

TRACE

LIVING LITERATURE

J. F. LEWIS & Flight
Mary Graham Lund

50

ISSUE

Autumn

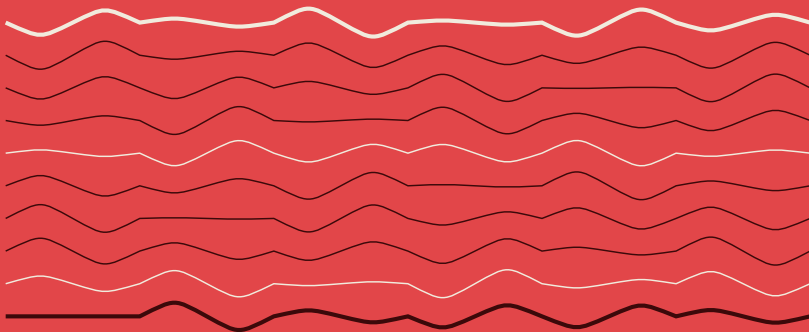
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JAMES BOYER MAY / EDITOR



TRACE

No. 50

Living Literature

Essays & Articles · Poetry · Reviews

Autumn 1963

Edited by JAMES BOYER MAY

A CLEAN READING EDITION

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

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

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THE NEW MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

by Mary Graham Lund

J AMES FRANKLIN LEWIS RECOGNIZED THAT he stood on the brink of a new evolutionary process, the regrouping of peoples into mankind. As a professor of science, he saw the approach of a new phenomenon of evolution, the group-mind. In a sense, he stood as a counterpart of Dante at the beginning of man's realization of individuation. Even the titles of his two books soon to be published, *THE PLEDGE OF SYMPHONY* and *THE APOCALYPSE OF HARMONY* remotely, suggest the necessity for a new organization of society.

That vast and tight organization of human units is required to launch a man into space has been demonstrated. Lewis, when a young poet suffering a self-imposed loneliness, saw modern society in organized flight from self. In his first published book, *DAYS OF PITY* (1936), he announced: 'The moment strikes / When men shall undergo historic pain' (*TWO LIVES I LIVE*, p.20). In this short poem, which begins: 'I look into the brimming past,' — Lewis sees the 'troubles' of the modern world which came into existence with Kantian philosophy, and he looks beyond them with Tennysonian optimism to 'a kinder time than I may know.' The poem ends: 'Two lives, one dead and loved in stone, / The other now unborn, but not unknown.'

The 'I' of the poem is Man on the precarious edge of time between past and future. Lewis, as the universal I, probed the past repeatedly, — as in his use of Greek myth. His poetry was rooted in science; it had historical tendrils . . . and slender, silver shoots that sometimes streaked toward the stars. In his later poetry, we feel the tremendous power which Horace ascribed to Pindar: ' . . . like a torrent rushing down rain-swollen from the mountains . . . ' Critics still ask of

Pindar's poetry: 'Does it make sense?' Yet, Pindar is read and explained and translated today.

Lewis' development was the reverse of the normal poetic experience in that he began as a conservative and ended as avant garde in both form and content. In the early poems, we find examples of every traditional verse-pattern, even the most artificial. He chose one of the most difficult forms of the sonnet, the Spenserian, in which to present an emotionalized philosophy in his second book, *FREEDOM IN BONDAGE* (1937). The strict linking rhyme-pattern seems a symbol of that bondage of genes and custom of which he speaks in this sequence of 158 sonnets. The semantic freedom he achieves within such narrow bounds suggests a triumph of spirit and predicts the victory that Lewis was to win when he shook off, through semantic revulsion, the fetters of the past and plunged into a Promethean love of 'time-binding manhood.'

In *ESSAY ON WORDS* (a poem in the first book), he speaks of the necessity of wrestling from the advertiser and from the demagogue 'this majestic tool' of language, 'This harp, this lens . . .' these devices that 'We use and abuse to make our lives a radiance / In themselves, or an abomination . . .' In the opening poem of this volume, *WE BATTLE NOT ALONE WITH THINGS*, he defines the role of the poet: 'I live a token of the race and wonder-working symbol, / Translator into verse of better minds than mine . . .' Lewis regarded the poet as both bard and prophet, with a Merlin magic subject to the necessities of the more active members of society. The entire sequence of *FREEDOM IN BONDAGE* is concerned with the anguish of the poet thus dedicated. The first sonnet begins: 'From false deceit I waged upon my soul, / I got my toll / Of anguish . . .' and ends: 'But what is great will burst the sharpest mold.' In *SONNET 2*, he complains: 'So much of freedom all my brains embroil / With wonder how to use these doubtful gains.' And, in *SONNET 4*, he confesses: 'Upon a desert man may roam at will, / Yet all directions be a

desert still.'

Lewis, the scientist, traces the brain up from the slime in the third through the twelfth sonnets, to conclude: 'Compared with dogs and cows my range is free. / But that I'm leashed at all enrages me.' 'Freedom of the will' is still more difficult to attain, since man loves to be a slave to his own senses; yet: 'Battalions of the intellect extend / In regimented wisdom . . .' (SONNET 18). Then: 'Great Hegel . . . plumbed the bottom of the world and took / The Spirit, flopping, to an abstract sky' (SONNET 19). 'The great Idea of Platonic love / Became with Kant the kernel of it all . . . Schopenhauer seized upon the ball / And played the evolutionary game / With Plato's thought . . . the "Will to Live" . . . Nietzsche's aim / To purge it in a philologic flame / And brandish to the sky the Will to Power . . .' (SONNET 20.)

Later, in his well-known SERPENT CITY, Lewis would trace man's rise through geologic ages much more dramatically. This tonal portrait was the culmination of his lyric period, which began when he taught in the small college at Batesville, which he lovingly called 'a little pool of culture.' Many of the poems of this period were published in SCORE FOR THIS WATCH (1941).

The opening poem of SCORE is the ancient metaphor of the sun-rain cycle in a new dress. Here is the fountain, ever repeating itself, a 'tree of water,' growing and sinking, renouncing form to become again the 'pearl-tree thundering loud.' Every poem he wrote was a burst of the fountain, 'each drop a moment of passion' upon which ensued the sacrifice — 'the blind, / The dripping, the shedding loss of form,' that fed the freshened rills for a new poem. For, each, he wrote one editor, was a supreme struggle: 'Solving the problem of composition for one poem doesn't seem to help much with the next, for the next is unique and must be written in accordance with its own internal demands.'

There are not enough serious pieces in this pamphlet to give us much insight into his philosophy, but it does help us to understand Lewis' poetical progress. In his early efforts, he had used traditional verse forms. Long narrative poems in blank verse, sonnets in scores and hundreds went into THE BOX of mss., rejected by Lewis' feeling of inadequacy, his ambition to perfect his form. His blank verse became more free. The strict sonnet became distorted by the exigence of thought, by the music of his yearning, by his passion for knowing. The knowledge he sought in macrocosm was a world-hypothesis; but, like the chemist he was, he searched for it in the microcosm. When he had isolated an idea from the contradictions of daily living and the ambiguities of common sense, he followed it with the eagerness of the scientist, until he had resolved its contrarieties and structured a 'physical continuant,' which he would sadly put back in THE BOX, with the vague hope that it might become a 'cultural continuant.'

It was Alan Swallow (publisher of SCORE) who encouraged Lewis to take his poems out of THE BOX and send them out to 'little magazines.' Lewis' reluctance to publish was not because of his lack of faith in his work. Lewis firmly believed that each poem was a growth that could not be tampered with. He applied the term 'organic' not only to the structuring of a single poem, but to the arrangement of poems in a volume. From this viewpoint, Lewis' APOCALYPSE OF HARMONY is important in helping one gain a perspective of his work. Thomas Howells, who wrote the Preface, asserts that reading the sixty-one poems in order will reward the reader with a 'unitive vision of reality.'

Some of the pieces are bitterly pessimistic; but, for instance, THE ASCENDING WAVE carries an optimistic note throughout. 'The spirit of Raleigh made America,' he asserts.

In the far reaches of these poems may be seen the reason for Lewis' failure to publish. In many ways, his ambition was

magnificently and completely self-realized in the writing; yet, his failure is implicit in the immensity of the task he had set himself: 'to establish a philosophy of inclusion, a wider synesthesia, a universal bridge.' He well understood that, in the course of history, God had become a symbol with so many and various referents that it had become meaningless.

In *STRANGE SPECIES*, a novel he wrote in his early twenties (see TRACE No. 41 for a preview), he has his protagonist say that he would 'first have to organize the symbols of art, arrange them into a hierarchy of categories with their ever more inclusive symbols, then fuse the quantitative and the qualitative under one vinculum.' In the novel, the philosopher will not be ready to set down his conclusions until he has reached the age of sixty. Lewis did not reach that age; and it would be foolish to think he might have succeeded in an undertaking so far beyond the limits of common sense. But attention is due a mind that could recognize with 'the whole of its intuitive psyche a vague desideratum on the horizon in which he has faith until he attain to within scrutinizing distance of it,' a mind which could deal with the minutiae of life scientifically and microscopically, hoping that each particle would eventually find its place in his philosophy.

We want to turn thumbs down on the odyssey of Case Poirier, the hero (or anti-hero) of *STRANGE SPECIES*. We say: 'It couldn't happen!' But we know that it could. With Case, it had to happen. How could he come home to the cosmos, if he had never been away? And there is no authentic return but the prodigal's. If salesmanship is the disease of our civilization, Case-as-Everyman must experience it. If specialization is paleolithic in fundamental reaction, Case must achieve a composite background of experience. He must put aside the microscope and scan the horizon with the telescope. The reader must endure the experiential groping as the hero adjusts the sights. We grow a little tired of the

endless analyses of love and chromosomes, to the strains of Massenet's *ELEGIE* (for violin), of descriptions of dirty restaurants and confession-meetings, set to the worn tunes of quack psych books, homebrew recipes, maudlin poetry, and 'the pewter plate upon the wainscot that thuds a round low bass accompaniment to the earnestness of life.' However, a second reading finds effective symbolism in the silliest detail, and we find ourselves reading more slowly, without skipping, reading a little angrily and scoffingly, but . . . reading. We are disgusted with Charlie's baroque deathbed scene, and the rococo funeral that is so near to comedy. Yet — what details could have been omitted? We know that here is the truth, that death scenes are baroque, and that tragedy becomes comedy if we change the perspective or the lighting. Abstractly, such moments of realism are nonsense; concretely, they are true. Twenty years after Lewis finished his novel, he wrote in his notebook: Note 17) only real criterion of truth is feeling. If any idea, however stupid it may appear to an academic mind, feels true, or has felt true, to someone somewhere sometime, then it contains truth in whatever weak solution. Error, therefore, there really is none. Apparent errors arise from apparent contradictions, that can be resolved, usually by syntactical analysis into a still more inclusive truth at a higher level.

This notebook of 1945 was probing philosophy for truth, as was his last poem, *THE STEPHOLDS OF THE MIND*, published in *UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS CITY REVIEW* (Winter, 1946). But, perhaps Lewis summed it all up in *SONNET 79* from *THE FERTILE DUST* sequence: I've not the margin of disease remaining Me, to write of blood and shedding longer, Or of whelming pain, or even the complaining Pulse of secret joy that I am stronger, That my hint of vague perfume is fleetter Than putrescence, to escape from hate. Life is a process whose degrees are sweeter Than their clustering totals, as by date We take them and complete them into war. The past our

fathers gave us to our present, Staked off the benefits worth
fighting for, And precedents to speed their sons' ascent, Has
given us clues to follow our dodging shadow Less aimlessly
than through their weedland meadow.* * Permission to print,
given by Mrs. James Franklin Lewis.

ALLAH'S PLAN

Not
time's dunce
has contrived
the appetites
that have buried him
in feverish gluts and
apparently endless rounds;
so who shall pay the score
for pleasure's coffin
if even fools
partake of
mercy's
draft?

by A. Fredric Franklyn

TOWARDS PRINT

(from the Editor's Notes: post Army, pre-trace)

(1947) An example of interaction of mind and scene: the puzzled (mentally confused) man in a strange city, walking streets new to him . . .

The man's notion had been that his reaction primarily would be from meeting unfamiliar persons. Instead, he reacts to the unfamiliar scenes.

He has come from a river-community of wooden homes. This is a mountain-city with avenues and avenues of brownstone and brick apartment buildings — chiefly crude imitations of Roman and Gothic and such ancient styles.

The man meets a huge, shaggy, red-haired puppy, which he pets; he feels removed from actuality. A man and woman come and take the puppy away with them into one of the brownstones. The man experiences a deepening sadness (no nameable cause). He nears a corner where closely-planted trees and intervening shrubbery form a hedge; about to turn, he sadly feels he is leaving his old world, walking into an alien one.

An Alice-in-Wonderland decision. Very difficult; but he does turn the corner into the other street.

Indeed, he does find it different; there are no strollers here; the sun has come out strongly, yet he walks in deep shade under closely-joined archways of tall trees that meet far overhead. He approaches what he takes to be the garden of a convent; it looks like the gardens of missions seen in photographs — Spanish-American architecture. He thinks of W. H. Hudson . . . of symbols of peace . . . and stares at birds hovering at a fountain. He speculates about the nuns he fancies live in the low, tiled buildings . . .

(1948) Note the discrepancies in emotional (subjective) effects from identical chimes of ice-cream wagons . . . how different times of day affect these . . . different immediate occupations . . . different recent events . . . Carry this to other, more-complex relationships of music to moods.

(1949) The silence, with feeling of mystery, in the city after a night-rain: dawn starting, and street-lights reflected in glistening, black asphalt-wetness; heavy, wet odors rising from dark-leaved bushes; in the distance, a flashing, yellow warning-light at an intersection. This flashing yellow glistens across a long puddle which is roiled at intervals by wheels of automobiles whooshing past . . . A boy chugs out of darkness on a motorpede, flings newspapers into porches with sudden violence . . .

(1949) Early October, in California. Venus as Hesperus, the Morning Star, in pink sunrise skies of mild, dry mornings. That darkness lasts later is becoming more noticeable — and this makes one ‘feel late,’ though the star and colors of sunrise are somehow reassuring.

(1946) Note how people affect word-values, by their uses of words. Different words have different meanings in different mouths; and, in the thoughts of the speakers they would be made into almost-disaccordant words. In relation to this, consider the great discrepancies in so-called connotative values, as utilized in certain modern poetries, dream-writings . . . that better discrimination (moderation) should be exercised by writers in these areas . . . that most writers should develop better judgments re words . . .

(1949) Thoughts roused by Charles Williams’ use of such of his favorite words as ‘power’ and ‘glory’ . . . how these had come to hold broader meanings for him than the commonly-accepted ones: shown by the varied contexts in which he placed them. Here . . . (was) a writer imbuing triteness with new significance; similar to what occurs when a writer uses a word that’s generally labeled inexact . . .

repeatedly and with effect, in a strongly personalized manner, until it does have a well-definable connotative (or denotative) value.

