, I pushed through Bereavement
And hurried to find you drying tears
At the corner of 5th and Love You Dearly.

How was I to know
You wanted me to offer hankies from the factory,
Thoughtfully monogrammed
With hearts and You're My Flowers?
I didn't even notice your
Wish You Were Here rouge!

So I Passed On to my night job
At the Sympathies mill,
Leaving you looking for Someone Dear.

Later, I heard that Tender Regard
Swept you away in his Heartfelt 88.
And now I find myself staying till midnight in Sorrow,
Rhyming the Gospel,
Gaining overtime
And Thinking of You.

Bob Greenfield

ELEMENTAL ESTHETICS AND CHARLES DICKENS

I was trying to imagine myself cold. It was the winter season. I'd been reading Dickens' *Christmas Carol*. And besides I needed an excuse for going out to buy a bottle of fine brandy. So I wanted snow and ice, thick frost on the windows, that wonderful stuff I used to peel away with my fingernails on blizzardous days when I was a kid living in Eskimo country. I wanted to walk out the door and be greeted with a howling wind carrying blankets of snow in its belly. I was living in Venice, California. Indeed, I *am* living in Venice, California. And I *do* wish to be transported to the place where I can partake of all that wild bluster that comes from ice being on the road. For a minute I thought of sneaking away North on a freight train to grab a quick vacation and get the feel of that polaric air. Walking into rooms from ice outside and feeling that delicious sting going from ice to a fireplace, feeling the blood puff up in the cheeks and hearing, yes, the knife of that wind saw through the air outside the windows. Something absolute in the fury of the wind, walking against it, letting it push in your face till it hurts, like the appetite for sex after long going without it. A goad to clean out your head, chest, sweeping out of the way all those splintered thoughts, the half-used-half-useless material that has gathered up in another year. Spring? Hell, no, I hate spring. It's dirty, slushy, indecisive. Give me a winter assault on my nerves, let them quicken, let there be icicles hanging from the branches of orchards, long thick spears like the kind I used to break off the roof sidings and suck on to cool the throat, slake my thirst. Yes, I savored that scene from *Love Story* with Jennifer Cavilleri rolling in the snow with her lover loosing a seasonal madness like going for a wild erotic bath in an ocean of ice water. An excuse to be crazy with love in a different shape. To holler the poetries of unbridled bliss into

the icy pure skies listening to the echoes of the tongue as they bounce back and wrap around the ears and fill the heart to a brimming fullness. An excuse to read books inside the house knowing the weather is absolutely frigid outdoors. Knowing the truth you read is not challenged by the fantasies of seventy degree weather outside. An excuse to buy an immense bulky top coat turned up at the collar with a muffler and a stocking cap and leather gloves. To love it until you hate it. The weather, I mean. Like a stout and persistent marriage, a devout wife. To love until you hate so that you may love again. So penetrating the cold, so defyingly definite, that your feet freeze in your boots, you shake with the numbness of teeth-chattering pain. Only so that you can then go inside out of the blast like crazy children who want to go ice-skating when it's thirty below zero. So that they can then come inside the house and gather round the flames and feel their bodies change from rock to thaw and laugh and chatter and exclaim their madness for all who do or don't wish to hear that, yes, we went outside because it's just lovely out there. Wasn't it cold? O, no, not a bit (shivering, snot running down their noses, tears in their eyes, shoes full of ice and snow, stockings dripping wet)—no, it was deliciously warm out there.....

This, then, is the orphic situation, the magic—the burning knowledge had by little children of the change that happens to their bodies when they let themselves freeze into a sodden clunk of shivering clay so that they can feel the juices surge up into their very throats and have discovered the very voice of the muse living on the frozen pond. Ice skating is an absolutely mindless affair in thirty-degree-below-zero weather. It is a young defiance against the comfort of the rocking chair and the dead tranquillity of the pipe-smoking existence. It is the holler of the ghost that hovers over the pond waving young dare-devils onto the rink of the tribe to quaff an icy taste of some pure thing. No summer swim, no autumn hike, no spring pageant has this quintessential pristine character. Rubbing bodies on the dance floor, kicking up the animal sweats, ah, yes, but that comes *after* the era of the Ice Kingdom. And many a love has

dropped into a lap flying off the pond into the huge sprays of snow where the upturned ankle shows no bare flesh but a mere thick red stocking. As male and female go flying into a heap of delicious mad carroming across the board. Have you ever smelled the hair of a woman in the middle of a snow bank? How that odor has feet, trots up through your nose and covers your insides throwing off all the carbon you had inhaled for years. *It was worth it.* For that one breath the whole insane venture became new. Suddenly you were reborn flat on your ass in the middle of icy winter skimming over snow and ice.....

And here is the esthetics of the elements: solid, liquid, and gas. It's the basic reason, it seems, that little important long fiction is written in Southern California. O, yah, here comes a moral, you say. Well, NO! Here comes a song. Coleridge once said that extremes meet. Like Frost's ice melting on the stove, so the poem. . . . yes, there's a free ride somewhere here. And that wonderful Frostian idea of *The Ride* that he used so well in his poems. (I am tempted here to launch a discussion in praise of the virtues of "Stopping By the Woods on a Snowy Evening" but I have promises to keep.) Well, Frost was a people poemster. Always talking about the weather, wouldn't you know. And now I'm thinking that fiction demands a lot of ice to freeze it into solid form. Otherwise you have all run and gas and no stopping and looking. And whereas it's easy enough to pour a poem, novels don't fit very well into glasses or pitchers. Novels are things that can sit in the cupboard for days and you can put the lid back on the jar and forget about it until you get hungry again—unless it happens to be a very short and/or brilliant piece that you can gobble at one sitting. In which case it can just as well be called a tale or poem. What I'm saying is that good novels seem to need vicissitude and diversity of seasons like good marriages. Whereas good poems are like lightning love affairs, romantic rendezvous. A poem seems to play best with a single emotion or theme or incident or scene or idea or thing. You can usually fit it on one page more or less. (I don't think there is such a thing as an epic *poem*. Those past pieces called epics

were usually long stories, essays, usually allegorical, like *Paradise Lost*, that did a lot of teaching and often, alas, preaching.) A poem can be all verb or all noun and some poems have even pretended to be pure adjective. So the weather doesn't *have* to change to pull off a good poem or even put one on. But I'm guessing that climates without *both* ice and summer aren't able to afford the extravagances of change necessary to permit large works of fiction to breathe in varying atmospheres and in diverse rhythms. The novels I like best and think the most about are written within the changing flow-and-stop of *all* the seasons. And even those great novels whose action happens entirely within only one season have strength from their author's having lived inside the other three. The author is conditioned to feel in terms of the changes one season rings on another. (I'm thinking now of *traditional* novels since there doesn't seem to be any other species of novel that I know about. Gilbert Sorrentino, for instance, hesitates to call his narratives novels and I hesitate to call any thinly-veiled autobiography a novel. What's *novel* about the straight daily details of our lives from a *fictitious* point of view? Of course the subject of insanity that has given rise to a new popular form of confessional writing in quasifictional manners, is a different kettle of fish, nor do I wish to denigrate it. It seems, though, at this stage, to be a separate, as yet unidentifiable, non-form in the strictly literary generic sense.).....

Anyhow, these thoughts arrive from having read Charles Huffam Dickens for the first time in many years—since about 1960. I did attempt to "teach" *Great Expectations* to high school students a few years ago. But I didn't read him then; I merely recited theories about what he was supposed to have meant by writing the book. But as I'm writing this now I am utterly stunned by the power of the novel to do that which no poem has ever done to me. (I'm talking about *A Christmas Carol* and calling it a novel because it seems to me to be one.) This book did actually take me outside of this room into a whole environment made by Dickens. I tasted the total Dickensian milieu in all its vigor and variety. Because it is an orphic book

possessed of the charms of immediate magic. It is completely real because of, not in spite of, its surrealistic hokiness. It's silly, banal, naive, decisively tear-jerking kid stuff. Not a fuck in the whole book, not a single murder. It would be howled and hissed out of the Fox Venice Theatre. BECAUSE IT IS SO UTTERLY NAKED WITH ALL ITS CLOTHES ON. Yes, I'm sure I'd be among the hissers and howlers. And we'd be howling and hissing because we'd been dragged back to take a look at the ancient garden and we couldn't stand to look upon such awful wonder. It's true that this ancient garden Dickens drew is strafed with snow and hail every winter. But as Camus has said, there is no sun without shadow and it is essential to know the night. Such pure holy joy Charles Dickens has clapped in our faces that we gladly leave the graveyard of our greed to go encounter experience for the millionth time—knowing that gladness is next to godliness. Somewhere near the center of that far-off frozen pond the Dark Lady of the Muses sits upon the Horse of Feeling. Charles Dickens goads us to ride that horse into the night to find the dazzling heart of day. One must imagine Dickens happy.

William Mohr

Walking

My friend, our bodies
have changed, not in light and dark,
but in the individual vapor
protecting our desires
that finally are leaking out.

Let's walk.
Let's walk near waves with their singed
edges, leveling

Walk, for walking arouses the dead

Let's walk towards that bush,
towards that lake with bruised
ice centered with reeds.

Walk, and if our eyes give in
and stop expecting crisp
and solid roots
and not allow, not
permit, but
shake on their own
until our whole
body's choking

then we'll run to sleep
for this evening's single cloud
is darkening from flesh
that's burning miles away.

The Price

A corner. A hat in his hands,
demanding coins.
Light's fading from the walls.
His eyes, like flaking paint,
reveal his boundaries.

Money, he says, is for laughing.
He'll do a jerking dance,
pretend to ride a donkey,
tear off his different-colored shoes
and alternate them on his head.

In a sudden darkness, I'm stubborn,
unwilling to give him a chance
to prove he's the final clown.
He drops his eyes
into the steaming hat,

scrambles them into an omelette,
and eats. His eyes appear
again, slowing rising from his chest,
up through the throat and cheeks,
and settle with clarity.

