

A LITERARY MAGAZINE OF CALIFORNIA

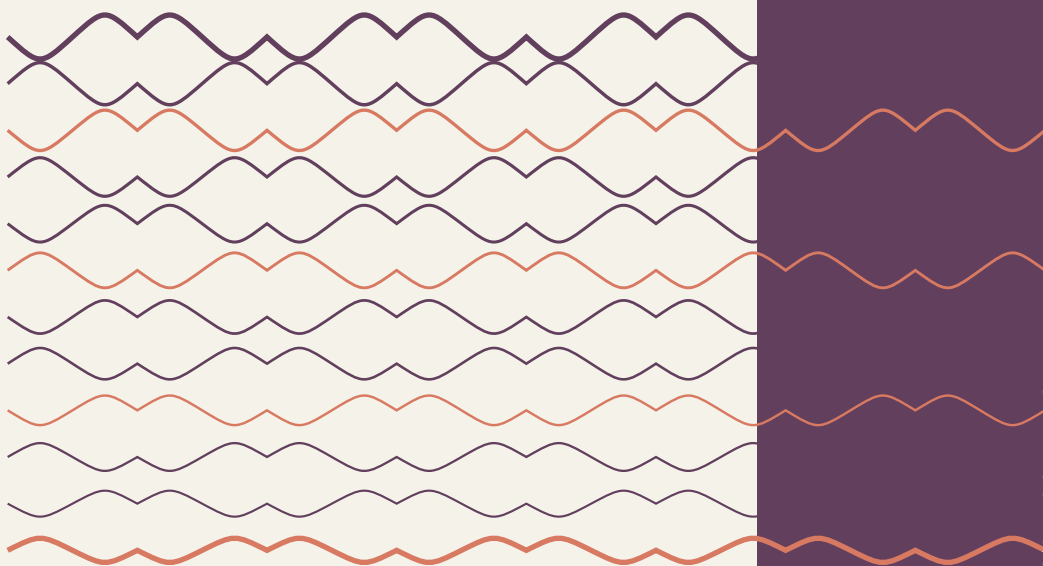
COAST LINES

Spring–Summer 1957

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COASTLINES

ISSUE 7

A Literary Magazine of California

Spring–Summer 1957

EDITED BY

Mel Weisburd

A CLEAN READING EDITION

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Fiction

War Meat, James Comorthoon
Crawdad Smith, Duane Jones..
The Accused, Lachlan MacDonalde,

Tour de Force

How I Came to Draw Forces, Sylvia Jarrico.

Poetry

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Reviews

Choreographer of Words, Gene Frumkin..
The Hollow Tower, L. MacD..

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Blunderbuss... what's going on around L.A.

THE IMMOBALIST--adaptation of Gide's novel by Augustus and Ruth Goetz, Horseshoe Theatre.
Above average production of a work hostile in mood to the strident requirements of drama.

NATHAN THE WISE--period piece on tolerance, New Hampshire Theatre. A mellow vehicle by Lessing, competently offered by Otto Waldis. There are few surprises in this play, except for an outstanding performance by Terence de Marney as the Dervish.

ARMS AND THE MAN--Hollywood Players, Ed Jones director and producer. Much fun compressed in a small theatre, Shaw at his best helped by a spirited cast.

DANCE IN CONCERT--New Hampshire Playhouse, Mark Rose and Larry Warren. Good technique and all-around production, but the man in the street will stick with Arthur Murray as there is no communication problem there.

TONIGHT! LINCOLN VS. DOUGLAS, by Norman Corwin, directed by Norman Corwin, at the Circle Theatre Playhouse. A splendid editorial-dramatic job on the historic debates. Jeff Morrow as Lincoln and Phillip Pine as Douglas exhibited thoughtful and effective interpretations of their roles. A new and timely work.

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*Letter To An Imaginary Friend**Thomas McGrath*

1.

"From here it is necessary to ship all bodies east."
I am in Los Angeles, at 2714 Marsh St.,
Writing, rolling east with the earth, drifting toward Scorpio,
thinking,
Hoping toward laughter and indifference.
"They came through the passes,
they crossed the dark mountains in a month
of snow,
Finding the plain, the bitter water,
the iron rivers of the black North.
Horsemen,
Hunters of the hornless deer in the high plateaus of that
country,
They travelled the cold year, died in the stone desert."

Aye, long ago. A long journey ago,
Most of it lost in the dark, in a ruck of tourists,
In the night of the compass, companioned by tame wolves, plagued
By theories, flies, visions, by the anthropophagi...

I do not know what end that journey was toward.
--But I am its end. I am where I have been and where
I am going. The journeying destination -- at least that...
But far from the laughter.

So, writing:

"The melt of the pig pointed to early spring.
The tossed bones augered an easy crossing.
North, said the mossy fur of the high pines.
West, said the colored stone at the sulphur pool."

2.

--And at the age of five ran away from home.
(I have never been back. Never left.) was going perhaps
Toward the woods, toward a sound of water -- called by what bird? --
Leaving the ark-tight farm in its blue and mortgaged weather
To sail the want-all seas of my five dead summers
Past the barn's ammonia-and-horse-piss-smelling dark
And the barnyard dust, adrift in the turkey wind
Or pocked with the guinea-print and staggering script
Of the drunken-sailor ducks, a secret language; leaving
Also my skippering Irish father, land-locked Sinbad,

With his singing head in a private cloud and his feet stuck solid
On the quack-grass-roofed and rusting poop-deck of the north forty
In the alien corn: the feathery, bearded, and all-fathering wheat.

Leaving my mother too, with her kindness and cookies,
The whispering, ginghamy, prayers - impossible pigeons
Whickering into the camphor-and-cookie-crumb dark toward God.
In the clothes closet.
Damp comforts. Tears harder than nails.
Summery. Loving. Laughter.

How could I leave them?
I took them with me, though I went alone
Into the christmas dark of the woods and down
The whistling slope of the coulee, past the Indian graves
Alive and flickering with the gopher light...

3.

-Dry runs and practice journeys through the earthquake weather
Of the interior summer...

the singing services

And ceremony cheerful as a harness bell...
-Bright flags and fictions of those hyacinthine hours
Stain and sustain me past the hell of this mumming time
Toward the high wake I would hold!

No ghost, but O ill and older
Than other autumns when I ran the calico lanes
Past sleepy summer, gone, and the late west light
Downfallen. Lost. Autumn of distant voices, half heard,
Calling.

Rain. Gunfire. Crows. Mist, far, woods.

Farther than winter birds in the most gaunt tree
Snapped in the frost, I was; or went. Was free, and haunted
By the reeling plunge of the high hawk down -- down! O down
Where the curving rabbit lunged and was slapped with a sharp and killing
Heel.

There, in the still post-solstice dark, among
Rococo snow, the harp-shaped drifts and the ghost-marked trees
of the season

I went all ways...
--Spring came; the first cold rainstorms, dropping
Their electric hardware in the bright-work of the snow.
Then, the leather seasons by, and my bundling times,
My eye sustained the cow-bird and the crow
Their feather terms...

Then horny Summer come...

-and Autumn growing

In the west steep wrestling light and the rain-wrung rheumy
wind in the rag-headed woods...

*

Way stations on the underground journey; the boy running, running...
--Search for Lough Derg, or the holy waters of the Cheyenne,
Or the calf-deep Maple. Running away
I had the pleasure of their company...

4.

Took them? They came --
Past the Horn, Cape Wrath, Oxford and Fifth and Main
Laughing and mourning, snug in the two seater buggy,
Jouncing and bouncing on the gumbo roads
Or slogging loblolly in the bottom lands --
My seven-tongued family.
How could I escape? Strapped on the truckle bars
Of the bucking red-ball freight, or riding the blinds cold,
Or sick and sea-sawed on the seven seas,
Or in metal and altitude, drilling the high blue
I fled
I heard them laughing at the oarsmen's bench.
Conched in cowcatchers, they rambled at my side.
The seat of the buggy was wider than Texas
And slung to the axles were my rowdy cousins;
Riding the whippetrees: aunts, uncles, brothers,
Second-cousins, great-aunts, friends and neighbors,
All holus-bolus, piss-proud, all sugar-and-shit
A goddamned gallimaufry of ancestors.
The high passes?
Hunters of the hornless deer?

5.

A flickering of gopher light...
The Indian graves...
And then the river.
Companioned, and alone,
Five, ten, or twenty, I followed the coulee hills
Into the dreaming green of the river shade,
The fish-stinking cow-dunged dark of the cattle-crossing,
The fox-barking, timber-wolf country, where ...
The cicada was sawing down the afternoon/
Upstream a beaver was spanking Nature/

The cows were wilder/
 ·Horses carnivorous...

The kittycorner river cut through the buggy,
 Through Dachau and Thaelmann
 Rolfe in Spain
 Through the placid, woodchuck-coughing afternoon
 Drifting
 Past Grand Forks, Baton Rouge, Sheldon, Rome,
 And past Red Hook and Mobile where the rivers mourn
 Old Thames, Missouri, Rio Hondo.
 Now
 In far Los Angeles I hear
 The Flying Dutchman in the dry river
 Mourning. Mourning...
 -Ancestral night..·

Passages of the dark; streets with no known turning
 Beyond the sleepy midnight and the metaphysical summer
 Leading here. Here. Here, queerly here
 To the east slant light of the underground moon, and the rusty garden
 Empty.

Bounded by ghosts.

Empty except for footnotes

Of journeying far friends near.

Enter now,

O bird on the green branch of the dying tree, singing
 Sing me toward home/
 Toward the deep past and inalienable loss/
 Toward the gone stranger carrying my name
 In the possible future

enter now:

Purlieus and stamping grounds of the hungering people
 O enter

"They died in the stone desert

They crossed the dark mountain in the month of snow.
 Finding the plain, the bitter water, the iron rivers of the black North."
 Horns on the freeway. Footsteps of strangers,
 Angelinos: visitations in the metropolitan night.
 "Hunters of the hornless deer."
 Ancestral baggage . ..

(The preceding is the first section of a book-length, narrative poem, quasi-autobiographical in nature. The poem represents the journey of the poet in his search for individual and community identity. In its entirety, the poem alternates between lyrical and narrative forms.)

WAR MEAT

James Comorthoon

The five boys walking along Emmet Road, away from Dublin, moved ahead in a deliberate and easy fashion, as if they were just out for an evening ramble. Bill walked in the lead, his blue eyes alert, watching closely for anything that might threaten the group.

The road was fringed with beechnut trees, broken by an occasional terrace of small houses. High overhead the soft shimmering leaves wove a whispering pattern, silhouetted against the deep twilight sky. Through a break in the trees the boys could see Kilmainham Jail. The medieval mass of granite intimidated them. They eyed it without seeming to.

"Gosh, I'm hungry," Jamsie said. "Can hardly wait to get my teeth into some good red meat."

Bill and Jamsie were brothers, blond and fresh. They looked very much alike, although Jamsie was smaller, his face a little softer.

"Will they shoot at us?" Charlie asked.

The youngest, with brown eyes and black hair, he had only recently been permitted to join the big fellows. Usually he was very quiet, fearful of jeopardizing this privilege.

"Oh, keep quiet, Charlie," Bill snapped at him.

