

TRACE

LIVING LITERATURE

MICHAEL FRAENKEL: Depth
Enquiry by Will Slotnikoff

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Summer

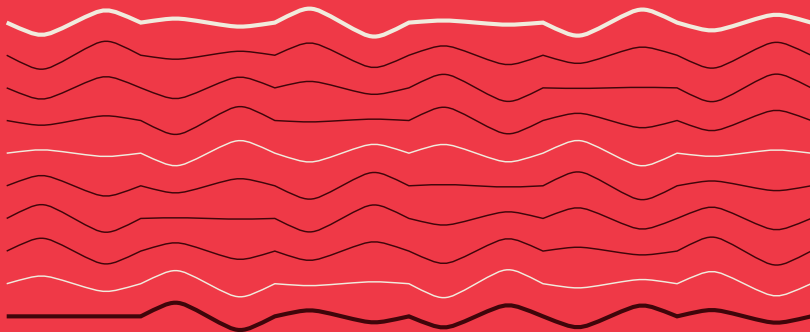
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A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This reading edition preserves the issue's poetry, fiction, essays, correspondence, reviews, and other literary writing in their printed order. Advertising, subscription matter, mastheads, the magazine's own contents pages, annual indexes, address lists, and the running trade directory are omitted as reference apparatus.

The text was checked against newly rendered source pages. Poetry lineation, stanza spacing, shaped indents, and hanging continuations for long lines are retained; prose continuations are joined without false paragraph indents. Conjectural readings are enclosed in square brackets, while original spelling and punctuation are otherwise kept.

Artwork is not reproduced in this text edition. The visual material in the issue is described here so that its place in the magazine remains visible:

Many poems in this section are printed over photographs or decorative artwork, or are trimmed at the binding gutter. The transcriptions below are taken from the clearest obtainable scan of each page; where a line-opening was cropped or a page was faded, the reconstruction is given in square brackets, and a note flags any poem that could be only partly recovered.

This poem is printed over a full-page photograph; the title and a few line-openings are only partly legible in the scan.

Printed over artwork; only part of the sonnet is legible in the scan, and several line-openings are conjectural.

A group feature gathering five Los Angeles poets. Each poet's contribution is signed at its close, as in the original. Several of these pages are printed over artwork or trimmed at the gutter; reconstructed line-openings are bracketed.

A group feature. Each poet's contribution is signed at the end in the original; the bylines are placed as section headings here. Several of these pages are printed over artwork or trimmed at the gutter, so some line-openings

are reconstructed in brackets. —

This short poem is printed beneath a photograph; the photograph is omitted.

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AN OVERVIEW: THE SPANISH AMERICAN LITTLE MAGAZINE SCENE

Hugh Fox

These pages are trimmed at the binding edge in the scan — recto pages lose a letter or two at the start of each line, verso pages at the end. Openings and endings have been restored from context; the reconstructions are silent except where a reading is genuinely uncertain. — ED.

The two main literary centers in Spanish America are in Buenos Aires and Mexico City. Not only are the big publishing houses there, but most of the literary activity. There's an activity, fluency, agility of a kind completely unknown in more 'stagnant' areas such as Ecuador and Bolivia or (even) Peru.

Perhaps the most lively of all current magazines in Latin America is ECO CONTEMPORANEO, edited in Buenos Aires by the young Argentinian intellectual, Miguel Grinberg. Thirtyish, bearded, soft-spoken and 'humane,' Grinberg is the founder of the Generación Mufada (The Mouldy Generation), vaguely similar to our Beats. Since he founded E.C. in 1961, it has been the real focal point of new literary thought of both North and South America. Very catholic in his tastes, Grinberg (he speaks fine English and has published a book of poems about New York — America, Hora Cero) has consistently tried to include in E.C. whatever is fresh, new, positive, idealistic. He claims he is apolitical and is interested mainly in poetic rather than political change, and ECO CONTEMPORANEO consequently stays pretty much out of the political arena and concentrates mainly on poetry, the arts, dance, movies, painting, etc. Unfortunately, because of the disastrous financial state of Argentina, Grinberg has only been able to bring out supplements to E.C. this year, but he hopes to resume on a full scale as soon as he has money.

Another interesting and similarly-internationalistic magazine in Argentina is the COROMAN Y DELFIN, subtitled *Revista Internacional de Poesia*, directed by Ariel Canzani D., a member of the Argentinian Merchant Marine. Carrying over the 'marine' theme into the magazine, most of the advertisements are from various kinds of marine companies; and instead of referring to the issues as 'numbers,' he refers to them as 'voyages.' In each 'voyage' he tries to include poets from a wide selection of countries. Recent issues ('voyages' 8, 9, 10) have had small 'anthologies' of poets from Uruguay, Poland, and Catalonia.

Another Argentinian magazine of the vanguardia is POESIA = POESIA, directed by Roberto Juarroz. Like the COROMAN Y DELFIN and ECO CONTEMPORANEO, it tries to maintain an international flavor.

Sur of Argentina is so big that it is hard even to consider it a 'little' magazine any more. Still, it does manage to include a lot of things; and, although at times it is a bit too conservative and faces a bit too much toward the past, when read along with a magazine like ECO CONTEMPORANEO, it gives you a very good panorama of the Latin American (and often world-wide) literary scene.

In Mexico, the most swinging magazine is EL CORNO EMPLUMADO, directed by a young couple, Sergio Mondragón and Margaret Randall. She is from New York, he is Mexican — and CORNO reflects this 'duality' and tries to form a kind of literary bridge between English- and Spanish-America. As a meeting place for a wide spectrum of new writing, it is one of the best. Even the advertisements are fun; and if someone is just getting acquainted with the Latin American literary scene, EL CORNO is probably the best place to start. Another magazine along these inter-national lines is MAGUEY, edited by Jed Linde.

Mexico is the home of 'weird' literary magazines. Two of the weirdest in all of Latin America are NIVEL and EL

PAJARO CASCABEL. NIVEL, although contentwise a kind of historical literary magazine, is rather overwhelming formwise. It's longer and wider than the LOS ANGELES TIMES. Really, the only practical way to read it is to spread it out on the floor. Although the magazine does contain commentaries on current Latin American literature, for the most part it has a marked historical (didactic) slant. The interest is not solely in what is going on today, but in how today's scene has been moulded by the past.

El PAJARO CASCABEL (the translation seems to come out 'Rattlebird,' a kind of take-off on *culebra de cascabel*, i.e.: rattlesnake) published its first seventeen issues in a very humble folded sheet-format. From number eighteen on, however, it has become thick, elegant, and very 'red.'

Letras — DE AYER Y DE HOY, in Mexico, is perhaps the country's most middle-of-the-road publication. Although drawing from a wide area of contemporary poetry, it is for the most part conservative both in its politics and choice of poetry. Three other magazines worth mentioning are LA PALABRA Y EL HOMBRE from the University of Vera Cruz, ARMAS Y LETRAS from the University of Nuevo Leon (Monterrey), and the CUADERNOS DE BELLAS ARTES, the 'official' magazine of the Ministerio de Bellas Artes — the most elegant, universal, and 'harmless' magazine coming out of Mexico today.

Official magazines, although they are widespread in Latin America, do not have a very important literary role because for the most part they are directed by political appointees with conservative political leanings, editors who allow their political conservatism to keep most of the content interesting to someone around the turn of the century but certainly not to anyone really in tune with contemporary literary-artistic happenings.

A happy exception is the REVISTA NACIONAL DE CULTURA of Venezuela, directed by the Venezuelan

poet-critic Rafael Pineda. Since Pineda took over the REVISTA a couple of years ago, the whole format and content has gone very Twentieth Centuryish, and Pineda makes a point of having a wide range of articles on the current scene not only in Latin America but also in North America and Europe. Visually the layout is one of the best anywhere.

Another Venezuelan magazine with a fine layout (but with very little meaty content) is CAL, directed by Guillermo Meneses. Meneses, at one time one of the best novelists in Latin America (a kind of Venezuelan James Joyce), now is on the decline; and although he keeps abreast of the latest (op, pop, whatever) in terms of 'form,' contentwise CAL is very disappointing. ZONA FRANCA, directed by Juan Liscano, somehow has been able to escape from the general limitations of other magazines outside the magic circles of Buenos Aires and Mexico City, and brings between its covers a wide and deep range of contemporary writing mainly from Latin America but also from Europe, Asia, and North America. The best feature of ZONA FRANCA is its criticism. New books, new magazines, new trends are discussed in depth, often by Liscano himself; and Liscano, although he tends toward an old-fashioned romanticism as a poet, is not only sharp and to the point as a critic, but also has a fine background in total cultural history. For 'keeping up,' really there is nothing that comes close to ZONA FRANCA except ECO CONTEMPORANEO — and ZONA FRANCA is still coming out regularly.

Many countries in South America are beset by two problems that practically eliminate the possibility of having any permanent little magazines of high quality: 1) Basic political instability; 2) Chronic economic underdevelopment.

In Colombia, for example, practically the only places where any literary activity can be found are in the literary section of TIEMPO and in the pages of ESPIRAL. ECO (which has no connection with ECO CONTEMPORANEO), published

by the Buchholz Bookstore of Bogota, is in fact a German magazine in Spanish. *ESPIRAL*, directed by Clemente Airó, has existed for twenty years and has published over one hundred issues — but this is extremely rare. Beset by terrorism and chronic political and economic instability, Colombia is just beginning (with the foundation of the Casa de Cultura in Bogota and the annual arts festival in Cali) to come into its own as a contemporary literary power.

In Ecuador, in spite of similar socio-economic conditions, there is some literary activity. At the same time, though, the same factionalism that divides the country politically everywhere also breaks the literary world into small warring groups. For example, the group at *INDOAMERICA*, a magazine devoted to the search for national identity through incorporating the Indian past into the present, has very little to do with the leftist group (Ulises Estrella, Alejandro Moreano, Francisco Proaño) at *LA BUFANDA DEL SOL*. And *NIZIAH*, a very visually-attractive magazine with poems pasted on vari-colored papers suitable for mounting, has little contact with either *BUFANDA* or *INDOAMERICA*. To acquire copies of *PUCUNA* (also leftist — Estrella is also a power here), *NIZIAH*, *LA BUFANDA DEL SOL* and/or *INDOAMERICA* is almost impossible, even in Ecuador itself. The bookstores don't stock the little magazines; the members of the various groups that edit the magazines don't have money either for large editions or postage for sending their magazines around — and above all there isn't really a continental attitude in Ecuador. Literary life tends to be limited to groups within groups within groups.

A notable exception is *SYRMA*, edited by Ruben Astudillo. Astudillo, besides being a fine poet himself, and one of the real innovators in contemporary Latin American poetry, also has an infallible eye for quality literature. As a consequence, *Syrma* (edited in Cuenca) is very high quality. With great effort, Astudillo maintains contact with what is going on

throughout Latin America and North America; and SYRMA remains a valiant proof that with few resources, and surrounded by indifference if not hostility, literature can develop — and with quality.

In Peru, the CUADERNOS TRIMESTRALES DE POESIA (Trujillo) and ALPHA (Lima) are really the only two literary magazines besides the official REVISTA PERUANA DE CULTURA that have any real literary value. The CUADERNOS TRIMESTRALES tries to publish all the young Peruvian poets worth publishing. Although its appearance is rather shabby (printing costs are high in Peru — thanks to her new prosperity), it is regular and widely distributed. The REVISTA PERUANA DE CULTURA is good, but unlike the REVISTA NACIONAL in Venezuela, it tends to be extremely conservative both in content and format. ALPHA is local, limited in circulation, and tends to be parochial.

Uruguay is a kind of small-scale Argentina. TEMAS (published by the Alpha press — no connection with Peru's ALPHA) is slick and well put together, but doesn't have that scrapbook quality of small notices on current trends and in-depth reviews of current books which is indispensable to a first-rate literary magazine in Latin America where there is so vital a need for information on a continental level. AQUI POESIA, top-rate poetry magazine directed by Ruben Yacovski, is small but in depth. Its leftist leanings enable it to serve as an eye looking into the poetic scene behind the iron curtain; and at the same time, Yacovski is balanced enough to include some of the best current North American poetry. He is going to publish a bilingual edition of contemporary North American poetry which I am currently editing and translating — and there are no political strings attached.

Chile has three noteworthy little magazines, HACIA, LA TIERRA, EL HOMBRE, LA POESIA (Antofagasta), ORFEO (Santiago), and TRILCE (La Universidad Austral). The least

impressive of the three, formatwise, is HACIA, although it is stable (sixty-eight issues so far) and 'competent' in its continued publication of contemporary poetry. ORFEO is the most impressive of the three and tends to look toward Europe instead of the two Americas. It reflects the establishment and is interested in yesterday's instead of tomorrow's poetic experimentation. TRILCE is 'attractive,' well laid out, and has about it a real breath of tomorrow. It is mainly concerned with poetry and poetic theory.

Bolivia's over-all economic 'precariousness' is unfortunately a determining factor in the lack of development of her cultural life. LA CULTURA BOLIVIANA, published by the University of Oruro, is attractive when it comes out, but its appearances are irregular. Bolivia is currently undergoing a university 'reform' that has paralyzed most of the literary activity at the universities and which will probably ultimately result in putting most of the university magazines in the hands of the leftists. CANATA, published by the township of Cochabamba, has some life, but is hampered by maintaining a conservative township-sponsored tone. The only real light in Bolivia comes from the bookstores and publishing houses, Juventud in La Paz and 'Los Amigos de Libro' in Cochabamba. A new magazine, AMBITOS, has recently been started in Cochabamba, but it is still a little premature to say anything about its permanent value, although its founder (Carlos Rimassa) is young, idealistic, and very talented. Werner Guttentag, the power behind 'Los Amigos de Libro,' publishes a bibliography of Bolivian literature every year and is also publishing various series of books by Bolivians about Bolivia, but so far has not ventured into the field of the little magazine.

In the last few years, Central America has been experiencing a great resurgence of both economic and cultural vigor. The Central American common market seems to be forming an entirely new kind of Central American

solidarity. Until recently, the only magazines published in Central America which had any real fiber were TESTIMONIO (Santo Domingo) and EL PEZ Y LA SERPIENTE (Nicaragua). BRIGADAS DOMINICANAS, founded in Santo Domingo in 1961, seems to have stopped publication in 1963. It was anti-Trujillo, and so much has taken place since then that anti-Trujillo seems almost antediluvian. In December of 1964, however, the Universitario Centroamericano in Costa Rica began to publish a magazine called REPERTORIO CENTRO AMERICANO, and since then a whole series of magazines have begun publication: VENTANA (the National University of Nicaragua), the REVISTA CONSERVADORA DEL PENSAMIENTO CENTROAMERICANO (Nicaragua), and PRESENTE (Honduras). Taking their cue from the REPERTORIO CENTRO AMERICANO, these three are all very much concerned with Central America; and, unlike the internationally-flavored EL PEZ Y LA SERPIENTE, confine their interest to Central America. However, they are lively and indicate a happy, although not altogether unexpected (I'm thinking of Bolivar's famous 'Jamaica Letter' in which he predicts both unity and prosperity for Central America), turning with the fortunes of the Central American Republics. The official magazine of the Casa de la Cultura in Cuba (CASA DE LAS AMERICAS), during its first few years of existence managed to maintain a very high and apolitical quality. But recently there seems to have been a change in policy and it has become more the literary arm of the Cuban government.

Latin American little magazines today serve the very vital function of maintaining alive the lines of communication between Latin American Republics and between these republics and the rest of the world. Plagued by cultural marginality (the Mexican Leopoldo Zea's basic theme) and for the most part frozen in a state of economic underdevelopment, Latin America still manages to produce

vital writings.

Her little magazines, like those in the U.S.A., reflect the best of her young writers. In spite of everything that logically should have extinguished experimentation, it still burns on. The importance of the world of little magazines cannot be overestimated. Not only does it already provide an outlet for the best work of a great number of aspiring artists, it provides (and hopefully will provide even more in the future) an infrastructure of understanding that goes beyond political boundaries and narrow national interests to stress the unifying, constructive, positive elements in human nature. Even while the old political structure continues disunifying the inter-American world, this new apolitical unity has already created an invisible link within Latin America. Hopefully this inter-American unity can be extended to the U.S.A. and eventually become international on a broader scale.

This seems to be the way that things are going. The very fact that I, Chicago-born of isolationist 'foreign'-hating parents, should have married a Peruvian poet-critic, spent three and a half years of the last eight in Latin America, should have become bilingual and have bilingual children, and have written this article, is a good indication of trends. Even more encouraging is the fact that the generation coming after me doesn't see anything odd at all about my situation.

ZONA FRANCA IN CARACAS TO ORFEO, ECO, AND PÁJARO CASCABEL. — ED.

EPITAPH FOR A POET ANONYMOUS

Richard O'Connell

He never studied under Robert Lowell
Or passed through Iowa — that long canal
Of alimentary grub-worm poets.
When he died no one wept him into style.

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PENSEES ART POP

Gil Orlovitz

‘Selection from a Taped Interview’

A. ... the most daring frisson, ultimate of pop-art reality, you understand, is the framing of the frame, wherein we have, for example, a photographic four-color repro of a Vermeer, including of course the framing of the gallery illumination itself and — what could be more apt? — a robot disguised as a spectator within the framed field, the entire assembly within a framed computer ... Q. The problem there — would it not? — would be one in which you would have to decide whether or no the programing itself should be framed? A. Yes, yes, there, precisely, is the biologic exquisite. A laboratory, DNA, and the scientist himself. C. P. Snow himself could not have envisaged a more nearly perfect crystallization of the rapprochement of art and science in the framing of scientific experiment in which the artist has fixed himself at the console of amino acids that, literally, will create the artist. Q. Would you say, then, that pop art has as its object the rendering of the painter, writer, sculptor, and composer as supererogatory? A. You have missed the essential point, haven't you? You see, the supererogatory has already taken place, otherwise no necessity for the pop artist would exist. We are here, exclusively, to construct the frame around the nonnecessity of us. Otherwise we should not DNA the wishes of one doting parent for an artist, another for a construction worker, another for a municipal politician, und so weiter. ... Mr. Truman Capote has descanted recently on the nonnovel, the French — by that breathless leap of cultural interchange — on the antinovel. We have had music in concrete and there are reports from Germany on poetry in concrete. Undoubtedly there will shortly be English translations in cuneiform. IN COLD BLOOD contains no condemnation or

denunciation of the murderers — it is simply reportage in depth of a psychosocial phenomenon — no? Well, all well and good. But, you see, Mr. Capote has not actually gone quite far enough since; within the contexts of the reported homicides, he has named and delineated the murderers, obviously a — Q. A value judgment! Ah, yes — A. Exactly. The unfortunate subjective note was introduced in the act of nomenclature, the implication then, regrettably, being within the province of ethics, namely — sorry — that those principals who were murdered should not have been. The ideal pop artist cannot engender that sort of implication. Mr. Capote fell short of the final frisson, so to speak, namely — sorry — that he himself wanted the murders to take place so that he himself could conceptualize his frame or, rather, more elegantly, his pop-art nonframe around the event. Q. Then you wish to obliterate the frame itself? A. Properly, yes. Pop art belongs to the evolution of a specific political philosophy, namely — sorry — anarchism. Anarchism, logically developed, is the statelessness of all states, you see? And that condition is here before our very eyes, so that the pop artist, as esthetic adjunct, has come into being to petrify the political ideal already obtaining, an ecumenical mode that embraces the present marvelous mélange of capitalism, state capitalism, fascism, communism, primitive agricultural economies, constitutional monarchy, absolute monarchy, and tribalism. We really need go no further. For this, pop art provides the fixatif. André Malraux — don't you see? — adumbrated the condition in VOICES OF SILENCE, in which he so eloquently argues the virtues of the reproduction of art. One does not have to seek out the source itself in the museums or the fastnesses of Cambodia; one has only to send a perceptive photographer from Death Magazine or Blind to shoot a series of kodachromes to be bound between book covers for mass dissemination so that one may have one's exquisite esthetic

appreciation while having one's teeth pulled or one's hair dried. Notice the grip: one can keep on your sense of alienation in the process: you are in harmony with Cambodian bas-reliefs as you have a tooth expropriated. Indeed, the whole problem of alienation in contemporary society might well be solved by pop art — the reintegration of man with his environment by the reproduction of pop art before his very eyes as elements of his own body are being spirited away under anesthesia. The dendritic process can be fantastic ... Q. You are warming up, aren't you? A. One does, you know, warm up best in cold blood. I was speaking of the dendritic process. Pop art, for instance, envisages the psychoanalyst filmed on a couch as he recounts his most intimate frissons; then, if you will, the same psychoanalyst behind his desk listens to the filmed reproduction of himself on a screen and proceeds to analyze his image. Actually, what we really need for this sort of pop art — and here is where the theatre itself is embraced — are two actors to take the twin roles. You see, then, how science itself is reenacted, and the neurosis becomes a species of pop art. The important thing to remember is: nothing need be created. Pop art is the celebration of what already is. Nothing need be added. Which makes all of life a sheer luxury, any phase of life, a sheer luxury, from the most degraded to the most sublime. Q. It must follow, of course, that since pop art contains all phases of the human condition, it must contain war — and make no denunciation, for example, of apartheid. A. The more modest of pop artists, certainly, have made no comments on nuclear warfare or the continued existence of segregation. But the less modest of us are logically bound in our anarchist esthetic to pronounce neither yea nor nay on the matters you have raised. And yet, you will observe, the leaders of peace groups and antisegregation councils freely mingle with us in open tolerance — enjoy being photographed with us at the most haut monde of social

functions. My friends, those people even buy our pop art. And if I may say so, we have affairs with all sorts of people who realize exactly where we stand and what we stand for. It is quite Christian to love pop art and pop artists. And if money for our art is not the capstone of its approbation, love certainly must be ...