(1949) Reading more of Williams . . . experiencing gradual emergence of pervasive negativism, a kind of mystical philosophy of abnegation. His 'glory' now seems to fail to recognize importance of individual awareness . . . he undertakes to credit the mass-humanity or some all-inclusive 'spirit.' The idea that if one individual does not appear to assume leadership, another is provided. Williams 'glorifies' sacrifice and surrender as good-in-themselves: that is, the very acts, without regard to specific reasons or ends-in-view. This is utterly different from praising or encouraging a gifted person who is dedicated to a task which is a sacrifice, and thus limiting himself for something greater he believes will endure into future generations. And Williams sings too often of cooperative life, in a period when the trend already is overmuch in that direction . . . when the threat is to individualism, not to group-activity.

(1946) Three related words: 'elation' (has an unduly connotation), the uplift ensuing some success, etc.; 'exultation,' with more emphasis on outward signs of triumphant feelings, as for descriptions of voicetone, a shout; 'exaltation,' the word I use more often, expressing inner lift of spirit.

(1946) Note how character is demonstrated in the driving of an auto: self-control or headiness; decision or vacillation; temerity or obsequiousness; courtesy or boorishness; generosity or selfishness; resourcefulness or incompetence . . .

(1950) The man who always has the correct time. His correct watch as indicative of his character . . . the great satisfaction 'time-rightness' appears to have for him upon all occasions . . .

(1947) November in the San Fernando Valley: moon-shadows of bluegums on night-grey grass; extremely light quality of starless night-sky; figures in distance, visible as far as in day except when moving under moon-shade of trees or buildings. This moonlight evening followed a sundown in which the sky was too clear for colors in the west; but there was a diffused purplish haze all around a fatly-gibbous, yellow moon in the east.

(1948) Dogs barking in frantic search in the dark of a misty morning, with a flock of invisible geese honking gently overhead . . .

(1948) Another morning: the singing bird, a black silhouette against a grey-blue sky, atop a black telephone-pole with angled crossbars and a bulky power-transformer beneath . . .

(1948) The redheaded character coming to the window (State Employment Office): 'I ain't got no crib — see? But, now I got a crib — see? When I told that dame sittin' back there, I ain't got none; so, now I want you should fix me up and put me down where I live — see? . . . My first encounter with this use of 'crib;' and I first thought it was hillbilly slang. But, 'crib' has as one of its meanings, home . . . was used by Shakespeare . . . from the old Anglo-Saxon.

(1948) The frustrated amateur geologist, finding comfort in thoughts upon the impermanence of all human works . . . his Sunday walks, staring at the hills and contemplating how they were rolled up 50,000 years before . . . also his night-thoughts about the lost Continent of Atlantis. He asks himself: 'Is the ice-age returning?' Now questioned, because ocean-levels are again rising after having dropped for some years; yet, Atlantis is such a short depth beneath the ocean's surface that the outlines of the Continent have remained much the same from so long before recorded history . . . making this quite immaterial. He also reflects upon the atom-bomb: that all the fissionable material on the world

couldn't make a dent bigger than (by comparative scale) a gouge in an orange with the end of a pin . . .

SCAN PP. 15-90

THE CHRONICLE

THE CHRONICLE, 'An Evolving & Biased Directory (of magazines and publishers of literary intent)' — four pages here, breaking off in the middle of the alphabet at MAGAZINE with 'continued on page 262,' and resuming seventy pages later to run from MIDWEST to WITTENBORN at the back of the issue. Both parts are omitted, some ninety-four magazines and presses in all: it is a working address list rather than reading matter, and it is superseded by THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE TO LITERARY AND ART PERIODICALS.

1963 is a good year to have caught, and this instalment catches it wide. UMBRA is entered from Box 1952, New York City — 'stresses Negro problem in literature. Ed., Thomas C. Dent' — the Lower East Side workshop's magazine in its first year. HUNGRY GENERATION is listed from Netaji Subhas Road, Howrah: 'unpriced broadsheets; ed., Debi Rai' — the Hungryalists of Calcutta, recorded in America practically as they began. TISH is at 2527 W. 37th Ave., Vancouver, 'Ed., Dave Dawson & new staff,' which is the changing of the guard after the first editors left. POETMEAT comes from Blackburn, Lancashire, where Dave Cunliffe says 'uninhibited, but not pornographic' — two years before the police disagreed.

The presses are as good as the magazines. AUERHAHN PRESS announces Andrew Hoyem's THE WAKE; CITY LIGHTS has REALITY SANDWICHES and Michael McClure's MEAT SCIENCE ESSAYS; FOLDER EDITIONS has Daisy Aldan; HORS COMMERCE PRESS of Torrance explains its royalty terms and its editions of 125; SCORPION PRESS of Lowestoft announces George MacBeth, Edwin Brock and Anna Kavan; ALAN SWALLOW is in Denver; NEW DIRECTIONS has a deluxe NIGHTWOOD and a joint annual with the SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW. ALPHABET is here from London, Ontario, EDGE from Edmonton, TEANGADÓIR from Toronto, ICONOLATRE from West Hartlepool, ANARCHY from Freedom Press in Red Lion Street, BURNING DECK from Ann Arbor, and PENNY POEMS from Amarillo College, where the editor was printing Vassar Miller a poem at a time.

The names are listed in Trace_50_1963_chronicle_names.txt

beside the transcript. — ED.

ISSUE P. 193 · SCAN P. 19

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

Dear Editors: I thought you might be interested and might know others so inclined in The Next Civilization. . . . The Old is a toilet for flushing people down; let's see about the New.

Thomas Morrill

(The Editors were [\[interested\]](#), and wish it were possible to print a complete work by this retired anthropologist, in the '63 TRACE Series.)

CLEARING THE GROUND

SYMPOSIUM ON THE NEXT CIVILIZATION *

History carries the pulse of life. Civilizations are like a tree's foliage of the year. Each foliage bears within it buds of a new growth, bears life outward and higher in the sky. The leaves come down in the winter, the new life is set higher. It has been a long winter, last year and this, and a long Winter. And spring is coming this year, and Spring is coming this Year.

How often and easily, with such noble objectivity, we analyse the psychological quirks of others. Though we know ourselves better than we know other persons, better than anyone else knows us, and we know we need un-quirking if anyone does, how shallowly we analyse ourselves.

If self-analysis is the most difficult kind, how very difficult for the individual, un-self-analysed, to analyse his own culture! Especially when that culture has a heart condition, asthma, and multiple schizophrenia. The anthropologist, Ruth Benedict, wrote that by the time a person can talk, 'he is a little creature of his culture, and by the time he is grown and able to take part in its activities, its habits are his habits, its beliefs his beliefs, its impossibilities his impossibilities' (PATTERNS OF CULTURE). Coleridge wrote, in 1816, that since about 1550 there has been 'a secret and tacit compact among the learned not to pass beyond a certain limit in speculative science. The privilege of free thought, so highly extolled, has at no time been valid in actual practice except within this limit.' (BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA). And, as the heroine tells the psychiatrist in THE COCKTAIL PARTY (T. S. Eliot): 'Please let the sickness be mine, for if it's the world's, that is much more frightening!'

The culture dying is also the harvesting of the seed for the new age. Individuality rises in the few as it perishes in the many. To face a dying culture, and a new, takes truly epic qualities. In our time is the Labyrinth of the Minotaur, the Sphinx on the road to Thebes, Troy's dread, alien towers, and the long wandering home.

** The symposium, so keynoted, was held in Wakula Springs, northern Florida, in April.*

... Our Culture keeps us chopped, emasculated, and running around getting nowhere but tired. ... The Culture is a dinosaur, a large amoeba (Chaos/chaos). We all partake, in varying degrees, of a global, imbecile fatigue.

One of the more diagnostic beliefs of our time is that principle in our biology and sociology that there are two evolutions. This of course violates the essential meaning of 'evolution' that there is no 'special creation.' The 'cultural,' 'biological' dichotomy simply means that our Culture is alienated from life, that our culture is a derelict on the oceanic waste of life.

The dominant belief in biology today lends itself excellently to cultural analysis and to analysing the Culture. 'The theory of evolution,' as it is called by scientists and laymen alike, though no theory can be 'the' theory, is merely a biological-sounding Calvinism: divine election has become natural selection; predestination of souls translates to transmutation of genes ... (If Darwin had not been born, 'Darwin' would have had to have been invented.) Based on the false analogy with man's selection, and on the Calvinist external god, natural selection is not a scientific mechanism. The scientifically-verifiable half of Darwinism, gene mutation, can explain devolution, since it is caused by a destructive agent — not evolution. On the other hand, organism-orchestrated, constructive gene-change is abundantly and variously proven by laboratory evidence. Darwinism is a creation-myth of the post-Renaissance

Culture, an artifact rather than a nature-fact; it tells of a culture-climate of accident-proneness, external physical determination, inner fractricidal conflict. 'Survival of the fittest' expresses a culture on the way to the cockroach.

We are all the time fed that old Darwinian crap about 'survival.' 'Survival' is the prerequisite for everything. That is why we have so many bombs! Modern man hates survival more than the end. Man, becoming steadily unsouled and uncivilized, will not increase his loss by survival. ... War is only the vulture come for the carrion.

... the demand of the survivalists that we cannot have the war, with no alternative but 'survival' (is what) drives us to war, because we can have the war if we choose not to survive. ... In the present case, to have the War is the last freedom and only purpose the peace-zombies offer.

I am not interested in destroying the Old Civilization; what remains will destroy the rest rapidly enough. On the contrary, I want the Old Culture to live out its age decently and bravely, and to die without taking the world with it.... I believe the Next Civilization has begun. This essay is sent into the world to find if the heart is beating and the mind can come alive.

ANENT DUBIETY OF THE 'IVY' LABEL

Hans Juergensen

Dear Editors:

Let me call myself a poet (for the sake of argument) and concede as fact that I have no direction, that I want no direction—only experiences and urges upon which to react in my individual way. Let me also admit that I am an academician, making my living at a university (and thoroughly enjoying it!). Does this make me an 'academic poet?' Hardly. And I could wish that critics and otherwise-vociferous lance-tilters would not keep

non-sequituring the one with the other.

Poetry arises from people who are talented for this form of expression (and who grow in it), no matter what their manner of making a living. A physician, a taxidermist, a dish-washer, a mother, a professor—may or may not create poetry, depending upon the mysterious chemistry which could mix politics with art in Dante, botany and lyricism in Goethe, and whiskey (or gin) with atavistic verbalizations in Dylan Thomas. Poetry is a condition in which he who is stricken with it easily commits hubris; for, he cannot help defending as inevitable something that may turn out to be chaff blown before the slightest breeze. All of which points to one dictum as *der Weisheit letzter Schluss*, namely: give me the work and let the writer go.

Of course, I do not completely deny an interest in the author; I merely emphasize the importance of his creation *per se*. Besides, the poor devil has enough problems, without being labeled.... Is labeling not an activity of the organization-man anyway?

The pen has run out of sap. Now I count 10 seconds while holding its stem above bottled blue blood to fill it for formal emotions.

A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT VIEW

Hans Juergensen

Dear Editors:

Helen Wolfert's letter would be valuable when reading the poem (q.v.: Page 232). I feel that it might be a fine idea to print a few of the authors' comments below their poems, should they write anything in their letters that might aid in discovering better the author & his work. Walter Leslie Denny

Excerpts from a Working-Editor's Letters

11/9/62: . . . Our boy is called Gregory Jason of the Golden Fleece Mondragon Randall. Naturally, we call him just Gregory, or a variety of other names which include Gregorio, Gregoritas Peckas, Gordis Fleece, Definitivo, Maestro Jason, Diablo, Oso, Monstro, etc. etc. etc. . . .

. . . We all do something to earn that 'bread!' . . . Lately, Sergio has written (in one week!) a hundred-page book on the political history of the last six years of the state of Oaxaca! Boring, tedious, but lucrative!!! Some day we may be lucky enough to make it go from what's really important to us — the magazines, the writing. Who knows? But we're not holding our breaths . . .

12/26/62: . . . You're right . . . our holiday (tho lovely) wasn't free from EL CORNO . . . in fact we were correcting galleys on Christmas eve! We have just changed printers . . . We made the change to cut costs and . . . we hope it will all work out . . . Of course, it means much more work for Sergio and me, but we're hoping it will be the miracle to keep the mag going. We received over \$100. from the fine reading in NYC . . . but are still struggling, and at the moment do not even have the full cost of this issue at press. Ah, the life of a 'little' . . . as you well know.

1/11/63: . . . Mexican skies are very, very big. As big as the skies of my childhood in New Mexico. Sergio and I often sit up on our roof, and it seems we can see for miles and for centuries . . .

2/20/63: . . . the translations of Neruda by Eshleman have provoked much pro-and-con discussion here . . . of course, I side with the pro, since I liked them well enough to publish . . . but those against are more or less involved in comparing them with the original Spanish from which they differ quite a lot. It is a difficult question, this business of translation, with all it implies, and no one knows it more than Sergio and I — who are also involved with it . . .

3/7/63: We're off to Jalapa tomorrow night, for two days . . . a borrowed car and some friends, Sergio, Gregory, and I. My last 'jaunt' before baby #2. In Jalapa there is the University of Vera Cruz and a group of fine guys who put out a splendid mag called LA PALABRA Y EL HOMBRE. Two of them have published with us in EL CORNO, tho we've only met one personally . . . it will be fun to see them all and to visit Jalapa which I hear is a beautiful town. Then, Sunday night, back to Mexico City and to work. 4/4/63: Sergio and I just work work work work . . . waiting each day for the baby's birth, which is now almost two weeks past the 'official' date given us by the doctor. Spring is here and the garden is wonderful and our cat just had a litter of kittens the other night, from which only one, completely black kitty, lived. We are short on EL CORNO money, working desperately to get the 1,500 still lacking for the printer, plus some 600 or 700 pesos we'll be needing to get the whole issue out to the world, stampwise. But miracles are bound to happen . . .

Margaret Randall de Mondragan

MORE IN RE IVY COMPTON-BURNETT

Dear Editors: I am not at all sure that Ivy Compton-Burnett isn't the foremost writer of novels in English — and feel

accordingly grateful for your article on her if she has, as you suggest, received so little recognition in America. I feel constrained to point out, however, that you have chosen just about her gloomiest work as a criterion; and to suggest that your rather erudite approach to her is inappropriate. I admit that I never regard content or characterization as of the least per se importance but, in Ivy Compton-Burnett, I find some justification for this attitude — as well for both of us. Her plots (you don't say anything about her forays into detection) are quite extraordinarily clumsy; her people — the means whereby she's funny. And — she writes quite beautifully. Her punctuation, in particular, 's exemplary. I regard the capacity to make one laugh until one feels sick, just as good prose, as of intrinsic merit; and, as a writer, Ivy Compton-Burnett would be unlikely, I think, to fail at anything she counted worth the effort —

Elizabeth I. Louch

ANOTHER SOUTHERNER'S VIEW

Dear Editors:

Reading Mr. Owen's remarks in TRACE #49, I feel that he has neglected some of the most important characteristics of the power of Southern writing in earlier eras. Poetry in no era or area can be dissociated from other writing forms; and to call the South a void before 1915 is to forget John C. Calhoun and Edmund Ruffin in the political sphere, Thomas Nelson Page in that of the romance . . . Edgar A. Poe.

