

CALIFORNIA

A JOURNAL OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

QUARTERLY

CHARLES HUMBOLDT

WILLIAM NORTON

LOUIS ARAGON

PAUL ÉLUARD

JACQUES PRÉVERT

GUILLEVIC

LLOYD ZIMPEL

DON GORDON

LAWRENCE P. SPINGARN

JOHN EMERY MITCHELL

RAY FABRIZIO

ERNEST KROLL

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY

VOLUME 2 / NUMBER 2

WINTER 1953

A CLEAN 6 X 9 READING EDITION

No Art Is Neutral gives this issue its argumentative center, with Charles Humboldt setting the terms. The fiction—*People Like Us* by William Norton; *A Dog in a Tree: The Rain on the Glass* by Lloyd Zimpel; *The Visa* by Sylvan Karchmer—moves among private crisis, social pressure, and public consequence, with each story's title and setting supplying a distinct point of entry. The poetry runs from Paul and The Phantom Sea, shifting between grouped poems and single lyrics rather than settling into one house style. The printed contents bring together 4 works of fiction, 10 poetry entries, 1 prose or editorial entry, giving the issue a deliberately mixed pace across genres and forms.

This edition resets the journal's literary texts for reading. Each piece begins on a fresh reader page and identifies its original journal page and PDF scan page; advertisements and decorative matter are omitted. Artwork and irreducibly visual material appear as labelled original plates.

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Notes on Contributors

LOUIS ARAGON, 'French poet, novelist, and journalist; later work was introduced to the Americans in Aragon Poet of the French Resistance (1945). Most recent work the monumental novel *Les Communistes*.

JACQUES BARBICANE was born in 1917, writes to us from a state. This is his first published work.

ARTHUR BOYARS is now living in London, where he edits the international literary journal *Mandrake* in the face of post-war inflation and paper shortages.

PAUL ELUARD, at his death late in 1952, was one of Europe's most vigorous and versatile poetic voices. Started as a dadaist and surrealist. During the Occupation his *Poesie* 'flerite (1942) and *Au Rendez-vous* Allemand (1945) spoke for a conquered but so heroic France.

RAYMOND FABRIZIO is a senior English major at Los Angeles State College, as a professional musician weekends. "The Bullet" is his first poem.

LAWRENCE FERLING, translator of *Prevert*, reviews poetry for the *San Chronicle*.

DON GORDON is author of *Statement* (1943) and *Civilian Poems* (1947), has widely in literary magazines including *CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY*.

GUILLEVIC, one of the finest poets of Resistance and post-Resistance France, has published several books of poems. Translations in this issue are from Gagner.

KENNETH O. HANSEN, translator of *Guillevic*, has himself published poems in *Intertwined Review*, *Tigers Eye*, and *Botteghe Oscure*.

CHARLES HUMBOLDT writes poetry and literary criticism. His poems "The Witness" and "The Careful Life" appeared in the Fall, 1952, issue of *THE CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY*. SYLVAN KARCHMER has published many distinguished short stories in American magazines. He appeared in *The Best One Act Plays* of 1947-1948 and in *The Best American Short Stories* of 1950. His story "Birthday" appeared in our Winter, 1952, issue.

ERNEST KROLL has held a post in the Department of State since 1945, when his poetry began to appear in big and little magazines. His first book of poems, *Cape Horn Other Poems*, was published this year by E. P. Dutton & Co.

JOHN EMERY MITCHELL, age 37, is an organizer for a C.I.O. International Union. He has lived in Boston for a number of years, and published in several little magazines. WILLIAM NORTON lives in Covina, California and works in the kind of warehouse he describes in his story appearing here. His story about the Korean war, "Coal Fatigue," appeared in the Summer, 1952, issue of *THI! CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY*.

JACQUES PREVERT, born in Paris 1900, is perhaps the last representative of an old and popular tradition, whose work is characterized by all the verve of a poet outside the academies. His film *Les Enfants du Paradis* was a notable success. *Paroles* (1951) is a one volume collection of Prevert's poems and stories.

ETTORE RELLA lives in New York, has published poems in many magazines, and has just finished writing a full length verse play.

LAWRENCE SPINGARN planned *THI! CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY* in 1950-1951 with Phil Stevenson. *The Lost River* (1951) was his most recent book of poems, published Heinemann in London.

ELSA TRIOLET, well known in France as a novelist has had some of her work published in America.

LLOYD ZIMPEL, formerly an editor of the *Minnesota Quarterly*, is now in the U. S. Army, stationed in Korea, the scene of his story in this issue.

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No Art Is Neutral

Charles Humboldt

There is taking place today an organized and official effort, unprecedented save under fascism, not only "to deceive people as to the social and political facts upon which their lives depend, but to deprive them of the ability to feel, think and act like human beings. It is not necessary to detail the process of distortion; one can observe it in any of the mass media the press, film, radio and television. The aim of this effort is to create a society in which men will see each other as in twisted mirrors. The farmer across the sea, the Negro and the Jew, the worker in another plant must be turned into monsters or figures of fun, or simply into unrecognizable objects whose passions are unlike one's own and who probably feel pain no more than an insect. The abuses and horrors inflicted upon these will then excite curiosity rather than repulsion. Family relationships are bathed in the light of contempt, subjected to the hilarity of script scribbler or master of ceremonies. Tenderness might remind us of women and children who are being bombed to preserve our way of life. The Owl becomes a hero if not a saint.

The solidarity of workers united by common interest must be replaced by the self-reliance of individuals determined to survive at no matter what expense to their comrades. (Survival is a great word these days among the philistines.)

It would be wrong, however, to treat these "ideals" as simple propaganda. The values which present-day capitalism tries to impose are really its own and reveal its predatory relation to society as a whole. To separate them from that relation is either to see them as prejudices which can be reformed away without disturbing the system of which they are an integral part, or to magnify them until they become generalizations for man in the abstract. The first is the way of social democracy; the second is the path which bourgeois art and philosophy have followed in their decadence.

The history of modern decadence is a long one and embraces such a variety of large and pigmy figures that one must avoid two extremes in

recounting it either to deny any relation between past and present examples, major artists and dwarfs; or to make no distinction at all, also that it becomes impossible to see how complete a degeneration has taken place in recent times. If, for example, one overemphasizes what Picasso has in common with Jackson Pollock, people, resenting the tie, will never understand why Picasso can and should, for the major part of his career, be called a decadent artist. If Joyce and Kafka are equated with Koestler and Paul Bowles, one may be led to regard the latter two as artists, ignoring the fact that what we have here is not simply a logical progression in decadence but a qualitative step of a pathological nature, in other words, rapid decomposition.

What has happened is that the pre~ dominantly conservative-tending-towardreactionary art of the major decadent figures has given way to an open reactionary expression which, when it pretends to bemoan contemporary spiritual decline, does so only in order to preserve the form of society responsible for that decay. The "criticism" of contemporary decadence is not directed against the real crimes of imperialism; it rather condones those crimes as essential to its preservation. So Paul Bowles who in a N. Y. Times interview announces that he writes about disease, "Because I am writing about today,... not about what happens today, but about today itself," also gives his considered opinion of the Arab peoples and their drive to free themselves from colonial subjugation: "Their culture is essentially barbarous, their mentality that of a purely predatory people. It seems to me that their political aspirations, while emotionally understandable, are absurd, and any realization of them will have a disastrous effect on the rest of the world." The link between such literary aims and such political vision is characteristic of contemporary decadence, a sociological phenomenon which resembles art only in certain superficial attributes.

One must remember, the tradition which has degenerated here is still a tradition, that no matter how much the child and grandchildren have each in fallen off from their forebears, they still related. For the disenchantment with bourgeois society of an artist Flaubert there could be only two outlets. He might actively reject the bourgeois order he despised and search for new social grouping which did not reduce every human striving to a cash equivalent. Or, filled with distrustful of change and placing his faith in art alone, he would resign himself seeing preserved the very form of

soci which drove him to despair. Flaubert's choice points the way downward. History of decadence is the story of change - in the movement as a whole and often in the same individual - from resignation to acquiescence and, finally, to militant defense of conditions admitted by the artist to be hostile to art. How did this come about?

The intellectual who was not simply a mercenary of those in power prized himself on his mental freedom. He washed his hands of the "dirty" struggle for money, he had mastered life by contemplation. He was able to survey from the heights of thought rather than forced to share its hazards. So he thought. But in refusing the role of participant in insisting of his integrity as an individual alone, he accepted as the inevitable condition of man just that view of it which capitalism had propagated. Of course he was critical of that condition; life revolted and still revolts him. It is a mistake to believe that decadent art is not moral. (Here we are not concerned with such completely venal products as those of Koestler, the later Dos Passos, etc., which have no more to do with morality than taking drugs has to do with ethical criticism of society.) But its morality is self-negating because it is powerless to act. Powerless in the sense that instead of seeking the roots of its discontent it continually recreates the images of human failure from which it fled in horror.

The important thing about decadent art is not that it is critical but that its criticism, like the consciousness from which it springs, remains within the orbit of bourgeois dissatisfaction and self-deception. It can paralyze, as in Kafka, it can rage, as in Joyce, or snarl as in the proto-fascist Céline, but it has set itself a hopeless task. For inability to act does not mean inability to destroy but, on the contrary, generates the worst kind of destructive drives. So the decadent becomes a prophet corrupted by the wrong kind of fury. Instead of hating what capitalism tries to do, and often succeeds in doing, to enslave, he misprizes men for being its victims. At first despite himself, but in the end consciously, he does the work of the bourgeoisie. Finally, in periods of acute political crisis, like the present, his response is as pathological as that of the fascist dupe who believes that he is combatting "international capitalism" by helping to enslave the world.

(Did not Frederick Engels say that anti-Semitism was the socialism of idiots?)

Because it expresses discontent, decadent art sometimes appears revolutionary. It betrays itself, however, by its passivity which may take such forms as sensuality, nostalgia, or morbid concentration on a special aspect of suffering or destruction of personality, but which always emphasizes a segment of man rather than men in their total activity. Any grasp of the organization of society, such as one finds in Balzac or Tolstoy, is lost in over-concentration on what has been done to this or that individual, so that the spectator can only writhe without understanding the causes of tragedy. Even when such art pretended to social awareness the exhaustion of its protagonists made it self-defeating. They became like patients with brain injuries which deprived them of a past or future. Pointing to them the artist could say the world is intolerable; it cannot go on like this. But what was to prevent it from continuing? The sprung trap does not open just because the animal is in agony. Nor can the spectator gather strength from a work of art if its subject has none. Then what use is it to him?

The decadent cannot take this question seriously because his spectator is just anybody. He does not see his art as a social process in which he, his subject and his audience are mutually determined and to which they contribute equally. From his point of view the artist's duty consists in creating, to the best of his ability, an object whose existence is self-justifying. Within the limits of that responsibility his problems are purely formal. Thus he claims a social status while rejecting a social function.

Yet social allegiance has become the central artistic problem of our time. Every dispute over form and content, abstraction and representation, humanism and decadence, is, in the last analysis, a quarrel over whom the artist should serve, working mankind or its spoilers, the relative few whose only answer to the withholding of their profits is death for the whole world. Art is a weapon in the struggle between these forces of life and death because consciousness is a weapon developed in the course of men's productive and social relations and sharpened in their effort to fulfill their potentialities. As long as the artist sets himself minor problems he may think himself neutral, unpledged. The plastic arts, for example, are replete with such beggings of the question, called experiments in technique.* But should the artist set himself the mature task of creating fully rounded typical human beings,

he would never be able to forget the phrase which side are you on? And it would force him to a reconsideration of his technique now inconceivable to him.

What makes it so hard for the artist to take this step? For one thing, he regards his sensibility as entirely innate *The pass to which both painter and critic have come may be illustrated by quoting from a review of the work of Burgoyne Diller in Art News. Mr. Diller "sets himself the problem of co-ordinating three visual themesthe theme of a rectangle on the rectangle of the canvas; the theme of the rectangle divided and yet integral; and the theme of thin lines of tension. He uses the three primary colors, black and white, and greys and offwhites. This range, larger than Mondrian's helps him to succeed in a complete integration of all these themes in Number 10, the largest painting, which took two years to execute. Number 8, which could not be changed by a hair, and though simple, eludes analysis, combines themes one and three, w•ith three vertical tension lines and one small red rectangle."

rather than conditioned by the same social factors which determine how he eats, where he lives, etc. Any attempt to get him to direct his perception in accordance with a deeper awareness of social relations therefore becomes an infringement of his liberty. If he complied with such a suggestion he wo~ld be insincere, a betrayer of his gifts. This conviction is re-inforced by the fact that his creative energy does develop an apparent momentum of its own. How can he renounce a way of life into which he has put so much effort and which at last rewards him with an almost intuitive flow of beautiful works? In addition there is an external force which propels him as much as his own the demands of the market, that is, in the main a mass of pampered people who desire to find in art the reflection of their own trivial, irresponsible and heartless relation to the life of society. These demands make themselves felt even when the artist does not profit by satisfying them, even when he can point to his poverty in self-justification. He may believe himself quite uninfluenced by the taste and outlook of others, and sure that his. wit and fantasy are quite his own. But he cannot escape the dominant intellectual atmosphere of his society unless he opposes those who, through wealth and power, are able to set it for the moment. And his opposition will have to come, not on moral or aesthetic grounds alone, but with historical understanding as well.

Complaining of the political immaturity of the artists of his time the Russian Marxist Plekhanov once wrote, "To comprehend theoretically the historical process as a whole it is necessary to think; and contemporary artists, unlike the great masters of the Renaissance, for instance, think very little. At any rate, there is no doubt that any artist of proven talent will increase considerably the forcefulness of his work by steeping himself in the great emancipatory ideas of our time. For this it is necessary that these ideas permeate his spirit and that he express them through his artist's temperament." The transformation of modern art cannot take place from within. It is only secondarily a problem of expression. Without a change in audience, that is without the artist's active support of progressive forces and ideas, it does not matter whether he paints representations or abstractions, whether he is clear or obscure, serious or clownish. He will merely substitute one kind of banality for another.

Nor can he condescend to offer his services to the progressive forces on condition that they accept him as he is. Then it is still not social reality but himself that absorbs him; objectivity is swallowed up in the attempt to equate his consciousness, simply because it is contemporary, with that of his new found friends. Not his art, only his sympathies have changed. Such one-sided pacts rarely last because the artist has inserted a secret clause which he believes will preserve his freedom, but which is in essence a demand that the future conform to his vision, that is, to a fantastic projection utterly limited to the modes of thinking of the past. To that future he will bequeath his sensibility, not realizing that his gift cannot even serve the present adequately. He is confronted with an intolerable paradox the masses of the people, whom he was prepared to support, prove to be his stumbling block.