UNTITLED

Norma Clark

Now is part of just
A sand world, a tiny shell
And part of the beach

ISSUE P. 164 · SCAN P. 18

TOWARDS PRINT

(Poetry — As Moving in Ideocratic Directions)

The Editor

Might it not be that the confutation of utter Anabaptistic Abecedarianism in contemporary poetics can be bolstered 'Zywxvally'? Perhaps this period's recognized experimenters really aren't abecedaries of any sort. Perhaps they are zyxwvunians with whirling-dervish traits? Witness the popularity of transposed syllables, warped phrases, for unheard metaphoric suggestion.

To underline concentration on this particular matter (and to reduce the unfairness of reviews in alphabetical order by authors — seeming never to reach those at the tail of the familiar rote), this article dwells upon writers whose surnames' initial letters match the close of the alphabet.

Harriet Zinnes (AN EYE FOR AN I — \$3.75 & \$2 — FOLDER Editions) is rather consistently cryptic and semi-Gothic, and almost macabre — if not shockingly so, at least ironically indulging a sort of sadistic or masochistic attitude. This is evidenced in her choice of words and structures as well as in her themes. A dark view is indicated by her juxtapositions of such things as stars with waters muddied by socks and shoes ... her boy murdering or intending to murder his father in a game of catch ... her interpretation of Loom Fixing in a quilt pattern ...

Favorite subjects are mental torment and death, derived from such unexpectedness as Encounter: the meeting of a man and a bird where 'The moment of arrest proves vulnerable. / An alien among the trees / man seeks the shelter of his will: / but contradiction rattles him / love saddens him / fear changes him / ... / resolution forsakes him. / The bird begins to fly. / An eye for an I. / I die.'

Her book contains social and (by inference) political protest; and the expression is distinctly pessimistic. For

instance, in Mural: ‘... large on the horizon / a red glowing elephant on its haunches / ... glaring / the setting sun / (fitting fire) / whole over lustful / over dead (quiet) bodies of men / miasmal / murdered men / Vietnamese.’

Miss Zinnes parenthetically says in *The Return*: ‘Nothing is farfetched that the mind seizes upon.’ — having illustrated this in the opening: ‘The roses from Pieria / and I with my hornbook of lilies.’ And her mind seizes upon the ‘sinister’ and odors of death: a Duchamps *Nude Again* takeoff. In *Word as Gesture*, her ‘Page’ reads to her: ‘I have been. / I die.’

Lacking clues to when or to the length of the period these poems were produced, the variety of technical approaches (plus some ‘cute’ devices) suggests she has not found her own voice. The sole distinctive mannerism common to all the poems is a terse staccato choppiness resulting from line breaks with sudden shifts of images often splitting transmissions of meaning. A few pieces also are varied by typographical ‘assists.’

This book’s format is handsome, with drawings by Margit Beck, Nell Blaine, Elias Friedensohn, Robert Rauschenberg, Hyde Solomon, and Theodore Stamos.

Since J. Michael Yates’ *CANTICLE FOR ELECTRONIC MUSIC* (Kiss, Ltd. [Canada] — \$4) invokes deity only through figurative allusions, mentions drink in no terms of pleasurable semi-oblivion, and calls upon sex with restraint, it may seem that comparison with Omar Khayyám is strained. However, there are relationships both in underlying purposes and in modes of presentation. To find the parallels, we use, not the partial metrical translations of Edward Fitzgerald or those of the many other poets, but the literal prose translation by Justin Huntly McCarthy.¹ In very ‘free’ verse here, Yates often reads as prose. But in the main his varied line lengths are well proportioned in

continually-changing metres; and, while in the ‘philosophic’ category, the book carries much imagery. At first glance — being rigidly cast in twenty-four cantos of eight stanzas of three lines each (befitting the title and perhaps also utilized to counteract what otherwise might strike the eye as overextended evolvment, by a contradictory systemization) — the work might be called artificial. It obviously is, in form; but not in content. The thematic development — fatalistic, though not wholly so — is quite spontaneous. He shows unusual maturity for a young poet.

The lines quotable in evidence of the Omar kinship, and substantiating that CANTICLE essentially falls in the same fundamental spectrum, are unmetaphoric and generalized. It would be unfair not to note that such passages actually are very rare and that the book is loaded with stimulating original juxtapositions of images in the modern manner; as, ‘At the conjunction of death and all music, / the tawney scenes war with baroque zones of color. / At a rockslide a bear digs for a squirrel, ...’

But, for keys to the Omar tie, from a preliminary verse and from Cantos 1, 2, 9, 11, and 24:

These canto excerpts are printed in a two-column layout that the scan interleaves; they are given here as continuous verse in reading order. — ED.

This is for whatever, like it,
Moves nowhere, saying to itself,
Between one nothing and another.
The thing not to fear:
That soon I won’t care
That there isn’t anywhere.

If things can die, were they ever?
Silence speaks silence to silences.
Words have always only been words.

It’s time again to purge my past. If I don’t write
To it, perhaps it won’t question after a time.

... I decide ... I am alive: Not to decide not to decide. The only critical condition The eyes of then in the face of now.

Exploring Omar in McCarthy's English, we have, in CLXVI, the old man staggering from a wine shop, muttering: '... this world is but a breath of wind.' In CLXXX: '... Drink wine, for you know not whence you come. Be merry, for you know not where you go.' (Fitzgerald's corresponding verse incorporates 'why you go,' but E. H. Whinfield's and others' do not ... and Yates doesn't pose the question.) Further relevant ties are scattered all about: in CC the typical '... I am what I am ...'; and soon he says '... why would I choose never to have come here, never to have lived here, never to depart hence.' (CCXVII); then he reiterates (CCCXLI) '... the words ... whispered were but wind.'; and later (CCCXLVI) '... live, knowing no one, known of no one.' An identical romanticized determinism is the underlying mood in Yates: 'Bach and Wagner / Collude the music / We die, laughing.' (Canto 16) — though the cynical merriness is of a different order as he ends the book: '... It is / The wind that does not blow, I'm waiting for.'

Fanny Ventadour (*BLUE IS RECESSIVE AS IN IRISES* — 10/-, or \$1.50, paperb. — Editions TWO CITIES) is another earnest poet of indubitable talent, who however makes lesser attempts than do the foregoing. Hers, here, are brief intense limited pieces concentrated upon vivid impressions of chiefly out-of-doors scenes and happenings — oftenest at the seashore. But this is by no means common 'nature poetry.' Though anticipated images, integral to internal unity, are frequent and lines which are startling in the prevailing modern manner are rare, she exercises a device which creates a transpositional surprise: injection of quite ordinary generalities of simple description or of verbal conjurement immediately met by inventive metaphors. As, in *And the blue stars bleed* ...

the children's laughter agile as a faun
leaps from the crags as they scramble up the
 jagged
 face
of the cliff.
... The rocks are angry dragons
gnawing at the sweet insouciance that crushes
the early baby's-breath blooming in the crevices.
Pebbles lie in wait on the dizzy path sly
 prevaricators
laying snares.

Another poem might have been commonplace — the
opening stanza voicing a flatly-indefinite adjurement of
a
senseless waterdrop — but is adroitly rendered
successful.

Miss Ventadour makes an abrupt subjective transfer in
an
isolated line, then begins the next stanza with simile
and

conjurement of fate, ensued by a key metaphor (the
only one
in the piece). She last leaves denouement unresolved in
a

final isolated line which gives depth and provides
polarity for
the poem as a whole. This last line is faultily used as
the

title. Without title, the poem is memorable:

Drop of water on a leaf,
lie there
replete
and hold within
circular, complete,
the tree, the car beside the door
the sky between the roof and chimney-top

a fading star,
a scoop of beach,
all this and more
things as they really are.
We see the things that are.
Curved shadows show like graphs
the slant
of what may come;
Juggernaut or blessing
either one (and odds are even)

depends on rearrangement of the things that are, or order or disorder of the things that are. We hold the leaf.

Here her improvement might be effected by eliminating the parenthetical comment. The distinctive subtlety which individualizes Miss Ventadour's work is more specifically imageful in other of her better poems. Doff your hat to a dolmen closes: 'now stumble on the rotting reeds of debonnair / There is no time for eglantine abiding / fill the void with sounds of worlds colliding.'

Despite Ted Walker's (FOX ON A BARN DOOR — \$3.95 — GEORGE BRAZILLER) similar addiction to poems about the sea and shore and his similar preference for closely-personal poetizing, there's little resemblance between his and Miss Ventadour's work. Since he's more analytical, his involvements seem less deep, and he never waxes strongly passionate. His lines never verge upon the overdone, as hers sometimes do. Yet, on the negative side, his polished control evidences too great a curb on his feelings; while his disciplined verses will pleasure many readers, there's frequently an impression of deliberative selection and arrangement in striving for effects which consequently do not quite come off. True — many acclaimed poets have revised and edited strenuously. However, they must have wrought from hotter-fired first drafts than Walker appears to have done, and they have left no traces of labors over diction.

Since Walker is not a 'book' poet, in that he obviously takes off from genuine direct impressions and not from secondhand reflections upon impressions of others, it's a pity that he falls into a related artificial category by reason of failure to be his own man in his language.

At a glance, Walker is 'modern' in his deployments of unexpected images through unexpected turns in new relationships. He even deftly justifies use of the critically-disapproved 'pathetic fallacy.' But, although his technical skill is considerable and he thoroughly understands and makes use of essential polarities, he does not form poems of moving power. Vivid metaphors and admirable word patterns do not inevitably make poetry of the calibre Walker intends. Opening stanzas of two of his best pieces illustrative of this article's theme assuredly are better than competent; yet, the foregoing critical reservation applies. First, Lancing Beach:

An asphaltic sea had lain
with a rash of bladder-wrack
breaking out along its back.
It was a sea-leukaemia
and the sea convulsed with it,
throwing up silver brit
and the body of a man.
Here it was they found him, here,
with little eels in his hair,
and from his unstoppered husk
fluid flowed. Balls of black flies
rolled in the pits of his eyes.

Then, Rook Shoot:

Against the evening light, strung
across banks of cumulus

goitres of mistletoe hung
from the necks of poplars.
Higher, in elms, rookeries
knotted the topmost tracteries,
rank and black like a cancered lung.
Always a restlessness turned
in the top of those tall trees:
even at rest the birds leaned,
lurching backwards as a breeze
blew fitful into their faces
scabrous with the rub of branches
jabbed. There was no comfort.

A Scottish physician, Gael Turnbull, manifestly has been influenced by the late American physician, William Carlos Williams, in his largely common-speech recording, *TWENTY WORDS: TWENTY DAYS: A Sketchbook & a Morula* (MIGRANT Press — 5/- or \$1, paperb.). However, he has his own idiom — more so than simply by reason of random occurrences of Scottish words and phrase mannerisms. One easily may be critical of these because they are dubiously classifiable under the heading of poetry, but Turnbull qualifies more consistently with poetic prose; and, as with Williams, one is convinced of the authenticity of the record and persuaded that it may be, because he honestly transmits individualized reactions to views of places in his time through noteworthy word-patterns.

Turnbull's booklet is composed upon a fixed superficial frame comparable in that one aspect to the Yates volume; but his frame is a diarylike continuum, where that of Yates is stanzaically tailored upon themes unordered by the calendar. Still, Turnbull transfers subjective analyses more inferentially through narrations of happenings and impressions. A reason for this accomplishment lies in the fact that he is untypical of the modern in making little or no use of surprise juxtapositions. His metaphors and similes

rise compatibly from natural occurrences. These are brief pieces upon actual days of a doctor's life, comprising fewer views of actions and thoughts in the practice of medicine than in his off-hours. Here is XII: bloated from over-eating, picked bones on a plate — and the fallen leaves too damp to burn properly, smouldering, the smoke like resentment contaminating the air — yet a deep smell, as of completion, to be inhaled, a savour — a CARCASS — and on the wireless, a jetliner down, just north from Montreal,

118 people aboard — ‘... seemed to explode ... just come apart in mid-air ...’ in the driving rain, near freezing, masses of mud, with no survivors to be expected — and I go out, restless, to try to walk it off, a thick taste in my throat — on the front steps, the remains of a mouse that the cat hadn't finished, just one leg and an ear, some whiskers, that I carry to the dustbin — to go off scuffing the weeds, down back lanes, along a railway line, past shops gone out of business — by a scrap yard, with rust like scabbed ulcers, speckled ochre, eating away the metal — desultory —

Though none of the poets examined — especially for modernity in the degrees to which metaphoric expressions have been strikingly devised — has devoted a major part of his or her life to poetry, David Palmer (QUICKLY, OVER THE WALL — \$3 — WALBROOK House: a first selection) least of all. This is not to be interpreted as derogatory to Palmer — simply that he has not chosen, or has not been able by reason of other occupations and preoccupations, to produce a large body of Poems & Paintings, and the repros of some of the latter here evidence divided interests. It's particularly significant that the anticipated preponderance of visual images nevertheless reveals, even so and despite comparatively-slight output, frequent arrangements and juxtapositions which in another time would be unlikely.

Lest the foregoing seems to report Palmer a posturing poet — he's quite the opposite. As here represented, most of

his poems rise sharply from personal experiences; his diction is uncomplex and straightforward — very ‘natural.’

Lines

from Winter Sunset, Midwest:

Watching the red come through empty branches
I think of stairs that lead nowhere
dying elm trees hypocrite speeches.
These dead branches are rusty spikes
stuck into the heart of this town
of bad will and big bank rolls.
The sun sinks under my feet.
I can not find a face without clocks
dead trees without echo stairs that end
or your steady breathing next to my ear.

From Spring:

Green wheat reels in yellow sun
watch cool gold pools and waterfalls
strike against the brittle rocks
fill the blue and crackling air
with stalks of form line and leaves
smell the green wet fist of spring
... thou art lovely
as wind in a poplar tree
a shouting bush a lilac
then touch these yellow shafts
melting shadows black as coal
dead as ice twisting shape of moving
years rotting apples smashed to earth

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY FABLE

Sam Bradley

Dear Editors: Herewith, a commentary in the shape of a verse communication.

THE COCK, BUREAUCRAT OF ARTS

Flocking of the modern!
The government, legislating by clock
— perfect atomic clock — made fire
in a charmed circle: Council of Arts!
All feathers together! Thus higher
authority decreed, and got
each man to his lot, and O yes, got
as director of the Gotalot Choir
a cock, common enough, no cock afire.

To get on. The assignment of parts.
The mocking bird banished, and the cowbird mooning
over bough
and the part-taking bough-birds. Now, now.
The blackbird in service of secrets
observing, backed by raven and crow.
'Play love's inventions! Let the world know
how vain we are, how proud to blow
the mighty brass. High-low! Bravo!'

Thus the cock's conducting crow.
His base on the people, how could he debase
any enterprising free taste anyplace?
His, all record runs! If his recorder
fouled things up too sharp or flat,
he blamed the old bat. Much too fat.

Lethargic equipment. And that's that.
But his diva-bird? O what a rare solo!
And his creative ensembles? Brilliant crew
with a future, worthy of crow! Cockcrow!

A door flew open. Contrariness blew
drafts high and low. Complaints flew.
Our asset-conscious cock knew
what to do. 'Nothing wrong, basically, so —
peck-birds, continue. I count on you.
Don't be timorous. Let your tympani do
high effects, proper timing, and you'll free
the energy of this timocracy.'
He knocked on wood, modestly.

'What we need, since none of us want to bleed,
is a little infusion of new blood, agreed?
But things are going good, indeed.'

Social charity corrupt?
Perish the view!

The government acted, and the cock acted
rationally, according to what they knew.
No firebird, the cock fired the old crew
from high lark down to the least sparrow.
Swallows fell, and even the hermit thrush.
Finches followed after the robin and bluebird.
The government's engraved formal regrets
praised good service. Then nothing was heard
but a gracious woodland hush.

Keats, in perhaps too black a mood
under an outcast moon, cried: 'The thought,
the deadly thought of solitude.'

Our clever cock scratched about and brought
a fill for the old places: chickens!
None of them broody. All in high taste
(Shame to let such voices waste!)

Now in his element, the lead cock paced
the cocksure music (a little cock-eyed,
but nothing national is something to hide.)
'Ah, today's eagles!' None dared cast a stone
at the new diva, Madame Hen. He gave every piece
of importance to her, and filled chorus with geese.
Though he kept crows and ravens, he was known
to be gentle. He radiated peace.

All was in order. But the public despised
his concerts. Take fell. So cock called
on the Bald Eagle who worldwide hauled
gifts of fire.

'Uncle, I require
a gift for gifts, a bigger subsidy.'
'Give me' was in order, so BigBird, with some ire
— though hardly surprise —
bestowed. Gold glowed. But BigBird's claw
marked him: 'Good for maw.'

There's no moral. Still
it's unfortunate. For, by Law, groups exist
of this cluckish sort. And they're subsidised.

Pacificu
s

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**YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE THOSE FOUR-LETTER
WORDS**

Willis Frost

Dear Editors:

A honeybee
on a daisy
was swallowed by
a bull and she
desperately

wanted to sting
most everything
in his belly
but got sleepy
and slept so sound
she woke and found
no bull around.

CRUSADE SUNDAY

Jean Rosenbaum

There are more things
between heaven and earth
than all the ghosts
of dead relatives and governmental agencies
and past presidents
and horses

Or all the Indians who galloped down
to the plain
and the Spanish who charged up from
lower regions
to scathe them
to reduce them —
can say.

THE EXISTENTIALIST ORDEAL OF MICHAEL FRAENKEL

Will Slotnikoff

Slotnikoff writes: 'This is an excerpt from a book now all but complete except for last-minute revision, to be called SECOND LIFETIME: a book of informal, humanistic, personalistic studies of contemporary writers, including myself. It will probably be almost twice as long as my first. The selection is from the — ED.