Mr. Owen scorns the classic tradition of the South. He might be reminded that exactly half the Civil War dead of Princeton were C.S.A. Those books Owen refers to up at Hah-hah-vahd were, if I recall, the same classics which he would say dragged the South down.

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MONTAGE OF THE POETIC RAGE MENTEUSE

CHARYBDIS

Chatting recently with my indecent demon,
He burred in grinning Mephistophelean:
“O such syllabubbling never was,
Such an inching and tape worming of verse,
metre and rhyming buzz,
All to catch false Fame as they lust for her praise,
Seeking rewards in the private parts of Fortune —“
“Please cut the classics, fiend, more matter with less
fart-
ing.” I tried an alexandrine on him. He looked hurt.
“But that’s exactly the frowzy aura their art
Poses! There they squat on endless boards:
Delicate sensibilities vortexing in shrouds
Of mildewed references, obscure translations;
Scholars sucking in ghost words —
‘Brachy-catalectic tetrameter’ is conversation
Forpoets performing tricks, merely critics —
Drawing prizes, grants, awards of foundations
Between the acculturation of buttocks paralytic-
Ally numb maiden aunts of slick
Assonance, inspecting each other’s suburban souls!”
“Charybdis begins at school with inexperienced
tongues.”
“Rather the insidious sucking of their whirlpools
Drowning the unwary deaf to the Sirens’ Songs.”
Ah yes, real Fiend, you’ve sucked such poets down;
And now prepare death for every tongue-tied clown.

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BY ROBERT BASSIL

SCYLLA

A huge sign carved on the rocks ahead says: YOUR DREAMS
Programmed by COMPUTER Getting closer now, we see: FREE
SAMPLE while you wake! The boys plug in their cores of
magnetic images, Reeling around a bit to de-range their
senses (No point getting your own brain burned), White
coat-tails flapping like gulls' wings, cool. Then — Tin tits of
automobiles rock in a body-lock smash suit-of-armor hearse
rears Jan Cocteau's post-Dada pissoir erect in the foam of
nude surreal, "all-trance sisterized," HER sea-shell dance of
writhing copula(La pieuvre qui chante a deux pierreries)
Smeared with lipstick or blood on wall-to-wall Snow White
print jobs put it in an auto mobile body-lock slowly rocks as
the Spiders on bare skin Witches creeping into bones
Macbeth cackling hysterically raging past in a.(c)oracle
Spiro-cheats of this syphallus Octopoid hoi polloi seizing us
— A switch flicks — "That's all bub," says the technician; The
advancing salesman smiles his synthetic emission.

*No, the South is not an intellectual void. The
literature of my own Virginia, for instance, is
consistently good . . . start with Jefferson,
Madison, Poe, Ruffin, Page, Ellen Glasgow, and go
on. In fact, I can't find these dark ages he seems
to refer to.*

Ned Heite

AN APPEAL FOR INFORMATION

Dear Editors: I am engaged in a thesis-research at the University of California at Los Angeles (History Department), which may be of interest to TRACE readers. The general subject-area of my dissertation is literary movements in America since War II. The emphasis is societal, a concentration on the artist's role in America and his conception of that society. The paramount source, naturally, must be the all-important little magazines of the period.

The variety and volume of postwar little magazines require immense research; and constant discriminations must be made in evaluating the levels of significance. I have decided to concentrate on the avant-garde little mag — devoted to formal innovation and experiment, to polemic and manifesto, to the refinement of expression. This is not to exclude from my study evidence from any source: the little mag's logistics; its audience; its problems. Greatest attention will be paid those periodicals and those poets who have most consciously been associated with the experimental critical tradition. As an example: the kinds of poets collected in the Grove Anthology, *THE NEW AMERICAN POETRY, 1945-1960* — but by no means exclusively.

I hope TRACE readers will be able to direct my attention to magazines I might overlook. In particular, I need information concerning the little-mag world as it emerged from War II, and up to about 1950; the 1958-63 lifetime of *NOMAD*, edited by Donald Factor and me, considerably postdated those years.

My dissertation will not be a definitive work on recent little magazines (as was the work of Hoffman, Alan, and Ulrich on the prewar period), but I hope to use them as a rich resource, and that some of you will help me to select relevant materials. Please write to Anthony Linick, 2486

Cheremoya Ave., Los Angeles 28, Calif.

Anthony Linick

S. E. MORAY

IN THE SKY

ARTISTS AND POETS THOUGH seldom rich, have nearly always been envied for their originality, inventiveness, individuality, and independence of action and thought. The creativity of the artist is the sun which warms Art. And this sun is eyed jealously by others, including Science.

Scientists like to think of themselves as creative. Gathered around science are the names of highly original persons: Faraday, Young, Lavoisier, Maxwell, Dalton. Scientists like to think of themselves as Bravely Facing the Unknown, eager to attack new problems, and shuddering with joy over the announcement of each discovery, each new concept.

Mathematicians, too, try hard to make us think that mathematics is creative so that they also may be envied as artists, not simply classifiable as bookkeepers for science and society. It's not very flattering to realize how, automatically, an IBM computer reproduces at the push of a few buttons the mental processes that solve intricate problems—and solves them much more rapidly than living mathematicians. This may account for the deep scorn in which arithmetic is held by many mathematicians . . . their boasts that they cannot add and subtract too well, or make accurate change—these being mere computations, far beneath the surdistical heights where grow more status, more glory (with an IBM computer accepting applause and taking an equal number of bows).

So hotly is Art pursued by mathematicians that a curious little book was published in 1953, with a second printing in 1959, a work by Lillian R. Lieber entitled INFINITY, BEYOND THE

BEYOND THE BEYOND. This title is an obvious and pallid imitation of Gertrude Stein; and the contents seem to have been written either for children or for other mathematicians, to help them in realizing social attitudes and moral values. The equations therein, and descriptions of Cantor's set-theory, are well greased with homely philosophies and sentimental sermons anent Truth and other 'eternal verities.'

The most curious thing about this little book is the typography: the letters and figures are arranged in broken lines like contemporary poetry, including even the preface, the dedication, the jacket-blurbs, and the footnotes. Liberally splashed about, are words in boldface capitals (for nearsighted mathematicians?). And the punctuation is—well—fastidious. The author coyly alleges that the arrangement is not intended to be poetry, but merely a device for easier reading. However, the right-hand margins are not justified, and the 'appearance' of poetry is inescapable.

Now for a good look at the mathematician's pretensions about the creativity of his work. Mathematicians and scientists alike love their problems to scoot trimly along under the steam of accepted postulates, each strand fittingly ordered like silk about a cob of corn, complete with pretty frill. Any reader who recalls his plane geometry will remember he never had to originate anything; he always had an hypothesis to tell him where to go . . . and each problem, equipped with its proper axioms, was easily solved. If he was good at memorizing, geometry was a cinch; and if he liked puzzles, it was even a pale sort of sport (providing his was the sort of mind which enjoyed puzzles that didn't make too many intellectual demands).

Mathematical statements fall into yes/no categories; right or wrong, true or false, black or white. The mathematician does not tolerate disturbing gray; and when gray is allowed at all, it too is arranged so that, with a change of symbols, it

can be placed in one of two slots. Set-theory permits somewhat more freedom, but the answers are still true or false. The mathematician may not know which category his answer ultimately may fit, but he knows it will be either right or wrong. If it is wrong, the ordinary mathematician does not discard the theory itself, but only his calculations. The Theory remains practically untouchable; and all questions he may ask are in line with it. Any question which doesn't have an answer within this perimeter is dismissed as a nonsense-question.

So, it can be fairly said that in all sciences resting upon mathematical bases — such as theoretical physics — questions are dealt with only if they have answers or are expected to have answers.

In elementary geometry alone, a student must memorize over 100 definitions, axioms, postulates, and theorems; and he must know which to pull from this lower mathematical hat in order to solve his problem. He comes to depend, from early student days, upon theories he himself did not originate. His experiments are but to prove the canned theories he has memorized. In other words, he deals with the unknown on the basis of the known — originated and elucidated by someone else. If A, then B — as night follows day.

Without such props, how far could he get? And what happens when he confronts something never before encountered? But, before examining the popular propaganda designed to convince the man-in-the-street that all so-accredited scientists are members of a high priesthood, initiated in the Wisdom/s, and so gifted to face the Unknown, let's have a look at some proposals and events — past and present.

Recently, I heard a theoretical physicist at a local atomic plant declare: 'Scientists must get control of government and run the country.'

What bill of goods is about to be foisted upon laymen who scarcely know the difference between an atom and a molecule? Thousands upon thousands of these place a childlike trust in the words of scientists — shockingly similar to faith in the Word of God.

Some decades ago, the geometers were claiming in their texts that geometry was an indispensable aid to the solution of the problems of daily life. (See, for instance, earlier texts of Stone-Mallory and Welchons & Krickenberger.) A knowledge of mathematics, it was declared, even gave us an appreciation of art and nature; to become informed how the polygons and rectangles in natural forms occur and how, through accuracy of perspective, a painting presumably sharpens aesthetic sensibility . . . to then be able to calculate perimeters and areas, would place us in artistic paradise. Some of these promises reach back to the ancient Greeks.

To the great relief of everyone to whom the square on the hypotenuse is as abstruse as an automobile crankcase appears to the nonmechanically-inclined poet or painter, these highflown claims of the geometers gradually faded; no longer did it seem so vital that the average man be able to calculate the secant of a circle.

Then came the jolt. Mathematics was bumped into the front seat by the Russian Sputnik. It was learned that most people had been avoiding higher math and physics, and that these courses were not required in secondary schools, except for those wishing to be admitted to certain specialized colleges and universities.

A kind of resulting trundle-series enabled Mathematics to wriggle up and into the same bed with Science. Today, atomic science is largely dependent upon mathematics; and, to the layman, they are wed as one.

Listening carefully, and reading yet more carefully, we might believe that there is only one type of science: physical science — that all else is trivial speculation, especially social

science. In brief, that if an idea cannot be embodied in mathematical symbols, it cannot be 'scientific.'

With physical sciences (plus mathematics) magnifying in stature, these fields of study are increasingly emphasized in curricula as the means of understanding technological developments in general and 'keeping up with' the Ivanovs of Soviet Russia. The experts would have it that we cannot appreciate modern technology unless we have some familiarity with higher math. If the day arrives when engineers and technologists wax as shrilly insistent as the mathematicians, all of us (including the mathematicians) may be forced to learn how every part of an automobile functions before we are issued our driver licenses.

But the cozy couple must be finding their bed somewhat chilly. Recently, in the magazine *SCIENCE*, N.R. Campbell said:

... science is the noblest of the arts and men of science the most artistic of all artists. For science, like art, seeks to attain aesthetic satisfaction through the perceptions and the senses; and science, like art, is limited by the imposition of the material world on which it works. The lesser art accepts those limitations, it is content to imitate or to describe nature and to follow where she leads. The greater refuses to be bound; it imposes itself upon nature and forces her to submit to its powers. The apostle of Art in a previous generation can make no higher claim for the greater art than this ... but if to lead the way and to bid life follow is the distinctive character of the greatest art, what art can be so great as science: A Newton, a Faraday, or a Maxwell conceives a theory and Life adapts itself for all time to the laws which it predicts; by the force of his imagination he creates no passing fashion, but the permanent structure of the world. He is no puny creature closely bound by the laws of time and sense; he is the creator who lays down those laws; verily the winds and the waves obey him.

From which it would appear that mathematics and science have not just cuddled art in their bed, but have swallowed it. Science is Art? And note the biblical tone of the final sentence; also, the remark that 'life adapts itself for all time to the laws which it (science) predicts' ... and the business about forcing nature to submit to its power. If we are to take this paragraph seriously, science is not just art — it is God. This is reminiscent of the chief of a preliterate society in a remote corner of the world whose people were convinced that the sun would not go down at night or rise in the morning unless the chief went to the riverbank and commanded that it do so.

If science is art and God, what is art? Much argument has rattled on the antecedents of this dilemma: questions which each oncoming generation attempts to answer.

If we swallow the propaganda, the scientist has the ability to face the unknown, to deal fearlessly with daring new concepts, to adventure in startling worlds of novel ideas, always landing neatly on the two sides of his equations because he is so accustomed to wandering in forbidden territory. He, further, possesses insight, quick intuition, flashes of sudden and brilliant thought; he originates neoteric concepts founded on little besides random information and hunches. And he gladly sheds his old convictions and theories, rapturously welcoming to his pounding heart the utterly original.

Mathematicians and scientists evidently have not read their own history — much of which is mixed and murky. The mathematicians were the ones who claimed that Cantor's theory of sets was the fabrication of a lunatic. And so on, back through the course of discovery — scientists themselves have rejected, objected to, and villified the Columbuses of technology; the commonplace here, as elsewhere, has been to attack persons instead of problems. How many inventors have been driven to madness by their contemporary

orthodox scientists?

There was the hostility of Helmholtz toward Robert Mayer (conservation of energy), who was so tortured and abused by his fellows that he attempted suicide, and eventually was placed in an asylum. There was the opposition of orthodox science to Huygens (light waves); the bitterness of Laplace toward Thomas Young (theory of light and colours); the fantastic controversy involving Laplace, Poisson, and Biot on Frenel's work on the subject of light; the rejection of Kaspar Friedrich Wolff (cell theory) by the pundits of medicine, anatomy, and biology — especially by Haller, who advanced the Bible as his authority. There were the Messrs. Bonnet and Leibnitz, who set about trying to ruin Wolff, actually to destroy his means of livelihood. There was the obstinate refusal of Liebig to allow the validity of Pasteur's work on fermentation; and Pouchet went to astonishing lengths in trying to discredit Pasteur. There was the dogmatic opposition toward antiseptics by members of the Academy of Medicine. When Thomas Edison demonstrated his phonograph before the Paris Academy of Sciences, every scientist there (faced with the unknown) declared it impossible to reproduce the human voice by means of a metal disc, although they were there, listening to such a reproduction. One eminent individual shouted: 'Wretch! Do you suppose we are fools to be duped by a ventriloquist?' A current example of this sort of irrational behaviour may be cited in connection with the work of the late Dr. Wilhelm Reich (orgone energy).

History is littered with cases. Recall the astronomer whom Galileo asked to look through his telescope at a new planet? 'There are no new planets,' said that pundit. 'We have already discovered them all.' This reminds me of the young math-physicist to whom I mentioned that there might be a type of energy about which science was yet uninformed, — or had refused to recognize. In all the certainty of

ignorance, the young man replied: 'There are no new types of energy; we know them all.'

If the rages and frenzies exhibited by the orthodox had been generated by laymen, the situations, then and now, would not be so dismaying; but the most heated of all the illogical oppositions on record have been generated by scientists against fellow scientists — against their fellows who have dared to travel beyond the boundaries of accepted rule, concept, theory, and thinking-patterns . . . who have dared to reject 'stock' answers and venture upon untrodden paths. Where is there room in such a system for the creativity now so much pursued and admired by science? Creativity cannot thrive in atmospheres of formulae, rules, axioms, laws . . . cannot be hemmed in by orthodoxies obstinately masquerading as openmindednesses. Genuine creativity is a sensitive and completely-alive act of individuation . . . from a movement, a constant flow and flux, as described by Henri Bergson. A theory needs someone to bring it to life; when not in active use, a theory is inert. But, creativity is itself alive . . . is the MOVEMENT ITSELF, not product/s or result/s. And most of the people of genius who have tapped it can draw upon their flow of creative energy because they have not been spoiled and retarded by the kind of mechanical education that consists of many answers and seldom any questions.