They had reached the brow of a long hill. A huge tramcar was rolling down on its way to College Green. The heavy rhythmic rumble, and the singing whistle of the trolley on the overhead wires were friendly, reassuring sounds.

"Well, here we are," said Packy. "Same spot as last time."

For what the boys planned, the spot was well chosen. The curve on the top of the hill would slow down the military lorry, and command the drivers attention. On the other side of the road was a large billboard. Ironically, the advertising on it was devoted to food: Bovril, Chiver's Marmalade, Denny's Bacon and Ham, all endorsed by H. M. The King. "Must be a very busy man-sampling all those. Like to help him." Jamsie's attempted humor had little response. The boys' eyes lingered on the enticing picture of the ham.

"What I could do with one of them right now!" said Paddy. "I could finish it off be meself without stoppin' for breath."

Jamsie could feel their hunger. The irritating, angry ache of five stomachs seemed in his own. It frightened him how their lives had changed. They didn't go swimming every day like they used to, or play hurley, or go rambling over the mountains. Every effort now was bent on getting food.

At first, when they felt hunger, they'd been able to steal from the farms of the gentry by swimming across the Liffey, and filling a pillow case with potatoes, cabbages and whatever else they could lay their hands on. That was out now. A heavy guard of soldiers had been placed on the estates. It had become too dangerous to get it that way.

Hunger, with its dull heavy pain, like a ball of lead, weighed down their bellies; made their bodies listless, and filled their minds with strange desires; like running away to live on the mountainside, eating birds, boiled grass, or dandelions for food. Then again would come the angry pangs that made them taut and reckless, driving them to take daring chances, like tonight. They were preparing to raid a military lorry carrying meat to Richmond Barracks.

They had first seen the lorry months before this, rolling through Kilmainham. Bill had spotted the meat packed under the tarpaulin cover. Every night for three weeks they had watched for the truck. It passed by twice a week, on the same evenings. Once they had raided it successfully, and they felt enough time had passed to try again.

"They won't be here for a little while yet," said Charlie.

"Let's sit here and wait."

"All right," said Jamsie sitting on the low embankment bordering the road, "only you fellows better be ready to jump when she comes."

They had a good half mile view of the road from where they sat.

Charlie couldn't sit still; he sat down, stood up again, and walked around. He put his hands in his pockets and took them out again.

"How did it go last time," he asked. "Did it take long?"

Bill looked at him.

"Don't be scared, kid, it'll be all over, before you know it."

Packy saw Charlie's fear, he began to feel a bit scared himself watching him. He turned toward Jamsie.

"Member the party we had last time?"

Jamsie took the cue.

"Will I ever forget it," he answered. "You weren't there, were you Charlie?"

"He was home in bed," Paddy ribbed.

Charlie quieted down, while Jamsie told him about the party.

They had managed to steal a side of beef. Jamsie's mother had done the cooking and the boys' families had gathered in his house for the feast. After the meal, Uncle Pat played his melodeon. The girls and boys had danced to a hornpipe. Jamsie's young desire grew strong with the memory of young breasts, free and firm, swinging up and down to the wild rhythm of the music.

"When the military patrol broke up the party, I sure got scared," Packy cut in. "I thought they were after us."

"What happened?" Charlie asked.

"The sergeant, Bill Ales, you know him, he had a glass of port with Uncle Pat."

Jamsie was keeping a close eye on the road while he talked.

"Then he made us put out the lights. It was after curfew."

The distant purr of a heavy motor broke the evening quiet.

"Here she comes," said Jamsie, "better take your places."

Packy and Charlie ran for the low hillock, behind the billboard. While he ran, Packy pulled out his catapult. In his hand it was almost lethal. Bill and Paddy

WAR MEAT 9

took their places about two hundred yards further down on the opposite side of the road. Jamsie put Bill and Paddy together, because Paddy, thin and fallow, wasn't very strong. Jamsie stayed where he was, checking the other boys' positions.

Packy waved his hand from behind the billboard. Bill signalled from across the street. Each one knew what he had to do. The steep grade would slow down the lorry. They would wait until it was just turning the bend, then Bill and Paddy were to run after it and cut rope holding down the tarpaulin, covering the load of meat. Jamsie would jump up on the high tail-board of the truck, raise the tarpaulin with Bill and Paddy's help, grab the biggest piece of meat he could handle, drag it to the tailboard, and drop it on the road. Bill and Paddy would be ready to pull it to the other side of the low embankment, out of sight. It had all been done so fast, the last time, the driver or guard hadn't even caught on to their truck being raided.

This time if they should notice, the boys were prepared. A couple of well aimed iron slugs, from Packy's powerful catapult, would keep them occupied while the rest of the boys got away across the meadows that stretched for a mile or more behind the billboard.

The truck was passing now. Bill and Paddy were already behind it, sawing at the ropes. Jamsie ran between them. The ropes snapped. He sprang up at the tail-board, gripping his foot on the hinge bar. His arm plunged in and grabbed meat and bone. He tugged hard. It didn't budge. He let go and felt around for another piece. He felt cloth and metal discs. What could that be, he wondered. Ah! he felt meat again. Balancing his body on the tailboard's edge, he plunged in both hands. He pulled desperately. It moved a little. Hot sticky sweat covered his body. He was gasping audibly from sheer terror-surely the driver or guard would hear. He pushed back the tarpaulin to see better.

puttees, legs, boots, cloth, brass buttons all piled together in bloody messy gore. Hans a pilot togel, He felt his stomach turn. Dead staring eyes, horribly butchered faces, arms,

His fingers stuck deep in a twisted mouth and the eye-socket of a head half blown away. There was a loud surging, drumming whistling in his head. He fell on the cobbled road, between the tram tracks. He felt the body slide with him. Everything tracks Me tel he that was happening he felt and understood as if it were happening to some strange person. Forcing himself to roll into the gutter, he lay face down and vomitted.

Through his misery he heard a tinkle of glass, followed by a shot. A little later he was lifted bodily to his feet. Two soldiers were holding him up.

"Are you a Shin Feiner?" one of them asked.

"No," Jamsie gasped,

"That's wot they all say," doubted the soldier.

The other soldier cut in; he sounded sympathetic. "Gor blimey, George! E's only a young 'un.

Jamsie's head was clearing a little. The sharp pleasing smell of shoe polish and bay-rum from the soldiers helped him.

"Never you mind that, Bert," George answered. "They start 'em off bleedin' young, these Irish do."

Bert looked troubled, he was much older than George.

"Why 'e ain't any older than my Bertie at 'ome," he turned to Jamsie: "What was you young 'uns arter?"

"Meat, we're hungry." It was Bill who answered

Jamsie felt such a surge of relief he had to grit his teeth to keep from sobbing. Tears rolled hot down his cheeks. But Bill should have run with the others. It was no use two of them being caught.

George was talking. "If it's meat you want, there's plenty of it in there." He inclined his head toward the lorry.

The body, crumpled on the ground, looked like a hunk of meat, wrapped in canvas, with raw edges sticking out.

"Ere, let the young 'un go, George, 'e's 'ad enough," Bert cut in. "It won't do no good to throw the loikes o' 'im in the clink."

George seemed to be relieved.

"Oh orlright," he said, "e'll probably end up in the clink enny 'ow." Jamsie's arms were released. He swayed a little.

Bill put his arm around his shoulder and led him away. A little bit down the road the other boys joined them.

"What happened?" Packy asked. The three of them were flushed and excited.

"Wasn't that meat on the lorry?" Charlie wanted to know.

"Leave him alone," Bill stopped their chattering.

"Can't you see he's sick? That lorry was full of mangled Tommies."

Jamsie's face was chalk white. Dark circles ringed his eyes. He was still very shaky.

"Look!" Packy shouted. From where they stood they could see two soldiers throwing the broken corpse back onto the lorry.

Paddy looked gloomy and desperately disappointed.

"Well, we're still hungry," he said, "and that's meat too."

Jamsie looked at his hands. They were sticky and smeared with dirt and blood. He retched again and again, but nothing came.

Charlie's eyes were drawn to the billboard, suddenly his boyish treble sang out in improvised tune and words to the advertising slogan blazoned before him.

"Jack Spratt could eat no fat. His wife could eat no lean. We have nayther lean nor fat. I could even do with that.

Quaker Oats! Quaker Oats!

Quaker Oats for breakfast. Quaker Oats for tea.

Quaker Oats for dinner, is good enough for me."

Bill glared at him while he guided Jamsie to the embankment beside the road.

Four Poems

Lawrence S. Gurney

Sheeprock, Nevada

(For the novel by George R. Stewart)

*Spalls of jasper and chert
Litter this tufted place;
The shifting winds efface
The old iambs of a different breeze.*

*The sandy troughs release
New flakes and bury old,
But they await the shift of time
Till once again
The wind blows from the west.*

*The Mormon flower, gingham dressed,
Long since a crone as creased and peeled
As the staring headboard she is under
In some California field,*

*Wavers on our noonday sight
Evanescent as the haze
Of some loved, but half-forgotten,
Old and scarce remembered days.*

*And where she stood, the bright mirage
Wedges the shimmering hills in two,
Where, glassily undercut, one ridge
Curls like the toe of an old shoe.*

Flirt

*The feeling that she half let out,
And yet could not release.
Was bound to an unyielding corc
With bow she fumbled for and found,
And yet each time
Pulled like a shoelace knotted hard.*

*Without all bright and beckoning,
Within a statue dumb and vast,
And marble-vacant were those eyes.
Athena-like her probing mind
To pierce the mists about her heart;
But nerveless lay the sculptor hand,
The pupils never finished.*

*And in his after bitterness,
He never knew how hard she tried.*

Matriculation

Some point to Byron, some to Shaw,
 Facades of calculated awe,
And all whose struggle for the part
Raised showmanship as high as Art.
But showmanship's not all we feel:
 The anxiety is real.

The elemental human need
For approbation of the deed,
The fear that worth cannot be shown
By giving just the gist alone,
The need the young have to disclose
Not just the victory, but the throes,
 To show what smarts they've undergone,
And recreating, pass them on.

As Degas said, Art but repeats.
And ego too; the little feats
By which we grow we must make known.

So when we see, prolonged to age,
 The youngster's pique, the thwarted rage,
 In spite of sham
 And the great I AM,
And all the little gods we flout,
It brings the mother instinct out,

Like Clouds that Pass in Dreams

To me it's sometimes strange to think
That some who breathe can be
No more aware of earth than sky,--
That rocks support the sea,

That dirt's not found down to the core,
 That roots and springs have ending,
 That granite's not the only rock
 That's hard and grim, unbending.

That the Grand Canyon didn't split,
That diamonds certainly will,
That layers come in more than cakes,
And else than coins in till.

Who never leaned against the earth
And felt its mute unrest,
Or viewless swing about the sun,
Whose embers bank the west.

Who walk the earth unknowingly
As clouds that pass in dreams,
 Nor guess the skill of frost and waves,
Or masonry of streams.

A Renoir for Ireland

Imperious and proud, before the lady died
 She willed to the Irish a painted nude,
 A Renoir of generous and lucent flesh.
It was her desire to be fleshly rude.

Deep in Dublin, the official mocked:
 "ake it and rang bur thizebacene lust.
Give the traitor his dream of dust."