CHAPTER, SEQUEL TO THE FOREWORD.'

Since the period in which Lawrence lived and wrote, which is also the era of Proust and Gide and Céline, a hundred years of history have been telescoped into the experience of one generation. We have now entered a new era for which history offers no precedents. 'Death has presumably been entered.' The phrase is Michael Fraenkel's in an exchange of letters between him and Henry Miller. Not, Fraenkel adds, the death of the body, the kind that his chambermaid can understand, described so satirically, for instance, in *THE AMERICAN WAY OF DEATH* — but living death (the *BASTARD DEATH*), the fragmentation of the self so clearly evident in the later multifocal paintings of Picasso and Braque and the nonrepresentational artists who were to succeed Picasso and who were in the height of artistic fashion till day before yesterday.

In a world where man's personality is perpetually assaulted by too many stimuli and subdivided daily into a dozen compartments, where is the totality of the self to be found and portrayed? Dr. Rollo May, distinguished New York psychologist and author of *MAN'S SEARCH FOR HIMSELF*, says: 'Psychotherapists have pointed out ... that the typical kind of psychic problem in our day is not hysteria, as it was in Freud's day ... but the type of persons who are detached, isolated, lacking in affect, tending toward depersonalization.'

Two other keen professional observers, Maurice R. Stein and Arthur J. Vidich, of the contemporary ideological climate write: 'We are in accord with the literary men who see the fragmentation of reality and experience as the decisive event for the modern personality.'

Readers of Henry Miller may remember that the book he planned to write on D. H. Lawrence which he has described in a note as a misfire book, a fiasco, was originally to be called THE UNIVERSE OF DEATH. It was, he comments in another note, because of the 'fear and trembling' of Jack Kahane, of Obelisk Press, who had accepted TROPIC OF CANCER for publication, that he got sidetracked on the abortive Lawrence opusculé. As we know, TROPIC OF CANCER, in the original French paperback, was finally published — three years later (1934). The Lawrence book was never completed. It is not my intent here to rake over the coals of the wretched story of Henry Miller's struggles with the publishers and the censors, his long slow painful climb to fame despite the opposition and obstacles to be overcome in the era he was living in. Henry Miller has told and retold the story, himself, superbly in magnificent detail and with many variations in the TROPICS, in particular, and in many other books (material now available in book form in HENRY MILLER ON WRITING, selected by Thomas H. Moore¹). Miller's account is in his own inimitable fashion and in the only way it's worth hearing — first hand.

To throw further light on the present theme, the meaning of success and fame in the life of the artist today and what general inferences are to be drawn therefrom for the problems of the ordinary individual, I shall more or less limit myself to a somewhat less well-known aspect of the story: the genesis of the Death Theme as a leitmotif in the work of Henry Miller and why it succeeded in his treatment of it yet failed to attract a sizable reading public in the books of the man who rightly considered himself the father of the whole

idea and the ideological leader of the group around Henry Miller in Paris: Michael Fraenkel.

Am Anfang war das Wort. In the beginning was the word. (And the word was God.) So reads the title of a great work by Konrad Schmidt, a modern German scholar, on the poetic art and its heights. The word for Michael Fraenkel was not God; the word was Death. Fraenkel is dead now; he died in London in 1957 after having lived and written in most of the major capitals of the world. If anyone ever wandered restlessly in search of himself — barring D. H. Lawrence, whose story is now so well known — it was Fraenkel. When he came to die, he died the ordinary familiar physical death that comes to us all and that even his chambermaid understood only too well. It must have taken him quite by surprise when it happened. He had expressed the fear, at various and sundry times in his writings, that he was going to live forever. Perhaps death also came as something of a relief. Throughout his adult life, he had had one foot in life, the other in death, and had found himself unable to move all the way in either direction. The final decision was not his.

The question whether Fraenkel was alive or dead while he was alive, to which he devoted so much thought and attention in his writings, has now been answered for good. He was alive and now he is dead. May he rest in peace!

Sooner or later somebody will need to tell this story because of the light it can shed on aspects of the ideology which underlies and pervades TROPIC OF CANCER, Miller's most controversial and still perhaps the best of his works. And when it is told, it had best be told by those who have some personal knowledge and appreciation of both the men and the writers.

Among these I include myself. The close personal relationship and literary friendship which existed between the two (it appears to have been at its fructifying best in the Paris of the Thirties) has been recorded in a number of books

by both Miller and Fraenkel. That Fraenkel was the original of the character Boris in *TROPIC OF CANCER* is now an open secret. The chapter, *God the Impossible*, in *BLACK SPRING*,² with its brilliant but mocking colloquy on the theme of the dialectics of death, is another clear indication of the impact on Henry Miller's literary development made by the abstruse doctrines expounded by Michael Fraenkel. In those days, they were collaborating on what was to be an endless volume of philosophical correspondence on the so-called Hamlet theme. Two volumes of this correspondence, hundreds and hundreds of pages, has already been published in two editions by Carrefour Press in a privately-printed paperback which has had a limited circulation and will sooner or later be republished for wider distribution.³ Boar's Head Books of Cambridge has already negotiated for the option on a one-volume edition.

There are numerous references to Fraenkel and his ideas in the *CORRESPONDENCE*, covering a period of twenty-five years, between Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell — as also in Miller's *LETTERS TO ANAIS NIN* and in *THE DIARY OF ANAIS NIN, 1931-34*. Alfred Perlès, who knew both men best over a period of at least ten years, has left us a fairly reliable and in parts a fascinating account in his *MY FRIEND HENRY MILLER*. Other sources have not as yet been published. I tried to get permission to publish a book of letters which contains most valuable material, but could not obtain the consent of the other writer. My own letters on the subject will therefore have to wait for possible posthumous publication. There is also available an unpublished correspondence between Fraenkel and me over a period of some seven or eight years which may have additional light to offer on this matter if permission can eventually be obtained from the literary executrix of Michael Fraenkel's papers. Meanwhile, there are my personal recollections and the testimony of participants who are still around to tell the story.

For one who has met both men, though never when they were together, it is not too difficult to reconstruct what the meetings between them must have been like. An eyewitness has described it as white-hot talk about Lawrence, Christ, Dostoevski, the Nietzsche-Brandes correspondence. ... The range of topics may be gleaned from the wide territory covered by the Miller-Fraenkel letters as published. These conversations usually started around the dinner table at some favorite restaurant, were often adjourned to the Café Select or to whatever café happened to be nearest at hand to their restaurant of the evening. Both writers have recorded their personal versions of what the meetings were like, as have the others in the group or movement they represented at the time.

Alfred Perlès, who was the most frequent third party in the trio and a trained reporter, has written about it in his biography of Miller:

[Fraenkel] was a born poet and no mean scholar. [His] specialty at the moment was death — death in all its variations — more particularly spiritual death. His ability to split hairs was absolutely astounding, and when he managed to buttonhole someone for an hour or so, he was the happiest philosopher alive. Henry was ideal for the purpose. With Henry, Fraenkel could split hairs to his heart's content. Divining his need, Henry assisted him like a nurse, prompted him, egged him on like a pimp. When Henry wasn't there he had to make do with a less ideal sparring partner.

That Perlès did not choose his words carelessly or for dramatic emphasis is clearly evident from a mere recital of some of the titles of Fraenkel's works. DEATH IN A ROOM. BASTARD DEATH. DEATH IS NOT ENOUGH. LAWRENCE AND THE DEATH PROCESS. DEATH MAGAZINE. The death theme is never wholly absent from his thoughts or his writings. He is, or conceived himself to be, the supreme

unofficial dialectician of the processes of the death and rebirth of the self. No one, he insisted time and again, can be truly alive until he has faced the fact that he has died, died in the spirit. For Fraenkel, personally — as one reads his work — he meant this almost literally. It was a form of spiritual or anagogic harakiri, and the problem of self-renewal or reintegration he posits is twofold. First, the confrontation, the awareness that death has taken place. And second, the liquidation, the living-out of the death-process so that the germ of the new life phase may flourish.

In an unpublished letter to me toward the end of his life, he expounds his thesis in these terms:

If the world is dead, and the late intellectual man can do no more than live out this death, how, you ask, will a new world be born? I think I have answered this question — more suggestively than explicitly, to be sure — in my letter of Dec. 15, 1935 [addressed to Henry Miller, eight years prior to his letter to me] ... especially in pages 194-196, and pages 207-212 ...

The references are to the HAMLET letters, the correspondence between Miller and Fraenkel alluded to above. He continues:

Here I speak of man as the self-creator, and thus, by extension, the world-creator. The artist — man in his highest capacity — once he has divested himself of the death within him and without, by a process of self-polarization, builds or creates out of himself a new self, and thus — by extension — a new world.

This is a good example of his style and characteristic mode of discourse. That the man in the street — a class to which Henry Miller proudly proclaims he belonged — could make little of this language was the source of never-ending surprise or disappointment to Fraenkel. It all seemed so clear in his mind. He had worked it out, like Euclid or

Spinoza or Descartes, in irrefutable syllogisms and in logically-lucid propositions.

As on first reading Henry James, the both early and late, and subsequently the roman fleuve of Marcel Proust, the initiation into the writings of Fraenkel was not an easy one. It was a forbidding, disturbing experience which nevertheless gave me distinct aesthetic pleasure. At first, the experience aroused considerable irritation — yet, one was impelled to go on further. One told oneself soon enough there is or must be more in it than first meets the eye. Those who had returned from the visit seemingly enriched and refreshed all could not have been mistaken.

Thus annoyed but intrigued, I first read BASTARD DEATH shortly after it was published. If I remember correctly, the copy was mailed to me by Anais Nin. It struck me in the beginning like a tone-poem by Aaron Copland or Samuel Barber, in a new musical scale that a few others have been able to master. To me, it was an ideological or metaphysical hodgepodge, a cacaphony which was intelligible here and there; but, on the whole, if it was a new art form, it was more abstruse than recondite. Musica esoterica. Spinoza or Donne, Robert Browning or T. S. Eliot at their worst, set to music. It was as if here again one who seemed to have much to say had reached, as it were, the heights of unintelligibility.

Determined to seek expert help at the source, I sat down at once and wrote my first letter to Michael Fraenkel explaining my reactions as tactfully as I could. (A word of explanation: we had not yet met and lived far apart — he, in Belgium, I, in New York.) His reply arrived in a few days — brief but encouraging. He was happy, he wrote, to have my impressions of his work. Without further comment he asked that I write him again — which I did without much delay.

One letter led to another until the correspondence grew to cover a period of some seven to eight years. It continued

whenever we were not living in the same city. I must say that the most valuable aspect of the letters to me was that they led to a personal friendship, in New York, where we were almost next-door neighbors for a period of about two years. Later, in Mexico, where I spent almost half a year as the house guest of the Fraenkels, during which time we spent part of every day in intimate outspoken general and personal discussion.

He was rather fond of reading aloud, and occasionally he read to his guests (I remember particularly Michael Baxte) from his own work, from letters, and from his favorite poets, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Apollinaire, and Cocteau among them. At times the conversation veered to his Golden Age, 'the quiet days in Clichy,' at 18 Villa Seurat, where he owned a house, part of which he had turned over to Henry Miller to use as a home and a studio. He also spoke of his travels to Manila, to Hong Kong, London, Bruges, Paris, Barcelona, and the various other cities of the several countries in which he had lived. And where hadn't he lived?

In short, we became good friends and companions, and I had the opportunity to study at close quarters the many contradictory aspects of his most-paradoxical personality. I am inclined to presume that the closeness of our friendship was intensified by the fact that he did not seem to have many personal friends.

To tell the truth, what I was seeking by means of his personal association and correspondence was more light to help resolve the many dilemmas of the world we are living in, more particularly as they bore on the problems of my own inner growth and development as man and creative individual. It has seemed to me, from what I have read of the work of Miller and Fraenkel, that each in his own way pointed the way to new directions or new frontiers where one might find preliminary answers to some very ancient questions in their modern guise.

'To keep one's place in the order of the universe is to endure; and to die and not be lost, this is the real blessing of long life.' Lao-Tse had said this, and to me at the time, it appeared that Miller and Fraenkel had made a special elaboration of this bit of ancient wisdom for the benefit of modern man in modern society. Lao-Tse, like Epictetus and Nietzsche, was one of Fraenkel's favorite authors.

The ensuing sonnet, which I wrote after one of our discussions and which is curiously enough a cross between the Petrarchan and Shakespearean forms, was by way of illustrating that I had concluded even then that my exploration of the inner life and its problems had to go on and will continue to go on as long as I live: The things we do not know about our friends Can be the ones that matter most to each. Let's say where pain begins and pleasure ends, The secret hope, the dream beyond your reach. I do not ask about your private woe, The niggling aches and pains of daily life, The mass of things you think would make you glow And prosper and find favor with your wife. I only ask you if you are at ease, Or do you wake at night and toss and groan Like men who've killed the thing they love the most, Settled for less, trimmed the lamp, wooed the breeze. Reverse your path and come into your own Be what you really want and lay the ghost.

Always and at every stage of our development there are more questions than answers, and the old answers have constantly to yield to revision to fit the new questions. Whatever I acquired from my literary friendship with Miller and Fraenkel (and I acquired a great deal) — and my close and avid reading of almost everything they have written — looking back, it was but a way station, an entrepot to the next stage of a lifelong spiritual voyage of discovery and self-exploration.

Wallace Fowlie, in his new book on Rimbaud, expresses a similar thought which is well worth repeating: 'The voyage,'

he writes, 'is one of the most persistent of literary themes. Homer's *Odyssey* in antiquity, Dante's *Divine Comedy* at the end of the Middle Ages, Rabelais' *Pantagruel* in the Renaissance, Baudelaire's *Voyage* in the nineteenth Century, and the *Anabase* of St.-John Perse today are all voyages. Where Henry James, Proust, and Joyce are static and voyageless, the modern poets, under the pervading influence of Baudelaire and Rimbaud, are continually narrating a voyage in their work. St.-John Perse's *Anabase*, *Exil*, *Amers*, and *Chronique* are voyages, not literal in a geographical sense, but explorations of the spirit, moments filled with the action of progress and conquest.'

Let me somewhat reluctantly make it clear at this point that my personal involvement with the life and writings of Michael Fraenkel supplied me neither with the 'explicit' answers to my questions nor with the immediate clarification I needed in order to unravel the meaning of his work. What I did learn, however, in the course of my inquiry was perhaps of far greater importance. I learned at first hand to get to know intimately an extraordinary man — poet, scholar, philosopher, lover of the things of the mind and spirit — who was evidently on the verge of making ideological discoveries about the human condition and his own special needs as the kind of man and creator he was, living in our kind of world.

In my present view of him, it may very well be true (as it was of Sherwood Anderson) that Fraenkel was right about himself — in his self-diagnosis and in his attempted indications of the remedy — but not in the sense he thought. He describes his own 'duality,' his own failure to establish what we would now call a wholly-unified and -durable identity, with great insight and clarity in *The Personal Equation* in *DEATH IS NOT ENOUGH* and elsewhere in his highly poetic and -luminous prose. He wrote that in himself the break with the past, his own past self, his earlier life (as a businessman?), was so sharp that somehow the schism

was never completely healed. He was left, as it were, dangling in mid-air between two worlds. To quote him:

That break from the past, that break from myself which the experience marked, was the turning point in my life. I do not know why I should say this, but somehow the World War marked for me the break with the world's past; just as my own experience marked the break with my past. In each case it was a process of killing off in the spirit the old self and the old world ...

... The record of that person is the record of a living man to the world, a dead man to me. The record of what I was before I entered that world, and what I am trying to be now, would be one of a dead man to the world, a living man to me ...

And a few paragraphs later:

... This division in me between my state in life, my old self, and my state in death, my present self, was very sharp. In me the break was so sudden, so violent, it left a permanent scar on me, where I broke off. It is my self-consciousness ...

It would be of enormous interest to me should I ever be able to locate the sequel to this account of his desperate but inspiring struggle to attain oneness, among his writings, published or unpublished. So far the account may be pieced together from the hints and indications, for the most part 'indirect' and 'implicit,' in his poetry, prose, and letters.

Elsewhere in his writings, Fraenkel puts it that he was the 'deadest of the dead' and therefore the most entitled to achieve the possibility of new life — creative rebirth. His obsession with his high degree of mental pain and suffering, which struck Henry Miller and Alfred Perlès at times as comic self-pity, was the price he claimed to have paid to earn that right. *Nature morte*, he called his condition, which in the English is euphemistically rendered as 'still life;' but he obviously intended it to mean something more like 'stillbirth'

as applied to his personal situation.

And he diagnosed the entire human and world condition in terms of his self-diagnosis and these prescriptions for the solutions of his problems. The world as disease. Consciousness as disease. A progressive sickness in the soul of Western Man since the time of Hamlet, and Werther.

When he selected the title of his last book, DEATH IS NOT ENOUGH, he was perhaps righter than he knew. Physician heal thyself! He had prescribed exact and specific remedies for the ills of the world and the contemporary ailments of Western intellectual man, 'man as creator.' It is all there in my work, if you know how to read it, he seems to be telling his readers. Yet, something was missing. The analysis and the recommended synthesis did not quite come off; it did not work for him in his personal life, no more than it worked for D. H. Lawrence or Sherwood Anderson, two other exponents of a kind of romantic deeply-moving chiasm. All three were men who wished to save humanity, yet none could save himself. Their lives, their struggles, and their works culminate in a sense of something left unfinished. Passage interdit! A kind of spiritual and artistic dead end or blind alley — a creative stalemate. All three had failed to find the missing inside men!

What then is left? — asks one of Fraenkel's greatest admirers and most discerning critics, Neil Montgomery. He answers:

Mr. Fraenkel knows very well. It is useless to abuse either the genius or the ordinary man for the modern death for which neither, so far as we know, is specifically to blame. It is just something that happens. It is an organic failure and exhaustion. It is useless to

deny it. It must be accepted. Death is the rhythm of life, and the dying matter is the one which will nourish the new-springing life. We must learn to live through our death, and turn it to the uses of life.¹

This is the task to which Henry Miller and Anais Nin and the new generation of serious writers have addressed themselves, for whom, as Colin Wilson pointed out somewhere, the Bildungsroman is the only serious art form of the century to which they are addressed and will continue to address themselves. This is the urgent problem and task with which we must all, in our day, great or small, come to terms — or perish.

¹ NEW DIRECTIONS, 1964. ² OBELISK PRESS, Paris, 1936. ³ HAMLET, A CORRESPONDENCE, 1941 & 1943. LAWRENCE DURRELL & HENRY MILLER, ed. by George Wickes — E. P. DUTTON & Co., Inc., 1963. New York, 1965. Edited and with an introduction by Gunther Stuhlmann — HARCOURT, BRACE & WORLD, 1966. JOHN DAY Co., New York, 1956. RIMBAUD — University of Chicago Press, 1966. See editorial note at close of this article. ¹ A review titled DEATH IS NOT ENOUGH by Neil Montgomery in PURPOSE, Vol. XI, No. 4, Oct.-Dec., 1939 — pp. 215-24 — C. W. Daniel Co., Ltd., London, W.C.1. Editorial note: New editions of the HAMLET and DEATH IS NOT ENOUGH are now available from Fraenkel's widow, Mrs. Daphne Fraenkel, at 27 Letterstone Rd. [Fulham], London, S.W.6. The former is hardbound [\$10], the latter, paperback [\$3]. Donations also are urgently solicited for the Michael Fraenkel Fund. Checks should be made payable to Carrefours Press and sent to Mrs. Fraenkel at the foregoing address. — ED.