G. Holton, professor of physics at Harvard University, maintained (in a SATURDAY EVENING POST article) that modern scientists are in no way peculiar or unusual, that they are just people working in teams. Then he said:

The new science requires a new kind of scientist. The unorthodox, withdrawn individualist, on whom most great scientific advances have depended in the past does not fit well into the new system. We must keep a special place for him and protect him.

What could Professor Holton have meant by a 'special place' for the individualist? This seems to imply that the scientific genius isn't wanted? That fifty men on a team are beating their heads together trying to take his place?

Contrast this with a statement by Bronowski, who declared that the scientist-inventor (differentiated from the plain scientist) needed 'imagination, originality, and dissent.'

Or a statement (SATURDAY REVIEW) by W. F. Thompson, who is in charge of research and development for a Philadelphia laboratory:

All of us who actually have to do with research know that the 'oddball' often is a more valuable scientist than his well-adjusted colleague. 'Oddball' may be too strong a phrase. I'm not talking about the man who is extremely unusual — who wears a Napoleon hat. No, I mean the man who doesn't conform, who doesn't always think the way most of us are thinking, who doesn't always act the way most of us are acting.

That the mathematician usually is not creative does not mean that none of them ever has been creative. Some have been: the creative mathematician is one who invents a new system, the rules of which other and less-talented individuals then obey. And the creative scientist is one who invents a new law, a new system, a new generalization — which other scientists of little or no creative talent then follow through.

In contrast, the artist originates anew each time he paints, writes, invents. His delight is to break rules. His business is to question the old persistently — never submissively following the rules of others.

And yet, the artist does not claim to be God. He does not set up a new dogma; nor does he aspire to run the world. Neither does he boast that he has bludgeoned nature into submission, nor claim he is forcing nature to do what nature has always done. The artist makes no assertion that if only

we all were artists, the world would work more smoothly and salvation might lie around the corner. He knows that it is not necessary to study painting and attempt the impossibility of painting 'as well as' Picasso, in order to appreciate either Picasso or any other artist. . . . If we could paint 'like' Picasso, we would BE Picasso, and not whoever we happen to be, now.

Returning to Mrs. Lieber's little book, we find her—in the beginning—causing Art and Mathematics to skip together in a happy round dance. But, by the time she reaches her last chapter (curiously titled, THE MORAL), Science and Art have been dropped as partners, and Mathematics performs solo: 'Way out front,' where, according to Mrs. Lieber, there is LIFE and real thinking (her caps). Moreover, that a study of mathematics will give us clearer ideas about 'freedom.'

She then goes on to degrade the flaw, the mistake, the paradox; intolerable paradox is the BIG LIE, and in mathematics, CRIME DOES NOT PAY. It's remarkable how these boldface capitals succeed in evoking shrieks and screams among orderly and unemotional equations.

Actually, the flaw, the mistake, the paradox, are excitingly provocative to an artist—as they are to the inventor. Many important inventions resulted from miscalculations. But, first these had to be noticed; and the orthodox mathematician or scientist does not do much noticing, so as to allow his curiosity to track him into entirely new areas. He regards a mistake or deviation from theory as something to be corrected and made to conform to plan. A paradox, if we are to accept Mrs. Lieber, makes him lose his mind.

The original mind, far from being angered or irritated, becomes curious and interested, wonders what happened, and why. Following the unusual path, such an investigator often comes up with the unique. This was what happened to the late Edwin H. Armstrong (electromagnetic waves) when he discovered superregeneration as a result of pure chance .

. . and super-heterodyne, which was accidental. When Armstrong was presented the Edison Medal, he said: 'Ninety-nine out of 100 experimenters would have failed to notice the effect or to find its cause.'

Armstrong, by the way, was suspicious of mathematics; it was his habit to work directly with his material, using direct vision. He thought first in physical terms of particles, currents, frequencies, and circuits — reversing the usual 'scientific' procedure of passing from the general to the particular. Later, he would reduce his observations to mathematical statements; he felt that too many discoveries had been put off by figures which had said they were impossible.

Here, it's not inappropriate to remember that — according to mathematicians — the ordinary bumblebee cannot fly. If the scientific calculations were taken seriously by the bumblebee, he'd never leave the ground. Mrs. Lieber and other mathematicians forget that mathematic's handy little rules and readymade postulates only fit prefabricated mathematical situations, while life cannot be reduced to formula — and all pat answers menace life.

How the orthodox physicist seeks to retain 'safety' in the shelter of absolutes, is illustrated by an excerpt from a letter addressed to the BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, postmarked Oak Ridge, Tenn.: 'The blatant relativism that pervades our society has shaken the foundations on which moral values rest, at the same time eroding our morality, our highest art, our law . . . gigantic problems that follow in the wake of a relativism which deprives values of eternal meaning . . . relativism is but another obstacle in the path of meaningful public discourse.'

Mathematical scientists nimbly seem to avoid coming down to cases outside their own domain of numerals, preferring to aim insults at social scientists, because society is so disheveled — the dishevelment which is the particular

delight of artist and poet. Without it, we'd have had complete silence from Lawrence Ferlinghetti and the noisy author of *HOWL*. And what fun would that have been? Lacking contradiction and disorder, what would Bernard Shaw have had to say? Or Ibsen, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky — or any of the great writers?

To rock the boat further, and reverting to an earlier observation and the basic thematic intent of this article with regard to the kind of education helpful to the creative imagination: that many of the 'scientists' they parade in their arguments were not trained as scientists at all. Faraday, as was stated, was a bookbinder; and he never went to school. Lavoisier was a tax-collector; Priestley was a preacher and tutor; Whitney was an unemployed teacher; Dalton was a farm laborer and teacher; Ben Franklin was a printer and politician; Cavendish was a dilettante nobleman; Fulton was a jeweler and painter; Young was a physician; Congreve was a law student.

And other inventors often quoted and placed in the front row of Science did not have an orthodox education. For instance, Henry Ford went through only the third grade. No conclusion is drawn from this — except to point out that the world's best thought and literature is easily obtainable from the nearest public library, written in what Mrs. Lieber called 'dangerous' languages (Viz.: nonmathematical and literary). Perhaps the original mind thrives on 'danger,' prefers to choose for itself and exercise itself on its own courses of study. May we not then look forward to some future where teachers in elementary and secondary schools, and especially in universities, will have the courage to accustom students to ask questions, even unnerving ones? Especially, if they are unnerving? This might be a time when students won't have to sit submissively silent while their professor orates and stutters over his notes — not daring to contradict or point out an error, for fear their grades would sink or they

might be ridiculed for deviant behaviour.

The intention here is not to shove science and mathematics off the map. They are obviously important and necessary. Some writers really like mathematics and fall in love with the square of the hypotenuse. Among the many who combine an exceptional knowledge of mathematics with creative talents are Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Dodgson, Lancelot Whyte, Alfred Korzybski . . . And yet, I don't believe, despite the exhortations of our poetical mathematicians, we stand in peril of replacing our Goyas, our Van Goghs, our Soulages and deKoonings with color reproductions of $E=MC^2$, tastefully framed with atomic waste, or that our bookshelves will be cleaned out and filled with algebraic equations and set notations for reading by the fireside on rainy Tuesday evenings.

Nor is the intention to eliminate education; but to call attention to what's wrong with education in this field. For instance — most mathematicians have been quite unable to describe or to teach in a way to make their subject understandable. Yet, many of them agitate against professional teachers who are not practicing mathematicians. And so, we have 'names' in the sciences holding down professorships in the large colleges and universities — many of whom have had no teacher-training and lack ability to communicate.

A few perceptive mathematicians have tackled this problem. Drills and memory exercises are put in their place. Emphasis is on teaching for mathematical understanding; and some are conceding that superior mathematical reasoning does not necessarily promote superior reasoning power in other areas.

With such more-sensible approaches, it may be that mathematics can settle into its station as simply another convenient system — of immense service to all, but only one

of the important subjects of the curriculum.

And those mathematicians who do not care for their roles in society, but long for drama and the excitements of art and poetry, perhaps ought — in the style of Mrs. Lieber — to: RE-EXAMINE their systems for a TINY flaw which may be PINCHING them into an UNBEARABLE PARADOX, and DRIVING them to ESCAPE to the more HUMAN realm of ART.

‘... books in torrents run’ AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MODERN WRITER by B. F. Wells

D EAR SIR OR MADAM: It has occurred to us, since we are your prime objective, those illusively vague creatures reading over your shoulder, you might be curious to know what we think. Although English professors may protest this admission, we are impressed at how much you have improved over the old masters. Some of those old immortals were notably lacking in terminal facilities; and, with the exception of a few Rands and Allens, verbosity is not one of your flaws. With all Jane Austin’s talent for phrasing those devastatingly-clever bon mots, she cannot match your gift for terse, clipped dialogue. As a matter of fact, we are afraid Jane would have flunked Flesch’s Readability Test. Too many eight-letter words. Quite frankly, we are awed by your acute integrity for factual accuracy. You would never be guilty of passing over an execution from the oblique angle employed by Arnold Bennett. Not you. You would take us out in the street and walk us up to that hangman’s noose, and let us see every golden fibre in it. And by the time you finished, we would fully appreciate how it felt to have been hanged. Certainly, there is no doubt in our minds but that you have taken infinite pains to become expert at whatever you describe. No detail seems too insignificant. But, lately, haven’t you been writing instructual manuals under the guise of fiction? We could be wrong, but we have been getting the distinct impression you are only pretending to tell us a story about a group of men on a submarine, when all the

time you are really trying to teach us how to run the submarine. It could, of course, be shortsighted of us, but we are not really interested in learning how to run a submarine. We would prefer knowing a little more about those men in the submarine and a little less about periscopes, ballast-tanks, and horizontal rudders. In the event we should take up 'submarine-ing,' we shall buy a book on 'How I Doubled My Income as a Submarine Captain,' because we know from past reading that article-writers will do everything possible to make their instructions entertainingly painless. And, incidentally, when articles become more entertaining than fiction, isn't someone in serious trouble? Or, is one of those subtle evolutionary switches taking place? Could it be that, in time, we will read articles for entertainment and novels for education and information?

In any case, let us outspokenly praise you for the daring break you have made with tradition. Iconoclastically destroying all those old Victorian mores, has opened up new vistas, introducing us to a depravity we never knew we had. Still, have you noticed that recently your once highly-original, outspoken thoughts seem to be in danger of themselves becoming clichés? There is, for example, that once-taboo subject, the sympathetically-portrayed bad girl. Now, every other book, movie, TV script, and magazine-story has a bad girl who is good and a good girl who is bad. We can even recall a dialogue: 'When I think of all the vicious good girls I've known,'—says the heroine — 'then I think if that's good, I'll be bad.' Perhaps the most original thing you could do at this time would be to write a story about a bad girl who is bad; or even more avant garde, a good girl who is good. This latter may be too far out, however; the editors may not be ready for it. We would have no objection to this; but then, we are only your readers.

Another thing that fills us with respect is your tenacity. You do not flit from subject matter to subject matter the way

authors used to do. You stay with a subject until it has been thoroughly exhausted. There is that cops-and-robbers story, for instance — you know the one we mean, the one ending in the warehouse with the villain running up metal steps to the suspended ramp and falling to the pavement below? No one can say you haven't explored every conceivable possibility there. You have thrown the villain headlong from the same ramp into a vat of boiling dye; you have splattered him, face down, on the concrete; you have pushed him from above; you've shot him from beneath. We're inclined to feel that the situation has been more than adequately covered. At this moment, we can think of no new way to originalize this bit of business. Perhaps you might explore some of the ways the giants of literature used to dispose of their victims. Not too much was ever done with pendulums. Of course, you could eliminate the final chase; but we realize this might be altogether too revolutionary.

Another example of your thoroughness is the prolific rewriting done on Robert Sherwood's PETRIFIED FOREST. What absolute devotion to theme! How you have cherished those bandits! You have given them a kind of immortality they didn't even deserve. They have appeared in every farmhouse in the U.S., disguised perhaps, but recognizable! Once they were Nazis making a prison-break, once they were Frank Sinatra's rat pack waiting to kill the President. But, no one can suggest you were disloyal to Sherwood; if there was deviation, it was not enough to alter the original seriously, and Shakespeare could never make such a boast.

It is with amazement that we speak of your erudite grasp of psychiatry. Dostoevsky himself would be hopelessly lost trying to compete with your penetrating comprehension of the inner machinations of the tortured mind. Sometimes we tire of playing the role of the analyst; but — from having read you — we are aware that our reluctance to listen rises from our own neurotic needs to be heard. Certainly, we don't

blame you for wanting to rid your subconscious of all those twisted, traumatic experiences. Yet, we do sometimes wonder if we should be burdened with them. Are they really our responsibility? And, if so, what exactly do you expect us to about them? And, if we take them seriously, won't they do something to us psychologically?

However that may be, your constant groping among the subterranean depths of the depraved and tormented has convinced us of one thing: the old masters were pompous moralists. And there is only this to be said for them: they had a few answers.

Several of us have given up reading fiction altogether. One of us claims he finds the views expressed by the Cuban alarmists far less depressing than the modern, realistic novel. But the rest of us are still with you. We still have hope. When we become despondent, we reread an ancient Sanskrit proverb: 'If things get bad enough, there is no place to go but better' — as written several years ago.

And even when we are despondent, we never lose sight of the great advancement you have made. You have increased readability. We even suspect we are the ones who have failed you. We haven't matured. We still carry around that childish-naïve notion that when we pick up a novel, we're going to be entertained. But — give us time. We'll learn.

IDEOGRAM

The guy rides by on his motorcycle without a shirt The midday sun beats on his wiry chest like words Spelling out a hieroglyph of pride unrehearsed While his eyes glitter with the eloquence of song birds. by David Rafael Wang

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THE DIARY OF SESSO-VESUCCI*

John Baker

woodcut by John Sutherland

** A story in which the fictional reflection of an actual person is controversial.*

See Author's Note, at close.

JOHN BAKER

September 6, 1963 I am Vesucci, a man five feet three inches and in the seventh year of the tower. I do not imitate the Eiffel, the Washington Monument, Parliament, Pisa, or any other of man's achievements.

SEPTEMBER 7

Mrs. Satoon prays for my sanity or a healthy structure of the veins, both of which is unnecessary.

SEPTEMBER 10

Who is an artist? I am a function, lunching upon the accidental com-posts of our civilization like a passionate janitor.