She is there now in the cold, savage wind
 And the exile feels her body through the graves
 And the warm flesh clings to his bitter bones,
 A Renoir for Ireland as the winter raves.

Home Life of the Circus Dancers

Home in the Henhouse or No Man's Land
 Seventy feet of a rambling railroad car-
 The circus girls wear mules anl snazzy pajamas.

Forty nicknames, family of the car mother,
 Eat in shifts of six; and the cold front for
 Miss Horse if she blooms into a borrow-body.

Meticulous the life of laundry-Little
 White Cloud floats on a sea of wash while
 Princess irons for her friend. Blowing Wild.

On track dates after the show, they whip out
 Folding chairs and tables by the car and
 Listen with clowns to the record player.

When the train whistles, back to their berths
 In their snazzy pajamas and nicknames, Smacks,
 Streaky and No Pants and Cheeseburger Cora.

And the train jerks away, the car mother rules,
 Dog and pig-pets sleep, while in her Big Top berth
 Miss Horse pastes up white waltzing wall paper.

-James Schevill
 (two poems)

CRAWDAD SMITH

Duane Jones

Monday morning, a few hours after the first flood warnings came over the radio, trucks were hurrying towards the bluffs loaded with all the precious and movable property which the Missouri river bottom farmers had left from previous years of moving. Sewing machines, bedsteads, radios, and boxes of clothes were heaped together on the trucks and unloaded in heaps in the yards and barns of friends and tarpaulins were spread over the outside heaps and extricated bedding laid out on straw or mattresses. Crawdad Smith didn't have a radio, but the flood control engineer and two farmers visited him in the afternoon and told him he should leave right away.

The next morning, as the sun shoved through the clouds in the east, the road running down from the dike to his place was covered with clay-brown, turbid water, littered with corn stalks. From a sign, "Fresh Fish for Sale Half Mile West," nailed to a trimmed cottonwood tree at the foot of the dike, the road ran down between sheer walls of cottonwood, willow, wild plum, and interlacing grape vine. A pale green veiled the burgeoning branches of the cottonwoods, and the white smoke of blossoms hung over branches of the plum trees. Currents crossed the road, in places churning the tranquil, chocolate pudding surface into frothing, boiling maelstroms. His house a weathered, frame structure, tilted to one side, appeared abruptly on a slight rise of ground.

On hod plat the chad o A bite thine, use lay a fiod of liked ices, ran konalled highest part of the field. Along this line plodded two brown mares pumping their heads up and down. Behind them, holding the handles of the plow walked Crawdad Smith. A limp denim jacket and overalls hung over his large body. On his head sat a grease-stained hunting cap. A stubble beard made his face look like a fat gray cocklebur. His eyes were deep-set and dark like catfish eyes. His mouth was straight and wide like a catfish mouth. His lips moved as he mumbled to himself, and his cheeks pulsed as he chewed tobacco.

Behind him trotted his two Airedales scattering the purple grackles and cowbirds which were settling in the fresh earth preying on the exposed worms and grubs. The dogs were gaunt like greyhounds, but heavier and had wiry coats, a rusty steel color.

Coming to the fence along the road, he turned the horses and pulled the plow over on its side where the polished silver of the moldboard and the share caught the sun. He wrapped the reins around a plow handle and walked around the horses pulling straps. Then he shuffled up along the fence to the west corner of the field. From there he could see a straight brown line just above the thickets of the flood plain. The tops of the tall cottonwood trees broke up the line. It was made by the top of the

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dike. He could barely see the line of the water against it, a brown strip of opaque glass midway up the side. His land was an island now that he could leave only by boat or swimming.

He walked back to the plow and set the share in a new furrow. He murmured, "Gid-up," and the horses leaned against the traces. The plow sank into the ground uncurling behind it a ribbon of black earth. Walking in the furrow, breathing the smells of the fresh earth, he felt relieved of the uneasiness which often came with early spring. The hard, winter-packed ground grew soft and yielding beneath him. It seemed to him that as soon as tomorrow the summer crickets and locusts would be singing, and the leaves and stalks in the deep rows of corn would be whispering in the south wind. Then soon after that the days would turn still and cool with frost in the air, and amid falling leaves he would unsheath each bright ear of corn. The metallic thud of ears against the bankboard of the slowly filling wagon would interrupt the morning stillness.

As all bottom farmers, he believed that no better soil could be found anywhere than the rich loam of his land. Since his thirty acres were high and down next to the river, the floods always made it into an island. Some years it was flooded and some it wasn't. Ever since the dike had been finished three years ago, people had been pestering him to sell the land to the flood board. The flood board wanted to cut a drainage ditch across it and incorporate it into the flood plain, a strip of waste land between the dike and the river. But he had always said he would never sell.

Once in the afternoon, when he again stopped plowing to walk over to the west corner of the field, he saw a blue pick-up with a boat sticking out of the back moving along the rim of the dike. The pick-up stopped at his road. He decided it belonged to his nearest neighbor who lived a mile and a half up the road on the other side of the dike. A dark figure stepped onto the running board and waved. Another figure climbed onto the boat and waved something red. He waved back to them and returned to his plowing. They wouldn't try coming over after him this year. Last spring two neighbor men had started out from the dike towards his place and the current, swift against the dike, had carried them three miles down stream before they got safely back to dry ground. He had never thanked them for their efforts, because he felt that if they had tended to their own business, they wouldn't have gotten into that fix.

In the evening, as the sun neared the bluffs on the west side of the river, a few purple clouds with streamers of pink hung motionlessly in the sky. He unhooked the traces from the plow and led the horses over to a wagon standing under an elm tree. He hooked the horses to the wagon tongue which was split and re-enforced by a two-by-four wrapped with baling wire. The brown sheet of water was well up the side of the dike by then. Water had even crept into the lowest corner of the field. The trail to the house had water over it in a low spot. The horses would not cross it, and he cursed them as he climbed down from the wagon and led them across.

He did his chores, then turned the horses, the cow, and his two pigs out into the pasture where there was a knoll they could go to if the water continued rising. He fixed his supper in the dim yellow light of a kerosene lamp. A grease-stained

kitchen range, a table covered with newspaper, a cabinet stacked with pans, and cobwebs in the corners pressed against the lumpy ball of light from the lamp.

His wife had died ten years ago. Since then a woman's hand had touched the house only when his daughter-in-law cleaned it up. She and Howey lived six miles away in Nebraska City. Howey drove a gasoline truck and was the only one of the three children that got to visit him very often. They had all been gone many years. The other son worked in an Omaha meat packing plant; the daughter was married to a farmer and lived in Arkansas.

Shuffling between the stove and the cupboard, he talked quietly about his hard day of work and about the fine black earth of his land and about the river. The lamplight flickered over his gray face as he sat eating. The dogs lay on a sack spotted by shalts of light from the kitchen stove. He chuckled when he thought about his visitors of the day before. He had told the engineer and the neighbor who came down in the afternoon that he would be leaving, he supposed, when the catfish started knocking on his door. He did not tell them what he had been thinking all the time they had been there, that he had lived seventy-two years, most of which time he had never been farther than a mile from the river, and much of the time on the river or surrounded by it, and he didn't need any engineer to come down and tell him when the river was going to flood.

After supper he went outside with a lantern, out past the barn to the bank of the slough; he felt the earth tremulous beneath him. The air smelled of stirred up swamp mud and stagnant water. He heard the river tearing at its banks not far away like distant thunder; he could see the dark, roiling surface of the flood water. It was still rising on the bank. He went over by the barn to his boat which he used fishing and trapping. He set a gasoline can in back by the outboard motor and started pulling the boat across the drive towards the house. He moved it a few feet, stopped pulling at it and stood a moment. The light of the lantern threw shadows upward over his face. His shoulders heaved as he breathed. Struggling with the skiff and the dancing figures created by the lantern, he pulled the skiff into the backyard and tied it to a post of the porch.

Boards creaked on the porch as he shuttled across it. In the morning, he thought as he entered the house, if the river is still rising, I will go down the slough to the main channel and cross to Nebraska City. The house was silent. Smoke puffed from the lamp chimney as he clumped through the doorway that led to his bedroom. With him crowded his inflated shadow. It spread over the walls and clung to the objects of the bedroom, a dresser with a tarnished mirror, a chair with a back bound with wire, an iron poster bed covered with a faded comforter from which emanated the odor of mildew.

He woke late that night hearing the dogs whining and barking tersely. Through the bedroom window he saw the gilt-rimmed tree in his yard rising out of a shimmering lake. He dressed and scooped some underclothes out of a drawer into a sugar sack. He wrapped his false teeth in a handkerchief and put them on top of the clothes.

As he stepped out onto the back porch, the dogs increased their whining and slinked over to him. On the dark mass of the flood shivered the moonlight. His

house was held in a stricture of water which had tightened to the very floor of the porch.

He pulled the boat up against the porch and pushed the dogs into it. He rolled his trouser legs to his knees and stepped down into the cold water. Towards the barn, across the shallow places, he pulled the boat. A swift current swept around a bend in the slough and down into the shadow of the barn. Before he realized the current was there the boat wrenched out of his hands and obliterated in the shadows of the trees down along the slough bank. Only the attenuating yelp of the dogs marked the swift passage of the boat towards the river.

Cursing, he slogged away from the slough. Mud pulled at his feet in front of the barn. In a soft pile of corn stalks and sticks, he sank to his knees. An old, flat-bottomed skiff, unused for over a year, was stored on the slanting roof of the chicken house. He pulled the skiff off the low end of the roof, then found a loose board on the side of the building and pulled it off. Inside the chickens cackled and squawked. He threw the board into the boat and pushed it across the debris to the barn. In front of the barn door, he stopped and felt under the floor boards. His hand came up wet. He pulled the boat part way into the barn while he felt around beside the door in a sack of oats. He withdrew a tin can and placed it under the board seat, then pushed the boat over towards the slough.

Shivering from the cold water, he climbed into the boat beside the barn where the water was deep enough to float it. With the board, he pushed off into the current which he didn't have to see then. He was swept rapidly down the slough into the shadows of the trees where the other boat had gone.

Suddenly the roar of the flood seemed louder. He glanced behind him where the shadows ended and the yellow lake of moonlight lay. The roof of the barn was bright, and while it held his glance, a monster like a tumbling mass of snow and rock, rose out of the night beyond and enveloped it. With the image of the crumpling barn roof in his mind, he was thrown to the floor boards as the boat surged forward. Upon pushing himself up and looking around, he found that he rode upon a gray wave of water which swept over the cottonwood trees of the flood plain thickets. The continual on-rushing trees flattened beneath him. Branches clawed at the boat and tossed it about until he thought it would be torn apart. The forward motion slowed as the flood crest passed, but he continued moving rapidly towards the main channel of the river.