THE SONG OF THE MILL

Oliver Everette

Go hold your nose to the whirring stone
and grind to your ill content;
though the sparks leap from the emery wheel,
what is the real intent?
To sharpen your nose or your intellect?
Around and around, what goes?
The mind of today is an amazing thing:
the sharper it gets, the vaguer it grows!

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THE CREATIVE WINDOW

JIM KOHN BECAUSE GIRLS I YOU GO

when I think of the rocking
that will come and come and come
above twisting tennis-legs
I think of love's cradles
Of the hips and bellies
and the hard bruising beating
of those hip bones
and the go-into pressing yielding
of those belly baskets
when I think of all the strides of baby butts
coming to all the strides of back stretching
flat navel kisses
and deep deep blanket-dark navel kisses
when I think of shinnying the poles
and all the tennis thighs
and leaping tendons
shinnying the poles
and rock and whirling on the socket
and world-sitting high on the socket
(spent girls walking except one running with another
whose metal mane blew in damp webs to the showers
faster than her leaping baby toes were pointing,
in her hips' winds:)

born after you, less fruit than
or navels more fankissed than
then I think of me and you
doing and doing and doing.

STEVEN OSTERLUND DOWN IN THE EARTH

(for my father 1913–1966)

O father, what happened?
Big as Hemingway,
he went down and never got up —
the doctor said, 'His heart
just exploded.'

I remember trading terrified looks
with him, the plastic tubes
criss-crossing
inside the sterile tent.

What an insult to this man of ships
and coasts and old wood!
And I hear and still
rock into hell
my mother's thick scream.

Later they gave me permission to
handle the stone —
lines of mine carved in the marble.
In Spring the new graves are
muddy, sinking below
ground level.
Birds. Fresh flowers.
And I wear your explorer's ring.
I go with my ax to mark
the sea.

BOHEMIAN GIRL

[Imprisoned] in some hall of love
you never know your touch
[your ir]on stare (you save for the street)
And you ask about the birds
[thinly] concerned
[chang]ing attitudes and sweaters once a month
[you fac]e Monet
[hips co]cked out your bra
[a dirty] toe in Van Gogh's eye (you don't reserve)
And you ask about the love
[warmly] interested
[in stud]ios and beds where no love is

LAWRENCE P. SPINGARN WHITEN THE TRAIL WITH

...

For entering the breeze-way to trespass in the
woodshed,
The two-car garage, the camellias, the dichondra lawn;
For diving naked into the pool with martini in hand
And sending chlorine waves to complacent
beach-heads;
For sprawling on deck chairs flirting with egregious
suns
That dry the brain as heat pirouettes and comes down;
For snoring through epiphanies of glass and aluminum
While the hostess selects the proper wine and cheese,
And dinner, pressure-cooked, upholds the rules
On calories or phone calls from talkative grandmas;
For deranging the bridge game and the Late Late Show
When the family, besieged in the den after midnight,
Whiten the trail with popcorn rather than surrender —
For this, for these crimes, punishment must be swift,
And the judge, lugging golf sticks, will condemn them
To an eternity of mirrors in a wall-to-wall silence.

DAVID CORNEL DEJONG STOLEN FROM [...]

a bin of polished
yellow apples, teaches his
lips, setting his teeth off
in pungent sap, purer than
his conscience a pedigree
explains, but a blue jowled
cop comes to weigh his chin
in a wedding-ringed hand,
wipes tears from his chin
with the cloth Veronica had
because he was too small
or calculated this every[thing].
In a setting of men now
fully venereal, tan with
adultery, each passing wads
of defiance and resignation
from hand to hand, dreaming
there are no judges left
to indict anyone for anything,
only one old basket of
a grandmotherly god who
rocks them all in his lap,
each in turn, and brushes
their teeth at the sink,
distils their sap, cidered
and urine yellow now and
marks them for significance.

ROBERT R. FOX THERE WAS A TIME

There was a time
The sun shone at midnight,
And slow cats crawled,
Waiting for bones
In the dark of my greenland.

There was a time
My nightingale song was ended,
Singing in the naked trees,
And I, the wing-spread owl
Plunged bat blind to my spring, for
The grass green buds grew red,

A low plane
Threw silver pins
In the cracked leaf spit of autumn smoke;
Alleycats toppled and rang the cans,
And the wall-channelled wind
Blew deep in its October.

With jack-o'-lanterns glowing in the jewel-deep sky,
I missed my gap-tooth warning.
But the Halloween wind
Cursed love's capsuled candle burnt,
And the raw carved fruit
Smoked dark, went cold, and sagged.

GIL ORLOVITZ NUMBERS: 84

His mother turned to salt in the spring snow.
Orpheus and Lot's wife looked back, but
I never expected a boy to tip
his father's hand gaze back at the sin —

I never named him Hamnet to take
advantage of strolling funeral directors:
how bad have the plays been? Nor can I
identify the disease that killed him;
if it were in his head, I might have had
the set of it, and righted it to scant
love's gross glossary. Perhaps I touched him
too many times in memory and had
him salt in the wounds his mother did — mother
the Queen, mother the girl, mother
the homosexual. He seemed to like

me enough on occasion, a voice in
the music of other-voiceless instruments —
as if to say we bore each other up
on occasion, curious, in the capture
of him I seem to hear his eye shifting
from dissemble to the ache of bawdry
in the brain — does one whore oneself to God
on the slash of semen across the brooding
egg? There's much bluedrift in the snowfall, Hamnet,
and I wish I could have shown you those warm
hillocks of the sun where the animal
and the wine of man whirled about in premature
foreshadowing. Your sister will not do.

ART OF THE SONNET: 234

The chaff done up as the face of god falls
as infantry and twists my limbs and I kill
myself as inheritor: all signs are motionless.
I can confess till my bowels are bowlegged but
I shall never be myself again — the cock must crow.
There is no sense save the orphan, his rib restored.
Betrayal, what was used of me, has made me pure
enough so that in turn I will love all traitors
to no cause, my children — see me done up in chains
between their thighs that I may burst by their disgust
to flying infantry and untwist my limbs into a face
of chaff, featureless beyond recall but skinable.
I came at last as a thin boast,
yea, the trailing chains my mustachios.

ART OF THE SONNET: 240

[A] man's stone leg against the rail
[in] the hive between his thighs stonehinged
[thro]ugh the fairest petrification
[s]weetnesses do gaze into crystals
[c]rystals burst their forgetmenots
[he remem]bered everything when he put his stone
[] in our mouths that whatever leg
[] of flesh did not matter a peg
[no] man left but the stump still is standing

**TRISTAN TZARA I HAVE SHATTERED THE WINTER
OF THINGS**

D. M. Pettinella

I have shattered the winter of things
shaken the laughter of the appletree
mirrors opened out
no fire startling us
the horse at the door
and waiting inside the room
where our miseries and revolts
invariably seek each other
dawn has brushed the billow
of her squally robe
burying the tears
of the unforgivable past
smile smile
blind sun

Translated from the French, *J'ai Brisé L'Hiver des Choses*, by

PIERRE REVERDY FARTHER AWAY

Guenther

*A prose-poem, trimmed at the gutter; the opening of several lines
is reconstructed. — ED.*

[] I'll have the benefit of height, she herself. But
across the way someone closes
[the] blinds and embarrassing attention settles.
[I have] the benefit of looking at shops. But
[] one of us would have to go up or it would
[be safer] to come down, and arm in arm go
somewhere [where] nobody watches us.

Translated from the French, *Les Épaves du Ciel*, by
Charles

ON THE DOORSILL

Guenther

In the corner where she crouched
Sadness or void
The wind whirls
We hear a cry
Nobody wanted to complain
But the lamp just went out
And a warm hand
Noiselessly
Strokes your eyelids
Where the done day lies heavy
Everything stands erect
And in the hurried world
The objects mingled in the night
The form I had chosen
In the light

Revived as we wake up
It would stay in my ear
The glad voice that watches her
On returning had chased me

Translated from the French, *Les Épaves du Ciel*, by
Charles

TOLLING OF THE BELL

Michael Yates

Everything snuffed out
Wind passes singing
And the trees quiver
[chimes] are dead
[some]one gone
Look
[st]ars stopped shining
The earth isn't revolving any more
[] bent forward
[] splaying over the night
[the] remaining belfry
[s]ounds twelve

Translated from the French by Rainer O. Schulte and J.

JULES SUPERVIELLE FORGETTING MY BODY

Michael Yates

Forgetting my body
And everything it touches,
I remember you.
In the effort of a palm tree
Beside strange waters,
Despite all the distances,
I discover here
What you were.
And then I forget you;

All I can
I show you how
You will die in me.
And I close my eyes
To see you returning
From the depths of me
Where you failed,
Solitary, to expire.

Translated from the French by Rainer O. Schulte and J.

GEORG TRAKL LAMENT

Michael Yates

Only the opening of this poem is legible in the scan. — ED.

[A d]ark voice laments over the sea.
[Ship] of stormy sadness, see
[] the anxious vessel
[] beneath the stars.
[], the silent face.

Translated from the German by Rainer O. Schulte and
J.

IN THE EAST

Michael Yates

Wild organs of the winter storm — they match
The dark fury of the people,
The scarlet breaker of slaughter,
The leaf-stripped stars.
The night waves to dying soldiers
With broken brows, silver arms.
Spirits of the slain sigh
In the shadow of the autumn ash.
A thorny wilderness girdles the city.
The moon is driving terrified women

From their bleeding steps.

Wild wolves have broken through the gate.

Translated from the German by Rainer O. Schulte and
J.

HARLEY ELLIOTT GUNS AND GARDENS

Only the opening lines are legible on this darkened page. — ED.

[] only accidentally

[coul]d a death be curling in my quilted brain.

[] I polish blue my guns to tunes

[whe]n corn worms sing inside,

[a] roll of scarlet paper in my pockets

KENNETH BERNARD FOUR POEMS

dead weed

river bed wilting

dried are lips

the mud passion grass

crack you no good

the water caked

your teeth disgorge

lump-lump I

love you

baby

I do

stretch me your tongue

love me in space

is what is never

chasm truly when we

seismo-seismo-

we is dead

[UNTITLED]

those bats in the night
sticking in my mouth
you kissed me
lingual web you
flutter scratching teeth you
OUT OUT the
paste of lip the love you
lonely loving leech me
love
love
OUT

CHRISTINE LAMSON WHITE TRIANGLE

Over your shoulder,
a ruined moon
lay sunk on its mountain-bed.
Too many oaths
have caused the wound.
Is it true the moon is dead?
Nightly
ejected across the Equator
Love howls
boasts
halts hostility
with no kisses.
Later:
sleep comes in shot positions.
You are deceived?
Then come to me
buried down
under the sea

[UNTITLED]

This page is faded; several line-openings are cropped and the transcription is partial. — Ed.

[] never apply to you ...
[] speedy, handy thought
[] a frown fell over your eye.
[ro]bbing a cloud, my love.
[to] penetrate your eyes
[fro]m atmospheres,
[loo]sen your indoors,
[] that your clovers,
[I'll] find trusty truths anywhere
[] outside.
[] a stuffed dinosaur
[] an ancient proud,

**J. EDGAR SIMMONS HAVING MADE LIKE
CHILDREN**

love
is inset
like doorways
regressing in the dark
beyond ornaments and masks
which stay despairs
beyond the fig leaf of neutrality
down and away
from the spiritual lozenges of mind,
love finally rising out of dolors
having been made
sensational
having been made like
children

INTENT ON BLOSSOMS

Only the opening lines are legible on this darkened page. — ED.

[] Intent on blossoms
[th]e pattern of apple
[wit]h its cannoned limbs
[th]e teeth of chaos
[re]minding tongue.

**SOPHIA CASTRO-LEON ONE MUST COME TO
WINTER**

And the grass shall grow
Among the thistles and the berries
Out of reach of Elysium
There is no cancer unfolding
The white birds cubed and cranked
By keys in cages for years
There is no sun forever
The grasses move
Beneath this folding
There is again the eye of spring
Summer arrived
In the water's rustle
In the musk of the sun in the orchards, in the serpent
Lucifer not wicked

THEN, SURELY

Line-openings are cropped at the gutter and reconstructed. — ED.

[] go flail the sky
[let] your stones cry
[] eyes have watched
[the] winds burn a season
[su]mmer stands
[there] is no need for balance
[] the apostle's eyes
[] is bare at the curve of noon
[] goes he wail at the children

MARTIN HALPERN DREAM-TELLING IT

About to be hanged for who
 Knew what crime,
 All I could think was what
 Kind of a time is this
 Not to be able not to
 Stare undressed that sad
 Girl at the crowd's edge, wind
 Whistling her ignorant skirt
 To the high heavens —
 Lord,
 I stood in that noose already
 Erect, and they hanged me for,
 And back into, this old
 Feared failure to transcend.

THE HOUR OF THE URGENT APPOINTMENT

[] heartbeat through high-powered microphones
 [his] heels on the concrete clacked,
 [ring]ing the corridors with report
 [the] echo of his identity —
 [] in the clinic's vacant maze
 [the] hour of the urgent appointment
 [ap]proached, approached, and just like that, was past.
 [] long then, trembling in the abrupt silence,
 [migh]t he have stood and stared at the stopped watch
 [and read] 'Done, done for, give up, give over, you've
 missed
 [] missed out, down now and be done with' —
 [a s]cratch-tick reached him again and he, inhaling,
 [stop]ped, took some stiff steps toward the way he had
 come;
 [] something rare in him quickened to a trot,
 [a l]ope, a run, a full and feckless sprint,
 [] tattooing on the concrete like a jungle drumbeat.

BERNICE WINTERS MANDO

Pink cows' knuckles
in a blue agate pot
simmer in a shimmer of
menudo for
Mando
and all his hermanos
and all his hermanas
fisting cardboard discs
into sultry mouths
in a kitchen kissing freeway shadows;
their sienna faces
burnt with the bearing of Aztec kings,
emerald-toed, vanquished:
Mando telling Mama

tripe and swollen hominy
[simmer]ed in a cauldron for
[Mando] in the limestone shadows of
[the m]ince of oregano and green chili,
[the] etchings of garlic
[in] the blood of
all his hermanos
all his hermanas,

[disinher]ited princelings of
[muert]os — Porque muy jovenes —
[Mando] telling Mama
[with] little ancient teeth,
'[No] good, damn,
[some] more!'

LEONARD OPALOV CRIPPLED HOUSE

Also a chair
can be crippled,
a table stagger
like a drunkard
and walls be dull
as the grayness of Autumn.
The other day I saw
window-eyes
drawn with cataracts.
The old worn house
resembled a beggar
and the squeaking steps
sighed from arthritic pain.

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THE LOS ANGELES INCOGNOSCENTI

ALVARO CARDONA-HINE CONCERTO FOR ENGLISH WORDS AND PERCUSSION

*A sequence in several movements (the scan preserves the labels
II scherzo and IV cadenza); a few line-openings are conjectural. —
ED.*

— ED.

[] goes begging for light
I offer it
a sliver of Sanskrit
a radish
the space between your fingers
thankfulness available
at the burial of my hands
they found a supply of half hours
each half hour
and
other lives
[] accepts the melodic line
[immed]iately above the spine of a butcher
a few chosen slaves
tow the boat of fear
upstream

when birds arrive
the tree accepts calling and being heard
II scherzo
also yellow is
the elephant's urine
the second hill conveys
the true tenderness of peacocks
a lizard of a brook
elbows its way through crocodiles
to pat a duck's head with spray

Signor Rossini at the zoo:
he sings an expansive Italian aria;
a man in plain sight of the ocean

one two three four five
Mozart overwhelmed
by a glutton's thoughts about gelato
a shark sleeps
stuck
on his ink of darkness
cormorants above him
rise and fall with each breath
the lungs of water take

night clouds
inverted flowers
the beggar under an eucalyptus
listens to the outside
of the fog at the windows
tonight he will leap
over the iron fence

Agamemnon
in the midst of
something white in the midst of white
serrated cutting utensils
do the merry finishing
the events of a chain
loose dreams
locked in a common cause
(IV cadenza)
no
you do not understand
how slowly
this is heard
your eyes believed
that blue and distance

[] a spider

[t]he suddenly illuminated light bulb
[a] phonograph
[] the head of a doll

[] trying a door

Alvaro Cardona-Hine

KEITH GUNDERSON SAMSARA

(Excerpt from Prologue to Singing Child-Eye and
Mountain Songs)

*The page sets formal quatrains beside vertical free-verse
passages; they are given here in the order they appear on the
page. — ED.*

The crickets have riddled the silence.
The cricket-songs cling to the edge of sound.
Beside the thin stems the night-colored crickets keep,
And the grasses seem as if singing.

branches
are full
of the summer
confetti
of moths
flutter
in
the leaf
falls
the leaf-shadow moves
to meet the leaf
before a day
can turn around
the mousy dusk
comes littering
its shadows
earth-eaten is the sun at day's end
trees

fold upon
their hills
like
wings
winter comes
pines
are king-tree
and a shrunken sun
slouches
across the earth's rim
stretching
shadows
as it
turns
prisoned streams
beneath the eye's world run
and rub their covers
with a
tink
tink
tink

lancing light
undoes the ice
roots wake
stirring
with
the urgent
saps
new azalias —
set their twigs
afire
sunlight
weans
the shadows

O words give length to my summer.

Let the late blossom cling to its twig.
My songs are as dust of the moth's wings,
And the frost has numbered their days.

time
an old man
raking
leaves
gathers dryness
strikes
a match
and
walks

Keith
Gunderson

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN HOMUNCULUS

(para Meg y Sergio ... con afición, amigos de mi
corazón)

*Line-openings on the later pages are cropped at the gutter and
reconstructed. — ED.*

(Valedictory:
Tortured de Sadists,
whose livers are blocks of ice
falling into the sun,
we murdered life
to make life
and drew small poems
from its blood. ...)
Here / among friends
the two dreams crossed —

[a]long cobbled streets
[in] the old section of the city
[of] plaster and stone walls,
an aristocracy of the spirit.
Paseo de la Reforma

[th]is is the avenue of history and trees
[a]nd two-peso cabs.
At its end,
Chapultepec Castle
leans against a pillar of clouds.
On a side street, a block away,
between
two apartment houses:

They are dead
and they don't know it.
This is their brief glory:
their superstitious belief
in life:
their redeeming [need]
to make poems.
Small,
Spanish and bi-lingual magazines
print their faith
/ their belief that others
read and understand.

Their music / the single blooming
[] is but their future ...
[] their unrescued
possibilities. ...)

A. Fredric
Franklyn

POUNDS, ETC.

Cropped at the gutter; line-openings are reconstructed. — ED.

[] about 60 or 100 years.
[Kans]as. (Good Kansas.)
[of] the earth's six-and-a-half sextillion pounds
[] meet my dancing foot.
[a] long way up and down, too,
[in] time (as did Oedipus get him
[a] hard and continual meeting
[of] us both. Between us,
[] about 8000 miles thick
[] moving 18½ miles per second.
And only one of us
[] on the short end of time, too!)

A. Fredric
Franklyn

GENE FRUMKIN A MAN OF THE CITY (I)

Who is he?
A man without ears
a double Van Gogh, though less
confused by sunlight
A walker intent on walking
as if by such intentness he could reach
another destiny
Refusing to learn

either cornfield or seawave
He confesses it: charmed by the city
Sunkilling buildings, soundproof ears
Does he hear the windows cry out
[with] beauty, now that beauty is dead)
[] disease (imagination?)
[] rallies in every spidery corner
[beca]use the world has him only
[part]ially at its mercy he walks the radius
[of h]is depraved landscape
[] miming the discord pleasurably
[who] is he?
A man without voice
[the] nest in him
[] are rooted in his bloodstream
[poe]ts whose names he'd speak
[] with them

Gene Frumkin

THE ENCOUNTER

It's an opening
no beginning
no becoming
Contact of eyes
a man and woman passing on the street
seeing
one another
walk on by habit
faces immobile as buildings
An accidental opening in which they hazard flight
lose some skin
scraping against rough walls

Gene
Frumkin

STANLEY KIESEL A FAREWELL

The first page is trimmed at the gutter; line-openings are reconstructed. — ED.

