

TRACE

LIVING LITERATURE

DE LONGCHAMPS: Paintings
Annual Indexed Address List

66

ISSUE

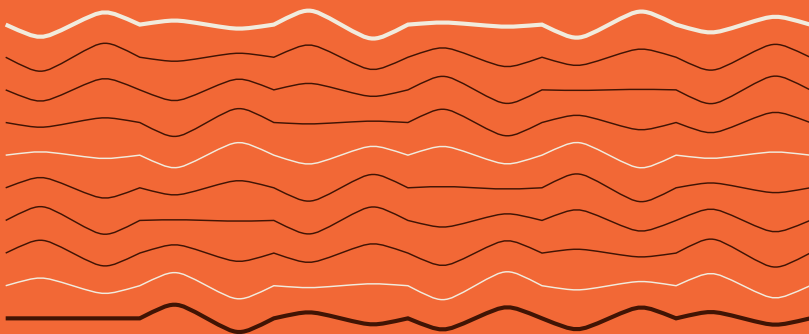
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JAMES BOYER MAY / EDITOR



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No. 66

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Edited by JAMES BOYER MAY

A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

Advertisements, subscription promotions, the front cover and blank leaves have been omitted, as have the running trade directory (“The Chronicle”), the seven-page annual index, and the 1967 address list; notes record what those reference sections held. This edition’s linked contents list supplies direct navigation. The poetry, fiction, essays, correspondence and reviews of the issue are given in full, in the order in which they are printed.

Trace 66 was also a magazine of pictures. The artwork is not reproduced here, and no placeholder pages have been made for it. Joanne de Longchamps’s eight black-and-white collage paintings (issue pp. 377-384) move from ruined columns and rocky landscapes through hybrid bodies, lunar figures, temple forms, and tangled forest imagery: EPHEBUS, ZEUS IN GUISE OF SWAN, HERMAPHRODITUS, GODDESS OF THE FULL MOON, HERO’S JOURNEY, TEMPLE OF APOLLO, CORINTH, IONIC, and CENTAUR’S FOREST.

Eight photographic plates interrupt A. Fredric Franklyn’s film column. Three stills from Peter Watkins’s *THE WAR GAME* show a fire-storm victim, an execution of looters, and an auxiliary field-atomics launcher. Two images from D. A. Pennebaker and Richard Leacock’s *DON’T LOOK BACK* portray Albert Grossman and Bob Dylan. Three from Watkins’s *PRIVILEGE* show Jean Shrimpton alone, Shrimpton with Jeremy Child and Paul Jones, and a crowded ticker-tape scene.

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

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TOWARDS PRINT (SELECTED POETRIES : IMMEDIATE ANCESTRIES)

by The Editor

HERE ARE NINE BOOKS of poetry, out of some 200 viewed, picked up, put down, picked up, read at random over the last year, then finally read through: (the order of listing and examination is roughly from less-complex thematic and structural endeavor toward greater complexity)

Carroll Arnett, NOT ONLY THAT — \$3 — The Elizabeth Press; J. Michael Yates, HUNT IN AN UNMAPPED INTERIOR — \$4 — The Golden Quill Press; Charles Simic, WHAT THE GRASS SAYS — \$1.50, paperb. — Kayak; Simon Perchik, TWENTY YEARS OF HANDS — \$3 — Elizabeth; Eugene McNamara, FOR THE MEAN TIME — \$1.50, paperb. — The Gryphon Press; Kenneth O. Hanson, THE DISTANCE ANYWHERE — \$3.95 or 30s. — University of Washington Press; Luella Booth, FOR THE RECORD — \$2.50 — Fiddlehead Books; George Garrett, FOR A BITTER SEASON — \$3.50 — University of Missouri Press; Howard McCord, FABLES & TRANSFIGURATIONS — \$1.50, paperb. — Kayak.

Many others of the 200 have been described in preceding issues; and some of those were as much enjoyed and as warmly recommended as these nine. Varied though the textures of the selected writings, all exhibit qualities of one sort or another lifting them above the 'stream.' My own tastes, of course, were an influence in the selections. Some may call this prejudice; but at least it's honest. Several of the poets have appeared in TRACE — or will — and any of them who have not sent work here would have been welcomed, had they submitted pieces as good as their better ones in these books. Partiality also may be charged because two presses are twice represented. This 'partiality' is honest too; I

congratulate George Hitchcock and James Weil on exercise of fine judgment, not only in book choices, but in a high percentage of what they have chosen for their magazines.

I've always thought — what with the growing problem of finding alert and untired time in our lives — that it's a waste of energy in the reviewer, a waste of space in periodicals, and a subsequent imposition on readers to discourse at length upon works in order to label them mediocre or to condemn them. (By this, please don't draw the conclusion that every book not written about here has been omitted because judged unworthy; we also have a problem of space and balance of content, and numerous books I'd liked to have described or to have had described gained only listings because time — again! — sped past, and too much else crowded forward.)

The gravest deficiency in the lesser poets of the 'avant' sector recognizably identifiable as composed of post-Cummings, -Thomas, -Yeats Romantics is failure of distinctive voice. The majority are turning out inchoate stuff in one or more of these lines of descent (in different combinations involving strains harking back to Pound, Eliot, Rilke, Dickinson, and the late French School). Without valid individualities, they are not in fact worthy of Romantic classification. And their direct or indirect protests and anarchistic stances — where present — are no more 'theirs' than are the verse modes and verbal dressings they employ. With equal justification, it may be observed of that minority who really have labored to perfect techniques, that few are as significant as poets considered here.

Many with Yeatsian strains also evidence Roethkian influence. Often, too — and frequently yet-more true of Cummings' descendants — that of Patchen (the most potent force in the ranks of living poets motored by socio-cultural revolt). Most who owe more to Dylan Thomas also are indebted to Gerald Manley Hopkins. But influences are so

variedly-mingled (and there are many more than referred to here) that no poets can simply be called progeny of Thomas — a common glib pseudocritical remark. However, since this article cannot pretend a comprehensive searching-out of influences, the pervasive Thomas strain is given special attention through allusions to *THE NOTEBOOKS OF DYLAN THOMAS*, edited by Ralph Maud (New Directions — \$8.50). Utilization of unfinished rather than final versions of Thomas is fitting, because we must concede that, although the worthier contemporaries we're writing about exhibit authentic imagination and expression, they have not yet forged their own expression through extended labors comparable to those of Thomas. References to him, and to the rest, are not intended to point up exclusive or even always chief influences. They are rather random observations. And there will be little or no textual analysis; compositional methods chiefly will be shown, not elaborated upon.

Concerning Cummings, be it not forgotten that his more-radical devices are absent from his earlier work; only three pieces in *TULIPS AND CHIMNEYS* much presaged typographical nonconformities to come, and the lines of most poems are unchopped and 'normal' (the poem, 2, is traditionally punctuated and capitals are used according

(Continued on Page 455)

THE ROBBERS OF PUBLISHERS' ROW

Curtis W. Casewit

ANY CHARWOMAN and plumber's helper and department store clerk is writing a book these days. Elderly spinsters employed to fold shirts in laundries are taking a stab at the great American novel. First-year theology students dabble in philosophy; and I know a barber who has put together six hundred terrible poems. To be sure, at least 200,000 book mss. make the rounds in New York during any given year; every author naturally wants to get his book published.

He can. He has only to foot the bill. This may be anything from \$1,000 to \$15,000.

The type of publisher who will charge for publication is called a subsidy publisher, or more commonly, 'vanity publisher' or (optimistically) 'co-operative publisher.' Authors who have been in the clutches of the hucksters who run these presses give them other names — such as vultures, robbers, rascals. Larston Farrar of *AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* calls them 'phonies, unethical lice, deadbeats, and charlatans,' adding that these are 'the more complimentary terms.' The Federal Trade Commission has cited five vanity publishers on numerous occasions, and even issued Consumer Alerts. The FTC warns authors that 'they'll pay a grim price for flattery' if they have a book published by a vanity house. An enquiry at the Authors' Guild will at once bring Senate Report #1032, entitled *Certain Organized Fraudulent Schemes Operating in The U.S.*, subject: the misrepresentations and excesses of vanity publishers.

Better Business Bureaus have staged their own little war against these sharp literary operators. And, through the years, a large amateur writers' organization, The National Writers' Club, has collected fifteen fat dossiers with

complaints of widows and others bilked of their life's savings. David Raffelock, who runs this club, recently issued a confidential report against a new vanity house. The paper must have fallen into the hands of someone connected with the outfit; for the phone rang, and this publisher told Raffelock: 'I'll beat you up!' On another occasion, Raffelock was offered 7½% commission on the total investment of any author he could bring to one of the biggest offenders. He declined.

In *THE ROGUE OF PUBLISHER'S ROW* (subtitled *Confessions of a Publisher*),* Edward Uhl an concedes 'subsidy publishing was conceived in sin and dedicated to fraud. My most important problem is to resist the temptation of larceny.'

Some of Uhl an's contemporaries have lost the battle against temptation. One of the more glaring examples was that of one who came to the field from a mental-healing society. He would clip his customers through a phoney literary agency, which charged stiff reading fees, and then clip them again through revision fees. Once the author was in the fake-agency trap, there would be approaches from four dummy publishing houses, all of which would bounce the book. Desperate, the writer would finally pay for his publication. This operator gained almost \$100,000 within a year, plus eighteen months in jail for fraud.

Vanity publishers frequently have been called on the carpet for misrepresentation, by the FTC. A typical citation read, in part: 'A Commission charges the company with making thirty-one separate false claims which have misled authors into signing contracts with it for publication of their books. These include misrepresentations concerning the nature, size, and operation of the business; the effectiveness and extent of the sales, promotion and publicity aid given an author-customer; and the royalties he can expect to receive.'

'Among other things, the complaint charges, the company does not, as represented — have a large organization or an

art department; conduct an effective or aggressive promotion and sales campaign; sell subsidiary rights; publish award-winning or fast-selling titles; sell any significant number of books through radio, television and autograph parties; have world-wide distribution or foreign representatives; advertise in worthwhile and important national media; offer the best way of finding “tomorrow’s authors of best sellers.”

Another FTC case showed what a victim of such a publisher can go through. It reads almost like a Maupassant tale. When a subsidy publisher asked an impoverished widow for \$1,300, the woman answered: ‘I am very anxious to get my husband’s work published because, as you can see, he put so much of himself into his writings . . . I am living on a minister’s pension and have two children still at home . . . I am very ignorant of the cost of printing and didn’t realize that it would cost that much. I have friends from whom I could borrow the money.’

The poor 62-year-old minister’s widow actually did borrow the money, then went out to scrub floors and wash windows. She worked as a dishwasher until she finally could repay the \$1,300. ‘I could never disclose the story to my children,’ she told the FTC in a letter.

*EXPOSITION PRESS, 1965 — \$3.50. This is not an isolated case. Again and again, authors have been fleeced in a most shameful way. It’s one thing to cheat a stupid stinking-rich stockbroker who can afford it; but it’s quite another to zero in on lonely unmoneyed people. Every shoe-store clerk just isn’t another Hemingway. The lady who ekes out her livelihood from the commission sales of Redbook subscriptions over the phone isn’t necessarily another Taylor Caldwell.

Yet, the subscription lady mortgages her home after she’s told about her ‘literary brilliance’ and ‘sure fame.’ Larston Farrar says: ‘Many times these dumb people are poor, and

can least afford to be taken in.’ Meanwhile, the vanity sharpies butter up egos of destitute and wealthy alike, making them feel important, then moving in for the financial kill. By that time, it’s too late.

Evidence? One elderly Chicago shut-in is still paying on the \$3,000 for a book which was published in 1959 and financed through a loan shark. The book sold all of thirty copies. ‘I suffered a long and treacherous illness,’ she wrote to the National Writers’ Club. ‘I’m unable to get around and sell the book. Can you please help me?’ Of course, payments to vanity houses may be split up. The catch phrase usually is: ‘Payable in any way you find convenient.’ However, with the contract signed and the first check made out, there’s no recourse. In some cases, the publisher doesn’t do a stroke of work until most of the money has been forked over.

Some years ago, a Dearborn, Mich. woman was encouraged by one of the big vanity houses to shell out her life’s savings of \$800. In a letter to Raffelock, she explained what happened next: ‘They suddenly wanted another \$350 for “additional material,” although they had the complete manuscript. Then they dunned me with a bill of \$151 for “advertising,” plus \$20 to have my book displayed at conferences. I asked for statements, and they threatened to terminate my contract.’

As a rule, vanity publishers become callous as soon as the first checks are in. This is best shown by the story of a Farmington, Mo. man. He suffered a heart attack shortly after signing a contract with the same firm. He frantically needed the \$500 he’d paid them. According to his son, he suffered another attack during the fight — and finally, a stroke.

As if this ruthlessness were not enough, there is a blatant falseness about the vanity press. A British author, who was clipped after much back-slapping salesmanship and promises of riches, puts it this way: ‘These publishers

conform with the image America has abroad. An image of hypocrisy, alas, of quick and unkept promises, of imperialistic wars “for the sake of Peace,” of business savagery, and of false pretenses.’ The false pretenses start after the would-be author has been battered, bruised, and endlessly rejected by the commercial publishers. Perhaps an unethical agent (who gets a commission) refers him to the huckster. Or he sees a name in the Yellow Pages of a phone book. Or one day he picks up an eight-page advertisement in a writers’ magazine. He reads the serious title: What Every Writer Should Know . . . On one page are clasped hands. The caption says: ‘We try to keep in personal touch with all our authors.’ Mr. X, the head of the firm, asks prospects ‘not to discard mss. in an old bureau drawer.’ He smoothly warns anyone who considers having his book done by a printer: ‘Personal distribution will mean many hours of unhappy work and later trouble collecting from buyers.’ If the writer takes the bait and asks Mr. X about his own literary infant, there’ll ensue a full treatment of praise and wet-nursing. Indeed, here the author finally finds love and understanding. Vanity houses are optimistic. At first, they’re helpful, heartening, kindly. They’re the opposite of the hard-bitten, risk-taking regular publisher who treats the tyro like dirt and the pro only a notch better.

For the novice, it’s hard to tell the difference between vanity and trade houses. Many firm names are very similar. A number of ‘coincidental’ resemblances might be cited. And the subsidy man doesn’t give his show away immediately. He doesn’t at once pounce upon the check.

A typical advertisement: ‘WRITERS: Books wanted on all subjects—fiction or nonfiction. Professional opinion without charge. FREE: a booklet to demonstrate how your book can be produced, publicized, and sold. Write Dept. Z.’

Take another typical advertisement: ‘YOU HAVE WRITTEN A BOOK? A representative of a New York publishing firm will be

in this city on May 1st to interview local authors. We are in search for finished manuscripts of all types for book publication. Any subject . . . If you have a book-length ms. and would like a professional judgment (without obligation or cost), please write at once describing it and tell us at what time of day you would like an appointment.'

The interview, in an upholstered hotel suite, will be all courtesy. Dollars are mentioned only at the end.

If a writer should request details by mail, he will receive a masterpiece of a brochure, usually by air. Most fabulous prospectuses are used. Let's look at one.

Right off the bat, the writer is reminded that there's no chance for a newcomer with regular publishers, that an accepted book is a fortunate exception. 'Do you want to throw your manuscript away in despair? Or do you want to come to us?' After being assured of a prompt careful and sympathetic reading, the author is dazzled with possible 'second, third, and fourth editions,' with the book-of-the-month clubs . . . 'real promotions' for mail orders, sales of subsidiary rights such as for motion pictures, TV, radio . . . serialization, syndication, translations, pocket-book reprints . . . Gasping, the prospect is told that the first books of numerous famous authors were subsidy ventures. With a subtle touch, it is stated that 'acceptability is determined upon merit and selling value.' Aunt Mabel is told what good company she keeps: doctors, educators, lawyers also are published by them. Moreover 'review copies are sent to all leading publications.' And, although stores seldom see a subsidy salesman, there is a firm promise of 'sales calls.' Photos of magnificent store window and convention displays make the prospect drool. Reproductions of checks marked paid — and running to thousands of dollars — assure her not only of fame but fortune. Then there are plugs from satisfied authors (no addresses, of course, for 'the vanity boys are hard put to

refer you to any happy former customers,' as an FTC Alert puts it). A headline screams: 'FIVE BIG PRINTINGS . . . FIRST TWO SOLD OUT BEFORE PUBLICATION! — Once you've gained print, anything may happen.'

Other come-ons are no less impressive. Some are agleam with respectability, with an abundance of quotations from leading figures of the literary world. A few photos may show proud authors at autograph parties or in front of microphones. You get glimpses of the production department's virtuosity in handling difficult reproductions.

The false pretenses move into high gear when an author has submitted his ms. The minister's widow, for instance, received a glowing report: 'I found the kind of clean honest teen-age boys' book that is a pleasure to read . . . with enough daring adventure to make it highly popular with red-blooded American youth . . . I think your husband wrote excellently, developing plot with professional cleverness so as to hold even the older reader's attention.'

But, according to the FTC, the inter-office report described the ms. as follows: 'This is a preposterous sentimental badly-written adventure story about teen-age boys. The plot makes very little sense.'

Other editors' letters also are masterpieces of flattery: 'The report on your book has been most favorable . . . a remarkably-powerful work . . . starkly real . . . and anyone reading it must identify with you in your brilliant denunciation, as you point the way toward reform. I want to see this published under our imprint. I had the enclosed contract prepared at once, as I would like to see it in print as soon as possible . . .'

However, Uhlan's autobiography gives altogether another picture: 'Like the psychoanalyst, the editor deals with clients in various stages of maladjustment, suffering from emotional blocks, guilt complexes and hostility.' He speaks of his motivations in commercial terms quite frankly, and the kind

of enthusiasm posed in the foregoing typical letter hardly seems to have been a moving force in fact in the actual life of this actual publisher.

While the term ‘cooperation’ is a favorite one in vanity financing, it usually turns out that the writer pays all. But she’s hopeful and often naive, and she’s made to believe that she’ll recoup her investment in no time. Less than ten percent of the writers ever do, and only two percent of them make money.

The victim also is greatly impressed by the contract. Legitimate publishers must take fifty percent of subsidiary rights to make ends meet, but vanity contracts often offer eighty percent of these rights. The sharpies know damned well that it is eighty percent of nothing, for nobody wants to make a movie out of Aunt Mabel’s book. Legitimate houses work on a ten percent royalty; the vanity liars allow forty percent. If the author can obtain a financial statement, that is. And if the statement is an honest one.

Even the term ‘royalty’ smacks of fraud. Farrar puts it this way: ‘The “royalties” paid by subsidy publishers are as phony as a \$3 bill. These “royalties” are not true royalties, but are small payments, to the writer, from the hard-earned cash he has invested with a subsidy publisher.’ And Donald Daly, a Californian who investigated the vanity houses after falling into their claws, says: ‘The 40% isn’t a royalty, but a return of capital.’ After his experience, Daly published *BOOK AUTHORS, BEWARE!*, himself. It contains a mild warning about subsidy publishing. When he wanted to advertise it in the writers’ magazines, he was turned down flat.

The vanity victim also soon discovers that national advertising for his book is rare; if he wants any, he has to pay for it. The prestige of the paid-for book is generally so low that many papers and magazines refuse the advertisements. This includes some good ones, such as *PUBLISHER’S WEEKLY*, the ads in which are carefully read by

bookstore personnel. The LITERARY MARKET PLACE, another bible for department stores and libraries, doesn't allow listings for vanity publications. Aunt Mabel's pride will further evaporate when she tries to join the National League of Pen Women on the basis of her book. She can't. Even certain Author's League chapters, consisting mainly of lady poets, will not let the vanity writer join.

With a jolt, the writer also finds out that the publisher's muchtouted 'mail order department' is a farce. A New York City woman was billed by one of these presses for the production of 1,000 sales circulars. She had to address them, herself, and to pay postage besides. Autograph parties are unlikely, unless the author has a following. Book reviews, so faithfully promised, are scarcest of all. Unless it's Aunt Mabel's home town, librarians also shun the vanity book, and retail outlets don't want to get stuck with it.

Indeed, distribution is the subsidy's 'Achilles Heel,' in Farrar's words. For there isn't any; once they have the dough, the vanity boys seldom see a reason to push a book. To the author, even the catalogue can be disappointing, because his name is sometimes misspelled. Books often carry the original spelling mistakes; to increase profits, the mss. are run on as is. Illustrations are likely to be crude; some dust jackets reek of financial corner-cutting.

Does the author own his books? Strangely enough — no, although he paid for them. In the end, he often buys back stock, trying to peddle them himself. Some years ago, one discouraged vanity victim, a manufacturer by occupation, finally stuck a copy of his book into every box of brass fittings for his customers.

Other writers at last find out that they've been doubly gypped: most of their books haven't even been bound. And a grandiose printing of 10,000 copies may just total 1,000 — the rest being flat sheets without cover. One Colorado writer recently returned from the East Coast, his car loaded with

the sad unsalable cargo. The 'books' are still in his barn.

There's no assurance that a manuscript will be 'speedily published,' as the vanity merchants promise in their brochures. Once they've banked the author's check, they'll only go to press when good and ready. Another California writer had to wait two full years before a Boston house went ahead with his book.

What sorts of books do the subsidy boys publish? Everything. One of these publishers once admitted he was 'besieged by perverts, crackpots and propagandists.' With 'unfailing regularity,' one vanity house gets 'biographies by homosexuals who try to explain what they are.' And even the average vanity title is revealing. It is frequently maudlin — often simply vague — though usually it will transparently presage a work pregnant with clichés.

Editorial staffs of these publishers lead no easy life. They complain that mss. arrive handwritten or typed on onion-skin paper, single-spaced ('Ever tried editing such a script?' one editor recently complained to another). Stories are sometimes plagiarized. They are generally filled with spelling errors, nor do they often make any real sense (minor matters aside). Subsidy houses must publish most of these horrors, to stay in business: books which are pretentious, vapid, tedious, trifling, melodramatic, dull, and, of course, wordy. ('If he wants to convey a message, why doesn't he use Western Union?' wrote one nasty reviewer.) The common run of the vanity novels seem to have been written by ladies who would wear hats topped with plastic fruit cocktails or by confused professors who are so scholarly that no one can understand them.

To be sure, there's nothing wrong with wanting to get published. Even the most gullible has the right to see his name in print. The vanity people fill this need; in fact, even regular trade houses sometimes publish the paid-for biography of a greedy miserly tycoon or the idealized history

of some toilet-paper manufacturer.

Uhl an once said that people should be permitted to squander their money on books just as they do in buying yachts. And one of Uhl an's colleagues frankly says: 'Writing is a vice. A man should be allowed to have it just as he can keep a mistress.'

Fortunately, not every would-be writer falls into the vanity trap. Despite the publishers' huge efforts. Some years ago, a lady residing in Aguanga, Calif. wrote a novel called *The Enlightened Eye*. After thirty publishers said no, she began to be nervous. Three years of work! An expensive typist! Two years of marketing! At this juncture, she saw a modest advertisement soliciting book manuscripts. An enthusiastic vanity-house report came within three days. Then came the contract. It asked for her signature and \$4,000. When she didn't bite, salesmen phoned her from New York. Although her novel is still unpublished, she resisted to the bitter end.

Actually, she was lucky to get her manuscript back. Others haven't been so fortunate. Take the typical case of a lady residing in Palm Beach, Florida. After she had vetoed a \$2,775 subsidy request, it took a full year of letters, wires, phone calls, and the help of a writers' organization to see the return of her manuscript. Another of those who refused to become involved found that the angry vanity publishers had torn a good portion of his pages in half.

Of course, all these sorrows can be avoided at the start. According to the FTC, a writer need only avoid any house that asks for an advance payment or offers spectacular royalties. Farrar says: 'The word "royalty" in my judgment, should be prohibited, in any contract between an author and a subsidy publisher, until such time as the writer has recouped the entire sum he advanced, or invested, to have the book printed.'

Raffelock of the National Writers' Club, who has carried on his own campaign to save his flock from racketeers, gives

this advice: 'Report any suspicious publisher to the FTC immediately!' Donald Daly feels that authors — if in doubt — ought to get in touch with the nearest Better Business Bureau. 'Once you're committed, there isn't much to do to correct the situation that doesn't turn out well,' Daly says. The Authors' Guild advises the beginner to hurry to a bookstore or library for literary counsel. Other experts say that there should be a federally-imposed code of ethical conduct for the industry.

In the meantime, what can the publication-hungry writer do? If he fails to find a regular market for his brain child, he can always get in touch with the nearest job printer or letter shop. One old man in a western city did just that. After obtaining a \$3,000 estimate from a vanity house, he limped to the corner printer. The price for running the same book was \$400. Happily, the old gentleman gave the books to his friends, until he passed on.

Unfortunately, as an Authors' Guild spokesman puts it, the general public does not have this advice—and most people wouldn't follow it anyway. After all, the writing waiter, taxi driver, charwoman thirsts for the sweetness of publication. Mr. Uhlans sums it up neatly: 'The truth is that most people want to be fooled, to be taken in by the peddlers of poppy illusions . . . They want to be hoodwinked by a song and dance. For even after the final penny has been taken and a man has been turned out into an alley, the melody lingers in his ear.'

EDWARD THOMAS*1878-1917 by Neville Braybrooke*

WHEN EDWARD THOMAS WAS KILLED at Arras fifty years ago, 'a mirror of England was shattered.' The words are those of Walter de la Mare. The two men had been good friends for some years, and when de la Mare's PEACOCK PIE had come Thomas' way as a critic, he had regarded it as one of the two 'finds' in a reviewer's lifetime. The other was Robert Frost's second book of verse, NORTH OF BOSTON.

Thomas had married while still an Oxford undergraduate and he was a father before he took his degree. He came to London determined to support his family by literary criticism, but soon discovered that this in effect involved him in compiling anthologies, editing standard authors, and writing numerous reviews. Sometimes he was compelled to read as many as a dozen books a week. At one period, he toyed with the idea of trying his hand at a novel, but decided that he lacked the necessary powers of invention. In prose, his talent was essentially that of an essayist; and to his descriptions of the English

and Welsh countryside, he brought a supreme sensibility. Something that he noticed about George Borrow could be applied to himself: 'He succeeds not only in evoking things that are very much alive, but in suggesting an artist that is their equal instead of one who, like so many more refined writers, is [merely] a . . . pathetic admirer of things.'

Poverty and hardship frequently forced Thomas to write to order. A book on Marlborough — 'the duke, alas, not the town' — he completed within two months. By any standard, it remains a remarkable performance. Insufficient attention

has been paid to his ability to work both incredibly fast and accurately. Too often, some of his thirty books have been regarded as no more than competent hack jobs. Keeping constant deadlines for editors had trained him to concentrate his thought, and there is an immense professionalism about every manuscript which he delivered to a publisher — whether the subject was one of his own choosing (as with his book about RICHARD JEFFERIES — 1909) or a commission, as was more usually the case. For instance, his guide to THE ISLE OF WIGHT (1911) includes not only an admirable summary of the island's history, but a number of observations that lift it to a level far surpassing the rest of the volumes in the same series. A passage which has stood well the test of time describes the walk along the coast between Bonchurch and Shanklin: 'In the course of years the landslip has been overgrown with trees and flowers, and become a tumult of twisted oaks among rocks all upheaved and broken into caves and hillocks in a fashion which an old countryman of my acquaintance would call "Gothic." The oaks are twisted as if conceived during the landslip.'