But a block to what? Surely not to the masses of the people themselves? Can it be, then, to his self-fulfillment? If that is so, then he is back within the circle of bourgeois thought, his individuality raised above the needs and goals and even the experience of those who might have revitalized his art.

Here one other source of confusion for the artist should be mentioned the existence in the leading capitalist countries of a relatively large sophisticated middle class audience which serves as a buffer between the intellectual and the true progressive forces to whom his conscience has

drawn him. Since the members of this group often profess a conventional aesthetic liberalism, the artist imagines that these are as the masses of the people would be if only the latter were educated in their tastes, and broader in their outlook. In this milieu the worship of talent obscures every question of its aims. Any theoretical discussion of modern art can be settled by the assertion that Joyce and Picasso are great artists, this putting the disputants to shame. Here, among those who "understand" him, the artist may feel that he has had a narrow escape from political dictation. Unfortunately, he is now only the emperor wearing a new set of no clothes, with no one willing or able to tell him the truth.

Whenever the progressive critic breaks in upon this hypocritical, idyllic relationship to recall the artist to his social task, he is charged with callousness because he will not recognize the absolute autonomy of the imagination. (As though the artist in our society has not to sell his imagination just as the worker does his labor power.) Besides, so the theory runs, in expressing himself the artist inevitably expresses the age in which he lives. Not any one of the opposing forces of the age, class, national, religious, etc., but the age as a whole. The imagination is seen as a projection, through the individual, of a hypothetical undivided world consciousness at any given time. It is not based upon material and historical factors, these being merely the trappings of art. So, for example, Rene Wellek and Austin Warren state in their *Theory of Literature*, "There is a... danger, however, of taking the novel seriously in the wrong way, that is, as a document or case history, as - what for its own purpose of illusion it sometimes professes to be - a confession, a true story, a history of a life and its times."

In other words, the meaning of life precedes concrete living, which is nothing but an allegory. The naive reader may believe that the writer's business is with human action, how and why people feel and behave as they do. Nothing of the kind. That is merely the coating of the pill, the puppet show for the childlike grownup. This joy, these tears, kindness and crime have no meaning in themselves. They are only vehicles for the embodiment of superhuman values, for the imposition of a moral order from above. So today the artist is free (that is, bound) to describe and bemoan the decay of the bourgeois consciousness and to propose its rehabilitation, à la T. S. Eliot and most of the New Critics, through hierarchy, spiritual athleticism, religion, and what not. But he is not to be

bound (that is, free) to reveal the social causes of that decay, nor to picture to what heights human beings can rise once those social causes have been removed. privilege to perish, that is what freedom means for the artist.

As political terror invades every sphere of our society, the coercive nature of freedom is fully revealed. Why does persecution in mass of Communist progressive intellectuals arouse no protest among the partisans of "the liberty and integrity of the individual"? It is not because, apart from fear and opportunism - though the degree of these is hardly to be discounted - the crisis imperialism brings to the surface latent conservatism of modern art? Of course, if one thinks only in terms technical advances, this designation seems grossly unfair. Yet the principle behind this criticism may become clear if we employ an analogy. The revolutions in modern art techniques are unlike the revolutions in industrial method under monopoly capitalism, of which they are, in the final analysis, an indirect result. Just as the present development of new techniques both reflects and helps to intensify the crisis of imperialism - its disastrous need to expand or perish, its drive toward war, its fascist "way out" - so the art rooted in the economic base not only bears witness to the breakdown of the forces which produced its "world" but hastens its decomposition. Is there not, for example, something almost neo-Malthusian in the avantgarde painting with its loss of the total human being as of over population, its desperate pride in the degraded appearance of content? Does not breakup and reshuffling of natural forces suggest that man's environment threatens (or bores) him that he can only assert his creative power ideally; by which sever him from it? Further is there not apparent here the dishonesty of present-day reactionary ideology? Defining freedom as the absence of restraint, it demands art's freedom from the subject, just as the war-waging imperialist seeks freedom from responsibility to his subjects, the rest of society. Yet the artist's freedom from the subject is actually his suppression or distortion of it, just as the imperialist's freedom is the right to enslave or annihilate human beings. The economics of scarcity is made to prevail in art as in society.

As long as the artist accepts the external condition as a given, unalterable fact, his criticism of it will bear within it an ultimate acceptance. The more or less conscious realization of this has produced a rash of pseudo-revolutionary movements: dadaism, surrealism, aristocratic

and religious estrangement (as in Auden and Eliot), homosexual protest, etc., self-absorbed and devoid of all realistic material perspective. Flaring on the stage of individual consciousness, these eruptions quickly subsided before the specter of organized action. Their goal was freedom from society, not freedom within society to be won in alliance with its progressive forces. After all, one could still crawl in the cracks of the police state. So the fire eaters now drink at their master's tables while the prophets compose cautious prayers for their own salvation. And what reality do they offer us? A climate of cowardice, their defeat diffused so that everyone can breathe it and be choked. On the one hand conjuring up the old positive values of bourgeois democratic ideology as though these could be miraculously restored by the cleft, most capacious rulers in history.

On the other, urging a spiritual resignation, a cheap self-saving which calls itself the tragic sense of life. Suffering humanity shall pose for the leading talents of our time, but let it not dare to smile, let no genius be distracted by some dream of happiness brightening its face. For a heaven of art, a hell on earth. Such intellectuals, flattering themselves that they have scaled the freezing heights of ethics, have managed to reach a level on which they can share a pew with any banker praying to the Lord of jellied gasoline.

We have seen that modern decadence, when it is not, as in its last stages, merely decorated pornography, sadism, or the work of agents provocateurs, is characterized by the separation of aesthetic values from truth-to-life. This division has also for a long time been the central task of advanced bourgeois criticism, among whose progenitors Nietzsche occupies a leading place. In an essay, "Nietzsche and Fascist Aesthetics," the Hungarian Marxist critic George Lukacs quotes a significant passage from a later preface to the early work *The Birth of*

Tragedy:

"The first thing that I grew serious about was the relationship of art to truth; and even today I face this dichotomy with mortal terror. My first book was dedicated to it *The Birth of Tragedy* believes in art against the background of another belief that it is impossible to live with the truth, that the 'will to truth' is already a symptom of degeneracy."

From this dichotomy, with its ~emagogic assertion of health so characteristic of fascist thought, springs that "ruthlessly interested arrangement of things, interested to the highest degree... enjoyment in overpowering by putting a meaning into it" (Nietzsche's phrase) which has become the goal of modern art and criticism. But this arbitrary meaning is simply an escape, the sign of a refusal or inability to come to grips with the social system whose hostility to art is the latter's constant, though heavily disguised, theme. Therefore, as Lukacs shows, the implied critique of capitalism gradually turns into its opposite, the "apologetics of capitalism... the path of apologetics in the shape of the general criticism of existence." The hollower this criticism, the more devoid of specific content and knowledge, the more profound and timeless it appears to its disciples. The artist, absorbed by the inherent evil in man or the sense of the nothingness of life can afford to ignore economics or such transient manifestations as the class struggle. For their part, those in power are only too happy to see social imbecility raised to an artistic principle. The arbitrary, consciously constructed illusion of Nietzsche is put at the disposal of the imperialist state apparatus.

Thus the very criticism which appeals for the preservation of the purity of aesthetic values is responsible for their degradation in the service of reaction. If this function is not always apparent it is because the critic still proclaims the absolute autonomy of art. The pretense is well illustrated by a statement of Allen Tate's in the course of a forum exchange between him, Kenneth Burke and Robert Gorham Davis, reprinted in *The American Scholar*, Spring 1951. The passage is as follows:

Mr. Davis I was interested, Mr. Burke, in what you said about dignification. One of my points was that the New Critics haven't shown sufficient interest in such transformed values and the possibility of them in our society.

Mr. Tate It's not the literary critic's business to seek them in society. His business is to seek them in books.

This looks more innocent than it is. Mr. Tate does not object to the imposition of his backward social values upon society. He merely resists any criticism which would test the validity of those values vis-a-vis contemporary social realities. He wants the critic to keep his nose between the pages and not be flustered by questions of truth. From such

a point of view T. S. Eliot can appear as penetrating a realist as Balzac. because he is so with "values."

Mr. Tate is on the right wing contemporary criticism. But his more liberal colleagues can do little else than deplore his social outlook and the sterility of the New Criticism in general, because they too are more concerned with the exposition of values than with the dynamics of character and the workings of society. It is instructive to see what such preoccupation with values independent of the particulars of time, place and social fact can lead to in even the most enlightened of critics. In his *American Renaissance*, F. O. Matthiessen discusses Melville's *Billy Budd*, the story of a young British sailor hanged for having killed, in a moment of astonishment and anger, an officer who had falsely accused him of incitement to mutiny. The execution is carried out despite the fact that the captain of the battleship, the H.M.S. *Indomitable*, who bears the symbolic name of Edward Fairfax Vere (Fair Deed Truth), knows that Billy was innocent of the charge. Furthermore, Billy had been impressed from a merchant ship, the *Rights-of-Man*. We have here a concentration of ironies of which both Melville and Matthiessen were surely aware. In fact, matters are stretched to the breaking point, as when Vere, speaking of the simple Billy, says, "But did he know our hearts, I take him to be of that generous nature that he would feel even for us on whom in this military necessity too heavy a commission is laid." And Billy confirms the justice of the sentence passed upon him by crying out, "God bless Captain Vere!" a moment before being strung up before the assembled ship's company.

Yet Melville, and Matthiessen following him, feel that these lesser ironies are swallowed up in the maw of a greater issue. Captain Vere is the "wise Father, terribly severe but righteous," a man who "has the strength of mind and true earnestness of will to dominate his instincts." As for Melville, no longer does he "feel the fear and dislike of Jehovah that were oppressing him through *Moby Dick* and *Pierre*. He is no longer protesting against the determined laws as being savagely inexorable. He has come to respect necessity." In the form of the British navy. Such is the fate of ethics in the shadow of nascent monopoly capitalism. (*Billy Budd* was written between To get down to mundane affairs, why was Billy's execution "necessary"? Because, since the action takes place in the summer of 1797, the revolt of Spithead and the Nore Mutiny, where four

ships raised the red flag, had shortly before shaken the confidence of the Admiralty in the legendary loyalty of the British tar. The commanders were taking no chances of having clemency mistaken by crews who <'have not that kind of intelligent responsiveness that might qualify them to comprehend and discriminate.'" But Melville does not allow his judgment to proceed from the simple fact which he himself has revealed. Everything is inverted so that the repulsive event is vindicated, the psychology of Vere ennobled, and naked class oppression represented as the will of God in which, respite reluctance and shuddering, peace must eventually be found. And Matthiessen like the sanctified Billy, accepts this version of necessity at its face value, as though it were a metaphysical category and not an historical phenomenon which men might understand and abolish.

Of course Melville did not intend his story to be interpreted as a defense of discipline in the King's Navy, nor does Matthiessen value it as such. Taken on its own terms, it is an attempt to reconcile humanity to despair and so presumably to rise above it. Yet is not this spiritual transcendence of injustice and evil an illusory triumph which requires only an earthly glance to become defeatist cynicism? The very fact that Melville's meaning must be derived at a remove, as it were, from ordinary human feeling ought to give us pause. Actually, his mystical resolution accomplishes the very opposite of his intention.,It enables us to see how modern idealism, religious or pragmatic, masks and justifies the crushing of the individual by the pseudocollective of monopoly capitalism. Matthiessen's expository, uncritical analysis is not so much a failure of literary sensitivity as of an exegetic method which cannot or will not trace the myths, symbols and forms of art to their material source.

The deeper the crisis of capitalism, the wider grows the gap between bourgeois reality and the bourgeois view of life, between the act and the meaning imposed upon it by art. It was Karl Marx, speaking of periods of social revolution like the present, who first showed how this discrepancy might be approached and overcome:

"Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness on the contrary this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict

between the social forces of production and the relations of production." (fl Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.)

In contemporary art the bourgeois consciousness works like the content of a dream which symbolizes but also conceals and falsifies the basic conflict of the individual, hiding him from himself. As in *Billy Budd* or *The Wasteland*, the traumatic social situation is transformed by myths and symbols through which either the tradition fetishes are revived or the actual suffering converted into an apparition of the sick soul. These presences, which have their equivalent in all the arts, have a reality comparable to that of the broken towers, stamping horses or drowned men of dreams; that is, they exist in the consciousness, but as the products of a fundamental contradiction which has still to be observed and understood in order then to be dramatized. Once he has grasped this, the artist will begin to examine his own consciousness as a subject, part of the content rather than the all-embracing form of the world.

In dealing with the spiritual phenomena of a corrupt society, it is natural to emphasize the passive, "effect" side of consciousness. But our criticism would be mere intellectual vanity if conscio ness did not also have an active side, i it were not itself a force of social develo ment. This is as true of art as of an other form of ideological expressio Therefore, in foreseeing a positive rol for art today we will remember it first therecorder of myths, then as their ada ter and transformer, but most importan as their eventual destroyer coinciden with man's mastery of nature. The eme gence of a realist tradition in art not onl represents such actual rather than fan • ful domination, but encourages furthe mastery by creating new, fertile habi of mind for seeing nature and man' dialectical relation to it. It is, however only with the control of social forces, o men's relation to one another, that t prospects of this tradition can be full realized, that all the myths will disa pear, and art, instead of placing joy • an idle heaven, will show it growing ou of free human labor.

The superiority of progressive art, tha is, of a ll art which anticipates this ou come, to the most talented products o decadence is not to be tested by compar ing this against that individual talent. I consists in its point of view which hono man in a way that bourgeois art, ev at its height, could never do, by envision ing freedom for the whole of society Similarly, the progressive critic is dedi cated to ending the distinction

between art for the relative few and art for the many which acquires such repulsive features under imperialism. This contrast is inescapable; for the cultured bourgeoisie and the intellectuals who share its attitudes an art of nurtured sensibility generally reserved and ironic, complacent in its psychology because irresolutely shunning material structure and movement in an effort to find absolute values in its own brilliant effects, indifferent to common life and social responsibility; for the masses of working people, the petty bourgeoisie, etc., the so-called public, an art devoted to the unrelenting propagation of lies, coarse, violent, sentimental, appeasing and exciting with wishfulfillment, formless or sporting clownish shapes, an art of contemptuous planned degradation which mocks its values in the act of proclaiming them. Often the division is compounded, as when the artist earns his bread perverting public taste in order to spend his spare time hunting the soul he has mislaid in the process.