[] in the corner bar is high, a grin
[stit]ched on her face. In effigy, her smile,
[on] the wet counter, guards her lost senses.
[] her diary; her factory; gallery of all
[the] pictures in her head; the inclined plane
[on] which slide all the children of her need.
[] what makes her eyes foam up: a cruel
[] in her mind's finger; the Morse Code
[of] sex begging to move, to be gratified;
[] from the beginning, it never lied.
[] this knowledge swings back and fro!
[her] hair flies up like a football

From this avante-garde boulevard room a bell
Of logic tolls. And now comes the time
To take discretion's temperature, to harness tact;
To spear the little pink deceits. Sliding down
The bannisters of a joke, bestowing medals
On her own inspiration, she comes. Tonight,
In her glance's palm I'll read of the downtrodden
Haste of her life, watch her unbox all the
Different puzzle pieces of her disposition;
Her worship of love crawls like a baby,
Is almost pitiful in its naked need, one would
Spread out for it the tablecloth of perfection.
Face, do not refuse counsel.

Stanley
Kiesel

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MARTIN STEINGESSER [UNTITLED]

here and there wildling
spring flowers from the earth
most beautiful like [dreams]
we are that are thoughts from a child

Martin
Steingesser

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THE LOS ANGELES INCOGNOSCENTI

ED.

ALVARO CARDONA-HINE CONCERTO FOR ENGLISH WORDS AND PERCUSSION

[] goes begging for light
I offer it
a sliver of Sanskrit
a radish
the space between your fingers
thankfulness available
at the burial of my hands
they found a supply of half hours
each half hour
and
other lives
[] accepts the melodic line
[immed]iately above the spine of a butcher
a few chosen slaves
tow the boat of fear
upstream

when birds arrive
the tree accepts calling and being heard
Il scherzo
also yellow is
the elephant's urine
the second hill conveys
the true tenderness of peacocks
a lizard of a brook

elbows its way through crocodiles
to pat a duck's head with spray
Signor Rossini at the zoo:
he sings an expansive Italian aria;
a man in plain sight of the ocean

one two three four five
Mozart overwhelmed
by a glutton's thoughts about gelato
a shark sleeps
stuck
on his ink of darkness
cormorants above him
rise and fall with each breath
the lungs of water take

night clouds
inverted flowers
the beggar under an eucalyptus
listens to the outside
of the fog at the windows
tonight he will leap
over the iron fence

Agamemnon
in the midst of
something white in the midst of white
serrated cutting utensils
do the merry finishing
the events of a chain
loose dreams
locked in a common cause
(IV cadenza)
no
you do not understand
how slowly
this is heard
your eyes believed
that blue and distance

[] a spider
[t]he suddenly illuminated light bulb
[a] phonograph
[] the head of a doll
[] trying a door

KEITH GUNDERSON SAMSARA

(Excerpt from Prologue to Singing Child-Eye and
Mountain Songs)

*This excerpt sets formal quatrains against free-verse passages
printed in the margins; they are given here in page order, framed
by the quatrains. — ED.*

The crickets have riddled the silence.
The cricket-songs cling to the edge of sound.
Beside the thin stems the night-colored crickets keep,
And the grasses seem as if singing.

branches
are full
of the summer
confetti
of moths
flutter
in
the leaf
falls
the leaf-shadow moves
to meet the leaf
before a day
can turn around
the mousy dusk
comes littering

its shadows
earth-eaten is the sun at day's end
trees
fold upon
their hills
like
wings
winter comes
pines
are king-tree
and a shrunken sun
slouches
across the earth's rim
stretching
shadows
as it
turns
prisoned streams
beneath the eye's world run
and rub their covers
with a
tink
tink
tink

lancing light
undoes the ice
roots wake
stirring
with
the urgent
saps
new azalias —
set their twigs
afire
sunlight
weans

the shadows

O words give length to my summer.
Let the late blossom cling to its twig.
My songs are as dust of the moth's wings,
And the frost has numbered their days.

time
an old man
raking
leaves
gathers dryness
strikes
a match
and
walks

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN HOMUNCULUS

(para Meg y Sergio ... con afición, amigos de me
corazón)

(Valedictory:
Tortured de Sadists,
whose livers are blocks of ice
falling into the sun,
we murdered life
to make life
and drew small poems
from its blood. ...)
Here / among friends
the two dreams crossed —

[a]long cobbled streets
[in] the old section of the city
[of] plaster and stone walls,
an aristocracy of the spirit.

Paseo de la Reforma
[th]is is the avenue of history and trees
[a]nd two-peso cabs.
At its end,
Chapultepec Castle
leans against a pillar of clouds.
On a side street, a block away,
between
two apartment houses:

They are dead
and they don't know it.
This is their brief glory:
their superstitious belief
in life:
their redeeming [need]
to make poems.
Small,
Spanish and bi-lingual magazines
print their faith
/ their belief that others
read and understand.
Their music / the single blooming
[] is but their future ...
[] their unrescued
possibilities. ...)

POUNDS, ETC.

Trimmed at the gutter; line-openings reconstructed. — ED.

[] about 60 or 100 years.
[Kans]as. (Good Kansas.)
[of] the earth's six-and-a-half sextillion pounds
[] Meet my dancing foot.
[a] long way up and down, too,
[in] time (as did Oedipus get him)
[a] hard and continual meeting

[of] us both. Between us,
[] about 8000 miles thick
[] moving 18 1/2 miles per second.
And only one of us
[] on the short end of time, too!)

GENE FRUMKIN A MAN OF THE CITY (I)

Who is he?
A man without ears
a double Van Gogh, though less
confused by sunlight
A walker intent on walking
as if by such intentness he could reach
another destiny
Refusing to learn
either cornfield or seawave
He confesses it: charmed by the city
Sunkilling buildings, soundproof ears
Does he hear the windows cry out
[with] beauty, now that beauty is dead)
[] disease (imagination?)
[] rallies in every spidery corner
[beca]use the world has him only
[part]ially at its mercy he walks the radius
[of h]is depraved landscape
[] miming the discord pleausrably
[who] is he?
A man without voice
[the] nest in him
[] are rooted in his bloodstream
[poel]ts whose names he'd speak
[] with them

THE ENCOUNTER

It's an opening
no beginning
no becoming
Contact of eyes
a man and woman passing on the street
seeing
one another
walk on by habit
faces immobile as buildings
An accidental opening in which they hazard flight
lose some skin
scraping against rough walls

STANLEY KIESEL A FAREWELL

The opening of this poem is trimmed at the gutter; line-openings reconstructed. — ED.

[] in the corner bar is high, a grin
[stitch]ed on her face. In effigy, her smile,
[on] the wet counter, guards her lost senses.
[] her diary; her factory; gallery of all
[the] pictures in her head; the inclined plane
[on] which slide all the children of her need.
[] what makes her eyes foam up: a cruel
[] in her mind's finger; the Morse Code
[of] sex begging to move, to be gratified;
[] from the beginning, it never lied.
[] this knowledge swings back and fro!
[her] hair flies up like a football

From this avante-garde boulevard room a bell
Of logic tolls. And now comes the time
To take discretion's temperature, to harness tact;
To spear the little pink deceptions. Sliding down

The bannisters of a joke, bestowing medals
On her own inspiration, she comes. Tonight,
In her glance's palm I'll read of the downtrodden
Haste of her life, watch her unbox all the
Different puzzle pieces of her disposition;
Her worship of love crawls like a baby,
Is almost pitiful in its naked need, one would
Spread out for it the tablecloth of perfection.
Face, do not refuse counsel.

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MARTIN STEINGESSER

Martin Steingesser

here and there wilding
spring flowers from the earth
most beautiful like [dreams]
[th]ese are that are thoughts from a child

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AN ATROCITY

R. D. Skillings

'You're a rotten bastard,' the man said suddenly in a loud belligerent voice.

Mr. Allen realized that he must have been staring tactlessly. For a moment he had thought he recognized the man from some former period of life, the Navy perhaps or, even more distant in time, the almost-forgotten village of his birth, to which for various reasons he had not returned in many years; but — no, he was mistaken. Plainly he had never seen the man before.

The stranger, whoever he was, was sitting at the other end of the small bar and now glared furiously back at Mr. Allen across the intervening space of vacant stools. Mr. Allen glanced away with distaste. A private person, himself, he disliked drunks.

'You really are a rotten bastard, you know?' This time he spoke in a conversational tone and then paused, apparently expecting an answer.

Mr. Allen, who was lighting a cigar to hide his annoyance, said nothing.

'You and your rotten cigars,' said the stranger familiarly, almost as though the smoking of cigars were one of Mr. Allen's more serious faults, as though it were, in fact, a fault which the stranger had borne patiently without censure for innumerable evenings in a closed room.

Mr. Allen made no reply, having long ago mastered the knack of ignoring thorny people. While he waited for the man to dry up and blow away, it occurred to Mr. Allen that they were both victims of a double mistaken identity. The man had obviously also confused him with someone else; he wondered idly what were the odds opposing such a coincidence. Possibly a billion to one? Ten billion? The very figure, cast in the bleak cold ciphers of abstraction, dizzied

his mind, and Mr. Allen dismissed the subject as too intricate, irrelevant, and tedious. He began to smoke his cigar calmly, giving the stranger a clear view of his profile. Surely the man would soon discover his error, just as Mr. Allen had discovered his, and the episode would then be closed.

'You'll never get away with it,' the man persisted, his speech growing more enraged with every word. 'I'm no fool, I know what your game is.' He bared his teeth in a mute snarl while his eyes fought for focus. Then, leaning perilously toward Mr. Allen as though to whisper something, something presumably intimate and vile, he lost his balance and tumbled headfirst to the floor.

He remained where he had fallen, ludicrous and tragic as a hobo in a cartoon, sadly wagging his head and blinking around with dazed bewildered eyes.

Mr. Allen observed this performance with a sense of vindication. Only a lifelong habit of good breeding prevented him from laughing aloud. The man was a decidedly seedy-looking type, with his soiled flapping trench coat and shapeless trousers. Two slabs of oily grey hair hung out beneath his hat and curled around his ears, and he badly needed a shave. He was evidently at the end of a long ruinous spree. The grey pallor of his face was prophetic. Soon he would be found dead in an alley or a mission, and his relatives — much relieved — would bury him quickly. They belonged to a different breed, Mr. Allen reflected, these dregs of civilization. He had often seen them dozing in the periodical rooms of the public library or poking in the gutter for cigaret ends. They had abandoned job, family, friends, love, duty, finally even self-respect. Nothing was at last precious to them but drink.

The man uttered a brief groan. He was obscurely in pain, but at first seemed unable to locate its source. He felt himself all over until his searching fingers found the bright

purple bruise that had sprouted from his forehead. Presently, after reaching in all his pockets, he produced a filthy handkerchief and began to nurse his hurt with it, now and again examining the cloth for traces of blood.

The shock of his fall appeared to have sobered him somewhat. He climbed cautiously to his feet, dusting his elbows, and retrieving his stool. He swallowed half his drink, swallowed the rest of it, set the glass down on the bar with a considered click; and then, marvelously, with the air of a man not to be swayed from his purpose by small defeats, he turned his battered face full upon Mr. Allen and howled a stream of hoarse garbled imprecations.

Mr. Allen was profoundly embarrassed. He raised his eyebrows discreetly at the bartender to show that he was in no way involved, that he had neither meant nor actually given any offense to his assailant and that he was, as a matter of record, a man whose part in the affairs of the human race was unimpeachable. But the bartender merely stared from one to the other with calm speculation, patently reserving judgment.

Rebuffed by the bartender's silence, Mr. Allen turned halfway on his stool, saying firmly: 'You've got me mixed up with someone else, friend. I've never seen you before in my life' — and offering his finest smile as a sign that he had already forgiven the man his mistake, a mistake which was after all a perfectly harmless and understandable one. But the stranger met this overture with a look of such knowing malevolence that Mr. Allen hastily withdrew his gaze.

He began to hope the man was not some kind of a nut. These days, lunatics went loose in the streets and nobody found them out until it was too late. Mr. Allen remembered a recent newspaper report about a high-school student, a beloved, loving and obedient son who came home one evening with a borrowed shotgun and slaughtered his brothers and sisters, his mother and father, the maid, two

neighbors who happened to be in the house at the time, a crippled aunt, and the parrot. The aunt's head, shot at close quarters, was torn entirely free of her body and rolled under the television set. The boy then went innocently to bed and slept until the police wakened him at noon the next day. In court he claimed to have no knowledge of the incident.

A nervous swarm of similar affairs flew suddenly into Mr. Allen's mind like a plague of poisonous flies. He recalled other articles describing the most bizarre and repulsive atrocities — murders, dismemberings, mutilations, tortures. Yet, at the times, they had touched him with only remote horror; he had been unable to take them quite seriously. The guarded tone of the news reports, their casual recitations of unspeakable details, together with the inevitable failure of the courts to establish motives equal to the crimes, had always destroyed Mr. Allen's sense of the reality behind the words. He had read these morbid accounts the way one reads science fiction, with wild curiosity, awe, and — at bottom — disbelief. Now he understood that they were true. A spasm of fear gripped his stomach and then passed, leaving in its place an emptiness of glacial cold.

So Mr. Allen was not unduly surprised. He felt merely prescient when he looked again and discovered that the man had brought forth from the recesses of his trench coat a long gleaming steel knife with a black wooden handle. He was honing the blade back and forth on his thigh and glancing slyly out of the corner of his eyes to observe the effect on Mr. Allen.

Mr. Allen, who had no experience in dealing with lunatics, called the bartender and nodded surreptitiously at the stranger.

'You want another Scotch?' the bartender said. 'You might as well.'

'He's got a knife,' Mr. Allen said impatiently. 'Can't you see he's got a knife?' The man was still honing the blade

methodically back and forth on his thigh.

The bartender watched with interest. 'Ain't no law against knives,' he said at last.

'The guy's a looney,' Mr. Allen said. 'Who ain't?' the bartender said. 'Hey, listen, who ain't?' He shrugged. 'You want another Scotch or what?'

'You don't understand,' Mr. Allen said, and his voice squeaked. 'I have good reason to believe that man's planning to kill me.'

'Is that so?' the bartender said sagely. He seemed to think Mr. Allen had taken one too many.

'You're in charge here,' Mr. Allen said. 'You're responsible for what happens on the premises. You've got to get that knife away from him.'

'Now, if it was a gun, I would have to ask to see his license,' the bartender remarked in qualified agreement. 'I surely would. But it ain't a gun. It's a knife and there ain't any law against knives, not that I know.'

'He's going to kill me,' Mr. Allen said, making a simple statement of fact. He had never been so convinced of anything in his life.

'Sure he is,' the bartender said gravely. 'I know just exactly what you mean, pal. And I agree with you one-hundred percent.' He picked up a glass and began to polish it vigorously on the hem of his apron.

'You don't understand,' Mr. Allen said. He reached wildly across the bar and clutched the bartender by the sleeve. 'That man's got a knife and he's going to kill me.'

'Hey listen,' the bartender said, disengaging his arm, 'if you're going to make a row, maybe you'd better go some place else.'

Mr. Allen glanced around wildly once, and then collapsed on the stool again in despair. The stranger was sitting between him and the door. He knew he would be foully daggered in the back before he could escape.

‘I don’t know, I just don’t know what I’m going to do,’ Mr. Allen mumbled.

‘Me, I only work here,’ the bartender explained. He wore an expression of sour disgust as though he had seen everything life had to offer and understood it thoroughly. ‘I don’t even own the place. So, naturally, I don’t get into no personal disputes whatsoever. Listen — with a job like mine, you don’t see nothing. You know what I mean? I don’t see nothing, I don’t hear nothing, I don’t say nothing. I just serve the customers what they ask for, no more and no less. I don’t care to meddle. You know what I mean? Am I right or am I wrong?’

Mr. Allen interrupted desperately: ‘I’m in trouble.’ ‘Hey listen,’ cried the bartender, ‘who ain’t?’ He brought his palm down smash on the bar for emphasis. ‘Who ain’t?’

Mr. Allen’s eyes had become as bright and yellow as a snared polecat’s. ‘I’m in terrible terrible trouble,’ he murmured.

‘Hey listen, I knew that the minute you walked in here,’ the bartender said, unburdening. ‘It was written all over you. I know a man marked out for trouble when I see one, and I’ve seen plenty.’ His gaze traveled toward the floor and then stuck there dolefully as if he were peering down into Mr. Allen’s grave. ‘Maybe it’s fair,’ he resumed vaguely, shaking his head, ‘and then again, maybe it ain’t. I wouldn’t care to say at this time.’

‘It isn’t fair at all,’ Mr. Allen said peevishly. He had not yet given up all hope. The thought that he had been born to die in this dismal fashion struggled in his mind with other more-reasonable expectations. He had barely achieved the apex of his life; his health was sound, even perfect, if the physician’s word could be trusted; he had a wife, three children, and a mortgage; his prospects were good — the shape of his future symmetrical and secure. He had always obeyed the rules and considered the police his friends. There

was no room on his horizon for an atrocity. 'I never did anything to deserve this,' Mr. Allen said with conviction.

'I can well believe it. I can surely well believe it,' the bartender said in a polite noncommittal tone. He looked at the clock which, by Mr. Allen's calculation, was at least seven hours off schedule. He frowned and took off his apron with the haste of a man recalling a crucial appointment. 'You'll have to excuse me,' he said. He hung the apron up on a hook. He smoothed his hair with both hands and wiped them clean on his thighs. 'I don't expect I'll be gone very long.' He heaved himself over the bar and bowed slightly to Mr. Allen.

'Where are you going?' Mr. Allen asked, glancing apprehensively at the stranger who had set aside the knife and was now tactfully pretending to study a racing form.

'It's just bad luck,' the bartender said, 'that is all it is.' He shrugged his shoulders and, limping on his short leg, he left.

Mr. Allen looked after him enviously. The power to walk, even in such a ridiculous lopsided manner, suddenly seemed to him miraculous.

No sooner had the door hissed shut on the bartender's heels than the stranger rose and flung away the racing form. He sat down beside Mr. Allen with profound deliberation, careful not to knock elbows, and began to pare his fingernails with the knife. Perhaps because of a growing sobriety or perhaps because he regretted his earlier rudeness, he seemed reluctant to open the conversation; Mr. Allen had time to notice that the knife was much smaller than he had imagined. Inaccurate to call it a dagger; it was more of a vegetable knife, a child's thing, hardly knife enough to touch the heart.

'I been waiting for you,' the stranger began presently. Mr. Allen blinked at him. He both did and did not believe what was happening.

‘But it took me a time to find you,’ the man added, blushing unaccountably. ‘It took me longer than I ever thought it would.’

‘I don’t even know you,’ Mr. Allen heard himself say. ‘No?’ the man sneered in an unpleasant way. ‘Well, in that case, I suppose I don’t know you either.’

‘Then there’s no sense in stabbing me,’ Mr. Allen said sternly, ‘no sense at all.’

‘Stab you?’ the stranger said as though the idea had just entered his head through the back door. He shut his eyes and ruminated for such a long time that Mr. Allen began to wish he had never mentioned it. ‘Well,’ the stranger said finally, ‘I knew it would be a pleasure to do it some day, but I did not know when.’

‘But you don’t even know me,’ Mr. Allen cried. ‘No,’ the stranger said. He did not seem anxious to discuss it.

‘And I’ve never done anything to you,’ Mr. Allen said. ‘How do you know?’ said the stranger, bending his face ominously close to Mr. Allen’s.