That last sentence, so apparently simple at first sight but so rewarding to ponder, has the intensity of a line in a poem. Moreover, it was Robert Frost who first showed Thomas how much of his prose could be turned into poetry with only a minimum of transposition. Looking back at the 140 poems he wrote during his last three years ('Did anyone ever begin at 36 in the shade?'), time and again there can be recognized that precision and economy of style which distinguished his prose. But, with the change to poetry, there comes a development and crystallization of his vision. His widow has referred to it as 'a kind of spiritual and intellectual fulfillment.' The ambling tone of the earlier essays becomes more concentrated in essence. A poem on October ends:

... now I might
 As happy be as earth is beautiful,
 Were I some other or with earth could turn
 In alternation of violet and rose,

*Harebell and snowdrop, at their season due,
 And gorse that has no time not to be gay.
 But if this be not happiness, — who knows?
 Some day I shall think this a happy day,
 And this mood by the name melancholy
 Shall no more blackened and obscured be.*

‘Edward Thomas was a war poet who died in battle.’ The yellowing newspaper statement remains true as far as it goes. Indeed, when he joined the Artists Rifles in 1916 and Eleanor Farjeon asked him what he was fighting for, he had picked up a handful of earth, crumbled it between his finger and thumb, and replied: ‘Literally, for this.’ Certainly, he was a patriot who was proud of his Welsh and English ancestry — and was prepared to defend his land with his life’s blood — but within him was another man whom poetry released, a man who could question in a quiet compelling voice the death of a private, once a Wiltshire ploughman, killed in France, or who could look at a bundle of hazel and ash faggots and muse:

. . . they will never warm me, though they must
 Light several Winter’s fires. Before they are done
 The war will have ended, many other things
 Have ended, maybe, that I can no more
 Foresee or more control than robin and wren.

Such lines offer no violent jingoism, no exaggerated rhetoric. They are, in their own fashion, the best epitaph. And perhaps too, the feeling they articulate is one that has grown more marked as the events of the first World War have receded into the past. For there is about these lines that end *Fifty Faggots*, a prophetic note which seems not only to foreshadow the poet’s death, but which reaches out beyond a

personal context and speaks for all soldiers still going to war. One of his last books to be published during his lifetime was a study of Keats — a poet who had said that a man should not shout or dispute, but whisper results to his neighbor. That is what Edward Thomas's poems have done for fifty years. On the evening that he fell at Arras, the Sergeant of his Company has related how, earlier, there was singing and dancing among the troops because the Germans had retreated and they thought they had won the war. But when, later, he went out and called to them: 'Men, we've lost our best officer,' the cry went up: 'Not Mr. Thomas?' And there was no more shouting that day.

A TIRED HORSE

(Rebuttal from Knute Skinner)

SURELY THE SILLIEST CONTRIBUTION to date to the tiresome tirades against poets of the academy, is Victor Contoski's The Same Cowboy (TRACE No. 62/3). To make his point — that 'poet-teachers' all are drawing the same cowboy — Contoski plays the easy game of selecting passages on similar subjects, from poems by X. J. Kennedy, W. D. Snodgrass, Donald Justice, Donald Hall, Richard Wilbur, and Adrienne Cecile Rich. My god, does he suppose that once a poet has treated a subject the material should be off limits? How many poems would that leave us?

Contoski allows that the teachers are good poets, 'some of our best,' but his pretense at broadmindedness is apparent when he states that Justice's work lacks guts and when he clearly implies that the work of Wilbur and Rich is 'verse' (as opposed to poetry). What he really objects to is traditional form; but, lacking the inclination or ability to take on such formidable opposition, he chooses instead to ridicule poets for writing about museums and painting. He also objects to such subject matter as dead dogs and Italy; but the surest sign of mediocrity — he tells us — is a poem on poetry.

Well then, who writes poems on poetry? Perhaps most poets do, on occasion. Here are some examples:

To be a poet's a serious occupation, condemned to that
in universe — to walk the city ascribing in a book
— (Allen Ginsberg, Aether)

And let me once, create myself. And let you, whoever
sits now breathing on my words create a self of your
own. One that will love me. (LeRoi Jones, The Dance)

and a man climbing must scrape his knees, and bring
the grip of his hands into play. The cut stone
consoles his groping feet. Wings brush past him. The
poem ascends. (Denise Levertov, *The Jacob's Ladder*)

ONE WRITES WHEN

an idea comes to the head —
idea somewhere in the blues
sometimes in the trash can
in the basement

(Edward Marshall, Two Poems)

THO THE SONG BE

pure as anything, if
the mode be not right,

(Joel Oppenheimer, For the Barbers)

COME WORDS!

and nourish the surprises of order.
Take on your lives
and live them with me.

(Ralph Pomeroy, To Words)

WRITE THE POEM

The image
unlocks Hell

(Jerome Rothenberg, A Bodhisattva Undoes Hell)

WHAT ABOUT MEASURE, I LEARNT:

Look in your own ear and read.
Nor wrest knowledge
in no end of books.
Pyrrhic nor Pirke do.

(Louis Zukofsky, Peri Poietikes)

Are these poems written by Contoski's poet-teachers? They are not. Have I searched high and low for them? They are all in *A CONTROVERSY OF POETS*.^{*} Am I being unfair to these poets by implying that their interests are identical? I most certainly am, but then that's the secret of Contoski's game, for he is not above misleading the reader. Does Justice's poem, *On a Painting by Patient B of the Independence State Hospital for the Insane*, really have that much in common with X. J. Kennedy's *Nude Descending a Staircase*? Isn't the poem, despite its title, really about the state of mind of a mental patient and not about 'art' at all?

If we take Contoski's argument about the cowboy seriously, I wonder what poetry he can like. Poems on the poet's students are out, he tells us. All right then, what about poems on social outcasts, on drug-taking, on Mexico and the Southwest, and on Buddhism? Thumbing through any collection of nonpoet-teacherverse, you would have to conclude that Contoski must be sick of these subjects also. Perhaps he's getting fed up with parks and birds and bedroom scenes as well. And the difficulties of two persons — especially lovers — communicating with words. Finally, I hope to god that Contoski has insulted the intelligence of most readers of *TRACE*. *Nude Descending a Staircase* is not only a small masterpiece, it is also the title poem of an important volume. And yet Contoski coyly withholds X. J. Kennedy's name from what he terms a 'mystery stanza.' Contoski represents himself as 'someone who loves art,' but in drawing his own cowboy, he reveals that he's riding a tired

horse.

** Edited by Paris Leary and Robert Kelly — DOUBLEDAY, 1965.*

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

'Why have you nailed up your doors, brothers?'

Kenneth Patchen

Dear Editors: On two occasions in the last year I have encountered college English instructors who were hazy as to the identity of Kenneth Patchen, and hadn't read a line of his work. The sorry ignorance of those two young men, I would suggest can be attributed to the community of Critics.

For more than twenty years now, a majority of critics have conspicuously evaded the growing body of Patchen's writing. And among those who have mentioned him, some have attempted to dismiss his work in two or three incredibly-empty paragraphs.

I won't elaborate here on the parasitic nature of criticism — nor discuss the vampiric behavior of most critics. But I would cite an obvious blind spot in the common critical approach to Patchen's work.

A scream and an aria cannot be evaluated using identical or even similar standards of judgment. Shouts issuing from a crumbling mine shaft, or the cries of a man hanging from a cliff, cannot be judged using the same criteria one would use in judging either singing or oratory. To attempt to do so is self-evidently absurd. Of those few critics who mention Patchen, most doggedly make the attempt.

Kenneth Patchen's poetry is pitched in the register of screams. He has consistently written at the top of his voice.

It is probable that the critics' obligations to be objective and passionless condition them to ignore a voice so desperate in its appeals for sanity, so relentless in its damnations of injustice — indeed, to reject a voice so immediate and direct that it renders the critical function unnecessary. Any suggestion of liaison being needed between Patchen and the listener is preposterous.

Perhaps it is simply that the critical establishment has a memory difficulty. Perhaps they have forgotten that Poets have traditionally comprised the front line in attacks on public evil. Perhaps they fail to realize that while whispers are essential in the front lines during deployments and strategy sessions, they simply won't do in a charge. The communicatory character of a scream is simply not that of lyricism, nor of philosophic enlightenment. It is not contemplative, nor clever nor careful. Nevertheless, Patchen's screaming does come through, gloriously, convincingly — even if unobserved by those peekers-through-the-Ivy.

I would remind the critics that not all provinces of Poetry are comfortable; and that the hazards of the less-comfortable zones do not necessarily invalidate nor diminish the Poetic achievements therein.

James Bullard Kennedy

FAR EAST GOSSIP:

Young man overheard in Provincetown bookshop buying EVER-GREEN REVIEW: 'Please wrap this. It might stick to my hand.'

M. D. Elevitch

'LIKE FARTING ANNIE LAURIE THROUGH A KEYHOLE'

Dear Editors:

... looking forward to your next ... No. 64 was good, particularly liked John Remmerde, and would like to read more of Jay Bail ... as a subscriber I imagine I can come out against what I don't dig much ... think you can raise your quality a lot by dropping some pretty predictable things ... like the whole thing behind 'Fish were the first to:', very cute ... as Gully Jimson said, 'like farting Annie Laurie through a

keyhole' wonderful technique, great show of facility, so what ... and the whole crop of 'poets' talking in the name of the Dylan thing ... sort of a Cult of The Mystic Me ... I wandered sad and weary and all strung out, here's my tragedy, but dig my coolness sort of thing ... a poem made up of useless chock fulla carbohydrate images, taking Corso's fried shoes to a burned-out conclusion ... it works in with your running pro/con argument of the Artist or Whole Artist or Bastard Artist, holding down a 'job' ... most of those who bitch about not being able to Create because they can't afford to do it all day, and don't feel it's fair to have to work at a 'job' in order to do so, are not caught up in writing, but in the image of it and the extension of it. Although it may not be evident from the tone I take, I do think the last issue is as well done, and in some respects (like most of the poetry) the best, of the issues I've seen.

Harley Elliott

AGAIN: WHY NOT PAY WRITERS?

Dear Editors:

It was admirable of you to advocate payment for material, in an earlier issue of your magazine, and you should repeat it annually. Naturally a little magazine can't pay its way, but neither do the house organs of big corporations, though they pay their contributors. It so happens that education is enjoying boom times; consequently when they have a magazine calculated to impart prestige to the institution, they should pay for the material as much as they pay the printer or spend in postage.

Were I the editor of a literary journal I would constantly rail against nonpaying magazines as well as needle them in various ways. In our extravagant era, whether a writer's remuneration is in a copy of the magazine or a penny a word is probably an academic matter, but it is the principle of the thing. Whether a person totes a lunch pail and believes dialectics is a form of electricity, or an editor who can quote Spengler in Sanskrit, the experience of life teaches us that both are motivated by self-interest. Since publication is in itself sop to the vanity of many people, this is an advantage editors have. Writers can have publication and payment, too, if they only wake up!

A. C. Perkins

EXCEPTIONS TO HUGH FOX ON LATIN MAGS

Dear Editors:

The single most important group active in Venezuela is El Techo de la Ballena, not mentioned in Fox's article. The poets, writers, painters, photographers, dancers, and theatre people of El Techo have a long history of contributions, beginning with the old SARDIO (now out of existence) and continuing with their EN LETRA ROJA and a horde of other publications featuring Venezuelan talent along with the best of the rest of the world.

Fox's mention of our own EL CORNO EMPLUMADO is appreciated. [But] EL PAJARO CASCABEL (meaning the bird-rattlesnake, not the 'rattlebird' as Fox says) is an extremely important journal; and I can only guess what Fox means by his adjective 'very "red."'

ZONA FRANCA, given so much space by Fox, is a joke among Latin American intellectuals. The 'wide and deep range of contemporary writing' it offers is generally pilfered from other publications, since most Latin American writers worth their human dignity will not contribute to Liscano's attempt at a display of the O.A.S. in letters. This editor is not a simple and rabid 'anti-communist;' he is more than that: the enemy of the whole young and worthwhile generation of Venezuelan writers with any leaning toward the progressive position.

When Fox gets to Colombia, he forgets the Nadaistas, that wild and woolly group responsible for much of what's alive artistically in that country. Their publications are too numerous to list. This group is not loved by the political left, they lean too firmly toward the 'nothing;' but they have produced some fine literature. Fox also fails to mention VANGUARDA, one of the finest, edited by Hernando Guerrero.

Instead he gives space to ECO, which he rightly defines as a 'German magazine in Spanish' (put out by Buhhols, not Bukhols), and to ESPIRAL, which in spite of its admirably long life is really very mediocre, literarily.

Latin America is exploding in the arts, as in other ways, and I hate to see it superficially or badly interpreted in the pages of an American magazine of the importance of TRACE.

Margaret Randall

BRIEF ON HART CRANE & THE ARTISTS OF TECHNOLOGY

by John Baker

WHILE FOLLOWING AND RECORDING the career of Hart Crane in advertising through the six agencies for which he wrote copy, finally locating the employer who saved Crane's folders for the Pittsburg Water Heater, I was distracted. What distracted me was the possibility that Crane had a role in the visual movement of the 'Machine,' as technology was called in the Twenties. This is my letter home . . .

I imagined as partaking in the movement, the painters Louis Lozowick, Charles Demuth, Charles Sheeler, Peter Blume, Stuart Davis, and the photographer, Alfred Stieglitz — meeting together in a West Fifty-fifth Street hotel room with samovarish dresser-scarfs, to produce a manifesto (which these artists did not), with Hart Crane as their immaculate exponent (Crane was never a doctrinal voice).

For each, the industrial theme was central at some point in his career: Demuth, with his cubist studies of city buildings; Sheeler, certainly in *Rolling Power* (I've chosen in this clearest of examples a painting which was too late for Crane); Davis, in *Lucky Strike*, *Cigarette Papers*, and *Sweet Caporals*, all from 1921, and the four paintings of the egg beater, electric fan, and rubber gloves series of 1927; Crane, most strongly during 1922 and 1923; and Blume, later in the Twenties. Each was searching for common new symbols which, like the Chicago of Sandburg, could be elaborated among poets. For Crane and the painter Joseph Stella, one of the symbols was Brooklyn Bridge.*

Can we suppose Crane 'belonged' to a visual 'movement' and was receptive to its artists?

As his social class moved toward the periphery, Crane, the *déclassé*, attempted to re-establish himself — but, as a poet, a category outside of class. He lost the primitive unity of his early childhood as the Crane family moved from the village in Ohio where he was born to the industrial town of Warren, and, finally, to Cleveland. Crane identified poorly with movements. Crane's family dissolved with the divorce of his parents and their remarriages. When his second wife died, Clarence Crane took still another. Grace Hart Crane's second effort ended, like the first, in divorce. Hart's beloved grandmother lingered in physical frailty. During one period of mobilization among such disasters in his personal life, Crane adopted the defensive position that he was possibly the principal poet of the 'Machine.' He wrote Gorham Munson in early March, 1923: 'Potentially I feel myself quite fit to become a suitable Pindar for the dawn of the machine age, so called. I have lost the last shreds of philosophical pessimism during the last few months. O yes, the "background of life" — and all that is still there, but that is only three-dimensional. It is to the pulse of a greater dynamism that my work must revolve. Something terribly fierce and yet gentle.'

**So familiar is the 'Machine' today that the Verrazano Bridge would be treated subversively, if at all, as a facial tissue.*

As his confidence in even this role — that of a 'Pindar' — dwindled, he overlooked other artists working with his theme.

The only known instance of Crane's recognizing an industrial theme in a painter is his letter to Joseph Stella, composed as carefully as an essay, from Paris, January 24, 1929. He asked Stella's permission to reproduce his monograph on the Brooklyn Bridge and three of the accompanying paintings for an issue of transition. He also asked permission to use one of the paintings (all were panels of the 'New York Interpreted' group) called *The Bridge* in the

Black Sun Press edition of his long poem, *The Bridge*; and, as an appendage to his request, he acknowledged Stella ('It is a remarkable coincidence that I should, years later, have discovered that another person, by whom I mean you, should have had the same sentiments regarding Brooklyn Bridge which inspired the main theme and pattern of my poem . . .'). But Crane must have been aware of Stella's absorption in Brooklyn Bridge before he even began the poem. As an unassailable example of correlative reading, Brom Weber points out, after listing the likely possibilities in his critical and biographical study, that Crane certainly read the Autumn, 1922 issue of *THE LITTLE REVIEW* — the 'Stella Number.' This issue has a letter by Crane as well as a photograph, by Man Ray, of Stella and Marcel Duchamp and fifteen reproductions of works by Stella — among them, another painting of Brooklyn Bridge.

Following the most intense flare of conviction in 1922 and 1923, during which Crane finished *For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen* and conceived *The Bridge* (two poems which have industrial themes), his confidence ebbed; he completed *The Bridge* in late 1929 on fortunate resurgences, having recognized Stella in an offhand way early in that year. I'll offer one undependable explanation for Crane's lack of generosity with rivals: as the 'Pindar' (a pinnacle) of industrialism, he displaced his father, a very successful manufacturer, and found the new position too precarious to be generous with rivals.

Some questions about the effect on Crane of the artists of industrialism border on fact. Crane couldn't have missed five photographs by Paul Strand in *BROOM* for November, 1922, an issue carrying Matthew Josephson's article, *The Great American Billposter*, for he commented on it in a letter. The theme of one of Strand's photographs is modern encroachment, *Babbitt's Best Soap* and *Chevrolet* billboards on a livery stable. The other photographs are precise studies

of industrial objects: ball bearings, the prow of a ship, fan mechanism and belt, mesh belt and gear. Strand used this set to illustrate his article on 'straight photography,' with Stieglitz as exemplar.

The intense interior vision which Stieglitz meant to project and equal in his *Equivalents* attracted to him persons who, partly from being with him, were able to recover from the photographs those feelings which Stieglitz intended. One of the persons was Hart Crane, who asserted the similarity of his aims with those of Stieglitz in a series of letters to the photographer during the spring and summer of 1923; and he struggled with Stieglitz's transcendental achievements in an essay on the photographer which got no further than a 'kernel' quoted in one of the letters.

In another instance, Stieglitz's handling of the industrial theme had a long-distance effect. A friend to whom I showed this article told me that he too had photographed the 'Machine,' and under the influence of Stieglitz. In 1934, while clinical director of a mental hospital in Iowa, Dr. Marvin Sukov had been photographing the hospital and, on his days off, the Chicago landscape, with his first camera, a Kodak Recomar — but without any clear direction. Then Sukov bought a summary book of essays on Stieglitz, published in 1934, *America & Alfred Stieglitz: A Collective Portrait*, and Stieglitz's influence moved into the paraldehydeic atmosphere of a state institution.

Among Sukov's photographs taken at Clarinda are: an *Equivalent*, a disturbing study of storm clouds; a 2½ by 3¼ inch study of the hospital greenhouse and power plant in the distance, with masonry like a Dutch Christmas-toy glass farm; a study within of a steam engine and flywheel. From Chicago, there is a photograph of a courageous Chevrolet sign overlooking Michigan Avenue, taken during that democratic moment when all conventions collapse and one's own self is equal to the resident of an avenue; and studies of

office buildings on Michigan Avenue which bear an inverse resemblance to Stieglitz's contracted tiers of buildings from the Shelton in New York (Sukov's buildings are generalized).

As a contributor almost entirely to little magazines, Crane is a beneficiary of Dr. Sukov, who is the foremost private collector of little magazines and literary quarterlies. The Marvin Sukov Collection, owned now by the University of Wisconsin, is described by Eric Oatman in the main article of *THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW* for August 28, 1966, as 'the most comprehensive collection of little magazines in the country.' Crane's career coincided exactly with the turmoil and disassembly in writing which produced the little magazines. Nearly every one of his poems—as they first came out in *THE DIAL*, *BROOM*, *THE LITTLE REVIEW*, *LARUS*, *POETRY*, *THE MEASURE*, or *SECESSION*—can be found among the 820 distinct titles and well over ten thousand issues in the collection.

His election of Stella apart, Crane makes no observation about industrialism in art in his letters. But there are reports of miscellaneous exhibitions visited and a rich variety of comment on artists in general—among them, Georgia O'Keeffe, Marsden Hartley, Gaston Lachaise, and William Sommer ('I refer to the quality of line in Sommer's work. That has, in particular, nothing more to do with modern work than the draughtsmanship of Michelangelo. It is something that may not distinguish a man as a great innovator or personality—but it is, for all that, a rare and wondrous quality. From what you write Stieglitz has the sense to recognize this quality and to value it . . .'). Friends of Hart Crane can't recall his talking about the industrial theme in art. This seems an embarrassed silence, an avoidance of his lyric assignment. One friend, the painter Peter Blume, met with a refined lack of response from Crane which opens into a pear tree as I separate the evidence. The details in a moment.

Several friends of Crane, including the painters Georgia O'Keeffe, who was an acquaintance through Stieglitz, and Blume, Carl Zigrosser, who lived with his friends, the Douglas Haskells, near Crane in Brooklyn Heights and loaned Hart phonograph records (Zigrosser was director of the Weyhe Gallery in New York), and three painters who might have come across him in New York, Louis Lozowick, Stuart Davis, and Charles Sheeler, graciously entered the entanglement and answered my letters.

Could Louis Lozowick have met Crane? Mr. Lozowick, recalling through nearly forty years and the Depression the literary groups he moved in, can't remember a meeting. Possibly Crane may have been among the writers he met—Kenneth Burke, John Dos Passos, Malcolm Cowley, Lewis Mumford, and Waldo Frank.

Carl Zigrosser, who was with the Weyhe Gallery during the Lozowick exhibitions which began in the late Twenties, doesn't recall talking with Crane about Lozowick's work.

I'll invent a cloud 'fact' here about Louis Lozowick—imaginary because I haven't been able to find among the letters Crane wrote any mention of articles about Lozowick or articles written by him, nor does Crane mention an issue of a magazine in which Lozowick appears. But there is an almost-factual possibility that Crane had some sense of Lozowick. Themes were in the air. In his two letters, Lozowick indicated that work by him which appeared in avant-garde literary magazines and European art periodicals was extensive. Crane read prolifically in such media. My invention is that he read the catalogue to the often-referred-to Machine Age Exposition, sponsored by THE LITTLE REVIEW in New York, 1927, in which Lozowick has an article, *The Americanization of Art*.

When he first met Peter Blume in 1929, Crane was once again engaged with *The Bridge*, bringing the poem to a close by forcing himself to write while correcting first proofs for

publication of the poem by the Black Sun Press. With his interest in this work reinforced, he had reason, when he saw a photograph of Blume's painting from 1928, *The Bridge* (not Brooklyn Bridge), to elaborate at least on the identical titles. He was warmly enthusiastic about two of Blume's large paintings in progress, *South of Scranton*, which won first prize at the Carnegie Art International in 1934, and *Parade*; but he expressed no companionship of viewpoint, although his comments on art to Blume otherwise were luxuriant and his perceptions original.

There is a possibility of an affinity with Charles Demuth. Demuth was one of 'Seven Americans' in Stieglitz's group exhibition in 1925 at the Anderson Galleries in New York and was given one-man exhibitions in 1926 and 1929 by Stieglitz at the Intimate Gallery (Stieglitz's small gallery in the Anderson). Crane visited the Galleries; he reports in a letter to Charlotte and Richard Rychtarik, March 5, 1924, seeing 'Stieglitz's wonderful new cloud photographs . . . this week along with Georgia O'Keeffe's work.' In her two letters to me, Georgia O'Keeffe leans toward the likelihood that Crane saw Demuth's paintings in Stieglitz's Gallery (Crane has left in her memory only a 'very vivid image' — a poppy folding in upon its formidable lining?), but she can't recall whether the two met during one of Demuth's visits to New York from his home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. These visits were less frequent as he grew older. Susan Jenkins Brown, a personal friend of Crane, writes that she believes Hart knew Demuth; but Matthew Josephson, another of his friends and an enthusiast of the poetess who published Crane in *BROOM*, referred me on this question to Peggy Baird.

Josephson feels that Crane was not acquainted with Charles Sheeler. Sheeler himself was unable to answer my questions, but thought that Stuart Davis might.

On the question as to whether Crane knew Stuart Davis, my reliable sources differ—Susan Jenkins Brown thought he

probably did and Josephson, that he didn't—but neither is wrong. An encounter between the two would have given rise to an anecdote, and there is this vibrant reconstruction in a letter from Davis:

4/8/63

Stuart Davis

Dear Mr. Baker: Pardon delay in replay [the spelling is Davis's]. Never knew Hart Crane. Never met him. Saw him once in 1928 [1929] Paris Café, very drunk. Was being relieved of his new spectacular Burberry coat by a waiter. He had no money to pay for a table full of saucers . . .

Through some working of the process of selection which is evident in his painting, Davis selected an event which was by 1929 commonplace with Crane: the disturbances he incited wherever he went (disturbances which once were restorative), projecting his own chaos to bring down his surroundings.

Further, by selecting only a few elements, Davis condensed the incident as he does in his painting. Nearly every sentence in the paragraph above is a fragment (the subject in four of the sentences is missing), the sleeve of the Burberry coat woven into the legs of a boulevard table, saucers activated, and Le Select (to be painted in orange), a sketch in felt-tipped pen for Vexed Waiter by Stuart Davis.

Each of the painters, with the exception of Charles Sheeler, whose note is typed all in upper case, replied by hand—a show of hand-loom[ing] (spinning, really), pens uncorroded by spun-out industrial acetates. Davis's letter squirms in its casing and splits open in the signature (here shown in actual size)—

Stuart Davis

Photographs by Carroll Hartwell

—the adult form (a Compton Tortoise?) resting on its hull and pumping open its wings . . . the condensed image and

style of Stuart Davis.

A reproduction of the second and closing paragraph of this letter is on the next page.

(Letters used in this article from Peter Blume, Susan Jenkins Brown, Stuart Davis, Matthew Josephson, Louis Lozowick, Georgia O'Keeffe, Charles Sheeler, and Carl Zigrosser have been donated to Donald C. Gallup for the Collection of American Literature at Yale—which is the repository of the major collection of Crane material brought together by Brom Weber, critic and biographer of Hart Crane.

The letters are part of around two hundred Crane items which I have accumulated in my Crane studies and which have been placed in the Collection of American Literature.)

THE HARVARD COGNITION PROJECT

This building has it,
the arresting property :
the mind cast along its face will hold.
Steel knot upon knot
over the flat enamel wall
holds the twelve double doors in line.
Brought here to think,
assembled at this point to reason —
imagine what the trucks will haul away.

Dennis Saleh The general idea of new juxtapositions in subject matter was at that time, product of its own actuality in daily experience. I was painting various aspects of landscapes and interiors in a single conceptual image in 1915. Carlos Williams used such a drawing of mine in the front of his first book “Kora in Hell”, around 1920. In 1921 I painted a series from tobacco packages. The ‘Sucky Strips’ as in The Mod. Mrs.

Sincerely, *[illegible]*

WALLACE STEVENS

(JOHN TRYFORD'S RANDOM NOTES)

*Nota: his soil is man's intelligence.
That's better. That's worth crossing seas to find.
Crispin in one laconic phrase laid bare
His cloudy drift and planned a colony.
Exit the mental moonlight, exit lex,
Rex and principium, exit the whole
Shebang. Exeunt omnes. Here was prose
More exquisite than any tumbling verse . . .*

WALLACE STEVENS MIGHT BE an inspiration to people who work in offices and write poetry. Certainly, Stevens combined the best of both careers — literature and law; no mean feat, if you really think about it. There was no conflict in his life; or, if there was, he never told anyone about it. Unlike some poets who rebel against society (Ezra Pound, Dylan Thomas) or others who retreat from it (Emily Dickinson), Stevens was supremely at home in the society of his day. Sophistication is the keynote in studying his poetry, and behind this sophistication lies great strength of character; for, how else could he have risen to such heights?