The progressive critic can condone no such abyss in artistic work which, like all other forms of production, he wants to see placed at the disposal of every member of the community. The goal he projects is the raising of the living as well as the cultural standards of literally hundreds of millions of people so that they can enjoy the intellectual riches of past and present, not as a gift but as their social right. This is no cheap promise, no scheme of enlightenment by which some members of the working class are permitted to lift themselves by study into the ranks of their "betters" and desert their own kind. A great collective striving is needed to make available to each individual the abundance he has helped produce. And this holds for the artist too, who knows that his work is always a colloquy, a man speaking with other men, exchanging experiences, being taught as much as teaching, immeasurably increasing the range of his subject matter and the forms of his seeing, because he sees through their eyes as well as his own. Need such a man fear the loss of his distinctive self? Only if he feels limited by the absence of security, only if he longs for those conditions whose disappearance will make it impossible for him to parade his distraction and separation from the masses of the people as an important and noble spectacle.

Today, wherever the fight for peace and against racist and class tyranny is being waged, great artists have felt its enormous fructifying power, source of recovered eloquence. The millions for whom they speak

are no beggars for their support, but allies who prepare a huge • victory over the death-absorbed enslavers of mankind. In this coming triumph one can sense at last the possibility of realizing Whitman's dream of a new art: "In the center of all, and object of all, stands the Human Being, towards whose heroic and spiritual evolution poems and everything directly or indirectly tend."

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People Like Us

William Norton

Rube worked in a warehouse where the freight was always going somewhere, in or out, always moving, going someplace to be of some use to someone. Inside the high vaulted gloom of that warehouse the lift trucks scurried from pile to pile with freight on their forks. The lift drivers spun the wheels and slammed the gears with a raw grinding sound as they carried the freight in at one end and out at the other. In from the asphalted wharves where cargo slings brought it from the deep bellies of the floating sheet-iron tubs, the merchant ships, and out where railroad freight cars from every road in the country waited with their sliding doors open, their insides gaunt and useless until men sweated with the freight to fill those insides and send the cars rackety pounding over the long rails to an inland city somewhere to be used or eaten or processed or done something with to satisfy a human need.

"How many kids you got, Rube?" That was his name, the old-fashioned name Reuben, and everyone at the warehouse called him that. As he answer he scratched himself along the leg wi the cargo hook in his hand. Sweat soaking down from his cap line dribbling across his full tanned che A few gray hairs showed at his temp mixed in with the crisp black curls.

"Three so far," he answered. "T girls and a boy. Why?"

"Just wondering. We got one kid my wife is knocked up again. She's li months gone."

"By God,,I hope we ain't got no mo on the. way."

.Rube slammed with his cargo hook a crate they were unloading and t sharp point gouged into the soft wo He knew and his wife Mary knew. was already a week late and they we both afraid she was pregnant.

"If there is one thing I got enou of," he said, "it is kids. I wouldn't t a million bucks for any one of the thr but I wouldn't give a dime for anoth one."

A guy with a gentle sort of stren big and yet quiet, that was Rube. Bl hair and warm brown eyes, kind of heavy in the jaw and with a tangled growth of eyebrows. A strong thick body that broadly sloped across the shoulders and down to where his chest ran into a flat muscled belly, a belly that boosted up weights that his thick forearms clutched while the blood veins stood out with the strain. On one hand a finger was gone, smashed years ago when he hadn't been careful about snatching his hand from under a load. A lot of men are like that, with something missing or scarred or smashed. That comes from working, all kinds of working, but never from sitting in a leather chair as an executive wearing fresh monogrammed underwear and a deodorant salve under the armpits and no sweat dripping off the end of the nose or soaking through a pair of pants like it did with Rube.

"You wouldn't take a million bucks for one of your kids?"

Th e man working with Rube, taller and ten years younger, was derisive. He hitched up his work-dirty pants and swelled out his chest. A tangle of blond lanky hair fell in his eyes from under a blue cloth cap cut baseball style.

"Listen, Rube. Don't try to snow an old timer. Another kid is the easiest thing in the world to make." He snickered like a schoolboy drawing dirty pietines on the walls. "Goddamn right I'd sell a kid for a million bucks. I'd make me a lot of dough that way. Just wheel the women around for this old stud and I'd give 'em all the kids they wanted." He laughed loudly at his own wit before bending back to work.

Rube was thinking about a baby, one more baby for him, and Mary, another human life, another pair of feet for shoes, another hot summer for Mary while she carried the child heavy and sad within her. That's what it might be, another child of debt and worry, heavy and sad in their lives. The word and the thought that teased and lurked in the back of his mind, like the echo of a dark back-alley, was abortion. And he knew of a doctor. Mary knew too. They had heard the whispered price. Two hundred dollars was the price gossip had said. He and Mary both knew of this, the doctor and the cost, but it was a thing silent between them, unspoken. Between them too was the trapped feeling, the fear, the pregnancy growing every day with every pulse of blood. Soon it might be too late to do anything. Now it was just a whisper of something, a suspicion of something in the dark warm place where life began. Maybe

it was really nothing. The time had been so short. Just a few days late. Then it had been a week. A full week before she said anything. They had been in bed together, he and Mary side by side, just drifting off to sleep with her dark head on his arm and the warm softness of her touching him and melting in to bring a peace, a soft happiness, then sleep.

She had turned her head and spoken softly against his cheek. Her tone might have been saying just anything but the meaning was there hard and harsh, unyielding.

"I haven't started yet this month." Rube waited while the fact soaked into his tired consciousness. Then came the beginning of a hopeless feeling, a feeling of being caught and no way to escape.

"How long has it been?" "Three or four days. Maybe a week."

"Don't you know?" There was a slight edge to his voice. A sharpness that he didn't want to be there but as the words came out it was there in spite of himself.

Mary didn't answer for a minute. ",I guess I should have started last Monday."

Rube punched at his pillow two or three times and then rolled over so he was away from her and hunched up against the wall. That way he shut her out and shut out the thing she had told him. Finally he turned around again and tried to pitch his voice low and reasonable. "You don't always start exactly on time. Maybe you're just, late. Maybe you've been worried. Maybe..."

It was a maybe, a dirty rotten chance of a maybe that had come to plague them and drive needles of worry into their eyes every waking moment and even in their dreams at night. They just couldn't afford another baby and besides, both of them were getting too far along to look forward to raising any more children. But there was the cost of the abortion, almost as much as birth, and the fear back in every woman's eyes of that word, the secret terror in it, the shameful death, the despair and pain. Mary would have to say, not him.

There were gray hairs among the short black curls on Rube's head and at night when he came home from work he felt every one of his years in aching muscles across his back and down his legs. A new baby with all its expenses and then eighteen years before the kid was old enough to take care of itself. •Eighteen more years raising kids and how in the hell could

a man that old bring home a paycheck every week when men younger and stronger started prowlin the sereets looking for work? One time Rube had read this on the wall of box car, scrawled in chalk: "Sweat • my eyes, down the crack of my ass. I work like a mule, I'm the laboring class."

Unsigned.

Another time Rube had read on th wall of a box car he was unloadin "Screw them all but six and save th for pallbearers." Then the guy had signed it, "Mario of Watts and d proud of it."

Rube had something of that same anger in him. Screw them all but six. Never quite enough dough no matte how hard you tried. Sometimes wh the day was hot and long and each hundred pound weight he picked up was a little heavier than the last, then the anger grew hard in him. The anger of working hard day after day forever and never having enough money.

Maybe the hundred pounds was a keg of nails shipped in from France or Germany or Japan or Belgium or England and going someplace to be pounded into a stick of lumber by a carpenter who had a work:-dirty bandage on his hand where the electric saw had snarled its way across one finger. Anyhow, what• ever the weights were and wherever the came from or went to they made profitt for people who don't sweat in box cars. That's what Mario of Watts and damn proud of it must have meant. That's what Rube knew.

They stopped working then, the two of them, and the lanky blond one asked, "How many kids you say you got at home?" He paused for a minute and then snickered his nasty-happy laugh. "I mean, how many that you are the father of."

"Too damn many. And they always need something, clothes, shoes, teeth fixed or something."

"You ought to stay out of beer joints and you'd have enough money to buy your kids shoes."

"If the- beer joints depended on me they would all go broke. I buy some beer once or twice a month that me and the old lady drink at home. We have a party after the kids are gone to bed."

Again the nasty laugh. "Big deal..Try to get your old lady drunk so you can get a little."

"I don't need to get her drunk for that. We just have a private party and sing a little. That don't do any harm."

"Yeah. I had a party like that on Thrifty Drug Store gin one night and w my wife is five months gone." The ky blond one was happy about it ough.,It would be only their second ild and he was ten years younger than ube. He snickered again and hitched Rube wiped at the sweat on his face 'th the arm of his shirt. "Y'know, our lest girl is two years old and we don't ve the doctor all paid off yet. We pay ry month but the bill just gets bigger." e thought for a moment. "In fact, by, we haven't been out of debt to a or since we was first married." "You funny or something? Who in hell ever gets the doctor paid off? o ever gets anything paid off?" Rube knew it was true. Payments came time after time without end and re was never quite enough money to ch. He thought of how the old tard, Karl Marx, had said they would never pay quite enough for a decent living and by God it looked like he had been right, even if he had worn a beard. Rube started to count all the expenses of a baby, the doctor and the hospital. It was too much. The ho~pitals wouldn't even let a pregnant woman in uriless they were paid first. He bent again to his work and thinking about it the anger grew in him. Suppose Mary went to some hospital already in her first labor pains so that she could feel that new life stretching and striving in its desperation to reach the air and sunshine, the life and movement of the outside. And suppose the doctors wouldn't bring out that new life unless first he paid at the desk, put down the green, the money. And suppose he didn't have it, which he didn't.

Rube stopped working and wiped his face again. "By God, they don't run hospitals for sick people • and pregnant women. They run them to make dough!"

The lanky blond man ran a hand through his hair as he straightened up: "The doctor would a hell of a lot sooner ride his fat ass in a Cadillac than in a Ford, y'know."

"They ought to make a law about those bastards! Money shouldn't have anything to do with sickness, not one damn thing.. We had a neighbor one time that died on account of how a doctor wouldn't come. We called him on the phone and he said to wait until morn~ ing." He raked his cargo hook through the air viciously and stood there breathing deeply the anger of that memory. Blood flooded his face under the dark skin. "Them thieving sonofabitches, the doctors with Cadillacs!"

They didn't talk any more but just stood there each thinking to himself. After a few minutes they bent their backs and started to work again, each man still with his own thoughts. The muscles bunched and contorted under their skins, and the weights moved, the freight was unloaded.

Rube sang silently to himself over and over in a refrain set to the rhythm of lifting... Rockabye baby sonofabitch. Rockabye baby sonofabitch. Rockabye baby sonofabitch. If that ain't the goddamnedest hard luck yet. Pregnant.

He thought of how he and Mary had quarreled the night before. Each one had blamed the other for this hard luck, this disaster that was worse than illness, worse than a plague. Ashamed even while they were doing it. They had quarreled with fear and disgust at this pregnancy, this new life, this child, this human being that was maybe nothing but a delay in time but maybe was a seed planted. Maybe it was a seed planted strong, too tough to tear out by the roots. Rube shuddered. Maybe it was a stubborn globule of seed that would some day be a man to stand spraddle-legged in his strength and roar out his anger at a mountain top. Even if they could, should that seed be torn out?

In bed last night Rube had told Mary over and over again that it might not be, maybe the pregnancy wasn't really true, maybe she was just late, maybe tomorrow maybe... Finally she had been able to listen no longer.

"Maybe not one damn thing!" she told him, exasperated. "You can lay there until morning telling yourself maybe this and maybe that but it won't change anything. You just came sniffing around once too often and we're caught. We' caught good."

"That's a fine goddamn way for yo to talk. Right off the bat you want be pregnant. A lousy week overdue you figure you're pregnant for sure. Rube sat up in bed and started wavi his arms. "Every single sonofabitchin woman is always looking for another Id That's all the hell you can think abo is kids. By God, I think you planned i that's what. I sure as hell didn't thi you'd ever do a thing like that, pl the thing on me."

"Planned it! You are a fine sap-he to talk about me planning it. Like I to blame and not you. You did it!" Ma was raised on one elbow and her voi had climbed louder and louder until was shouting in a hoarse whisper. Th should~r of. her nightgown fell down an she jerked it up angrily. "Me plann it! Who in Christ's name is it that walk around

carrying it for months who is it that spreads and gets torn apa when the kid is born?"

Rube was silent. "Who in the hell is it that cleans an walks and feeds the kids? I suppose it' you that does it?"

Then both of them were silent whil outside a car drove slowly down t sleeping street. The headlights came in the room through the curtains for instant and then it was dark aga· darker than before. Rube breathed slowl and deeply, clenching and unclenching h' hands at his sides. Mary was right. I was crazy for him to blame her. It w crazy for either of them to blame th other. They loved each other strong an wildlly, as they had for years, as th had since they were young, just ol enough to learn together how to love. And that's how babies came. If you loved each other strong and maybe a little wildlly so you weren't careful, that's when you got pregnant.

"What ·can we do, Mary?" His voice was subdued and quiet.

"Do? I don't know what we can do. I've already drank a whole bottle of castor oil. Don't ask me what we can do. We can't afford a baby."

She was silent then and after a while another car passed with its lights flooding into the room. In the darkness afterwards they were both silent. Finally they drifted to sleep.

The next morning they had no time for remembering a quarrel. It was a scurry and a scramble to get everyone up, cook breakfast, get the kids dressed, make the lunches, yell and scream about something that was lost. Shave, eat and get off to work. There was no time to remember a quarrel.

As he went out the kitchen door that morning with his black tin lunch box under his arm they had kissed at the doorway with the taste of coffee still moist on their lips. He and Mary just the same as always. It had been all right then. No more quarrel. They had loved each other for a long time... since they were kids in the same neighborhood and first learned how to love in the long rm summer evenings when you could ' in a lawn swing and smell the lawns wing and the flowers. Th,lt was the good way, to learn toher and then to be together always.

at way it didn't matter to one when other put on weight or started sag- • g here and there or getting a bald t or any of those things that happen to everyone except to the illusions that exist in the magazine

brassiere ads and in the movies. Rube knew that real people aren't like that, not like the ads. With real people their hands are made for work first and patting each other on the fanny second. And the breast on a woman is full and proud from feeding babies and not at all like the brassiere ads.

A real woman, that was Mary, a working woman. She had the strength to talk back when Rube got out of line and talk loud until they settled it between them as equals. When Mary went to the bedroom, by God, she went there because she wanted to and sometimes she was the one leading the way. Be a man, she said, and I'll be a woman, tender and loving but strong, just as strong as you, that's what she said. And she was strong for planting her feet solid to stay with her husband and kids no matter what happened and no matter how tough it got with no money and no job and not even any jam to spread on the day-old bread. She was a real woman.

For Rube and all the others at the warehouse the whistle blew 4:30, quitting time. The shift was over, the day was done. Where winches had screeched and motors raced there was a sudden silence. Where wheels had turned there was a sudden stop. Tired backs raised up and deep gusts of breath came out of lungs in a sigh. Quitting time. The last lift. The last load. All over the big warehouse the men started streaming for the doors, for the outside. Hands grabbed the black lunch pails and they hurried for home. No one looked back. With their eyes and their stomachs and their hearts they looked ahead to home, where there was rest and the woman who loved each of them and the children pointing, running, reaching. up, screaming... Daddy! Daddy! Daddy's home!

a little gift for no special occasion, j a gift.