Mr. Allen felt a pang of terror shoot through him. He stared at the stranger with all his might, trying to remember if he had ever seen him before. It was a common, an unexceptional face, a face he might have met in the street daily for twenty years and never noticed. In spite of all his efforts, Mr. Allen could not remember a single soul who looked like the stranger; and at length the red and purple bruise between the man’s eyes began to distract his attention. It glared back at him with furious agony, an ugly wound. Almost, for one blurred irrational moment, Mr. Allen understood that it might be mortal.

‘It hurts,’ the man said humbly.

‘You ought to see a doctor,’ Mr. Allen said. ‘You could get an infection.’

‘Doctor!’ The stranger cleared his throat and spat contemptuously. ‘Mister,’ he said, ‘I never once so much as

took an aspirin for a headache in all my life.' He spoke as though he despised not only doctors and drugs, but the whole concept of healing itself. 'A man ought to put up with things.'

Mr. Allen's mind was working at full speed, but he could not seem to anticipate where the dialogue would go next. 'I never had any enemies,' he said at last rather helplessly. 'You've simply got me mixed up with someone else.'

'No,' the stranger said obdurately, 'you are the one.' His eyes, which had turned a brilliant sky color, fastened themselves upon Mr. Allen, who began to wriggle like a spider pinioned under glass.

'I'm sorry,' Mr. Allen mumbled. It seemed an inconclusive thing to say and he could not have defined precisely what he had to be sorry for, but he felt utterly overwhelmed with disappointment and remorse.

'Mister,' the stranger said, getting to his feet, 'apologies never did anybody any good at all. Apologies are always too late.'

Outside, the stars were shining bravely and the streets were thronged with theatre-goers; yet, none of them looked through the door of the bar. No one came running to Mr. Allen's aid. On the wall an advertisement for Red Rainbow Beer promised its patrons health and happiness at a price you could afford.

Mr. Allen found himself trying to recall his dead mother's voice and regretting the day he'd left home.

'... I got bad nerves from the last war and the next one'll ruin me for sure,' the stranger had apparently been saying. 'The termites are at my bones, I got debts I can't pay, I got debts I don't even owe, I been cheated, shot at, and kicked like a dog. I been here and I been there, I been everywhere but I never stayed to live, I drove my daddy to death and now my wife sluts with my brother behind my back and my only daughter married an Albanian and locked her doors on me.'

Since I was a little boy, everything I done turned out wrong. But it don't forgive you none to say you're sorry.' The stranger lifted the knife up to the neon glare that was streaming through the window and studied its flashing colors purposefully.

'You'll go to jail for this,' Mr. Allen said. 'You'll only make things worse by violence.'

'I been in jail before,' the stranger said, still examining the knife. 'Jail is not the worst place I ever been.'

'If you'd only stop drinking,' said Mr. Allen desperately, 'you could get your wife and job back, and then you could settle down and save some money and lead a decent happy life. All it takes is a little honest effort.'

'No,' the stranger said, 'it ain't true. That's what my daddy told me, but it ain't true. Everything he told me was wrong.'

'But ...' Mr. Allen began. 'Everything he told me was wrong,' the stranger said in a savage rising voice. 'I been lied to all my life ...'

'You wouldn't kill an innocent man,' Mr. Allen whispered. 'No,' the stranger said, 'I wouldn't.' At this assurance, Mr. Allen felt a strong flush of renewed hope seize his heart. He twisted on his stool to say something gracious, something to express the idea that they might now have a drink together and get acquainted, perhaps even arrive at some kind of reasonable and mutually beneficial compromise; but what emerged from his mouth was a little squeal of protest and fright; for the stranger, true to himself, had plunged the knife with nice accuracy into the hollow just beneath Mr. Allen's Adam's-apple.

After observing his handiwork for a moment, the stranger began turning the knife around and around the constricted knot as though he were eyeing a potato. Mr. Allen watched this operation, which was surprisingly painless, with the fatigue and resignation of a sudden convert. He felt his wretched body becoming a corpse as a relatively-large grey

object shaped like the Rock of Gibraltar descended little by little before his eyes and blotted everything from view.

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THE CITY: A FABLE

Stanley E. Aspittle, Jr.

Once upon a time — perhaps even in this time — there was a little village in the middle of a great wilderness between the ocean and the mountains. In the beginning it was only a few rough houses and buildings around a cool spring in a cool grove of trees. At this time, the village was content merely to lie there in the warm sun and cool shade and drink when thirsty from the sweet spring and breathe the pure fragrant air. It could not have had a better place. All around was a great lovely forest full of tall trees and wild flowers of all the colors in the rainbow. And above the forest, seeming to grow right out of it, was a range of magnificent mountains all tall and wild and violet in the mornings and purple in the evenings. There was white snow on the tallest peaks. And around the buildings of the village itself were all manner of animals, wild and not wild. It was a very fine place for a quiet peaceful little village.

For many years the village basked sleepily there under the mountains beside the forest. The people who had come first and built the village were happy and prosperous and relaxed, for the land was rich and good. The people loved the land and village, and the love was returned. Slowly, over the years, a few more people came and liked the country and were delighted with such a nice village, and so they stayed and built more buildings. And gradually — oh, so slowly — the village began to grow until it was clear around the spring and even growing out beyond the grove of trees.

All this happened so slowly that no one realized what was going on until one bright morning, when the air was especially clear and the mountains were remarkably majestic, they discovered they were no longer just a quiet little village but were now a fairly-bustling little town. This excited them and filled them with pride, and they began to

see themselves in a new light.

A town! That meant things had to be done. Streets had to be planned and named and zoned. And because more and more people were coming, rules and regulations for the general good had to be adopted. And because more industries were needed, messengers were sent out all across the land to spread the word that where once had been a sleepy village was now a wide-awake thriving forward-looking dynamic booming community, the town.

All this excited the new town, and gradually it took on a new aspect. It was growing rapidly and was no longer content just to idle away the days. That may be fine for a mere village, but not for a powerful young town.

All the new people pouring in, all the new businesses and industries excited the town and filled it with a strange new desire: hunger! The more people who came, the more buildings put up, the greedier and more gluttonous the town became. It fairly raged with insatiable hunger.

And so the town began to devour the countryside. It ate up all the land around the grove of trees, but decided — since they were pretty — to leave them. So it put a fence around the trees and the spring and put up signs KEEP OFF THE GRASS — and thus created a park of its very own. It gobbled up all the rich land between the grove and forests. After all, what use did the town have for this land any more? It was a growing town with a great future, and growing towns with great futures have no need of farms and animals.

When the town had swallowed all of this, it rested a while to admire itself.

O, such a lovely, big town it was! It had its own streets of durable asphalt. It had its own factories and stores and supermarkets and housing projects and automobiles. It even had its own laws and police and government and its very own taxes. O, what a prosperous big town it was! In fact, it was too big to be just a mere town. It was big enough and

strong enough and, above all, ambitious enough to become something much more important and imposing. So, one day when the air was smoky and the mountains barely visible, the town decided it was ready to become something bigger and better: a city.

Now the city was much hungrier than the town had been and it needed more room for more factories and houses and shopping centers. So it crept up to the edge of the forest and looked in. Then it began nibbling at the smaller trees and bushes. The more it ate, the hungrier it became until — finally — it went right ahead and bolted down great hunks of forest.

For a long time the city feasted on the forest. All its chimneys billowed smoke and all its streets were gagged with people and traffic — also billowing smoke — and the faster they came, the faster the city ate. It sent out great superhighways, and made a superairport and a superseaport, and wound superfreeways all through and around itself. It sent suburbs up the foothills and snapped its teeth at the mountains.

It grew and grew, gorging until it devoured the whole forest and several puny towns along its way, too small and weak to escape. And the bigger it grew, the more people arrived every day to witness the phenomenal city and contribute to its greater growth and glory.

The city forgot its humble beginnings way back in the quiet peaceful days. It lay like a concrete scum over all the land it had devoured. It squinted up into the dirty yellow sky and inhaled the dirty smoky air and still was not satisfied. It wanted more room for more enticements to lure more people for more growth. So, one day, it turned its eye to the little lone grove of trees amid the endless miles of concrete. With one gulp it ate the sad little park and in its place built a convention hall and culture center.

Still unsatisfied, the city gnawed at the roots of the mountains. Then it took bigger and bigger bites until it was gorging on the very snow-capped peaks. And the city was very clever. It took all the debris from the mountains and put it into the sea to create new land to consume.

And so the years passed and the giant supercity grew and grew and gorged more and more land and people, and even the sea. And all this was not enough to satisfy the city. It wanted more — always more. But the world was big and there was much land in it and many people. So the city grew and fed, and fed and grew.

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THE FLIGHT OF THE RED CALLIOPE

W. D. Perry

It is said that you are privileged just once afterwards, to look back on an unfamiliar identity with such a fine clarity of detail that the minutiae of what you were stand forth as forest-shadowed banks stalking the platform of your present. It is then that the quick wrong you made one day becomes a massive sculptured ikon with meaning on every polished surface. But the backward journey is painfully slow and must extend only to the right street ... never beyond.

It is night of a darker time. I search for the glacial days of my youth to evaluate the density of my wrong. It is here in this painted valley between wooden canyons of building shapes where druids patrol the paint. Now I see greennesses of calculated rectangles, below enfeebled street lamps swinging like lavalieres in night's wind as light is thrown to make moving shadows on trees that bend but do not break their leaves.

George Geezil, a patriarch with the face of Walt Whitman, lives in a plain house across the street from my family. He has a wooden leg and knows dangerous stories of the Civil War, having ridden, he whispers, with Morgan's Raiders — as if the North's knowledge of this would result in his immediate hanging. He is ancient but his great blue eyes, that shine with light hard as stone, see other honest ghosts of past that walk and beckon as he talks; and I believe him. But I fear him because the shining sword of what he was persists without fatigue into and beyond his fifth age.

Geezil is raising a granddaughter of my age, fifteen, whose parents died in a fall from a high wire in a traveling-circus act. Sarah Geezil, with blue mirrors for eyes, is a chiclet-cheeked sweet-bodied girl without a symmetry of purpose or an aura of guile ... a beauty full of grace is Sarah Geezil. And what a substantial name: a sound that springs

fully armed from the earth, pointing to the sun without falsification or contrived prettiness. But she will never hear it, for Sarah is deaf as a lantern. God, what an outrage to bring this kind of calamity to earth: alone without sounds to tell her of the earth's timbre, frightened to make a sound of her own ... who in reading one day will come to the poet who said '... I want to hear the sound of rain on my grave ...,' and will wonder if sound persists beyond death in its ultimate reality. And who will tell her?

Geezil likes me, I think, probably because I am able to exhibit free innocent enthusiasm about everything that old-timers value. I spend too much time with Sarah and am permitted this because Geezil considers me gentle companionship — and maybe mostly since there are no children of her age willing to consort within her perimeter of silence. Little Marge Littleman laughs at Sarah's lugubrious sounds, and Sarah remains disordered in her room.

Today when we walk across the park and sit upon the high places, excitement shines in Sarah; I will be a mentor, guiding, telling, relating to her concerning beauty and heartbeat, human biologies, music and the river's current. But the telling must be annotated. Always we go armed with pads and pencils; for they are the devices of our communication to puncture the gray monotony within her quiet walls. Every day is different, a canvas filled with patches of brilliant paint to present some partial scene that will become part of a bigger scene, with all to be assimilated and mixed again by the recording mechanism of Sarah. I plan everything for the long days to come; and what I do not know, I learn in advance from libraries and books — for I, too, am involved in this learning. Tomorrow I think the subjects will be the life of Mozart, Custer the boy general, and maybe a short résumé of William F. Cody and dirigibles. She's bound to like that, but it's a lot of writing.

When she reads my notes I watch her fine cameo face for the changes made by the assimilation of what I teach to this yet-innocent one. Still, there are times when I cannot see her, and they say she is like a lost one without roots, without a sun to turn to, looking very sad and white and not eating food her grandfather prepares. Sometimes it is three or four days when I do not see her and I am saddened.

But then I ask Geezil of her, and he comes out with lamps of fire behind his blue eyes: 'She will bear up, boy. Mustn't comfort her. Pity creates other weaknesses; she'll be out again and brighter than a kite. May lean on you a little, boy. What you have to do is this: be an honest brick wall, Herman.' And with that he is off to the calliope. (I wonder if his speech, arranged in poetic cadences, would look like the poetry of Robert Frost.) I go down also to the calliope. 'Yes, sir, Mr. Geezil. That's the way I see it too ... only when I don't see her every day like, I can't do good things for her, sir, and I never think bad things about her or anybody else, sir, only good things about you and the calliope and Sarah and everybody.'

Geezil, George W., Sergeant of Cavalry, Confederacy, retired, looks at me with eyes blue as the Tyrrhenian Sea, and I search in the second's closing of panic for fishermen's white sails, spires of coastal villages, with other blue-eyed Geezils looking out over land and water to defeat the innocuous Hermans of the world who say they only do good.

In the rear of Geezil's house and down the hill, sits his ancient fire-red steam calliope left over from earlier times when he'd followed a circus. It is silent like Sarah, and inoperable, surrounded by brush and weeds which have grown, turned to hay in the falls, and grown wild again in the springs. Rusting apart in the green jungle, it is frightening like Geezil, with the solemnity and exquisite sadness of an old man who has shot his last bolt but remembers when his

body was straight and his groin an arrow strong with quick music.

Some evenings when the time is long, Sarah, Geezil, and I part the undergrowth and climb through onto the derelict, but I do not feel comfortable even with Sarah along. I listen as he raves about the halcyon days when steam calliopes were a great thing for the country as a whole. (I remember my mother saying: 'It's ominous, ominous, Herman.') 'You see, kid, those were the grand days of the big song and everybody was happy and busy because the country was growing in the right direction with the right purpose and the right song ... the big song ...' (My father says he's insane, but then there's poor Sarah.) Sarah sits watching the old man with admiration, unfamiliar with his ravings. She places her bare arm on mine in the darkness and I get a jolt in my viscera like a kick from an army mule. She smiles.

Swiftly we mature before knowing. One day in a brilliant October when we are seventeen, I realize with fright and high excitement that she is almost a young woman: pondering whether her breasts are delicate half-moons or wild melons, I begin to see a real fullness of her rising high to be heard, forcing itself to be heard, and I wonder if there are others who, seeing, hear the voice of it, knowing what it is.

That night when I am with her for a while, I start the motion that will make the difference. I remember the brittle clear blueness of Geezil's eyes and the persistent sword of himself. Maybe Geezil is a Divinity who will belch out a terrible punishment to me; or maybe he is an extension of his calliopo, who, with the help of the forces of darkness, manifests himself as man during daylight hours only to return to his lair at darkness. With regret, I pull away from such sensual thoughts of Sarah, for Geezil's eyes make a difference in how violins are played.

Today Geezil tells me that Sarah's tutor has not worked out well and she continues to rely upon me. I think with

candied rapture of the delightful curve of Sarah's leg between ankle and knee, knowing that the change from child to woman is being made. I bring myself back to Geezil and listen, wanting to catalogue him in a special phylum for archaic calliope men.

'When he is here teaching, Herman, Sarah is out running in the fields with you, and the Sarah that remains is not capable of learning and responding as in the other days. Herman, I think you have a part of that girl with you all the time. Did you know that? Ah, voilà, but you are a good, good boy who will do right by the little girl.'

I nod and look stupid, not knowing what I am going to say to all of this. He leads me gently with prodigious hands down to the calliope again. I cannot and will not listen to any more of his stories, and I think desperately of something to divert him.

'Mr. Geezil, will you fire up the boilers and play a march that'll make the dead fall in?' (I know the boilers are hopelessly rusted out.) 'When the time comes, Herman ... when the time comes,' he growls. Perhaps he is mad, I think — as some have suggested.

Sarah comes to the hill in back, sees us, hurries to where we are — and I am thankful. I have not seen her cherub goodness in three days. The pinnacles of her pimento breasts point straight to the belfry of St. John's Church, and I wonder what irregularity of the human ecclesiastical system could prevent her from completing a pilgrimage to sainthood. As she takes my hand, I see the red paper rose in her raven hair and decide that I can then bear anything Geezil wants to tell. Maybe my heart becomes the metronome for Geezil's voice, now low, now high; it will make the difference. ... There is the smell of musk, of the ashes of a red paper rose. And sweat. No, my biology cannot summon the necessary chemicals, and I am unheroically defeated as he talks on about parades, rallies, and campfire meetings.

By Winter, something happens in Sarah; confluences of her happiness contrive to make her burden easier. The impediment is made less. Her larynx begins to make small animal noises that find their way into evenings when she makes words with me which do not come without a great struggle. I try to think of the dulcet musical sounds of a speaking-singing Sarah, speaking from a small song that I made from the clef of leaf, sun, skies, and paper pads with which I brought her folded evenings and simple explanations. I try to increase the desperation in her to speak.

One day in the hard of winter she comes to my door looking like a Russian princess in her fur and boots: 'Hourman, Hourman ... Hourrmann ...' She says my name for the first time, and there is an abundance of beauty in the other voice that swells but cannot be heard. Smiling, she hands me a folded note, turns about with a small animal cry, and runs back to the fortress of Geezil's house.

I am uneasy. I read: 'Herman, my body does not feel the same now as before and before that. At dark my body is restless for what happens when we're together. When you are not with me, Herman, this hunger begins. You must explain in our next meeting what is happening to the inside of me. Also I want to see you after dark tonight for I cannot wait until tomorrow. The life I hear inside of me tells me of a freedom I have with you that I had not had before. Come tonight and we will sit in the snow on grandfather's calliope. He will not be there, Herman, to watch you like I know he does sometimes.'

I am nineteen and realize that she has finally made it to the full-bodied laurel of her youth. I see her for the last time tonight, in the snow, high on the calliope. Sitting on the snow-covered bursted leather I look at her to see alluvial deposits of what I taught in four years in her onyx eyes, but see only my last great purity. Now I know that I have been a

good mentor, and I touch lightly the red paper rose she still wears in her hair. Suddenly, Sarah lifts her face up to me and we kiss, this real time, one of those long fine kisses that begin in the pit of her universe of young womanhood, the kind that makes you hope you live forever. I kiss lightly her chiclet cheek — afterwards made scarlet with her feeling — lift her down from the calliope, and bundle her inside to warmth, wondering if she, like Lot's wife, will look backwards.

I pack this morning to leave home. It is time now, while I still have control over Sarah. I am nineteen, almost twenty, and can feel at times the tenuous roots forming — prophetic — about me, securing me to the black dirt of my origins. Sarah knows who she is now ... but I must leave before I sit with her again to hear her song of summer. Now Geezil sits his days in the red calliope. He is truly mad, but Sarah is nineteen and watches him — and he loves her.

Time passes in gusts of many-colored flying madnesses, and I think that the feel of this filigree world in my hand obliterates sounds made in a younger time; yet, in the stillnesses you stand with compatriots and laughing, talking, wenching at a bar for time trials (I show her today the first live horse in Grady's pasture, seeing her tremble to touch it ... she writes on her pad: 'Noble animal is gift of God to earth. I will take my crayons and draw it as it smiles.');

always concerned with getting off the hook, knowing finally that in the interstices of yourself there is a final sky shadow, something that has to be looked at again before you can become a positive factor. So you make up your mind to return for a look and a feel of some former world that is now as strange to you as the breath of the girl crossing the street ahead. I think of my parents, long dead; it will be painful.

A Sunday is chosen because it is appropriate for an odyssey. I recognize old landmarks that lean away from their perpendicular, saddened by knife-winds of progress. As I

drive over streets which point to my place, I come to a panic stop, seeing in the path of the car a red paper rose. I run out to save it, for it belonged on the front pages of a Canto I know; but the rose turns out to be a furled soap wrapper that the exhaust fumes of a bus blow into the storm gutter. Here is the gaunt facade of my parents' former home looking down at me, a harlot now who has forgotten to look in mirrors, giving her insides to strangers who rip at her with hands of barbed wire. I look across for the other door I seek. It is there for me.