He was born in 1879, attended Harvard and then the New York Law School. He started practice in 1904. His first volume of poems, *HARMONIUM*, was issued in 1923 and again in 1931 by Knopf. A second volume, *IDEAS OF ORDER*, appeared in 1936, followed by *THE MAN WITH THE BLUE GUITAR* in 1937. In 1934, he was elected vice-president of the Hartford Insurance Company. Thus he reached the peak of his poetic achievement about the same time that he attained the height of his legal career.

I am not bragging when I say that I have read what all of the 'important' critics have said about Stevens. It all is

contained in a book entitled *THE ACHIEVEMENT OF WALLACE STEVENS*.^{*} The commentaries range in time from Marianne Moore's in 1924 to Geoffrey Moore's in 1961. And not one of them has said that he or she dislikes Stevens' work. They are awed by him, certainly — baffled, mystified, amazed by him, but they do not dislike him. Indeed, it is hard to dislike Stevens; for, with whom can critics compare him? He wrote like no other poet — most emphatically, quite differently from any other American poet, though he has been compared to some minor French poets.

**Edited by Ashley Brown and Robert S. Haller — LIPPINCOTT, 1962.*

Wallace Stevens also has attracted no 'discipleship' to speak of. None of the younger poets around today try to write like him. On the other hand, William Carlos Williams has quite a few disciples, foremost of whom has been Allen Ginsberg. Ginsberg has been the object of one of the most undeserved publicity campaigns in the history of American literature. And I'm not saying that this just 'happened;' Ginsberg deliberately contributed to the making of it with his wild antics. The type of poetry that Stevens wrote, and his style of life, are the very antithesis of indulgence in hallucinations and delusions of grandeur à la Ginsberg and other 'beats,' 'hippies,' etc. Stevens was calm, unperturbed, rather cerebral in the midst of a century of the most extreme emotional irrational outbursts; this held true not only in his literary world, but in his politics and in his participation in human life in general. What a relief that there was such a man!

Today, there is no question of Stevens' place in American literature. If there ever was a question (in the 1920's), it was quickly resolved. There were enough perceptive critics around even then to recognize instantly that the body of his work would be a lasting contribution. He has survived attacks from various sources, and now he is read in every

college and university throughout the land.

'The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.' (Line from *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*.) Yes, indeed; if the poet says this, then it is so. And who else but Stevens could have thought of such an association. By tradition, emperors are rather important personages, entitled to dignified treatment and respect. Ice-cream, however, melts away rapidly if not immediately consumed. To be the emperor of ice-cream is to reign over an ephemeral empire. This familiar line is in a context concerning death — which, in the final analysis, renders everything as ephemeral as ice-cream. Empires melt away and their emperors are forgotten. Only death is absolute.

Now I am not trying to provide an easy key to deciphering Stevens. It is not easy to get used to his strange turns of phrase, his rhetoric, his arcane vocabulary. This is especially true for those nurtured on Yeats, Pound, and Eliot. But, if you really try to understand Stevens, you will understand him; and I think the rewards are great. To repeat, Stevens wrote like no other American poet. Why do I repeat the statement? Simply because it is a sweeping one which might not get across the first time. Every poet has sensibilities, of course, or he wouldn't be a poet; but Stevens' sensibilities were focused to a very great extent upon himself. Outside objects, other people, related only tangentially to this great sensibility. What happened when Stevens tried to compare himself to other poets, other men? Well, there is this piece, *Bantams in Pine Woods*:

BANTAMS IN PINE WOODS

Chieftain Iffucan of Azcan in caftan
 Of tan with henna hackles, halt!
 Damned universal cock, as if the sun
 Was blackamoor to bear your blazing tail.
 Fat! Fat! Fat! Fat! I am the personal
 Your world is you. I am my world.
 You ten-foot poet among inchlings. Fat!
 Begone! An inchling bristles in these pines,
 Bristles, and points their Appalachian tangs,
 And fears not portly Azcan nor his hoos.

Is this nonsense? No, it cannot be. Wallace would never write just nonsense, being of the stature he attained.

To find the real meaning of this poem, we must look beyond the surface rhetoric. The hero of the piece is Iffucan; and he is not only a giant, but so fat that the adjective has to be repeated five times to give the proper picture — how fat he really is. Such an imposing personage is derided by the inchling, who must be very brazen to address him in such terms. Allegorically, Iffucan may be thought of as the poetic imagination — gigantic, awesome — while the inchling is the banal idiot who cannot possibly understand what poetry is all about. He warns the chieftain to stand off: ‘Your world is you.’ Here may lie the heart of the poem. There is such a gap between the imagination which produces poetry and the dreary gray reality which the inchling represents that it cannot be bridged. Yet, why does the inchling make such an effort to exorcise the chieftain? Why does he say ‘Begone!’ and warn him that he fears him not? The imagination poses a threat to the banal life, and rather confuses the inchling. For example, he is confused between the adjectives ‘portly’ and ‘fat.’ Portly means fat — yes — but fat well distributed. Portly is a compliment rather than an insult. Then, too, the inchling is diverted for a brief moment by the smell of the pines in the woods. This is a tangy smell, beautiful, and

almost, you might say, poetic. Even the unimaginative one is touched at times by the beauty of that natural world which forms the subject of the poet's daydreams. Finally, he turns back to Iffucan and states that he does not fear him. The pines in the woods were only a brief apostrophe to the main theme. We see after all that the inchling much prefers to remain in the 'real' world and does not care to be bothered with the images which Iffucan suggests. The inchling is not afraid of Iffucan's hoos, either. Now what is a hoo? One of the critics, Marius Bewley, indicates that the hoo is Iffucan's attempt to imitate the sounds of the sea. In Stevens' symbology, the sea represents a natural source of vitality and insight, which is often repressed by the academic and the strictly rational. The inchling must come to despise the hoo of the chieftain, because he cannot bear anything which is not substantiated by hard facts.

A discussion of Stevens' conception of the battle between imagination and reality, or between the rational and the irrational is a good way of launching into the idea of religion as expressed in *Sunday Morning* in these beautiful lines:

We live in an old chaos of the sun,
Or old dependency on day and night,
Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,
Of that wide water, inescapable . . .
And, in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
Downward to darkness, on extended wings.

This is the end of a poem in which a woman eating breakfast in her peignoir on a Sunday morning turns her thoughts to Palestine and the death and resurrection of Jesus. Not unusual thoughts on a Sunday morning; but note that the lady is not in church — she is in her sun-filled room, watching the green cockatoo on the rug. If this is religion, it is certainly not the traditional Christianity, but rather

something to the left of Unitarianism. Our existence cannot be attributed to an act of God, but to some kind of unknown solar ‘chaos.’ Why should she give her bounty to the dead? the poet asks. Indeed, why? She owed no allegiance to Jesus, who was a historical figure — a man, not a god. She is certain of only a few things: the sun rises and sets, or the coffee tastes good, or the cockatoo is green in color. Stevens can write of such large themes with complete equanimity because he has faith and confidence too, in his own vision of things-as-they-are. Nothing tragic or really chaotic here, in spite of the sun (that chaos is ‘old’).

Like Pound and Eliot, Stevens has created a fictional poetic character, Crispin, who is the protagonist of a long piece, *The Comedian and the Letter C*. ‘C’ is short for Crispin, and this designation means that in the beginning of the poem, Crispin is indeed a miniscule personage hardly able to accomplish the task before him. Crispin is face to face with the sea — a theme at least as old as the *ODYSSEY*. Crispin must make the voyage, willingly or not, because all men make the voyage. There is no choice. The sea, of course, is life, the ‘ultimate’ value, essence of all other values. Not only is Crispin small in size, he is ridiculous in attire: ‘The ribboned stick, the bellowing breeches, cloak / of China, cap of Spain, imperative haw / of hum, inquisitorial botanist / and general lexicographer of mute / and maidenly green-horns . . .’ Then, he hears the sound of the sea: ‘The whole of life that still remained in him / dwindled to one sound strumming in his ear, / ubiquitous concussion, slap and sigh.’ This is evidently the same sound which taught Iffucan his hoos; and it is irresistible. The voyage begins.

The first place Crispin lands is Yucatan, an exotic locale — exotic enough for Crispin at least. Here, he comes in contact with all types of new things: Mayan sonneteers, toucans, falcons, snakes, strange plants. New vistas open up in his mind, and he becomes a larger person. Finally a great

storm rises from the west. Crispin goes to church, where he prays for safekeeping. Before the storm subsides and he departs for other shores, he conceives of an important project, a colony of poets in America. Yucatan, it seems, was just what the doctor ordered to cure Crispin's sluggishness.

He now becomes a sort of rebel against convention, the leader of an as-yet-unformed avant movement which will cause a 'new intelligence' to prevail. He starts off on this idea with much gusto, but is soon discouraged. He realizes that the symbolism contained in poets' dreams is not at all the harbinger of that higher intelligence he lusts for. Instead, it is simply the reflection of the humdrum ordinary lives we all lead. The enthusiasm that had been stirred up in him now seems pallid, and in part five of the poem, 'A Nice Shady Home,' Crispin's attention is focused on his personal life.

Crispin turns from being a romanticist rebel to become a realist. He gets married and settles down:

. . . Crispin trod,
Each day, still curious, but in a round
Less prickly and much more condign than that
He once thought necessary. Like Candide,
Yeoman and grub, but with a fig in sight,
And cream for the fig and silver for the cream . .

The comparison with Candide is obvious. Crispin is cultivating his garden just as Voltaire's hero did. The days of romance and adventure are over. Crispin has found everything he wants in his secluded retreat. After all, what could be better than figs with cream for breakfast? Stevens could not have made a better choice than to compare Crispin to Candide, for the latter represents the very core of petit-bourgeois life, the reaction against idealism.

Finally, the last complement to Crispin's happy home life is his children, four daughters. Whenever he gets a little urge to depart on another wild adventure, all he has to do is to glance at his wife and daughters to realize that he cannot

possibly act on such urges. He is middle-aged now and in no condition to fulfill any commitments.

Like his creator, Crispin is a hedonist, one who enjoys pleasures for their own sake. It took him a long time to find this out; but, once he discovered himself, there was no going back. The Comedian as the Letter C is Stevens' answer to the problem of the temptations of the imagination vs. the exigencies of daily life — a problem which has plagued more than poets. Perhaps this seems only a tentative answer, or no answer at all; yet, if we take Stevens at his word, how can we say that an ordinary life in Hartford, Connecticut (or elsewhere) is not better or more satisfying than the uncertainties and hardships of a wholly-literary career? 'Exeunt the whole shebang,' says Crispin-Stevens; and I think what he meant was that he was just concerned about being Wallace Stevens, a man in the universe. As for the rest of it — well, let it go. Stevens could say this because he knew the course his life was taking.

He knew, he really knew.

(The various quotations from poems of Wallace Stevens are from THE COLLECTED POEMS OF WALLACE STEVENS—ALFRED A. KNOPF, Inc., 1954.)

THE BRINGING FORTH

he dreamed there it lies,
 he had this thing his child
 to say, of prodigious worth;
 carefully bore a thousand whacks
 it about on the ass
 for nine days, won't make it rise :
 then merged stillbirth.
 himself with ink
 (soul split wide)
 and bled to life
 the trembling word.

Joseph H. Kemp

E. R. BAXTER, III

SMOKE

at first they said
it was the south
west wind that
caused the factory
smoke to pour at
right angles from
the stacks forming
horizontal bars
over the city
later it was just
one of those nights
when the smoke flows
up the inside of the
stacks and down the
outside/filling the
city with a miasma
of dust and sulphur
cars creep in the dim
streets/windows rolled
up/glow from slender
tubes of city neons
GAS-UP and EAT
diffused large
like lamp posts
order returns
with morning
dawn draws up
the haze and
once again
the smoke rises
from the stacks
slim like pencils

and straight up.

Mist

seven miles long
is Niagara gorge
and some nights
the mist from
the falls creeps
in it deep down
in mingling with
the fog/swelling
full-bodied in
the gorge
and extending
cautious tendrils
up into the back
alleys of the city
'just gorge fog,'
folks say as the
city fills in like
undersea/the solid
buildings fade
and streetlights are
dim beacons holding
the city to an uneasy
geometric existence
as one night mists
rise up heavy
and thick/even
the streetlights
will wink out
like snuffed candles
and when the fog
lifts in the morning
the whole city
will be gone.

E. R. BAXTER, III

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS THIS BEAUTIFUL
MAIDEN WHO LIVED LOCKED UP IN THE TOWER
OF A CASTLE/*but nobody knew she was there.*

Start with fields/back then there were fields on
that edge of town cut with long dusty roads/dusty
from the factories and dusty from furnace room
cinders/slag cinder roads that they were sharp
edges biting bare feet and merging out big ones
flung to the sides and then fine thick dust
working over into the dusty grasses of the fields
where at the worn roadsides, dewy fresh for
a brief hour or two the morning of birth;
wild morning-glories/size of dimes
and out of the fields grow working man flowers
hard and tough fighting the clay and shoving
up drab goldenrod clusters and burdocks grow
thick / thistles and milkweed, coffee plants
and beggar's lice make the rank fields that
lay like ragged brown bear-hides to where the
factories loom square and black on the skyline
blind-eyed the broken windows of the factories
are by day and the over-head cranes whine
freight cars thunder into each other
the noon whistle shrills/and it's a song
over the brown waving fields
back then the prairies of fields stretched out
to the haze of far and distant horizons where
old dogs sit and stare and then one morning
when the sun had burned the ground fog away
the factories squatted there/they'd come slow
crawling during the night like monstrous snails

E. R. BAXTER, III

dragging their dusty shells/leaving a silver
trail over the curve of the earth and rested
there on the horizon where men came to be sucked
up and spewed out/gray and broken to limp home at
shift end with the laugh gone out of them/in its
place a dusting of bright silicon in the lungs
carried out unrecognizable at 2 in the afternoon
having resisted as only a man could the smoking
brick wall of a blast furnace having collapsed
and held him three tons to the floor/clenching
their teeth like the young man who after his
first day in the plant reaching into the vats
all day pulling out acid clean parts, came home
slow to his wife and washed up for supper, dried
his hands on a towel and the skin slid off them
like mucous-lined gloves/little soft jagged holes
where the fingernails stayed with him; and the men
cried like whipped children the day the big carbons
broke loose rolling crazy-fast like wild horses
and crushed the marrow of Will Kirby's life out
against the coalpile
and through the years and fields/through the hills
and valleys of men's lives the dogs keep journeying
lone through the dusty fields heading into town or
heading out / barking strong in the night and some
times tired and far away at stars beyond the brown
fields/passing down the cinder roads and pausing a
day or two like Whitey last summer came and now is
gone/Whitey had a secret cough red flecks staining
his dirty white hair/morning came and he was gone

E. R. BAXTER, III

leaving squatting on the horizon like baleful toads
the factories warty and breathing cold reptilian
breaths/damp waste piles and old pieces of wire
warehouses scaling rust flakes earthward/skyward

the chocolate smoke funnels from the stacks/smoke
a thin umbrella over the fields and cinder roads
filtering the sun into pale yellow over the fields
where white cabbage butterflies flutter over the
devil's paint brushes and close to the ground's
dusty grasses tiny butterflies twirl/orange;
no bigger than shirt buttons — with dirt-streaked
faces children are playing in the fields and
scrambling up and down the coalpiles of the plants
up and down the cinder roads they are playing and
when they stop; they feel the ground
tremble under their feet
they are told that far away to the south falls
a great sheet of water which causes the ground
to tremble/but they believe it is the factories
and once a year they are loaded into the old
family car and are carried Up Town to see the
holiday lights and paper holly strung across the
streets/by the way along the river they travel
and see the medieval castle way down in the
mists of the gorge/lights dim and tall stone
tower extending up out of the gorge spewing smoke
thick and soot like factories/and just where is
the beautiful maiden they wonder how she breathes
in all that smoke/and home to vibrating freight
train chugging beds dreaming of night rides on
a dog big and sturdy like a friendly pony
only quiet in the dark/just claws clicking
the sidewalks and snuffling loud big heart
thumping between their bony knees whipping
through the fields and crunching down late

E. R. BAXTER, III

cinder roads heading for Up Town to streak
down city sidewalks the wind streaming in
their hair and sluicing the factory sourness
out of their clothing leaping backyard fences

and racing over the forbidden green grasses
of unstepped on lawns darting through the
sweet cool tunneled darks of leafy grape arbors
cutting corners and pounding between the houses
and through exciting pools of incandescence
under the streetlights bounding four-legged
through the night/dusty fields and factories
far behind far behind far behind
but night factories are castles/dim slits of
lighted windows showing from granite walls the
chimneys and water-tanks are stone towers/canal
where barges are loaded by day is at night a
moat/inside the smoke hangs like mist and the white
hearts of the fires gleam/red hot steel is clanging
and they are forging armor and damascene blades
and Kirby is there and he is working the forge and
he is laughing and the sparks are flying from the
anvil/he is pounding out bright coats of mail
Somewhere in a far tapestry-hung hall is the King
purple and ermine robed and even he does not know
of the beautiful maiden who is locked in his tower
they are preparing for war;
and the artificial aurora borealis of the open
hearth furnaces is lighting up the night sky.

OTTONE M. RICCIO

ON SEEING A SUNDAY PICKEREL ON THE PIER

scales sparkle in the sun
a final flap
and then the nothing that follows
everything
had it been cloudy
it would have been
less dramatic
we wouldn't have noticed
the brilliant colors flashing
in the body's thrashing failure
to adjust to air
how speechfull in the pity
of the last quivers
and in the sportsman's pride
what strength of smile
convinced us!
had it been cloudy
only the slimy green-purple
would have marked
the drop to death

MARGE PIERCY

THING-SONG

Jagged intractability
of agate pebble and peony.
Wave on stony wave still when measured by pulse but
 happening.
Red feathers beating in on me.
not gorget. not bird. Nor peony.
You once shimmering like a gong in time thing,
let me in for a flash to the stroke of red
as blood's flowering word swells in my head.
Hard says finger, cold says tongue:
pebble and flower unknown but sung.
The sum of knowing/having I can get
wingtip touch of push and hair and wet.
Body on body laboring lies.
Open your opaque and agate eyes
(words mumbled and acted, love and man,
words to wave for whoop and grieve)
that I may press up and receive
what I can.
Distant at my nervetips, exploding within and still
 above,
in but not of my flesh. My love. My love.

STANLEY COOPERMAN

THE APPARITION

Walk on grass
with skin
hanging from your feet,
and dew-drops
boil between your toes :
dandelions
hide razor-blades
under green leaves, bits
of broken glass
holler HELLO to spring, when

birds plume
in the corners of con-
tented
wives.
Sniff cherry
blossoms, and your nostrils
fill
with invisible
teeth
that eat the wind,
begonias
under the bedclothes, and
lilies pulled from
the humps
of postmen who struggle
up
everybody's
street.

STANLEY COOPERMAN

Open the door, and
you drown
in a spray of furious
lawns, children
looking for gumdrops
or dogs,
the smell of
something
in heat
behind the garage,
and the air
filled
with whiteness, like
used
condoms
drying in the sun.

CHARLES EDWARD EATON

THE VENDETTA

So they had beaten him, kicked him in the groin,
left him like a bleeding, golden rag upon the beach.
They had wanted to use him to erase an icon,
The illumination he made upon a brilliant day:
white sand, blue-green water, the bluer sky,
needed just this burning image to have a final thing
to say.

For it was almost in the sense of completing a mosaic
he had wanted to insert his vital touch of form
to show the world that he could make it stick.
Experience was in no way limited by the forceful scene:
The sea raged on either side, the blue ejaculated its
lightning,
but with his gold he could impose something almost
Byzantine.

They saw his purpose and they meant to blot it out —
There would be a stark hole, a pure nothingness, where
he

stood
and they could take ship on the very void which they
made float.

But the crumpled stuff itself cried out to the sea
which rumbled in, insane with cure and grief,
and stretched itself flat as a canvas where the gold
cross
might be.

ROBERT ELBAZ

ARRIVING AT THE NEW SOLSTICE, WE SLEEP

It's this waiting.
The high excellence of mid-afternoon,
The sparrows asleep, half-frozen in grammar.
The ritual of waking.
The hours.
Something that cannot be preserved.
Like watching my fingers
Descend into darkness.
The pupils
Suddenly alert, a single leaf
Turning over in sunlight.
Red flowers in the desert.
Our new-found lack of speech.
And it's no use.
The stones have discovered us.
Shy, not speaking, the hands
Moving, establishing a province.
And I had learned to live
With less.
So I thought.

PETER WILD

THE EASTER SWINE

The Easter swine
comes out of the heavens
falling on huge scaly wings,
trailing frills of toilet paper.
his small red eyes
scrutinize the shadow
which precedes him;
cats shrivel up and die.
walking with their baskets
children look up
and see
the huge bloated bulk

coming down;
the hair on their forearms
bursts into flame;
and they run rabid
through the streets
lugging new-born
elephantine genitals,
pupils gone to pinpoints. . .
he inhales
and all the hidden eggs
are sucked into his maw
overturning flowercarts,
he roots in store windows
for candy figurines,
ripping the cellophane
and foil
with his snout.
he flies up to steeples
and eats the clocks.
he consumes
my chocolate heart.

PETER WILD

LUNA CAUTA

looking for her children
calved in a dream
she walks barefoot
over volcanic wastes
and the cold pinetops
of mountains,
pledged to a fast
until she has found them.
she knows her two-headed lover
hides deep in canyons,
behind boulders and scrubbrush,
around the corners of buildings,

slowly waving his tail
as he waits to leap up
through the apple trees
and pierce her heart
with a cold iron rod,
and rob the god-child
from her womb.
cautiously,
she peers out
from behind a mountain,
covers her face with ashes;
and clutching her burlap veil,
steps out into the sky. . .
midway between tilting horizons,
dogs fly up to meet her
like mesmerized birds,
and as she strides unaware,
slowly consume
her tasteless flesh.

DOUGLAS BLAZEK

STREET SONG

Yes, I have entered the streets
and my eyes are the unwiped windows,
the subway of roaring feet mats; my mouth
the calling army of door chimes,
the heartbreaking flashing of key holes.
I have claimed sidewalks as my home
and slept between the cracks
and in the morning my voice would
wash the streets like waves
and I would sail away
down the forehead of a breathing face.
Does the iron and asphalt
burn from my brimstone feet?
does my flesh sweat a crystalline

drop of loneliness?
Is there not a dead bird
that is forever being crushed
by street corners?
Yes, with the force of a locomotive
I have entered the streets
and whistled firehydrants
till the water turned black with disaster.

J. McLEOD

A LOIN GROWTH

emanating warmth and longing,
a loin warmth growing,
slow burning up my legs to want, for
the distance between our beds
is two feet;
we have lived together,
loved one another,
for two years now,
my hand can almost touch
her warm back,
yet each time I cross
that space
I stumble like Swinburne on melons, and
entwined in desire, I fall on grass, as
a loin growth
emanates warmth and longing,
a loin warmth grows
slow burning up my legs to want.

STEPHEN LEVINE

ELEGY FOR A STILL-BORN LOVER

I gave you broken flowers
 wanting you to think me mad,
 knowing of the frequent helplessness
 of your often Mexican face
 and fond hands
 fumbling beneath too many
 awkward inclinations,
 holding so tightly
 to the pillow,
 needing too much for resurrection
 or however frequently you
 cry
 alone and slightly changing.

DAVID RAINE

A ? OF LOVE OVER ST. OF HOT T .

a lot of things / questions are hot
 full of hot such are cabbages
 cabbages rot in the hot
 nite is the rot in the thing
 thing is the wing of the rot
 in the nite. . .so hot
 then what is a sing in a voice?
 (that is woman in a sing)
 is a sing that is song
 that is A now
 so when St. that is hot
 is that most of the way of the day
 that is cabbage in the pavement
 solid rot now the St. of hot
 from window to room /
 cross St. that is hot
 over cabbage that is rot
 is a voice that is sing
 knife thru air. . . sweet as flower

hot question)))))) now voice that is sing
to an ear // full listen
via kindness of air / voice of sing
HE complete listen
in flat high over cabbage
can hear murmur sing / she voice
with eye that is blind
that is closed.

WILLIAM J. MARGOLIS

THE GREY FACADES

I live in a world
of grey façades
which I ignore.
Only the light
from my own eyes
has color,
& I look only
where my bright gaze
falls.
I am out of touch
with whatever world it was
I once inhabited . . .
gone, faded, changed
or by some strange metamorphosis
become invisible
except as those shades,
wisps in the corner
of my sight —

WILLIAM J. MARGOLIS

**I LIVE IN A WORLD GONE SANE WITH VERMILION
JAZZ & VELVET POETRY**

(the cries of old friends as they are dragged across
gravel & mud by
Southern red-neck cops for Riding Free . . . the frenzy
in faraway
places with disputed borders & hungry hordes . . . the
piercing scream,
the clouds of dust & babies as the population explodes .
. . the pullaway-
tug-of-war wobble of the balance of power & terror . . .)
fading false fronts,
grey façades my eyes
become blind to . . .
I live in a world gone
sane with vermilion
jazz & velvet poetry
soft light on nude flesh,
warmth, laughter in the bright
blue night sparkle air,
gauzy mists at spire tips,
a fairyland of love
& touching . . .
I live in a world of grey
façades which I ignore.
I will not look at war.

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CHRISTOPHER BURSK

THE PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS OF AN UNDERTOW

The rocks haunch at the edge of the sea, like lions at their waterholes; in the background the seagulls are barking, like monkeys, keeping their place. It was all before my day. I was only the historian of a drowning, a peeping tom, a footnote, a friend. I have been shadowing an old woman to the world's end, time out of mind, to make a living;

My father was born. You went South, Vaughn. You had never seen the ocean, but only heard it rumoured in the backwoods of Maine, where Dr. Ross hoodwinked you from the Indian reservation, and after seven years on the road, left you for four other wives and a president's daughter. Down and out, you short-order cooked, played the numbers, bided your time until the bellyful from that Indian giver made a break for it, and your number came in. It was spring. My father's testicles swelled with mumps. The Black Sox scandal hit the front page, and you headed where the action was. On the way, you changed the diapers for two generations of other families, and lost your breasts under the knife to another damn pale-face doctor. Saturdays, half high on Cuba Libres, you watched your son break through the line

CHRISTOPHER BURSK

like a Mack truck to save the game.

My father was married,

and the Red Sox finished fifth.

Every April you hit the road again, Old Sport,

to catch Spring Training,

and to ask another question of the talking horse
you knew in Georgia.

At seventy you drove from Boston to Florida

without reversing — you never knew how to back up

the damn thing — to play the dogs at Hialeah,
then went North with the team,
back to the sea you never swam in.
The waves left tire-marks
and a smell of gasoline on the sands.
I was an accident,
and we entered World War II.
We were the last family you came to,
the summer your friend Evelyn shackled up,
and taxied you twenty miles on your day off
for your life's savings
which you never saw again.
I grew up, took sleeping pills,
tried to junk my car in the sea, went to college,
got drunk. You got cancer.
In the dark of the nursing home
we watched the kid, Ted Williams, walk once more,
and force a run in.
I emptied your ashes off Cunningham's Bridge.
Old Squaw, nigger-hater, dear parody, gentlewoman,
you said you would dance at my wedding.
Now I am a spy, caught behind the lines
and lost in this enemy territory of time,
with my orders cancelled.
For the time being I will pretend to be living.

JAMES D. BERTOLINO

TRAVEL POSTER #1

Crickets quiet.
The growing web of clouds
snares and snuffs the moon.
In this new dark the skier
posted on my bedroom wall
sprays me with snow.
The previous winds
demanded only a quilt
but now my crimson
coat is in order.
But for the import
of the mission
I'd burn him
and warm my bed.

JAMES D. BERTOLINO

THERE'S A CRICKET . . .