When Rube walked from the car lines down the tree-shaded street in the old neighborhood just back of the factory district he always squared his shoulders and walked kind of proud because it was his own street where everybody knew him and he was coming home, home from work with the white salt stains of sweat showing on his blue work shirt, but with another day's pay earned.

The front lawn at Rube's house usually needed cutting and there were cracks in the black asphalt driveway where grass grew up through. The flowers were kind of scraggly around the edges of the yard and the hose was always left out on the lawn where the sun rotted away the rubber

until it had cracked in three or four places and the leaks sprayed when the water was turned on. Mary had tied rags around some of the breaks in the hose and that helped some.

Crossing the lawn, Rube saw where the screens were rusted and needed paint. So did the front door. It was cracked too from where the kids slammed it. On the front porch was one of the girls' dolls, bald headed and with glue caked on it where the blond hair had once been.

The front windows of the house were open and the curtains billowed limply against the rusty screens. Music came from inside and greeted him. It was music for him. Mary played it on the phonograph for him. The record was La Golondrina with the strings of the guitars crying sadly about the little bird, the swallow, who flew so far from home. • The record was worn but it was nice as no other song was nice. It was like Inside the house maybe the kids were yelling and wanting something and getting messy all over and needing attention and beads of sweat from the heat of the cook stove were on Mary's upper lip and there was dampness at her temples plastering back a few strands of dark hair, but, no matter what, she always was there to be the other half of his life. And tonight she played music for him La Golondrina.

And after the kiss hello and the kids yelling and Mary saying hello home was it a hard day, there was dinner for him too, stew or beans or spaghetti meat loaf or macaroni or sometimes pork chops on the day after payday.

They all ate together around kitchen table and afterwards he sat in the front room with his shoes off read the paper. By the time Mary finished the dishes it was time for her to bathe the girls and get them ready for bed. The boy took care of himself because the girls needed everything done for themselves still. It wasn't until after all this done that Mary could sit down. then maybe Rube was asleep in the chair • the heavy tiredness squatting like ugly gargoyles on his shoulders.

Afterwards it was nice with just two of them. Then they could be alone and know each other and talk. It was nice when at last the kids were asleep when the girls had called for the last drink of water, the last something eat, the last put the blanket away and Mommy, the last kiss me goodnight, last I want another drink of water.

Watching them asleep, the heads on the pillows were sweet with the eternal sweetness of sleeping children. The hair of the little girls tangled softly

around the small faces that were so pretty, so much of everything beautiful, that sometimes it hurt just to look.

In the boy's room his dark head was there on the pillow with the lines of manhood already beginning to show in his boy's face. His hand rested on top of the covers in its relaxed position that would some day be strength, strength to work and love and to hold strong to what is right, maybe even to fight for it with that hand. His legs outlined under the covers were long and straight. They would walk the bricks with pride, down the Embarcadero or across Union Square or through the Plaza in L. A.

On the tired nights when Mary would find Rube asleep in the chair she would wake him and then they would make ready for bed. On this night they took a shower together, enjoying the warm flooding caress of the water, the clean soothing lather taking away the sweat and smell and dirt of the day, and taking away too some of the tight feeling, some of the tension, some of the hardness. Afterwards they got out together to relax and feel comfortable and lazy and rich with the sensuous feeling • of the towel drying their bodies and then the fresh pajamas that Mary had washed. Sometimes there was still the smell of the sunshine in the pajamas from where they had dried on the clothes line.

Then they walked with bare feet down the hall to the bedroom but before they climbed between the fresh sheets they ood together as close as ever a man and oman can stand, while their mouths et in a full long kiss and their hands oved over the back of the other, patting d smoothing and holding. It felt good, very good for b(ith of them, their bodies together after the clean warmth of the bath. For fifteen years it had been that way between them.,It was the best of their life, the reason they were a family.

In bed they relaxed side by side and held hands lightly. Sometimes they lay like that and other times Mary lay with her back toward him while he curled behind her with his arms around her and his body curving to fit hers. That's how they went to sleep sometimes, deliciously close. But most of the time they lay together for a while and then one would turn over, pull away, pat the other softly and, half asleep, murmur a good night.

But tonight they had to settle it between them. They had to bring peace about this child that might be, this baby. They had to decide if that seed should be torn out in blood and pain.

"Mary." Rube reached over with one hand and rubbed along Mary's shoulder as he spoke. It was almost an unconscious thing, his hands caressing her when they, were close.

"Mary, if we did have a baby..." His voice trailed off and he was silent. In that moment when they were so close he loved her so strongly that he wanted a child, he wanted it more in how he felt than in how he thought. He wanted it because it would be more of her, more of Mary. But she had to be the one to say. She had to say yes or no. She had to tell him.

He tried again. "Mary..." She spoke to him quietly. "Rube, I've thought about it until I could scream and there is just no use to it. We're pregnant and that's all there is to it. It's gone too long to be just a delay. I don't want another baby, Rube. We have three. She was silent then and they both waited, breathing deeply "Rube, we could borrow on the furniture and go to that doctor. We don't have to have the baby."

"Is that what you want, Mary?" "It's not what I want, but you work so hard and I know you worry about the money."

"I don't care about that. Is it what you want? Is that what you want to do about the baby?"

"Rube, it's for you to say just as much as me."

"I know it, but you say first." "I'm sorry we are pregnant. God, but I'm sorry. I'd like to close my eyes and have it not be so, but •I don't want to stop it. I won't lie to you. I don't want to stop it. It has happened now and it will be a baby. I don't want to do anything to it. I would if you wanted to but I don't want to. I can't help if I feel that way but, I do."

Mary brought her face into the hollow of his shoulder so her lips were against his cheek. "A baby isn't such an awful thing. Look at Billy and the girls. They aren't so bad."

Rube tightened his arm around her and that brought her close. "We can't wish away a baby just like we can't wish away how much we love each other. I wanted it too, Mary. We'll like a little baby. It'll be nice to have one again. Won't it?"

She nodded with her face still pressed against him.

"It is a hell of a thing when babies can't afford to be born." "We'll get along, Rube. We always have and we always will because we will keep fighting for life and for our children. We can't give up and hide. We can't kill ourselves. We can't kill our own children. People like us have to fight to stay alive."

"I love you, Mary." His lips searched across her face until they found hers. They were happy. They were one. They were man and wife.

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Paul

Louis Aragon

I was reading the papers. The phone rang. Elsa, sitting beside me, answered. "Who? What?"

An expression came over her that I had seen only once or twice in my life. I had just time to think; Who? But she recovered and said in a deceptive, reassuring tone: "The trained nurse? Thank; you." And hung up.

What is it? Paul Eluard is dead. There are things you don't understand, but you act as if you did. Spread the word.

,I took the telephone. I passed on to others the blow I had not yet received. The paper. Right away the Party. Picasso . . . who misunderstands, speaks before hearing what ,I have to say Elsa, crying, murmurs: "Don't tell him like that . . . "

I told him just like that. He screamed into the instrument. That scream went through me. I don't know why I'm so calm. The phone, again and again . . .

He had been dead only an hour when we arrived in the sMw at the little apartment beside the Bois de Vincennes ,rhere Paul and Dominique, such a little while ago, had rebuilt their life and ppiness. Such a little while. Dominique

her red house-coat, as she was when

she got up this morning, except for the quiet tears on her face, without thought of concealment. Around her the first friends to arrive, the intimates in the narrow hall, the living-room : Monette, Alice and Jacques ...

Paul died at five minutes to nine. He had read the papers, eaten breakfast; then he laid his head back, said: "Dominique!" and it was over.

Everyone keeps saying he didn't suffer. I along with the rest. We go in to see him. Oh, but Dominique doesn't want us to see him like that. She says, with that irritated movement of the shoulders, "Well, go on in." And adds a terrible thing: "Now he's become an object ... "

There he is on the bed that doesn't look like a bed--one of our chaste modern beds. Dressed already, stretched out in his dark: suit with the white pin-stripe. Already his colour gone. His face with the morning unshaven look. The trained nurse at his feet lacing his shoes. His legs happened to fall spread out. When she finishes she brings the feet together with the air of begging pardon. The woman day-worker moves about the room with suppressed haste putting things to rights, her face bathed in tears. Both

women work fast and noiselessly as I watch. Paul sleeps. His hand is still quite warm.

Then', abruptly, I understood it all.
But look here. Can't let on to the others,

Dominique. It's Paul. Abruptly, so many things smashed, ruined, vanished. No one will ever know those things, •I'll say them to the void, if and when I ever say them ...

Now we are very alone

We did what had to be done, thr papers, the telephone, came, went, sniffed back sudden tears, talked, talked as if nothin2: had happened, told others about it, we have to organize matters, there was a meeting at seven thirty, another at eight thirty, I couldn't begin to write till morning, it was still snowing, my heart felt as cold as my feet, and the result was not at all what I had decided to write, the essence of it was not so long-winded, I had said it all to the gentlemen from the press association who had called on me at my office. I am not going to revise those words now :

"Nothing is more difficult for me than to speak of Paul Eluard after seeing him dead. What he was to me for thirty-four years-does it matter to others? The man we have lost is no longer the companion of my youth, the comrade of my sombre hours, the friend-whom I visited in recent

days and who shared with me an entire life, dreams, struggles, hopes. He is of the greatest of French poets; he is the one whose poem, *Liberty*, became familiar to every child from one end of the country to the other and thrilled • all in the days when France was eclipsed among nations. He is the tremendous voice of life, of goodness,

peace, whom the entire world has en •
us, and will envy us, always.

"I have no right, in his presence, n
to add this: that he was a Commu •
and he was a Frenchman; and in
face of his death, which imposes a
tional mourning on our country, it
in this double sense that he remains wi
us, as the poet of happiness to come
the symbol of the union of men ag •
death."

From now on Eluard will. be sim
the affirmation of happiness. From n
on. Forever. In spite of the snow t
has been falling since he died. In spi
of our tears, our shattered hearts, P
Eluard forever proclaims that happin
exists.

You see, he will never know that
is dead. He simply laid his head back
said, "Dominique ... " It's we who
fer. It's he who is right. Read his po
he is not dead.

-translated

from Les Lettres Fran,a'

FRENCH IS THE LANGUAGE OF LOGIC

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1953
JOURNAL PAGE 25 / SCAN PAGE 27

Two Poems

Paul Éluard

lazarus

I

The evening vanishes it is now night
Savage and dark open above a missing world

Tomorrow's world must surely be revived
But without growing old if I have grown old there will be nothing

From the day nor from the night will flow the vital juice
If I have not a young man's strength in my hands

I have grown old I have no heart left but for the night
For the desert without fire or light or voice

Bitter and poisonous the night glides in me
My mouth is diseased with kisses of the void

No part of me is ill yet I know all is ill
My body is ploughed up my disaster is assured
The night gnaws at the fruit and the night is my murderer.

II

The smoke to the sun a signal
My heart melts its ice
Word a single swarm of bees
My heart that was so dead returns to earth

Magic even the vermin
In my ten fingers
Peopled is the white and fertile winter
.In my eyes made large with ecstasies

The nights learn how to march
The day-break falters
The rival life is re-armed
I rise from the cradle of the tomb

Tears and my tears lend me new warmth
My feet move forward
Already the sun rests on my head
The good sun increases my number

Already I am making provision
Against oblivion
For my daughters for my mothers
Already I count myself immortal

Sun and moon
Are man and woman wedded

I see sun and I see dark
I am alive I am free to see

III

For one teacher, one hundred orphans
Everything is destroyed
And for one hero one hundred victims
I am defeated

I succumb to shameful wounds
Blood stains me
Fool or coward my laughter is the same
The mire covers up all trace of me

The heat turns white I am mortal

No matter the sky gives
The earth gains
And on my bed of gall and shadows
Hope outlives every suspicion

The others will have the right to a life without suffering

And without a tomb

They will not pass through where I have passed

They will not know the incantations of death

Day on their heart everlastingly

Day on their body

Day on the works of their hands

For nothing more shall be destructible.

the language of colours

Colours of men and women I know you

Fresh flowers decaying fruits haloes fallen apart

Prisms musicians mists the night's offspring

Colours and everything which opens my eyes wide breathes life

Colours and everything is grey which gives me cause to weep

Colours of health of desire of fear

And the sweetness of loving answers from time to come

Colours crime and madness rebellion and courage

And laughter in all places stripping contentment

And Reason sometimes which vomits us up stupid

And Reason always which re-shapes us sublime

With the beating of blood down the paths of the world

Colours and in vain despair would undermine the night

And mysteries or darken utterly the sleeplessness

Of dreams are beauty bounty and are turned to day

On one side of my heart is wretchedness

But on the other I see clear I hope I am bathed in rainbow colours

Fruitful I reflect a body which gains in stature

I struggle I am drunk: with struggling to live

In the light of others I erect my victory.

translated by Arthur Boyars.

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JOURNAL PAGE 28 / SCAN PAGE 30

Two Poems

Jacques Prévert

promenade de Pica

On a very round plate of real porcelain
an apple poses
face to face with it
a painter of reality
vainly tries to paint
the apple as it is
but
the apple won't be pushed around
the apple
it has its word to say
and several turns in its applesack:
the apple
and there it is turning
on its real plate
artfully on itself

that all the appearances of the apple arc against him
and
like the unfortunate pauper
like the poor pauper who finds himself suddenly at the
 mercy of no matter what beneficent and charitable
 and redoubtable association of beneficence charity
 and redoubtability
the unfortunate painter of reality
softly without moving
and like a due de Guise who disguises himself as a bee de gaz
because they want to draw his portrait against his will
the apple disguises itself as a beautiful fruit in disguise
and it's then

that the painter of reality
begins to realize •

then suddenly finds himself the sad prey
of a numberless crowd of associations of ideas
and the apple turning evokes the apple tree
the earthly Paradise and Eve and then Adam
the watering-can the trellis Parmentier the stairway
Canada the Hesperides Normandy the Reinette apple and

the Api apple
the snake of the J eu de Paume and the oath of Apple Juice
and the original sin
and the origins of art
and Switzerland with William Tell
and even Isaac Newton
several times prizewinner at the Exhibition of Universal

Gravitation
and the dazed painter loses sight of his model
and falls asleep
it's then that Picasso
who is passing by there as he passes everywhere
every day as if at home
sees the apple and the plate and the painter fallen asleep
What an idea to paint an apple
says Picasso
and Picasso eats the apple
and the apple tells him Thanks
and Picasso breaks the plate
and goes off smiling
and the painter drawn from his dreams
like a tooth
finds himself once again alone before his unfinished canvas
with amongst his shattered china
the terrifying pips of reality.

the last supper

They are at table

They eat not

Nor touch their plates
And their plates stand straight up
Behind their heads.

translated by Lawrence Ferling.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1953
JOURNAL PAGE 30 / SCAN PAGE 32

Five Poems

Guillevic

It isn't so easy
to round men up
and to shoot them
and them looking at you.