Knocking softly, I listen for her to come, knowing she will first stare at me through the cupola glass door, exploring the grafted light on my sufficiently-weary face — and think this scene back to its beginning. Though it isn't the sound of my knock, she comes immediately as if she had been waiting ... (Sitting in the darkened theatre watching Charlie Chaplin movies with her, I instinctively close my eyes because the greatest part is the organist playing from the prepared score, projecting motion tonal intervals. Seeing this, she closes her eyes with me, hoping to catch some slight vibration which will cut through her frozen shadows of deafness to record with me.) She opens the door. I stand marvelling at her delightful unchanged child-form, for I remember the lamination of years. I do not know yet if she remembers me, for I have aged the wrong way.

I ask facetiously: 'Don't you remember Herman who wrote so many things on pads?' Immediately I feel like seven fools. She is still deaf.

She smiles, but does not speak, and there is at once a unified reflection from many pieces of broken mirror making ballets of remembered light on flutes of air.

Behind me there is a heavy step. Pirouetting, I see Geezil in all his hoary-headed blue-eyed God-wonder, unmarked by further age, his old order running backward into the summers of youth (gray coats of the cavalry main body

thundered and smelled into Lebanon, bringing with them the dust and squalor of their forced ride, the hunger of cavalymen looking with open bearded mouths. ... Sgt. Geezil and two privates searching outlying barns for additional mounts for General Morgan and staff officers. Three Yankee privates currying their mounts were shot, screaming, by Geezil. The column continued on to Bardstown, with Geezil praying all of the way, never certain of his penance through all the years, but sculpting a monument for others to apprise before his stack of years collapsed.) He stands staring at me with lamps of blue flame burning beyond the forest of his head. I look away at Sarah hurriedly.

She holds the door open and smiles to me again. Then I feel the old man's dry-fingered flesh pull at me, pull me away from the porch and Sarah. He smells of age that persists, and his breathing is a sawmill. I step away, thinking why isn't this old man dead!

'Boy, you listen to me now. You can't come all the way back; never all the way. There's been them that's tried and failed. Only to the street ... and never any further. Don't know why they didn't tell you that. What do they teach you out there, kid?'

I am frightened and wait for the black spell of this time and place to break, sliding me back to my place of voluptuous shadows. Sarah is beautiful, but I don't know if she is real or I am mad, reduced by Geezil to a simple Don Juan in a Geezil-type hell. But his voice is authoritative like Moses and I wonder if he will presently produce a burning bush.

'Herman, come. I want to show you something in the street that Sarah and I planned for you. We knew it would please you, this special gift, for we knew you'd come as far as the porch.'

He pulls me in the darkness to the street where, beyond the trees in the fall of the late evening mists, sets the

monstrous red steam calliope with four roan stallions stirring nervously in their traces.

‘Get aboard, Herman, this is the way we go!’ He sounds impatient, but I stare at this macabre thing in the dark street, polished until it shows a luminous glow, smelling the sweat of the horses. Geezil throws wood into the fire box and I hear the flames roaring inside. I look around for other people in the street, in the yards between houses. No lovers strolling in the darkness — no one but Geezil, Sarah, and I. God, she is beautiful, a madonna! A daughter of Magi!

‘Help the girl, Herman. Don’t stand there like a dolt!’ He is sitting up front in the driver’s seat holding the gilded reins, although I didn’t see him climb up. The roans breathe heavily as if they’ve come a long way. Geezil releases the calliope wagon’s hand brake.

I lift Sarah on up (it’s a good time for a little feel, with Geezil up front and all, but my hands tremble like aspen leaves and I think that this thing is really getting to me) and make her comfortable on the precarious seat by the keyboard. I brace my legs as Geezil suddenly without a warning shout gives the roans the whip. My head snaps back with precision and I summon final courage to yell because the noise of the calliope wagon and the wind’s scream in my ears are now deafening. I never imagined such speed from this derelict calliope.

‘How far we going, Mr. Geezil?’ The speed steps up even more. The wagon’s rumble stops, but we are going at a slant and the wind’s scream increases as I am thrown to the floor. Madly I clutch the sides of the wagon and I hear Geezil’s big voice answer me: ‘We’re going far enough to know you’re on a little flyer, kid!’ And he says no more. Cloud layers of white escaping steam from safety valves obscure him.

Sarah rises, examining the valve-pressure reading on the luminous copper boiler — then sits again at the keyboard, smiling reassuringly. ‘Hourrman, Hourmann ... I will play a

song for you when the steam gets up.'

The first time I hear her speak and with the fluency of an actress speaking her initial lines. What dark and monstrous hell was this? I peer over the mad steaming wagon's side, cautiously seeing the narrow substance of the earth's flesh and sand from my place, knowing now with a refined terror that we are at a great height in dark skies, windswept, with wild austere clouds creeping close to show me the various faces of God ... looking at me as he played Geezil, George W., making me know that I had run away from some great purity of love that happened far below, among the earth's lichen. ...

I look finally in supplication to the beautiful deaf Sarah who has learned to speak aboard the mad calliope ... she will help me for I am Herman who wrote so many things on pads. But she is not there when I look. In her place sits a talcum-faced crone whose dull slits of eyes watch my lately-warm flesh as she wearily punches keys to release a careless waltz. In her mad swirl of unfastened hair, grey as chromosomes, is a red paper rose that is blown by me toward the heart of darkness by the violent winds.

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OFFSHOOTS FROM NEW GRAFTS

HELMER O. OLESON A FELON SCRAWLS HIS CONFESSION ON THE WALLS OF HIS CELL

*The examinent saith she hath three familiars like
2 mouses and the third like a frog, and the names
of the 2 like mouses are Jack and the other
Prickeare, and the name of the third like a frog is
Frog. — From the Several Informations,
Examination, and Confessions of Witches in the
County of Essex, England (1645)*

Hello Hello Hell
O Hell O Hell O Hello!

I am
what others are
what others do
I do

As everyone knows
I was guilty of earlier crimes.
I may as well tell you now (appropinquante mundi
termini)

It was I
who killed Cock Robin
who knocked up Helen of Troy
and pulled the switch on Gyp the Blood
(the demon Isacaaron persuaded me
(and I didn't think the gun was loaded)

I guess you know by now
I dropped the fireball on Hiroshima the Hot
spat atoms and sprinkled fallout
caused sundry tempests, frosts, and avalanches

(I was a soldier and acted under orders)

I was 1 of 17 who killed the Black Dahlia
I tore her black clothing to shreds
My brain was like jelly in a jar ... amoeba-like
extending its pseudopodia
(to strangle people in distant places)
I dealt in the black market
chopped down that cherry tree
and stole apples from the Garden,
walking in a circle counter clockwise
lived in a world of tit for tat.
My murderous self wishkilled my neighbor.
I slew with my eyes and robbed with my thoughts
shooting deadly day dreams
at the face of my enemy
As everyone knows
I played fifth violin
and was in charge of the fourth chair
in the barber shop.
I attended certain covens and assemblies
and played ball on Sunday.
This much is admitted.
I have also committed crimes daily in the morning
tabloids,
have horsed around in the high chair
and was a criminal in the crib.
I might add in all seriousness
that It was I and I alone
who killed Captain Pigot
and later mutilated all those bodies
in the East End.
I was the last toothpuller at Auschwitz
and helped Hubert set the Great Fire of London.

*Three poems by Aline Musyl Marks – Problem Child,
Consolation, and Same in the End – appear here in the original
contents but fall on two leaves (issue pp. 262-263) that are*

*missing from the source scan, which skips from p. 261 to p. 264.
They could not be transcribed. — ED.*

JOYCE ODAM PRAYER No. 333GM1000

O most abstract holyism,
this century
perfects the stereotype
to a coded sanctuary.
Key-punch a prayer
for our identity!
Do not alter Self,
or the Machine
will have to punch new holes
in your godly-card.
We cannot accept
new images for old.
And do not change
that book of fables;
it is haunting
the way it is.
We have looked into science
and died!
We need
the ghost in the soul
and an archaic mystery
for the uncomprehending
mind.

ISSUE P. 265 · SCAN P. 117

ROOT, STEM AND BLOSSOM

A. Fredric Franklyn

And finally there was the greatest time-taker of them all — the benshi.

ripening late-ish the spring frog's night voice his somewhat cumquat Launcelot having become proud loather up chivalry is punished by time

Issa Flood Matsuo Basho Flood

the plum tree's burdens held over past their season are split by the sun

Taniguchi Buson Flood

The last serious strike the benshi were able to inflict on a major studio in Japan occurred at Nikkatsu Studios in 1932, after the studio announced they were again going to try to convert their motion picture production to sound. Every other studio in Japan had already done this, of course. The implication was that the need for the services of the benshi, already vanishingly-small, would shortly disappear.

Benshi was the term used in France for this kind of master-of-ceremonies who presided at film showings in the early days of the cinema there, before the use of titles and long before the advent of sound. Narrator, interpreter, commentator, lecturer ... explainer. Such was the benshi. In such a literal-minded society, they gained an enormous hold while the cinema was still in its infancy.

When, in the Western film capitals, movie-makers were seeking new ways to present a story, the benshi — in Japan — were gaining a popularity that gave them, in their time, the kind of stranglehold on the industry which only projectionists have in our own era — and this for about another decade after the films of every other nation had graduated to the innovation. So great was the prestige of the benshi — a greater box-office attraction than the most celebrated Kabuki and Shimpa actors could boast — that

even the use of titles in Japanese films represented a major transition.

From the medium's inception, it was the novelty that attracted Japanese — and French and German and American — audiences to the theatre. In Europe and America, the continuously-creative innovations were what made them return. In the U.S., D. W. Griffith's experiments in technique, such as his development of the flashback as a story device, were the effective force. In Germany, it was F. W. Murnau's moving camera and the 'street films' of Murnau, E. A. Dupont, and G. W. Pabst. And France had the unequaled versatility and artistry of the former magician, Georges Méliès, with the trick camera ... the visual effects in Marcel l'Herbier's films and sets by designers among whom were Alberto Cavalcanti, Claude Autant-Lara, Fernand Léger, and Mallet-Stevens ... and the experimental films of Germaine Dulac, Man Ray, Jean Vigo, Jean Gremillon, and René Clair. In literal-minded Japan, the personalities of their favorite benshi drew the movie-goers after the newness of the gimmick had worn off.¹ As Anderson and Richie point out, the considerably-narrower margin of box-office profit in Japan was probably the greatest single factor in delaying the installation of the expensive equipment necessary to produce and exhibit sound motion pictures there. It was less expensive — and less controversial — for the industry to continue to rely on these interpreter-personalities. They explain:

... He was somewhat like the lecturer who used to appear with travel films in the West, introducing the film

by telling you what you were going to see and then,
as
the film progressed, telling you what you were
seeing.
The Japanese, then as now, were constantly afraid
of
missing a point, of not understanding everything,
and
demanded a complete explanation. This the benshi
gave
them, usually expanding his services to the extent
of
explaining the obvious.

As the authors of THE JAPANESE FILM go on to
elucidate, the benshi had origins well grounded in the
traditions of the Japanese stage: the joruri and nagauta
of
Kabuki theatre and Bunraku (doll drama); and the
classical
storytellers of yose (the Japanese equivalent of
vaudeville).

Even before the advent of motion pictures 'Lantern slide
shows had been touring Japan since 1886, and as early
as
1897 an Italian had brought something called a
"kinematograph show" to Nagasaki. Since this form of
entertainment always needed explanation, someone had
to
comment during the viewing.' Further:

When the movies came, the West dropped its
equivalent
of the benshi, but Japan still felt the need for
someone
to explain. For one thing, the audience was not
sure how

the projector worked, and this they had to be told,
since
the ordinary Japanese, unfailingly curious, is
usually
interested in machinery. Furthermore, Japan has a
theatrical convention of treating the necessary
mechanics as a part of the performance itself, as in
the
Kabuki, where sets are changed with the curtain
up.
This interest in the machine rather than in the
content
of the film shown is most apparent when one of the
early
showmen placed his projector at the right side of
the
stage and the screen at the left. Most of the
spectators, if
they could see the screen at all, viewed it quite
obliquely,
but at least they had an excellent view of the
projection
crew in action.

This same wholehearted, almost childlike absorption
with
the process, even to the exclusion of the material which
the

process is merely supposed to be forwarding, is sometimes
apparent too in the amoebic choice of plot necessities in both
artistic and commercial films.

In one of Daiei's popular ninja series (period spy-magician
dramas), in which Raizo Ichikawa stars, the story rests upon
the murder of a character who has been occupied with
rediscovering gunpowder for the Japanese, and the
subsequent theft of his process. His son, a child at the time,

witnesses his murder from concealment in a closet. Of course, the child grows up to become a super samurai-spy (ninja) and to avenge his father's murder.

In Hiroshi Teshigahara's *WOMAN IN THE DUNES*, the protagonist is deliberately trapped by the villagers and forced to live in one of the pits which they have constructed around their village to stem the encroachments of sand from the surrounding dunes. Their purpose is to misuse him as a slave for the rest of his life. He's a university-trained student and has no intention of spending his life in one of these pits shoveling sand for them. To convince themselves and the audience that their hero has found a selfless reason, by the end of the story, to change his mind and to devote his life to these simple villagers, director and author occupy him — when he's not shoveling sand — with rediscovering capillary action! That these high-school-girl experiments in General Science One phenomena could occupy him so profoundly that they will motivate a total change in his personal goals seems absolutely plausible to Director Teshigahara and author Kobo Abe.

Even where imports of foreign flicks included dialogue scripts, in the silent films, the benshi could not be required to use them. And most of the time he preferred to rely on his own imagination! As Anderson and Richie point out: 'The only thing that remained the same, no matter the film or the benshi, were the characters' names in foreign films. The heroine was almost always Mary, the hero was Jim, and the villain was usually called Robert. Even in historical dramas there would come riding a chivalrous knight in shining armor.'

Eventually, the benshi rather than the film became the box-office attraction. After the arrival of the story film and the star system, film advertising was showing the benshi's name in larger characters than those used for the title of the film, the stars, or the director. His pay became equivalent to

that of the highest paid Japanese film actor, and his position was further secured by the producers and distributors, who liked the benshi, saying he saved the cost of printing titles. As they explain:

The benshi had been thrown into complete confusion by the coming of sound. At first they kept silent, hoping that the talking film would go away. Then they decided to take the offensive and tried to narrate over the sound. This was difficult because they had no public-address systems and were forced to shout as loud as they could. Soon they learned to cut down the volume to let themselves be heard, and, finally, some benshi turned off the sound altogether, showing the film as though it were silent and, as always, faithfully narrating. Some even narrated strictly musical shorts which had only songs.

In April of 1932, the protection group formed by the loose union of benshi who were formerly employed by the Shochiku chain was arbitrating its notion of the retirement allowance which it demanded from the executive heads of that studio. The demand represented their quasi-guild's countermeasure to Shochiku's tardy but determined policy to rid themselves of the anachronism the industry at last realized the benshi had become. And no mere optimism on the part of the benshi had formulated the demand. This was a desperate decision which they even were driven to implement with extortion:

Just a month before, Shiro Kido (who, at the age of thirty, had become the head of this studio, replacing the much-older Hotei Nomura) had been attacked in his home by two gangsters who turned out to have been in the pay of the benshi. Kido was unhurt and the gangsters were arrested, but the attack more than dramatized the delicate relations existing between

employer and former employees.²

Subsequent to this, the Nikkatsu Studios again attempted to reconvert production to sound and were blocked by the benshi, who went out on strike. This was much more effective than the same measures had proven against Shochiku and the rest of the industry.

But the benshi star was plainly in decline. The day of their grip on the box office was over. The new art form, even in infancy, possessed too active and large a potential for the swaddling clothes in which they had hoped, in the narrow interests of their own profit, to keep it. Three years before the Nikkatsu strike:

In 1929 ... it had become clear that the talkies were something with which the Japanese industry would sooner or later have to come to terms. The convincer was a Fox Movietone musical short, MARCHING ON, which was shown at the Musashino-kan in Shinjuku and played to full houses for two months, at a time when a two-week run was considered a smash hit.

Some people were not impressed. The critic Yoshihiko Tanaka wrote: 'As advertised, this is all-talking. Too much so, because there is no room for the benshi

explanation. At first the mere mechanics may
impress
Japanese audiences, but they will soon tire of
something
they cannot understand.' Other critics wrote
manifestoes against the talkies, saying that cost
made
profits impossible, that the talkies were only a fad,
and,
oddly, that talkies were not an art like silent films
but a
science.

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POETRY IN THE THEATRE — IV

William Packard

Suppose for a moment that our poets know all there is to know about poetry in the theatre. Suppose they are able to create the greatest possible poetic drama on the printed page. What do you suppose is the likelihood that their written work will be translated effectively onto the stage? What are the chances that the spoken poetry will be truly communicated to the audience with the proper tone and intensity appropriate to the text?

To give any kind of an answer to that question, perhaps we ought to examine whose interests are really at stake.

First, there is the audience. We may not think that audiences play much of a creative part in the theatre. We may imagine they are simply there to be entertained or edified or shocked or shouted at. But audiences are usually a determining factor, in part responsible for how much or how little poetry there is going to be in the theatre. Is Shakespeare done badly these days? Blame it on the audiences. They do not care enough to protest loud and long and boycott productions until they are done the way they ought to be done. Obviously, the very fact that a theatre audience does not insist on poetic drama, and does not insist that the finest actors be highly proficient in spoken poetry, is a moving factor.

Looking at this in another way, let me cite examples — how audiences in the past helped determine that there would be more poetry in the theatre.

In the period of Attic tragedy, roughly from Aeschylus through Sophocles to Euripides, the audiences were as attuned to the music of the spoken language as the poets who wrote for their theatre. The Greek audiences knew that when a Chorus went into a complicated verse form known as a strophe, this was to be followed immediately by another

equally-complicated verse form known as the antistrophe. In fact, the antistrophe had to match the metrical structure of the strophe line for line, repeating the metre exactly, and heaven help any actor who missed a beat or misplaced a stress. Observing this immediately, the Greek audience would sometimes take that actor offstage and punish him by giving him a good punch in the stomach. They knew very much about poetry in the theatre and insisted on technical excellence in actors.

Again — the French Classical Theatre has always been committed to certain strict metrical rules, such as the alexandrine line, which has been in the theatre since the days of Molière and Corneille and Racine. But, in 1830, Victor Hugo decided to take certain liberties with this great classical verse tradition. The opening lines of his play *HERNANI* commit a terrible breach of convention in that the sense of a sentence runs over from one line to the next: ‘*Serait-ce déjà lui? C’est bien à l’escalier / Dérobé ...*’ This is called an enjambement, which has no place in alexandrine tradition. To be sure, it is a technicality. But the French audience at the premiere of *HERNANI* did not think so. As soon as these opening lines were delivered, all the classicists in the audience hooted and booed and hissed this outrageous insult to the French Theatre. However, there were others who were delighted to see poetry freed from artificial strictures. Men such as Gautier, Balzac, Delacroix, and Berlioz rose to cheer and applaud. Pandemonium. This was not the first time that a stage performance was almost halted by an unruly audience, but it was rather unique in this sense: the audience was not objecting to what was being said up there on that stage so much as the way it was being said, a violation of the conventions of spoken poetry in the French Theatre. It wanted the right to decide what to listen to. One finds it hard to imagine an American audience becoming much concerned about what it heard in the

theatre short of how many four-letter words might be encountered in the course of an evening. And Americans couldn't care less how those four-letter words might be strung together metrically.