SEPTEMBER 11

Accidentals acquired for the tower this week—

Violet Rakich 1 yellow handled nickel picnic fork fourth tine? * * 1 portable barbecue for Bird Bath * Arbor * 1 bottle brush *** * 1 baby carriage suspension 1 assorted broken buttons * Mary Rakich 1 rose paper weight * * *

George Rakich 1 watch key * ** 1 Oldsmobile bumper guard Mount of Mentality * North Incline * *

S. Satoon * 1 un mendable rotor * 1 blue bubble-glass cru
et

SEPTEMBER 13

Mrs. Satoon of the grass lip fluttering on a quagmire. Her mouth is an inconsequentia, a quicksand ingesting me with the procedures of second-hand mattresses, succulents, and cheap lettuce, informing me that Mr. Janson could see during the surgical extraction of his cataract.

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JOHN BAKER

SEPTEMBER 14

Hexa * Herrat Alice ** Fred Burt * * Hiddy * *** * * Herva *
Tillomen *

These are the names of Mary's dolls.

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SEPTEMBER 15

Dreams are the mosquitoes of music, the little pears on the
tips of a nigger's fingers. There is no sound when I dream.

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SEPTEMBER 17

Today Mrs. Satoon showed herself clearly as a periwinkle in the tapestry of art. Who among us has not heard of the douanier, Rousseau? This is the great French innocent, the customs collector, who was laughed at repeatedly in the annual salons, but who through self effort became the idol of intellectuals.

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SEPTEMBER 18

Wit is hate dressed in its Sunday best for a ride.

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SEPTEMBER 19

Buckling marigolds under the overshoes of tumblers, Satoon
is drunk.

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SEPTEMBER 20

THE DREAM

H. Rousseau

Yadwigha in a lovely dream,
Having most sweetly gone to sleep,
Heard the snake-charmer blow his flute,
Breathing his meditation deep.

What is my flute against the sleep of Mrs. Satoon? When she thoughtlessly rests her hand upon my shoulder, and not seeing — for Satoon does not see — sinks away into the red sofa laughing, then she is my Yadwigha. But when Satoon sees, then she will be my Picasso and my Apollinaire.

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JOHN BAKER

SEPTEMBER 21

Today a woman came whom I shall have to call remarkable. She is Armentil Hol. She drove in through the hot traffic from Pasadena, the tall remarkable Armentil Hol. Not all tall people are lonely, but this is largely so.

She studied the fastidious red boutonnières sprouting among the shards, rinds, and tiles at the base of the tower, and the sparrows pecking buttonholes there. A tan stain advanced like a shore line on her white felt head piece. She talked about her book, "The Sculptors of Southern California," which is beginning in its third volume. She sighed. A band of gnats rose up from the rinds and disappeared into the pores of the head piece. She shook them out and sighed again, so that a long trailer fluttered and resigned.

"I really don't know what to make of all this," she said inaudibly. "You can congratulate yourself, Mr. Vesucci. What is the name?"

"Transmutability . . ." I placed this shard artfully to her, for I pick a new name for each visitor.

"It's the junk you transmute."

"Accidentals. Anything the neighbors once wanted, but I require that they be unburnable. I grasp the hand of the average man, and the Useless passes between us. Then . . . Wings! Please. Watch me." I had located the right place for the unmendable rotor. The heavy central pivot in the tower swung slowly in a half circle. I boarded with a queasy dip, and swung slowly back again. "What was Seville is now Barcelona," I called back, for I had cemented in the rotor, and the tower was an arabesque.

Miss Hol lit a cigarette. The smoke collected in the hood of the head piece. Gnats clustered at the pores, confused bats

smarting with sleep. She took a pad from her purse and made a note.

“How do you make a living?”

“Certainly. I cast statues for Sentinel Whiteworks. We mold the lawn fixtures — the deer and concrete gnomes. The deer, of course, was a favorite on the old time lawn . . . Understand, please. The Whiteworks supplies only the concrete and the broken trophies. The tower . . . is mine. It is original.” Something had to be done with this plaster flamingo, the senatorial curvature of the beak.

“I see —” her tone was nizzily high.

A flight of sparrows flew up into me, pecking at the burls of asbestos which we sprinkle on the crests of our flamingoes. I cracked off the beak, and the sparrows scattered in a pulse and settled on the wheelbarrow.

JOHN BAKER

I laid a trowel of concrete and pressed in the beak. A sparrow flew to a ledge above my head and pecked at its image in a tile. The reflection quivered in a distant window. Then I checked the beak and the rotor, and found that I had balanced in the sparrows and had to balance them out. The concrete was setting.

I stepped up. I was distressed at bending one of the lesser accidentals. The rotor was nothing less than the double oriental principles, chasing their tails like cats. I pried out the rotor with the handle of a jack. The rotor had its soft underside, and I pressed my fingers through the intakes. The insulation left beards on the finger tips. I pressed a finger through the guard into the blades, and looked about like an old forgetful mandarin entering his favorite temple for the first time. Then the blades wiped off the beard. I bounced the rotor on the ground and sprang the blade. I looked for a new position. A sparrow flew up and settled in the concrete, frosting its wings. This made me think, I suppose if you inspected the leaves in the paintings of Rousseau, you would

find the wings of flies embedded in the varnish as wings in amber, or the sculptor's fingerprints in bronze.

"That's the way it was with Rousseau," I shouted down. "Every leaf and every streak of rain is in its place. Look at any of his pictures."

"What?"

"Look at any of the paintings of Rousseau."

"Whose?" Miss Hol was getting interested.

"The douanier, Henri Rousseau's."

"I don't understand."

"Please. While I'm working."

A sparrow pecked a shiny tile and set the window quivering. I stepped down, but the shoe was wedged in an accidental. The cigarette of Armentil Hol burned the dust like an amber animal eye — the lion's eye in "The Sleeping Gypsy." Santos-Satoon stood at her screen door — I could see her there, the embedded laughter of Mrs. Satoon. On the tower accidentals grimaced and wiped their eyes in the sooty light.

SEPTEMBER 22

A fly in a skull is a pioneer, an Ahab within its own universe. It is the Moby Dick that draws a fly through the various sockets of a wicker chair — spotting and sprinting, and arrogantly wiping its legs, weaving its death among the muzzy wands where a fly alone commands. I would tear apart the wicker of a chair in order to pull out and destroy such a fly.

JOHN BAKER

Mrs. Satoon was sitting indifferently in her chair sorting broken buttons when I suddenly decided to rid her. I raised the bally wrench to strike. Expectant somehow, Satoon craned neckless over her shoulder with the resigned perplexity in her face of the crowd when the drowned is first brought up on the beach. She gazed at me with her compound eye, her resignation a whispered flight. "Were you thinking of building me into the tower, Mr. Vesucci?" She buzzed ineptly with her tongue, making a joke. But Satoon believed that I meant to finish her.

Do I always affect people this way? Always giving them the impression twisted or opposite of what I really intended? Plants cry under my thumb.

(I had thought of that. Bones Satoon has. She is actually a specimen frozen in Siberia.)

Her black satiny . . . yes, I am sorry . . . tilting, sateen compound insect eye! I could also plainly see the gustatory hairs of her lip. "I know I don't understand the tower. How can you expect the ordinary ones?" she said. The unassuming really do care. You never see the caring within the flurry of their resignation. "Preserve me?" She smiled.

SEPTEMBER 23

Satoon is a function, a hand feeding swans. Today she came again feeding, a santos with her cactus pectin, the residue of succulents from the freeway hillside, which she boils down and mixes into crumbs of bread, with butter. Her cooking achievement, a pudding, Rice Satoon.

Her face is oily, a bread dough rolled in butter ready for the slap. Her hair is a grey net — it is knit into her hangings. She prayed for my "sanity" at the doorway, and crossed herself with a mock cross.

"My little spider." She welcomed herself in with a laugh. "How is La Chalupa?" She crossed herself again. "Where will

you fit this in?" She reached into her paper bag and brought forth a shell. "Barnacles for La Chalupa." Satoon is my loyalist disciple. "For the ship." I dip among her words like the neck of a swan.

Consider these — 1 engraved metallic emblem, suffragette cravat. Satoon. 2 souvenir coins of the Columbus Exhibition. Satoon. Heel and toe wheels from furniture dolly, and the amber extracted eye of a lion. Satoon. 1 perfect shell. These things.

SEPTEMBER 24

Every day I watch one very bright white boot climb the Xylophone of

JOHN BAKER

the South, and at night the rind of the moon squeezes lime arsines upon the Pedals of the Arbor.

There are two cats taking up with the tower. The sparrows are gone.

September 25 Accidentals for the past 2 weeks —

Violet Rakich * 4 punctured Carnation Pet Milk cans * 1 bean slicer * 1 floral aspic mold

* 1 gold Lady Bonnie compact Mary Rakich * * *

* 1 circular saw blade * 1 automatic choke * Trekkio super
* 1 Aladdin urn lighter * 1 ball peen fenders fixed at garage
George Rakich

2 rocket spenders * * * Gerold Markey 1 set piano pedals *
1 badly bent flute * * * * pads also swollen

* 1 brass curtain ring * 1 shards yellow cup * S. Satoon **
* * * 1 assorted sea shells pectins and periwinkles * 1
emblem * suffragette cravat * 4 heel and toe wheels *
furniture dolly * 2 souvenir coins of Columbus Exhibition

September 26 Some shells are oleol when rubbed, as sweet as a cauliflower ear. I take sighing shells as well as the boneware plates. A paper bag could not hold these, nor any mind.

September 27 I look at the photograph of Rousseau in his studio. He leans his head on his hand. The moustache hangs. By 1908 he is tired. His hands are

JOHN BAKER

frail like the coiled paws of an insect. The shirt, the vest, the coat are wrapped too large, like yardage. What is this artist, so small, even with parts lacking?

I recognize one of Rousseau's paintings, "Mother and Child," on the wall, but nothing else. The douanier's violin and bow lie on the table. I have imagined the douanier. Douanier is an inaccuracy. Rousseau was a minor inspector in a toll station, not the customs house officer. I read.

SEPTEMBER 28

Who is this certain French primitive, Henri Rousseau? Nous sommes les deux plus Grands peintres de l'époque — toi dans le Genre égyptien; moi dans le Genre moderne, he told Picasso.

OCTOBER 1

The girl from the design school, the one with the eyes growing in the horned rims, has discovered me. I never disappoint them, the yearners. These are the ones who talk so much about being original. They are the ones who are looking for primitive, untouched talent. Somewhere they lost their talent under the arduousness of their instructors.

Which of us is "innocent"? I ask them — the students, curators, and members of the general public who come to visit me. Every one of us has taken his first step. But Bobbin doesn't understand this.

"Please. Turn off your recorder," I told her. "Trust your impressions. A machine is not the artist. Conversation is a delicate stocking. Now, please don't label me a 'primitive.' I don't take photographs. Rousseau took photographs, you

know — tropical leaves in the botanical garden in Paris — and made some charming mistakes.”

She turned off her tape recorder.

“You see, it is really a fight to be regarded as one thing, one kind of artist, and not everybody’s wheelbarrow. That is what happens if you do not have the right credentials — the reputation.* I would like to be Picasso. Then I would not be so misinterpreted. Now, please, your questions.”

“When did you start the tower?” Bobbin started, properly. I must have cut through all her valuable notions. When you do this, people are reduced to facts.

“About seven years ago,” I told her. “I’m on a definite schedule, an eight-hour plan. From 5:30 until 7 every morning I address myself to perishables, stripping labels and testing bottles, soaking the enamel off

JOHN BAKER

radiators, and burning the pedals off bicycles and tricycles. In the evenings I match accidentals — reduce tiles and match colors, and sort bottle caps. I have four barrels of bottle caps by color now, and some day they will embellish the Seasons, my final steeples. Everything that comes in is built . . . it has its place . . . into the tower. I don’t select, except to get rid of the burnables.”

* Mrs. Rakich says, “I don’t care if you make a mess,
Sesso-Vesucci. But you better be a real artist, and a
success at it, before you do.”

October 2

Why do I think my way up steeples . . . as though we were not privileged with a round world?

October 6

Let us all hold babies today.

October 7

I saw Mrs. Satoon today, and the witches in my head crooned. She has, somehow, finally rid herself of the sulphuric opening smell of old gumwood trunks. I know she

is a furtive.

Author's Note.

In 1959, when this story began, I knew that a grove of fantasy towers existed in Los Angeles. The 'diary' developed fictionally from there. Then, I came across an issue of ORB, a news sheet from the Chouinard Art Institute, which identified the builder of The Watts Towers — Simon Rodia, now retired.

Since I have never visited The Towers nor met Simon Rodia, incidents in the 'diary,' grotesqueries, Sesso-Vesucci's ideas and his dreams, and his neighbors, are not based on the personal lives of actual persons.

May I point out other builders who might excite and illumine the Sesso-Vesucci ulterior in the susceptible: Sculptress Louise Nevelson, whose moon-gardens are constructed from table legs, banisters, and bowling pins; the late Father Paul Dobberstein; and the civilized lady in Farmington who makes 'things' out of feathers, seeds, typewriter-ribbon spools, buttons, wishbones, the neck bones of ducks, bits of tin, and coffee grounds?

With the exception of Father Dobberstein's grottoes, all these constructions are destructible.

SAM BRADLEY

EZRA SLEPT HERE

Peril of poets! The world hoots!
Wry jewel, boxed madness!
Spoil-sport, Ezra — to leave
our civilized lie-in
(no Marywomb, no getout):
St. Elizabeth's, where a man
can nuzzle the ancients. Snout to snout.
And dig the roots.
Shadows, thrustleaves under purple fruits!
Digging without
judicial interdict, congressional hex,
or literary ban. A writer, flawed, and —
fourwalled as sex
with its centerpole, family,
St. Elizabeth's is the place to be,
and couth, cozy, a place to believe.

SAM BRADLEY

WORK UNDER WALLS, YES YOU CAN.

Army caged you, remember, Rex?
Work under walls.
Poets take place. A place for a poet?
Other weathers, other walls.
All, breath's
Chinese boxes!
Crack. Open. Dig in. In the last
(padded with folio and scrawled
with ideograms) one capital unspoiled
poet. Shut man. Mon sibling. You, Rex —
persona in place.
Give tongue
amid thrustleaves!
What weight of walls sung!
What fruit of nuzzling! All craftily cast
in cantos.
Well, keep snug — if out.
Sport is sport, past is past.
Lockhouse as world is vast, is vast.

THE STREAMLINED NORM

Dorothy Ellin Flax

the common man *****HERALDED *****
 *****HERO OF THE ATOM AGE *****
 M A L E I R N T E S D by AUTOMATION ///////////////
 *****UNIVERSAL JUBILATION*****
 Ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-chain reaction CONFORM . . .
 CONFORM CONFORM STAND PAT . . . PAT FLAT . .
 . . . PAT . . . PAT . . PAT .. FLAT ... FLAT .. FLAT flatter than the
 pattern you flatter — *****MORONITY*****
 Guaranteed satisfaction in recessive contraction — du in vi al
 it di an lar ies all gu IRONED OUT to form the monotone norm
 — UNIFORM MORONITY
 *****HURRAH*****BRAVO*****HUZZA!
 PROPAGATE . . . PERPETUATE at a multi-million rate
 nothingness nothingness nothingness

DOROTHY ELLIN FLAX

TAKE ART APART /-/-/-/-/-/-/-/-/-/-/

STRAIN from it
 every varied bit
 of live expressiveness —
 contrive to extract the breath of life
 through STRICTURED ARTIFICE. . . .
 no shrift on any shift for man's special gift —
 to LIFT.
 Compulsion-driven multi-mind
 blind — blind — blind —
 PRECIPITATE SOCIETY TO SUICIDAL DATE:

 The common man —
 Shakespeare knew him too —
 vagabonding through back alleys and the countryside

ranging the byways far and wide
Will captured all the raw vitality of him ——
his dung-flavored wit ——
down through the centuries
uninhibited
Will handed us the whole of it!
But mediocrity
monodied in monotone ——
desiccated —— devitalized ——
if it's more than for this age
ALONE
I'll be surprised.