I want to buy his magic.
He walks away, three feet
off the ground. I run
to keep up. He smiles.
Finally, I'm hungry

for my own body.

Demolition

1

Coming down, the walls
stop holding their breath.
Their sighing fills my gloves
on the flat-bed truck.
There's barely room for my tired hands.

I pull the nails out, smooth the edges,
and stack the boards, with their nests
of insects, galaxies of lungs.
As the dust settles,
I see the secret ventilation pipes
with tiny holes that squealed all night.

2

Once in my family's garden
my father pulled out stakes,
the dirt end caked
with termite holes.
We dipped them in a pan of gasoline.
He smiled at me. His teeth
held back the breath of his love.

Wiping and sawing off the bottoms,
I stared at the holes,
the source of his mouth.
He knocked the stakes back in
and carefully stretched new wire
in between, as if the air

were a broken jaw.

The Bathers

I hear hot water spraying out of pipes
and a woman cleaning the backs of her thighs.
Perhaps all her blood has turned into soap
and she is rubbing it back in, arm to arm.

Another friend's washing his hair,
shampoo swirling on his head.

I move from bath to bath, comforting my friends
with a towel that smells like a dark oil.

Soap covers their faces like welders' masks.

I raise their eyelids, swollen with blood
like the lining of a pregnant womb
and see their eyes, stunned
by a soap stronger than acids.

Male

With my sperm plump
in her, my breath
slows as I sleep.

In the morning bath
I wash my hairy chest
which tails down to a stump
that often slumps too soon.
My pubic hair,
when pulled straight out,
isn't too much shorter.

Almost an afterthought,
my sex, as if developed at the second
of birth.

Los Angeles

1

A mattress on the floor motorcycle in the shed
Morning, a helmet and boots kick & kick & kick in rain, roll-
start past buildings with architects erasing project titles, but not floor
plans
 printers pasting up high school annuals,
 a kid thumbing dimes into a pay-phone,
 cursing the want-ads,
 secretaries touch-typing forwarding addresses,
 the desires on their bosses' faces
 as set as a keyboard,
car washes with cylindrical brushes, banks with Doric columns and
Spanish
 tile roofs,
excavated pits, huge rolls of wire, gravel churning in cement trucks

2

A bowl of yolks and dragonflies outside my window
Motorcycle kick&kick&kick
Driving past the red rag at the end of 2 X 12 lumber in a pick-up
truck,
I see a piece of orange canvas on scaffolding next to grey cement walls
and pull over to the road-side and stare. I don't try to think of
comparisons.
It is simply a piece of bright orange canvas on scaffolding,
left hanging there till Monday.

San Diego

Butter on burned skin, my mother stamping one
foot in the kitchen, bags of eggs on the floor,
the dented frying pan with bacon shrinking,
"I threw it at him when he was drunk."

In the living room, a painting of two women,
long oily hair, kneeling opposite each other,
butts on ankles, blocks of wood in their hands,
the edges of trees surrounding them,
ground glowing between them, butter
on burned skin, but no fire.

My mother's hair, rinsed red, her hips
of six births; in every room religious calendars
and statues; an eighteen year old altar boy
not believing women want to touch.

Painted in Hawaii. Our house—the septic tank
a beach with a bare tree I touched
the top of, the mountains in the morning,
wooden porch with rain puddles.

On the other wall, the Garden of Gethsemani,
a Christ with purple robes, kneeling, leaning on a rock.
I stare at the women, listening to water
circling in their mouths.

Ralph M. Angel

within the silence

this brown, twisted river does not flow, it creeps.
the air is hot, and thick as the river.

on every thatched roof and treetop,
huge black vultures sit motionless.

within the silence there is a long hiss,
a rattling, a high-pitched whine.
i know the sun is howling but cannot hear it.

in a tangle of red-leafed aroid
stretches an intricate orange web.
the spider at the center, fur beaded with moisture,
and sun dancing upon waxen rings.

i turn my head, an indian appears.
his eyes gnaw into mine like teeth,
he is short and strong, his hair caked with mud
makes sharp edges at the brow and neck.
he wears a vest of feathers and grasses,
and in his hand, a thin reed-like arrow.
his head cocked, eyes looking at me,
ears listening away from me.

a tailed-amphibian emerges from a bush,
a sudden thrust and the indian smiles,
showing me how the arrow struck the center back of its neck.
we sit, staring at each other for a long moment,
we allow the jungle to do the talking.

ucayali river, amazon valley, peru

5/1/74

Santa Marta Hot

Every night he beats her with his fists,
and she moans and whimpers
on the bed where he forces his way into her.
And nobody stops him and he knocks her
BAM BAM to the floor.
In the morning he pinches her big ass,
sadly crammed into stretchy denim pants,
and steps out, cocky, the little macho,
smiling from the top of his starched blue shirt
with salt stains, the piece of shit,
strutting in his high-gloss maroon shine.
She curses him and gathers the laundry off the line.
Her crucifix dangles between her breasts.

He whistles as I walk past him to buy papaya
from the old man who carries the big stick,
"Caramba! pssst, linda, como mujer"
the proud little macho,
selling contraband sunglasses, in the sun.
He boots a ladron from his prestigious cardtable,
screams, "Largate"
and the kid stuffs decals into his piss-stained trousers,
pictures of the Virgen Carmen,
surrounded by trucks and buses.

I dive into the soothing Caribbean,
watch the water change colors,
waist deep I watch a morena's firm round ass.
The perennial waves roll in and out
and her ass moves perfectly with the salt foam.
It knows that I am watching.
She has learned all her tricks from the gringo movies;

that never seemed to do it for me back in the states.
I wish I was the sea.
After a late lunch I rest in the hammock in my room--
I gaze at a contorted rhumba sun,
boiling in distant waters.
And the wind comes on strong now, I don't know why,
hot steam blowing in from the setting sun,
stretching backs of tall palms,
and slamming shutters against the wall.
A whore on the street looks up at me
through my starving window.
I smoke a pinch of la cosa and laugh myself to sleep.

Later he will begin calling her names.
She will scream as he pounds on last night's bruises,
wrestling her huge ass from her pants.
BAM BAM BAM. . . .
Then I will get up and find a glass,
pour myself Aguardiente and think about writing a poem.
Then, I will write it.

William J. Margolis

SOME ASPECTS OF BEING IN CONTINUAL PAIN

"Come on! Give me the medicines I need!"

— *Lamantia*

"Man finds his touching crushed."

— *Stuart Z. Perkoff*

for szp & I, etc.
I could the rds for four days--
they let me breathe,
& piss without *that* pain. . .
but they weaken . . . things. . .
things like Will & themselves &
things like -- I've not had a real
flash
for months now. . . .
I endured *that* pain,
& all *those* other pains. . . silly word
four-lettered!
P-A-I-N
I will forget it.

On Sunday I rose, levitated
by one sodium seconal capsule.
I had smoked some of Her incense
-- nonsense! it's weed,
plain earth & sun
& lots a water!

. . .at least twice

(the laughter again, always
the laughter again, always
the always at least once.*)

And *that* pain always
returns

I will
forget it. (please!

Her touch rebuilds mine as it crumbles, "crushed,"
as

Her touch on the plant, in the earth, water,
SUN!

my star,
generator & center of creation, lord of the sky,
Hold Me From that Pain in Thy Blinding Light!
,Ha ha Ha, is it?

Well, you'd just better hanker down
a little bit of that light for love
& *see* those birds & flowers
in those magic hills & on the edge
of that enchanted ocean, or
on the other, a hidden/lost island
. . .?la tierracita buenisima?. . .

Maybe. But, you'd just better *use*
that time between times -- not
Everyone gets to suffer *that* pain
and *lives*, to tell of it. . .

It is thought
that Change is possible.

It is hoped
that . . .oh, many many
good things will become &
evil things will . . .
we *do* hope.

It is believed
that love is possible
"simple love
is not impossible.
only our hesitance
to touch
keeps us from
inhabiting each other."

I said that, once.
I cannot remember to whom I said this
beautiful toy of words.
I have been told it is sad.

Epilogue:

I'll stop now. I've been writing about an hour. I must go to sleep. The pain, all *those* pains, surround me, begin to touch. . . that the word *cd* have such use! I'll stop now. To sleep. The only real gap in the continuity of pain. But then I am not aware for the pleasure. To sleep. . . . I do not dream.

(Guadalajara, March 1963)

Christine Zawadiwsky

In Walked An Angel

Panes of glass between our hands, an apple
filled with razor blades. You can't see me anymore.
I stand alone near the open door. In walks a piece
of the blackening sky. In walks an angel.
The dead stride by. In walks a laugh.
And two petal-less orchids roll in the hallway.
I cover my ears.

I hide my tears. I hide the bitter looks
you throw at me in a jar filled with fishhooks.
I can't see you anymore. I hide the cuts
your distance brings me. I hide the difference
between our bodies. Everyone in the house laughs
and snores, they break the stained-glass windowpanes.
I cover my ears.

Tons of black hurt rise in mounds between us.
I don't feel the pain because I am blind
and graves are of little use to me. My pen fills
their hearts as it scratches this paper. Mice tear at
each other for meat on the floor. Shreds of old
love fall between us, screaming their fears.
I cover my ears.

You won't see my anywhere. You won't see me anymore.
The shepherd sports a glass mustache, he keeps
both hands on his new black cane. In walks my love
who was never adept at using another's crutches before.
Walking and walking, a beggar, a lion, I hide my years

though you will walk till you can't see me anymore.
I cover my ears.