He didn't notice the water in the boat until he was in the main channel and nearing the bridge at Nebraska City. The water was almost covering his feet by then. He started bailing frantically with the can. Before he arrived at the bridge he could hear the water roaring under it. As the sound grew louder, he looked up from bailing and discovered in the boat's path, the black wall of a concrete pillar. The river piled against it and fell off on either side in plumed waves. He paddled hard with the board and missed the pillar, but could not avoid the swift water around it. The boat turned and struck a log, then water spilled over one side and in a moment filled the boat. He found himself moving rapidly along with only his head above the black surface of the river. He grabbed at a log which passed near and left the boat. A clicking and high-pitched squeaking sound impinged upon the roar of the river. In the moonlight, he detected the fleeting form of a rat at the far end of the

log, then two pair of eyes watching him and then two more. He could not tell how many there were, milling and frantic at the end of the log. He detected the vague shape of one approaching him, exposing its teeth, hissing, then vanishing. He lifted himself out of the water, depressing the log and sending the rats out into the water.

By kicking his feet he was able to move towards a tree whose hazy outline he could see nearby. He climbed onto it and straddled the broad trunk. It was floating as stable as a boat and he hugged it with his cheek against the rough bark. His heart struggled like a fish in a box. He began shivering as the coldness of the river put cramps in his muscles. All he could think about was staying on the tree until it got within swimming distance of a bank. The moonlit surface of the river lay all around him and only the distant moving shadows of the land told him that Nebraska City was being left farther and farther behind.

Two weeks later, Crawdad Smith arrived at Nebraska City. After walking six miles along the bluffs from the home of a fisherman where he had left his boat, he arrived at the street Howey lived on. It was evening and flocks of sparrows chirped in the tops of elms along the wide brick street. His overalls were yellowish-brown and stiff from mud. Toddling along the street, he looked like a gray old swamp owl. Dried balls of mud clung to the coats of the two Airedales. They walked slow to stay behind him. They never got farther than a yard from him except once when one of them spun abruptly and tore a three-inch gash in the flank of an Irish setter which came up sniffing in back of them.

Howey's wife met him at the back door of the white house and led him into the kitchen where he just stood for a moment, looking around at the spotless room, blinking his eyes like an owl in a flashlight beam, and giving off a river smell of crayfish and mud. The room had sunlight-yellow walls and contained a white refrigerator, a gas stove, an enameled metal table, and a stainless steel sink. They'd thought he was a gonner for sure this time she told him, and he said, well, he'd never had so much bad luck gotten out before.

Howey brought him clean coveralls which had "Rich Oil & Gas Co." sewn on the back and took the mud-covered overalls and water-hardened shoes out the kitchen door. The bedraggled dogs snarled at him as he dropped the clothes beside them.

Devouring supper left-overs and passing scraps to Howey to throw to the dogs, Crawdad told how he had awakened with the river almost running in his back door, how he had lost the boat and dogs, got swamped in his old boat and finally ended up perched in a tree and floating almost clear to Kansas City on it before he got in near enough to a shore he could swim to. He told how he came back up the river walking along the bluffs, hitching rides, sleeping on the ground, and how he arrived at the river town of Brownsville where he heard about a boat lodged on a willow piling. The townspeople said it belonged to whoever could walk up to it without getting both legs chawed off by two wild dogs that hung around it. They had driven off everyone that tried to approach it and had been vicious enough that no one even cared to get close enough to shoot them.

Why didn't he call and say he was all right Howey said to him as the two men sat around the table and the woman cleared the dishes. He said, well, he figured they'd know he was coming sometime sooner or later.

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Lying on the cot that night on the screened-in porch with the dogs curled on the floor beside him, he could not go to sleep right away. The next day he would cross the river from the fisherman's place where he had left his boat and run up along the Iowa side until he came to the mouth of the slough. From there he would be able to see his land. Maybe he would find some stock on the knoll down by the river. Before he could do anything to the house, which Howey said had a wall caved in and was washed off the foundation, he'd have to get his corn planted. It still wasn't too late for that if the ground had been drying properly the last few days. The flood would have stirred the big catfish out of the deep holes in the river and he would have to get some throw lines and a gill net out for them. Now would be the time to fill the live box with fish to sell to the occasional customers who would come down through the deep river thickets to his place when the road dried. He did not go to sleep until he had listed in his mind all the supplies he would need to take with him the next day, the seed corn, the catfish bait, the stock feed, and the eats for himself.

Old Chinese Song

*I wait, far from the sun
Keenly I listen, inwardly I smile,
Soon you'll tread softly
On each porcelain tile.*

*You have not come.
I'll wait and watch, and wait again
Till the cool dusk
Breathes heavily on the sun.
A crescent moon climbs the yulan,
A gong clashes,
A monotone chants,
"Young evening bears a star."*

Japanese Love Song

*I awoke when a sash of light
Provoked my sleep and
Muted rain tapped the hardened ground.
On the winter thatch
The quiet iris weaves the sound
Of frost enjewelled on a wedding gown.
Spring is a bride sifting thin clouds
Over the earth's eyes
As I am wedded near the April skies.*

-Edith G. Wies
(two poems)

Postcard from N. Y.

This town is built upon
 History's garbage, and covered with stone,
 Indian bones, dried pools,
 crumbled Dutch walls
 and the ghosts of sea-shells.

In the Portuguese Jews'
cemetery, see, where we fix our clews
 amid the brick and steel.
 We keep the ocean eel
 in the sewers, and he's loyal.

And when the tourists come,
as out of Sparta, any clumsy kingdom,
 stiff, and green, and taught
 the insolent notion that
 Wonder can't be bought,

we, knowing natives, sell,
with every ad-man's tricky ritual,
 our cut-rate heritage.
 Unbribed, the crazy gull
 screams like a landlord from the Brooklyn Bridge.

Song

My love whose breasts are round as loaves
came asking of my weather
thanking my sparrow's sentiment
 so hungry in his singing,

and I sang forth the lively Spring
 all in a green-upstairs
while the dawn rose a flutter note
and told me of her dowry:

how glad I sent my brekfast north
 to spend a tropic dollar,
 but she whose breasts are round as grapes
 fled tiptoe to her valley,

and when the Winter weighed me down
with such a clever reason,
I still sang zero to the wind
that roundabout madonna.

--Felix Stefanile

(two poems)

THE ACCUSED

Lachlan MacDonald

At first they had been reasonable with him. The Supervisor, for his part, casually asked him to dash off a note reversing his stand on The Case. There had been no threats, no promises, not so much as a narrowed eyelid. The Supervisor and The Agency had been perfectly reasonable. More reasonable, if that was possible, than The Girl or The Friends had been. The Girl, however, had not even asked for a written statement, and if one had been implied in her conversation she had not stated it directly. The Friends would be content, she suggested, if he would only admit the he had been a sad to sin The eithe Pithis bie, the be ired out, to pass the word around.

On one note both The Girl and The Supervisor had been in agreement: after all, they said on their separate visits, it was over twelve years ago. Why hold out for something in the dead past? It couldn't have been that important, they said.

He was no longer sure how important it had been to take his stand on The Case, or how important it had been to sign The Petition. He was no longer sure of anything. He wished they would leave him alone.

When he had refused to discuss the matters with them they had continued to be most reasonable. They spoke to him calmly, softly, and with the utmost persuasion. They pointed out to him that it was he who was being unreasonable.

They had begun by stopping him on the street and inviting him for a drink. When he began to stay in his apartment they phoned him, often several times a day. After several weeks he began to agree with them both. When the phone shrieked its summons he picked it up dutifully and would stand there nodding his head in silent agreement. But it was an agreement that he was never able to voice, an answer to their requests that he was unable to give them.

Today had been the most difficult one. At five o'clock in the afternoon The Supervisor had called and nearly wrung an agreement from him with his first quiet words.

"Listen," The Supervisor said, "you and I both know that this is a dead issue. All I want to do is get this off of my books, clear it up. You know I've got nothing against you. But, my God, if you insist on making a big thing out of it there's nothing I can do to save you, absolutely nothing."

He caught himself nodding at the phone, checked it, and said, tonelessly, "If I've broken the law you better come and get me."

"Come off it, man. You got nothing to worry about. You won't get in any trouble. This will be the end of it; as soon as you write what you really feel about The Case. I know you couldn't help yourself that other time. How about it? Well just put it away in The Agency files and forget it."

"Can't you leave me alone?"

"Listen, man, I've been protecting you. Don't you realize that? What's the matter

with you, anyway? We aren't trying to persecute anybody about this business. Why, I get a dozen of these deals and nobody makes a peep. It doesn't cost them anything. They just write us a note and forget about it."

"I can't forget about it."

"Hell, that was twelve years ago. Nobody blames you. I'm just trying to give you a break; once your file is cleared up you'll be better off and so will I."

He thought of hanging up, but he said, "I have to go now. I have to see about a job."

"Wise up, man. You're going to have more than job trouble."

"I can't do it." He was about to try to explain, to tell once more, when there was a click at The Supervisor's end of the line. He held the phone a moment, then put it on the cradle and waited.

There was no point in leaving the apartment, or in looking for a job, at five in the afternoon or any other time. As soon as someone learned that his file was tagged they told him they couldn't take the chance. Sure, there were jobs to be had, if he would turn to The Friends.

But The Friends were inflexible. The Girl had been over just that morning to tell him he couldn't expect anything from The Friends.

She had settled herself by the apartment window and crossed her legs and given him that dead-serious look that was so different from the old days. She did not remove her gloves.

"They can't understand your point of view," she told him, and her voice was dry, brittle, different than it had been during the past few weeks.

"They are sure that you have been working for The Agency," she continued. "They have seen you together with The Supervisor. Only I understand that he's alter you for something; I know you aren't working for them. But you know The Friends, they, won't take my word for it, not with The Petition on record. I don't see why you would sign such a thing, stick up for such a person, it just isn't like you. Don't you see, dear? I can't understand it and neither can The Friends. If you'd just be yourself again, just be reasonable, we'd be glad to help you."

"I can't get a job," he said. It was a statement without emotion, not a complaint. He was feeling beaten.

She had dropped her voice, then, and said, very softly and intimately, "That's just it, darling. As long as you fight The Friends we can never work things out for ourselves. It's part of my life, and part of yours, too. Couldn't you do this thing for me for us?"

He had nodded, absently, thinking that this was the way he had expected it to be, the final, the personal, argument. But her face brightened at what she took to be his consent.

"Oh, darling, will you?" she had exclaimed, clasping his hand

He had awakened abruptly and shaken his head. "No," he said. "No, I can't!"

The Girl had flung his hand away from her with a fury and hurried from the apartment. Then he had waited, sitting, not eating, until the phone rang and, picking it up, he had heard the voice of The Supervisor.

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There were no more calls. He watched the sun disappear and the city lights come on and he felt that he was standing in a pit, waiting to be taken to the arena. Voices sounded in the darkness and trumpets in the distance blew. He knew what they were saying.

The Agency: repudiate your stand on The Case. The Supervisor: I've been protecting you... I can't protect you anymore.

The Friends: say you never signed The Petition, say it was a forgery, say you despise the man. The Girl: do this thing ... for us.

All together: It was twelve years ago, it is a dead issue, be reasonable, be reasonable.

He was staring at the door (was it the door of the pit or the door of his apartment?) beginning to remember a story once read, when he heard the knocking.

The Pal was slapping him on the back, The Pal was mixing himself a drink, The Pal was borrowing some records, lighting cigarettes, telling the one about the one-armed whore, laughing to everything but his eyes, talking, talking, talking. He settled in a chair, bounced up, finished his drink, looked for another.