The storm has come again today,
It rages shrill pins. I hear a pale child
Moaning alone by the bottom rocks of the field.
I can feel the blowing wet cut her face.
Three days have been since Marlys left
In her wool coat, winding through the fright
Of the path, dark. The branches are knives.
When it lulls it turns to quacking; a duck on the raft.
I can't remember how long the fire's been cooled,
And my legs are twitching more today.
Stomach too moans more than hungry, it's afraid.
I awoke to a bird, but it was only the smell
wet of wool.
Lying here the shadows make shapes with my hand.
The storm is subsiding. There's a cricket under the bed.
But it is too late and I'll never see her again.

ROBERT LEWIS WEEKS

VISION

When she was here before
she talked low and harsh
and hissed foul things,
a hot bitch in anger,
but she has come back
from the street and the fog
and talks about a bank of clouds
and stars overhanging the river
like a swarm of bees
whirling in beautiful disorder.
She is changed —
and nightly under her
thoughts of stars
she is gentle
as the veins of eyes.
She will go out no more,
and she is afraid of night.
She will die, she says.
But her songs are emblazoned
and she loves me now
and the river whirls
with bees of light.

HAROLD FLEMING

THE NAKED TRUTH

I do not mean to doubt the adage.
I mean to drag truth down cinder paths
And tie it up in the darkest cemetery,
Then, afterward, locking the bibles up,
See how long truth lives out certainties,
And mingle redhot clinkers with the ashes,
And watch a fire I can see burning out.
A fish sinks in the water out of sight.
Truth has it easy hidden in the dark
Of cemeteries that a sexton cuts.
It leers at us who look it in the eye.
I'd rather be a fish staying alive
Than in self-evidence of what is sought
Dress truth up in an educated shirt.

BURNHAM EATON

SLEEP TALK

In the quiet of night
you open a hollow voice —
your voice? —
answering somewhere your unmasked creatures
who walk and say their say.
You are out of my depth
in a tangle of unknown stars.
Turn.
Be borne to the surface be quieted.
Come from your upside down soundings
and hear the dark trees
making a voice of sweet earth in the wind.
Open your eyes to the blue drapes blowing,
the stars around Polaris
set to rights.

COLETTE INEZ

SAUERKRAUT TALK SHREDS IN HIS EAR . . .

Sauerkraut talk shreds in his ear;
 the night supine and breaking wind.
 Chekov's 'life is cabbages and quarrels'
 comes to mind
 and how years growled
 in time's distended stomach.
 Flo, hunched at the table,
 riffling through old recipes,
 how her titties once were snow peas,
 hair buttery, pepper-firm ass . . .
 even the world was firmer
 when they rolled through escaroles of summer
 curled in the heart of the leaves.

PETER HARKINS

CAMERA OBSCURA

His toes wore away long ago,
 and now he could no longer feel his feet.
 The journey had taken much time,
 and now the night made progress invisible.
 The disheveled hut on the far dry plain
 provided a welcome place of rest.
 He lay down on the mildewed mats,
 hardly feeling at all the soft caressing web of mold.
 Half-dreaming of the morning's adventures,
 he scarcely noticed his ankles constrict,
 and wasn't alarmed when his feet rolled aside.
 Slowly that morning became only a glow in his mind,
 while his glands, long unused, receded imperceptibly
 into his trunk.
 Without even knowing it, he forgot his name.
 His hair joined the slowly melting refuse on the floor.
 Presently the joints of his arms cracked,
 and his limbs fell away,
 his desiccated fingers splintering in the movement.

The past disappeared; the present was then all he
knew.
The ticks began to play in the skin of his stomach,
making long and intricate corridors in his flesh.
He turned his head to lay his eyes once more upon the
ground,
but the motion loosened the last delicate link,
and the skull rolled free.
The scattered refuse, dry, melting, discrete, and
congealing,
Was all that was left.

HALE CHATFIELD

PLAYED UPON ROSEWOOD AND STEEL STRINGS**(TO HIS COY MISTRESS)**

I will give you for your love four flowers;
I will give you a handful of seawater
snapping with fish
whose tails tickle your palm;
I will give you a gourd
full of the noise of two stones
when you shake it
and grin
and dance
and toss your hair
and shake it until your bones
flap;
I will give you a stallion of silence to ride
until your breasts go hard as apples;
I will give you an eagle and a piece
of the sky he flew in and cut
with his wings and his eyes
and his grey beak and even
his talons now folded in sleep
in flight or in equal death

hungerlessly and docile
hooks dreaming waitful
drowned in the bird's own breast,
the warm down.

HUGH KNOX

RIDING THE SUBWAY TO A JOB INTERVIEW

A child's toy snake
is jointed, joint to joint
on a thin spine
that holds each tiny bone
together/
and this train,
jointed and green like
a slitheringsnake
(if i am not mistaken)
drops
quickly
to a deeper
cavern in the brown bowels
of the earth.
A real snake is a green sub
marine to the swallowed frog,
who, thru necessity,
must then give himself to fate.

STUART FRIEBERT

I ALWAYS CUT THROUGH, DROP MY HOOK . . .

The snow hustles over the runners
of the porched sleds or your heavy
thighs or howls like a lost virgin
getting it from a first-rate devil.
The cat bends over the cold, ice
pods snapping on her bushy legs.
She smells the semen coming long
before you see the car lights, greets
me looking right at my crotch. (I
want to run it down, Diane) You're
only flirting again, the sun stretches
on the branch of your kiss. The kids
radiate hope through the furry windows.
They don't need a father any more so
let's love out here, strict like ice.
(You always turn from time to time
to check the surface of your lust)
I always cut through, drop my hook
and pull you up. Your mouth turns
with speed and anger
into a flying fish.

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D. V. SMITH

MARTHA'S PORTIONPIES

I am demented. But a poem a day Will keep me in good spirits. A poet should be this way: Full of good spirit. It befits him — the demented — Especially in America; When he is good for nothing But payoffs: sort of like The family queer handsomely paid To keep out of sight: France is a perfect place for him.

His mother Martha sends him Letters of good cheer: how well Things are going back home; She still has her allowance Which she shares with him: Documented evidence, irrefutable: George is (overbearingly) generous. It is what is Not said is perfectly clear.

& so I write a letter back to Mother: I see the cows coming barn, Their boobs leisurely swaying Like a boy in a spring meadow hammock, They are full of the succulent grass That tickles them while they walk Deliciously in and among The tickling, wild, yellow flowers.

GREEN HEAVENS

A madness had been born, and the mill stood gaping in the empty green heat. High above the sawdust bin a pair of silent vultures stretched their net about the sun. The sun was crying; now and then a white-hot tear dripped into the aluminum-covered burner. Here and there a chain creaked monotonously. It was during the most unexplainable of times.

He was not taller than the mill entrance and was therefore not obliged to stoop. He entered, and immediately the interior melted before his strength, for he was an heir of the potential, whereas she could only tremble. Slowly he advanced to the beginning of the mill life. And fell. Tied with huge blue chains he passed through the saw and was cut down through the middle. They pulled off his skin and reduced him to a four-sided beam. The procedure was repeated and he fell apart into five fragments. He rumbled down a chained embankment, was caught up, and neatly stacked in a pile.

In time he stood up and circled the mill again, slowly, deliberately. Suddenly a noise like the soft gabbling of geese reached him from a dark corner, and a huge Indian stepped out into the sunlight. His upper front teeth were all missing and he wore grey tin plates in front of his eyes. He blinked at the intruder through slits in the plates. Then: 'They haven't arrived yet,' he said tiredly, without expression, rubbing his right boot against a shovel. 'They're still growing.' 'Oh,' the other said, equally expressionless. And then they both fell silent, ashamed. It was a dying hope at best . . .

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A. P. SCHROEDER

AN EXCHANGE

*‘ . . . et pour s’établir dans le monde, on fait tout ce
qu’on peut pour y paraître établi r . . . ’*

There was a noise on the sidewalk beside the front lawn. The old man got up and crept to the window. The old cathedral clock, its gnawed stumps of hands very much behind the times but still creeping valiantly, trembled at three o’clock; morning. The two faces from sidewalk and window, met in a neon flash, then were quickly extinguished. Fog swirled about the street light on the corner; only two eyes glowed against the barred window. There was the sound of shuffling footsteps. The man on the sidewalk was coming back again, slowly, dragging a piece of lead on a rope behind him. The two eyes followed him with precision; they saw his long skirt, his wide floral hat and the perambulator he was pushing before him. There was a large dog in the buggy, sleeping. The man jerked along, sending the perambulator ahead with an occasional kick, but the dog didn’t wake up. He may have been dead. The lump of lead rumbled along behind the night walker, dragging bits of leaves and an old piece of newspaper. The blakies on the man’s shoes rang up his progress. Kick, click, rumble, kick, click, rumble. Two greyish-yellow eyes at the attic window. The sounds faded out into the fog. Two ears appeared at the window. Kick, click, rumble. Softly. It was gone. The old man crept back to his book. ‘ . . . et le soleil ni la mort ne se peuvent regarder fixement . . . ’

DAY OF REST

Under the ragged curtain that separated one half of the shack from the other, he could see his mother's legs, thick and straight like cordwood, with bunches of varicose veins popping out and the film of dirt over the purple discolorations. He heard the rustle of clothing being arranged over the swollen flesh of her body; then a stocking was pulled up over one leg, a stocking was pulled up over the other leg. The stockings were shapeless cotton, with many holes. His mother was a dirty person; her face was puffy, with kindly stupid eyes embedded in pools of tallowlike fat; and over the yellowish sogginess of her face, the tinge of dirt could be seen. Her hair, stringy, sticky, came undone quickly, fell about her neck and forehead. She had a kindly whining voice.

As he watched her legs under the curtain, he felt the desire to go in and seize his mother and put her down on the bed and do violence to her. It was only lately that these thoughts had been entering his mind; and though at first he had been frightened, now the idea interested him, as would a deer whose leg is broken, lying in the snow waiting for the final bullet.

He put his face down in the bowl, dashed cold water against it. He rubbed his face briskly, looked down at his heavy muscular arms. He could uproot saplings with those — shovel dirt or snow harder and longer than any man in the village. He looked down at the bare legs below his shorts — hairy, muscular. They were like horse's legs. He had walked sixty miles to Ferrington and back to look for a job once. Everyone knew about it. They were amazed. He smiled to himself now. They couldn't take that away from him. He walked long distances all the time — to work and back, to

visit his friend, Canby, five miles away and back again. He walked farther and faster than anyone in the village.

He put on his shirt and trousers, and his mother came out to get breakfast. It was Sunday.

‘Are you going to church today, Ma?’

‘I think I will, son.’

Dawn light was just beginning to filter into the airless shack. The rickety unpainted furniture, the torn rug and unswept floor, the magazine pictures pasted on the bare wall, the sagging wood stove — early sunlight fell on these things with dismal irony. There was an odor of mold and bacon grease in the shack and — sweat — his mother’s sweat.

Marvin ate with smiling pleasure, looking up at his mother’s face now and then. He noticed her lips were coarse and bloodless. But, in his lifetime, he had kissed only two of the village girls. They seemed afraid of

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him. He realized it was because he was a bastard, and because his mother was living with Corbin Lange without being married to him, and because his sister was living with the second man she’d hooked up with for unmarried sex (the first one had jumped from the window of a psychiatric clinic and crushed his skull). Marvin and his family were tolerated, but the villagers secretly scorned them.

After he had eaten his toast and egg, he got up and put his arm about his mother. ‘Have a good time at church. Maybe you’ll see angels there.’

The flabby skin of his mother was cold to his touch. There was dirt on her neck, and Marvin felt a warm sickly burden of passion settle on his mind and weight down his blood.

‘I wish you’d go once in a while, son.’ She cocked her head, and the tallow holes of her eyes begged him languidly.

‘I won’t go up there.’

'You aren't working today — not on Sunday. It's a day of rest.'

'No. Canby's coming over.'

'Canby's crazy.' She studied her son's face blandly.

'Sure. They may put him in an asylum.' He laughed and patted her.

'Don't laugh, son.'

He kissed her grimy forehead.

'Why not? I like to laugh.'

He laughed again and patted her back where a roll of fat fell out over the line of the brassiere strap that cut in deeply. The flesh felt to his hand like salt pork drawn from barrels, the rumps of pigs slaughtered. It gave him a feeling of secret excitement.

Corbin Lange came in with an armful of wood. He was so tall he had to stoop to get through the door. A huge man, more powerful and hulking than Marvin, his face austere and flabby-jowled, he owned this place, had brought Marvin's mother here as his housekeeper when Marvin was a baby. Marvin did not know who his father was: his mother had been having relations with more than one man at that time.

Corbin threw the wood in the box, ignored the woman, walked across the room and hung his jacket on a nail. He was round-shouldered, grim-mouthed, and taciturn.

'I'm going to the city today,' he said. He didn't look at the woman, but he hitched up his pants with a gesture of virility. 'And I won't be back early.'

The mother stared out the window.

'I'm going to church,' she said.

Corbin brushed the wood chips from his arm.

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'You kill the pig this morning,' he said to Marvin. The mother started to protest, but closed her mouth tight.

Marvin agreed he would. He didn't fear Corbin Lange exactly, but he knew if Corbin ever became angry, he would hurl him through the rotting wall of the shack.

Corbin put on a tie; the mother washed dishes. Marvin, as he sat at the table, holding a copy of *True Stories*, realized he hadn't heard the bed springs in the other half of the shack for a long time. The bulk of Corbin Lange slept there in the same bed with his mother, but he probably didn't make love to her now. He just tolerated her in the daytime.

'Canby's coming over today,' the mother said in a fretful voice.

'Damn him!' said Corbin. 'He's crazy, Marvin. When are they going to put him away?'

Marvin smiled. He liked Canby. With an affection equally as strong as the hate he felt for Rumel Ferris, he craved Canby Detts' companionship.

Corbin left, going down the road with long easy strides — like Marvin's strides, only heavier and slower. Marvin could outdo him over long distances.

The mother came over and kissed Marvin, telling him she was going to church today and would put on her good silk dress. She smiled at him and said: 'You're always so happy-looking, Marvin. But you don't always feel that way, do you? — inside?'

He had a sensation of fear.

'Why not?' he said. But he grinned and tickled her sweaty arm-pits. 'How do you feel, Ma?' She giggled. 'Go on, Marvin.' But he felt sure the glitter in her eyes meant something. They had been playful like this lately.

Outside, the autumn air was keen and frosty; the trees shed their leaves with a gentle sadness. The nearest house was Rumel Ferris's — a quarter of a mile across the fields. He saw Rumel come out of his house, very straight and dapper and calm, and get into his car and back out of his driveway. Rumel had money; his wife was pretty and slender and

young, and she kept her house scrupulously neat. Rumel was proud of his wife and very smug and contented. He had a new car; and every day he drove to work and back, sitting very straight behind the wheel, very happy and smug. Every Tuesday and Friday night he had three men in and played cards. They were quiet, and his wife, Irma, watched and got refreshments. No trouble, no fighting. A neat clean game — in a kitchen perfectly neat. Chips cashed in by 10:30. Bed at 11 o'clock. Rumel and his wife were respectable.

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Every day, Rumel drove out the dirt road to the main road. The shack where Marvin lived was set back two-tenths of a mile from the dirt road, but Marvin saw him clearly, very straight behind the wheel, very satisfied, going to his job as paper hanger. A man with several thousand in the bank, living in the only house visible from Marvin's shack — a neat tall well-painted house — and with a wife slender and pretty, waiting inside for him to come back every day. Rumel's car, as he drove to work, seemed to move with a supernatural smoothness — not on the road at all, but in the air — even and smooth, at a slow sedate speed, even and graceful, with Rumel perfectly contented and quiet behind the wheel. When Rumel passed Marvin on the road, he never glanced at him. He hated Marvin, and he hated Corbin Lange, and he hated to be the villager who had to live nearest to people like those in the shack.

Now Marvin noticed Rumel as he drove off down the dirt road. Face calm and secure, body erect. He was going after Sunday papers. The tires of the car didn't touch the road; they rolled through air, springy and soft — with a pride like Deacon Appleton's. Marvin felt hate rise in him like wind coming over Holcomb's meadow — powerful, swift. And he thought of Rumel's wife in the house there — alone — waiting for Rumel's return. He began to laugh. Now and then he and his one close friend, Canby Detts, had crouched in the

shadows back of the Ferris house and watched Irma undress or go to the bathroom and sit down. Irma was a neat person, but she was careless about shades. She came from mountain country; she had never lived near other people and didn't dream anyone would watch.

He walked over to the woods and lay in the grass. It felt good in the damp deep leaf-mold. He pulled twigs and crumbling leaves over his face and body. He pulled a tree branch over him and then dropped handfuls of dirt on that and it sifted through into his mouth. The dirt and mold and smell of decay was a wonderful thing to him. It stifled him, as the smell of his small filthy home stifled him; but it was different, and he craved it. He crept close to a rock and felt its bigness and power; he drew a juniper branch down over him, rubbed its fierce prickly needles against his face till his eyes smarted with pain.

Then he got up and walked to the pigpen. His mother and he fed the pigs, and both of them took pride in the size of the animals. Now he observed the biggest with growing elation. How good that pork would taste, how sharp the pig's cries would sound when he ran the knife into the neck. Corbin had said: 'Kill the pig today.' He looked down at the trampled mud, and a warm feeling of pleasure stole over him. The sharp footmarks deep in the muck, the scraps of swill — he had a queer affec-

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tion for the place. Once, after he had killed a pig, he'd come here and gotten down in the muck and thrust his arms into it and slapped a little against his face with both hands. It had made him nauseated but happy. He had the impulse now, but crowded it back.

He heard singing from over the crest of Barrow Hill where he and Canby hunted for deer, and soon Canby came through the thick low growth of pine. His flattened face seemed to puff with triumph as he sang; his voice was loud

but without life or vibration:

‘She blew, she blew; Oh, golly, how she blew!
Mother, put the kettle on,
And we’ll all have tea . . . !’

As he came up, his eyes sparkled crazily and he kept his thumbs hooked in the breast pockets of his shirt like a man with a lot of pride. Marvin told how Rumel had driven away to get the papers, and they both cursed him.

‘His wife waiting all alone?’ asked Canby, and they began to laugh. Then Canby said seriously: ‘This week I’m going to get that job running the farm. Burt told me.’ As he said it, his long pock-marked face became glossy like a chestnut, and his lips seemed to puff out with self-importance. This was where Marvin thought Canby was crazy: he kept talking about a job as supervisor of the big Burt farm; he’d been there and applied, but he couldn’t even get put on as a hired man, and Marvin knew he’d never get a job there as supervisor or anything else. But Canby was serious about it. He kept talking about it.

‘It pays sixty dollars a week,’ Canby said. ‘Then we can build that place at the lake, for the women.’

Canby was thirty-one; Marvin, thirty. But neither of them could seem to get a chance to sleep with a woman; only twice had they lain with anyone, and both times it had been a young girl who was called simple-minded by most people. They walked long distances and talked and worked together, but they were rebuffed when they asked for dates with unmarried women.

Now they leaned on the pigpen fence and laughed at the thought of Irma Ferris.

‘She isn’t up yet,’ Marvin said. ‘Let’s kill the pig first.’

They trussed the legs and hung the pig up in the cherry tree behind the shack, head down. When the knife went in, there was a spurt of blood and the squealing sounded way up to the church, which could be seen on the far hill across

Holcomb's meadow and where people already were going in. They cut the pig open and Marvin liked the feeling of the hot blood

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running slowly down his arm.

In the midst of their work, Marvin's mother came out in her Sunday dress and stockings and started up toward the church. Marvin noticed how her rump moved under her dress. Canby began to sing: 'She blew, she blew . . .' They both laughed and the mother looked back at them and gave them a dim smile through the crust of powder.

'Those people don't like you, Ma!' Marvin called after her. 'You're wasting your time.'

'You should go to church,' she called back. 'You're not perfect yet.'

He was aware of the dirt on her legs and body clear across the space between them, but it didn't offend him; it gave him a slow crawling sensation like the hot blood of the pig going down his arm.

When the pig hung still, gaping open, its entrails smoking on the ground, they started over to see if they could get a glimpse of Irma, afraid she'd been disturbed by the pig's squealing and already was up. But they had timed it well: she was in her bedroom, drawing on her underclothes. From behind the woodshed, they saw how her breasts fell, deep and heavy, when she bent over. The nipples stood out like the studs on a cowboy belt.

'Jesus!' whispered Marvin, feeling something grow all over him and itch him like a snake's scales.

Canby was making an odd growling noise.

'She blew, she blew . . .' he muttered. 'Mother put the kettle on . . .'

'She's going to her Sunday School class,' whispered Marvin.

Irma didn't attend church, but she had consented to teach the church kindergarten. Having no children of her own, she adored the little tots.

They saw her finish dressing, drew back in the undergrowth as she came out the front door and went up the road to Sunday School.

'Look!' said Canby, gripping Marvin's arm. 'Look at the legs!'

'The best I ever saw.' Marvin had a toadish ogling sensation; but the queer suppressed fury in Canby's voice made him giggle, and then he felt scratchy and uncomfortable — Canby's face was so fixed and red.

They went back to work on the pig. All at once, Canby got a bullish desire to go hunting.

'I'm going to shoot something,' he said. 'A woodchuck or something. Maybe a cow.'

'Go ahead,' said Marvin. 'I don't feel like it today.'

Canby started off through the woods at a trot. Marvin heard his voice floating back over Barrow Hill:

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*'Mother, put the kettle on,
And we'll all have tea . . .'*

Marvin sat on the sagging front steps of the shack, watching the church up on the lonely hill.

Pug Peroni, the Italian kid from across Deer Run, went by on the wood road. He was shy, and walked with rapid self-conscious movements when he felt Marvin's eyes on him.

'Hi, Marvin,' he mumbled.

'Hiya, Pug. Say, come over some night and take a look at Irma. You can see everything.'

Pug flushed.

'Maybe . . . I'm on my way to the store. Hope you don't mind my taking a short-cut through here.'

'Any time. Any time,' Marvin said.

After Pug had gone, he thought: Pug Peroni's a nice kid — but he's too queer. A lone wolf. He's never laid a girl, never kissed one. He stretched his legs out comfortably, grinned to himself. Some day he'd have to show Pug how to go about it.

He kept his eyes on the church on the hill. After a while, he saw the people come out; he couldn't distinguish their features, but he could tell who some of them were by the way they walked. His mother's broad suggestive waddle was unmistakable. Then she disappeared into the pine grove below the cemetery. Marvin waited. He was uneasy. His mother was taking an unusually long time in getting here.

Finally, she appeared down below Rumel Ferris's, coming swiftly. He saw that her face was puffed and splotched with weeping. When she got to him, she stood on the steps and cried into her handkerchief. Her loose wrinkled stockings, her mussed dress bursting with fat, the odor of sweat — Marvin was pleased by it. He was pleased by the sight of his mother weeping.

'What did they do?' he asked. 'Are they all angels?'

'It was Rumel,' she said. 'He was stopped by the side of the road, talking with Phil Starret. He had the Sunday paper with him and I asked him if he was coming home and could I have a ride.' Her sobbing increased, and she pressed the handkerchief against her nose, stared over Marvin's head with oily incredulity.

'He looked at Phil,' she went on, '— awful, it was terrible! — and then right through me. He said: "Some people oughtn't to be allowed in church."'

Marvin looked up at her; then he patted her leg. 'Don't worry, Ma.'

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George Abbe

She turned and pushed in the door of the shack. He could hear her crying for a while; then she began to move around lethargically, getting lunch.

The afternoon was long and tedious. Marvin cut wood and sat in the sun. A wind blew softly, and the pig's carcass, gutted and quartered, hung in the tree, its smell reaching him. His mind kept turning to his mother. She was taking a nap, lying on the dirty bed with her stockings off and her varicose veins coiled up on her legs like eels. Her thighs were chunky and secret. He couldn't seem to get her out of his mind.

Perhaps, he thought, Canby's shooting a woodchuck. Perhaps I should have gone with him. Sitting against the south wall of the shack, he began to itch; he twisted his back savagely against the clapboards.

I've got to find a woman, he thought. Then, as he relaxed, he saw Corbin Lange in his mind again, swinging down the road on his way to the city; he heard him say: 'And I won't be back early.'

Again, he visualized his mother.

Ashamed, he decided to go and seek Canby and set out with him to look for girls. But then, before he could rouse himself, he saw the door of Rumel's house open and Rumel come out with his wife. It was sunset now, and the red slanting light struck Irma's stockings and made their sheen fiery and seductive. The curves were the best Marvin had ever seen.

He remembered what Rumel had said to his mother that morning, and felt a flare of rage; but then the rage became tangled with desire for Irma; and, as Irma stepped into the

car while Rumel held the door open for her, her dress slid up above her knee, the desire became overwhelming. He sat there against the wall, numbed.

Rumel closed the door sharply. He did not glance toward the shack. He walked around the back of the car, got in, and started the motor. The car glided away elegantly, its tires seeming to float above the ground, its tail pipe breathing immaculately, crisply.

Suddenly, Marvin felt that swarming vicious hatred for the whole village, the people in the church; he recalled all they'd done to trample him and his mother and sister and Corbin Lange—and his passion for Irma was swelled and puffed by this anger; and his head felt light and queer like a catalpa pod with its seed rattling in the wind.

He walked into the shack. The light was reddish and dusty and dying in there, struggling through the grimy windows. The smell of bacon grease and sweat assailed him. He walked in and looked at his mother seated on the edge of the bed, trying to read True Stories in the fading light. Sitting down beside her, he put his arm about her, and began to pat the fatty

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flesh where it rolled out over her brassiere. Through the silk dress, it stung his hand as sharply as bare skin. 'It's too bad, Ma,' he said, with a choked and horrible sensation in his throat. She leaned her head against his shoulder and became hysterical; the tears coursed down her dingy cheeks, her hair caught in Marvin's mouth as he kissed her forehead. 'Oh, son! . . . How could Rumel say such a thing! I've tried to be good!' 'Sure, Ma.' He kept patting her, and she hung against him more and more heavily, sobbing, mumbling about what Rumel had said. Then she began to moan over the heartless way Corbin Lange treated her. Marvin lay back on the bed with her and she held to him hysterically; the wet of her cheek was against his cheek now. Far off, through the sickly storm of his passion, he heard Canby's voice: 'Mother, put the kettle on, And we'll all have tea . . .' The words kept repeating themselves, following him, down . . . down . . . On the window glass the sunset red was smudged to a pallid gleam, was rubbed away. Only a whitish ghost of daylight leaned over the world.

Canby Detts had no luck at all with his hunting. On his way home by moonlight, he thought he would get a glimpse of Irma Ferris, but there was no light in her house; so he crept up to the bedroom in Marvin's shack. His gun, he held in his hand, grimly, as though at any moment he might have to defend himself. What he saw stiffened him with amazement, and then delight. After a while, still gripping his rifle with determined force, he skulked off toward the woods, grinning happily.

THE MECHANICAL SWEETHEART

Gerald Alper

He broke from a deep demonic sleep, convinced at last — ten thousand subconscious reasons murmured it was so — that his sweetheart was mechanical like the others. This was not so outlandish — by his newspaper clippings, three such cases already had been uncovered in Manhattan. Although in each instance, an autopsy, commissioned by the wrought-upon though small-suspecting lover, had been needed to unveil the gleaming secret.

‘Why is she childless?’ he wailed, now prisoner of his idea, pacing miserably in the handsome second-storey bedroom. This was one of nine heady rooms in the chimneyed rococo cottage, replete with splendiferous staircase, standing cabinets, flashing mirrored paneling, and an august court walled from the traffic.