Waving

Waving, waving on a long long stalk, waving, a
pale moth on each purple cheek, waving, split
kernels of burning, blackened wheat, waving,
waving with nausea, waving, waving, the train runs
on. Hypodermic needles in the park, they're strewn
between the grass blades, spearheads, arrows, they're
pointed at your temple, the red fist of your tie,

they're clamped around your juices, taped to your lead
veins. And now that my heart is as thin as a needle, a
bone, my heart is the burnt black wick of a gas lamp, the
sight of the poppies, eggplants, lilies blooming, blooming
blooming blooming and eating me away, glass bubbles
fall out of my mouth and fall from the new red crack
in my forehead, the hairline crack that a chick makes

breaking out of its egg, the crack of worry that makes me
resemble you---you, you a hydra with its antennae waving,
me like a caterpillar balancing on a straw, you, you
with no one beside you but the entire population
of all who've lived and died attached to the ventricles
in your left arm, you between striped barber poles and
on the silver screen, with your arms stretched up like

black tree limbs scratching the eyes out of the sky, you
milking me and waving good-bye good-bye, waving with
white cardboard hands, with a sickle, waving and spilling
ounces of cherry soda, spilling molecules of vinegar,
rinsing my gums. Encased in black gauze but still a wrinkled
red puppet, my blood is a cripple, my painted blood falters
and flickers, my blood keeps on fighting so that it won't

get lonely, my blood is a hostage, it carries no name, a
rabid squirrel chewing on Indian corn, it waves on battered
stilts and ostrich legs, buries its teeth in the sand, it
waves me on, it coagulates but it's still waving waving
waving, it thickens like sour milk, parts me like an ebony comb,
eats dinner in a field of dandelions, clover, lies black and
sleeping like a lightbulb till it brightens, waving at you.

Ruth Moon Kempher

THE EXPANDING LINE

Last night the moon was full, so tonight it's not quite; or possibly it's the unevenness of the glass through which I see it. When I was a little girl I wore glasses thicker than that glass, with thin gold rims to hold the the lenses like fragile handcuffs. At any rate, it looks lopsided, that moon.

The two dogs are restless because of the cars going past. All there is down the road, is the landlady's house and then a house standing empty, and the swamp. Nobody visits the landlady at this hour. Anybody that old is close to death, in bed, supposed to be.

Or maybe the dust does it, the distortion, like fat thumbprints on eyeglass lenses, thumbprints after strawberry jam for breakfast, on bisquits. The moon looks more like a communion wafer than a bisquit, not soft and dusted, but crisp, tasteless.

I wish the phone would ring. It may be broken, so that no one can call in. More likely, no one wants to.

ESSAYS OF ELIOT. T.S. This room would amuse him, with so many objects to correlate about, a green glass cat with bitter moonlight in its eye, birds on the wall, with fat black legs. An extremely black line, that's the leg of a bird, holding on.

That car turned around at the end of the road, and is coming back. I could have told them there was nothing to see but an empty house set in the swamp, with an old refrigerator rusting in the yard, a plastic sofa on the screen porch where the screens have disintegrated in, and a baby doll lying in the grass, arms out, and

They have got to stop barking. There is nothing to bark at, now the car's gone by. No one. Or they are barking at the moon. But their noise made my hand jump, on the paper. The pen drew a violent line, a

loud line. It could be taken for a child's drawing of lightning, with thunder, or the way a child would describe a tantrum. When you want so much to do something and you can't. You want to be read to and there isn't time, or you wanted strawberry jam for your bisquit, and all there was was guava, or marmelade.

The fat black line of the bird's leg is done in fluffy wool. It makes a lumped fist on its fat brown woolen branch. I really like that bird, and the way it's holding on, hanging on.

The green glass cat cocks its eyeful of moonlight toward the woolly bird, with something less than liking. More like lust. And the vine beside the cat reaches along the wall, behind the cat's back, a long dark green leaf that would almost twist around the cat's neck, if it wanted strangling.

Now the dogs are quiet, except for breathing. There is that sound, and the refrigerator thumping, and the clock.

The phone must ring. All this regular, systematic noise, the dog's breath going in and out, and that is my breath, or my heart pumping, and the refrigerator motor heaving, and the clock just sitting there, emphatically

expanding time

no. It is expanding time. I am a literate person, capable of reading Eliot. Someone should call me up, and tell me so.

I don't know why that car is going by again. There's nothing down that road but swamp. You can't count an empty house, and a sleeping, half-deaf landlady, old so old

They ask you, "What does the clock say?" and the smart answer is "Tick tock." That's all anyone should let it say.

The rest is so much noise

Incredible noise, the motor and breath of everything, even the tides somewhere yanking the earth up to the moon, echoes and vibrations of that, pounding back and forth wall to wall, shattering like strong surf on the mirror, submerging in the curtains with the roses and the vines, groping out again

Logic is when you go from tock to tick to tock to tick to tock, and nothing else matters. But is it tock to tick, in here? Or tick to tock? It fills the whole house with its pounding.

If the phone would only ring. If it would, it would break the beat of this house. The walls would crack. The dirty windows would fall, brittle, in a downrush of slivers, and let loose the moon.

If there were some way I could manage it, I would send my soul out of my skin, to find a phone booth, somewhere in the swamp.

If I only could. I would dial my own number.

I hope they know.

Sam Eisenstein

Artichoke

usually *Cynara Scolymus*
sometimes *Carciofo domestico*
for soup

with iron, mineral salts, iodine
boiled, baked, fried
stuffed and salad

whole, halved or quartered
hot, with mayonnaise or butter

a globe whole

Helianthus tuberosus
(or *Girasole*,
from this the mistake for Jerusalem)

a sunflower
for sheep, cattle, hogs, pickles

will survive hot
dry weather, poor soil

yields
carbohydrates as inulides
levulose upon hydrolysis
starch to dextrose

tubers

yield with removal
or left dreaming in their wood

a mystery

Inferior mouse

I bought the white mouse
at a pet store
in a cardboard coffin-shaped box
for my snake to eat
but he began to hibernate instead

the mouse crouched in a cold steel corner
nowhere else for him to go
 the snake took up most of the cage
he sat and stared at nothing

I had to move
I thought, I'll throw the mouse
 out in the mud

this white mouse was cheap
rejected for sale as a white-mouse pet
or laboratory animal
he was fit only for snake-food
 then my snake rejected him

I hated that inferior white mouse

a piece of blue muslin dropped
into the cage by accident
 the mouse more cowardly
than other mice
 (part of his general inferiority)
avoided it for hours
then I saw him carrying it like a banner
 around the cage
even walking on the snake with it

and took the muslin carefully to pieces
 built a nest with it
and lay down
precisely white in a cloud of blue

my mouse

I think I'll throw away the snake

Chana Bird

I've got to be crazy sitting at the typewriter
writing things nobody wants to see
while you laugh in the garden.

I'm so nervous I miss my pipe and shoot a spear
of butane flame at my thumb. I still owe Ronson
money for the last repair

caused by your throwing the lighter while I was
chasing you.

A spear of light on the washed lawn,
the first day of clarity in months,
and I sit at the machine like a slave.

I pay someone to gather the honey of your
two-year-old joy
while I impale myself on broken ideas.

Sun breaks through the smog of threatened
eviction, bad health, divorce, death
for just this one minute.

You run toward me with "Daddy" peremptory.
On my pale eternally bleached wrist the watch
ticks off seconds.

Launched! I can't read the gauge. You're gone!
Before I can open my arms to your form across
the room.

In a dream I smile, hug, turn you around to the

sitter, send you away.
You cry. I go to my desk, close the door,
drown out the cries.

I can't give you all my time.
But what is my time?
Does any sweetness trickle from these keys
to compensate for time?
Our ages are inverse, our time together
unfathomable.
How can we say hello if we don't, sometimes,
say goodbye?

It is like a hopeless love affair:
"We can't go on this way, meeting like this,"
like the parody of a remaindered movie.

Any words are only
plump painted corpses.
I may not fix
any part of you.

Chana my bird,
rise clean and free,
laughing at your burning Daddy
who looks for a way to go
some part of the journey with you.

February

the men are two clots
on the dark playing field
circling like moons
their planet not yet spilled
into blood

my stiletto disappears
into my boot
my ankle bleeds

I will begin to leak
when the boot is miles enough
older

unconcerned
I begin to walk

no ransom demand
makes it certain she will be killed
the only question is how
they will present me the body

alone when I can scream
or when I am in company
where I will be allowed only tears

I check my watch

a man asks me the time
I can tell him

the men have disappeared

into the dark sun
behind my shoulder
the knife comes out of my boot

the man checks the result
with the sun
into his left cheekbone goes my knife
emerging just under the right eye

out of the field come men
holding the body

I am alone
I can scream

middle night

middle night
when the little girl
comes back sometime
from her dream

her animals
are awake and alert

lion flicks his tail
at his ease
her hand asleep on his
paw
not needing to stand
to protect
yellow bear sprawls
wide eyed
the honey of the little girl's
dream
fascinates him
with far places and exotic sweets
he needs his nose rapped
he is patient and contrite

raggedy ann brainless useless
smiles continually at the
whole family
they are tolerant
what should a rusty lady do?

the little girl's compass
is at her head
ready to identify detours

pointing north
the mountains are always
identified

humpty dumpty's eyebrows
make a roof against disaster
sleep is too much
like spilling in the dark
a little girl needs more
protection

baboon swings her through
jungles where the lost kingdoms
yield their secrets
politely into her hand
she does not uncurl her little
fist even asleep
the secret might spill

Angela Korvisianos

THE CLOUDS

Madeleine, wakes to the breakfast ants, the feathered hat, pelican yawning like the jug that sizzles tongue-licks round the teapot. Disc jockey's babble fills the world, birdcage is hanging on a string up from the ceiling, and dustmotes are competing for attention. Moth lighted Madeleine of cheese soft arms. Kimono clad.

Claude cat is curving up his body at the chair leg. The Matisse up on the wall is staring at him eyeless.

"There will be pre-cyclonic gloom today" the radio says. But now the world is sweating red. Grape juice for breakfast, belly of pig, refrigerator humming, lean creeping steaming sunlight. Pigeons are rustling up the rooftops.

Madeleine the pierrot. My alter egos have all run away to sea or joined the travelling pantomimes. And here I'm now the lady of the house, glycerine breasted, giving off sustenance. I'm one big motherfucking pool of self-effacing, sacrificing, all embracing love.