"I've only got a minute, got a piece lined up, got to be moving along, say that's a book I've been meaning to read, why don't I see you around, thanks for the record, give me a ring."

At the door (now unmistakably the door of the apartment) The Pal stopped, discarded the smile.

"What's eating you, anyway. That political business again? I don't see how you let it get you down. Why do you?"

He shrugged.

"I know what I'd do, I'd just walk out on it. That's what I'd do."

The Pal picked up the smile, the record, his cigarette, closing the door as he left.

Alone now, but out of the pit, in the arena, he faced the two classic doors, behind one the Lady, behind the other-the Tiger.

But there the story ended, he told himself. It ended there, and the reader could assume whatever he pleased. Open this door and the Tiger springs to my throat. Open that one and the love of the Lady smothers me forever.

He was no more able to choose one against the other than he had been twelve years before. He stood at his window, telling himself, almost trying, trying to discover some hope, wanting the story to end there. He considered that he had not eaten all day, that there was very little food in the apartment and that he might starve himself. He considered also the gas jets and his razor blades. And then, from the window, he saw that his decision was in the process of being made by others.

On the street below, at the corner of the next block, he saw a cinematic figure reading a newspaper, watching the entrance to the apartment building. He realized with a slight shock that The Supervisor had told the truth, that The Agency had changed its tactics.

It came to him as no surprise, then, when he heard a sound on the fire escape at the rear of the apartment and caught a glimpse of movement through the kitchen window. He was sure that it was a figure going up to the roof to wait until darkness. He was sure also that The Friends had become The Enemies.

24. COASTLINES

His first thought was that The Pal was sure to be implicated. This bothered him less than he felt it should. His next thought, ironic to him, was that his decision might be a matter of which person got to him first. Escape occurred to him, but he did not touch the phone, so sure he was that it was dead. Already he detached himself from the moment and tried to consider his most important problem.

Whatever happens, he thought, I must understand myself, I must know what I accused in The Case and I expressed myself for them. I did not consider their facts too gimmish and what I would have decided. The facts are simple enough: there were those

families, I did not consider whether or not they were guilty, I thought only of their humanity. I could not say I acted out of a sense of justice. Why, then, did I act at all?

And, he thought, this is also true of the other affair. I did not approve of The Petition, but I signed it. I didn't sign it because of any feeling for the dignity of the man's office; I didn't sign it because I felt the man was too contemptible to be worth the reprimand. Why did I sign? Why, if when The Petition failed it did not make me particularly happy or sad? Why, then?

He heard footsteps in the hall approaching his door and he snapped the latch, knowing the figure from the street was on the other side of the thin wooden panel. He thought, wildly, wait one minute until I can say it! At the same moment there was the sound of the kitchen window being forced open from the fire escape. Wait, he thought, give me two seconds!!

He began to perceive why he had acted, to realize what had been in his mind all along.

Then he cried out: "I hated them both!"

But that was not enough. He knew with the words that it was not enough.

"I loved them, too!" he cried, and he fell to his knees, trembling.

In the half moment of silence that followed he discovered what it meant to both love and hate at one instant. And he knew that, if by any miracle he lived, he would never be able to change his stand from what it had been.

"Because they were accused," he said in a whisper.

At that instant, and for newspaper days thereafter, the Lady and the Tiger claimed him as their own.

Argosy

See where the argosy of fear
 Floats a sea of ink and muddle.
 Three spars emasculate three names:
 Out of time, of work, and out of place.

The bulkhead's wired,
 The steward's hired
 For cursory clues
 Of subversive views.
 Stores by the bulk
 Rot in the hulk;
 They keep it on ice
 For a higher price.

On the bridge, the captain smiles
 A wreath for tombs of the windward lee,
 Informs the crew

severity's the brew
 of democracy

"It's sure a case of liberty
 Against your Genghis tyranny.
 We castigate all social schism,
 Use lower case, but capital-IsM."

Under the clouds, black scarves flapping,
 The wind's cold spit swills the deck,
 And the crew sprawls out against the mast.

"O sing a song of seven bells,
 Of burning spuds and seven hells.
 The scullery boy may be a spy,
 A stowaway for the F.B.I.
 Officers are getting formal,
 Parodies of being normal.
 Careful, careful, darling daughter:
 Vital Centers run to water."

Yesterday, under appropriate flags,
 There were given to the arms of the sea
 Two that died of hunger, one dead in a brawl,
 And one before dawn

without rites or regret
 a mutineer.

"O sing a song of sixty-pence,
 O gnomes and goblins get thee hence.
 Watch the sky for signs of grace,
 A miracle will bloom apace.

Then it comes. No miracle, but harbor. Round hug of home.
 The land folds them in. Shore's crowd delirious,
 The ship cracks at center, parts the water;
 All splints and shavings, bolts to its grave.
 Who thought the ship was final, wade to the sand,
 And, weeping arrival, invade the certain arms of brothers.

Letter to Beatrice

She will not speak, and in her raiment's grace
delineates for me most bitter margins.

She leaves the small boy, tattered,
pegging his nose to frosted window panes,
his desires only crossing the crystal wall
where shadows, blue or tailored, dance
the stiff cotillion. The music of that ball,
the arid laughter, bell of manners there,
toll the formal safety of the unsafe hall.
While the small one gapes, is still, and waits.
he senses tinsel hearts of puppets' pirouette,
and in the shape of hands maneuvering,
(fastidious and rigged, they tug the air),
the coldness of the heart seduces him.

If there is some curling absence here,
the tender stitch of lost loves, healing,
or coldness rocked in discipline of masters,
consider there, over the ordered rim,
that bright unordered scattering of stars,
or the impassioned rune of suns exploding.
Now I hear the marvellous carillon
from your presence, merely, round the desk,
the study lamp. Roped by fabric, strung,
intact, by limits mutable and black,
the brooding hymn of darkness separates.
Before the midnight of compassion,
your ordered magic curves, is lost, and rings,
and rings, breaking the heart, and the circled pane.

-George Bluestone
(two poems)

Shipyard No. 3-Richmond

A desolate place, square miles of empty buildings,
noise as of faraway trains, as on a desert, or on a
mountain, a few springlike bird chirps in the 5 o'clock
shadow, warbling from the hills

--an American flag flying in the silence above the
gate, where a negro in a uniform stares at fingerprinted
photographed FI passes & identity cards

--low modern buildings, rural pentagon-the abandoned-
the Administration building has a pile of chairs and splin-
tered slot machines blocking the glass facade of the entrance.
The janitor even is gone.

California sun going down over it all, a blue sky and
peacefulness.

Meanwhile at the dock of the shipyard the Walker a huge
ship full of bottomless holes (where once the gamblers soldiered
together coming to & fro from Korea

now also abandoned, with a skeleton crew
 racing madly and dispiritedly up & down the passageways
 working vainly to keep the mountain, the monmouth iron leviathan
 from falling into rust and disentanglement in the long years
 since she was tied up there & rendered inactivated
 out of permanent service-- in hope or fear of another war,
 kept alive

--and tied up next to her an even more absurd LST, with a
 big cave in the middle for cargo, where I work.

The great spread of the plant, a fire station, huge motionless
 cranes poised in the air over the ships and buildings, inactive,
 so that the clank of a tin can echoes more loud than all the
 barndoors of the ships of battle. And the song of the train
 faraway.

-Allen Ginsberg

Poets Hitchhiking on the Highway

Of course I tried to tell him
 but he cranked his head
 without an excuse.

I told him the sky chases
 the sun

And he smiled and said:
 "What's the use."

I was feeling like a demon
 again

*So I said: "But the ocean chases
 the fish."*

This time he laughed

*and said: Suppose the
 strawberry were
 pushed into a mountain."*

After that I knew the
 war was on-

So we fought:

*He said: "The apple-cart like a
 broomstick-angel
 snaps & splinters
 old dutch shoes."*

I said: "Lightning will strike the old oak
 and free the fumes!"

He said: "Mad street with no name."

I said: "Bald killer! Bald killer! Bald killer!"

He said, getting real mad,
"Firestoves! Gas! Couch!"

I said, only smiling

*I know God will turn back his head
 if I sat quietly and thought."*

We ended by melting away,
 hating the air!

-Gregory Corso

HOW I CAME TO DRAW

FORCES

Sylvia Jarrico

Every time Geneva becomes the focus of world attention, I remember what happened to me and my family there, and how I came to draw forces.

In the summer of 1947 my husband and my son and I arrived in Geneva on the day of its annual festival celebrating itself. To be in Geneva at all was wonderful. To find the Festival of Geneva in progress as we arrived was to be fawned upon. We had not even known that Geneva had a festival of its own and so, of course, could not possibly have planned it that way.

We had been planning another treat in Geneva—one that we had learned to look forward to with unblemished confidence in the course of the trip that preceded our arrival. We had been driving north through France in a middle-aged rented black Buick, organizing our itinerary increasingly around restaurants designated with one or more stars in the annual Michelin Guide, which is, as you may know, a thick book with fine print, a non-profit gourmet's road map published by a patriotic French tire company with a highly developed palate. The intensity of our feelings about French cuisine mounted daily. However, since my son Bill was seven years old that summer, we compromised with Michelin's guidance sufficiently to maintain a sensible American average of three meals a day.

As we were leaving Digne one morning, I was browsing through later sections of the Michelin Guide, reading especially provocative excerpts aloud. I came to the closing pages dealing with western France; I reached the Swiss border and discovered that the Guide did not halt at borders if there was good reason to push on. Over the border, in Geneva, the Guide continued, there is a superb table, an eastern outpost of French cuisine at its best. And its specialty quenelles. I spelled it out lasciviously.

"What is it?" Billy asked.

"Something plural probably," Paul explained cheerfully.

"If the waiter speaks English, we'll ask for some quenelles; if he doesn't, we'll say *des quenelles*," I expanded, deftly nailing down both our itinerary and Billy's grasp of French idiom.

"*Des quenelles, s'il vous plaît*," Billy chanted.

"*Des quenelles, si'l vous plaît*," Paul and I chanted with him.

"I'll order for all of us when we get there," Billy offered. "I wonder what *quenelles* is."

"*Qu'est-ce que c'est quenelles?*" I chanted educationally.

"Hell of a rhythmical language!" Paul said.

"Say '*mon dieu*,'" Billy suggested. "Mon dieu' is not swearing."

"Mon dieu! French is a hell of a rhythmical language!" Paul conceded happily.

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Billy looked at Paul with startled appreciation, an expression supremely becoming to him.

Thus, giddy with tourism, we drove into Geneva four days later. There were flags and streamers, and excursion boats with music on the lake. There were family picnics on the lake shore and confetti was for sale on the street corners. We felt that everyone was our friend.

The maid who came to prepare our hotel room said we were lucky to have a fourth-floor overlooking the lake because our view of the fireworks tonight would be marvelous. The Festival of Geneva, it transpired, is marked by a sensational display of fireworks over the lake. Swiss know-how in the matter of fireworks is world famous, she told us.

Quenelles and fireworks, then, constituted the broad outline of our activities for the day. An hour later, bathed, neat, as Swiss looking as the next fellow, we set out for Longchamps, the restaurant of the quenelles.