‘Or so wondrous happy?’ Why, too, is he visited by forbidden dream sounds of distant siren blasts or great cat shrieks, the clanging of a faint bell, sometimes a melodious soaring humming? He remembered a long-ago shadowy nightmare in which he imagined his sweetheart, her arms swung out before her, her face choked blue, blithering in her sleep — save her squeak-squeaking voice, repulsively, was that of a toy’s. Had she ever bled before his eyes? — he self-interrogated — had he ever witnessed her living bloodshed?

In such perplexment, he unfurled the florid massive quilt from the torso of his sweetheart — she who each night for two years, similarly drowned in satin pillows, had rested this serenely; and, in near metaphysical anxiety, variously examined her: ringlets of honey-blond hair which poured from baby-soft temples to fragile shoulders; her parted

sanguine lips; a chestnut bloom shimmering in the cheeks; veined shiny eyelids; a fresh-sparkling taut skin.

In the reflections of the queer city lights breaking through the immense bedroom window, impetuously he undid her kimono, leaned his ear under the pink rise of her exquisite breast in hunt of her heartbeat. He lingered so long, hearing naught but his own labored wrathful breathing, that she at last awoke.

Perfect blue eyes, now, that open like flowers; a sinuous frame that springs carnally to life; and tan purring arms plucking him upon her undo Zorn: Zorn, the Neapolitan, brilliantined, jocund idolizer of spontaneity, who — happy to forget — drowns his compulsion in the Lethe of most beastlike nightlong love.

But the succeeding morning, enroute to Flacon the Aristocrat, traveling

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by monorail through the goat-white stained luminescence-rinsing minaret-mottled futuristic Manhattan—his demon of doubt had again risen, pinching him a thousandfold. It was absurd, but he had shuddered as though palsied at a certain throat-clucking and stomach-growling, never before noticed, which accompanied her breakfast cereal ingestion . . . had turned flour-pale afterwards at the homely spectacle of his sweetheart washing a single dish: her fingers had moved too blurringly fast for his liking . . . had been unsettled past endurance at what heretofore had enticed him: her semblance of oft-lauded modeled doll-like pulchritude. More significantly, at the first dawn hour, he had scouted, inchmeal, her epidermis, finding it porous and viable enough; plus which — what, never in his love-circuitings, had he hit upon — at the base of her spine in dimmest tattooing, the word ‘Jane,’ an anomaly she rapidly imputed to an impulsive single childhood act that was never repeated.

All of this and more, Zorn, in his high-spirited Italianate manner transmitted to Flacon, the wire-lipped fleering aging Aristocrat. They conversed in monstrous mechanical chairs which, at push-button edict, could navigate innumerable flights of stairs which studded this fantastic kingdom: the superhuman proliferation of surrealistic toy works (actually an immense shop room, with Flacon as Foreman) that had been hewn from the innards of the old Coney Island Fun House.

Do you remember that Joker-faced olden pleasure-dome that, with giant chute, skirt-inflating hiding wind, and protean mocking mirror, had thrilled the joyless multitudes of the Twentieth Century? And who but a few would have prophesied that one hundred years later, at least in this odd particular, the circle would have run full: to wit, that the nerveless masses, beggared by ceaseless emotive opiates, would wax impotent, even in execution of their voting prerogatives . . . that, proportionately, the Western Super-State and its President would grow godlike in their hegemony over the prostrate proletariat, climaxing in the unopposed self-proclamation of our recent Emperor . . . his equally-uncontended tranquil nomination of inflexible social classes with titled landed Aristocrats, such as Flacon, topmost, and nethermost, slaves, such as the tall jacketed lesbians (that now flank and attend Flacon and, strangely, numb Zorn's soul) . . . that both classes, top and nether conjoined, should labor in implementation of the Emperor's youngest fad, the creation of a metaphoric aesthetic Coney Island — more specifically, the translation of Alice-In-Wonderland dream happenings into toys and constructs of terrible mechanical realities, to be released in Manhattan?

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'Her eyes could be rubber-cased painted electronic-light receivers . . . her skin, a transplant. Her heart — that is simple — an ordinary pump would serve . . . her hair, an engrafted fine wig — even rope . . .' Here, Flacon halted his catalogue, and — uncontrollably charmed at these ironies — dissolved into escalating reedish laughter which thunderously echoed, climbed to the rafters of the cavernous ghoulish vault, past the platform stages interspersing and affixed to the rising staircases where goggled blowtorch-brandishing lesbian mechanics pounded at headless mannikin frames, waded through outlandish embroglios of exotic puppets, welded small robotized animals or vicious Leonardoesque war-machines, or simply transfused nutriments to strange cellular lumps, suggesting embryonic human brains.

'But your fear is absurdly improbable, unthinkable,' reassured Flacon, hastily strangling his laughter. After all, did he not love the presently-petrified Zorn? Had he not, years ago, taken this mediterranean peasant-type under his dandified wing? And sponsored him to the best that was in him, a leading position in one of the Emperor's prime underground factories as high-salaried happy-go-lucky riveter?

'The three cases you cite,' Flacon continued coldly, 'show the mind of a maniac. He goes beyond, far beyond, even the wild imaginings of our adored Emperor. But still you are not sure. What, you think, if her brain is a computer? Her memories transistorized and groove-stored? Then she would not have a soul. That is what poisons you? You must test her, Zorn, to rule out all possibility. You could x-ray her. It will be difficult. Hmmm. How could you tell?' A look of mellowing craft grew upon Flacon's withered countenance, as though he were sounding the deepest pools of his fabulous experience for the soul's arcanum. 'Play her music

— majestic courtly music. How could she appreciate? Watch her deeply. She would not be human, remember? Finally, well, her heart's dear blood — especially that which courses in the aorta — could not possibly be counterfeited. This could be dangerous, however — to you. But I will signal you.'

And Zorn, slave now to his compulsion that his sweetheart was mechanical, heeded his mentor. Was Jane dreamless? A vigilante of dreams, he touched electrodes, nightly, to her eyelids and temples. Until finally, waking as her lover wired her, she howled so piteously and long that Zorn, pleading her forgiveness, foreswore his experiment.

Was her skin, which the more he suspected, the more he doted on, a traitress? Was it honeycombed with grease and underpinned with rods? At his behest, under elaborate pretence, Jane, loudly complaining, was

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multiply x-rayed. And her bones, straighter and more compact than he wished, anchored his doubt.

To ambush her soul, the ardent Neapolitan procured with his savings an aesthetic trove, a centuries-old recording of a master violinist executing a most sublime eldritch solo. To what music, pray, does she move? — moaned Zorn; for her azure eyes stood static and lustreless as it played.

Seven nights since Flacon and his perplexed testing, under a smoky ribbon of Manhattan moon, Zorn stood in his courtyard near a sundered blackened medlar tree which had been fantastically lightning-struck. He knew that this year was the autumn of his love, that sans this compulsion he inescapably would have sated of Jane. Which is why, more than ever now, he was heartsick to think he might never have possessed her. Looking at the tree, he reminisced how, months ago, both their hands stroking its bark, a winging bolt of summer lightning had marvelously ruined the medlar; in that ochreous blazing gleam, he had thought Jane's face phosphorescent-glowing, instinct with an ineffable

supernatural beauty. Now, wretched man, he ruminated, if conducted through something metallic and lumpish in her body, the lightning had been pulled from the ground.

In a doleful dull trance, Zorn began to prowl meaninglessly through his tasteless small mansion — bought for beauty. Three years ago, in quest of eggs and butter, Jane had knocked at his door; and from the start, he had loved the sweet harmony of her face and body and had pitied her luckless desolate childhood she had despised talking about.

Inertly, Zorn climbed the flamboyant soaring staircase, mulling these thoughts. An unholy premonition, swept from his undermind, screamed in his consciousness: ‘She has no mother!’ — propelling him to the heavy vellum book in the cabinet at the head of the stairs, Jane’s family album which somehow had never been displayed.

Now, as he riffled the leaves, Zorn remembered her bony fulsome sisters with their broad smiles and friendly eager handshakes; he could still sense their clammy touch, his lingering suspicion that they were lesbians, both. But the photograph of her father was torn at the head, and the page for her mother did not exist.

He commenced a giddy hysterical tittering laughter when he espied their bedroom door standing inches ajar, cognizing at once that Jane — what she did infrequently, her arms before her — had sleepwalked, her destination, as before, being the immense closet that shelved in peacock array the porcelain and plastic dolls she so adored and which Zorn, with

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his riveter's wages, adoringly purveyed. As before, Jane sat on the floor slightly rocking, reverently stacking the tiny mannikins one upon the other in her lap. Save that this time — which has since haunted Zorn — her eyes not blue, or closed, were upturned little egg whites; and her face was alive, made monstrous with the weirdest, most sluttish of smiles. Some primal protective instinct led Zorn to gag Jane's mouth with his horny palm as it commenced to speak. Because, at this instant, that tiny piping doll's voice, which inhabited his nightmares, would have unseated him forever.

Jane awoke from the pressure — but partially, her arms still flung forward hypnotically, as though to woo or to seize him — backing him through French doors, straight to a charming open-air terrace surmounting their courtyard, and sprinkled now with quite bright moonlight.

With his head reared back, Zorn, halcyon at last, breathed prodigiously. He had resolved excruciatingly that know he should.

Above, as though in foil to his courage, two great eagles, rinsed in phosphorescence — such is one of a multitude of the new Emperor's mandates — glorify the night skies.

Now it is the harsh whistle-scream directing Zorn . . . to what he had prayed for: the scarlet-clad hooded figure of Flacon bestriding the fallen medlar tree. He taps his heart with a bleached finger and shines with an old man's leer.

Almost simultaneously, Zorn hurls the hatchet made ready by his side for the heart of his beauty, his love, his Jane, whose fingers and nails, with a strength he'd never guessed, gouge in his stomach. Zorn steps back and, with a boisterous bull's fury, Jane's angelic braids in his fists, heaves at her hair — which, like a fine planted wig, separates from a sheeny nude pate. From the hatchet sticking in her breast, a blue electric jet sputters; her teeth hammer

together. And now, in that nightmarish voice, her arms and legs twitching in herky-jerky insane spasms — from her lonely doll's heart, now truly spurned by its lover — comes a pitiful feminine last request: 'Dance, sweetheart?'

And Zorn, more madly in love than ever before, seizing her gorgeous body, rains kisses on her skull, her teeth, her wound. Together, they dance wildly through the great house. Into the room of many mirrors.

Music, now — stately trumpets play as though to cheer their dance, which still rages. Yes, and Flacon, now with trumpeteer aristocrats, each of them caped gloriously and masquerading in a goat's, wolf's, fox's, or lion's head, eerily file in. Dead silence, now. In unison, the aristocrats aim their trumpets like rifles at Flacon, whose ancient eyes are blazing, fixing

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Jane. She returns a most thrilling smile. 'He is her mother. He is her mother,' the august chorus of voices sardonically choir.

Zorn is maddened; his face flushes dangerously. Is Flacon mocking him, laughing at him? No. He is eyeing him beneficently. But is the evil man in the saffron throne chaired by lesbians through the bowing aristocrats mocking him? The Emperor? Does he join, too, the aristocrats' scoffing chorus?

But now, Zorn, bolstered by the quite-manifest benign paternalism in Flacon's eyes, remembers what he has always known: the marveling boy of ten, huddling by his Sponsor's side as the gelatinous guts of Jane were shoveled in the steel crib of her torso. Sadly, his eyes stray from Flacon and this pain-fraught remembrance to the tall mirror diagonally fronting him. And so, inadvertently, he at last knows this also. He sees his arms and legs twitching in herky-jerky insane dancing spasms beneath his Neapolitan weeping robot's face.

Thomas Bledsoe

A (W)HORS(E)S OPERA

— A DRAMA OF THE OLD WEST —

Scene — A ONE-ROOM RANCH HOUSE IN EASTERN CALIFORNIA. CENTER, A COUCH, TWO CHAIRS, AND A POKER TABLE. RIGHT, A WOOD STOVE, SINK, AND KITCHEN TABLE WHICH EVA IS MOPPING AS THE CURTAIN RISES. LEFT, TWO BEDS SEPARATED BY GINGHAM CURTAINS, THE FORWARD ONE CLEAN AND NEATLY MADE, THE OTHER HIDDEN BEHIND THE DRAPERIES. EVA IS DISCLOSED SINGING WHILE SHE MOPS, WHILE SOMEONE BEHIND THE CURTAINS IS MOPING WHILE SHE SINGS. AUDIBLY.

Eva: Dad!

Ephraim: (WEAKLY, FROM BEHIND THE CURTAINS, INTERRUPTING HIS MOANS) What was that?

Eva: I said Dad.

Ephraim: Is that the way to address your —

Eva: Okay, elderly saintly father — can I ask you a question?

Ephraim: May you?

Eva: All right, ESF. May I?

Ephraim: Of course, daughter.

Eva: You think Chester likes fish heads?

Ephraim: Do I think what?

Eva: Chester. He's coming for dinner tonight, remember? Or is your senility galloping again? You ate up all the fish last night except the heads. I thought I would stew them for Chester, who'll arrive that way anyway, after his lecherous afternoon at Kitty's Blue Bordello. Otherwise I'll have to saddle up our horse, Black Beauty, and ride into town to the supermarket.

Ephraim: It doesn't matter.

Eva: I'd get Blue Chip stamps.

Ephraim: Be serious, child. I'll be dead tonight.

Eva: So that's a switch?

Ephraim: (MOANS)

Eva: Mother said you always —

Ephraim: Quiet, child. I have a thing to tell you.

Eva: Then get with it, ESF. Ariawise. Hurry up, please, it's time.

Ephraim: In fernem land —

Eva: This opera is in English.

Ephraim: Okay, okay. Don't push me. This is a horse opera, remember,

THOMAS BLEDSOE

and anything galloping is good. Including senility. Set?

Eva: Side settle?

Ephraim: That's my girl. Here goes.

Once not far,

In Kitty's bar

I say with rue,

'Tis true,

'Twas there that you

Were disinherited.

Eva: (ASIDE) He knows not what he says. Oh, Chester,

Chester, I need
you now.

Ephraim: Yes, Chester.

It would be best for

You and me,

You see,

Had I not met

That small-sized

Wet

Imitation of a man.

Eva: You're chesting.

Ephraim: Would it were so.

I sat at his table
With Mabel
And Doc
And Kitty
And Banker Warren.
Eva: That cad!
Ephraim: You know not what you say.

I gambled,
Ambled,
You might say,
Down the short road to bankruptcy
While Chester,
With his fat stupid hands
And that empty marshal's face
Dealt me one losing hand after
another
And I bet
And bet
And lost.

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THOMAS BLEDSOE

UNTIL —

Eva: Heaven forfend me and all other virtuous girls who have their union cards!

Ephraim: Until, my child, on the other hand, I put up —

Eva: Mother!

Ephraim: I tried to, but they knew she was dead.

Eva: Me!

Ephraim: I couldn't guarantee you'd come through. No. Something simpler. The ranch.

Eva: The ranch! No! The Shangrila for my noble Chester and me, which I am to inherit after you are decently dead, elderly sainted father. Tonight, you say?

Ephraim: Yes, my child. But hear me out.

When that surly

Curly

Marshall

Dealt me the last queen of
spades,

He won the ranch,

Lost noble child,

And gave it to —

Eva: It can't be —

Ephraim: To Kitty!

Eva: No!

Ephraim: Yes!

FOLLOWING AN EXTENDED CANON ON THE JA-NEIN MOTIF, EVA GAZES
AT HER FATHER IN HORROR WHILE THE SUN SETS WITH A LOUD
CRASH CRASH OUTSIDE THE PICTURE WINDOW OF THEIR
PREFABRICATED RANCH HOUSE.

Eva: Hark! I hear Marshall Chester's horse, Old Bawdy.

Ephraim: Not yet. It cannot be. I have a thing to tell you.

Eva: Must you be so long-winded, ESF? You know Kitty always eighty-sixes Chester at sundown.

Ephraim: I'll be short-breathed soon enough.

Eva: Promise?

Ephraim: Tonight. But hear me out.

When pretty

Kitty

Put her ti —

Eva: ESF!

THOMAS BLEDSOE

Ephraim: I can dream, can't I?

Eva: Who owns it now?

Ephraim: Which one?

Eva: The ranch, stupid.

Ephraim: Can I help it I'm all bent over like this?

Eva: (THREATENINGLY) Who?

Ephraim: Banker Warren.

Eva: Oh, Whoa is me!

Ephraim: Whoa?

Eva: That's how we say it in the horse operas. How could you give the ranch I was saving for my noble Chester to that evil conniving Banker Warren?

Ephraim: I didn't, remember? I lost it to Chester, who gave it to Kitty, who sold it to Banker Warren, who bought it to protect you from the foreclosure, lost noble girl.

Eva: It cannot be.

Ephraim: 'Tis true. But hark, I hear Old Bawdy. Set up the cards and whiskey, child. I'll win you a nest egg before I depart this vale of tears tonight.

WHILE EVA BUSIES HERSELF AT THE CARD TABLE, MARSHALL CHESTER IS HEARD SINGING OUTSIDE WHILE HE TIES UP HIS HORSE TO THE HITCHING POST.

EIGHTY-SIXED BY PRETTY KITTY, I WILL SING MY
MANLY DITTY, TELLING OF MY LOVE FOR EVA,
WHO'S SO STUPID SHE'LL BELIEVE A RAT LIKE
ME. EVA: AIN'T HE ROMANTIC? EPHRAIM: THE
CARDS, GIRL, THE CARDS.

WITH HER AGING, AILING FATHER, I WILL
BRIEFLY HAVE TO BOTHER, TAKE MORE DOUGH
FROM THAT OLD JOKER THROUGH MY SKILL AT
DIRTY POKER, AND PRETEND THAT ALL MY
BUSTLE ISN'T JUST A WAY TO RUSTLE THEIR
TWO REMAINING COWS. EVA: MY HERO! EPHRAIM:
AND DON'T FORGET THE WHISKEY!

THOMAS BLED SOE

*Chester: Eva doesn't know from Adam That my love is really
Madam Kitty of the Blue Bordello, Who loves me though she
knows the yellow Rat I am. Eva: My own true love! Ephraim:
Where's my truss? Chester: But now to resume my disguise
as the noble marshall of Gus's Gulch. Hiyo there! Howdy, I
mean. Anybody home? CHESTER ENTERS THROUGH THE
DOOR BEHIND THE POKER TABLE, ALL FIVE FOOT SIX OF
HIM REEKING FROM KITTY'S PERFUME AND WHISKEY. EVA
EMBRACES HIM ENTHUSIASTICALLY, LIFTING HIM UP ON
THE TABLE TO DO THE JOB MORE THOROUGHLY. HER
FATHER VIEWS HER PERFORMANCE CRITICALLY. Ephraim:
Not thataway, girl. How often do I have to tell you. Bend down
before you pick 'em up. You'll strain yourself. Chester: I try to
tell her, Pops, but she just won't listen. Ephraim: Elderly
saintly Pops to you, you rat. Chester: Okay ESP. But like I
say, she's stupid. Ephraim: Enough to believe a rat like you.
Chester: Sing a song of noble Eva Who's so stupid she'll
believe a Rat like me. Eva and Ephraim: A rat like you.
Ephraim: Enough of these amenities. The cards, girl. Chester:
But what'll we play for? I've already won everything around
here but her. Ephraim: (OMINOUSLY) Tonight we take the last
great gamble. Eva against Kitty. Winner take all. A deal?
Chester: But it ain't fair, elderly saintly Pops. You never win.
Ephraim: You are afraid, perhaps? Chester: I ain't afraid of
nothing except field mice, bumblebees, and Kitty when she
eighty-sixes me. Your deal. Ephraim: Cut the cards. Chester:
New cards, ESP? Ephraim: Fresh in from Chicago on the Wells
Fargo wagon. Cut. Eva: Win me, Chester. Win me, my love.
THEY PLAY. CHESTER PUTS DOWN FOUR ACES. EPHRAIM
PUTS DOWN*

THOMAS BLED SOE

FIVE.

Ephraim: (TRIUMPHANTLY) I've won!

Chester: You cheated!

Ephraim: Naturally.

Chester: I know because there ain't only seven aces in any deck.

Ephraim: Not in my special marked deck from Chicago, you rat. I beat

you fair and square. Eva, you are now owner of the Blue Bordello. And

I can die a happy man.

Chester, Ephraim, Eva: (AS TRIO, CHORUS) A rat like me.

A happy man.

Owner of the Blue Bordello.

EPHRAIM DIES.

Chester: All right, girl, let's get this stiff out of the way and figure how

we're going to explain this to Kitty.

Eva: That's your problem, buster. I'm boss.

Chester: Maybe if Banker Warren —

Eva: What'll I wear? —

Chester: Kitty could make him —

Eva: Oh, Chester!

Chester: Yes, boss.

Eva: I almost forgot.

Chester: Yes, darling.

Eva: You like fish heads?

CURTAIN

ENTER FORTINBRAS

James D. Houston

PROLOGUE

ENTER FORTINBRAS, WITH THE AMBASSADORS, AND WITH HIS TRAIN OF DRUM, COLORS, AND ATTENDANTS.

Fortinbras: I only am escaped alone to tell thee. The sun also rises.

While, next to the pier, a fat lady (that phrase — does it amuse you, do you hear Phil Silvers warming up?) a fat lady just stepped out of her rowboat, wearing a green and yellow flowered dress. She waddles like a rhino, holds a fist to her mouth and coughs into it, squinting. Do we know her? Do we care?

(And please, can you wait a bit, till things get rolling? It's the road-runner cartoon. Scrawny, smirking desert bird winding up for take-off, scratching the road with feet that disappear in a spinning blur until we spurt out of the picture, inches ahead of the wildcat that wants to swallow us.)

Fortinbras, Fortinbras, don't lie to me,

Tell me where did we sleep last night. (Old Song)

Yes, old song. Out on the bay, wind sends the water hurrying past a line of trees there, a scratchy surface under the noon sun, and one launch slapping the low chop, running against the wind.

In the sun, in the sun, with my cape and my gun

We warbled the whole night long.

SCENE : FORTINBRAS AND THE HOLY GRAIL

He feels, how shall we say, out of sorts. Muscular aches and pains, neuritis, neuralgia, excess gastric acidity, nasal congestion, dull throb in the temples, lack-lustre eyes, or just plain logey. He needs something. His condition is becoming chronic. He never feels right any more. If only he could find a pill, a potion, a tonic to eliminate the logeyness, life itself would have more meaning.

He tries ironized yeast, he tries multiple vitamins, he tries protein supplements, he tries exedrin, bufferin, anacin, alkaseltzer, antihistamines, and coricidin. He builds up his hormone count, kills off harmful bacteria. He encourages his enzymes and reorganizes his haemoglobin. He consults a general practitioner, who refers him to a urologist, who refers him to a radiologist, who refers him to a neurologist, who refers him to a physical therapist, who refers him to a chiropractor.

JAMES D. HOUSTON

He looks and looks, combing pharmacies, close-out sales, health-food stores and clinics. Nothing seems to work — at least not for long. He still feels the same. He begins to lose heart. His shoulders sag. His jaw has gone slack. He's thinking: What's the use?

And at that moment, in the paper he reads of a new remedy endorsed by thousands of satisfied users. It's exactly what he's been looking for.

The very idea revives his limp spirits. He's smiling and eager as he leaves for the drugstore.

PROGRAM NOTES

Fortinbras is nobody's universal tragedy. He arrived too late for that, a few minutes after the showdown, and so spends the rest of his days cleaning up. (Old magazine cartoon: around the polished oval table the board of directors are slumped in tweedy despair, one moustachioed member looking up at a huge portrait of the firm's founder, saying, 'If only he were here.')

But he is gone forever, and only Fortinbras remains, Johnny-come-lately, bearing in his skull, skimpy dissolving images of the good old days. (The bay is bluer now, hard metal blue. No boats at all in such a wind, with dream-clouds pushing down from the mountains, and rows of eucalyptus trees flailing at the wind, Leave us alone, leave us alone.)

And yet . . . and yet . . . it is better to light candles than to curse the darkness.

EPILOGUE (TO BE SPOKEN BY FORTINBRAS FROM A DARK STAGE)

Under exploding waves that grind
pebbles into yet smaller bits
pelicans dive for food.
New ferns rise from rotten trees.
Grass grows in the graveyard,
and sculptors make statues
from scraps of ruined cars.
If this world dissolves
something will come of the pieces.
Something always has.
So there's no need to worry,
except that next time, regrettably,
it won't be me.

Exeunt, Marching — After Which a Peal of Ordinance Is Shot off.

M. IAN SAXE

CYANOGEN

As dull as a dictionary preface,
(the nobility of symbolic representation)
As standard as a STANDARD URINAL,
(only Swift dared recognize its importance)
As close to nature as the hammer and sickle,
(starving farmers without any wheat)
As appealing as a car's crankcase,
(a mechanic with pink playtex gloves)
As eyestopping as a grey stone in a grey stone quarry,
(only a perkins graduate could tell the difference)
I wish he'd drown in bacon fat.
As repulsive as uncooked gelatinous ham,
(it titillates the tongue)
As thoughtless as his thoughts,
(. . .) (. . .) (. . .)
As equivocal as the blades of a pair of scissors,
(cutting a piece of paper on one side)
As doomed as a Greek tragedy,
(studied for centuries on end)
I wished him a neuropathic, tin foil chewing, drilling
death.
He did everything that didn't matter and it made him
feel so good.
His ordinariness was repulsive.

HENRY GRIFFITH

THE OLD ANCHORITE'S AUTUMN MEDITATION

Let us consider the navel now,
The dot above the I of each of us :
Existence is the first certainty.
But what shall we do? How shall we do it?
Louder than fireworks the colors of autumn
Have exploded soundlessly around us!
But should we see too darkly and too far,
What of the winter already within us?
What of the cartilage under the cloth?
What of the heart that is muscle?
What of the mind that is nerve?
What of our lust and its reasons?
Let us consider the navel now,
Let us make witness of ourselves,
Marooned in the middle of autumn,
And the finest performance in the stars.

DOROTHY ELLIN FLAX

I'LL BE MYSELF

Shall I glut my mind with antecedents
— contigual or antique —
clutter my brain with petrified spawn
till my brain's a scrambled ganglion?
Or skim the effervescent, evanescent spray
of the young upstarts as they splash my way
a moment, and are gone
— digesting regurgitating spew it out again
— sour substitute for sunsweet flesh
saltfresh?
I lack the will as well as aptitude
to ape my betters and perhaps escape
the mediocrity nature imposed.
However mean my mien
I shall not screen my own ineptitude.
If I'm not lithe enough for lyrical glissando
I shall not stoop to spleenful innuendo
and should I lack the stature for the epic stance
I'll prance no monkey dance!

DOROTHY ELLIN FLAX

BELLY TO WING

Belly to wing,
 how far the fling
 in evolution's elongated spiral?
 The snake, you've heard,
 progenitor to the bird
 — who would suppose him so virile?
 How anticipate
 a scaly crawling creature
 —the original
 treacherous lecher —
 could slough his nature
 and eventuate,
 at a later date,
 a lyric-winged, angelical symbol?
 So it goes with men
 of creative ken
 — videlicet Liszt,
 Blake, Donne, Molière,
 Cellini, Bellini, Baudelaire

MARY WEEDON STIVER

TO THE GODDESS, LIFE

What of age
 that sickles over the ripe dreams,
 while the woman watches them topple
 at the least flick . . .
 Does it matter, which direction?
 A bare shrug tells all.
 So I am crowding sixty:
 vision and hearing unimpaired
 except for 'reading glasses;'

so I am weighted and fragile-boned:
 with the thistle-down, the goose-down,
 and the rain run off my shoulders . . .
 Shrug tell all?