It isn't so easy
to strew ruins all over,
to dig up the dead
and dismember them.

You don't do that
if your heart isn't in it.

You don't do that
if you don't enjoy it.

object lesson

The blood is an involved liquid
that circulates. It's a red
seen nowhere else, changeable
as a plain under several moons.

The blood contains numerous bodies.
Some people know their formulas.

It is our blood. It
turns and returns
and nourishes.

The blood spills easily,

one opening is all it needs.

The blood of one killed in an accident
isn't the same, on the road,

as the blood of one killed for freedom,
stretched out, the same way, on the road.

Each of them, each has its own kind of red,
and its own scream.

season

Apples and pears
are no longer on the tree
and the cold increases.
Already the bird has flown over.

There's no hitch there.

Now like a snip of the scissors
the bird takes wing, and the briar
seeks to shake too much weight
which perhaps can hang on.

There's no hitch there.

To the sharp triumph of sharpness
in the soil and the sharp air,
the fountain has no response, is
freezing like a ploughed field.

There's no hitch there.

The season, with vast strides, opens
for the struggle, for our victories.

we're hopeful

We're not denied the evenings
when the birds are ill at ease,
on or off their branches.

We see, we know the heart of the iris
and the rainbow over the plains
where the herds don't drink any more.

We've not denied the pricking of the pin
at the pinpoint of seconds
and the song in the subway.

We've never said it's comfortable
for trees to keep still, or for boys
to smile by a mirror.

We've never said
it's easy to live
and simple to love one another.

-This
will all be quite different,
later. We're hopeful.

We're not the men
at a loss what to do ;
it's our job to conquer.

The way we build,
the way we plough,
is the way we
take our fate in hand.

When you know how to build a wall,
you can build a state.

It isn't merely our share
we want.

If there are no cherry trees,
we'll plant them.

translated by Kenneth O. Hanson

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2 / WINTER 1953
JOURNAL PAGE 33 / SCAN PAGE 35

A Dog in a Tree: The Rain on the Glass

Lloyd Zimpel

Slowly, sluggishly, by increasing degrees of strain and aching, he struggled upward out of sleep. His eyes came open, sensitive, unseeing, and he blinked heavily, moving slightly on the cot so that he faced the room. In the fetid w~rm air there was no other sound than the quiet breathing of the sleepers who lay shrouded in the mosquito netting hung over every cot. His eyes sought the light, roving to the window the dawning sun was bleak, without warmth, sullen in the unskimmed, overcast morning sky...

He had slept but, as always, he had not rested; he moved again (the cot creaking and swaying) to lie on his back and stare with half-closed eyes at the meshed netting that canopied him. Wearily and crookedly his mind ascended to clarity. Beneath the heavy woolen blanket he felt his body clammy with perspiration and he flung aside the covering in the damp and almost chilling air that hung with the fitful spring rains he began at once to shiver. He pushed back the netting and sat on the edge of the cot, pulling on his boots, then stood to complete dressing. It was slightly past lix o'clock; he, Allison, was the only one awake.

The accumulation of night smells in the room was evilly oppressing; he opened a window and stood before it, looking down over the drifting morning mists. They were quartered on the second floor of an old red brick mission school that stood majestically, almost isolated, on a hill; and from this window now, as the mists which had gathered in the coolness of the night shifted and dodged with the wind, he caught momentary glimpses of the strawthatched and curved tile roofs of the city. From this building on the hill almost the whole of the city of Seoul fell away into a valley that brought up sharply against a mountain the top of which, in the clouded rainthreatening sky, he now could not see. But he knew almost by heart the view from this window the panoramically unarranged tightly packed little huts that touched roof-edges for miles; the larger buildings and skeletal parts of larger buildings that marked the remains of the city's business section; the ancient blackened pagodas that

stood in towering aloneness, scattered at ungauged distances among the diminutive native dwellings.

Each morning for months nowthrough the brisk barrenness of autumn, the snows of winter, the rains of spring -he had stood before this same window, overlooking these same endless miles of buildings till he felt he could recite for hours on variations of Oriental rooftops. It was strange that, often as he had looked out over this city, and often as he had prowled its almost deserted paths and streets, he did not know it better this city was somberly uncompromising, it gave no fraction toward familiarity and resented the stranger's overture of friendliness however sincerely it was offered. Silently with a cold implacable sullenness and a frightening dignity (born of hate and suspicion, Allison thought guiltily) the city bore its bloodfresh pocks of war-the city and its people, too... Those remarkable people who never look at you, he thought.

Frequently, driven by loneliness and some less definable need, he had climbed the paths up into the uninhabited hills, or wandered blindly through the maze of untenanted huts, and his loneliness had only increased, multiplied paramecium-like into a whole family of sufferings--of longing, of fear, of guilt. He found no forgetfulness in the faces of the few people who had remained here as the war passed they were truly of their city; from the small naked children who, like bugs, looked obliquely up at passing strangers, and the prostitutes, almost fashionable in their self-conscious Western dress, to the wrinkle-faced turumagi-clad men who had retired into the oblivion of age, these people had a dimension he felt he lacked some uncringing, relentless power not only to survive but grow as well. It was remarkable, he thought, that out of the concentrated filth and poverty thrust upon them they were able to fashion dignity and strength. For them, he reflected, is a mark of immortality; and for me point of shame...

In a far corner of the room he h the clearing of a throat, then the so of a match being scratched to flame. turned from the window, pulling it do against the breeze which was cold cause of the morning mists. A voice-i was Fuller's-across the room ask him What time is it, Allison?

After six, he said... They were all waking now.

When he came down the warped stairs to the office it was still well before the required starting time; only Lieutenant Singleton, the cheerful young assistant operations officer, was in the room. They exchanged

grunted good mornings. The officer was studying and making occasional grease-pencil changes on the tactical situation map that covered a good portion of one wall. At times he would swear briefly and without malice at lines drawn improperly by the corporal who normally made the daily adjustment of the map.

Early, aren't you? the lieutenant asked. Working for a promotion?

Allison chuckled twice. No, he said, hardly that... He removed the dustcover from the typewriter he used and stuffed it along the crack at the bottom of the window at his back; in the early mornings, despite the heat of the sun, a chill breeze managed somehow to work itself up in the shade of the large old trees that clustered at the rear of the building and blow in on him. Then, with an old toothbrush and an inkwell filled with gasoline, he cleaned the keys of the machine.

It was standard morning procedure;

captain before; petty offenses-failing to salute, driving a jeep without authority, every morning now for over eight months he had walked down the stairs, into the office, spoken good morning to whoever was there, removed the dustcover from the typewriter, cleaned the keys with gasoline and a toothbrush. At infrequent times he would suddenly find himself thinking about it and the other equally menial, equally boring and monotonously standardized tasks he did day after day without end; doing them all without thinking (except such times as these) and yet expertly enough; there was a single formula and once he had grasped it every meaningless thing he did every day fit perfectly into it; no intricacies of pattern, no variation, nothing done without formula. •It had a name, or it amused him to think so the Right Way. And despite the fact that he was, in a manner of speaking, trapped by it, he could still regard it laughingly...

And this formula, he thought as he scrubbed absently at the little oblong keys, was part of the system and the system was very large, and too complex -or at least muddled-for him fully to comprehend; but he did at least know one of the little formulae that went to make up the system, and this knowledge he felt gave him a certain insight which was valuable since it made things bearable by lending him tolerance. Generally, his view of the system was one of amused tolerance.

Now he rolled a sheet of paper into the machine and solemnly typed, The quick brown fox leaps over the lazy Before noon the company clerk

came to get him. The old man wants to see you, he said. What is it this time? Allison asked. He had been up before the uniform violations. The captain considered him a sloppy soldier, had told him so.

The clerk, a tall myopic youth, took on a ridiculous air of coy secrecy. Oh, I don't know, he said. I think he just wants to chew ass. He smiled around at the other people in the office, conspiratorily indicating that that was not it at all.

Okay, Allison said, you and your silly jokes. He thought he knew well what the captain wanted; most probably it was his promotion to corporal, he had been recommended for it, that he knew.

He felt a pleased nervous satisfaction, as though he had just been successful in revenging some particularly dirty trick that had been played upon him and now feared reprisal. Already, he could anticipate the captain's shock...

Captain wants to see me, he told the first sergeant who waved him on, to the officer's desk in the far corner of the orderly room. With an embarrassed salute that was almost a mockery, he reported. The captain smiled at him, his fat strict face relaxing at the mouth; he looked suddenly very jolly.

Why, yes, Allison, he began. You've been doing some good work, I'm told. We're giving you a promotion, to corporal, you know. I want to see you hold up our faith in you now. Across the desk he handed the single sheet of paper with the brief, typewritten promotion order on it.

Prompted by reflex, Allison almost reached for it. He looked away from the officer. Sir, he said, I'm afraid I... I'd rather not take it...

The captain looked closely at him, the hand still holding the order suspended incredulously above the desk. How's that? he said.

Allison breathed deeply. He was standing at ease, and he hitched his hands nervously behind his back; this was not so easy or so pleasant as he had anticipated. The captain's head was cocked aslant, and his eyes were now cold and demanding. I don't care to take the p-promotion, sir. I... I just can't accept it. You- Deliberately the captain allowed his arm to fall loudly to the desk. He looked at the paper in his hand and flipped it away with his fingers; it slipped off the desk to the floor, fluttered at Allison's feet. This nonsense, the captain said. What's the matter? You wouldn't mind telling me why? He spoke without actual anger; his voice

held a certain peevishness as though some unimportant personal favor had been denied him. But his eyes were cool and flatly gray; they measured Allison, from his feet to his eyes, and held them.

Before the captain's glare he tried to appear hard and inscrutable. He'd rehearsed the high points of the speech he meant to deliver when this situation arose, but now all his well-thought-out and highly plausible reasons seemed juvenile and inconsequential. The captain waited, watching him closely; with the self-possession that had fled at the initial shock of Allison's announcement again returned, he seemed slightly removed, detached, his lips pursed superiorly. Well, tell me, he said. I imagine there is a reason.

Allison attempted to hold the eyes; he felt like an idiot standing before the officer who now slouched indolentl his chair his discomfort and the tain's composure seemed to grow in verse ratio. His face felt hot, and became angry, as much with himself with the captain. Oh, yes, he said only, I have a reason. He sought to at the subject in some affirmative ner that would not offend. Actually, • only a minor thing... a personal ma something that I couldn't feel ri about. You see, I'd like to accept this.

He realized suddenly that he m sound frivolously apologetic and he gan again, more firmly. I know I' qualified for it, he said nastily, but whole thing is - well, meaningless. tain people, I suppose, would be v grateful for this, but I think it's all well, funny. Very funny... Sir, an • telligent person... a person who see beyond the things that are happen' today, well, he laughs at all this, whole thing... And he... ah... laughs.... He paused, uncertain h to go on, uncertain even what he ha said, or what he had meant to say.

Curtly, the captain broke in: •I th" I see all right. And with an even rush words,as though he had rehearsed the whole impassioned speech so often that now he could deliver it levelly and with coolness, he said In other words, Allison, what you're trying to say is that you're nothing but a misfit, a troublt• maker, and t9at you're pissed off at the whole army in general, now isn't that right? He waved his arm and looked sharply away as though to indicate the matter was settled and Allison was excused.

At the captain's words, Allison burned.

proof that he was at a loss to deal per• sonally with the problem.

No sir, no no, that's not it at all. His hands tightened behind his back and he spoke too loudly. The captain did not look at him, as if to indicate he was willing to listen but no matter what he heard he would pay no heed.

In the first place, Captain, I'm not a trouble-maker, that's one thing I don't want, is trouble. The words tumbled angrily out, he strove to control himself. Probably you think anybody that refuses a promotion is off his nut, but not me. I'll tell you, if you want to know why, I'll tell you this whole thing is a farce, this whole war, it's a farce and it's funny. I laugh at it, and that's why I don't want a promotion, because I don't want to be part of it and I don't condone anything it does. If I'd of had any guts I would've been a conscientious objector... but I have got enough guts to turn this down. I can't go this far. Because I don't feel it's right.... And, he finished, lamely, that's why... and I'm sorry about it, if...

The captain now turned toward him but their eyes did not meet; the officer was looking with uncompromising hardness at a spot somewhere beyond Allison's head. Now it will come, Allison thought.

That's very eloquent, the captain said remotely, but there's one thing you ought to know this army isn't run by your feelings, or anybody else's. You're in it and you do what you're told, soldier, get that straight. Your personal feelings have no place here.

Strangely, as the captain spoke, Allison felt very calmed. In the hard, somewhat irrelevant words he recognized the pseudo-tough stereotyped philosophy he had encountered time and again; and that the captain should resort to it seemed Dismissed, the captain said, and added, you kids...

Allison saluted, pivoted and walked out, avoiding the jakal-like stare of the first sergeant who looked now to the captain, expecting a meaningful smirk or glance of tolerant and amused complicity but the officer was rubbing his hands slowly together, and staring at them.

As he left the orderly room a wave of self-conscious shame swept Allison. He felt he had spoken very foolishly and meaninglessly he had not said the many obvious things he had wanted to say he had not spoken of the explosive traitorousness he felt, the gloomy self-condemnation; he feared he had sounded abysmally stupid. Now even more than before the captain had reason to think he was a complete misfit, spouting crackpot ideas.

And yet everything he had said so badly had meaning for him; every word he had spoken had connection (though, once uttered, he feared only vaguely and loosely) to the betrayal and dummylike falseness he now felt around him and, even more, the black terror and great hopelessness he saw looming. He truly did not want to be a part of the tool that fashioned such a dismal future. But the captain had not understood or perhaps he had, partially, within the rigid mind his many years in the army had given him. Such a man, bred to act and think only positively, would not easily hear criticism that was in the end directed destructively toward him. And, Allison thought, whatever the captain had thought of his words, he had still been dismissed as a foolish kid.

pretty silly mess we're in and an ev bigger and sillier one we're heading f He returned to his office, and the men there, gleefully pouncing on every silly little opportunity to lessen the maddening boredom, questioned him eagerly.

He didn't want me for anything, he told them. And then he said: 1It was something personal....

Sharply, Lieutenant Singleton looked at him, and for a moment studied him in what seemed to Allison surprise and perhaps wonder....

It was obvious to Allison that the captain had told Lieutenant Singleton, probably at lunch, for all that afternoon as he typed, pretending to be engrossed in the weary letters he was copying, he felt the young officer watching him; and when the opportunity came for them to be alone, it was apparent the lieutenant had been waiting for it.