It was on the outskirts of town, an old square wooden building with a vine-covered veranda along two sides. Except for one car parked at the back door, the parking area was empty. An unusually self-possessed dachshund waited to see who was getting out of our car, and then continued across the yard toward a large, closely cropped green field.

"Who's he?" Billy said.

There was no one on the dim veranda when we stepped through the vines. We strolled along it, passing several tables, until we came to a screened doorway. Inside we could make out a large dark room.

"Hello!" Paul called. "Hello! Hello!"

A child stood up in the room and ran farther into the house.

We knocked, waited, and continued along the veranda looking for a more business-like entrance. When a door slammed behind us, we turned back. Rounding the corner of the veranda, we confronted a middle-aged man, dressed like a father, who bowed like a waiter. He murmured inquiringly and Paul said slowly, "Nous entendons que vous avez ici des quenelles merveilleuses."

The man looked at us thoughtfully. Without speaking, he motioned us to a table on the veranda. When we were seated as if in a restaurant, Billy said rhythmically, "Des quenelles, s'il vous plaît." The man bowed and left, entering the room where the child had been.

We waited. Our confidence that everything had been properly arranged was put to a severe test of time. Billy left to explore the neat green field. He returned cupping a handful of bright little copper shells.

"Voici bullets!" he announced.

We had additional time to speculate that Longchamps was probably set up to serve a rifle club that was not in session today because of the festival, before the man reappeared, now dressed as a waiter, and set out a steaming bowl for each of us. In the center of each bowl was a pile of something like dumplings, from which individual members were disengaging themselves to float away over the surface of a thick pale sauce.

"Est-ce que cettes sont des quenelles?" Paul commented in a friendly way.

The waiter nodded gravely and turned to leave.

"M'sieu! S'il vous plaît!" I called. "M'sieu, qu'est-ce que c'est quenelles en anglais, s'il vous plaît"

"Quenelles. is.." he began with assurance, "quenelles is... meat forcemeat. Yes, quenelles is forcemeat." He was satisfied with his English as compared with our French, and gave us an airy little salute as he turned away.

We were puzzled.

"What did he say?" Billy whispered.

"Forcemeat," Paul whispered back.

"What is forcemeat, though?" Billy asked.

"Let's find out for ourselves," Paul said aloud, picking up his fork.

We each took uncharacteristically dainty bites, and chewed slowly. Fluffy. Spicy. Perfectly delicious and perfectly unfamiliar.

"Cheese balls," Paul said.

"Oatmeal?" Billy ventured

Paul was looking intelligent. "You know, like Welsh Rabbit is cheese. Well, French or Swiss forcemeat is cheese."

"And everybody knows that mincemeat is cheese," I scoffed.

"No, listen," Paul advised me. "Like head cheese is meat. It works both ways, I mean. Cheese and meat are interchangeable. Proteins, folk wisdom, and all that."

"Nuh-uh. I like the theory, but you're wrong about forcemeat. Remember? The waiter said 'quenelles is meat.'" And then he said "forcemeat" as if to tell what kind."

Billy frowned. "Maybe he said 'horsemeat.'"

Paul and I dismissed Billy's suggestion kindly but firmly. Remarks like this made us realize from time to time how young Billy really was, too young to understand the simple institutional truth that the Michelin Guide would not leave French soil for horsemeat.

"But it could be something unusual like squirrel-meat or bear-meat," Paul proposed to Billy encouragingly.

"Maybe it's meat from a force!" Billy exclaimed. "Force ... meat," he added with good diction.

Paul and I were full of approval. "Sure. That's it," Paul said. "It took so long because the man had to go out and kill a force."

"What is a force?" Billy asked carefully. He watched, alert, while Paul and I held a speedy silent consultation. Paul's glance said "Let's play." Mine said "Okay, but keep it simple."

"Oh, there's different kinds of forces," Paul began. "One kind you may have heard about is the Force of Gravity."

The joke clicked for Billy during a pause. "O-o-oh," he said admiringly.

"I've heard about the Force of Habit," I contributed.

"And what other kinds of forces?" Billy wanted to know.

"The other forces aren't so well known probably," I hedged.

"But what are they though?" Billy insisted.

"There's the Irresistible Force," I said.

"And Historical Forces," Paul said. "And Mysterious Forces."

"But what is a force really?" Billy asked.

"Well," Paul considered, "it's a strong little animal..."

... That grazes around restaurants and likes to watch rifle practice," I concluded for him.

"Those are the Armed Forces," Paul specified.

"Oh, no!" Billy exclaimed. "And how about the Air Force?"

We had reached a heady peak of self-congratulation. "That's the kind that has wings," I said, soaring.

We were content to devote ourselves primarily to the quenelles for a while. Paul claims now that he recognized them as meatballs at this point, and understood that forcemeat is simply meat that has been ground or otherwise "forced." That is his claim now, but what he said then was: "The Centrifugal Force goes in ever-widening circles around the rest of the herd."

So I said, "The Centripetal Force, conversely, likes to be in the middle of things and is, in general, as gregarious as a sheep."

"Landing Force!" Billy yelled.

"Oh sure," Paul said, "I've heard of them. Popular in the Marine Corps as mascots."

I could think of Naval Force, but I did not want to transgress in the area that Billy had carved out for himself. I thought of Police Force too, but nothing good to go with it. "Distinguishable by its flat feet" seemed only so-so now that we had explored the possibilities a little. Paul and Billy were eating quietly too. We finished our quenelles, using spoons for the sauce.

Driving back to the hotel, Billy wanted answers to new questions. He wanted to know what forces really are. He was not satisfied to know that they are pushes and pulls and things that make other things happen. He wanted facts. He had been taken along, half-fare, on a whirlwind excursion into the world of cause and effect, and he liked it, and he intended to stay, and he wanted to begin preparing for citizenship in it right now. He pursued the subject into the lobby of the hotel, up the elevator, and into our room, and stopped only when the fireworks started.

He drew his chair up to the open window and settled his elbows on the sill. A soundless warm wind stirred his hair.

Here and there in the twilight over the Lake of Geneva a streak attenuated itself excruciatingly, higher than our room, exploded languidly. The streaks multiplied and grew stronger until it was fully night, and then the display was prodigal, crackling, and brilliant. Below our room the street was stirring with confetti-throwers, some of whom were dancing to the music on the excursion boats.

"Geneva is full of forces tonight," Billy said, yawning out the window.

Paul stretched out on the couch near my chair. "Shall we tell him about the Humanitarian Forces, the Forces of Enlightenment, the Peace Forces, that have converged in Geneva for generations?"

"When he's older," I whispered. "So many forces are Invisible Forces to him, or Forces Beyond His Control."

"Closely related to Inscrutable Forces probably," Paul yawned.

"They're all closely related," I said comfortably. And when Paul looked at me with mild questioning, I found it easy to explain, "By the Force of Family Ties, of course."

CHOREOGRAPHER OF WORDS

DANCE WITHOUT SHOES, by William Pillin; a Book Club for Poetry selection, The Golden Quill Press, Francetown, N.H., 80 pp., \$2.50.

Wherever the dance is felt, wherever music is heard, there is happiness; the dancer is the happy one of the earth; the end of the dance is despair - then there is ice and snow. In William Pillin's latest book of poems, his third, these symbols grapple with the facts of the world as the poet knows and has known them. There is nothing complicated in Pillin's symbolism; it is as simple as "All songs of passion share/ an ultimate despair" or "We dance pavannes to tambours and celestes./We try new laughter. We shed all our deaths/liked faded working clothes." At the end, we realize that the poet is capable of feeling both happiness and sadness simply, basically, without flim-flam or dilution, and this is heartening; it humanizes him, because it tells us so unmistakably that both moods are the staples of the existence we and the poet know in common. But saying this is saying nothing new; it is merely something that ought to be said more often.

Despite the apparent ease of the symbolism, there are in it deeper implications. What happens when the dancer grows older and cannot dance as he once did? Doesn't the old dance become his memory, the remembrance of his mood as it was actualized in the past? To once have been the dancer is to have captured the motion in the mind beyond the rhythm in the blood. The dance, then, goes on as a known experience, happiness exists through having existed in the past. Even in the sadness of nostalgia, as in "There Was a Time We Could Subdue a Storm," the memory works:

... we laughed, we ran to rainswept linden grove
past doorways where embracing couples
told their breviaries of love.

The wind swore. Thunders slowly salvoed
and spattered blue upon the ashen sheaves...
Now we're content to snare/love's smaller game."

Here is a narrower world with room enough
for soul's performance of a brief pavanne.
We sit indoors and hear the dolorous
andante of the rain.

The memory of the dance provides the bridge for a future dance, for in the title poem Pillin writes:

She rises, treads a virginal ballet
naked before the mirror's frost and flare
and hums a little tune while fingers play
with hairpins on her darkly coiling hair...

... Come, let us dancing greet the day that brings
the scanty coin of soon-spent happiness.

Death is no medicine to take in small"
black doses till the dancing limbs are numb
and sorrow will not silence iron growl
of massed frontiers or stop the sunlike bomb.

So come, my love, put on a naiad mask
for pas de deux upon a dew-damp lawn;
extended in a graceful arabesque
we greet with fingertips the morning sun.

Having been happy, it becomes possible to be optimistic. Pity those who have never danced And here we have one sort of answer to the metaphorical question Yeats once asked:

O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

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Only the dancer himself knows, because he has gotten the dance in the memory; the dance comes first; it must be found, and will be lost, and may be found again; it is only the dancer who changes: in this is the knowledge.

It should not be supposed, however, from what has been said that Pillin is a mere hedonist. There is too much awareness in these poems of terror and evil, war and the possibility of a future landscape that will be pure desolation. Ice and snow are repeated symbols of terror and portents, and in one or two poems a clammy hand is not far from the reader's hand.

For the most part gracefully clear, the poems handle themes we are generally familiar with as a part of the everyday world: "Prelude and Dance on Quitting a Rotten Job," "Melancholy at [wilight]," "Song on Having a Roof of Our Own," "Poem on Growing Older," "Song for a Sleepless Night," and others, pieces whose titles are adhered to straightforwardly (no detours to ancient Greece or Rome) in the bodies of the poems.

But there are troubles, too. Unfortunately, a number of the offerings are too pretty, resulting from the overmuch use of such words as "luminous" and "silver" which have a nice liquid sound, but are irritating in their fuzziness -- they are like moonbeams, ungraspable, and like too many moonbeams, leave a vague and sickly light in the mind of the reader. Another tendency of Pillin is sometimes to be triflingly romantic, as in "Transfigured Night," where the lines "whose breathing hair transfigures night,/whose eyes are limitless and blue" evoke no precise feeling of love or passion, but only a dimly sentimental mood unworthy of this poet who, at his best, writes of love as if he really knew the meaning of the word.

Pillin, as befits a writer whose recurring symbols are the dance and music, pattern and rhythm, has a fine ear for the language although, incidentally, he was born in the Ukraine. He is a traditional poet, writing mainly a tightly organized iambic toot with rhyming and formal stanzaic structures heavily predominating. In only one respect, it seems to me, do his lines sometimes jar when they are not supposed to, and that is when he eliminates the article or possessive pronoun in cases where the flow of the language indicates they should be present. He does this to preserve the tightness of the meter, but I think the practice results too often in interruptions in the progress of the reading at unimportant points in the poems.