Sweet oceans lapping, there's grinning angels in the streets on lanes and outskirts of the parks, riding on donkeys and on ostriches. Mexican winds. Auditory visions, songs and cadences. Loping from side to side, smiling, with hands of veins and little nails, skeletal networks, lizard trails. Sunshades, dried grass and earthworms, grasshoppers leap onto old ladies hats.

One architecture book on Oscar Niemeyer, one Phantom comic, one nail file, candle, teapot, flower vase and honey jar upon the table. Transparent peacocks squat in speckled sunlight.

Claude cat's big shuttered eyes have snapped tight in the sun. The sun is pure thinks Madeleine, the water from the tap is pure, the air

draft from the fan is sending mobiles fluttering. Gravity's lazy bones, everything's slowly spiralling.

Lennie has nipples like small flowers. He's sitting on a wooden chair, its legs and back curved, unpolished, old. His chest is bare, his arms are rested on the tablecloth. Long nails like flints, his adam's apple casts a shadow down his neck. He's concentrating on dissolving one small cloud up in the sky.

"There will pre-cyclonic gloom today" the radio says.

Last night, thinks Madeleine, looking at Lennie's tranced still profile, something was following me. Clip, clop. clip. clop. and then some cats were fighting, hissing like spirits on a fence. And then clip clop clip clop again. So I stopped. Clippity clop and stop. No one around. Could be a demon after me, waiting to pounce and ride on my back. What would I do? I'd feel his weight there and his heels digging into my ribs, but no one then could see him. He'd be invisible. And so I hurried on. Down past the factory. And suddenly the factory just leaped to life. Whoooooom..... and the machinery was turning in the night. Lights flickered on and off.

When she had finally reached home, Lennie was talking in his sleep. Window was open and round the moon a haze. Beyond, the Mary Poppins world of chimneys and rooftops. Do demons race across the rooftops in the night? Jumping through open windows, sniffing in closet doors and curiously investigating contents in the drawers?

"Lennie," she said to him, her eyes like little pins and fingers trembling caterpillars, "I had some dreams last night."

"So did I," he said, and didn't look at her.

You tell me yours first zephyr face, she thought, but saw he didn't want to talk.

Sarah with the red and white polka dot dressing gown walks into the room and yawns and sighs. Her hair is wet. She sits and tries to

dry it near the fan.

Lennie last night you cold ungracious shit (she broods alone) those people who moved past the bookshop beckoned you, playing their flutes, jangling their bangles, and you stepped out of the safe fluorescent light into the street. They had some words with you. I waited for you, peering into the street, abstractedly I leafed through pages of a book. You came back in. "How beautiful they looked," I said to you. You incensed me with sullenness. Tossed back your lovely hair and slapped mosquitoes off your skin. And talked ideologically of why you shouldn't speak to them. "They're not political" you said. And let me know how dumb I was, how politically naive. What about Madeleine? She's dopey too. She spends her days inside her antiquated laundry.

"I wonder where the idea came from," Lennie muses. "That certain people can concentrate and melt the clouds? Hm. Whatever, anyway, I don't seem to have any effect at all."

Madeleine's fingering the hot pink baubles and the earrings which she'd stolen a few days ago from Woolworth's. And hugs her kimono around her body. I know that there'll be pre-cyclonic gloom today but now it's sunny hot and I can hear the ice cream vans and referees who blow their whistles in the parks. "Lennie you want some cordial?" What is the point? He's so precise, intelligent, and so meticulously paranoid. He never takes food that's not concocted by his own trustworthy hand. But I will smile at him. And after all, I'm one embracing self-effacing hunk of love.

Sarah gets up and takes her nail file from the table. Claude cat is sniffing at the garbage. I want some honey and dried apricots. Lennie will get some yogurt. Madeleine watches him adoringly. I had a dream of disembodiment last night. Climbed over rooftops with a gleaming knife, up to his window, crouched on his window sill behind the flapping curtain. And saw fat Madeleine, old and obese, transformed, standing there statuesque, next to his row of sparkling well kept books. She had a head of lint grey hair, a mothly dress of

lime green tulle that fell to fatty knees, and thickened old age ankles. She was an op-shop fairy godmother holding a fly spray gun and not a wand. She aimed this gun of fly spray at my face to keep me out.

Madeleine turned to Sarah. In a loud voice, hoping that Lennie would listen also and attentively, she said: "Hey, I had an amazing dream last night. I dreamt that there were these things from outer space, extra-terrestrial beings, masquerading as humans. To determine if they were human or not, one had to ask them to pass the test of drinking tea. If they drank it correctly they were not aliens but tried and true and proven humans. But then there was a problem. Nobody seemed to know the way that was correct in drinking tea."

Lennie moved his sparrow lightweight body to the fridge and set about preparing free and uncontaminated food. All things were still. Madeleine's jewelled fingers nervously leafed the pages of the comic on the table. The Phantom gallivanted round, adventurous, his mask mysteriously around his eyes. Lennie's eyes have big black circles round them. Does he find me adventurous? What stimulates his ether mind?

Sarah stared at her half lovingly, half hatefully. She needs so much affection, this big hunk full of placid and maternal love.

Lennie sits down, stretching his bare and bony feet, and moves his architecture book to lean his elbows on the table.

"I had a strange dream too," he said, knitted his eyebrows, looked around. Sarah and Madeleine look first at him and then around, and then towards each other in expectancy. We humour him, thinks brooding Sarah, justifying herself. And wants to touch his long long hair.

"It felt so frightening and ominous," he said. "It was a dream in which my shadow was on fire. The panic paralysed me but I tried to put it out." He looked so quaintly and expressionistically unhappy.

They all were quiet. Reflective. Sarah the brooder lights up for one brief moment and she thinks, today's the day when I'll burn off the

wart upon my thumb by using Lennie's magnifying glass. Madeleine the innocent stares vacantly around and then fixates upon the sky outside the window. Is all pacific? Just like a camera, click, the scene, the walls, the room are stamped fixated and eternal. Around the corner, beyond the horizon, I can sense clouds. But now I think I feel exultant, I feel the rich exotic plumage of the peacocks strutting invisibly under the trees and foliage. I hear cadences in the wind, I hear ice cream music and the voices of children running in the parks. All is impressed indelibly upon my senses. But I also had another dream, thinks Madeleine, nodding into herself. It was a carriage I was in, and I was flying gliding through a misty drizzly lamp lit street, maybe a street of the last century. A small white dog with big brown spots was racing gracefully ahead, as if attached and pulling at the carriage by a cord. Then hell, quite suddenly the dream dissolved, the little dog pulled over to the side and died.

As Sarah lights a cigarette, she sees across the corner of her eye, sighing fat Madeleine, mellifluous, falling and gripping on the teapot handle for support. I see her balanced there, clutching the teapot, lingering, sensing for voices or for clouds. I see her big bronze teapots, silver lined, bubbling with fertile and ebullient tea, shrink animatedly in size, and then attach themselves upon her lobes as minute decorative earrings.

The antiquated laundry gurgles. Outside the pigeons flutter and a breeze is wafting in a smell of acridly decaying fish and salty sea. A ship is hooting in the harbour.

Lennie abstractedly is touching Madeleine's soft fingers, as she is leaning on the teapot. And Sarah wryly smiles, and blows out smoke and stares into the distance, across the trees, beyond the laneway to the tyre factory. Somebody from an upstairs window is shouting down a recipe. Clip clop of donkeys, or of draughthorses, or of the people on the water hammering, intent upon their boatbuilding.

I hear finned cars whizz by, and motorcycles. Deserts and shadow paintings. Circuses. Lost winds and feral night time cats.

All is impressed indelibly upon my senses. This room, the weather, dreams and seasons. Click. Just like Claude's eyes that snap it shut, and hold it tight in ecstasy, rocking the soothing memory forever.

Gary Lusson

Notes To A Poet

for Bill Knott

1

Bill, I was in a bookstore in Berkeley when I saw your note.
When will you learn that you can't write a note to the world at large
until you learn the human name of every being, even the corpses.
It is an impossible task, a poet may climb for a lifetime
with his guts for a lifeline and his dreams for pitons
and never move a foot on that mountain.

Better to write of birds, trees, the sea
use flowery language and read in a grand style:
orally interpret, feed a recognized need,
take to wearing a black cape and ballet slippers,
hang bananas in your hair, blondes on your arms.

what's the difference, what's the difference,
you will be as invisible as you wish to be
but your poems will be read.

2

Dear Serendipity:

I understand you distribute *Barn Dream Press* books-
This letter is to inform you I'm bringing suit against
Barn Dreams and will ask for a court order halting
publication and/or distribution of my book
"Love Poems To Myself"--

The grounds are Fraud, Malfeasance, and breach of contract--

Unless you wish to be included and named in this suit,
I suggest you inform *Barn Dreams* that you will not
distribute this book--
Please inform me of yr decision--
Thank you,
Bill Knott.

3

If you keep turning so fast even a dress of chameleons
will not preserve your visibility,
you will be thinner than a shadow,
than an image that hardly exists,
a coconut on a monkey's paw,
a poem on the tip of a poet's tongue,
a rodeo, a nightgown, a vegetable:
thinner than a reason to write poems at all.
We only die once, or not at all.

4

I gathered up every word I know
and proceeded to forget them.
So when I came
to the very last word
it was the last word
that I knew:
it was "You".

5

Is this what you want, that fucking spiral page tacked on a strangers
door?

Anonymous as a man in North Dakota, barge boots and salvation
shirt,
a walk like a wounded camel, head down and your poems thrown
out
underhanded
like a man hired to toss dirt in front of the janitor's broom--
it keeps them both busy: a civil service position perhaps?

Do you want obscurity and a job or fame and a job?
The American Poet has these two choices.
Would you rather suck ass from above or suck ass from below,
the American Poet may choose whichever he pleases.
Is it a cool, detached, grand manner of supreme hippness, joie de
vivre, kiss
my ring--
all performed at the bottom of Nixon's barbed wire swimming pool;
or a frantic, screaming, frightened, massive eruption OF POETRY
(coffee with Cocteau, Baudelaire, the wind of the wing passing over
daily)
all performed at the bottom of Nixon's barbed wire swimming pool.
The American Poet may do either oh, it's entirely up to him.