Allison, he said, what's this I hear about your refusing the corporal's promotion? I had you recommended for it, you know.

Of course, the captain had told him the reason for the refusal, Allison thought bitterly, or at least the captain had told him his version of it, and the probing of the lieutenant now was most likely another attempt to humiliate him.

Yes sir, he said. I didn't feel I could accept it.

Well, for God's sake, why? He spoke with what seemed genuine interest, not unkindly. His sharp, unshadowed eyes watched Allison keenly.

Well, the captain must have told you, sir - I tried to explain to him. Allison breathed deeply and looked away. It's just something I couldn't do

in good conscience. The way I feel, this is a 1I was conscripted into it - forced in it - but I still don't want to beco an active part of it. This is someth' where I just want to be the bystander because I don't want to answer for wha is going to happen, I don't want to swer to myself.

The lieutenant seemed to think. That' very odd, Allison, he said with a mirth less laugh. You're a very peculiar lad, you know. You are in the army, you know, and therefore you are an active part of this "mess" as you put it. Actu• ally, I think it's quite a mess, too, but I still feel there are certain things within that mess that are good enough to warrant a man's participation. If you feel so strongly why is it you didn't refuse to be drafted?

There was no censure or rebuke in the lieutenant's words and Allison felt suddenly a warmth toward the young officer who spoke with sympathy and apparent understanding. He wanted to explain the tightness and guilt within him to the man, make him know every doubt and indecisive moment, every tortured thought of wrongdoing and longing ache to do right he had ever felt....

At the time, he said, there were a lot of things I couldn't control people would have been hurt and I didn't want that. But something like this rests only with myself and I can control it myself. You see, nobody is hurt but me. He smiled And I'm not hurt, lieutenant.

It's not such a very big thing and you probably think it's ridiculous but it represents a lot to me. It's the only protest I can make, and I'm glad I made it, really.

The lieutenant shook his head in wonwork he picked up a stack of papers and sat blindly studying them.

Now, would this be the end? or would his name be on the roster tomorrow or the day after tomorrow or every few days so long as he remained in the company? Lieutenant Singleton had told him the matter was finished, closed; and he looked up now at the officer seated at his desk across the room. Perhaps he should appeal to him, urge him to assist in worming out.... But he felt, no, he couldn't do that; it had a tinge of cowardly underhandedness about it.... And yet he was no martyr; he did not welcome this unrighteousness; it did not make him feel superior or contemptuous; it made him feel that in the eyes of these people he was small and hopeless, worthy not of serious consideration but of petty discipline. To them it was the inconsequential type of punishment they

felt suited the man. Stubbornly, he clenched his fist and looked at it. All right, he said sullenly, all right. He would do what they demanded of him, he would do everything they piled on him no matter how unfair it might be. He would do it ably and without a word. And as he shuffled the papers before him he could almost feel, physically, the little knot of rebellion tighten more intransigently inside him.

At sunset the clouded sky released a torrential downpour which in a fury of retaliation for its morning-long imprisonment pounded downward in such force and volume as to form immediately gushing little rivulets in the washouts and gulleys that led down the hill from the old mission school. As it became darker the frenzied intensity of the rain seemed to add dimension to the approaching darkness, giving it substance, making it murky, gloomy, alive. Broodily, Allison stood at the closed window in his room. It would be a particularly nasty night for guard.

With the rain the room had become damp and sweaty; the windows could not be opened for the rain would sweep viciously inside, yet closed they left an unhealthy shower-room odor, and with the tiny, minimum-sized lightbulb that glowed a sour yellow, gave the room a depressing air which had communicated itself to Allison he leaned moodily against the sill watching in the pane the reflection of his face now gauntly distorted by the rain racing down the out• side of the glass.

He studied closely the ghostly shifting outline of his face, becoming fascinated with the infinity of forms it was capable of assuming and, oblivious to the loud talking of the other two men in the room, he became lost in contemplation of his reflection. In its uncertainty and changeability it seemed to him entirely new, as though he were seeing himself - all the many dissimilar facets of whatever was himself - for the first time; or even as though he were confronted with some stranger whose face had depths and powers he could not fathom.

One of the men in the room - Fuller was questioning him; he heard his named called repeatedly Allison, Allison... Allison, you know how old a hog has to be when it's castrated?

The words were so fantastically unrelated to the thoughts gripping him that for a moment he was confused and could not reply. He hunted for a relevant answer that could be spoken aloud I don't know, he said finally.

But the spell of his face in the glass was broken. The loud talking of Fuller and the other man intruded upon • his consciousness, and though he was looking into the window without listening he was involuntarily aware of their argument. It rambled on and on, from hogs to barrooms to dogs. To Allison their voices seemed unreal, muted, as though they were standing far away, using megaphones. Then he became aware of a tale Fuller was telling and he began more consciously to listen, his mind darting back over the story - which his mind had only dimly registered - to the beginning:

I had this monstrous white bulldog (Fuller had begun), great big bastard, you know. He had a pair of jaws on him like a vise, once he got his teeth in something there was no getting him loose. You know how bulldogs are - stubborn like that. Well, now that bulldog used to go out in the front yard where we had a pecan tree and he used to sit under that tree and just jump and jump for one of the branches on it. It hung down I guess about five feet off the ground. At least at first it was about five feet, but he got it gnawed down until it was so light it sprung up considerable higher. Now that goddam bulldog, he'd just jump and jump at that branch, and maybe he'd be at it for an hour, sometimes just about catching it, just grazing it with his teeth, and then finally he'd get a grip on it, regular death grip. He never gave up jumping until he got his teeth into that limb. And here's the funny part now; once he got hold of it, he just hung there... just hung there, bouncing up and down with the spring from the branch. He'd hang like that for a couple of hours.

At first when he started to do it, we'd pry him off right away, but it got so after a while everybody got tired of him doing that and nobody paid any attention to him and some days he'd be up there with his teeth in that branch for three, four hours.

We tried tying him up (Fuller was saying) so he couldn't get at the branch, but he'd just chew his way out of the rope and go hang on the branch. I bet he did like that for at least a year. Sometimes we'd shut him up for a week or so in the shed, and he'd just sit there not moving and seeing there was no use trying to get out, not even trying. So the old man'd figure he'd cured him of grabbing branches and let him out, and right away that old dog would make a beeline for the tree. It got so that he finally had the branch chewed down so light that it sprung up high enough in the air that he couldn't jump that high, so he just kept trying,

squatting there and jumping up with his teeth clicking and landing splat on his ass and squatting there again and jumping with his old teeth clicking shut on nothing.,I guess it got him down after a while; he sort of petered out without being able to reach that limb. Funny thing, you know, he nev er bothered any of the other trees, just that one, and just that one limb; like it really meant something to him... Funny....

Fuller paused, and Allison, listening closely now, turned away from the window, looking at him, said What happened to him, finally? Oddly the tale of the white bulldog had kindled his imagination; he felt he could vividly see the pecan tree and the dog, stubborn and intent and eternally frustrated, beneath Well, Fuller said, I don't know. He just seemed to peter out; like there was nothing left to live for, once he couldn't reach that limb no more. Died finally... Christ, he was a crazy dog; never chased cars, never got into fights. I never once saw him take out after a bitch, nothing like that just kept after that old pecan tree day after day till he had pissed himself out. Wasn't very old when he died neither, I guess six or seven years. It's funny. Nobody could ever figure out what made him do it. People used to come and watch.

Allison chuckled dryly to himself, small secret sounds of half-amused appreciation. He felt that as little as he had ever interested himself in animals and as second-handedly as he had come by this information, he could nonetheless understand the unusual behavior of the bulldog. It amused him to think that he knew the motivations within this beast.

He turned back to the window and his face peered at him in watery transformation. He was thinking of the bulldog. but it occurred to him to wonder if this face he saw now was truly identifiable with himself; did he possess all the eerie qualities he saw mirrored? He liked to think of himself as stable, rational, coolly aware, anchored to an anchor as concrete and provable as the white bulldog's pecan branch. And yet he fearfully wondered if what he saw in fluid reflection was not really himself. I do live removed from substance, he thought, I am like the white bulldog hanging from no branch, I live as shadow....

Now the rain on the glass drew his image into a beetlebrowed, heavy-jowled, wrinkled caricature of something less than human and he saw the white bulldog. Then he recalled the scene before the captain that morning; and now very soon he must go on guard. With cheerful

softness, he half laughed. The reflection he saw in the glass, though the rain distorted it badly, was quite unmistakably his own.

AN AMERICAN SAMPLER

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One Nine Five Three

Don Gordon

Everything in the gaunt hour is exposed: the eye
penetrates the cellars
Where avidly the civilians defend themselves
with charts of incoming planes
Or on the hills outlined in miraculous light
the spotters pray
For one hostile pilot or one lost enough to rouse
the wild radar over the demi-world.

Midmorning between the history and the music
the children's hour
Falls like a plague. The fatal voice cries Drop I
curled as the larva,
The reflex is conditioned early in life: when doom
• is rehearsed
On the knees, it is too far to vetebrate status
and too late.

The desert surrounds the concrete caves with a ring
of pale lizards,
The chosen island lies tenderly on its back. At the
gaunt hour they are blown
In modern designs like mushrooms or smoky flowers
and dispersed in your house.

As we try to sleep
torpedoes hiss through the planetary tides;

as we try to dream

the rocket goes twice around the globe,
the warhead ticks in the bedroom ;

as we try to wake
everything is exposed like a death in the family.

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An Imperial Fragment

Lawrence P. Spingarn

We speak again to all in the city built on a swamp:
To priests, money-lenders, brigands, the horde of women
Who suck on the corpse of love before the god of flies
Where the wind perishes in little mounds of sandalwood.
We have gathered from many lands these jars of myrrh,
These pots of basil, and ambergris shaking like pampered flesh,
• The virgins, and the carpets that plead quiet,
Clocks that run through the drunken days and night
Winding themselves, and silks that polish the skin.
,It was the rare brain in the lonely skull
That looked from the Great Wall and dreamed of this city:
Each man could name his price, each woman her hour or place.
The scrolls would be read backward. Nobody would heed them,
Shrined in the Porcelain Tower by the Peacock Pool forever,
And the feeble king, fanned by the desirous eunuchs,
Would sleep in the tub of his fat till gongs sound alarm.

Now, at the frontier, a tiger rages. Flames mow the grass.
Barbarians peer from the bamboos at the rich caravans,
Guarded by janizaries, that fetch us this tribute.
And in the padded towns a red dawn belches its fear.
We must arise from the easy couches, the pliant bodies ;
Sons of the ribboning lights, daughters of success, we go
For the spear again, the just bow, and the blazing stick-
Superior weapon that beats foes back over the hills
And out of the mines and markets where our treasure lies.
We have squatted on crossed feet long enough, to the lute
And the jugular wine, where the maidens bathe at dusk.
There are deeds, and the deed, and the furled banners
Of that ancient chief who will lead us across the line. . .
Then, back to our own surrender, to the terms of night,
To the couch again, and the sleek days as before.

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Résistez l'infâme!

John Emery Mitchell

resistez l'infame!

Before the Hell bombs fall,
before a nightmare
(spun out of daytime dreams of financiers)
fills the sleep of the world-
THEY

must erase the bronze words,
alto relievio,
from the plaque at Ellis Island ;
no memory must quicken with horror
of a man (peine forte et dure)
who was pressed to death at Salem ;
and the present plight of Puerto Ricans
has to become a cause for crackpots.
(What shall we say of the ebony-hued
black-ghettoed, degraded and garrotted?)

And before we-
who added new and splendid sounds
to the dull dictionaries of scholars
-Abolitionist,
Wobbly and Suffragette,
to name a few-
can slaughter without repugnance,
contemplate with calm
complete annihilation of nations;
be made to agree
that the ashes of six million Jews
billowing in the atmosphere
were but responsible for a slight haze-

(not without a certain beauty
and a prize for Ezra Pound).

They
must corrupt each conscience,
make a cult of violence
and us its devotees.

Have us envy even
Thyestes and his banquet.
Wherefore it is incumbent
that we resist.

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Bullet

Ray Fabrizio

Smug indifferent tiny moulded cone,
trim twirl of steel with hollow-rounded head
and powerful bowels, I am often told
that you end arguments. They say you hold
a rightful place in nature like the sting
of bees or like the poison-coated thorn.

Prim polished metal insect forged for flight,
like some bright mineral bug you cut the air
on calculated paths and, harmless, eat
your- way into a clump of sod perhaps;
or, if your course is true, your beveled sting
can pierce and sink: into some softer bullseye.

Squat shiny famous guardian hanging there
so snugly on the officer's black: belt:
in one straight row like capsuled vitamins:
through all your myth and history T see
the tragic lie, the insane irony.

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Two Poems

Ernest Kroll

the beetle

Where my blind, my blundering foot came down,
The beetle lies, its finery smashed,
The green-gold coat, a wing, obscure detail,
The ichor staining the walk. I stand aside,
Considering in the ruined thing its defect
Of trust in my responsibility
To honor its lack: of speed. Wakened to my duty

In the shaky scheme, I cast about for means.
I think of Milton's "sight through every pore,"
The visionary skin, how, failing that,
We lack: equipment to be circumspect,

How, even so endowed, we'd lack: the will.
If only the minor life that we destroy
Lifted a little noise against its doom.

summer and money

The lake glittered in the well-monied summer.
Promoters in white flannels on the shore
Disported in the sun they could afford,
Littering the lawn with ash of their perfectas,
Expensively at ease, savoring the opulent season.
When the speedboat cut the velvet lake
With stertorous, prosperous noise,
They followed it approvingly, agreeing

That was the proper sound of fortune. Nature,
No problem, was simply green and blue
That might be bought or sold, a merchandise
In long supply, another's enterprise,
Available if they had need of it.

They rested in that knowledge sure,
The world within their means, secure,
Gazing blandly out between the trees
Where the lake glittered in the well-monied summer.

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The Phantom Sea

Ettore Rella

We are a sea of blood, as old and as deep
as the deep old sea, the blue the green
the salt-water sea-

our bodies,
containing the red sea,
walked up from the blue the green-

up from the deaf thunder and the blind light
into the open air-

the red sea in the air
contained by the delicate shores
of mortal shape, reinforced

over and over again
with each generation-

Occasionally
we have lifted our human face
from the storm on the blood
and the storm has subsided and the sun
has driven countless nails of gold into the surge,-
flashing nails of gold to confine
the shifting shape of the nightmare, the enormous captive,
while the human face
has risen to show the body of a god
dancing on the sea-
and then again the face has fallen
like the statues of Crete,
chipped and extinct, and the red wave
has risen into our eyes and we have drowned-

It is our fate
that we shalt drown in ourselves-

in the red storm that our bodies
contain in the air-the
 storm on the phantom sea
where the tiger swims like a shark, and the ape
screams from the rock like a seal-

Or

it is our fate
that we shall lift the sculptured face
into the sunlit air and keep it
so impressed on our minds that at last
we come to resemble it-a
 race
of giants containing
a calm red sea-the
 phantom sea in the air,
remembering dimly dimly
the submarine eclipse where the shift of the sea
dragged the godlike head across the floor
and the monstrous fish
moved indifferent past the eyes of stone.