There is a marvelous unity to the poems in this book, a unity which just rarely becomes a sameness. About a dozen pieces in the collection are felicitous in the way that a Mozart or Vivaldi concerto is: Pillin does not strain for the majesties of a Beethoven or Sibelius symphony --he recognizes well his own metier. One of the best poems in this book is "That Which Is Good," which deserves to be quoted in full, itself the final commentary on Pillin's work.

*That which is good is simply done
without the manifesto's noise
as Francis talking to the birds
or Leo to the peasant boys.*

*The socialism of the heart
is not in schedules, is in man
and what is generous on earth
is generous without a plan.*

*As when creative fingers roam
anarchic space in hit or miss
and suddenly discover there
a luminous caprice.*

*So musical this silence is!
so natural the heart's technique
like sunlight glittering in trees;
the rest is rhetoric.*

Gene Frumkin

THE HOLLOW TOWER

The \$10,000 Harper prize for 1957 has gone to *Tower in the West* (362 pp., \$3.95), a novel put together by Frank Norris with the deliberate and sometimes tedious seriousness that must have gone into the skyscraper which is the book's central symbol. The single impression it achieves is of very thin Hollywood, something with all the advantages of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* and few of the drawbacks of that onetime best seller about a stubborn and idealistic architect. Gary Cooper was miscast in that role; Glenn Ford would be a happy choice for the role of George Washington Hanes. More to moviedom's taste, *Tower* has politics without parties or Party, the kept press is so obliquely noted it is never distressing, and none of the women are raped—three strikes that were against *The Fountainhead*. Norris comes boldly toward each of these situations and then ducks into the elevator.

The *Tower* is the final and greatest achievement of Thomas Jefferson Hanes ("Everybody, or almost everybody, in his profession loved him: Louis Sullivan, Adler, Root, Burnham, Holabird, and all the rest.") and is said to be in St. Louis, on the northwest corner of Eighth and Chestnut Streets. It has 20 stories plus a six-story tower. In the 1950s it becomes the home of a municipal college. Which reminds us of the Auditorium Building built by Louis Sullivan on the southeast corner of Chicago's Michigan Avenue and Congress Street; itself a 10-story building with a seven-story tower, the Auditorium has been quickly pointed out by other reviewers and was finally acknowledged by Norris. But (as the story of the building) the book sags in the middle, it is rather the story of a younger brother George who is custodian of T.J.'s reputation, building, children, wife and mementos for all eighteen of the chapters. T.J. dies rather early in the book and the story is told from the viewpoint of a Marquandish gent accounting for his custodianship. There are few characters in fiction with George's tremendous ability to bear his sufferings without mutter or self-pity, without attempting either to escape or to lash out at his tormentors. His sense of duty is carried to such a degree that this reader was inclined to join in the general game of let's-kick-George. I had no pity for George, though some for his blurb-writer; his "courage" came off as so much stupidity, his "tenderness" was senseless, his "salty humor" was painful. If Harper is willing to part with a prize of ten thousand shells they should make the blurb-writer read the book but then maybe *Tower* does hold for him the "surge and tempo of our times."

The story does wander over a chiefly American landscape during the period from 1914 to just after WW II. George relates how he wed Mary, his brother's unfaithful and pregnant widow, the act of duty that keeps the book going. After a stillbirth George ships Mary to Pasadena and the marriage that was to have legitimized the child goes on and on while Mary refuses to consider a divorce. While she lives in luxury, all but ruins her young son and daughter and plays amorous hostess to a scoundrel, George enlists in WW I, letting his true love wed another, his building go into decline, his business be taken over by a sharp operator. Afterwards he is lucky to escape the VA scandals with a reputation as a square. Then things get tough for this Candide without zip and bounce. A prohibition gangster and one-time pal buys in on the *Tower* in time to keep it out of the scrap-iron yards of the Japs. You'd never guess what old George inherits when the gangster is gunned down. Promptly he clears out the carney manager and the raft of neon signs and turns it over to Uncle as a cadet center while he re-ups for WW II. Well, when that's over, his true love, Margaret, has a divorce and... no reviewer has yet remarked on the *Tower* as a rather large phallus and the curious vigor that infuses George once he gets rid of it and marries Margaret.

The Harper award, picked from 800 entries by judges Hamilton Basso, Orville Prescott and Jessamyn West, will have no impact on the novel as a literary form but it should sell prettily this year and make a heartbreaking film. Frank Norris has spent most of his life with the news-magazines *Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek* and *The March of Time* radio program, and it would be dishonest not to report here that the apprenticeship has left its scars. The research was apparently extensive, the style is detached in tone perhaps one cut below the *New Yorker's*, the whole performance is as smooth and as bereft of concrete values as a *Life* editorial.

Make no mistake, Norris has other skills that will please the casual reader. But he has not written the story of the builder, the businessman or the buildings; there are towers in the West that *Tower in the West* fails to comprehend.

-. MacD.

News Notes

As may be noted on the first page of this magazine, Coastlines is now operating within the corporate structure of the California Quarterly, Inc., as that corporation has had to cease publication of its magazine after a desperate struggle to obtain financial aid. The editors of Coastlines have completely replaced those of the Quarterly as directors of the corporation. This means that Coastlines circulation as well as quality of manuscripts have improved, but no changes in editorial policies have taken place. Many works appearing in this issue were previously accepted by the California Quarterly.

It has become a tradition of the literary magazine when it can no longer endure, after all means to keep it alive have been attempted, that its properties and heritage be turned over to another magazine of similar purpose. For, there is no competition where donated labor, enthusiasm and interest in the literary traditions of the world are concerned. Since the object of little magazines cannot be to reap profit, but rather to provide for writers an unsuppressed outlet for their works and for audiences the freedom to read the literary achievements of our time, the little magazine cannot help but to serve the general good. In this sense, the spirit, which sustained the Quarterly, will continue in Coastlines.

The editors of Coastlines, together with all those faithful readers who followed the career of the Quarterly regret the loss of what was not only a leader, but a vital interest to writers and reading audiences in southern California. Its existence, moreover, was a phenomenon-for as an independent literary magazine it depended on the love, devotion and enthusiasm of its editors and the many contributors who appeared in its pages without compensation. While its loss is to be regretted, the fact that it could continue publishing highly significant work for five years without the backing assured to other periodicals of its type serves as an example to other independent magazines now beginning publication.

The Skin Divers

*Skin deep we dive in attitudes
Of praying, palms together, turn
The shallowness of sudden gods*

Into a sublimated ocean

Where the metaphysical fish

Swim above the deserts of

Our basic solitude. We wish

Return to Eden and to love

*But find that wishes disappear
Approached too suddenly, though haste
Is not excuse enough. We fear
To swallow what we freely taste*

For love may be an allergy

Whose surfaces succumb to itch

*Of ecstatic proportions which we,
In shallow exile, fear to touch.*

*The surfaces we scratch of good
And evil are merely tentative*

Adjustments to an attitude.

We pray because we fear to live.

--Walter H. Kerr

To a Life Insurance Salesman

*Yours is the bluff I always fall
for in the game I never seem to choose;
being only human, I must call
the turn for the pot I always lose.*

*Smiling across from me, you hold
all the tricks, and the way you play,
I shuffle the deck and do what I'm told.
Win or draw, there's the kitty to pay.*

*You cover my past and check my hopes
(you've gambled in this way before)
and when I'm up against the ropes,
you win, we shake, and no one gets sore.*

*But then, I think as you leave, the cards
do not belong to you, the case
was provided by our common guards,
and the Company deals with a poker face.*

--Norman Friedman

Notes on Contributors

GEORGE BLUESTONE is now in Italy where he is working on fiction. His book, *Novels Into Film*, is being published by Hopkins Press. A previous contributor to *Coastlines*.

JAMES COMORTHOON comes from Dublin, Ireland, where,

in the Gaelic, was Mr. Comorthoon's first published effort. After coming to the U.S., he worked as porter, elevator operator, iron worker, sign painter, truck driver, etc.

GREGORY CORSO'S *Gasoline*, a book of poems, will soon be published by the City Lights Book Shop in San Francisco.

NORMAN FRIEDMAN has had a varied and interesting career in the navy as a commissioned officer. He is at present an instructor in English at the University of Connecticut. He has written a book of poems, as well as non-fiction on George Meredith and e. e. cummings.

ALLEN GINSBERG has been receiving extensive notice for his book of poems *Howl*, published by the City Lights Book Shop in San Francisco.

LAWRENCE S. GURNEY graduated from U.S.C. in geology, but has since been following a career as technical illustrator and cartoonist. He has also contributed interesting analytical letters to *Trace* and *Poetry Public*.

SYLVIA JARRICO is a former managing editor of the *Hollywood Quarterly* published by the University of California, and is presently an editor of the *Hollywood Review*.

DUANE JONES, a graduate of the State University of Iowa, is now working toward his M.F.A. degree at that institution. He has contributed to *Epoch*.

WALTER H. KERR writes to *Coastlines* from Maryland.

LACHLAN MacDONALD, former editor of the *Chicago Review*, is a recent addition to the staff of *Coastlines*.

THOMAS McGRATH: his novel, *Gates of Ivory*, *Gates of Horn*, will soon be published by New Century. Mr. McGrath is now completing his book-length poem, *Letters to an Imaginary Friend*, the first part of which is published in this issue.

JAMES SCHEVIL'S new verse play, "The Bloody Tenet," had its San Francisco premiere in February by the Actor's Work Shop. The play will also be published by Meridian Books. book of poems, *The Right to Greet*, was recently published by Bern Porter, and some of his poems are included in an anthology issued by Rinehart.

FELIX STEFANILE is known both as editor of *Sparrow* and for extensive publication. His first book of poems, *River Full of Craft*, was just published by the New Orleans Poetry Journal.

EDITH G. WIES, originally from New England, now lives in Maryland where she has been writing short graphic poems on children.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Following is the major portion of a letter received, commenting on Lawrence Lipton's article, "America's Literary Underground," which appeared in COASTLINES No. 6).

What is a "dis-affiliate"? To me it certainly does not mean a person who refuses to accept the cannibalistic practices of our "free" economy; or one who rejects the stratagems of the war-makers; or one who holds in contempt the cultural commodities of the market-place. No, to define a disaffiliate I must speak in Mr. Lipton's words-and we are then confronted by a certain irrational mystique.

"They blew the whistle at the Social Lie," writes Mr. Lipton, "not for God, Truth or the Party, but just for the... hell of it..... They had in them none of the Nineteenth Century lip service to Progress and Liberty and Freedom. .. They brought under the closest scrutiny all the easy platitudes of love, sex, marriage, family and religion. If it was something 'everybody knows' it was probably a lie, part of the gigantic all pervading Social Lie. . . . They stripped away the seven veils of false illusion and presented the greatest, the most mysterious illusion of all, naked reality."