6

Even Rimbaud shit, Henry Miller wrote essays on reading in the rest
room.
Should we laugh at your new names before we read your poems, or
after?
Drink your beer and piss or piss and drink your beer?
(The drunker you gets the mores you hear.)
For instance: the Buddha shows Tarzan movies on the inside of my
mother's cunt:
my mother lives in Tibet and invites the Dalai Lama in,
the Buddha is enraged and defecates in the popcorn

but Warner Brothers thinks it's a good slogan
and hires you as their official poet.
Clotheslines run all through my meanings:
I can strangle you slowly or I can strangle you all at once—
ah, one more choice for the American Poet.

7

Bill, I won't have you laughed at, this time your body had better go
with
your name.
Bill, when they laugh at you they laugh at me and poor Gene, he too
works
hard.
Bill, I laughed so hard when I read your note that my shoes began to
cry.
Bill, I was enraged at your childish printing, the sloppy address, the
zip code
written twice.
Bill, I came up behind the bookman (a poet too, I'm sure) and broke
his
neck
with a whalebone: I wrapped his body in brown paper and twine and
mailed
him to you.
Bill, I burnt *every* book in the store, including yours.
I would like to say "they screamed like lobsters" but it wasn't so:
actually, they seeped through the floor like snowflakes through a
sieve.
Bill, if we don't escape from the cave then people will always smile at
us--
soon they will get the idea to build bars across the entrance,
then the joke will not be quite so funny.
Bill, only death has things both ways, stop the plunge, crap out!

Frances Hall

THE LAST GOOD DAY AT THE PUB ON ST. GEORGE STREET

She was a great figure of a woman, not majestic exactly, and yet not the big-armed milkmaid type, either, but somewhere in between. You'd have cast her as Britannia in a pageant, if it was a village pageant and you hadn't too many choices for the role. This was how she seemed to see herself as well—as "Rule, Britannia," in a pageant—for those low-cut frilly blouses sitting off the shoulder in a brief excuse for a sleeve, and the long full skirts sweeping around sandaled feet suggested she was already dressing for the part.

In the upstairs bar and restaurant of the pub she owned in St. George Street, where she generally presided, leaving the downstairs bar and the snack counter to the casual services of Sydney, the son of the cook, she did such incidental chores as distributing towels in rooms marked "Ladies" and "Gents" and the initialing of orders for supplies, but the main job she assigned herself was ringing up the cash and disbursing the money.

Thus, standing at the cash register and seen mostly from the rear, she was wonderful. Her shoulders were radiant as a verse out of Ecclesiastes; and the effect was tremendous from the side as well, with her fair hair falling forward loosely from a center part to lay the curling ends on that mighty expanse of bosom. Only when she put her hands up to throw back this soft screen behind which she hid did you sense some lack, which seemed imaginary as the hair fell protectingly forward once more.

If you got to be a fairly steady customer, you became gradually aware that her role had certain subtle facets also. One of them consisted of manipulating the exuberance of Mary, the Irish waitress and barmaid. Mary in her blue serving smock, with her Galway

laughter and her Galway flow of friendly language, moving swiftly from bar to kitchen to table gave a kind of sparkle, full-bodied as the ale they served, to the place. But a word here and a nod there could turn Mary's attention from one table to another in an easy sort of way that Mary herself was scarcely aware of. It was part of the pleasure at the St. George pub to joke with Mary and watch for the Mistress, as they called her, to life her hair a little from her face and look out sidewise.

But then there was this rainy morning, when two customers—coming upstairs and settling themselves at a corner table even before Mary had written up the speciality of the day to be tucked into the corner of the menu—walked in and sat themselves down like the high and the mighty instead of coming respectably to the bar to order and start their pint while cook was doing up their plates in the rear.

That was the first thing to put Mistress off—sitting themselves down in a snug corner instead of coming ordinary to the bar. Then the way the woman peeled back her coat, so fine, and took herself off to the "Ladies", where she'd be using the fresh new towel first of anyone. Making free, you might say. A small dark woman, she was, the kind that made Mistress feel her bigness. She was done for from the beginning, as any of the help at the St. George could have told you.

Then there was the matter of the speciality of the day. The couple in the corner ordered it straight off, as of course Mistress ordinarily hoped her customers would; but Mary, setting up the relishes to go with it—it was turkey with whipped potatoes—reported there was no cranberry sauce. No cranberry sauce, and the first lot of regular customers already pounding up the stairs. Well, you could give them a double portion of the good bread sauce instead without a complaint from any. But the woman in the fine coat, now, she'd be the one to mew about the cranberries. You could count on it.

The bar got busy then, with a pushing of beer mugs to and fro on the mahogany and a shouting of plate orders into the kitchen. The

tables filled up, and a second lot appeared, calling their drinks as always; but the room seemed smaller and more crowded, with that strange couple spread in their corner and another set of first-timers taking up the table to the left of them.

Mary, skittering to and fro with hot plates from the kitchen held along her arm protected by a towel, stopped to giggle, "They'll be Australians, or maybe Canadians, I expect. Look how they use their forks, will you!"

"Get rid of them," said Mistress, her head aching at the base as if she had slept wrong on her pillow. "Give them the bill with no talk whatever, and get rid of them."

The order was far more abrupt than usual, not really Mistress' way at all, and Mary's eyes grew wide at the sound of it. "Why?" she asked so loudly that the customers gossiping over their drinks suspended their chatter; and into the silence, more clearly than she had perhaps intended, came Mistress' off-putting answer, "Because they're old, and I prefer to serve younger customers here. Get rid of them, I say."

Eyes turned on the instant, though more obliquely, as if they had belonged to watchers at a tennis game, to the couple in the corner. There was a tautness about them as if they had clearly heard. The woman slipped quickly into her coat and got out her gloves. The man opened his wallet. They were both standing by the time Mary could reach them with the bill. As they went out, it was apparent that they were indeed quite old. A hush went round and ebbed against the stained glass windows. You could hear the footsteps of the banished pair all the way to the street.

A callow youth, given to head-bobbing when anyone condescended to talk to him, giggled in a high-pitched sort of way that he cut off suddenly when he realized how it projected into the silence.

"Tell them not to make up that plate I just ordered, Mary," said a customer. "I've only just remembered an errand I must do." He went

out, limping as quickly as he could, with a gait that suggested he would be easier using a stick if only he would permit himself one. The hall light glinted on his silver hair. The coin he left on the counter had made a terminating sound as he laid it down, and his mug was still half full of ale.

Mistress looked up sharply, recognizing him as a customer she had inherited twelve years ago when she had taken over the pub, a quiet man who came in most middays from the bookshop round the corner. Her shoulder lifted and her mouth went crooked in spite of her intention to smile. She met the mocking gray gaze of a patron she sometimes exchanged glances with, though mainly she kept her comely back to the bar, letting Mary handle that sort of thing. But the gray gaze was not inviting her to trade smiles, as it usually did when it succeeded in catching her attention. Instead, as if it, too, were shouting into silence, it seemed to be saying, "And do you see yourself so young and blooming as all that? It's easier than it used to be to look down your front, my pet," and he betook himself with too casual a gesture to his accustomed table.

The others drifted off tableward as well, leaving Mistress standing in sudden isolation, while Mary cleared the place where alien people had been, keeping her head down as if she wanted to cry. "Damn people!" thought Mistress bitterly. Never allowing anybody else to have an off day. Expecting perfection of others and requiring nothing of themselves. Hoarding up all the blessed leeway.

Always expecting more of a big woman, too. Anybody else--a small woman, a young woman, now --she could have her pouts, her tantrums even, in time of need. But with a big woman they called it temper. The whole thing was unfair. People should remember there was more to ache, more to hurt, more to be miserable in a big body than a small one.

Mary was passing through the bar to hand her dishes into the kitchen. "Gave me a better tip than most, so he did, missus," she said as if she were winning an argument. And on her return journey, "I'd

like better to be working where I wasn't told who to be nice to and who not." It was the first time she had so spoken; and with a foreboding that quenched the last remnants of her anger, Mistress knew it to be a signal of intention and a matter ended.

"Chilly in this place, isn't it," said one long-timer to another. "Think I'll try the Fox and Hare tomorrow. At least they lay on a fire.

D. E. Steward

CARDINAL POINTS ON THE COMPASS ROSE

The first thing to do when moving into a fire tower at the beginning of the season is to orient the firefinder and correct what accidental jars, toyings of people ignorant of direction and orientation, and (in California) the winter's earthquakes and tremors have done to the plane table. A few reference points are recorded permanently on the firefinder's base for this purpose. A deft hand manages this and it is easy to find the towers in the first place because they stand out on the peaks. All we have to do is climb in the mountains to get there. Still many make their way to fire towers, look out and do not know what they are seeing, and then pushy, clumsy people tend to put firefinders out of whack. Fire towers are founded on the truth that with two existing points it is possible to exactly locate any other place in view. In American writing right now we have our two points. They are fully oriented, leveled well and ready to go into the height of their season. One is Evan S. Connell, Jr. and the other is Annie Dillard. With them we can fill in as much of our map as we have will and awareness to comprehend and accept.

Connell's point of view has an elevation advantage on Dillard's. He has been around for a long time and in his massive worldliness he knows it all. Before his triumphant *Points For A Compass Rose* (1973), his most important book is *Notes From A Bottle Found On The Beach At Carmel. The Diary Of A Rapist*, full of other sorts of truths, also should be read deep into the twilight of our times. Annie Dillard is not yet thirty. She has only one book of poetry and her *Pilgrim At Tinker Creek* (1974). But what she has done, making her creek-watcher's perspective universal to us all, is a feat considerably more surprising than Connell's universality since he surveys the whole planet, she just a Blue Ridge creek south of the Shenandoah. Indeed Dillard's cool and modern view is nearly microcosmic, the only mountain in view,

Tinker Mountain, just a mild Virginia hill by real mountain standards, being off there high above her, distant and mildly threatening. "I am sitting under a sycamore by Tinker Creek. I am really here, alive on the intricate earth under trees." So she says in her chapter, "The Present," a deeply honest piece that is full of modest echoes of every profound insight ever made into the state of human consciousness. That is what she tells us, how it is to be alive. We are joined by her to the awarenesses of muskrats and sunfish and it is glorious. She has taken one Virginia creek (called "runs" in other parts of the Shenandoah) and made it like the whole river of modern awareness.