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JOHN TAGLIABUE

FALSTAFF POEMS

(From My Shakespeare Notebook)

WITH A NEW FIRE ENGINE

Pistol
in his red underwear
with some purple stripes
tossing histories into the air as if they were wild
chickens
enters
like a sputtering fire department
(the old girls giggle) he sends out
flames of old time oratory bedraggled turned into
loose dragons;
the fire engine sends up ladders in all
directions
and fire chiefs
climb, recite
Marlowe and wet
the audience with tragedies
galore, he tears the air to shreds
and sends it down like a festival
of scattered words.
Falstaff hails him and he flies through the air
like a paper flower.
Later he is histrionic, tells the histories of
the fire department.

JOHN TAGLIABUE

**DEAR WILD HOTSPUR, TOO FAST, HE'LL TRY AND
DIE**

I'll leap over brooks, burrs, books, cracked pates,
- flying plates, Kate, bushes,
to honor and if I miss it as one in leaping into
water may not hit the moon,
I'll swim up and wet and wild make Kate
see me find honor.

'That earthly man, Sir John Falstaff, whose redness is
from Adam!'

Red Adam (have you read Adam and Eve, boy?) red apples
(don't call me shrivelled apple-john, jumbler) a walking
talking sitting leafy tree (O blockhead) Edith Sitwell
appreciating the splendor walks miles and hails Sir John.

JOHN TAGLIABUE

IS THAT YOU BEHIND A TREE, SILENCE?

Dilapidated
somewhat
dim
Justice Shallow
slender
somewhat
shadow of a man; he sort of remembers his homework,
Jane Nightwork, the good old days;
in the shadows with Silence
and the world he bemuses,
he wonders if he remembers;
Silence says alas. Alack,
what was I saying? Falstaff
has come back to remind
us of the world. A shallow
comment? several shadows wondered.

(HENRY IV / Part 2)

MILTON VANSICKLE

Icon

He wove his bones into his hair
and sped into the sun
dripping spittle on the floor of heaven
as he passed. He grew fat;
a lap-dog fed from dancing
fingers of his dollar-bills.
His itemized domain lobotomized
his soul; he grew fat
on the calories of his boredom,
his competent form conformed.
He grew fat; a panorama
of the middle ages
like a dieting whale,
emammulated, untoothed,
devivified, he was stuffed
with the crud of immensely preposterous
pomposities, smiling from the wall
of his billiard room—a bifurcated unicorn.
But this morning he collapsed,
shrieking around the room
in punctured dismay
like a farting balloon.
He died — and ninety-million corpses
can't be wrong.

GERARD MALANGA

WAITING FOR YOU

(for Jerry Torres)

Waiting for you is like hearing your voice
the time I walked 72nd Street and there you were
and you didn't tell me you'd come and
Waiting for you is standing by the mailbox watching for
the quickness your turn makes but it wasn't your car
but another just like yours and black but it wasn't you
Waiting for you is thinking a tearblaze of young
thoughts
I must hang in your ears of the photograph of Faith
taken in a moment of time even smaller then the
moment I was
Waiting for you with the expectation of bringing
together the dented fenders
of our eyes like the crushable smoke bandaged from
birdcages
we unlocked to the various outbursts of laughter when
Waiting for you your girls were numberless and twice
I saw the blond smiles move to form with the weather
as unpredictable as my immediate emotions when I was
Waiting for you in a time rather a time that was equal
but not very friendly where a glass of water became
the hydrant of a child's disordered memories. I was
Waiting for you and unfamiliar streets mangled with
conversations
of human conditions and boys in the cellars their
snakeskin eyes
of misfortune and desires leaned on the lamps without
heads

GERARD MALANGA

WAITING FOR YOU

Waiting for you and 'Boxhead' was worried and dyed her
hair
red and told me to paint kisses on the barber shop
mirror
and you said, 'Don't be so vivid!' and the red boats were
Waiting for you in the moist July wind that heaved us
a thundering 'rush' in the joy of our achieving distances
like the twang of juices and knobs. It was where I was
Waiting for you to approach me in low gear held high in
your hand
in the thrust of the singular clutch that your hand
moved
as your hair stroked the wind of my jacket familiar with
sand and
Waiting for you is that look I thought was a hurricane of
uncertainties
that became the beach leaving behind you the
sunbathing loves
and your hands held big lollipops and toy lions. What
am I going to do after
Waiting for you by an uneventful door I was compelled
to open
because I thought you might be standing there
that you had an eye on the girls as I came
Waiting for you where the favors said small things
perhaps of love
or your hands became steady in the opportunities of
our half-lit madness
and I was not alone when a stranger spoke to me and
his voice was like yours

HELEN WOLFERT

DAYBREAK

The music, O silvery and early with birds,
Sifts landward, sifts seaward;
The spume is like feathers.
The lobsterian bees fly here, fly there;
The nets of the weeds make snowflakes.
Down to the river's edge the bird-beaked cactus
Makes bristles and thistles and bird-beaked whistles.
We fall down on our knees and worship the earth.
Make my knees grass!
And the sea is a hoop into heaven.
Little cat beast walking, you are wheat in the wheat.
This wheat wanders.
Gold kelp shimmers in the molten air.
A water of birds is flying on gold voices into
The gold eye, the cat in the sun.

*(For the Author's description of the occurrence of this poem,
please read her letter on Page 14 TRACE No. 48, Spring, 1963.)*

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LAWRENCE BARTH

FOUR HALF-HAIKU

*(A form in the spirit of the haiku, without its
syllabic scheme.)*

1

Tac! an egg divides
Disclosing within white shell
The world.

2

They love
The TV tube:
No mirror.

3

Obese bellies
Are not always
Socrates.

4

A butterfly
Said to me
'Bombs.'

A GADANGUS FULL OF DIRT

Darryl Ponicsan

The boy immediately identified himself as editor of ARCADE, the campus literary publication, which served the purposes of Muhlenberg and Art. Yes, he had seen that chap, strange one he was. 'A few months ago, Mel Perl — Have you read Mel Perl?'

Julie felt frightened and alien coming against this pretentious intellectual on his own turf.

'No, I haven't,' she said.

'Well, you should. He's one of our spokesmen. Where are you from anyway?'

'Circleton.'

'Circleton? I never heard of that college.'

'It's not a college. It's a town. I never went to college. I never even finished high school. I got pregnant and had to quit.'

'Oh . . . oh . . . I see. Where was I? Oh, yes, Mel Perl was here giving a poetry reading. He spotted this fellow in the audience—the fellow in the photo—and it seems they were college chums or such. After the reading, I took them to Hook's. As far as I could tell, Mel was taking this fellow back to New York with him.'

Inasmuch as he'd let drop that he was the organizer of the poetry series, of course he had Mel's address. Giving it to Julie, he wondered aloud if he couldn't induce her to stay in Allentown for a few days. She laughed in his face and took the next train to New York.

After checking into the Dixie, she called Mel Perl and told him her story. Yes, Frank had come to the city with him, but he hadn't seen Frank more than once in all that time. He had his address, though, a place on West Eighth Street.

How simple it was! For a whole year, nothing—and then in two days she had found him. Tomorrow morning, she would fix herself up real pretty, put something sweet-smelling on, go over there and take him home—to her home, their home.

At nine o'clock the next morning, a warm, friendly morning, a morning for finding people, she took a cab to the Eighth Street address. Stepping into the cramped foyer, she scanned the names on the mailboxes. Then, she studied them. There was no Frank Graham. She got that shaky, fluid feeling in her breast, the feeling one gets when he is stopped just before the final turn. She kept looking at the names, wondering what to do, when one of the tenants, an elderly woman, opened the

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inner door. Julie stopped her before she got into the foyer. 'Excuse me. Maybe you could help me.' 'Whadda ya want?' 'I'm looking for a man,' said Julie. 'Ain't everybody?' 'It's very important that I find him. A friend told me he lived here.' 'What's your man look like, dearie?' 'He's twenty-four,' said Julie. 'He's got brown, wavy hair . . . Well, wait a minute . . . I have his picture here.' The old woman looked at the picture, then at Julie, and curled her upper lip. 'I guess that's him all right.' 'Then he lives here?' 'Honey, take my advice. Find yourself another man. You're young and pretty; you don't need the likes of him.' 'But, he needs me. He's needed me — only me — since we were children. He just forgets. Please tell me where he is.' 'You go up these stairs, take a right, go down the hall, last room at the end of the hall. Good luck to you, girlie.' The hallway was dark and dusty. From the room at the end of the hall, Frank's room, she could hear the clatter of a typewriter. Anxiously, she knocked on the door. The clatter did not stop, but she heard a voice singing: 'Who's that rapping, gently tapping, at my chamber door? Come in, come in, whatever you are.' Julie opened the door to what must have been a combination kitchenbath, because, besides a stove and refrigerator, there was a bath tub. This room was dark, but, in a sun-drenched living room, she saw Frank's back, crooked over his typewriter. Two studio couches, a number of photographer's lamps, and a couple of cameras on tripods, cluttered the tiny living room. The place was filthy: dust had collected into numerous odd-shaped balls of fuzz which rolled lazily over the linoleum floor; the drapes were sooty and brittle with age. The sun, forcing its way through the dirty windows, made Julie dizzy. She held her throat. When Frank stopped his typing and turned around, he slapped his knee and said: 'Look who's here! Holy hell!' He was dressed in faded tan corduroy trousers too small for him. A rip at the bottom of a pocket

revealed a white section of bare hip. His feet were bare, his undershirt stained with sweat. The hair was long and crawled over his ears and down the back of his neck; but his face

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was worst of all. Laugh-lines had turned to furrows. Splotches of brown, almost like age-blemishes, were on his cheeks. He had lost weight, and the veins could be seen through his crusty neck. The sight left Julie speechless and motionless. Frank made a sweeping gesture with one hand. 'Ain't much, but it's home. Well, don't just stand there. Take a load off your feet.' She sat on a couch; he sat on the opposite one. 'What brings you to town?' he asked, still wearing the grin he had worn when he first turned around. 'I've been looking for you.' 'You've found me. Feast your eyes.' 'What have you been doing all year?' she asked. About to answer, he was caught in a spasm of mucousy coughing. When the spasm passed, he asked weakly: 'How about a little drink?' 'No thanks. It's a little early.' He took the glass which was next to his typewriter and filled it with two fingers of rye. She could see a tattoo on the back of his shoulder. Some writing, but she couldn't make it out. Sitting down again, he said: 'I've been busy' — and swallowed from the glass. 'Have you been working?' 'Have I been working, she asks!' He walked to his desk and kicked a beer-case full of papers that sat on the floor. 'What do you call this?' 'What is it?' 'My novel.' 'It must be very long.' He took another drink. 'I'll tell you the truth. It's turned into a Frankenstein's monster. But I have other prospects going for me. I have this buddy, Mel Perl, who's making it as a paperback poet, and he's promised to help. I also have a terrific thing pending uptown. I know this secretary from Columbia Records, and she's going to get me a job writing the backs of album covers. How about that? I could do that kind of stuff. What do you think? I would be able to do that kind of work, wouldn't I?' He fell into another coughing spasm, worse than the first, which drove him into a closet for fifteen minutes. Julie's eyes filled. When he came back, there was some color in his face and he seemed more relaxed. He was carrying a large,

bright-red blanket. ‘See this? A genuine Hudson’s Bay blanket — from England. Boy, is this the baby

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in winter! You can just put it over you and let the rest of the world go by. No idea what I had to go through to get this baby.’ He tossed the blanket on the couch and sat down next to it, running his hand over its surface.

‘Frankie, are you very sick?’

‘Nah, a touch of something. I have this doctor who says I’m committing suicide the hard way; but nobody likes a smart-aleck doctor. You sure you don’t want a little drinkie?’

‘No.’

He stretched his legs out in front of him and wiggled his toes.

‘Remember Mendol? Oh, of course not, you never knew him. This guy Mendol was a buddy to me and Mel at college. The old son-of-a-bitch has been institutionalized — which means he’s been locked up. Serves him right for being so smart. He’s sitting with his father in this restaurant, and he points to another booth and says: “See that girl in the booth? I know her. She’s got a three-way personality-split.”’

‘What’s wrong with that?’ asked Julie.

‘There were three girls in the booth!’ He put his head in his hands and rocked with laughter.

After he calmed down, she asked him: ‘Are these your cameras?’

‘Hell, no. They belong to Sixty.’

‘Sixty?’

‘Yeah, you see this isn’t even my apartment. It belongs to a guy uptown, name of Charlie Nine; only, everybody calls him Sixty. He just uses it for his . . . his . . . avocation, which is photography. I help him at it occasionally, so I get the place for nothing.’ He took his last swallow of rye.

‘Are you happy here?’

'Happy? Happy? Oh, sure. I'm getting a lot of work done, and I have lots of friends and good contacts. I'm livin' kinda thin, right now. Just a matter of time though.'

'Do you want to hear about your family?'

'No, I don't think so.'

'Did you know you're an uncle now?'

'An uncle? Is that a fact? What about that? That's something. Listen, Jule Babes, do me a favor, huh? Don't tell me anything else. I'm happy to know I'm an uncle; but don't tell me anything else.'

'Maybe there's something you ought to know,' she said.

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'There's nothing I ought to know. That's the truth. Just don't tell me anything else.'

'All right.'

He relaxed again and said: 'Looking for me, huh?'

'That's right, Frank, I've been looking. I've come into some money. My boss died and left it to me. It's quite a bit.'

'I'm glad. Glad for you, that is. Sorry to hear about your boss, even though I didn't know him very well.'

'I have this money, Frank, and I've been thinking about that night. Do you remember that night, last year?'

'Oh, sure,' he said. 'How about a cigaret, Jule?'

'No, thanks.'

'No,' he said, 'I mean, do you have any? I seem to have run short.'

'Oh.' She fished in her bag for the cigarettes and tossed the pack to him. 'Keep the pack.'

'Hey, thanks, I'll do that. Thanks.'

'Frank, I've been thinking about what you said that . . .'

'Do you still have that gadangus?' he asked.

'What?'

'You remember. That big, old gadangus you wore around your neck. You're not wearing it.'

'I have it at home . . . in a drawer. Do you still have yours?'

He walked to the window and stood with arms folded behind his back, looking at the street below. 'No, No, I don't. I opened it one lonely night here. And do you know what I found? Do you know what was inside?'

'What?'

'Dirt!' he laughed 'Or earth, if you prefer. Ain't that a kick in the head! For all that time I was lugging a sack of dirt around my neck. I damn near died laughing.'