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The Visa

Sylvan Karchmer

So long as the Germans remained in charge of our camp there was little opportunity or, for that matter, will, to tease Renata, but sometimes after our liberation by the Americans just to kill time I used to say to her that their soldiers liked to do harm to little DP girls. I was never sure if my sister was old enough in years to know what I was talking about, but in some of the camps where we had been held (and most of Renata's life had been spent in camps) she learned a great deal about soldiers.

Then the first Americans in our camp were replaced by a new outfit, and Renata must have realized by now that what I had told her did not mean anything, but it had reached the point where teasing her was hard to stop. If I had to go through it all again I would be more careful. I think the trouble was that there was so little to do after the Americans liberated us. We just sat around waiting.

Half the people in camp had plans to come to America, some of them with better prospects than we. Our only American relative lived in a little known place in the west, and he, after months of delays and correspondence, all of which passed through the American offices that had been established for such matters in Rome, finally consented to sign the affidavit. Now we must secure visas, and this meant endless trips into Rome, which despite its short distance from our camp (less than twenty-five miles) might just as well have been thousand miles distant, for to travel DPs needed a special pass which had to be secured from the American commander, a major, who had a trim moustache and wore very elegant trousers.

The pass itself enabled my mother upon whom it fell to make these trips into Rome, to catch a ride on a G vehicle. One time she was fortunate and the major himself offered a ride in his command car. This gesture of kindness coming shortly after the time Renata passing him on the camp street, had been offered a chocolate bar wrapped in silver paper, increased our fondness for him. Renata had been so excited by the gift that she came running to me. I told her that when Americans gave girls chocolates it

meant only one thing, and I almost had her believing it, for she was ready to turn the chocolate over to me and I would have eaten it, too, but at the last minute I was ashamed of my conduct and gave it back to her. Renata's trouble was that she was too trusting.

She had another fault. She listened too closely when adults talked. You couldn't believe them of course. I knew. They were always making mistakes and in some matters they showed less judgment than a boy would.

There was the matter of the visa, which made it necessary, as I have explained, for my mother to go into Rome often. Yet my parents quarreled constantly about her trips. My father resented her going directly to the major for permission; he was unwilling too for her to ride in the major's car, though, to be sure, riding in a comfortable command car was much better than taking your chances on the highway and perhaps being given a lift by a truck, upon which you had to scramble up the high side railing.

Not since Germany had my parents quarrelled, for in the camp-years they were too busy keeping themselves and us alive, but now that America was in sight they indulged in this little luxury more frequently each week.

Yes, to hear them as I sat behind the curtain on the bed that Renata and I each used on alternate nights (the other night one of us had to sleep on four wooden boxes which we got from the American mess hall, pushed together and covered by a blanket) ~as a good sign with nothing else to worry about they fussed about the best way to travel to Rome.

I listened for a minute to make certain it was nothing new this afternoon and then came outside. I was on the way to the hill where I could watch the American trucks speeding down the highway. You would think it was a race the way they came--one faster than the other, and too bad if some DP happened to start across the road just when the trucks came around the curve! By the dozens they sped by, jeeps, weapons carriers, command cars, heavy tractors.

Now outside I found Renata sitting on the steps of the barracks. She was working on a bedspread design, using the yarn from an old shawl she had found. This was the second one she had made, the first having gone as a present to our mother. It would be petit point, she explained to me and would look nice on the bed, but I used to tease her and say she

was wasting her time. When we came to America she would have to leave it behind.

"Are they still angry with each other?" she asked. I had forgotten their silly quarrel; but seeing how concerned she was I became annoyed. "He'll ruin everything," I said darkly, and left her to climb the hill.

Presently she put aside the petit point and followed me. We took the back path. From here we had a good view of the slope, the curve, and the highway.

"Why can't he go?" she asked. "If we depend on him we'll never get to America." Of course Renata was too young to remember, but in Germany all my father did was to live on his father's money.

"But if Americans are our friends why does he say it is dangerous for her?"

I should have explained that they quarrelled as a luxury, but I was too bored to talk. There was so little we could do; we couldn't even discuss the secret BBC broadcasts now that they were no longer forbidden; there wasn't even any war news.

"They might do things to her, like what happened to Lotte Schloom," I said finally, making conversation. I had never discussed Lotte with Renata, yet I was sure she knew about her. Lotte, who had been fourteen that time at Cosenza, had gone one morning to the river with clothes to wash. The story that went around the camp later was that a German soldier had used her criminally there and later she had thrown herself into the river.

"But," said Renata, looking down at her own pretty legs, as if she wished to conceal them, "Lotte was a girl, not a woman."

I knew what she was trying to figure out. Our mother was still attractive, especially when she took pains with herself. I had even heard the GIs whistle when she went by. I watched the trucks below as they rounded the curve. The sun was in my eyes and I had to shade them. I wanted to enjoy the sport but Renata kept worrying. She couldn't understand and wanted to discuss the situation with me. Playfully I grabbed her thin little arm. "If you don't stop worrying," I cried, and made a gesture to shove her down the steep incline to the cars below.

She seemed to grow rigid in my grip. She was so easily frightened. "There," J laughed, releasing her. "Do you think I'd do it? Now stop worrying."

Friends again, we sat side by side and watched the sights until presently we saw our mother come from the camp. She stationed herself by the road and held up her pass. A truck slowed down almost at once, but she shook her head; then a large weapons carrier came to a halt. This vehicle too she turned down. I was proud of her because she was confident she could get a ride in a more comfortable vehicle. That took courage when you had to hitchhike twenty-five miles.

"Hold out for a Packard," I called down. But it was a command car, washed and brightly polished, its tan color gleaming in the sun, that pulled over to the side of the road for her. She raised her head and waved before stepping inside.

Renata and I sat there with the sunshine in our eyes and we did not speak. After a while I got to my feet. "Where are you going?" she asked anxiously. I did not answer. I did not have to to tease Renata. She tugged at my "Don't tell him it was the major," said. "Please do not tell him."

"He should know she got a ride." "You will upset him and then th will quarrel."

"Let them quarrel," I shrugged. She followed me back to the barracks, where my father was sitting on the bed studying a chess problem. "You are not to worry," said Renata before I had a chance to speak. "She had a good ride."

My father raised his head. "In a truck?"

"She had a very good ride," repeated Renata, sitting down with her petit point.

"Aha, the major," said my father and brooded on his chess problem.

"Will the visa take long?" I asked, watching the pain come and go in her face.

My father frowned. "Who can say?" he said, scratching his silver grey stubble. He shaved only once a week now to save razor blades.

"Can a Daimler go faster than a command car?" I asked him.

"Yes. No. Who cares?" "Maybe when we get to America we can get ours from Uncle Ernest in Germany."

My father bent over his board. "Don't talk to me of your Uncle Ernest."

Uncle Ernest's mother was not the same as my father's. She was one of the other kind and had passed on to him her blond features, her extreme height, and her erect bearing, all of which had served him in the best fashion, for no one ever took him for one of us.

"We will write him from America?" I asked.

"Don't listen to camp gossip." "He gives her cigarettes-whole cartons," I said.

My father became angry. Talking about Uncle Ernest always affected him. "For me he is dead-he is as surely dead as if I had buried him." But he didn't mean that. I had heard him talking with my mother about recovering some of his Berlin property and if not through Uncle Ernest how else?

"Why?" I said. "He is the only relative you have left. Mama said so herself."

"When others chose to die," he said with a bitter face, "he preferred to remain."

"He got your Daimler," I reminded him. Besides, what he said wasn't strictly correct. Nobody had chosen to die. Not deliberately. We all tried to escape, even those who were sent to the eastern gas chambers. Some of us were luckier than others.

"Who talked like that?" he demanded. "Mama," I said boldly. "She said in a way she admired Uncle Ernest for staying alive."

"Renata," said my father sharply, "why are you moving about so nervously? Sit still." He gave his attention to me again. "It was shameful to live under those conditions.

"He stayed alive," I said again. Just then we all three turned around to exchange greetings with Hedwig Baum, who passed us on her way to her own cubicle, which was at the other end of the barracks. She was dressed up today in a brown woolen skirt which I recognized as having been an American GI blanket. She was a good-looking girl, not over seventeen. "She is prosperous," I said grinning. My father looked after her curiously. "She goes into town every night with Corporal Jameson," I continued.

asked Renata. She was breathing heavily as she turned away from contemplating Hedwig, and I could see her budding breasts move under her blouse.

"Not for nothing," I laughed. "Do not say such things in the presence of your sister," scolded my father.

"She knows," I replied. "She knows all about Hedwig." Yet I could not be sure.

When our mother came back she had nothing to report. One waited all day in an anteroom only to be told at four thirty that it was necessary to return the next day. "Tomorrow, I will go," said my father.

My mother threw back her head and laughed. She had wonderful teeth. She always took care of them, even in the camps. "You," she said, "you!"

My father wisely kept quiet. "Besides," said my mother, "the major has a friend in the legal bureau. They drink wine or beer together."

"And you take a drink with them?" "If it will help us get the visa," she replied. She liked teasing my father.

"You think, then, under these circumstances I will take the visa." He raised a shaking hand. "Thank God I still have my honor."

This time my mother laughed full in her throat. "You talk but you will go, my husband. You will surely go."

Renata had been behind the curtain in her cubicle, putting the last touches on the petit point, which was now ready for the bed. She made a movement and my mother called to us to go fill the pitcher at the pump and start scraping the dishes.

"What does the major want with Mama?" asked Renata when we were outside. "It makes Father so unhappy." She looked at me. Then away. Then back again. I could see the question working its way up her throat. "Is it something like with Hedwig?"

"With what like Hedwig?" I asked in a cool voice, trying to force her to say it.

"The major and our mother?" "What about the major and our mother?" I could see her eyes getting wide. The water spilled over the sides of the jug. I grabbed it and hurried back. Silly girl, I thought, to worry over trifles. They quarreled to pass the time -couldn't she understand that? The following week my mother went three times to town. Each time she was fortunate enough to get a ride with the major, to whom, she reported later to us, she was teaching German. My father stopped shaving; he took to walking by the river; he talked a great deal

when he was with Renata and me about Uncle Ernest and those who had remained in Germany. He was full of brave words like honor and human character. I couldn't decide if it was the major or the delay in getting the visa that bothered him. But I too was sick with the waiting. Visas came for our friends-the Hesselmanns, the Kullbacks. Even Hedwig Baum left to join her brother in Los Angeles. She wore her brown woolen skirt and carried a bag filled with American cigarettes. Everyone, it seemed, was moving out; but we remained. My mother, however, was full of hope. We were not to give up. Each time she returned from town she and my father quarrelled.

On Saturday morning the major came to our barracks and, smiling at R asked for our mother. We told him was at the river washing clothes. stayed a minute, one hand in the of his elegant trousers. We wondered he were searching for chocolates to gi us, but if he was he never produced for my father, who had been studying chess problem, stood up and said, "Pl what is it you want of my wife? Y, must see when she goes to Rome you there is talk." It was a long s and my father's cheeks, covered wi silver stubble, were glowing. His han were shaking too. It must have been effort for him to talk to the major.

At first the officer simply stared a him; then he commenced to laugh, but i was not a friendly laugh. I could see h. eyes grow small. He stopped laughin and made no other reply but abruptly le the barracks. In another few minutel my mother, her arms loaded with washing, came in and we told her.

"What have you done I" she cried to my father.

"I have saved the honor of my home." "Your honor I Now I will have to go on foot into town."

"That is better than going the way you have."

"You fool I" "Only tell me, then, my suspicions are wrong."

They had quarrelled before. It meant nothing. America was the main consideration. My mother raged at my father, and I knew that in a minute she would grab her shawl and go down and explain to the major that my father was nervous and meant no harm; but first they had to scold each other a little more. Then finally she cried, "You have accused me of flirting. Now I'll give you reason." And just as I had expected she hurried out.

Renata had been sitting on the bed behind the curtain. After our mother had gone she came outside, following me. "Stop her," she said. I noticed in the sunlight how pale her face had grown, and I don't know what it was that made me get so angry. "Why should I stop her?" I said. "We need the visa. Somebody in the family has to get it."

"Oh no," she cried. "Maybe you'd rather not go to America." "What do you mean?" she cried. Almost instinctively her hand went up in front of her small bosom.

Our eyes came together and I shall never forget how much pain I saw in hers. But I had the devil in me that morning. •I couldn't stop tormenting her.

"Why be such a fool? Aren't you anxious to go?"

She fell back a little as if I had hit her across the cheek. "No, no," she said. "I never want to go-like that."

I could hear the trucks below the hill. "You'll go to America like the rest of us," I said.

She looked at me for a minute, the pain giving way to disbelief. Then she ran. I didn't know where she was going. I didn't care. The world was all wrong today. I was mad at my father for being 111ch an idiot; at my mother for being lunable to get the visa; at myself for r' having nothing to do. The truth was I ld didn't know what had happened between in my mother and the major. It was not us that important. What mattered, as •I ad aplained to Renata, was getting to ien America. I wished she could understand. me e The trucks were racing around the mrve. They came by the dozens. I den.

cided to climb the hill and watch. As I got up from the barracks' steps and stretched I saw Renata already there. The wind was blowing her dress, and for a moment I had a queer sensation that she was up to something. But already it was too late. She seemed to float down like water over a fall; there was no resistance in her. She went, not running, not walking either, but skipping, rather, with a simple girlish grace. I could see her going all the way down the incline and I wondered idly with some dead part of my mind where she was running.

Not until I heard the sound of brakes and saw people running did I start down the road. But now something curious happened. 1! couldn't move. I sat down on the grass and screamed. I screamed for a long time,

conscious that people were hurrying by and looking at me, until my father came up and slapped me, but even as I screamed I was thinking what a fine one he was to slap me with all his talk of courage and honor. Afterwards we stood in a circle, my mother and father and I, we all three cried. We could not go inside the barracks because they had brought Renata there and had put her on the bed with its petit point which she had made herself out of old yarn.

After a while the camp people came and took her body, to make it ready for burial. Now we could come inside the barracks. But neither that night nor the following, nor any of the nights that remained until our visa came did I use the bed upon which my mother still kept the spread with its flower design. I never went beyond the curtain and I left for America without ever seeing the Petit point again.

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The Terrible People

Jacques Barbicane

It was different, then, in Rome. Life was hard, full of hunger and uncertainty as the Tiber is of water. We lived on an alley called the Miseria, a gaping, toothless mouth.