No, I am helpless with fury
that the moments piled on moments . . .
a tall tower to the goddess:
and the bitch will pull out the rug
from under my knees before the last moment
of prayer is recorded . . .
like words on water.
Where have they gone, the moments?
What do they all add up to?
(The price I paid was high . . .
dare I ask, was it worth it?)

MARY WEEDON STIVER

TOMORROW I SHALL FIND AN ANSWER

And my fury?
Will it die a natural death?
Grovel like a dog?
Or turn on the Goddess, Life,
and be damned?
Today I watch the ripe dreams topple:
Does it matter which direction,
or what age?

ARCHIE ROSENHOUSE

THE OFFICE WIFE

She of the caressing eyes,
the honeyed lips,
the predatory breasts,
Floats
 between heaven and earth,
Flits
 into eyes, bodies,
 of the everready males.
Atmosphere
 thick with courting.

Duties wither
 on vines of her demeanor.
None has the strength
 to lift a demand to her face.
Her life-mode,
levant and couchant,
 bare pleasure.
Her couch a haven,
her eyes heaven,
and she a Garden of Eden.
On a ceiling corner moulding
blackbird “utility”
dreams black dreams.

WILLIAM McLEOD RIVERA

POETS ARE OUT

mutual fear brings peace Will
Blake you saw selfish
loves increase
killing at best people drop little
bombs nations adjust to the bad as
good I believe in
dogs the struggle of scientists poets are out
of it the end of the world is now
an ordinary idea computers lasers hover-
craft art
should be in
the long run dangerous Plato prophesied today
we are guilty
bystanders or buy
a decision like a motorcycle and are gone
to extremes good
poems are no good lasers computers hover-
craft in words we need to kill
selfish love mutual fear is a vision
I aim all I've got is
this plastic gun

DOROTHY GRAVAGE

JAZZMOTATED

like out of Ether
shapes of Sound
whirl into Me,
at Say When,
or jacarthy's bar,
where dark Men
slap Vibronic base
and wild drums
carry Words
to bodies
sandwiched
between slices of smoke.
I move
with the Beat.
the Combo
speaks from the Sacristy,
it Booms
to the congregate
Devout
and I cry out,
singing my beads.

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MARION WOODALL

HARVEST

Phonics, phrase, context clue Phonogram and diagraph too,
Synonym and homonym, n. and adj. and plur. and dim. —
Opinion, Fact and Rumor — Adventure, History and Humor
— Essay, Poetry and Fiction, Argument, Debate and Diction,
Expletive and pun per sé Commutative and real cliché Lazar,
mayser, deliquescence. Acceleration — obsolescence — SOS
— L.S.M.F. T — Cum laude C.O.D.

LOUIS GINSBERG

MILLENNIUM

The city indexed silence;
The trees broke out in tears;
The houses cached their honey;
While stars let down their years.
The T V tubes saw visions;
Orators ceased to shout;
The schools tore up the text-books;
People turned inside out.
The atom-bombs went silent,
Picketing all the strife;
The skies surrendered horizons —
And I stepped into life.

HALE CHATFIELD

TRICK DONE WITH MIRRORS

A roadside condom's
shock is jealousy;
jealousy's awe
when countless such flaccid
fish convene
at a juncture
of river and sea:
what's more
preposterous than somebody else's
lust? What's less credible
than others' ecstasy?
No man expects
to meet his double
on a country road:
no man dreams
of wakening in a town
where every stranger wears
his monogram.

MARION MONTGOMERY

THE RETIRING PROFESSOR LOOKS OUT ACROSS THE PEPSI GENERATION, AS IF A FIERCE DOVE WENT FORTH

Robert Frost, commenting on man viewed as caged bear among the centuries, says 'He almost seems religious, but he's not.' Yet he is; the only problem is to define the object of his worship. Our present god goes under many attempts at name, the most inclusive being Progress. Whose first martyr in this hemisphere was Ponce de Leon, seeking the Fountain of Youth. The son of that father (Progress), or sacrificial husband to that wife, is Original. No sooner named, but he turns Idol on us, weak selfish creatures that we are. The

curse of our false worship is that firstness seems essence to us. Who, by the way, discovered America? We used to hear lament of such sad decay from intellectual clouds of this new holy land, largely directed against the market place: new name, new styling. But every year Ford turns Phoenix. Make it new, and the new can make us forget the insistence of it.

Who can escape a plague? We are infected. The old lament is faint, grows weaker with each new flush of gold that crumbles ivory towers. The Idol, richer than the Nile, bears golden millions to our sacred temples: library, laboratory. New, we say in our hearts (out of our own hearing) is good for advertising. Evangelical to legislature or foundation, Newness is the tool that digs our sluices to those richer (alas) drowning waters. Phlebos is dead, but don't mention it. The god turned gushing Idol is at last drained of its enshrining waters? Preposterous old economics; nonsense. Not to be confused with new religion, whose god cannot die. Yet, Osiris, blood draining, does not bring us close to any Isis. Perhaps larger cars and steady pensions translated? We founder in the weird sticky other person of that magic duo: Progress-Original. Out of Isis-Osiris — temporary immortality, security for retired priests thereof.

In Plato's world turned worldly, Puritan decay, the final failing is the raft of tenure, numbered. Original Professor X, in rough waters, holds his Ino's veil of bibliography. The true nature of it pursued is here comfortless. Let Aristotle spend twenty years at Plato. In another country — and besides, the bitch Philosophy is dead.

The new springs, in the young tiger lurking. Twenty, PHDed. That special heaven we seized as our own (Specialty), which gave priestly office (Expert) is always being violently borne away from us. We seek rarer and more-private Elysium. But alas the new — enzyme, article, chicken: it becomes such a common has-been sort of thing.

MARION MONTGOMERY

And we grow old. We grow old.

Turned toothless, must we drink our state broth cold?

We hope only that the common has-been thing we were may represent deposit against future cold, bright-fire banked. Perhaps, just perhaps, given one last (perhaps) Project, the has-been may be suggested as collateral for a new measure of healing waters: Government or Foundation, new sweet Ino's veil.

Face bravely, old men, clinging to the mast outworn:

Have you done anything recently:

Are you at work on anything now?

Oh well. Youth fled, one may tell the story of the journey, be remembered as the first who used objective correlative on Hamlet. Or, that failing, the first to observe who first used the term on Hamlet. Compulsion to new newness in our old age—as if we really weren't immortal. The accident (Newness) of the reality (It): we make substance. No lively liquor to the old.

Hence, Relativism, the world's church militant, harvesting the Nile. Raising tombs we cannot build, by and from rich waters. Not so much the true nature of existence—an insight into the true True (as we pretend from most advanced mathematician down through used-car salesman). But pressing 'economic' necessity. Since we ourselves are the final chit on the exchange set up in the temple. Sad fact: one doesn't sell well if not new. The bucket full of years holds little of the golden waters we used to step so young and gayly to the Potomac to fetch. Who can afford devotion to an abiding it, if the cow equals the milk she gives? The market structure of ourselves would tumble. Newmatic pipelines replace old oaken buckets. What happens to General Motors should it produce a wonderful one-horse shay, that ancient threat to Yankee genius? To Gillette, if undullable blades get handed round. To Professional Teaching Certificates, should

Shakespeare's lyrics prove first-grade fare? Communal machine tests no longer measure?

By folly first, now for survival's sake, we become absolutists such as never were in time before: absolutists of Relativity. And we continue uneasy in our security. Some whose trade is in new sentences wish to have, themselves, said 'There is nothing new under the sun'. For, there lies security: it is the last possibility in relative history to say an abiding Original aphorism. Oh, how we suffer, unheroic. In waters, yet thinking ourselves dark Oedipus of flowery vales. Poor fish blinded by accidents of false glittering spray on invisible rocks, compulsion to the new.

MARION MONTGOMERY

say the new, and so for a moment be the marketable new, perpetual youth still our dream. Oh! golden waters. And even Original Sin is a revelation of a country we won't suffer, since it is not distinctly and peculiarly our own. Sin's adjective, alas, is neither newly new nor relatively true. We perish clutching Ino's veil, almost safely ashore, praying: Oh, St. Ponce de Leon, save us, now and in the year of our retirement or grant.

**THE WAR GAME (IS A) PRIVILEGE
(BUT) DON'T LOOK BACK (OR: BUT
FIRST, A LITTLE SONG . . .)**

by A. Fredric Franklin

IN MY MIND'S EYE I SEE a couple of children and a rabbit, indoors, in a large living room filled with furniture and bric-a-brac. The kids have foolishly let the rabbit out of its cage, and it is having itself a romp over the carpet and floors. The doors and windows all are closed, so the rabbit can't get out. But neither can the children catch it. They plunge gleefully in its wake, their small hands reaching and closing on emptiness.

Almost as if the rabbit knows how ineffectual their small bodies are, it sits waiting each time until they are almost upon it before moving again. Then, effortlessly, it is off once more scampering around the room among the towering furnishings, pausing here and there, in this forest of chair legs and table legs and piano and desk legs, to catch its breath or do its business, leaving a little something here and a little something there . . .

The children are totally frustrated, of course. But they aren't entirely unhappy. That's the feeling I get — that's somehow what it's like — trying to review a Peter Watkins movie. Everything's just fine, until the moment I get too close. And then he's off and away again, possibly leaving another small pile for me.

A couple of years back, the British Broadcasting Corporation commissioned this youngster (at that time not as yet thirty) to do a special which would deal with the probable effects of nuclear warfare on the population. *THE WAR GAME* is, today, notorious. But, after viewing the film upon completion, both the B.B.C. officials and the Home Office responsible for civil defense and public morals banned Watkins' pseudodocumentary. (That's a term which should gain wider usage, or some equivalent at any rate, as more films in this genre, which emulate the newsreel and cinema-verité techniques, appear in art-house theatres.)

Well, what was this all about? The following paragraphs are loosely quoted from the film's narration:

London [now]—Russian nuclear bombs devastated most of Great Britain yesterday. The horrors of war were mercilessly poured against this island in an effort to aid the Red Chinese now openly engaged in bitter fighting against U.S. troops in Viet Nam. They massively outnumber the Americans, who began using strategical nuclear weapons less than 48 hours ago.

In the cities women and children were hastily evacuated during the scant hours preceding the Russian attack. Homes, offices, and public buildings were partially sandbagged against the nuclear bombs.

Many persons were unable to leave the cities because of confusion, congestion, and even disinterest. Most of the defensive measures urged by responsible leaders failed because of public apathy. The terrifying toll of the dead in wake of the bomb cannot be ascertained — or even imagined — at this time.

Countless thousands perished because they believed 'it would never happen.'

Casualty lists continue to mount in residential quarters because of slipshod 'fortifications' which left homes pitifully vulnerable to the nuclear explosion.

A state of emergency has been declared by the Government. Announcement was made on the B.B.C. Special Band at 11 PM.

Harrowing, unbelievable reports are still coming from every quarter. The effects of strontium 90 are yet to be reckoned with by all exposed survivors of the original blast.

All persons severely burned by the bomb blast yesterday are being systematically killed off, according to the Government report. Dazed witnesses say mercy killings are being carried out on the spot in every section of the country.

It is also stated that looters are facing firing squads wherever they are caught. Food riots have been widespread. Police and civilians have clashed repeatedly over the scant food stocks still intact.

Russian rockets had no difficulty finding targets. Great Britain had more potential strike points than any other land mass its size.

One military spokesman noted that another attack is feasible since the nuclear weapons are plentiful. Estimates place it at the equivalent of twenty tons of explosive for every man, woman, and child in the world.

It's an adequate build-up. It's not a terribly original one, the outlines actually suggesting themselves, once given the subject. But the progression, anyway, is sound and entirely believable. What matters now is the conclusion which will cap all this preparation.

In his essay on war in *ENDS AND MEANS*, Aldous Huxley declares: 'War exists because people wish it to exist.' He goes on to point out that there are substantial reasons in the lives of a great many people for making this apparently-universally condemned institution desirable. This is a bitter theme. And there are two or three sequences in the Watkins film where it is more than hinted — without, however, quite developing at any point into a guiding purpose for the picture. Nor does the conclusion refer back, in any way, to these vague suggestions of a leitmotif.

Elsewhere, Huxley points out the euphemistic character of the oblique journalistic references to the slaughter of warfare, a tabloid approach with which we all are familiar; and one that is the more comfortable because guaranteed not to interfere with one's digestive processes at the breakfast table. The references are usually phrased something like this: So-and-so reports (not, admits!) that the left flank (not, some dozens or hundreds of adult male human beings!) of Tuesday's advance (not, stupid blunder or

holocaust) has suffered nearly total casualties.... (For Christ's sake, these weren't men dying — were they?) These 'communiqués' are meant, not to expose, but to mask the inhumanity of the war game. And of course they are a very different sort from those accompanying the visual impact of the Watkins documentary.

In *THE WAR GAME*, we've seen, much more honestly, all the horrific eventualities which we can believe would follow upon the heels of an atomic assault: We've seen the noontday sunlight magnified by the explosions miles away (a trick of going from the positive image in the frame to a negative one); We've seen individuals dying of asphyxiation from the imbalanced atmospheric ration of oxygen to carbon monoxide; We've seen the blindness, the frightful radiation burns, the appalling effects of strontium 90, the monsters into which the radiation burns have turned people, the psychotic collapse of individuals who have seen too much maiming and death; We've seen the mercy killings, foot riots, vandalisms, lootings, executions, and so on, and so on.

We have, in short, been maximally prepared for the climax of all these images and sequences. Now, we want to know what the author-director thinks about it all, what he has to say to us, his own personal statement of his thematic intent for which, presumably, all this material has been collected and organized....

And that's most unfortunate, because there isn't any such summation. Every expectation apparently has been unconsciously stimulated by Watkins. He isn't even aware, at the conclusion of his film, that anything remains to be desired. He has taken for granted, as a matter of fact, that nothing further, by way of his special individual viewpoint, need be added to the amply-implied theme that this really wouldn't be so good . . . if it happened.

Worse, that 'if' is precisely the note on which this little documentary is terminated. Watkins has literally grabbed

his viewers by the hair and yanked them out of their involvement with his vehicle. This, he concludes, is what could happen . . . if it happened . . . or something. In other words, everything is okay. It didn't really happen, after all. You are still safe. You can return to the ostrich comfort of your emotional head-in-sand attitude.

This 'if-it-were-to-happen-here' reference occurs throughout the script. This is defeating each time, because it makes the audience's investment and identification ridiculous. But nowhere is this as jolting to this audience empathy as at the picture's end. And that is the note upon which the viewer is obliged to leave the theatre . . . reassured that everything has been let's-pretend!

Carried out visually in the same semirealistic style of narration, the film is a highly-stylized compilation of pseudonewsreel segments with over narration and two kinds of live action scenes: The ersatz 'interviews' and the 'on-the-spot' synchronous sound scenes. The entire production was filmed in the suburbs of London. There are no scenes which depict any of the mythical events supposedly happening elsewhere in the world. The atomic explosions, the fire storms, and even individuals burning alive are depicted in gruesome and authentic detail. And when either police or civilians are literally executed in the streets, this is done in the manner we have been accustomed to witnessing in television coverage of such events. These fictionally-executed human beings look very dead. And, of course, this is a topic of enormous immediacy. So, then — is this creative cinema? Has the writer-director, Peter Watkins, achieved a cinematic work of art? But there he goes again! And we almost had our hands on him . . .

I mean, does anybody have the audacity to say that a picture as timely and significant and honest (and all that) as this one is not a work of art? Lord, I don't know! But I'm almost certain that, at least in his first two films, Watkins

has not exhibited the lineaments of a major directorial talent. (His second one, *PRIVILEGE*, has only just been released in the U.S. And I presently intend to deal with it at length in this article, as well as with the Richard Leacock and D. A. Pennebaker production, *DON'T LOOK BACK*, an instance of cinema-verité to which Watkins' later release bears a remarkable similarity.)

Photographed by Peter Bartlett and edited by Michael Bradsell, *THE WAR GAME* is an important film. But its director, nonetheless, is not an especially important talent. The film's horrifying excesses did require determination and courage; and Watkins has his share of both. But the quasi documentary was an assignment in the first place, and hardly an original concept. Nor have either the film's literary aspects or calculated excesses required any great imagination. Once given the assignment and its purpose and the means to implement it, the story line seems to suggest itself; and the entire progression, thereafter, appears somewhat inevitable. We scarcely need mention models such as Philip Wylie's novel, *TOMORROW*, Eugene Burdick and Harvey Wheeler's *FAIL SAFE* (adapted for the screen by Walter Burnstein and directed by Sidney Lumet—Columbia, 1963), or the Stanley Kubrick-Terry Southern-Peter George screenplay—also, Columbia, 1963—*DR. STRANGELOVE, OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB*, from George's novel, *RED ALERT*, and directed by Kubrick.

In his notorious (and, in my opinion, absurdly overrated) documentary, *NUIT ET BROUILLARD* [1955], Alain Resnais has also taken a self-evidently 'important' theme and exploited it with the same predictability. Resnais' superficial approach never departs, even momentarily, from the obvious, to make any kind of personal statement. His color camera makes the same funereally-paced ante-bellum trip through the now-inactive German concentration camps which so many already have done with black-and-white newsreel and

documentary-shorts cameras for our re-edification—more or less. As indicated, the only two real differences are that he does the film in color and spends appreciably more footage than the cinematists who already have done what Resnais seemed to have felt the theme required to make the point.

But, of course, it's all in a perfectly splendid cause. Do you want to see human beings thrown into such kennel-like prisons, to be baked and gassed and sadistically operated upon by psychotic surgeons? Of course, you don't! And isn't it perfectly awful that the Nazis did this in Hitler's Germany? Certainly, it is! And don't you think an occasional reminder of these atrocities is productive in the cause of ensuring that it does not happen again, here or elsewhere? Naturally, you do.

So, then—is this art? And is Resnais a quote-unquote creative director? Ought it even be taken into account that Resnais' vehicle is an enormously simplified one? After all, most of the directors who have attempted to deal with antiwar, antiviolence, and antipersecution themes have had to simplify while dealing with and employing the whole array of cinematic elements: screenplay, cast, make-up, costuming, set design, intricacies of budgeting a full-length feature, continuity, characterization, relationships, and even literary content, to the extent the script makes use of thematic argument. The only element common to them all, and present in the Resnais documentary, is the necessity, in howsoever unimaginative a fashion, to point a camera at something and expose X-amount of raw stock, until somebody decides there is enough. Is Resnais' limited task, in *NUIT ET BROUILLARD*, the equal of Kubrick's *PATHS OF GLORY* (1958) or Andrzej Munk's *THE PASSENGER* (1961) or Shinobu Hashimoto's *I'D RATHER BE A SHELLFISH* (1967) or Carl Foreman's *THE VICTORS* (1962) or Lewis Milestone's *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* (1930) or Arthur Miller's stage play, *AFTER THE FALL*? Does it so much as have the complexity of

something as black and white as Billy Wilder's *STALAG 17* (1952) or a picture as banal and exaggerated as John Sturges' *THE GREAT ESCAPE* (1963)?

Certainly, any protest against atomic holocaust, in any form and however artistically limited, is in order. But this is a general subject, and has been worked over by all the hacks and the experts. Judged by *THE WAR GAME*, Watkins is no hack. On the other hand, I can see nothing especially fresh or original there, either by way of viewpoint or by way of method, in the treatment of the subject. It merely seems a worthwhile movie produced by a competent talent. And I think the production would have attracted considerable notice and discussion — even without having been banned initially by the B.B.C. and the Home Office — because of its subject. But I think Peter Watkins might have received much less attention as the film's director.

For the same reasons, my feeling is that more can be said for the thematic substance of *PRIVILEGE*, his second film, and less said for Watkins' substance as a director. Yet, again, I am reminded of my image of the children and their rabbit. Because so much can be said about the theme of *PRIVILEGE* that it becomes an open question whether we must perhaps base a portion of our estimate of a director's abilities upon his facility for selecting really-controversial material — for whatever quality of exploitation! Before dealing with this later movie, in fact, I want to consider its premise at some length.

...

Not that this will seriously disturb any of the hard-core purposes and directions of the little social universe in its professional orbits; but, the point of view of this movie is at least upsetting in terms of the more necessary and especially satisfying of our illusions about the moral climate of Twentieth Century planetary echology — above all, perhaps, our singular ideals about the value of personal worth or

original talent. We will return to this notion in a moment.

I've long been persuaded that most of the earth-disrupting, horrendous, so-called differences between the — great (quote-unquote) — political ideologies of our time are perceptible largely by only the most selective attention breaks. (i.e.: in the way John Cage listens to his mixture of random cowbells with Beethoven coming over the radio, so that he can keep turning the latter on and off at irregular intervals — this being, as he has explained, the only way in which Beethoven becomes palatable for him!)

Let's be candid: For the majority of us, nearly all the time, politics is a dirty word. Anyone who still thinks of either politics or politicians as dedicated to serving the public weal is simply naive. It just isn't true of American politics in the second half of the Twentieth Century. Even our Abraham Lincoln of this Century has said: 'Ask not what your country can do for you; but, rather, what you can do for your country.' This might be a nobly-selfless ideal of personal service, but the truth is that it was being advanced as a standard of citizenship! As such, this is on a par with the ideal that the driver exists to serve his vehicle. Your Detroit model, in other words, wasn't manufactured to serve your transportation needs . . . rather, you were put together in some poor female creature's womb, then protected and loved and reared and even educated, to serve the limited life-expectancies of these Detroit-machined miscarriages!

We are always courting a certain amount of danger whenever we risk an opinion. Because any lucid and outspoken viewpoint — about anything — is bound to be offensive to somebody. But, when we attack any one thing, we have at least a theoretical support from its generic opposite. We really risk ourselves and engage our opinions when we are compelled by our values — and our individuality — to assume the truly-isolated posture of 'a pox on both your houses.' What we cannot point the finger at with any

impunity, in any kind of subject we are discussing, is everything of that kind. But that's so often precisely the dismaying task before us . . . !

Isn't the primary goal, within any of the world's political organisms, to get ahead (i.e.: of one's fellows)? From the human perspective, the tragic point about the central goals in each political environment is that the structural philosophies all assume that the individual is some kind of depersonalized pillar which has been erected solely to support an abstract governmental entity. What does the particular form or name of the institutional milieu signify? Such a rationale is a program for dehumanization, under whatever political designation. Furthermore, implicit in this value edifice is the additional folly of viewing government as an end in itself.

Above all, it must be understood — even of personalities as great as the Kennedys — that the institutions of any social order are created by men to serve men. Forever isolated, each of us, in our own skulls, we are individuals, for better or for worse, and whether or not we wish to suffer the distinction. Any social concepts or governmental idioms which fail to take into their semantical accounts the immeasurable variety and inexhaustible possibilities of these differences are naive to the point of inutility. Their evolution, necessarily, will be an even swifter process than the customary historical brevity in the rise and fall of nations and cultures. Anyway, there are more enlightened sociological ecologies today than there were a couple of thousand years ago. And, hopefully, there will be wiser methods employed in the civil autonomies of the future.

In the meantime, the natural condition of life for this individuality is one of perpetual jeopardy. And what our fragile vanities must understand is that the imposition of our private hopes is suffered by the society. We ourselves are suffered to draw breath despite — never because of — the

personal nature of those hopes.

If this seems demolishing to the individual's ego, it's because we acquire such facility at distorting reality that it ceases to upset us or to challenge the images it flatters us to project from our sense of self-importance. But this is an untrustworthy base from which to learn anything about the world. In a way, it's funny. And cruel. Because most of us live out our lives without acquiring the most rudimentary standards for gauging what is and what isn't important ... either in our personal lives or on a greater scale.

It isn't necessarily true that the few among us who achieve any sort of eminence have done so because of any ability to make this kind of distinction. Sadly, most of us are merely creatures of impulse. And impulse is not often a reliable criterion for anything. However, every now and then (rarely), the collection of impulses in a particular individual prove unaccountably fortunate for him — probably not lucky in terms of personal happiness, but leading him, stumbling and blind, into his fool's greatness.

What Johnny Speight's story and Norman Bogner's screenplay and Peter Suschitsky's photography and John Trumper's editing have brought, by way of their collective insights, to Watkins' *PRIVILEGE* is, at best, a murky thematic identity: Conformity is bad. Fleshing their skeletal clichés out considerably with our own interpretation, we will not be able to resist adding much to what the film's method has not specifically earned. My own poking around in this Sargasso Sea of innuendo has come up with this elucidation: Whatever the luck or manner in which another fumbler has fumbled his way into the halls of the mighty, somebody has always got there before him. In fact, a whole raft of others, more or less as crippled and stupid, will be waiting there when he enters. And each of them will already have established his personal entitlement to remain here with all the others. Those who appeared and failed to conquer are

long gone from this place.

The newcomer will have to satisfy many others, all of them skeptical, that he belongs here. And he isn't going to do that by demonstrating any type of personal worth. If he had any real substance as a human being, any appetite or qualifications for life, he wouldn't be here among these 'successes' and 'above' the battle. Or he might have stumbled among them, but only momentarily. That is what he must demonstrate: That he is entitled to more than a momentary place in these halls. No amount or variety of personal excellence will help him do that. The mighty just aren't interested in such qualities. What our fumbler must do here is at once both easier and more difficult: He will have to convince a great many very sick people that his presence among them will never prove a serious embarrassment or make them excessively uncomfortable. Should he fail to produce enough positive evidence of 'good' (i.e.: paralyzed) will, all the additional fortune with which it's possible to support his original luck will not maintain him in this world.

As I indicated a little earlier, the value we place so arbitrarily on this idea of personal worth is rooted in nothing more encouraging or reliable than our vanity and our fear. In his study of motivational behavior, *THE HIDDEN REMNANT*, Gerald Sykes examines in some detail the neurosis which drives some men to massive over-preparation for their life goals. It's one type of response to suppression. The antithetical response, of course, is the decision to pass over or side-step the conflict inherent in questioning the status quo, to accept the fact of authority as an absolute, to learn the ground rules of the game and to conform.

The story line of *PRIVILEGE* is sketchy to the point of absurdity. It is something of a compendium, too, of the popular clichés of the radical view upon which a discouraging percentage of the art-house protest films are premised. And there is the patent dishonesty of an attempt

to 'luck into' the statement of theme rather than to arrive at it deliberately. The result is a lot of suggestive material which remains unspecifically exploited. But, again, *Peter Rabbit* dodges the reach of our criticism. Because that damned theme, even where we have been left to piece it together ourselves, often supplying missing parts from whole cloth, is so exciting that we discover ourselves amazingly willing to undertake the refinement of Watkins' and Bogner's amoebic labors.

We are caught up and incensed by this dimly-formed idea that our betters can (and sometimes will) make do with a select handful of us; but, more often and more comfortably, they can positively do better without most of us! So this isn't just a question whether or not the artist is willing to prostitute himself and his gifts. By the time he gets around to the decision to sell out, even to sell out everything he has, he may discover that there are no buyers.

The film is done, insofar as they will work, with the pseudodocumentary techniques of *THE WAR GAME*. There are the ersatz interviews and newsreels, the narrative over and behind these sections of the picture, and the sync-sound on-the-spot scenes and fictional performances of the lead character in the live action sequences. These are fresher, more sophisticated tricks of production devised for a generation of television viewers. This new audience is a demanding one. Because it has been privy, through the access of the medium, to any of the world's events, to more of the ugly realities of war and famine and disaster than many people ever had firsthand views of before. They know, today, what a dead man or a hungry man looks like. They know how the man in the street really speaks. And they know what real tears or mass hysteria and mob violence look like.