He ran his fingers through his hair and returned to the couch. He sighed as he sank down. 'You're looking well, Jule, very well.'

'Thank you,' she said. 'But I wish I could say the same to you. Frank, what are you doing to yourself? What are you doing?'

Frank rubbed his arm. 'As I told you, I've been quite busy. I don't have much time for personal appearances.'

'Come home with me,' she said.

'What?'

'Come home with me.'

'Oh, I couldn't do that.'

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'Why not? Why couldn't you? It would be easy. Let's just walk out of here and go right to Philly.'

'I have responsibilities here,' he said. 'I can't just walk away. I have things to do.'

'Like hell you do! Oh, I'm sorry, Frank, I didn't mean that. But I want you so much. I wish it could be by marriage; but I'll take it any way I can.' She unbuttoned her blouse and went toward him.

'Stop it, Julie! Remember the towers of ice . . . the bridges of sand. Back to Philly. Back to Circleton. Back where you belong. My life is in this room and I can't leave it. I can't!'

'Then let me stay here with you. I don't care.'

‘Are we still kids on the playground? How do I have to tell you? I have never been true to anything or anyone at any time. I’m a singer without a song. I just sit in this room and I sit alone. What the hell do you want from him?’

‘From him?’

‘From me. What do you want from me?’

‘I want you to come home with me!’ she cried. ‘I want you to be my child’s father. I want to be Julie Graham. Give me that and I’ll never ask another thing from anybody ever again. Frank Graham, I love you.’

Frank scratched the back of his neck. ‘There is no Frank Graham. Can’t you see that? I have a great deal of work to do. Excuse me.’

He sat at his typewriter and began typing: ‘Now is the time for the quick grey fox to come to the aid of his party . . .’

Julie stood still for a moment, held her breath; then darted out of the room, down the stairs, and to the street. She ran until she reached the drugstore on the corner. She dashed into a phone booth and crazily dialed random numbers. With her back against the folding door, she cupped her hand around the mouthpiece, and into this, she cried. It was all that was left for her to do.

A MOTION PICTURE DIRECTOR'S DREAM

Robert Lowry

A long shot of a long beach with bathing beauties dissolves to the turbulent waves of a storm at sea and the ridden rodent boat of my destiny. Shot Two! Shot Three! Keep shooting! This close shot shows us the moist murdered figure of a man dumped facedown in the bottom of the boat — one arm dangling overboard with lifeless fingers marking the water. Cut to: A sea of smiling faces blazing forth from the screen, my own among them; then pounding grey rain obscures this scene. Series shots show a variety of people being awakened in their beds by friends, butlers, bolsheviks, bearded peasants and bored-looking girls. Use green film to suggest that spring is here. Babies, naked to the day, toss tiny red balls among them and occasionally laugh in a longshot of a drillfield. Our next shot consists of a composite shot running all previous shots simultaneously on the screen. A VOICE: Everything depends on the sound track! ANOTHER VOICE: An eating scene would be good. A THIRD VOICE: How about ending the whole thing with an execution — a hanging, maybe? FOURTH VOICE: A trial! You can't beat a trial for interest. FIFTH VOICE: Keep it poetic, at all costs.

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THE IMAGE*

by David Cornberg

AND NOW HIS MIND WAS SWEPT, swamped, and filled to a cosmic completion, of images, of sounds, of smells, and the latter were the ultimate identity of his reflecting mind's images — indeed did he handle all of it, of them, in this great unconscious hope, with the same swift, efficient, balanced, of-harmony motions that he used in his conscious dream: and he thought, and it was no mystery, nor hidden truth, nor nadir of secrecy and he knew that he was thinking, and he was thinking, and knew it, and reliving doing again, repeating, moving, holding, he was feeling again, the meaning of all, that was now at his fingertips.

At times they flashed up in whorey brilliance, of radiant perfume, and a taut and cool surface, as a snare-drum in the snow on a Minnesota winter-morning with no stand or sticks but a little boy testing the tautness and coolness with ungloved fingers, clanging, ringing, proclaiming the adequacy, the existential necessity, the ascendancy in strange and deathless vapors, of his job: he was a garbage collector, on mystical and esoteric ships, of rumbling, promising, of inspiring, perspiring power: the trucks — he hung on their bucking sides, his sharp eyes alert for the adventure of a sanitary triumph, he held the grubbing, mucking juicy garbage-shovel once again, and strode the infinite dumps of his mind, and smelled the infinite odor of courageous, of busy, of the thousands of wonderful, glorious bacteria at work. And once again, one more time, of another similar incident, recurring once again, and now, again, he reveled in that Tuesday in August, in the green and yellow of rejected squash, and he sucked the distinctly-flavored wonder of the world into his lungs, into his very Psyche,

where it was a part of his being, of the echoing and symbolic roar, of the truck pulling its load up the last hill, speaking of day's end, of lunch, of casting the remnants of human nutrition to the mercy of a great order, and again, the rapturous buzz of the darkly-beautiful and meaningful flies, recalled to him the early mornings, of the promise of new worlds, new alleys, new travail for the sanitation engineer, and like roaring, spitting, bucking, smoking dragsters, waiting to leap from their trainers' bridle linkage, as fine thoroughbreds tied to hitching-rails and pulling at their ropes as though they wanted to run somewhere, the trucks hung, in a static expectation that fulfilled itself in a great becoming of diesel fuel and brake-fluid, and found the mighty warriors of cleanliness once again on the proper path, to garbage, to trash.

**A critical parody upon 'The Dream' section in OF TIME AND THE RIVER, by Thomas Wolfe.*

And he felt the trembling, bursting power, a surging oil-sprung vibration, of worn and cracked piston rods, and again the brilliant sun, finding the noble caravan, in a burst of clean, refreshing light, and heat that wakened the senses, and livened the vital ethers of the magnificent morning of collection, and there again the expectant, gray faces of the early-risers come to share, to be engulfed in, the spectacular, sensual potentials of the alley, and wondrous, decaying life: for, there were masculine alley-cats, gray, scarred, of definitely dubious ancestry, who cried out in blighted chorus, the meaning of the morning, and of the collection and again he saw the luscious, tempting yellow banana-peels, spread luxuriously, sensually, foreboding great mystery in their mastication against soggy coffee grounds.

But these thrilling and absorbent images did not remain, but remained for as long as the adequacy of his past success, and the need of his neurosis, suppressed the

bulging and overflowing, chartreuse and obscene truth, that lagged at the heels of his moving visions, that clamored at the walls of his Ideal Truck, threatening to return to where it came from the Garbage that he had successfully retrieved and recovered from numerous Cans: and his mind was transfixed, and the image flashed and sloshed before his eyes, and arose to quicken his breath, and sweat his pits, to plaster the diminutive growth to his flappy chest, to tremble his hand, and shake his self: a terrible thing, that clamored the walls of his nascent success, and threatened the apathetic Marasmus of his garbage groove.

His mind's eye spurred in panic, across the floor of a huge furnace, as a lake of ashes that he could walk on without effort because it did not crack under him as spring ice on an inadequate plot of water but remained as the finest dust on the hardest path, and out into the blinding, hostile brilliance of the morning sun; and it was a rivet on the huge handle of a monstrous garbage can, and its metallic brightness was extremely bright, and it did not get dull, but sat there in the handle as, far above it, were the dogged bits of rejected flora and fauna; and he ran, but always the full bucket that he could not grasp, nor be as large as, nor get a controlled hand on, hung above him, dripping his wickedness, and it would not run dry, that full image that swelled and smelled in him, from the depth of parental aspirations, of childhood dreams, and a vision of fellow-(as brothers)-collectors superseded by garbage disposals, a gripping, flipping, mushing, slushing, and terrifying fear of oversight. And the condemner-image dissolved, and came again in a strangely familiar form, and there he was again, at his failure in high-school athletics and academics, at his early, and residual, social ineptitude, as backwardness, in the stocks of his inadequacy; and suddenly he was speeding through the musty ditch of an alley, and at length, he stumbled and cried out from the wilderness, as a voice, unheard, unheeded, for it answered

back at him, for him to find the bulging indictment and empty its corruption of professional ethic; but they had all been handled, they were all empty, and rolled and closed against him, to obscure, for future muckery, that bulging garbage can that he had forgotten to empty.

THEOKRITOS UNBOUND

It is perhaps unfortunate for our age that Theokritos' poetry should be termed idyllic. This suggests that it has no value for the tension-ridden, Twentieth-century cosmopolite except as an escape from the jagged frustrations of daily reality. Previous translations of Theokritos bear this out. Without exception, they are Victorian in outlook and choice of language as well as in their publication dates. They are, in short, scholarly, but hardly poetic. (They also either translate some of the more graphic passages with a scholarly vagueness—or omit them altogether.) The total impression of Theokritos conveyed by such translations is that of a learned Hellenistic antiquarian looking out from a jumble of scrolls in the Alexandrian Library onto a painted backdrop which has, at best, a secondhand grasp of reality.

Barriss Mills (*THE IDYLLS OF THEOKRITOS* — \$2.95 — PURDUE University Studies) has shattered these images. His Theokritos is a man very much alive and very much in love with life. It would be misleading to assert that he has made him our contemporary (except as all men are, in a sense, contemporaries). But, Mills' Theokritos is deeply concerned with existential-Man: Man as he is involved in his own unique existence—not philosophical-Man, political-Man, religious-Man, or Man in any other of his secondary aspects. Because of this, we gain an insight into the Hellenistic Age when art, poetry, philosophy, and historiography too often were designed for mere entertainment. 'An age of decline,' perhaps; for Bion and Moschus sweetened the fresh sentiments of Theokritos' pastorales into saccharine sentimentalities. (Milton's *LYCIDAS* and Shelley's *ADONAI S* certainly owe much more to Bion and Moschus than to Theokritos, who is far too convolved in the problems of the living to spend his talents in wild dirges for the dead.) The

pastorales of Theokritos, however, number less than half of THE IDYLLS. (And it is evident from reading Mills' translation that idyll is not synonymous with pastoraie.) Yet, this genre is commonly associated with the poet; and, to Mills, Vergil's pastorales seem 'pale and formal,' 'literary,' 'almost academic,' in comparison. Meanwhile, surely, the Laocoön episode of THE AENEID has taken something from the Twentyfourth Idyll, where: 'Crafty Hera sent forth two monsters, / two blue-coiled, writhing serpents, / toward the wide threshold where the pillars / of the open doorway stood, / and commanded them to devour the child Herakles.' Still, Vergil's Laocoön is a human of an Olympian age, with a sense of inevitable destiny clinging to him. THE AENEID is everywhere concerned with elevating ancestors to heroic proportions; whereas, THE IDYLLS bring heroes into the scope of actual daily living. To Theocritos, cattle are more real than gods. In the Twenty-fifth Idyll: ... the whole plain was filled with homing cows — the roads and rich fields crowded with their lowing. And the cowsheds were soon filled with the shuffling creatures ... and Herakles accompanies Augeias on an inspection tour: For kings, like other men, seem to think their possessions are safer if they keep an eye on them themselves. Later, Herakles gives a simple recountal of the story of the Nemean Lion: ... I'll tell everything that happened, except where it came from, for of all the Argives, none can tell that with certainty. The characters of Homer and of Vergil are never uncertain about such things. Only a human being, faced with these gaps in his existence. Consider the Eighteenth Idyll which is concerned with the wedding-night of Menelaos and the beautiful war-sparking Helena: Dear bridegroom, have you fallen asleep already? Are you so heavy-limbed, so eager for sleeping? Or had you drunk too much, when you cast yourself down on your bed? If you wanted to sleep so early, you should have slept by yourself ... Not quite the Menelaos depicted by Homer. 'Put

up your fists and fight, face to face, man to man,' says Amykos in the Twenty-second Idyll; and a graphic, blow-by-blow description of a boxing match ensues — hardly a subject which, by modern standards, could be regarded as suitable for poetry: ... he ducked his head aside, and with his right fist struck below the left temple, putting his shoulder into the blow. And dark blood spurted suddenly from the gaping temple. With his left, he struck at the mouth, rattling the close-set teeth, and mauled the face with a quickening rain of blows till the cheeks were smashed ...

Another fight, in the Fourteenth Idyll is even less acceptable, since Aischines, at a drinking party, strikes the girl, Kyniska, because she is in love with someone else. But then, unrequited love is a suitable theme for poetry. Several of the IDYLLS contain this theme.

In the second one, for instance, a young girl has seduced her lover; and he, 'that false lover,' fed her a line, enjoyed her favors, and then fell in love with someone else. So, she pines away, passively awaiting his return? No, indeed! She gathers bay leaves and barley grains and prepares to grind up a lizard:

'Now I'll bind him with my love-charms, but if he still treats me badly, by the Fates, he'll do his knocking on the gates of Hades, I say.

Theokritos' characters are never lacking in vitality.

In the Eleventh Idyll, we are presented with the incongruous love of the one-eyed clod of a giant, Polyphemos, for Galatea, who lives at the bottom of the sea, and who is not the least bit interested in him. In his song,

... I'll learn to swim if some stranger sails this way in his ship ...

And, rejected lover that he is, adds:

Many a girl teases me to play with her all night long, and they giggle when I listen to them. On land, it seems I'm a somebody too.

More poignantly ridiculous is the unrequited love of the adolescent goatherd in the Third Idyll, as he tries to get the 'dark-eyed nymph,' Amaryllis, at least to look at him. He promises her ten apples and weaves her a wreath of ivy and roses. 'Now my right eye's twitching. / Does that mean I'll see her?' He ends with: 'My head's aching, but you / don't care. I'll sing no more, / but lie here where I've fallen / and let the wolves eat me.'

But, in the Twenty-ninth Idyll, the object of the lover is a fickle young boy. 'You're young, and I'm older. / Then listen to me, and you'll / be happier, and some day / you'll thank me.' And the lover goes on to give the boy perennial advice — which is perennially ignored. The Fifteenth Idyll is an incomparable glimpse of Hellenistic suburbia. Two housewives discuss their husbands, admire a dress (not omitting the price), and dash off for a hectic afternoon in downtown Alexandria. The pressures of modern civilization may be different, but they seem not really to have increased any.

The Twenty-seventh Idyll is a scene of love and seduction between Daphnis and Akrotime. She tells him: 'You ought to kiss your cows, not an unmarried girl.' This is a delightful piece, though it's doubtful that Theokritos was the actual composer. Indeed, of the thirty IDYLLS ascribed to him numbers nineteen and thirty definitely are not by him, while five others are in doubt. Nowhere does Mills suggest this. Perhaps it's of no real importance — perhaps. This would, I suppose, depend upon what one considers poetry to be; and the ultimate answer is essentially nonverbal. Whatever the definition, poetry is only a translation into words of a nonverbal 'sense,' and yet even so, poetry is the use of words (also) to communicate the 'inner reality' of the poet — and to add this is to say that the poet never can be separated from his composition. Were this not true, why bother to attach his name? Imagine, for example, combining the erudite CANTOS

of Pound, Eliot's dry, attenuated . . . PRUFROCK and THE WASTE LAND with the slashing multi-leveled sonnets of Gil Orlovitz, and labeling the whole: by an anonymous poet of the Twentieth Century. This is comparable to trying to speak Latin, pig-Latin, and racy English slang, all in one sentence. If poetry has any meaning, that meaning can only be the poet. (Which is not at all to suggest that a poem should not stand or fall on its merits. For, certainly, the better the poem, the more validly and the more-nearly completely the poet is communicated.)