I can write pages on the implications of this quotation; but I must not presume on your patience. I would like, however, to interpose a bit of philosophy. "Naked reality" is a province of mysticism. But the unidentified writers in Mr. Lipton's article were concerned with such phenomenal matters as sex, society, family and manners. These have nothing to do with "naked reality" which is a noumenal mystery.

say this: that "naked reality" is Nothingness. Whenever Nothingness assumes Being, whenever it assumes social, moral or aesthetic form, it ceases to be a "naked reality." No useful end is served by demolishing our phenomenal human patterns in the name of some elusive thing-in-itself. This desire to strip away the "veils of illusion" is really a nihilistic craving to attain a state of chaos and is indulged in by individuals who, through incapacity or through caprice, find themselves unable to accept human categories by which human beings live.

Small wonder that most citizens who live by the "easy platitudes of love, sex, marriage and family" are outraged by this arrogant blah.

ne gets an impression that the rebellion of these literary desperados is based on a desir

or literary craftsmanship. Screams and howls take the place of reasoned discourse. Poetry becomes a sprawling, formless "self-expression".

These extravagant posturings have nothing to do with genuine dissent.

In the beginning of his article Mr. Lipton describes a meeting with a literary man some fifteen years ago. "Excitedly, conspiratorially" they discuss a shelf of unidentified writers who contain some mysterious dynamite capable of exploding all the Sacred Cows (including, presumably, love, sex, family and marriage).

I remember reading many vital and original books that were current at the time (and are still, many of them, subjects of discussion and controversy). There were poets like Cummings and Auden, anthropologists like Meade and B.Tilfaut, sociologists like Machajski, Nomad, Weber. There were novelists like Jacob Wasserman and from the preceding generation unortho-

non-conformist minds as that of Havelock Ellis, George Bernard Shaw, the earlier Menckens, dox Russians like Arzibasheff and Kuprin. Since the turn of the century we had such stimulating

the earlier Aldous Huxley. Hundreds of names come to mind whose work was the property of all young intellectuals. Their books were widely circulated and discussed.

The point is that I can't think of a single name whose books belong in a secret book-case-with the possible exception of Marquis de Sade, that ultimate disaffiliate, whose credo, incidentally, is well defined by my quotation from Mr. Lipton's article.

Who, then, are the unidentified writers in that secret book-case? Is it possible they are on par with the latter-day nonentities that are mentioned in the article? Lamantia, a feeble surrealist; MacDiarmid, the Scotch Nationalist; Olson & Creeley, inheritors of what is weakest in Ezry.

As for B. Traven, George Orwell, Dylan Thomas; when were they ever in any literary underground? Orwell, especially, who exercised truth, discipline and moderation, virtues practically unknown to the torch-waving iconoclasts.

What is the positive outcome of all this "intrinsic negativism?"

Our magazines reflect a cock-eyed view of the world. There is a sort of pornography of human wretchedness in them; depravity, sex in its most sordid aspects, brutality. The writers deal with exceptional individuals in extreme and exceptional situations. They encroach on the domain of psychopathology and give us a degraded, discouraging view of man.

Our age, they say, is exceptional in its pain, dislocation, anxiety. I doubt if this is true. Human beings were always confronted by imminence of death and despair. But even if our age is exceptional, still our literature will be significant only to the extent that it widens the area of truth, hope and faith. The morbid concentration on the shabbiest aspects of our environment contains no significance of purpose and distorts the actual quality of life in its manifold facets.

--William Pillin

Los Angeles, Calif.

REBELS and CONFORMISTS

When Herman Wouk was regarded by Time as a rebel in reverse, possibly capable of reviving Victorianism, battle lines were drawn between the conformists, comfortably entrenched in their business suites, and the rebels who, it is feared, are now occupying the crowded apartments already showing signs of wear from bohemian exhibitionism and Marxist fund-raising campaigns.

Except for some new phrases such as "disaffiliation", coined by Lawrence Lipton, and Nelson Algren's determination to "stand with the accused," there is every indication that the battle now waged is an old and tired battle between the artist and the philistine. The only difference is that the conformists are slick and that their protagonist, Henry Luce, has capable writers on his staff who make sure that the cause of conservatism does not take on the air of being pompous and stuffy.

Life in its June 11, 1956 issue, in replying to the rebels, has detected the failing common to writers and intellectuals when it said:

"Some writers feel surrounded by sinister, hostile forces, even a Philistine conspiracy to control the thoughts, of which the LIFE editorial was cited as an example. American literature is invited, with scarcely a veiled threat of economic boycott if not actual imprisonment, to become the house organ of Big Business. If the artist wants to eat he will henceforth have to sing for his supper.' Thus Lawrence Lipton in the Chicago Review. Needless to say, LIFE did not say, hint or mean any such thing; we quote it merely to suggest that part of the novelist's problem is a certain touchiness that keeps him fiddling with his chair, ash tray, window shade, pocketbook and even citizenship papers, long after he should have started work."

To be sure, this attitude is more reminiscent of a plant manager complaining of employees who are alleged to be a bit slack on the job than that of literary patrons who wish to preserve the vitality of the novel, but still the "philistines" are astute in their attack.

The rebels, on the other hand, are not original. The only new element noticeable on the literary scene is the magnification of "skid row" and the heroin addict, mocking the smug satisfaction of success with sensationalistic ironic accounts of the most abysmal, of failures. The pre-Raphaelite lily has been replaced by ash-cans and termite-eaten tenement buildings. Otherwise, there is a sameness that indicates that the rebel is not quite at grips with reality. While Nelson Algren writes in a lively fashion, he is in danger of becoming a dog cursed by his fleas. What is supposed to pass as the fervor of youth is the brashness of adolescence and the disagreeable assertion of the id.

Fortunately, this is not the only center of resistance. The Nation, with Maxwell Geismar and John W. Aldridge, carries on the fight tempering its opposition with intelligence. The area covered by these writers has more scope, but their weakness lies in the fact that their approach is overly academic. Mainstream is another center, but at the moment it is still trying to orient itself. It is hoped that the disclosures of the Twentieth Congress will free it from the tight dogma that has cramped its writing. We also hope that the events in Hungary will not force it to revert to past behavior.

--Tom Viertel

Editorial

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

*Moanings and groanings at the bar,
When Venice puts out to sea.*

When, perhaps, we think ten years from now of the monumental attempts of editors and writers to establish literary communities -- like those in Santa Fe, Big Sur and San Francisco -- we may have forgotten that little harbor of "voluntary poverty," Venice-by-the-sea, in Los Angeles County.

By that time, Venice will have been famous for pulling off the greatest deal since the Brooklyn Bridge was sold down the river. The art of disrobing to hysterical readings of poetry will have been spread to every bistro, cafe, saloon, drive-in and night club along the coast; poetry will have given jazz a kick it never had before, and will be flowing out of Los Angeles' radio stations like the embalmed nineteenth century now does out of KFAC. We can expect that by that time sleepy literary specialists still will be tinkering here and there with eternity, though the masses will be hep to the word like they've never been before.

It is possible, also, that in this marvelous decade of literature, Lawrence Lipton will have become Governor of the first thirteen counties of the Greater State of California, beginning with Venice, San Fernando, and ending, perhaps, with the Los Angeles suburbs of San Francisco and Seattle. For certainly, once poetry becomes marketable, there is no reason why the business cannot expand indefinitely in the hands of a sharp publicist. In fact, it is amazing that no one has thought of it before. It is quite possible, like selling shoelaces, hairpins, filthy postcards and inside stories to Confidential. According to modern advertising technique, the first requirement is to sell not the product, especially, but to sell a way of life, a hermetic philosophy which cannot be altered except by administrative directive from the authority. And what would be more effective in the world of letters but to sell a package-deal of dissent, a whole underground way of life, complete with heroes, to those who, perhaps gullible, are sincerely dissenting.

When we are asked to applaud and reward Lipton's literary underground, to blow the "whistle on the social lie" -- well, we would let it blow just for the "hell of it" for we are just about ready for anything to happen -- anything at all to move the present generation to some kind of action since creeping conservatism has so stultified the literary landscape that good poets, docile and broken by the times, permit their reputations to be taken away from them.

But, as editors of Coastlines, undertaking to represent as we can at least the writers of the Los Angeles area, we cannot help but to signal the alarm when writers in this area are grossly misrepresented. As his articles in the Nation and his recitations on local radio stations and elsewhere would have us believe, Charlie Newman and Stuart Perkoff are the only live things around, Ark Il Moby I is the only real literary magazine of importance on the west coast, Ginsberg and Corso are spearheading the new poetry, and Orlovitz is a movement all unto himself. Outside of the real poets of this area, this, we must believe, is Poetry-California, soon to become Poetry-U.S.A.

Mr. Lipton knows better, the disinterested public does not, and writers and editors, apparently awe-struck by this promotional machine, fail to take stock of what is really happening.

Although we are inclined to find Lipton's codification of an attitude in his definition of disaffiliation accurate, we cannot help but to feel that writers have, since Thomas Hardy, been disaffiliates. And whatever their orientation to society, this attitude was quite secondary to the nature of the content and form of their works, or to the particular social and aesthetic problems they worked with. Mr. Lipton's selection of writers to represent us, though some of them are promising, are at this writing wholly limited by an immaturity which holds them to an expression of adolescent negativism. These writers cannot be associated with any true underground literature. For to be in the underground means to be fighting for something while experiencing at the same time, not just anxieties of a personal order, but real economic and political threats. It calls upon a courage born out of a reality of external, as well as emotional, conflict. There are even other writers who, as ironic affiliates (as Isaac Rosenfeld has called them), have much more of the sense of a continuously defined underground than those who hitchhike between Partington Ridge and Berkeley. And finally there are those self-proclaimed disaffiliates who represent a completely non-existent underground, but who nevertheless affiliate with their egos, or their press agents.

We must ask Mr. Lipton, what of those silent and steady writers in Los Angeles, such as Don Gordon and Ben Maddow, who are light-years ahead of Perkoff and Newman? What of Naomi Replansky who in a couplet can say memorably all that Ginsberg attempts to hysterically catalog? How about William Pillin whose lyricism is both realistically positive and yet closer to a meaningful attitude of dissent than Creeley will ever get? And what about Thomas McGrath who, in the literary tyrannies of the time, himself waged the staunchest underground struggle with greater over-ground results than any of the fake publicity that Mr. Lipton has generated. And if Venice represents the cultural center of Southern California, what about Curtis Zahn at Malibu Beach? What about Ann Stanford, Scott Greer, Gene Frumkin, Henri Coulette, Peter Yates, Stanley Kiesel, Bert Meyers, Lawrence Spingarn, Sid Gersh-goren, Howard Phillips, Vahan Gregory and many others too numerous to mention here?

The literary business at the present time is so slow, we are afraid, that it is a pushover to anyone who seeks a career for himself, regardless of what he has to offer. There is no real leader -- just a handful of perpetual laureates slow to die out. Because of this condition, Mr. Lipton's initial activities -- the gusto and promise of his early poems, his literary essays, his suggestions of a revival of a bardic tradition, and his stimulating essays on art and poverty -- seemed to provide hope that we had in the decline of the Age of Print a new and articulate champion. We are sure that Mr. Lipton can grow to his full capacities in doing poetry a service, as well as discovering and promoting promising writers, if he will become aware of his responsibilities. Leadership is not for the mediocre only, or for those who reciprocate favors, if we are to grant the long deserved justice and rewards for all worthy poets.

In future issues, we hope to discuss some of these poets and their activities around Los Angeles. We hope that Mr. Lipton scoops us.

--Mel Weisburd