The time was the hardest of all, cruel like the jaws of mad dogs. Miseria starved. Our family was the same as the rest, transport workers. When the strike was called we all went-well, I was fourteen at the time and did not go. But Papa and my brother Giuseppe did. Mama stayed home and cooked, and Grandfather Gino kept her company. Grandfather, for whom I was named, lay on his narrow pallet by the window and died a little more each day.

The strike lasted many weeks. I forgot how milk tasted. Meat became a memory. I cried at the smell of thin soup floating over the miasmal backways of the Miseria. Sometimes I shaped my hands in sleep, feeling a round loaf of bread out of nothing at all. It was a neighborhood game among children, thinking of food, trying to make ideas digestible. I became expert at conjuring up the texture of brown bread crusts, the odor of stewed tomatoes, frying olive oil-the sharp fragrance of chianti.

We were a beleaguered army, but fought among ourselves. Papa was socialist, a little stupid, not the Ne sort. Mama and Giuseppe and Grandfather were communists. Me? I fourteen. I was on the side of the winning class. What Grandfather was, I with Giuseppe and Papa were always fighting making the air blue with argument and smoke, while Grandfather lay in bed fumed, for he could not do more than raise himself on an elbow and shout feebly. Papa was the head of the family a big man with a big voice, shy outside his own walls. Giuseppe never agreed with Papa, but he didn't do anything to break up the family. Mama was a paragon member, too, but that didn't keep her from throwing things at Papa. We loved each other.

Grandfather Gino no longer had an obligation to love anyone. He was nearly ninety, fierce as a whiskered bull, full of fire and thunder, just enough to melt some small fireworks now and then. Like Papa he was big, stretched out with a bad heart so that his feet overhung the pallet. He could

remember men of Gari baldi and the Risorgimento. Grand mother was dead; she had died happy the year they hung Mussolini. Grandfather roared and waved his arms. Grandmother did this, too. But she had a tongue like a silver cannon. Her words were armored divisions marching out of her mouth. When the fascist army escaped from Rome, it was Grandmother who made a speech on the Galleria r a cone and then. crowned the Pontine region Fascist party secretary Grullo with a rock before he could heave a grenade. Her strength lived on in Grandfather's rages.

Now he was dying. He followed the strike, savoring each nuance of the battle. He advised barricades, drew up battle-lines, shouted manifestoes. He thought his pallet was the headquarters of the Revolution. But steadily he weakened and the fire grew dim, sustained only by Mama's infrequent lasagni and mussels from the Tiber. His delights were few-the strike and the vists of Taddo Fortalli, the chairman of the neighborhood communist branch, a short, merry technician at the Snia Viscosa works. With Fortalli Grandfather didn't roar. He wouldn't have dared. They were both lions. Fortalli brought chianti to wet dry talking; he knew Grandfather would have killed three fascists, twisting them by the necks, for a bottle of chianti.

Papa came home from the strike quite early one day, bringing the Unita for Mama. I was sitting by the bed, studying my lessons. As Papa tossed the U nita to Grandfather I heard the paper strike the thin coverlet. Then silence. I raised my head. Papa looked down at Grandfather who was very still; his hands shook.

"Maria!" Papa called hoarsely. Maria-Giuseppe-Gino I"

Giuseppe was out in the backyard toilet. He came in grumbling, but became silent at the bedside. Papa felt the old man's pulse. For the first time I noticed the sudden, deathly pallor of his face.

"You did not see?" Papa demanded. "He is dying! The pulse is already as weak as a wounded bird!"

A strange horror swept through my brain. I was only a boy. I had seen them killing fascists like jackals. But this death was closer. I did not love my Grandfather, then. A boy cannot love a fallen mountain. But I respected him. I pulled my head free of my mother's arms and looked at him. His great face was white, with the black mustachios like streaks of storm cloud beneath his nose.

Slowly the old man's eyes opened. He stared at my father in contempt.

"Eh, you socialist, you pulse feeler!" he said weakly. "The waters of life are running out. Run, run for a priest! Maria!" His eyes rolled toward my mother. "Send this husband for Father Portinaro!"

Papa seized my arm, drew me aside. "Run quickly to Portinaro," he whispered, giving me three coins. "This for the church. He will hurry!"

Giuseppe, tall, in brown whipcord, growled. He held my mother against him, as she swayed in weakness.

"You are an imbecile, my father!" he said. "You read the Unita? The priest will not come!" Giuseppe let Mama go and clenched his great, gaunt fists. "And if he does, how will I keep from tearing him to pieces?"

Papa sneered. He threw off the hand Giuseppe laid threateningly on his arm.

"So this is your party discipline!" he cried. "An old man is dying. And all you can think of is tearing some priest limb from limb. Gino!" He pushed me roughly toward the door. "Run I"

asked, turning his eyes on me at last.

I went like the autumn wind that whirls dust down the Misericordia, down the flight of steps that connects it with the Galleria Vaccone. Friends called to me, hooting. I had no time for their play. There were problems on my mind. How did one speak to the priest-alone? "Holy one"? "Father of the Poor"? Possibly "Most Reverend Excellence"? We all had great respect for the priests. We were Catholic. Even Giuseppe. Even Taddo Fortalli. Children did not speak alone to these black-skirted men.

But it was easy, after all. Portinaro was at home, in the little two-room stone house behind the church. The old woman who lived off the Vaccone, and who kept house for the priest in return for supper, let me in.

"Be quiet!" she commanded. "Father Portinaro has just eaten. He may be asleep."

"But my Grandfather is dying!" I shouted, holding out the coins. "These are for the priest if he will come!"

She fretted a moment, then flung open the door to the further room. Portinaro was not asleep. A copy of the *Osservatore Romano* was spread out, open, on his wonderful old carved desk. He was rubbing his hands and smiling, hunched up on his chair.

The old woman trembled behind me, but the priest only crooked his finger and beckoned. I laid the three coins on his desk and told him why. All the while he seemed to be listening, but he was also reading the *Osservatore*, and his eyes grew grave like a man who is counting up numbers.

"Carvella, did you say, boy?" he "Yes, Father, the family Carvella, Miseria. You baptized me, Father. Gino, my Grandfather called upon y name himself. But hurry. He cannot very long!" I touched the coins again.

The priest put the money into a box as we walked out through the chur We went along the Vacone and then into the Miseria. Father Porti bobbed along briskly. I could hardly k up with him. He kept his hands in f of him. From one dangled a rosary, f the other a black bag with the holy of absolution.

Our path along the crooked length the Miseria seemed to throw up spr of disaster before Portinaro's flapp· skirts. Windows opened and pale fa stared down at us. I heard the neigh gabbing and thought of how qui rumors travel.

Mama was waiting in the street. S threw up a hand when she caught si of the priest's shovel hat. She bowed head, but it was only a little bow. S was a proud woman and a communist.

"Where is the sick one, signora Portinaro asked, respectfully.

She led the way upstairs, dragging by the hand. Then, at the door, she dr aside, letting him go in first.

"Fortalli is in there," she whispe "He came just after you left, with brc meat and chianti for Grandfather fr the Party. What will happen when th two come face to face?"

"Don't worry," I whispered, think' of the Party's sausage. "It will work all right. If Portinaro tries anyth· Fortalli is clever enough to pitch out a window I"

When we went m I saw Fo sitting by the bedside, with Giuseppe, talking with Grandfather. Papa was silently glum in a corner. The basket Fortalli had brought was bright on the table in the middle of the room.

Portinar.o looked round the room and Papa got up and bowed politely. There wasn't much to see, except the two pictures on the walls, one of Togliatti and one of Lenin that covered a patch on the fireplace wall. His eyes stopped at the pile of U nitas that Mama saved to start fires

with, in the stove. A slight smile crossed his face, and then he put the black bag with the holy oils down beside the Party's basket.

"You are all communists here?" he asked softly.

"What did I tell you?" Giuseppe cried passionately, rising. Fortalli pushed him back into a chair. Grandfather stared at Giuseppe angrily.

"Not all of us are communists, Father," Papa broke in hurriedly, "though there are many such on the Miseria." Papa looked down at his hands. "But what does it matter what we are? A man is dying, a good Catholic."

"The holy oils are for those who deserve them," Portinaro observed. "The grandfather?" he asked, pointing. Fortalli got out of his chair and pushed a pillow under Grandfather's head. Then he and Giuseppe moved away from the pallet. Fortalli had Giuseppe by the arm in a grip of iron. Papa put out a hand "The old man is not a communist," he said suddenly. Giuseppe opened his mouth, but Fortalli kicked him in the ankle.

A roar like Vesuvius went up from the pallet.

"Who is not a communist?" Grandfather bellowed. His great mustachios quivered. "I am not a communist, you she-dog of a socialist?" he demanded, shaking a long finger at Papa. "Since 1923 I was in the Party, while you were chasing girls through the Vacone!" He paused, suddenly, clutching his heart. My mother screamed. Grandfather pushed her away. Then he went on, gasping: "I was in the party through Mussolini and Staraci and their whelps." Finally he caught his breath. "What does it matter, anyway?" he growled. "A man's politics are his own property, like his religion I"

"A Protestant heresy," Portinaro said promptly. "In Italy a man's religion is the State's. Do not deny it I"

"He is an old man I" Giuseppe shouted abruptly in frenzy. "He is a good Catholic, he never missed Mass. What more do you want?"

Father Portinaro turned to him gently. "You have read the Holy Father's commandment in the Osservatore Romano?"

"Do I look like a priest?" Giuseppe demanded grandly. He folded his arms and glared at Portinaro.

Fortalli put a hand on the priest's shoulder.

"We read the Unita, Father. We know what you mean. But surely... "

Portinaro dropped his arms down before his loins, his lapped hands like a shield. He stood there, grave, a black:

column, the thin edge of his face cutting the wall.

"My hands are tied, my son," he said. "The Holy Father's word is law. I may give neither absolution of sins, nor holy marriage, nor the last rites to communists."

Mama shrieked. Grandfather's cheeks went white and pink and back again.

"You could make an exception," Fortalli said. "Because of his poor heart, Gino has not been an active Party member for many years."

"He reads the *Unita*. He obviously believes in the Party programme. He accepts Party food," the priest said firmly. "It is useless, my son. We are forbidden!"

I watched my Grandfather. He stared at the priest, trying to speak. Fortalli tensed.

"I can make a declaration that he is no longer a communist. I have the authority," he said.

"No!" my grandfather said, gasping for breath.

"You are a sick man, Gino," Fortalli said calmly. "You should be thinking of heaven. It does no harm."

"He must agree, of course," Portinaro said. "I will take his word. Then he may have absolution and the last rites."

Giuseppe stood by the window, his face working.

"Bribery!" he fumed. "Political bribery I"

"The church does not meddle in politics!" the priest said curtly.

"You lie!" Grandfather cried feebly. "Who can live without politics? I would have starved to death many times over if I had no politics. And so would the Church. Everyone knows it. If us, then you. Why do you lie? Are you a bad priest?"

"Silence, Papa!" Mama begged. Grandfather demanded. "I am a dying man. I have a right to speak before I die!" Suddenly there was no more roar in his voice. He lay back on his pillow and said: "In the mountains, when the crops have failed, the peasant smash the images of Jesus and the Vir • Do they not curse the weakness of pri at such a time?"

"Hush, my son," Portinaro said soothingly. "You must have quiet. You must have peace of mind!"

Grandfather pulled himself up a littl glared at the priest furiously. The p• of life came flooding back into his chee "Peace of mind?" he asked. "Does• fill my belly? I am dying, but it is family who needs peace of mind. T morrow I will be gone. But who fill their bellies? The church? All y want to do is give us peace of mind. am a poor man, a worker. I do not kn what peace of mind is. Maybe it • death."

Portinaro stared at my grandfath and shook his head; he made no mo toward the black bag of absolution.

"He needs a doctor," the priest saiL "He is raving. Why has not a docto been brought?"

"He is coming," my mother said ti idly. "A neighbor has gone for him the Via Reggio."

The priest raised his hand in a benediction.

"Calm yourself, my son, listen to t Church. You were born and raised good Catholic. You know what it mea to die unshriven? Your flesh will bu for all eternity!"

"You are killing him!" Giuseppe cried. "Why do you frighten an old man?"

"It is you who are killing him." Por• tinaro's eyes swept the room like a cold flame. Naked hatred quivered on his lips. "You are communists, terrible people with a hideous mission. You believe not in God, nor the Kingdom of God!"

Giuseppe howled. He ran swiftly to a closet and returned, the German rifle he had clubbed from a Nazi soldier levelled at Portinaro. The priest smiled. He was a brave man. He shook his head. Giuseppe threw a bullet into the firing chamber of the gun. His fingers tightened on the trigger.

"Shrive him!" Giuseppe commanded.

"Sit down!" said the communist branch chairman, calmly. Fortalli took the gun away from Giuseppe with a quick motion, emptied the magazine and pushed the rifle under Grandfather's pallet, while Giuseppe sank, crying, into a chair.

"You will tell no one of this weapon, priest," he said, looking squarely at Portinaro. Then he turned to Grandfather. "I cannot help you, Gino," he said. "I can give you no absolution of the church, no last rites. You need none. If there is mortal sin on your soul, your life has wiped it a":'ay. You are an example to us all!"

Grandfather Gino turned his head, looking up at Fortalli. His lips trembled, but peace blossomed like a beautiful flower in his eyes.

Mama began to whimper. Papa held her close to him.

"The doctor is coming," he said, listening to footsteps on the stairs.

"I will not need him," Grandfather said. His voice sounded like a faint call from over a hill. A feeling as of ice struck deep into my heart for the first time. Grandfather clutched for Fortalli's hand, found it; then he looked at Portinaro. The priest looked away. Grandfather closed his eyes. A shudder ran through him, as through a great horse, dying.

I remember my mother screaming. I remember the doctor coming in, too late, nervous, officious, and Portinaro gathering up his skirts and his black bag and departing, while the family backed away from him.

I remember Fortalli, his hands fumbling for lira pieces in his pockets, to put on Grandfather's eyelids. The communist leader's eyes were fixed on my Grandfather's dead face. Tears streamed down his cheeks like the molten sparks sweated from a crucible.

"He is not dead," Fortalli muttered. "They never die!"

Then I came out of my corner and he gripped my fingers that sought for his sleeve. He had a hand like hammered copper. My fingers were mashed.

I looked down at my Grandfather. Fortalli held me close, a man comforting a boy in the way he knew how, murmuring comforts that could not last and other words that lasted through war and revolution.

"Remember, Gino!" he said. "What lives cannot die I"

I clung to Fortalli, my eyes shut against the rough corduroy of his jacket, and cried my fill, seeing large, looming against some hot horizon of the mind, the faces of my grandfather and of Taddo Fortalli, real and alive as the memory of Lenin, hard as the iron from which the steel of our life has been smelted, bright and steady as the red star that shines on us all.

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