The only defect in Barriss Mills' presentation of THE IDYLLS OF THEOKRITOS then seems to be, not in his translations, but from his omitting mention of authorship doubts, in the introduction.

Milton VanSickle

AN EPIC WITH MEANING FOR NOW

A LONG POEM AS IMPORTANT and meaningful in contemporary thought/feeling as William Carlos Williams' *PATERSON* is presented in a new World Poets Series (*SUN STONE*, by Octavio Paz, translated by Muriel Rukeyser—NEW DIRECTIONS, \$1.). It's to be hoped that this series expands into a large library of ably-translated modern verse.

The original work was published in Mexico in 1957. Paz is Mexican, and an intellectually-acute writer, a combination which undoubtedly puts him in a rare position: that of knowing and explaining 'literarily' what his historical intuitions echo. *Sun Stone* is the *Calendar Stone*, with the Aztec symbols, the ancient signs continually sought by us, used by us (though rarely so well), made new, stroked by our fingers because they recall what we have been, will be, through synthesis: what we are. As here, and as one of Mexico's foremost modern poets, Paz has consistently shown his keen mind reflecting the dualism that is today's Mexico. In prose, also (see the GROVE publication of his essays, *THE LABYRINTH OF SOLITUDE*).

SUN STONE contains 584 lines (corresponding to the number of days it takes Venus to complete its synodic period). Miss Rukeyser writes in her foreword: ' . . . the poem calls up and participates in the sense of repetition within eternity which is an aspect of nearly all natural religions, and at the end of the poem the first six lines are written again, signifying the entry into a new cycle or, in a profounder sense, the re-entry into an identical cycle.' Her own excellent translation of the six lines is:

willow of crystal, a poplar of water,
a pillar of fountain by the wind drawn over,
tree that is firmly-rooted and that dances,
turning course of a river that goes curving,
advances and retreats, goes roundabout,
arriving forever:

Physically, the book is small, handable, well printed, with translation facing the original Spanish. Miss Rukeyser has done a fine job of remaining faithful to the text, while at the same time retaining the sound and rhythm of the Spanish insofar as this is possible with two so-different syntaxes. In many instances, she has carefully used English words or phrases which convey the real meaning and/or feeling rather than the dry but accurate 'exact rendering.'

If it is at all possible to give something of the feeling of the work in a short review, the following passages are perhaps worth setting down:

I go a journey in galleries of sound,
I flow among the resonant presences
going, a blind man passing transparencies,
one mirror cancels me, I rise from another,
forest whose trees are the pillars of magic,
under the arches of light I go among
the corridors of a dissolving autumn . . .

and:

now there is nothing in me but one vast wound,
a gap with no possible way of healing,
a now without windows, a turn of intellect
moving on itself, repeating and reflecting,

it loses itself in its own transparency, self knowledge that
is shot through by the eye that watches itself watching,
drowning itself in clarity: itself in clarity:

Paz is a great poet, a particular and precise voice of our
time. And Muriel Rukeyser is a poet in her own right, whose

translation is clear and moving. The combination is a necessary book. Margaret Randall

The Innocents Abroad

TWO NEW YOUNGER AUTHORS WITH fictive talent have just published books centered around the American innocent abroad; otherwise, their interests are diverse, and their literary merits rather far apart. One is H. C. Brashers (THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE — \$1.65 — ALAN SWALLOW); the other, Norman Thomas (ASK AT THE UNICORN — \$3.75 — NEW DIRECTIONS).

Not only have some of the great masters of European fiction (Chekhov, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Gide, Joyce, Kafka, Mann, and Tolstoy) made successful use of the novella form, but many of the greatest works in American fiction fall into that elusive and often neglected category. In terms of the past, one recalls Melville's BILLY BUDD, James' THE TURN OF THE SCREW, Crane's THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE, Faulkner's THE BEAR, and Fitzgerald's THE GREAT GATSBY as representing the variety of possibilities inherent in a form older than the novel itself. First of all, the novella allows for a degree of scope and development not possible in the short story, while imposing on the artist a discipline through economy not present in the novel. One is tempted to recommend an apprenticeship in the form to numerous contemporary American authors who, while redeemed somewhat by their styles, nonetheless tend to confuse the overlong, complex plot with moral involvement or philosophical depth. And yet, the novella has not been entirely neglected by contemporary writers; among outstanding postwar novellas are James Purdy's 63: DREAM PALACE, William Styron's THE LONG MARCH, and Saul Bellow's SEIZE THE DAY. These suggest the utility of this ancient form in the crisis of values in mid-Century.

In general, however, publishers remain sceptical of short fiction — whether it be novella or story. While their prejudice

against the latter is borne out by the fact that collections of short stories, especially those by young or unknown writers, tend not to justify their investments, prejudice against the novella seems harder to postulate. Fortunately, one American publisher has realized the potentialities of short fiction and the brilliant but largely unsung tradition which rests behind it. Alan Swallow, for years one of the most forwardminded and enterprising of U.S. book editors, has recently launched a series of paperbooks, all original titles dedicated to the novella and short-story genres.

It is regrettable that one of the first titles — that of Brashers — in the new series, should offer two so-called novellas of such dubious merit. Both of these concern a young American, Sammy Carter, and his experiences as a green recruit in occupied Germany. Sammy is the traditional innocent abroad, and his spiritual odyssey takes him through a maze of emotions and experiences: rebellion against his own middle-class background; the pressure to conform, imposed on him by his fellow G.I.'s; and most significantly, the feelings of love, scorn, and shame with which his German acquaintances greet him. Ostensibly, both novellas are love stories, but, in each, Sammy's innocence finally becomes a source of destruction and estrangement. The situation is ripe with thematic and symbolic possibilities which are almost totally unemployed, in large part because Brashers has failed to realize that the novella is neither a long short story nor a short novel — that it demands a special talent and a special conception. If *THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE* is any index, Brasher's talents are for the short story, and these contents might better have been appropriately labeled 'long stories.' They lack the full and immediate impact of the short story, proper, and the dramatic fusing of concentration and scope characteristic of what Henry James called the 'blest nouvelle.' In a time when younger writers seem to be springing full-grown from publishers' offices

almost daily, Brashers' first efforts seem pale and ineffectual.

One of the finest examples of the gifted first novels multiplying at nearly a geometrical rate during the past five years, is Norman Thomas' *ASK AT THE UNICORN*, a tale set in the small, tradition-bound Welsh village of Dyfnaint. As it opens, Morgan Johns is embarking on a final stage of a quest which has sent him, at his father's deathbed imprecation, on a journey from California to Wales in search of the mysterious Grando, a wise, elusive old man who had once been mentor to Morgan's father. Grando has something of the ubiquitousness of Godot, and the boy finally comes to doubt that the one he seeks still lives. As the search persists through the rituals of Welsh family life, through a storied countryside, decaying churches and boisterous taverns (including the Unicorn), the idea of Grando increasingly dominates the boy's mind. The voice of the old man speaks to him parenthetically: "The end of rain is announced by a little man with a couple of huhs and a yellow rag . . .").' It is, in fact, the memory and the legend of Grando which are important for Morgan's search, and he discovers the 'real' Grando only after legend has served its purpose.

As did Mark Twain with the innocents in his classic, Thomas makes Morgan Johns critical and demanding. His protagonist looks first with humor and condescension, then compassion and understanding on the dreamers, lovers, drunkards, puritans, dogmatists, and iconoclasts who people the little village of Dyfnaint. The search for Grando becomes a search for himself; and Thomas handles the successful completion of that quest with a precision and directness, consistently avoiding the sentimental and contrived. The Welsh people play the same roles for the reader that they play for Morgan Johns: their speech, customs, myths, and ancient sense of wisdom and suffering are beguiling.

In the light of its rich, Welsh background, *ASK AT THE UNICORN* is reminiscent of Dylan Thomas' *PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG DOG*. Norman Thomas' work, however, lacks both the passionate utterances and the overrichness characterizing much of the work of that other Thomas. The richness of *ASK AT THE UNICORN* is one of concentration rather than effusion; yet, the debt to Dylan (especially in descriptive passages) cannot be overlooked. Compare, for example, Dylan's description of the 'best room' in a farmhouse with Norman Thomas' description of the sitting room of the station master at Dyfnaint:

The best room smelt of moth-balls and fur and damp and dead plants and stale, sour air. Two glass cases and wooden coffin-boxes lined the window wall. You looked at the weed-grown vegetable garden through a stuffed fox's legs, over a partridge's head, along the red-paint-stained breast of a stiff wild duck. A case of china and pewter, trinkets, teeth, family brooches, stood beyond the handy table; there was a large oil lamp on the patchwork tablecloth, a Bible with a clasp, a tall vase with a draped woman about to bathe on it, and a framed photograph of Annie, Uncle Jim, and Gwilyn smiling in front of a fern-pot.

Then, Norman Thomas:

Religious-red curtains swirled out like a cape where two lights touched each other and retreated — a soft yellow light from an inverted tear of gas, lambrass shining, and, where it faded, a glow from between the black arms of the grate where they crossed as at a bailiff's belly. The floor under and around the table was in darkness and things, containers, bundles, bottles resided there. Things packed up, contained and waiting there. Where the weak light fell over the tablecloth fringe it smoothed a worn carpet, dark colours swirling like a scene from a glass aquarium roof above tails and tentacles.

The sources from which these images spring are obviously similar, and the artist's tone in each case is neo-romantic. But there is less piling-up of imagery in the latter's passage, as well as less of the characteristic Welsh phrasing. While he is currently a resident of California, the first twenty-four years of Norman Thomas' life were spent in the Welsh coal-mining town of Treforest, and the common heritage of the two Thomases undoubtedly accounts for most of the occasionally-striking parallels in their uses of language. However, in the work of Norman Thomas, the Welsh heritage serves more a narrative than a lyrical function—thus giving *ASK AT THE UNICORN* a developmental profusion rather than textural exuberance. David Galloway

East Meets West

ONCE HAD A FRIEND WHO many years ago journeyed to the bush country of Nigeria. And there, in a tiny, isolated village, he was confronted with an old lady clad only in a flowered skirt who was almost the counterpart of his Victorian old Aunt Hattie. I am reminded of this on reading Nieh Hua-ling's *THE PURSE and Three Other Stories of Chinese Life* (HERITAGE Press, Taiwan — HK\$2.50). The people in her stories have names which sound odd to one accustomed to Indo-European names (such as: Li Huan, Wen-chin, Wan-chin, Wen chi — female; Hsiao Chao, Ta-nien, Hao, Tung Tien-en, Wen-ting — male). It would be so much easier for us Westerners if the translator were to render them as 'Mary' and 'John.' And, instead of drinking Chi-shuei or Kao-liang, why not 'lemonade' or 'gin?' In *OLD LADY KAO*, when her son suggests taking her to a movie, she answers: 'I am not going with you. If it is a Chinese movie, you act as if you had a stomachache; if it is a foreign one, I suffer. Those blue eyes, those protruding noses — I can't tell one actor from another.' A change of locale to, say, New York City, and Old Lady Smith would demur: '... if it is a foreign one, I suffer. Those lidless eyes, those flat noses ...' A few changes

like these, and even the laziest reader could enjoy the stories as ‘slices of American life.’

TRACE readers, however, won’t need such ‘corrections;’ they will still, I’m sure, find — perhaps not their Victorian old Aunt Hattie, but — on a very basic level, that the state of humanity is a constant, despite differences in nationality, culture, language, or other unimportant terms. All differences are essentially individual, whatever our conditioning causes us to perceive.

These works are simple, poignant masterpieces, undoubtedly some day to be rated with the best of Western literature in this genre. They are, in truth, Occidental in form and style (Miss Nieh’s favorites on this side of the world, we are told in the Introduction, are Flaubert, Gide, Henry James, Willa Cather, Katherine Ann Porter, Katherine Mansfield, and Virginia Woolf); yet, they echo something of that sweet sensitivity which Western laymen (such as myself) attribute to the Chinese poet Li Po, Tu Fu, Ch’U Yüan, and others. *THE PURSE* describes a woman in her early thirties who some years before had falsified her I.D. card, adding eight years to her age to get a better job; but those added years have begun to weigh on her. ‘She had often thought of correcting her age lately, but she was afraid . . .’ ‘She’d have to tell the whole story to some clerk and he would summon his superior and they would ask her all sorts of questions with a smile that would be mixed with amusement and pity.’ *DINNER* portrays two underpaid teachers dreaming up schemes to make money. *THE SUITOR* is a bachelor of thirty-four looking for a wife; the tale describes in a drool sympathetic way his awkward attempts . . . shown in his remarks to his love of the moment: ‘The moon’s full!’ ‘It won’t last!’ ‘It’ll be full again!’ ‘It’ll wane again!’ And *OLD LADY KAO* is an older woman watching her children grow up. She wants them near her, but their generation is unintelligible to her. They all love one another; but what do they have in common

except memories? The small volume concludes with an article in which Miss Nieh discusses whether or not she herself is the model for the heroine of *THE LOST GOLDEN BELL*. Except for a few chapters of this novel and the present book, her other works (*CREEPERS*, a novella; *THE EMERALD CAT*, stories) have not been rendered into English. (She usually does her own translating). I can only view this as a great misfortune for mono-lingual Westerners. Milton VanSickle

Americana in Free Verse

BRUCE CUTLER'S NEW book of poetry, *A WEST WIND RISES* (UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA Press — \$3., \$1.60, paperb.) is the passionate narrative of love of this land: Only the man who gives himself whole-hide to land can know how absolute it is to own. Or lose. And it is ours, he thought. And it is about the love and terror of settlers caught up in the struggles of the day. A Quaker wife ' . . . Lily lays her head across her arm. / William, thee is not for violence, she thinks / yet feels a numbness in her limbs. A sense / of strangeness presses in around her like / the dry insistent beating of a locust's / wings. The wind rises and the longhorn ox / bellows as a rifle volley.'

Her husband was killed in the Marais des Cygnes Massacre in Kansas (the story of the book) when, in 1858, pro-slave and anti-slave men lawlessly clashed.

A narrative poem, this unrhymed verse, like Anglo-Saxon verse, is full of energy and sense of action; and Bruce Cutler has his own powerful, unique idiom. It is quite different from that made familiar by such moderns as Eliot, Pound, Robinson, Frost, and Williams; but, in its way, by its light, quite as successful. In subject matter, but not as verse (for Stephen Vincent Benet's is conventional), it will remind many readers of *JOHN BROWN'S BODY*.

Sam Bradley

endemics: 6 we have just now; this instant justly, found
the soul-solution of all poetry:

fourteen thous and buckets of ale as many years of
recording clockly seconds; stumbled along knowing the
almost truth, too afraid of grandparental in-lawry to admit
fact and form

simple. read it. by Lee Holland 261