An actor may be admirably trained for naturalistic action or for character interpretation, but how is he to be trained for the action of spoken poetry? How is he supposed to locate the proper approach to a poetic text? The theatre is not like the classroom. In the classroom, over the course of a semester a teacher can talk about language, demonstrate the meaning of a line, persuade his class to analyze an image; he can lecture and drill and cajole. In the theatre, there is not that much time; everything has to be done all at once. During a single performance, the actor has to 'show' what the language is all about.

The actor may or may not be trained in a tradition. Here is a statement by one who has been trained in a tradition, a member of the Comédie-Française, Robert Manuel, speaking in 1963 to Actors Equity in New York City:

My master was André Brunot, who often spoke to me about what he had learnt from Silvain, who was a pupil of Régnier's, himself a pupil of Samson's, who was a pupil of Talma's, that same Samson who taught Rachel. These artists could pass on orally traditions that they had learnt from Talma and Lekain, who may themselves have heard them from actors who had known Baron, Molière's protégé.

Thus, it would be possible for a French actor to take a stage direction, a problem of character interpretation or a line reading and try to trace it all the way back to Molière himself! But what of the language? M. Manuel comments: 'I would like to insist once again on the respect we must have for the works, for their authors, and for the audience. This respect is shown by the strictest obedience to a perfect memory.' Have a respect for the text, he said, and show that respect by an absolute fidelity to the written word. Of course,

it is difficult this way. It means working with every word, and a great deal of digging to get at the author's original intention, a complete concentration on detail. And certainly, it will be a great help if an actor happens to belong to a theatre which has an unbroken line of tradition, a continuity of style to help him in gaining access to a poetic text.

Perhaps we feel that we, too, have our own tradition. We have our Shakespeare and we have the many centuries of distinguished actors who have performed Shakespeare — Booth, Irving, Kean, Forbes Robertson, Beerbohm Tree, John Philip Kemble, the great Garrick, all the way back to Richard Burbage. But we would look in vain for any continuity of style in this list; we would not be able to link one man's approach to another man's approach as Robert Manuel was able to do with the *Comédie-Française*. There have been interruptions in the Shakespearean tradition; the Elizabethan theatres were closed, their performances banned due to the plague or due to the Puritan religious prohibitions or due to any number of accidents and calamities, so that a tradition was not permitted to come down to us unbroken from generation to generation. From all available records, a performance of *HAMLET* by Henry Irving would not have very much in common with a performance of *HAMLET* by John Philip Kemble — because we have no idea how Richard Burbage approached the part originally, if indeed he did play Hamlet. Nor is there any reliable information concerning the way in which Will Kemp came onstage, or the way in which Robert Armin played the fool in *TWELFTH NIGHT*, or the way in which battle scenes were represented in *JULIUS CAESAR*. Despite the huge accumulation of retrospective scholarship on the Elizabethan Theatre, all the books in the world cannot supply the countless details an actor would require to walk on the stage and play one of these roles as originally written.

John Blatchley, a director at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, has little faith in the historical

tradition of Shakespearean productions. Speaking at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. in 1964, he said:

The tradition that we have inherited is the Nineteenth Century sentimental, romantic tradition of the actor-manager, it is all the statuesque, rococo clutter of heavy sets, donkeys and rabbits and pigeons, it is all a lot of textbook quotations taken out of context, with speeches treated as arias, so that we don't really see what it is all about.

How then may we approach a text without continuity of tradition, without a guiding style to help an actor gain access to the text? Bluffing doesn't help. Blatchley had this to say about a famous passage of *MACBETH*:

Don't let anything go — you look at that speech, and you say: 'I do that rather well, the vowels are all well turned and my body looks good and the audience is impressed' — but then you get offstage and you say, 'What the bloody hell is that speech all about?' — Please don't let us think that these people say these things naturally, that it is all a lot of beautiful sound — the images have got to be so utterly real to you, that you're able to say them and feel them and be them, and the audience is able to say, what an extraordinary thing!

In other words, Blatchley is arguing for a complete disregard of the traditional 'Shakespearean' attitudes. He loathed the slick henny professional approach, and he felt that an actor would have more of a key to the character if he could only have the humility of a respect for the text, if he could only trust the written word to supply him what he needed. This is the most authentic key, because this is the key given us by Shakespeare himself.

A soliloquy from MACBETH and certain lines
ensuing it
may help us to see how an actor can learn intention
from the
language.

Macbeth: If it were done, when 'tis done, then
'twere
well

It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. — But in these cases,
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor: thus even-handed justice
Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject;
Strong both against the deed: then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead, like angels trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. — I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'er-leaps itself,
And falls on the other. —¹

Whereupon, Lady Macbeth enters, interrupting him.

This

speech is a tortuous example of indecision, even the sentence structure and syntax writhes with obscurity and

involution. But he now plainly and curtly tells his wife:

‘We

will proceed no farther in this business.’ Lady Macbeth berates him for changing his mind. Then we notice something very curious about the ensuing two speeches by Lady Macbeth. In the first, she is brutal and ruthless, using extremely gross imagery about the babe at her breast: I would, while it was smiling in my face, Have pluck’d my nipple from his boneless gums, And dash’d his brains out ...

But, in the second speech, suddenly we note that she is speaking in a highly rhetorical voice: ... Memory, the warder of the brain, Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason A limbeck only: ...

Why does she abruptly go into obscure imagery? There is only one line separating the two speeches. Macbeth had asked merely: ‘If we should fail?’ — and perhaps in that one line he revealed tacit acceptance of the situation, and that he was finally determined to carry out the murder. So, now Lady Macbeth knows she can afford the luxury of lifting the level of her speech from a brutal ruthless attack to a rhetorical celebration of the fact that Macbeth is once again in the fold.

It could be that this poetry is a sort of shorthand, the playwright’s way of revealing character and indicating the pace and the mood of the scene. Just as a composer uses certain musical notations to tell the musician how fast or how slowly a piece is to be played, as well as by choice of the musical units (quarter notes, half notes, whole notes), a poet has ways of speeding up or slowing down the pace of the spoken text, and can also cause a sudden change in a

dramatic character just by shifting the use of imagery.

An example of imagery in action is a passage from *THE DUCHESS OF MALFI* by John Webster. This is the strangulation scene in which the corrupt Bosola enters, disguised as an old man, to torment the Duchess in her last moments of life. But the Duchess already is beyond torment. She has been systematically tortured and degraded by her maniacal brothers until she has lost all instinct for life. She simply accepts the madness and malevolence thrust upon her. Note how Webster pervades this terrible scene with such grotesque and perverse imagery that the dramatic characters really need do nothing to project the sense of absolute evil. It is already there, in the poetry. Bosola: I am come to make thy tomb. Duchess: Ha! my tomb? Thou speak'st as if I lay upon my death-bed, Gasping for breath; dost thou perceive me sick? Bosola: Yes, and the more dangerously, since thy sickness Is insensible. Duchess: Thou art not mad, sure: dost know me? Bosola: Yes. Duchess: Who am I? Bosola: Thou art a box of worm-seed, at best but a salvatory of green mummy. What's this flesh? a little crudded milk, fantastical puff-paste. Our bodies are weaker than those paper-prisons boys use to keep flies in; more contemptible, since ours is to preserve earthworms. Didst thou ever see a lark in a cage? Such is the soul in the body: this world is like her little turf of grass, and the heaven o'er our heads, like her looking-glass, only gives us a miserable knowledge of the small compass of our prison. Duchess: Am not I thy duchess? Bosola: Thou art some great woman, sure, for riot begins to sit on thy forehead (clad in grey hairs) twenty years sooner than on a merry milk-maid's. Thou sleep'st worse than if a mouse should be forc'd to take up her lodging in a cat's ear; a little infant that breeds its teeth, should it lie with thee, would cry out, as if thou wert the more unquiet bedfellow. Duchess: I am the Duchess of Malfi still.

Bosola: That makes thy sleeps so broken: Glories, like glow-worms, afar off shine bright, But looked to near, have neither heat nor light. Duchess: Why, do we grow fantastical in our death-bed? do we affect fashion in the grave? Bosola: Most ambitiously. Princes' images on their tombs do not lie, as they were wont, seeming to pray up to heaven; but with their hands under their cheeks, as if they died of the toothache: they are not carved with their eyes fix'd upon the stars; but as their minds were wholly bent upon the world, the self-same way they seem to turn their faces.

The proper approach to spoken poetry is not, as we may have been taught, an approach based on diction or elocution or articulation or any of the by-products of a speech class. None of these things will be able to sustain spoken poetry for very long. And neither will an approach that just uses the text for a springboard for any sort of personal pyrotechnics. What is needed is intelligence and a willingness on the part of the actor to confront the written text itself, to find out exactly what the poet had in mind and why he chose his particular way of saying it. This takes considerable humility and a profound respect for the text. This means that the actor must stop worrying about the sort of impression he's making onstage and begin to concern himself with the shape and the form of the words he is saying. Only in this way will he commence to achieve some sort of approach to spoken poetry.

¹ *Quotations here and ensuing are from the Falstaff edition, ed. by George L. Rice back from the 1632 folio (HENRY T. COATES & Co. — 1859). — Ed.*

[UNTITLED]

Siv Cedering Fox

Why? the world-go-away
turning from a universe
of too many puzzle-pieces

to within, within me waiting
a lake that holds
the scoop of the sky

upside-down and spilling light
whereby I read
and word the flight of bird.

IN/VENTION

CON/VENTION

FECUND

A. Fredric Franklyn

A concrete poem; its visual arrangement is approximated here. —
— ED.

ED.

In /
FECUND VENTION
CON /

The hotlight / of nascent folly
restructuringng wet images
is a !green and !fiery / dying

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WHO IS LE ROI JONES? WHAT IS HE?

John Tryford

Le Roi Jones is black, and he is angry. This is justifiably so, for he carries in his mind the memories of 500 years of oppression of his race. Jones goes further than Martin Luther King and Stokely Carmichael, further even than Malcolm X or Elijah Muhammad in his condemnation of 'Whitey.' He has even called for total extermination of the whites, his hatred is so great. Yet, paradoxically, he depends on the white world to a great extent. He went to the white man's university and served in the white man's Air Force. He writes books intended for white readers and published by white publishing houses. How would Le Roi Jones exist without the white world? One assumes that in an all-black society he would be a kind of teacher or prophet.

Le Roi Jones' message is simple. He is saying that it is too late for civil rights, too late for integration, too late for everything. Watts and Harlem serve to prove his point. The civil rights people preach integration and nonviolence, yet there can be no integration while the contradictions of American society are such that that society cannot grant basic needs to Afro-Americans. A year after the Watts riot there still were no significant changes in the area — there still was unemployment, poor housing, school dropouts, police brutality. The McCone Commission spent \$250,000 to investigate the causes of the Watts riot, but offered no real answers.

If Jones writes for a white audience, then he certainly pulls no punches. He speaks with the voice of Watts and Harlem, the voice of the oppressed masses who cannot get their message through except by rioting and looting. Jones

says: 'Look, Whitey, you're to blame for all this chaos, and you're going to regret it. We're going to rub your nose in it.' By bringing slaves to America, the whites created a monster that no one can control, a monster that is now only beginning to unleash itself, and whose full havoc has only begun to be wrought. In Watts, during the riots, people shouted the exact same thing: 'You created this monster, and it's going to consume you. Whitey, you got a tiger by the tail. You can't hold it, you can't let it go.'

Le Roi Jones uses the medium of drama to get the point across, and his plays have the quality of rising quickly to a stupendous climax. The theme is the confrontation of black and white, each hating the other; and it is a confrontation that neither wins. Jones' plays are one-way roads to oblivion. The white man destroys the black man, but in doing so destroys himself. There is no salvation, no nice liberal messages of integration and point happily ever after. All Jones wants to do is to portray brutal reality as he sees it.

He does this especially well in two plays: *THE DUTCHMAN* and *THE SLAVE*. Both are short, taking less than fifteen minutes each to act out. This is because Jones has slashed away all elements of the superfluous and the unnecessary; what remain are the bare bones of drama. Basically, there are only two characters, a black and a white, because that's all it takes to get the message across.

The *DUTCHMAN* takes place in the New York subway. When Jones was writing this, he evidently had in mind the terrorizing of whites by young Negroes in the subway. He depicts what it is like when a white terrorizes a Negro. The white girl, Lula, can tease, torment, almost seduce the Negro, Clay, and be amused by his reaction; but she is not amused when he starts to tell her the truth about Whitey. The tension between Lula and Clay builds slowly throughout the play, until it climaxes in Lula's brutal song and dance satirizing Clay and the entire black race.

Lula says:

Come on, Clay, let's do the thing ... Clay, you
middle-class black bastard. Forget your
social-working
mother for a few seconds and let's knock
stomachs.
Clay, you liver-lipped white man. You would-be
Christian. You ain't no nigger, you're just a dirty
white
man.

Then she dances a sort of jig and says:

Screw yourself, Uncle Tom. Thomas Woolly-Head.
There
is Uncle Tom ... I mean, Uncle Thomas
Woolly-Head.
With his old white matted mane. He hobbles on his
wooden cane. Old Tom. Let the white man hump
his old
mama, and he jes' shuffle off in the woods and hide
his
gentle gray head. Ol' Thomas Woolly-Head.

This is more than Clay can stomach, and he turns
on

Lula brutally, pouring out the truth to her:

Charlie Parker? Charlie Parker? All the hip white
boys
scream for Bird and Bird saying 'Up your ass,
feeble-minded ofay. Up your ass.' And they sit
there and
talk about the tortured genius of Charlie Parker.
Bird
would've played not a note of music if he just
walked up

to East 67th Street and killed the first ten white
people
he saw. Not a note ... You understand? ... If Bessie
Smith had killed some white people she wouldn't
have
needed that music. She could have talked very
plain and
straight about the world. No metaphors. ... Crazy
niggers turning their backs on sanity. When all it
needs
is that simple act. Murder.

In other words, jazz is just an escape, and not a very
satisfactory escape, from Whitey. The black man cannot
kill
the white man, so he sublimates his terrible
frustrations in
jazz. In other words, Charlie Parker and Bessie Smith
are not
heroes but cowards, for they could not commit the
simple
and necessary act that would rid them of their
oppressor.

The SLAVE is a longer play and involves a Negro and two
whites. The Negro, Walker Vessels, is torn between the image
of himself as Uncle Tom and as a black militant. In the
prologue, he appears as Uncle Tom, dressed in old farm
hand's clothes, questioning his position in the world, finally
deciding that passivity is the best position. In the play
proper, Walker Vessels is very different. He is Jones himself,
rather idealized — bitter, brutal, uncompromising, leading a
revolution of blacks which is raging outside while the action
takes place on the stage. Walker feels that he has to kill the
white people, Grace and Bradford Easley, in order to free
himself and prove himself. But there is a complication.
Walker was formerly married to Grace and has two children

by her. He wants to reclaim the children and take them away with him even though they are half-white. Feelings of tenderness and love are still in him; but, in the end, these feelings come to nothing. Walker kills Easley and Grace, and the two girls die in an explosion. Walker is left with nothing but himself and the black revolution which he now only half-heartedly believes in.

The SLAVE is full of long monologues and explanations. The action is not so compressed as in *THE DUTCHMAN*, nor does the tension build up so much. But Jones takes more time to develop the character of Easley, the impotent ex-university professor. Walker despises him and calls him a faggot. In fact, he goes so far as to say that all university professors are faggots. Yet Easley manages to retain a certain amount of dignity in the face of the revolution which is going on outside. Easley shows up Walker for the hypocrite he is in trying to be a poet and a murderer at the same time.

Walker does not win a victory by killing Easley and Grace, nor does Lula win a victory by stabbing Clay. In the end, both are left with themselves in a kind of oblivion. There is no way out.

Le Roi Jones' plays certainly are timely; but the question is — are they lasting drama? The greatest dramatists — Shakespeare, Goethe, Shaw, O'Neill — created characters who were universal. What they thought, what they felt, are things which probably have been felt by all men at one time or another. The historical setting of a great drama can be ignored because of the scope of the message. Do Jones' plays have a universality that will transcend the Twentieth Century? Perhaps only time will tell, but on the surface it does not appear that they have the necessary universality and scope. The white-black confrontation is at best only a moment in history which soon will fade away. But, so far, it is mainly unexplored territory, ventured into chiefly by Jones

and James Baldwin; and, compared to Jones, Baldwin is Pollyanna.

Turning to Jones' poetry, one must apply different standards of judgment. Poetry should not be 'preachy.' Jones' verse is most solid when he follows a 'hard' romantic line. It is weakest when he tries to put across a political or racist message. Poetry, one might say, is Jones' first metier, since he himself says that he started writing in college and by the age of twenty considered himself 'a kind of poet.'

In his book of poems, *THE DEAD LECTURER*,¹ he tries to follow the subtleties of Robert Duncan successfully. In the tradition of Pound, Duncan is one of our truly-professional poets. Duncan once said that he made poems the way some men make love or war. This requires absolute dedication, poetry being the entire being of the poet compressed into words, and the words, the impressions which carry the sense of awareness of the poet's being.

At the close of a poem called *This is the clearing I once spoke of*, Jones lets out a thin line of impressions which transfers the reader's senses from the concept of love to the images of birds and wind: *Whose mind has this here? The way love*

will move. I love you, I say that now evenly, without emotion. Having lost you. Or sitting, at the ruptured threads of light. Wind and birds, spun out over the water, silent or dead.

These impressions are artfully worked out in a poem entitled *The [...]* *I want to be sung, I want all my bones and meat hummed against the thick floating winter sky. I want myself as dance. As what I am given love, or time, or space to feel myself.*

The best poem in the book is the first one, *As a possible lover* — especially these lines: *... the way of wind is a bursting its early lull. Cold morning to night, we go so slowly, without thought to ourselves.*

When he tries to get a message of black hatred across in a poem, the poem fails. This happens in *Black Dada Nihilismus #2*, where he trumpets up Sartre as the last white man who had anything to say that was important. There is certainly nothing subtle or intriguing about this piece; it is stark and brutal like Jones' plays — and, as a poem, it doesn't work. It descends to the lowest kind of polemic, which does not make good poetry and is acceptable only in prose. Furthermore, there is no such thing as 'Black Dada.' This is something Jones concocted. Dada was a literary fad in Paris in the Twenties.² The Negroes are not Dadaists but oppressed people struggling to be free and hating their oppressors. They know nothing of Dadaism, Socialism, etc., but they do know they want a better life.

Le Roi Jones has the potential for becoming a great artist, if he doesn't let his hatred stand in the way. Already, he has been acclaimed by major critics all over the country, and *THE DUTCHMAN* won an award as the best off-Broadway play in 1964. The question is — where does he go from here? He has already shown us the black-white confrontation in the frankest possible terms. If he continues to dwell on that subject, he surely will become uninteresting and dated.

It just may be that Jones' future lies in the direction of teaching. As an example to hundreds of aspiring young Negro poets and playwrights, he could well be that catalyst which will unleash an untapped source of new talent. All the literature of the Western World has heretofore been written by white men for white men. What a revealing, and perhaps terrifying, thing it would be if the Negro were to pour out his soul, his feelings, his personality on paper. Such a generation of Negro writers might entirely change the course of literature.

¹ GROVE Press, 1964. ² Editorial note: The 'faddish' offshoot of serious Dadaism is generally considered to have died in 1920, in

France, where it turned into Surrealism. The original movement, founded in Zurich in 1916 in protest against World War I, was a serious destructive nihilistic one attacking the entire European culture. Jones probably envisioned a similar stance for his people in the U.S.A. — ED.

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THE CLOSET

Helen Luster

curious
and noticing
the door
a beautiful wood ...
he opened it
some hooks old
a few curtains
things hanging there ... and a card
marked with a G ...