As have others before him in the U.S., the Maysles Brothers (*LONELY BOY* and *THE SHOWMAN*) and Leacock and

Pennebaker (JANE and DON'T LOOK BACK), Watkins has brought the techniques of the television age to the feature cinema; but not without mixed results. So much attention to the nuances of the new realism has gained him authenticity, yet it has also cost him the development of character and relationship. The people of PRIVILEGE are almost as depersonalized as the central image of an old newsreel of Winston Churchill or Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It is, in my opinion, only possible to get at the rough-hewn outlines of humanity with a conscientiously impersonal approach. And whole areas of human intent must remain conjecturable and unexploited.

In this atmosphere of super-realism, even the necessity to penetrate a character in his variety as well as in his humanity is obviated. Here, the man in the gray flannel suit actually wears a gray flannel suit. In this kind of theatre, the fat greedy ten-percenter is fat and greedy; he's also balding and he smokes large expensive cigars. Calculated insincerity is blatantly calculated and insincere. And we do not require — forget even to ask — anything about earlier background or motive.

Yet, that core of central truth hinted by this slick eviscerated technicolor scam remains in the mind. Knowing perfectly well I've let Peter jump away from me again, I'm bound to say that, in many ways, this pretentious and inadequate movie is a soul-sickening and honest view of things as they really are. At once, the worst thing and the best that might be said of it is that, given considerably more footage, the film might have done justice to the subject.

I ought perhaps to synopsise the story at this juncture. I'm conscious of an odd reluctance to do so. And this is not simply because the screenplay is so weak and diffuse, considered apart from its technical approach, and interpreting its thematic content. . . . It doesn't seem to me that the seven or eight additional pages which I might devote

to a resume of Speight's story and Bogner's script would be worth the space. Above all, that the story's gimmicks and devices and superficial characterizations and absurdly-inapt plotting would not be worth detailing. Briefly, then, let me just stop at suggesting in the barest outlines this labored, patchworked, oversimplified, and ridiculous complicated mish-mash story.

Steven Shorter (Paul Jones) is the world's most popular entertainer, earning more than any other performer in history. But his mediocre rock/folk music and voice are only secondary. There is something indefinable in his personality and presence which has gained him such a colossal and fantastically-devoted audience.

Everybody around Shorter, including the government of his own country, is misusing his popularity to further their interests. Only Shorter's girl friend (Jean Shrimpton) has interest in him as a human being. Unable to bear these remorselessly-impersonal demands on his usefulness, the skinny singer is on the verge of an identity crisis.

When he collapses emotionally, during a television broadcast covering an award dinner given him for publicity, Shorter tells an audience of millions that he hates them for what they have done to the person inside him. He has, in three minutes, absolutely destroyed the possibility of further utility, in his talent or in his person, to the leeches around him who have been making their fortunes at his expense, and to the church and state which have been assiduous in making ruthless use of him in their own service.

Retribution is swift. He is denied access to any public media for the rest of his life. He is no longer 'privileged' to appear before the public. The ex-entertainer swiftly falls into obscurity. The highest-paid and most-acclaimed performer in history is almost forgotten within a year.

The most jejeune postulates are utilized, such as the slogan attributed to the campaign headed by Shorter to

seduce the nation's youth to a passion for conformity: 'We will conform!' A piece of naiveté as crude as this assumes that it's possible to popularize things like duty and obligation by calling them duty and obligation; but the real manipulators of people and opinion would be selling the audience the idea that this is their one chance in a million to get something for nothing!

And again, there are unexpected excellences in the screenplay. One such is the treatment of Shorter's repudiation of his audience. The entirely-human limitations of this second-rate balladeer are cruelly apparent when he rises and stands before the cameras. He is unable to speak at all, at first; he is actually crying before he so much as begins. What he has to say is going to cost him everything, his popularity, his personal fortune, and any hope of a public future. Inarticulate almost to a degree of paralysis, when he finally finds his voice almost the only thing he can say, repeating it over and over again, is that he hates them. His explanation why he hates them — what they have done to him — is so abbreviated that it is doubtful that the most sympathetic of them will understand any of it. And this choice — to obliterate all suggestion of the heroic posture — has an unmistakable ring of truth.

Perhaps the most striking thing about *PRIVILEGE*, after its provocative (if garbled) thematic material, is the remarkable parallel suggested between the story and Richard Leacock's and D. A. Pennebaker's cinema-verité documentary, *DON'T LOOK BACK*. The more than twenty hours of footage shot for this film during a four-week tour of England by Bob Dylan has been edited down to something like an hour and a half. But ninety minutes are enough to expose some aggravatingly-revealing moments in the work habits and social attitudes of a colossally-arrogant and unaccountably-hostile youth who has achieved, for an inarguably-limited talent, as much financial and prestigious

recognition as anyone his age could ever have expected. (There is no parallel at all, other than in their application of similar techniques, between *THE WAR GAME* and *DON'T LOOK BACK*.)

If Bob Dylan (a stage name) has personal or psychological problems, maybe of a serious nature, so do we all. But few of the cruellest of the world's celebrities are as brutally ungenerous in their behavior toward their less-gifted or less-fortunate inferiors as is this unhappy young man.

Like the fictional Steve Shorter of *PRIVILEGE*, Dylan has achieved a stupendous popularity for a limited talent. And, like Shorter, he has a retinue of followers: a few of them actually useful, but most of them leeches, spear carriers, and hangers on. There are also myriad lesser parallels between the two films, including the audiences on screen, the money haggling, the hothouse backstage environment, the frantic atmosphere of a major entertainer's personal appearances, and so on; above all, the ceaseless climate of hypocrisy and sycophantism inevitably surrounding an international celebrity. The significant distinction between the documentary and the feature, where all the convenient parallels abruptly run into difficulties, is in the *PRIVILEGE* delineation of the protagonist as a simple unassuming well-intentioned artist whose basic amiability is victimized by others. He even lacks access to his own wealth and cannot have so much as a girl friend without the specific approval of a half-dozen members of his entourage and a whole board of directors, besides. He, under no circumstance, is ever permitted the slightest say about the quality or evolution of his professional image.

Dylan, on the other hand, is free to scramble his brains any time he wishes in a stupid motorcycle accident, to fill his 'protest' songs with innuendos about drug addiction, sexual deviation, social invective, and all the compromising ramifications of his own deeply-personal rebellion against

the society which has made possible the staggering success of a totally-unoriginal and unexceptional talent.

Dylan is ready to turn his weapons of sarcasm and contumely instantly upon his most ardent admirers. And his exaggerated hostility toward the press especially is already legendary. No one, including his most serious detractors, can say of him that he has courted his own audience!

His ruthless treatment of those around him, whether business associates, friends, or acquaintances, distinguishes him from the fictional Shorter, who is apathetic most of the time in his dealings with nearly all others.

In one scene in *DON'T LOOK BACK*, Dylan is in his large hotel suite with some thirty or forty people, including Donovan who has dropped over to meet him and to play for him. (This is in 1965, before Donovan became really big time, but after he already was becoming a top box-office draw and recording artist with, at least in England, a hard-core following.) It is some sort of afternoon cocktail party or press reception. Someone has either accidentally or deliberately dropped a liquor glass out of the window, and the management has learned of it and phoned up to protest this drunken behavior. Dylan cannot possibly have any accurate or reliable notion as to who has done this. But he is in a towering foul-mouthed rage and determined to get himself a victim for it.

The worst thing about his senseless thick-skinned transparent anger is that the incident cannot possibly mean anything to him, in view of an earlier sequence at another hotel where he permits his equally foul-mouthed manager to treat one of the hostelry's executives so badly that he and his entire entourage are thrown out. But, with or without any point, this is an opportunity for him not only to continue ignoring Donovan, but to take stage center for a moment in his own privatelystaged melodrama. He does not ignore the chance, whatever the cost to his image in the eyes of any

thinking persons present. And his cinematic biographers get it all down on celluloid.

He seizes upon some half-drunk and semi-literate kid in the room — plainly present because of his hero worship of his idol, Bob Dylan. The boy protests his innocence repeatedly, but Dylan's shocking determination to use him as a whipping boy won't credit anything but the blind assumption he's already made of this poor devil's guilt.

Dylan is not an especially bright individual. Yet, like many only halfway-adequate intellects, he endeavors to disguise many personal shortcomings with a vituperative tongue. He is something of a self-styled sadist with his clever mouth. And he's not in the slightest above taking a maximum and disgusting advantage of his immensely-superior status as a celebrity to humiliate his victim. He quickly wins his unequal little battle, after which Donovan is still willing not only to remain in the same room with him, but to persist in his determination to sing something for Dylan. This is probably the kind of diffidence from the less-recognized talent which is somehow accepted as due the more-recognized talent!

In fact, this boot-licking by other celebrities of somewhat lesser rank is one of the features of the documentary which emerges again and again. Joan Baez's unaccountable genuflections to the Dylan ego throughout the first half of the film are especially offensive. She's just there — in the Presence — like all the other little boot-lickers and spear carriers. And, like Donovan, she is willing to wait — and wait and wait — for an opportunity to sing to him. And again, like Donovan, eager to do so when the opportunity arises, even if Dylan pointedly continues to ignore her.

The euphemisms written about these revolting scenes by movie reviewers, such as Philip Elwood, John L. Wasserman, and Ralph J. Gleason, fall spectacularly wide of the mark:

Elwood: 'Grossman, the principal supporting character, is just wonderful in the film. He is a cherubic Quaker Oats looking type who nevertheless tells off hotel lackeys and handles a booking conference with steel nerves and an ingratiating aplomb.

'Joan Baez makes a strong impact with her disarming beauty during the early scenes just by being in the background and singing a little. . . . Toward the end, during the juicy hotel episode, young Donovan sings one and is most attractive in the camera eye.'

Wasserman: 'In the hotel a stoned neighbor causes some trouble and the threat of a fight appears. Dylan listens to Donovan sing in his room, or clowns with Alan Price or sways in rhythm to a Joan Baez song as he sits pecking at a typewriter.

'His manager, Albert Grossman, who looks like a Soviet diplomat, is also revealingly shown — wheeling and dealing, blustering and cursing in the time-honored tradition of the Big Time Operator.'

Gleason: 'In an incredibly real scene, Dylan meets Donovan at a party, sings Baby Blue magnificently for Donovan and Donovan, in turn, sings To Sing for You for Dylan. Joan Baez is present for the first half of the film and sings with charm in a lovely scene while Dylan is writing.

'The film is really a poem to life and to creativity. There is so much in it, as in the Beatles flicks, that it ought to be seen dozens of times.'

The bargaining scene, referred to in such quaint platitudes by Elwood and Wasserman (the italics, *supra*, are mine), occurs when Grossman pays a visit to the B.B.C. agent, Tito Burns, to dicker with him for a personal appearance by Dylan. There is nothing time-honored or traditional about the revolting exchange. The pair are depicted as two of a kind, with Grossman looking like an aging fool trying to look like a young hippie and second only

to his protégé in arrogance and hostility.

In a backstage sequence, while Dylan is waiting around in his dressing room with his accompanist and a few others, he appears particularly restless. Present also, is a poor college kid who clearly idolizes the folk/rock singer. Once again, this time without so much as a surface reason, Dylan requires a victim. He uses the same weapons to turn off the boy's response and to flay his self-esteem for purely-imaginary deficiencies. Dylan has so little difficulty in abjectly routing this hero-worshipping nonentity that one wonders how the sport could retain any excitement for him.

On still another occasion, the balladeer is being interviewed by an editor from TIME. His overwhelming and entirely-gratuitous hostility toward his guest, in this instance, is as uncritical and histrionic as it is uncalled for.

Elwood, Wasserman, and Gleason (in that order) again:

'I know more about you than you could ever know about me,' he snarls at a Time reporter; 'you have too much to lose printing the truth,' he continued. 'What is the truth?' asks the Time man (by now quite distressed). 'Pictures . . . pictures are the truth,' answers Dylan.

The most fascinating bits are interviews: one by a young man who does not appear to be a professional journalist and one by a fool from Time magazine.

'Can't you ever stop wondering why?' Dylan asks the earnest young man. And to Time: 'You're not interested in truth—truth is a picture of a tramp vomiting into a sewer next to a picture of Rockefeller riding to work.' (How original!)

It's a visual record of what really happens on such a tour, the confusion, the ambiguity, the idiotic interviews [['do you care about what you sing?'](#) a Time reporter asked Dylan!], the way it really is and at the same time an allegory of modern youth alienated from his elders, communicating by feelings, not logic.

Far from being the unalloyed selfless proletarian hero fighting for truth and beauty and fair play against the abusers and spoilers of labor and virginity—which the three Rover Boys of San Francisco film criticism (*supra*) seem bent upon selling—Dylan comes off once again as self-assertive, uninformed, belligerent, and also, this time, a little foolish. The reporter manages, with impressive self-control, throughout this ridiculous boyish and ill-mannered tirade, to hear Dylan out without protest against vulgar mistreatment. His occasional questions, however (and during the few fleeting moments when Dylan's big aggressive mouth gives him any chance to speak), are devastating. At one juncture, he succeeds so well with his patience and astute attention that he traps Dylan into an assertion that he can even do the *TIME* editor's job better than he! Like the content of his songs, most of Dylan's 'protest' just seems so much hot air: the petulant semi-adult paranoid rantings of the Hippies against everything they do not consider within the province of their own limited interests (which includes everything that frightens and confuses them), without regard to quality or utility or even identity.

It's difficult, after all, to attribute the substance of authentic rebellion to such sweeping declamations and unconsidered judgments. Their authors, as exemplified in the spoiled darlings of the underage public like Dylan, seem merely shortsighted and selfish.

But the Leacock/Pennebaker cinematic document is at least honest. This is, in any case, one kind of truth; and it is happening.

One of the more serious deficiencies of Watkins' and Bogner's feature motion picture (or documentary-style feature) is that, after all, there was perhaps less than a minimum degree of truth in its trickery and artificial complexity, with all the technical effort to ape exactly the brand of reality which television has foisted on the public.

Even without the heroic posture, the script has structured some kind of hero from its collective impression of the Bob Dylans. Clearly, the author and the director feel they are under some sort of obligation, for the sake of their political and social themes, to retain the audience's empathy for their little protagonist.

Myself, I incline, as I said at the beginning, to a totally-isolated vantage. (Why stop at mere alienation?) My position is at once simpler and infinitely more desolate: A pox on both their houses . . . Bob Dylan and TIME.

DANGERS OF WORKSHOP CRITICISM

Dean Lipton

THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP is a cultural phenomenon of the times. It is doubtful if there are more than a scattered handful of major cities without at least one. New York has several. So has Los Angeles and its environs. They even dot the 'cultural deserts' of the Middle West.

Until recently, I was Chairman of the San Francisco Writer's Workshop, the nearly twenty years of existence of which makes it, I think, the oldest writers' organization in the city. Some of the criticism during the more than two years I held office was intelligent, perceptive, and even penetrating. Unfortunately, this was only a small part of the criticism, most of which ranged from the ignorant, pointless and meaningless to the vicious and destructive.

In the latter category, the most damaging usually came from people who considered themselves amateur psychiatrists, and whose criticism of a manuscript often consisted of an attack on its author's character or psyche. The nature of this kind of criticism and the by-play between writer and critic which occurred during my tenure in office can be fairly well illustrated by two typical participants. The critic was the owner of an art movie house and, possibly because of this position, fancied himself as something of a cultural arbiter. His own writings which were read before the Workshop displayed limited competence, having some slight publishing merit (publishers sometimes give print to the barely competent for reasons known only to themselves). The writer, named RJ, was an artist of very real, if at times spotty, talents; some of the finest work read at our sessions was written by him.

On the occasion I have chosen for our example, his manuscript was well received by the majority of the Workshop participants. The movie-house owner was the exception. He launched into an attack on RJ's alleged 'hostilities,' claiming that they came out in his work, and that he would never be able to write until he cured himself of them. Aside from the obvious unfairness of this approach, it displayed a woeful lack of knowledge of the history of world literature. Unlike this particular critic, I did not have a pipeline into the inner workings of RJ's psyche, so I had no way of knowing whether he was 'hostile' or not. Assuming, just for the sake of argument, that he was, the great writers who were hostile, bitter, or angry are so numerous that it seems almost pointless to tick off names such as Villon, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Edgar Allan Poe, Jack London, John Osborne . . . all England's Angry Young Men. . . The list could go on and on.

This man was just one among many of the mediocre attacking the brilliant. RJ never came back to the Workshop; and while I missed his writing and the penetrating critical comments he was capable of making at various times, I could never find it in my heart to blame him.

A random sampling of Workshop criticism would include instances such as these:

A writer reads a historical evaluation, and is informed by a critic that she doesn't like history. Why doesn't the writer produce a novel?

A science-fiction ms. was read before the group several months ago. The author was no Heinlen, Bradbury, or Sturgeon. However, the ms. compared quite favorably with the work of many better-than-average practitioners in the field. So, naturally, he was subjected to this kind of critical comment: 'I don't like science fiction. I never read science fiction, but . . .'—followed by a tirade against a type of writing about which the critic admittedly knew nothing.

One of the best writers and worst critics at the Workshop always used his own emotions as a measurement of the manuscripts of others. If he were feeling expansive, all of his fellows were embryonic Shakespeares, Dostoevskis, or Flauberts. At other times, he was rude, unconcerned, cutting—and he would finally clump out of the room on hearing something he did not like.

Workshop participants and professional book reviewers have a common problem in the variegated quality and quantity of written and published material. Last year, approximately 26,000 trade titles were published in the U.S. They ranged from serious novels to how-to-do-it books . . . such items as one on the manufacture of artificial catnip. The scope of magazine fiction and nonfiction was just as wide. However, the book reviewer does have one advantage: he does not have to read or review books in fields with which he is unfamiliar or in which he lacks interest. By the very nature of a workshop, its members are exposed to everything that comes across the board. Very few persons have the versatile breadth to give adequate hearings to more than a small segment of this material. Fewer still have the knowledge or background to realize that type and subject matter irrevocably limit such things as method of handling, dramatic power, narrative pull, and all of the many other things that go into the making of any specific literary work. These dangers come to the fore most often during attempts by workshop critics to generalize from a specific ms. to the totality of the writer's past work. Now, of course, book reviewers do this continually, comparing a present work either favorably or unfavorably to an author's past work. But there's a major difference. A book reviewer is dealing with a published book, and the writer knows as well as anyone else that his competence certainly is no greater than the publisher's readers and editors who accepted the book. At any rate, he is off it now, at work on something else, and

criticism one way or another—even total adverse criticism—isn't going to affect him too much. At a workshop, what is criticised is a work in progress—which brings us directly to the individual writer, how he works, and why he works in a particular way. Beginning with Thorstein Veblen's *INSTINCT OF WORKMANSHIP*, there have been a number of excellent studies on the conditions, the drives, the compulsions of the human being as a work animal. But, I suppose, to expect the average dilettante or hobbyist—who often sets the standards for a writers' workshop—to have read Veblen is expecting the impossible.

At the extremes of a long vertical line there are two kinds of writers. There is the writer who must have an extended fertilizing period for an idea to jell in his mind before he can work with it—sometimes months, even years. Katharine Anne Porter is an excellent example. And, although they had their more prolific moments, James Branch Cabell and Sherwood Anderson are also examples. At the other end is the writer whose mind is so geared that ideas topple one upon the other. He is the man who can turn out a full-length novel in four or five months—then, two days later, start another. Names such as Jack London, Balzac, Hemingway come to mind. Both types have produced masterpieces, and obviously there are all sorts of gradations between the extremes.

One of the finest writers at the San Francisco Writer's Workshop falls into the first category. She recently started work on a novel. The initial chapters which I have been privileged to read contain some of the most vivid and gripping writing I've seen in a long time. But she will not bring any of it to the Workshop, for she knows all too well what the know-it-alls, the would-bes, the critics who never write, the writers who can't write will do to the ideas it has taken her long hard months and years to develop.

The prolific writer is faced with a different kind of problem. Unless he is the exception of all exceptions, his work is bound to be inconsistent. Even a casual look at the prolific authors of history will show this. Balzac would write a masterpiece followed by a string of potboilers. Jack London, capable of writing *SEA WOLF*, *MARTIN*

EDEN, *CALL OF THE WILD*, later produced trash.

The prolific writer at any workshop session inevitably has his current work compared with that of his past. Even though a piece may have considerable merit, there will always be someone who will say in effect: 'This isn't as good as the last thing you wrote. Why waste your time on it? Do something as good.' The writer may not only stop working on this piece, for a long while he may stop writing altogether.

The easiest way to understand why is to explode an old bromide: 'You can't have your cake and eat it, too.' This is obviously false on its very face. If people stop eating cake, bakers will stop baking cake, and the longer the remaining cake is kept the more stale and inedible it will become.

And this is the way it happens in the mind of this kind of writer. To tell him to dig up a better idea doesn't mean that he will. Usually, it means that he will stop and search and develop every conceivable psychological block against doing so. The Balzacs and Londons oiled their creative processes on their inferior work and in time produced other greater work.

What kind of writers read at workshops? The answer is, at least as far as my experience goes, all kinds. A small amount of material is so amateurish that the authors ought to be urged never to write again. A much more substantial quantity is wooden, expressionless, and correct, the kind of stuff expected in high school and college themes. A few of these writers will outgrow this stage and later produce things of at least professional competence; but the majority won't. I heard a man whom I consider one of the few authentic

geniuses I have met, read his plays, snatches of verse, and the rough section of a novel at a workshop. Three or four fine short-story writers have taken part in workshop sessions. At least two excellent novelists have been among those who read their work. One is a man with a superb gift for comedy, and the other is a woman with an almost-Proustian sense of detail. A few have been published in periodicals ranging from small literary magazines and newspaper supplements to the *NEW YORKER*. Most have never been published. This is less a commentary on some very real talent and ability than it is on the pathetic stage of present-day publishing.

The problem in any form of criticism is to arrive at a set of objective standards. Most people agree to this in theory; yet, in practice, most people have none, although such standards have been around at least since Aristotle. In fact, each century has seen some of its finest minds refining esthetic standards for art and literature: Edmund Burke in the Eighteenth, Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and Oscar Wilde in the Nineteenth, George Santayana, James Gibbons Huneker, and H. L. Mencken in the Twentieth; and, of course, there have been many others.

The search always is for the writer who transcends the ordinary, who is capable of producing more than common competence in his work. In the end, the question must be answered: Can this work stand alone without a peer? Or perhaps it should be asked this way: Could another writer have done it as well? Some writers have the gift of the ability to leave a little piece of themselves in their creations; others do not. This is the determining factor, the way to decide whether a work has an element of greatness for its kind.

No writer but Ernest Hemingway could have written *A FAREWELL TO ARMS*. On the other hand, *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS* — despite the seriousness of its theme and some unusual characters — could have been produced by any of a dozen competent novelists who were his contemporaries.

MAN'S FATE had to be unique with Andre Malraux, but his journalistic pieces could have come from any competent journalist. One of the few writers of modern times whose work nearly always appears unique and original is John Dos Passos; and this probably is one of the prime reasons that Jean Paul Sartre rated him the greatest writer of the Twentieth Century — a designation with which I, incidentally, do not agree.

This occurs, too, in all sorts of lesser literary situations. A Zane Grey western novel such as *RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE* or *WILDFIRE* will stick in the reader's mind because of this, while westerns by a dozen others will not leave even the faintest impression. Take a field in which more mediocre work has been done than in almost any other: the costume novel. Then throw in a handful of names such as Costain, Sabatini, Yerby, Slaughter. That Sabatini gave his books individual impact while those of the others are virtually interchangeable, is apparent. On a somewhat higher level of historical fiction, there would be a few names such as Howard Fast or David Stacton, perhaps even Kenneth Roberts, Walter D. Edmonds, or Bruce Lancaster; while there are literally dozens of others who might just as well have produced one another's books.

Why do Mickey Spillane and Ian Fleming stand out in their fields? They have had dozens of imitators. But that is what they have been — imitators — without the extra individualistic spark. And this was so even when Fleming plagiarized Sax Rohmer in *DR. NO*; he somehow managed to add a new dimension while plagiarizing.

The clichés in criticism die hard. Maybe some day someone will write a book which will deal their final death-blow. The one heard all too often is 'taste.' An otherwise intelligent person will shrug off a piece of literature or art with a statement beginning: 'My taste . . .' What they apparently do not know is that taste is for interior decorators

and not for writers, artists, or critics.

Fashionability is the most insidious enemy of true creativity, and we unfortunately live in an age when great stress is placed on the fashionable. Such judgment is comparable to passing upon contents or style by observing whether a book has a frayed cover or is bound in expensive leather. A former critic for the *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*, Dean Wallace, wrote an article which pointed this up, although somewhat in reverse. What he said applied to literature as well as art. The main idea of his piece was that he preferred reviewing the work at gilded establishments such as Maxwells, Gumps, or De Tours to reviewing it at dirty little art galleries where economic necessity forced the owners to sell picture frames. I have no doubt that he did! But I also have no doubt that if there is a budding Van Gogh around, his work will be found buried in the dirty little art gallery which sells picture frames. It is, to be sure, true that Maxwells will handle the work of Van Gogh safely dead these last seventy-five years at suitably high prices.

All competent writers are not good critics, though some of the greatest of them have been. Sharp critics are not necessarily fine writers; and yet, again, there have been able critics who were gifted authors. The advantages — and there are some — to be looked for in a writers' workshop have little to do with the occasional or infrequent perceptive or penetrating critical comment. They must be measured by the writer's condition. To remark that writing is the loneliest profession devised by man is to state a trite truism, but a truth, nonetheless. The writer at work is alone with thoughts he cannot share with anyone except possibly another writer. He knows that his best friend would scoff. His wife would be bored. His mistress has other things on her mind. This order should, naturally, be reversed when the writer happens to be a woman. If this were so in a more private age (we have the word of writers, back to Montaigne, that it was), the

pressures society today forces upon the individual must intensify this feeling a hundredfold, for the writer would be either less or more than human if he failed to resent an enforced privacy while surrounded by increasing social activity.

So, for him, the workshop can and often does fill the void. He is made a little less lonely when he realizes that there are others who have the same problems and needs. Too, he finds stimulus in the exchange of ideas and work, even when he feels that the ideas are less than brilliant and the work inadequate. More than one writer has told me that without a workshop to attend, he would write less or not at

WILLIAM PACKARD: POETRY IN THE THEATRE—V

PERHAPS IT'S TIME FOR US to name names and talk about specific plays, to see just where we are in terms of a poetic drama in our own theatre.

I had better state at the outset that I do not think we are going to be entirely satisfied. Because, over the past fifty years or so, there have been a great many brave 'beginnings' of poetic drama. Each has been heralded as exactly what we all have been waiting for; but, somehow, nothing much came of these beginnings — at least, not in terms of a guiding style and a tradition. We find ourselves confronted with a great many isolated examples of poetry in the theatre — all of them interesting, some quite remarkable, but none of them representing an ideal fusion of the resources of poetry and the theatre. We will have difficulty in locating any one work that we can point to and say definitely: 'Yes — there — that is what poetic drama is all about, something we can count on to continue bringing more and more of the same sort of poetic drama to our theatre.'

With that reservation in mind, let's look at what we could call regional poetic drama, in which poets turned their attention to the myth and the folklore of their own particular nationalities and produced some form of verse theatre based on the native speech patterns and rhythms and imagery of their own cultures. In Ireland, Yeats and Synge and O'Casey created such great plays as *PURGATORY* and *THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD* and *JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK*. In Spain, Garcia Lorca adapted the Andalusian folklore and imagery for his great plays, *BLOOD WEDDING* and *THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA*. In India, Rabindranath Tagore drew on the elements of Indian dance-drama to create such plays as *KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER*.