"I've been told that when a memory is intense what's past becomes the future. If so, let it be. I am small and afraid," chimes in Connell. Before he has told us: "If it comforts you to forget, do so by all means. As for myself, I never forget anything." His irony continues relentlessly caustic and civilized, as when he quotes Fredegar, a Frank writing in the 7th Century: "The world is growing old.... We live at the end of time." Connell takes mankind by the ear and drags it through all history. In *Points For A Compass Rose* he has made a sublime, sometimes arcane, synthesis of what has been on this planet. The book cries out for acceptance of its vast and important solemnity. Taking Tinker Creek as her window on the cosmos, Annie Dillard is "small and afraid" and true and magnificent. If she is the future then we are all right. But her Hollins College pastoral, a cocoon of course but perhaps not as constraining as the tent caterpillar nest mode of a big city life, closes out the affairs of import on which Evan Connell's scorching conscience fixes. We need him more. He has taken the sitting-on-the-Rocky-Mountains-the-Black-Hills-my-footstool consciousness back close to Melville's ontological sighting where it probably belongs.

Neither of these writers has much concern with the stickiness of dependency relationships that, in television-level plottings and sex anxieties, so clogs things now, although *Pilgrim At Tinker Creek* is suggestive of a solution, a possible new pattern of rapport between people and the places in which they live. Connell's *Bridge* novels and

The Patriot deal with people in situations, not situations in people. No, what both these writers care about is the whole.

The privacy out of which they both write improves the communication of their visions. What a grand advantage over the *American Mischief* school of indulgence. We are let in on the personal data that Annie Dillard is playing softball but little more. We know even less about Evan S. Connell. Pensacola, Kansas City, the Bay Area are all hinted at but not critical to anything. Both these people stand where they are and look. We should read them, celebrate them and then leave them alone so that they will be able to write more that helps us away from the realms of the garden dwarfs.

Lawrence D. Stewart

THE BLACK SPARROW PRESS

"There is a kind of Black Sparrow gestalt. The people I publish add up to something recognizable. It's really 'What's happening now.' " So speaks John Martin, creator of Los Angeles's Black Sparrow Press and a self-labeled "book accumulator." His productions are distinguished by his personal touch, the informed taste of the man who insists "I publish people, not books. That's always been my attitude. I would much rather publish (D.H.) Lawrence--his great books, his medium books, his one or two poor books--I would much rather publish the whole sweep than masterpieces." Even though Black Sparrow has become commercial--recently experimenting even with trade cloth editions--it is still almost a one-man operation. (In 1974 Martin hired his first two assistants to help fill orders, and he relies increasingly on Seamus Cooney for editorial advice and proofreading.) Certainly Black Sparrow reflects one man's literary interests: "I don't publish anything unless I'm really enthusiastic about it. And I find that very often my enthusiasm isn't shared by my closest associates. But I always feel that I'm right and that they're blind." This quiet assuredness is the press's unifying principle but is verbalized only in conversation. Martin dislikes publisher's prefaces and will not appear under his own name. The works must speak for themselves, and Black Sparrow must serve as his pseudonym.

Today neither Martin nor his wife, Barbara, can agree which of them gave the press its label--though it is Barbara who, over the years, has redesigned the logo bird. Martin traces the name to two influences: "I admired the Black Sun Press, which was run by a husband and wife, Harry and Caresse Crosby. I didn't admire it so much for what they published. . .but I loved the name. . .and I liked the idea of one or two people doing exactly as they pleased in this fashion in publishing what they wanted and not paying any attention

to what was current or popular or in demand." (As Martin also points out, the Crosbys had money and could be indifferent to production costs and small returns; Martin could not: "I was in a low paying industry--the equivalent of a teacher's salary--and I went into this with no financial backing at all: it all had to be made to amortize itself right from the start.") Black is a non-color: "It sort of symbolizes space." The sparrow itself was both personal and universal: "It's your trash bird, the indestructible, breeds by the millions, lives in the most inhospitable kinds of place." "The idea of the two--the kind of the elite, mysterious black, and the common proliferated sparrow" symbolizes the wonders of the world of reading.

Martin now remembers that he became a serious reader when he was eighteen or twenty. The excitement of discovering Lawrence forced him into book collecting. "The Paperback revolution hadn't started, and a lot of books were still only available in the first printing, or at least in an early edition." Born in San Francisco, he had in 1941, while still a youngster, moved to Los Angeles; and it was in Los Angeles in the 1950's, when he was about twenty, that he personally met two of his favorite writers: Wright Morris (whom he now publishes) and Henry Miller (whom he still hopes to). Reading Wallace Stevens turned him toward poetry. Stevens led to William Carlos Williams, and from there it was a straight line: "Creeley, Duncan, Olson. . . . Paul Goodman was always one of my favorite writers." Absorption in contemporary poetry had convinced him that he was living in a poetry renaissance. "In order to read a lot of good prose I was having to go back and read Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner and Nathaniel West, and there weren't so many people of that calibre writing in 1962. But the people who were writing at that time in the '60's were all poets - - and that's what turned me on to modern poetry." When he discovered that Charles Bukowski was "a living poet - - *in Los Angeles!*" the sensibilities of book collector and poetry lover coalesced. Martin was managing an office furniture and supply firm that also owned a print-shop. Now having met Bukowski, he decided "There were a lot of things

published at a professional level, that were just being published for pleasure, or self published." So he proposed to use the print shop in his firm and issue, in editions of thirty copies all signed by the poet, some small broadsides of new poems. Bukowski remembers this windfall (from "a balding, red-haired man with a high, scrubbed forehead, meticulous and kind with a a very faint, perpetual grin") as particularly helpful. Martin "wrote me out checks as I sat in my kitchen across from him, drinking beer and signing the broadsides. It was the beginning of the Black Sparrow Press... but neither of us knew it then." Bukowski showed Martin a manuscript of poems thought lost but recently recovered from some transcribed tapes. "John Martin took the poems home with him and phoned me a couple of days later: 'You have a book there and I'm going to publish it myself.' And that's how some almost lost poems [*At Terror Street and Agony Way*] were found again and printed in book form and the Black Sparrow was flying." The development from broadsides (theoretically for sale but actually presented to friends) to books took somewhat longer than Bukowski remembers. "You get sucked into these things," says Martin. "It's like a vacuum, and there you stand, and then you get pulled right into it without really knowing what's going on. And that's how I got pulled into publishing full time." (It was a three-year pull, from 1966 to 1969, before Martin gave up his job with the office supply firm to become a full time publisher.) Some time after meeting Bukowski, Martin met Robert Duncan, "who was very helpful—he still is—calling young poets to my attention, because I don't particularly like poetry readings. I often get a very false sense of a person's poetry at a reading." (Duncan was also to be very helpful to Black Sparrow's initial financial struggle: he spent six months making 125 original drawings that could be inserted into one early production and thus guarantee a quick financial return on Martin's investment.)

Martin gets many of his potential contributors by reading small magazines and journals. Long an admirer of Paul Bowles' novels, he discovered his poetry in *The Great Society* and solicited a collection

which in 1968 he commissioned Saul Marks of the Plantin Press to print as *Scenes*; later Martin brought out *The Thicket of Spring*, Bowles' collected poems, and *The Boy Who Set the Fire*, Bowles' translation from the Moghrebi of Mohammed Mrabet's stories. In 1975 Black Sparrow will publish his translation of *Look and Move On*, Mrabet's autobiography, and the uncollected writings of Jane Bowles, with an introduction by Tennessee Williams. A couple of years ago Martin came across Joyce Carol Oates' essay on the poetry of D.H. Lawrence. He didn't know who Joyce Carol Oates was, but he knew good Lawrence criticism, and he wrote to compliment her. She responded that only a portion of the essay had been published; would he care to see the complete manuscript? Thus in 1973 Black Sparrow issued its first Oates: *The Hostile Sun: The Poetry of D.H. Lawrence*. This year's *The Seduction & Other Stories* will be her fourth Black Sparrow publication; and so confident is Martin of its success that his initial press run is for 5,000 copies. (At the beginning, Martin was surprised that writers would respond so generously to his request for manuscripts. But beginning with the Bukowski broadside, he has paid a standard royalty: "As long as I'm making it I don't try to make it at somebody else's expense.") Because of the way he discovers his writers—choosing old favorites or writers who have already appeared in small journals—Martin will probably not be remembered as the publisher who "discovered" an unknown: "In a way the poets are following their stars, and I'm the person who contributes to what they're doing; and I'm following my star, and they're contributing to what I'm doing." He is not interested in innovations. "I'm not interested in apprentice work." And though he is so besieged with unsolicited manuscripts that even his business telephone is unlisted, he has accepted only a handful: David Antin's *Code of Flag Behavior*, and books by Stephen Stepanchev, Kenneth Gangemi, and Sherril Jaffe.

Today, Black Sparrow's is an impressive list. The new Oates volume will be its two hundredth title; at this writing, over seventy titles are in print. "You can only publish what your program will support," says Martin. "In effect, Seamus and I are like a funnel—everything has to

go through our hands. So we're limited to about eighteen books a year, maximum. And in '74 I published eighteen new titles, twelve issues of a monthly little magazine [*Sparrow*], and I reprinted fifteen books—now that's a tremendous amount of work." The catalogue retrieves the imaginative work of yesteryear (Lawrence, Stein), the American surrealists (Ford, Tyler, Bowles, Roditi), the Objectivists (Reznikoff is Martin's most recent enthusiasm, and he and Cooney are readying his complete poems. *By The Well of Living & Seeing: New & Selected Poems 1918-1973* appeared in 1974), the established and functioning (Morris, Purdy, Ashbery, Duncan, Wakoski, Kelly), the younger generation (Tom Clark, Joe Brainard, Gerard Malanga), and the poet-in-progress (Robert Creeley uses Black Sparrow for reactions to his ongoing work; on the basis of these individual publications he will then assemble a book for Scribner's). The current list has forty-five different authors. Martin especially likes *Sparrow*, his monthly chapbooks, which allows a writer to issue fourteen pages of new work (or selected work-in-progress). Each year twelve writers are thus given the opportunity to keep themselves freshly before the public; and each year the dozen *Sparrows* are bound and issued as a single collection. Black Sparrow books appear in a variety of editions—from paperback to bound, signed, and special ones. To date its most expensive have been the five copies of Kenneth Koch's poetry, each of which had an original Larry Rivers Collage: \$500 per boxed set. Martin himself had no experience in printing when he began his Bukowski broadsides, and he has never conceived of his press as catering to collectors of "fine books." His special editions are directed to a small, affluent audience, and remain a financial necessity. "Somehow it seems tricky to people who are just readers. But it's a useful—and as far as I'm concerned, a legitimate—way to help cover costs. It's almost the difference between making it and not making it." For his first two dozen titles he had left everything up to the printer's judgment. When Robert Kelly complained about the design of one of his books, Barbara Martin suggested that she might try her hand with the problem. It was an unexpected offer, and a fortuitous one. To Martin's surprise and delight, his wife has a natural gift for book

design. And commencing with the twenty-fifth title, Black Sparrow productions have owed much of their beauty to her discernment.

The press began with Bukowski, and publishing Bukowski has given Martin enormous pleasure as well as his biggest seller: *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills* (1969), now in its sixth printing—a sale of ten to twelve thousand. That book, together with *Mockingbird Wish Me Luck* (1972), and *Burning in Water Drowning in Flame* (1974), bring together "what I [Bukowski] like to consider my best work written over the past nineteen years." Calling out from the depths of Los Angeles life ("I was born to hustle roses down the avenues of the dead"), Bukowski's voice has the directness of daily journalism, with overtones of Farrell, Fearing, and Ferlinghetti. Sometimes Bukowski seems to be the poet Hemingway promised but did not deliver.

wha' *did* you expect? a schoolboy lisping Donne? or some more
practical lover filling you with the stench of Life? I'm a fool
and no gentleman: I walked the Brooklyn Bridge with Crane in
pajamas, but suicide fails as you get older: there's less and less
to kill.

What is available for self-destruction is painfully laid before us in these autobiographical poems. And should doubt continue about the anguish of the writer's life, Black Sparrow supplies two volumes of Bukowski's prose, *Post Office* (1971) and *South of No North: Stories of the Buried Life* (1973), where these *tranches de vie* show the wild old man still fighting like hell to get it up, off, or merely over with. Occasionally Bukowski thinks his slackening productivity prompts John Martin's tendency toward retrieval from the past:

I watch a professional basketball
game on

t.v. and

I have no interest

in who will win but I do notice

a lady in the grandstand crossing

her legs (my editor phoned me last night at 10:15 p.m. and

found me asleep—

maybe that's why he has to

print the unpublished works of

Gertrude Stein).

For Martin there are two Black Sparrows: the pre-1969 "hobby," subsidized by his salary; and the subsequent self-amortizing press which must support him and his family. There is another way to divide his productions: original work by living writers who can supervise their work through the press; and work of the dead, which must depend on another's editorial assistance. Of the works in the second category, the most commercially successful have been three volumes of Gertrude Stein, all edited by Robert Bartlett Haas: *A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein* (1971), *Reflection on the Atomic Bomb* (1973), and *How Writing is Written* (1974). The primer is a volume of Stein excerpts, with commentary by Haas to show how Stein may be apprehended by the uninitiated. The two other volumes (One and Two of *The Previously Uncollected Writings of Gertrude Stein*) draw her fugitive publications from the often obscure journals and books in which they first appeared. (Bukowski incorrectly believed these works had not been printed before; such a volume of unpublished work is still in the planning stage.) In all those years when Gertrude Stein could place so few of her writings—she didn't become a commercial success until she was in her 50's—these were the only writings that a publisher would accept. Black Sparrow's

collections thus have enormous interest, showing the bridge which she was endeavoring to construct to an audience.

No scholarly edition of Stein is in the offing; therefore these two Black Sparrow volumes will be read and referred to by Stein fans and quoted by scholars. I appreciate Black Sparrow's enterprise, but the inaccuracies in these books are depressing. Even a casual collation of the Black Sparrow texts with the acknowledged sources reveals startling carelessness in transcription. (There is also at least one error in attribution: the "Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia" did *not* appear in *Geography and Plays*.) Gertrude Stein's opacity is quite sufficient; she requires no further dimming from indifferent or unskilled editing. To test these Black Sparrow transcriptions I took, arbitrarily, five reprinted pieces; "Ada," "Ladies' Voices," and "Susie Asado" (all from *Geography and Plays* and now in *A Primer*), "Mildred's Thoughts" in *Reflection on the Atomic Bomb*, and "Why I Like Detective Stories" (in *How Writing is Written*). None of these preserves Gertrude Stein's punctuation precisely, even though *The Previously Uncollected Writings* assert: "The texts as printed in this book follow the published texts (including variations between British and American spelling) except for obvious printer's errors **[and a few emendations in square brackets]**"—the bracketed phrase appearing only in Volume Two. Admittedly Stein herself kept changing her mind about punctuation, and her 1935 lecture, "Poetry and Grammar," proclaimed a new indifference to commas: "I do not now care whether you put them in or not but for a long time I felt very definitely about them and would have nothing to do with them." But some of the Black Sparrow mistranscriptions complicate the sense unnecessarily. More important: in none of the five works examined is the text reprinted correctly. A word is omitted ("the two things" becomes "the things"; "each other stories" becomes "each stories"), another is altered ("crimes" becomes "crime"; "gentleman" becomes "gentlemen"). But in the case of "Mildred's Thoughts"—which fascinated Richard Bridgman as an insight into Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas's private life, and which John Malcolm Brinnin says "Gertrude felt best

represented her work of the immediate postwar period"—we have a textual disaster: Black Sparrow prints only the first two pages of what was a *twenty-two* page piece; and no mention is made that over 90% has been omitted. When the first two printed pages were transcribed from *The American Caravan*, did someone forget to turn the page? Since Mildred's thoughts (as well as Gertrude's) were not so curtailed or circumspect, this is a serious omission indeed. My random sampling thus makes me wonder if any of these Stein texts is accurate.

Eventually what Black Sparrow has done here so carelessly must be done with accuracy. I hope the press will consider a temporary solution. In the past, for holidays and special occasions, John Martin has generously issued small "gratis" publications to his friends, dealers, and associates. We now require another gratis publication, correcting the Stein transcripts and bringing them into conformity with bibliographical standards, indeed with the standards of the Black Sparrow Press itself. James Joyce prepared his own "Corrections of Misprints" for *Finnegans Wake*, and for many years Viking Press included it in their reprinting of that novel. (Subsequently, all the plates were reset.) Until such time as Black Sparrow can reset the Stein volumes, it can lay in a pamphlet of corrigenda; and perhaps the rest of us who already own Stein volumes might have it direct from the publisher on request. All this will take some doing. No hasty editing can hope to correct the Stein texts nor return Mildred to us in the full power of her thought.

It is in such retrievals from the past that Black Sparrow, as a one-man operation, runs its greatest risks. Perhaps a board of textual editors needs to be convened if the reprinting of dead authors is to continue. (The Los Angeles area is rich in graduate students and budding bibliographers who know the virtues of meticulousness.) Otherwise, Black Sparrow could take less aesthetic, but textually more accurate, route of other reprint houses: photograph the original publications and then reprint those duplicated plates. But somehow that kind of shortcut (and typographical hodgepodge, where the

various entries appear in different fonts) seems not appropriate to Martin's high standard.

John Martin has taken on a great deal, and his 1975 list is to be his strongest yet. "My dream would be not to be involved with all the business end of the press and to really sit down with Seamus and plan about a year ahead and do nothing but just marvelous kinds of things that would take a lot of thought and a lot of research and a lot of time." (We had talked about his collecting and issuing the unpublished letters and diaries of the dead writers he admires.) "Now, publishing as few books as I do—although eighteen is a lot (New Directions didn't publish eighteen titles in 1974, or anything like it)—all I can deal with now is the current work of the fifteen or so poets that I'm deeply involved with." The 1975 list may have fewer titles than the 1974, but they are longer works and in larger editions. Quite a difference from a decade ago when a broadside poem daringly emerged in an edition of thirty signed copies.

*Editor's note: John Martin disagrees with Stewart's
comments on the Gertrude Stein texts, noting also that
the full text of "Mildred's Thoughts" is restored in the
current Black Sparrow printing. More on this in*

BACHY 6.

Contributors

RALPH M. ANGEL has just begun sending out his poetry. After graduating from the University of Washington, he spent 1974 traveling and writing in Columbia, Peru, and Bolivia. *Bachy* marks his second publication. At this point in his career he feels like a young horsetail pushing up through freshly laid blacktop in a bid to survive.

AL AUSTIN is finishing an MA in history at California State University at Northridge. His political satires have appeared in several Los Angeles underground newspapers. This is his first literary publication.

KATE ELLEN BRAVERMAN has published a story in *Viva* and poetry in *Momentum*. Some of her poems will appear in *Bachy* 6. She lives in Culver City, California.

PAUL BROOKS "...talks funny. He's an extremely sensitive person as labels go. He is a cynic...don't hurt his feelings about the price. He has a warm mouth. He knows how to love a proper noun. Give him credit for being a backwoods fire. He has been in several magazines...He is currently worshipping a book called *The Harry Northup Poems*."

KIM CANNAZZI is a professional photographer currently living in the Hollywood Hills. The two photographs presented on pages 62 and 63 are part of a series of eight, intended to be viewed sequentially. She is currently working on a series of sequential color illustrations for a projected children's book.

STEVE COHEN is a professional photographer living in Hollywood. He has been published before, but he can't remember the name of the magazine.

JACK CRAWFORD, JR. writes: "I've never had a book of poems published (and wonder if you can suggest an approach). I have published in a number of little mags, including *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Two of my hardest struggles have been against an ingrained romanticism (Southern, at that!) and a tendency to strain too hard for effect. More recently I have been trying to loosen up. I say to myself, 'Crawford, you've agonized long enough. Let go.' And I find that for the first time, really, I thoroughly *enjoy* the act of creation."

SAM EISENSTEIN supplies the following: "I teach creative writing and English at LACC, have since 1962. I have a PhD in comparative

literature from UCLA. In 1965 I had a Fulbright to Japan; in 1972 I studied at the Jung Institute in Zurich. I had a column 'Headstones' in *Open City*, *The Staff* and in the old *LA Free Press*. My work has appeared in *Penthouse*, *Beyond Baroque*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Quixote*, *Invisible City*, *Quetzal*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *The Reconstructionist*, and recent plays in *Dramatika*. I'd love to find a publisher for a book of poetry and several novels, as well as producers for half a dozen plays. My friends tell me that I don't push hard enough."

JOHN FINDLATER is an actor-photographer. He works in commercial photography from his studio in Malibu. The pictures he makes for himself are a very personal experience.

BOB FLANAGAN reports: "I live in West LA with a hamster named Tinka. I type at the kitchen table, paint on the kitchen floor, develop photos in the bathroom, and play guitar (badly) in bed. Once a week I run a poetry workshop in Orange County. I love chimpanzees, orangutans, and gorillas. I attend a lot of workshops and watch a lot of TV. I like tall glasses of cold milk and Hostess cupcakes. I do a great Bob Dylan imitation and a good Rod Steiger. These are my first published poems. I'm 22 years old."

ANNE VALLEY FOX writes: "Well, I've lost track of the facts anyway. Except, I was born in New Jersey in June 1946 and grew up after 6 years on the Santa Monica beach by Lifeguard Stand number 2. I've been up all night editing words for \$. Dimes in my pockets, poems in mind." She now lives in San Francisco.

JAN GEALOR is a professional photographer living in Hollywood. He hitches a lot of rides and takes a lot of pictures. Even though he spends most of his time shooting rock groups, he has still found ways of expressing his unique sense of humor in the work he does for himself.

BOB GREENFIELD reports: "I'm 36 years old and my roots go back to what used to be a little farm outside of Waupun, Wisconsin,

Everything I feel and think, including what I write, has to do with the infinite magical qualities of woman."

FRANCES HALL lives in Glendale, California. Her prose writings have appeared lately in *Malahat Review* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. Her verse has been published in *Nimrod*, *Southwest Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal* and many other magazines.

JEANNE HARVEY, originally from Florida, is now living with assorted animals (cats, dogs, horses) in the hills around Northridge. She is a commercial artist with an advertising agency in Burbank, and is just getting started in photography.

CHARLES L. JOHNSON lives and writes in Venice, California.

RUTH MOON KEMPER is mostly known as a poet, having published three small volumes, 400-500 single works in periodicals. She has just finished an 814 page "novel" ('longest damn poem I ever wrote'). She lives in Decatur, Georgia, and is 'trying to escape with a Master's from Emory University.'

ANGELA KORVISIANOS is 20 years of age and lives in Sydney, Australia. She has studied with Michael Wilding, whose stories appeared in *BACHY* 3.

GARY E. LIGI writes: "This time I've decided to play it straight. Here goes: 'Gary E. Ligi, alias Haralambus Modestus, Craig C. Craig, Dildo and Derek O'Thomas, Gonzago Byook, and others—a former turkey-hanger, logistics technician, warehouseman, pizza jock, cotton-picker, teacher, poet-in-residence, technical writer and editor—has a first volume of poems *Stinking And Full Of Eels* (Peaceweed Press) due out in 1975.' I swear to you I don't know how much of the above is true."

LORAYNE LIPPS is noted for her equine, or western art. She has an Arabian horse named Creson and a quarter horse named Ziggy Stardust.

GARY LUSSON reports: "Born in New York, 1948, educated in the mid-west, now living and writing in Berkeley, California."

WILLIAM J. MARGOLIS has had three books of poems published: *The Anteroom Of Hell*, Inferno Press; *The Little Love Of Our Yearning*, Roy Miller & Stanley McNail, Publishers; and *The Eucalyptus Poems*, The Croupier Press. Margolis published and edited various magazines: *The Miscellaneous Man*, Berkeley and San Francisco, 1954-1959 (and the *LA Free Press* published one issue in 1968); *Mendicant*, Venice, California, 1961; and was a co-founding co-editor of *Beatitude*, San Francisco, 1959. His work has been widely published in magazines and anthologies in the U.S., Canada, England, India and Mexico. He produces occasional poetry programs for KPFK-fm, Los Angeles.

WILLIAM MOHR reports: "I am working on a novel right now. Last year I worked with another playwright, John Groves on a twenty-hour drama for TV about the lives of real, ordinary people in pre-revolutionary Boston (1760-1775). I have written several full-lengths plays, including a drama about Frantz Fanon, *The Weighing Of Feathers And Gold*. A short one-act play, *Ladder*, will appear in a future issue of *The Sunset Palms Hotel*. My poems have appeared in *The Lamp in the Spine*, *Invisible City*, and several others. *Momentum*, a magazine which I edit, is going into its fifth issue. I am twenty-seven years old."

BYRON PETRIDES attended Santa Monica City College and majored in photography. He is now working for a large photographic equipment distributor and pursues creative photography in his leisure time.

TRISTINE RAINER, Malibu, California, is presently co-teaching a writing and literature class with Anais Nin through International Community College and writing for film and television. She has made and written several non-commercial films. Her essay on Anais Nin's diaries appeared in *BACHY 2*.

BOB RIPPY writes: "Born in Torrance in 1940, I've lived my life in Southern California: growing up around the piers in Redondo and Manhattan Beach and in some fields inland, schooled at San Diego State and the University of Redlands, now living with my wife Kathy and our four children in Yucaipa. I've come to poetry recently—after high school, after my BA and MA, after teaching English in high school for five years, after a lot of careful avoidance of poetry. In 1970 I taught with DeWayne Rail. It was through him—his love of writing, his concern with its craft and its integrity, his patience with my vast ignorance—that I became interested in poetry and started to write. I'm currently teaching English at San Bernardino Valley College and writing some poems and trying to discover how to do both."

MIKE ROSE supplies the following: "I guess I'm getting to the age where my hip cynicism has worn itself out, died from boredom, and I'm beginning to realize the truth of the themes of those old 78's: romance, sweet sadness, etc. Trouble is, they've been clichéd out of existence, so let's bring them back with the saving grace of whimsy and laughter. OK. So much for my tin-can poetics. What do I do? Teach, counsel, take pictures, and read modern poetry like crazy. Thanks for reading my stuff."

SUSAN R. RUBINSTEIN became interested in photography several years ago while completing her studies in art and design at The American University, in Washington, D.C. She continued her education in photography as an art form rather than as a narrative or journalistic device. Her use of multiple images, mirror-images, and use of spatial dislocation investigates spaces as a source of paradox and enigma.

FRANCES DEAN SMITH was born in San Rafael, California in 1922, learned to talk in Brooklyn, attended high school in Lexington, Massachusetts, spent the forties and fifties staying out of trouble and the sixties learning not to write. Now she watches grunion in Ocean Park. She has studied under Lois Smith, Anne

Forsythe, Grace Hazard Conkling, and Mayor Clo Hoover of Santa Monica, a subsidiary of the Rand Corporation.

NEAL SPIEGEL reports: "My life-style corresponds to the diversity of Southern California where I was born 25 years ago and where I have spent the preponderance of my time. I have seen Acapulco Bay from a parachute, Los Angeles from a helicopter, and the produce trains of Coachella Valley from a sleeping bag next to the tracks. My job as an all-around legal messenger allows me to interact with a wide range of people whose interests and orientations vary significantly from my own." These are his first published poems.

D.E. STEWARD 'writes novels, lives in Europe but misses California'. ('Europe' is Basel, Switzerland.) His fiction has appeared in *BACHY 2*, *Beyond Baroque*, *Transatlantic Review* and other journals.

LAWRENCE D. STEWART is Associate Professor of English at California State University, Northridge, where he gives courses in the English Romantic poets, the Gertrude Stein circle, and bibliography. His most recent books are *Paul Bowles: The Illumination of North Africa* (So. Ill. Univ. Press, 1974), and in collaboration with Edward Jablonski, *The Gershwin Years* (revised ed., Doubleday, 1973). He is also Associate Editor for *The Mystery & Detection Annual*.

MARY TRAINOR, cartoonist, currently resides on the Strand in Hermosa Beach. "e.e. cummings' ego," she says, waxing literate, "vanished into lower case letters but he kept right on breathing thru the commas! it good english to turn blue, you know. (Ahem!)"

BOB WEBB is afraid of becoming a drunk; tries to be a friend, often failing her; plays a 70-year-old banjo. Periodically he waits in the *roji* in Wattles Park for tea ceremony never given there. Novels in

progress. Doug lives in San Francisco for now, best friend for 22 years.

CHRISTINE ZAWADIWSKY writes: "You can say that I've a chapbook out by Handsel (Larkspur) Press and a broadside coming out by Lazarus; I've had poems in over a hundred magazines and have work upcoming in *Granite*, *Poetry Northwest*, *West Coast*, *Ironwood* and others; and that I'm walking through the snow this winter only because I know that somehow I'll get to the damp sidewalks of spring...something like that."

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