However, aside from such regional plays, the problem of poetic drama remained to be dealt with. T. S. Eliot knew that in writing verse plays, he was struggling to achieve a contemporary diction and verse form which would be serviceable for the modern theatre. *MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL* was a history play; it was not until *THE FAMILY REUNION* and *THE COCKTAIL PARTY* that Eliot discovered his own poetic way of saying something in the theatre—and this discovery was enlarged upon in his later plays, *THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK* and *THE ELDER STATESMAN*. As Eliot himself posed the problem of poetry in the theatre: ‘We must find a new form of verse which shall be as satisfactory a vehicle for us as blank verse was for the Elizabethans.’¹ Taking into account what Eliot accomplished in his own work, we would probably have to say that he did more toward laying the foundations of poetic drama in our time than any other playwright.

But there were other playwrights at work. In Germany, Bertolt Brecht was developing a theatrical form for his own purposes—partly aesthetic, partly political, partly humanitarian—and he incidentally made good use of lyric poetry in this form. In *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN*, for example, there is a kind of didactic ironic song which complements the dramatic action and helps to project his message to the audience.

In America, Maxwell Anderson wrote a sort of traditional verse and more or less imposed this on the dramatic action in such plays as *WINTERSET* and *ANNE OF THE THOUSAND DAYS*. Anderson’s work was competent, but did not really come to terms with the problems of finding a contemporary form for poetic drama. The plays might as well have been written a hundred years ago.

And then there were the established poets, men already secure in their own reputations, who felt the lure of writing for the theatre: W. H. Auden collaborated with Christopher Isherwood in *THE ASCENT OF F-6* and *THE DOG BENEATH THE*

SKIN; E. E. Cummings wrote allegorical verse plays: HIM and SANTA CLAUS; Robert Frost wrote two chamber plays, A MASK OF REASON and A MASK OF MERCY; and Mark Van Doren wrote a verse play about Abraham Lincoln. Another established poet, Archibald MacLeish, had always been interested in the dramatic possibilities of poetry, and his early work included a number of radio plays, most notable THE TROJAN HORSE. Then, turning to the stage itself, he wrote J.B. (published in book form by HOUGHTON MIFFLIN), a modern allegory of suffering and justification which contained some very moving passages:

¹ *A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry*, SELECTED ESSAYS—HARCOURT, BRACE & WORLD.

*I sit here
Such as you see me. In my soul
I suffer what you guess I suffer.
Tell me the wickedness that justifies it.
Shall I repent of sins I have not
Sinned to understand it? Till I
Die I will not violate my integrity.*

One other poet wrote an amazingly-effective play for voices. The play is UNDER MILKWOOD, by Dylan Thomas. Although it is disorganized, bawdy, and sprawling, this play contains a very special lilt and exaltation which seems to lift the characters to the very heights of lyricism, both dramatically and poetically. It is a phenomenal experience. We may well have lost the one poet who would have been capable of creating great verse theatre — although, strangely enough, UNDER MILKWOOD is in prose.

Another aspect of theatre is presented by such writers as Ionesco, Beckett, and Duerenmatt; and it is difficult to say whether we should include this aspect in a discussion of poetic drama. These writers are concerned with a sort of modern metaphysical poetry in the theatre, and they use language as if it were an object to be dealt with creatively in

the search for new theatrical forms. I personally find these playwrights highly poetic in their approaches, and I think such plays as *JACK*, *WAITING FOR GODOT*, and *THE PHYSICISTS* must be considered as a sort of experimental poetic drama. These are popularly considered 'avant-garde' theatre. It will be interesting to see whether, in the next fifty years, any significant innovations in theatrical language are produced by such approaches.

Finally, there are the translators, those poets who have done exceptional work in carrying over the form and content of great plays from one language to another. Two poets in particular stand out: Richard Wilbur, for translations in rhymed couplets of Molière's *MISANTHROPE* and *TARTUFFE*; Robert Lowell, for his rhymed adaptation of Racine's *PHEDRE*.

Have we left out names? Of course we have. Thornton Wilder, for one. Although his plays are in prose — such as *OUR TOWN* and *THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH* — they surely deserve to be considered as outstanding examples of poetic drama. They explore the use of form and language and achieve a sort of contemporary epic theatre, albeit on a local and colloquial level.

Probably many other names have been omitted. This is inevitable in almost any listing. But, two outstanding names are missing: those of Christopher Fry and Tennessee Williams.

Today, Fry is not so fashionable as he once was; he is considered some sort of literary curiosity, a person who somehow actually made a commercial success of poetry in the theatre. And perhaps, for this very reason, it may be worthwhile to look at his work to see what led him to his remarkable success and then later caused a falling-off of interest.

Fry's plays enjoyed the services of some of the greatest actors of our time: John Gielgud, Richard Burton, Paul Scofield, Dame Edith Evans, and Pamela Brown. And he

himself was aware of the importance of the actors. Speaking of an experience he had in 1929, witnessing a production with Gielgud, he commented: 'Our efforts to bring audience and actor into closer relationship, by way of the apron stage or the theatre in the round, are useful, no doubt; but our proximity depends upon the actor. We can be at touching distance, and yet seem remote; or we can be away in the gallery (as I was in 1929) and yet our ear can be against the actor's lips.'

His plays were entirely in blank verse, making use of almost all poetic devices: metaphor, simile, imagery, figures of speech, assonance, alliteration. And they reveal an underlying world-view to which he is committed: the role of Providence and grace in the affairs of men, and the necessity of the resurrection of life. This view is carefully worked out in *A SLEEP OF PRISONERS*, *A PHOENIX TOO FREQUENT*, *THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING*, *THE DARK IS LIGHT ENOUGH*, and *VENUS OBSERVED*. These all were popular when first produced. One wonders why their popularity has not grown with the years. To be sure, *THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING* is frequently performed by some amateur group; but that might just be because it is a colorful costume play about love with a lot of long poetic-type speeches. It's no indication that either the actors or the audiences really know what's going on — or whether the play is very good or of lesser value.

An English actor once commented about Fry: 'I remember, it was just after the second war, and we were all so delighted to hear the English language used again, and used so marvelously. Fry's plays were splendid, we thought. But then, gradually, we changed our mind. The plays seem to be static, there was very little dramatic action, it was all a lot of stationary speeches, which just didn't seem to go anywhere.'

Certainly, there is the danger in all verse theatre that the poetry will come to dominate the dramatic action. Yet, we

will have to admit that Fry's language itself is a rather remarkable sort of action. He has a genius for metaphor; and metaphor is the soul of poetry. He himself has remarked: 'Poetry in the theatre is the action of listening.'

Yes, poetry itself is action, and so is imagery; metaphor is one of the fastest actions we can ever hope to know, because its insight always goes right to the heart of a situation — it can be as exciting as a sword fight, and it requires just as much skill and precision. As an instance, take this speech from his early play, *A SLEEP OF PRISONERS*:²

Meadows: The human heart can go to the lengths of God. Dark and cold we may be, but this Is no winter now. The frozen misery Of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move, The thunder is the thunder of the floes, The thaw, the flood, the upstart Spring. Thank God our time is now when wrong Comes up to face us everywhere, Never to leave us till we take The longest stride of soul men ever took. Affairs are now soul size. The enterprise Is exploration into God.

As another example, a brief scene from *THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING* (notice the delightful hodge-podge of imagery and the way the language seems to be having a love affair with itself):

Thomas: And, Richard, Make this woman understand that I Am a figure of vice and crime — Guilty of — Guilty

Jennet: Thomas: Of mankind. I have perpetrated human nature. My father and mother were accessories before the fact, But there'll be no accessories after the fact, By my virility there won't! Just see me As I am, me like a perambulating Vegetable, patched with inconsequential Hair, looking out of two small jellies for the means Of life, balanced on folding bones, my sex No beauty but a blemish to be hidden Behind judicious rags, driven and scorched By boomerang rages and lunacies which never Touch the accommodating artichoke Or the seraphic strawberry beaming in its bed: I defend myself against pain and death

by pain And death, and make the world go round, they tell me, By one of my less lethal appetites: Half this grotesque life I spend in a state Of slow decomposition, using The name of unconsidered God as a pedestal On which I stand and bray that I'm best Of beasts, until under some patient Moon or other I fall to pieces, like

² This and ensuing quotations are from the OXFORD University Press editions. A cake of dung. Is there a slut would hold

This is in her arms and put her lips to it?

From Christopher Fry, we go to the opposite extreme. If Fry is occasionally a bit too poetic at the expense of dramatic action, Tennessee Williams occasionally is too theatrical at the expense of his poetry. And yet, he is just as effective.

All of Williams' plays are in prose; although, if it is true that metaphor is the soul of poetry, then there is no reason we should not include his work among the outstanding dramas of this period. Such plays as *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*, *SUMMER AND SMOKE*, *SWEET BIRD OF YOUTH*, *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF*, and *THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA* — all are filled with metaphor and imagery immediately compelling to the modern audience.

Williams has said: 'Symbols are nothing but the natural speech of drama.' And in his Introduction to *CAMINO REAL*, he wrote:

We all have in our conscious and unconscious minds a great vocabulary of images, and I think all human communication is based on these images as are our dreams; and a symbol in a play has only one legitimate purpose which is to say a thing more directly and simply and beautifully than it could be said in words.

To be sure, Williams is sometimes unabashed in his use of imagery. When it works, it works very well — probably as well as that of the other great imagistic poet of the modern theatre, Garcia Lorca. And Williams makes no apologies for

the fact that sometimes the imagery is terribly naive, or obvious, or unsophisticated. In *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, one of his earliest, Tom says:

The play is memory. Being a memory play, it is dimly lighted. It is sentimental; it is not realistic. In memory, everything seems to happen to music — that explains the fiddle in the wings.

In *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*, when we first see Blanche Dubois, there is this exchange:

Eunice: What's the matter, honey? Are you lost?

Blanche: They told me to take a street-car named Desire, and then transfer to one called Cemeteries and ride six blocks and get off at—Elysian Fields!

Eunice: That's where you are now.

Blanche: At Elysian Fields?

Eunice: This here is Elysian Fields.

Blanche: They mustn't have — understood — what number I wanted.

Eunice: What number you lookin' for?

Blanche: Six thirty-two.

Eunice: You don't have to look no further. These are very obvious metaphors: street-cars named 'Desire' and 'Cemeteries;' and then, 'Elysian Fields.' These names do exist in New Orleans, but I have heard people complain that using this kind of metaphor is not at all subtle. Perhaps it isn't, but it does what it has to do — which is to establish the atmosphere and direction of the dramatic action. Is subtlety really all that important in a play? Was Shakespeare subtle when he began *MACBETH* by having three witches come onstage? The point is, it worked.

3 *NEW DIRECTIONS*, 1953.

4 *RANDOM HOUSE*, 1945.

5 *NEW DIRECTIONS*, 1947.

I have also heard people complain about the nature of the metaphors. They delve into areas of incest and impotence, rape and sadism, and into the frightening experience of psychotic disintegration. And they remind us of loneliness and the inability to communicate. As in this scene from SUMMER AND SMOKE:

John: Now listen here to the anatomy lecture! This upper story's the brain which is hungry for something called truth and doesn't get much but keeps on feeling hungry! This middle's the belly which is hungry for food. This part down here is the sex which is hungry for love because it is sometimes lonesome. I've fed all three, as much of all three as I could or as much as I wanted — You've fed none — nothing. Well — maybe your belly a little — watery subsistence — But love or truth, nothing but hand-me-down notions! — attitudes! — poses. Now you can go. The anatomy lecture is over.

Alma: So that is your high conception of human desires. What you have here is not the anatomy of a beast, but a man. And — I reject your opinion of where love is, and the kind of truth you believe the brain to be seeking! — There is something not shown on the chart.

John: You mean the part that Alma is Spanish for, do you?

Alma: Yes, that's not shown on the anatomy chart! But it's there, just the same, yes, there! Somewhere, not seen, but there. And it's that that I loved you with — that! Not what you mention! — Yes, did love you with, John, did nearly die of when you hurt me!

In a more recent play, *THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA*, Williams settles for a terribly-obvious metaphor: an iguana has been tied up, and each time it tries to escape, it reaches the end of the rope.

Hannah: I took a closer look at the iguana down there.

Shannon: You did? How did you like it? Charming? Attractive?

Hannah: No, it's not an attractive creature. Nevertheless I think it should be cut loose.

Shannon: Iguanas have been known to bite their tails off when they're tied up by their tails.

NEW DIRECTIONS, 1948.

Ibid., 1961. Hannah: This one is tied by its throat. It can't bite its own head off to escape from the end of the rope, Mr. Shannon. Can you look at me and tell me truthfully that you don't know it's able to feel pain and panic?

Shannon: You mean it's one of God's creatures?

Hannah: If you want to put it that way, yes, it is. Mr. Shannon, will you please cut it loose, set it free? Because if you don't I will.

Shannon: Can you look at me and tell me truthfully that this reptilian creature tied up down there, doesn't mostly disturb you because of its parallel situation to your Grampa's dying-out effort to finish one last poem, Miss Jelkes?

Hannah: Yes, I .

Shannon: Never mind completing that sentence. We'll play God tonight like kids playing house with old broken crates and boxes. All right? Now Shannon is going to go down there with his machete and cut the damned lizard loose . . .

And the lyric poem Nonno recites later is a fine example of poetry in the theatre — perhaps a token of the high admiration Williams feels for Hart Crane; for it seems close to the spirit of some of Crane's finest verse. However that may be, what is important is that the piece is worked into the context of the play so skillfully that it complements the dramatic action — which is the most we can ask of poetry in the theatre.

Nonno: Hannah! Hannah!

Hannah: Grandfather! What is it?

Nonno: I! believe! it! is! finished! Quick, before I forget it—
pencil, paper! Quick! please! Ready?

Hannah: Yes. All ready, Grandfather.

Nonno: How calmly does the orange branch

Observe the sky begin to blanch

Without a cry, without a prayer,

With no betrayal of despair.

Sometime while night obscures the tree The zenith of its
life will be Gone past forever, and from thence A second
history will commence.

An intercourse not well designed For beings of a golden
kind Whose native green must arch above The earth's
obscene, corrupting love.

Have you got it?

Hannah: Yes!

Nonno: All of it?

Hannah: Every word of it.

Nonno: It is finished?

Hannah: Yes.

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to the rule). Nor did his name appear in lower-case type on or in his first COLLECTED POEMS; the transition to typical e. e. cummings verse was gradual. Those following him have gone through no such justificatory slow development in any unique fashion, whether outright imitators, occasional imitators, or partial borrowers from his lexicon — to the last of which groups, Carroll Arnett belongs. Logically enough, it's almost exclusively in this third group that elements of genuine creativity are nevertheless found.

In this, his second book, Arnett moves from the frequent distillations out of specific personal encounters, distinguishing his first (THEN — Elizabeth), to generalized condensations from several encounters of like sorts — and from only occasional irony to consistent caustic bitterness. While first-person candor continues to sharpen impacts, he is more 'hung up' by restricting himself to a short line which characterizes him only technically. Working with a paucity of images, his control of simple, sharp, often freshly-juxtaposed breaks and turns has improved. Such control is well and good; yet it's not a happy achievement if it leads to a hardening of the creative arteries to block enlivening structural variations such as found in Patchen (another influence). Arnett exercises a good ear and gains effective cadence and precision in precessions of sounds. Here are The Hunter (left) and The Utility Bill (right): (Note the Poundian compression.)

Bird, beast,
woman, or
poem, the
best time
is in
the making,
the rest
only something
to do.

[n.b.: Patchen's influence above.]

These show that Arnett does not straitjacket his pieces (all deftly open out into suggestions of broader or deeper implication); yet, he risks stunting himself through preoccupation with a single mode. Cummings' preoccupation with form was immensely diversified.

J. MICHAEL YATES

not only tries many moulds, he has not so nearly made up his mind how life is. In a sense, this makes him less mature; but he is as much his own poet as is Arnett, marked though the influences are. Imprints of Yeats and Roethke are evident, especially in mid-poems of a section titled *Spiral of Mirrors* involving plants, animals, water things, and beasts—with themes of death and the supernatural. And there are structural relationships. Even many titles are indicative: *In the Crater of the Antlion*; *Lynx-Eyes*; *Scorpion*; *Lioness Tiergarten*. The last-named:

Fixed on the smoky agate of her eye,
We are embarr'd and blankly watching.
Gone finally is the thing that paces,
First from blood, then from merely pacing.
Glare, which takes us in a blur of tawny
And a shadow-zebra of bars,
Past your misty mask of yellow
Thinly simmering a ruse,
Past embers of dermis lemon,
Beyond incremental pools
Of hot transitional chartreuse . . .
Into a deep, deep smouldering lagoon,
Round and full of green and dying moons
And spiral echoes of jungle afternoons.

In part because Yates uses comparatively few direct sexual allusions, less of Thomas is apparent than in others here (George Garrett, Luella Booth, Charles Simic), except in Dylanlike imagistic magic, the dazzle of which has affected hundreds; but he is less subjective and reveals a world view quite different from that of Thomas. This, in fact, probably is Thomas' greatest weakness: his too-limited world view. Typical Yates pieces are *Civilized* (left) and *A Beginning* (right):

I knew by the sudden silence
In the streets inside me
An animal had entered the clearing:
One soft paw upraised,
One precise ear followed
The sequence of closing shutters.
Stiffly,
Just born,
An animal arose
Beneath the weight
Of darkness and the wound,
And set forth
Undistracted now
Along a luminous line:
This burning scent of the hunter.

Passing to Simic: first, lines out of 'Nineteen,' in the Thomas NOTES:

Through easier heather to the foul lair Over a road thick
with the bones of words. If hunting means anything more
than the chase On a mare's back of a mare's nest or goose,
Then only over corpses shall the feet tread,

And this way leads to good and bed, Where more than
snails are friends, . . .

Simic's work — intensely personal reflections (in both senses), often nostalgic, often projecting imaginatively into other consciousnesses — suffers not at all from comparison with Thomas' more-finished passages. Though his way with words doesn't equal Dylan's, he deals with more human universals and treats more major themes (sometimes antiwar or protest against social evils) through these private concerns. The beauty of *WHAT THE GRASS SAYS* is in no way contingent upon Joan Abelson's twelve attractive abstract prints (some multi-colored). Simic's lyricism demands no complements; he demonstrates a talent comparable to that of almost any living poet in mainly quite 'straight' poetry that

often relies on successions of simple statements to suggest images to readers. Fewer metaphors appear than are expected in young moderns; but many lines are rich with similes. Butcher Shop's opening is typical of his plain 'saying,' whereafter, complexity proliferates with similes, synecdoches, and metaphors. The poem concludes in a haunting semi-ambiguity:

Sometimes walking late at night
 I stop before a closed butcher shop.
 There is a single light in the store
 Like the light in which the convict digs his tunnel.
 An apron hangs on the hook:
 The blood on it smeared into a map
 Of the great continents of blood,
 The great rivers and oceans of blood.
 There are knives that glitter like altars
 In a dark church
 Where they bring the cripple and the imbecile
 To be healed.
 There is a wooden slab where bones are broken,
 Scraped clean: —a river dried to its bed
 Where I am fed,
 Where deep in the night I hear a voice.

Simon Perchik (another second selection, the first having been I COUNTER ONLY APRIL — Elizabeth, 1964) does not title his poems. He relies less on metaphoric images; and, though as closely personal as the Simic pieces, his—despite simple language—are less direct, sometimes verging on the cryptic.

This is not meant as a pejorative statement; the lines are sharply fresh as well as terse—often, dramatic. For instance, this close:

hard against each heel : the news except a piece of sun
 heaves wounded at my feet.

now the scene is clear Not a sound
 Or the opening of another:

The morning sky is cocked to revenge this beach. The circling of flies can't distract its aim.

Without being typographically reminiscent, the influence is more that of Cummings than of Thomas, as shown in this portion of a Perchik poem:

Inside my hand a wind surfaces to cool its flight a million muscles burning to exhaust the treat : to warm the hand that died racing for more work. He too, cupped this storm and as a relay team is taught passed on his opened palm : quieted, dry, here a possible scar but mostly that tread cut by a steering wheel . .

Reference to his first book confirms this; there, he tends more toward 'telling,' with less condensation.

Here—as with each of the other eight poets—it is not possible to confirm that the detectable similarities prove direct transfusions. Perchik's distinctive voice well may have been trained just through acquaintance with the body of modern work manifestly leavened by these major influences.

Passing to Eugene McNamara and the rest, there will be fewer comments on quotations with reference to these influences. Not to infer that they are not too well regarded, but because a good deal already said about the preceding also applies, and observations would become repetitive. Admixtures of the effects of predecessors plainly may be seen, especially since—as remarked before—the progression of work described in this article is, in general, from predominant simplicity toward compositional intricacy. The more-complex stanzas of McNamara result, in a percentage of his poems, from projections of more-detailed world views transmitted by semi-newsy shots of events, past or then current. Thematic depths are somewhat-passingly suggested, not delved at length for the multiple extensions of a Pound or an Eliot — nor yet, in this facet, played upon in the spreading sonorities like those in the Thomas Notebooks. Dylan intones: 'Intangible my world shall come to nought, /

The solid world shall wither in the heat, / How soon, how soon, o lord of the red hail!’ (Ten, August 1933); and: ‘A process in the weather of the world / Turns ghost to ghost; each mothered child / Sits in their double shade. / A process blows the moon into the sun, / Pulls down the shabby curtains of the skin; / And the heart gives up its dead.’ (Thirty-five, do.) But McNamara deft-handedly closes *A Portrait of the Man Who Knew That the Sky Was Falling Even Before Chicken Little*: he pulled the feathers off before he brushed the rest off the table as one might flick crumbs sighing negligently “how interesting.” However, most of McNamara’s poems are intense reflections of private experience or reminiscence. Take the first and last stanzas of *Equinox*: The skate key unlocks the day to let in bundles of green, promise of seed, coveys of skiprope girls who curve the air in jounced blurs of skirts tossed at the sky and bare knees hover over your surprise in precise turnings. You let in someone else who came disguised with marbles, tops and kites But under his leafy mask lurked age and falling hair and fallen grace. Among the first things that strike one on reading *Kenneth O.* Hanson is the 100-percent vertical typography (all lines, flush left), because, in his book, this has greater than typographical significance. While he’s far from unique in this vertical compulsion, not only is he very disciplined and polished, exercising less free association in verbal invention, but he employs a virtually-invariable device to reach thematic denouements — nevertheless, an effective device, adroitly used in such masterly fashion that one may too much admire the first few pieces read. The initial reaction will be that these carefullyconstructed poems are indeed spontaneous; Hanson’s craftsmanship is enhanced by a lively way of listening, seeing, and interpreting. Yet, passing to more — while still enjoying it immensely — one reluctantly will discover that, besides evidences of several major influences mentioned, Hanson seems to have been

enamored of a typical Chinese prosodic manner of projecting poems in pictures and events in stasis. He imprisons his own related type of prosody in a neoclassic mould. 'His own,' since the English language, of course, with its connectives and articles and many modifiers, happily — as in Pound's best Chinese 'translations' — permits evolvment of an original style, no matter the Chinese influence.

So, Hanson is no mere artificer, no pseudohaiku addict. Nor does he let this element cause him to attempt closing his pieces enigmatically. His method allows less-ambiguous conjurements in depth than found in more-slavish Chinese imitators; yet, he often resorts to poetically-unsuccessful explications. But, even then, as in his better poems of nondirect statement, there's a certain saving honesty; and, facile though he is, he says important things distinctively and entertainingly — sometimes delightfully. If not highly exciting verbally, he's practically never trite and he exercises unaffected compression with poetic insight. Despite the limitation, he is likely to endure for memorable transmissions of individuated responses to real places in his time. These are well-suited to the ear and couched in unpretentious language. A good illustrative stanza closes one of the longer poems, Sideshow:

SIDESHOW

Blind lights annoy the vacant air
where possibilities by life grown large
prevent the gaudy miracle to join
this audience, to read our fortune
quartered in the knavish mirrors, back
into the patient deck. We wait.
Behind the tent a cricket chirrs.
Torn posters scatter on the walk.
The moon has vanished like a palmer's coin.
We stiffen, hesitate, turn back.
Beyond the park, the gypsies & the clowns
are changing in the silent dark.

Preponderance of 'vertical' poetry in Luella Booth has slight critical bearing, what with her varied treatments and frequent bursts of untrammelled song, identifying her as a Romantic. She's the most exuberant of the nine poets, but less profound. Love of love and love of life motor most of her themes; and, for all her syntactical intricacy, her many different kinds of 'takeoffs,' she says less.

Her work is tightly personal. Nothing is, per se, wrong with that; but the poems are made by her relations through words rather than by words. Influences upon her are revealed not so much in the syntax and her manner of 'making' poems as they are in the underlying feeling that emerges. She appears to have been chiefly affected from a sense of communication/conveyance of the feelings of earlier poets. A marked example of this is in some less-good lines out of Bermuda Poem: '. . . on a bike / death wins no dominion life / is ripe and rich and full / and I am fully opened / by a small black pigtailed child who puts / her arms around my waist . . .' Her use of the Thomas clause is justifiable; but, in this instance, her own verbalization does not do her justice. In fact, it hardly seems that the same person could have produced the closing stanza of April Fool's

Oratorio:

Brass Christs and footsteps at the shore
larrup lichen sea maid hair
along the rivers of my peaceplaced
lap when gay and mad and whored with light
one April rash and rusted fool
roars 'God damn the righteous tragic
and I mean those fools
who'd violate the godded heads
of saints.'

George Garrett's poems are intimate. They, too, often evolve frankly from sexual feelings and reactions; however, many in this book—rooted in sex or not—reflect deeper, sometimes universal, meanings. He treats more major themes, and he ranges more widely for his analogies. He does not often make words themselves the poetry, employs comparatively-few metaphors and a preponderance of similes, and overfrequently relies upon modifiers; and yet, unexpected turns and far reaches, together with the fact that the modifiers as often as not carry surprise and new insight, make for work of larger talent. Rarely does he verge on clichés. Here and there, these pieces appear to have sprung from dreams—again, from self-conscious reveries. The former are, as would be anticipated, the better ones. Even poems out of direct reactions to persons, places, events are almost never without profounder levels or one of those far reaches. An example of unexpected transition is the close of *Bathing Beauty*:

. . . O

Judith, have my head
and hear the gulls and children
sing. I hear my voice
wailing at an ancient wall.
my heart my four limbs
and my balls and all
(O Ruth) my alien corn.
She stretches, sighs, and seems
The sun, all trumpets, blares
and the sea is falling, falling
like the walls of Jericho
whose waves were tongues of dust.
to be asleep. I close my eyes

Garrett, to be sure, has not yet fused his own idiom from the mingled infusions of predecessors; but he is both fresh and disciplined, and his ability to relax and utilize farflung associations forecasts the probability that he soon also may achieve this with language.

The same reservations applied to the Garrett book apply to the enjoyable McCord selection—except that McCord has found a definite ‘voice.’ His voice has an epic quality, and his materials are from history, bearing protest themes. The recent line of descent and inheritance is from Pound/Eliot. Yet McCord is his own man in more than his idiom. The forepart—and better part—of the book concerns American Indians; later, he does more wandering about the world. Openings of poems usually are their best portions. From *Day’s Journey with Geoffrey Young* (1):

and at the river a shape traced on a stone the cull of a
shape by a degenerate hand The Shoshoni no Chichimecs
rude, inglorious, a fish-stink heavy as fog.

No castaway Phoenicians with a bloody, mercantile
gnosis. Shoshoni and brute, illiterate

But they danced and knew the orgasm and ate every day they could.

What was known of them in Tenochtitlan or Alexandria?

McCord's orientation is well and clearly stated in the first stanza of *The Falls of Poetry*:

The poem as a glyph the poem as a fit subject for poetry
the lyric opposed to information a sense of place location in
time (whose ecology is history)

The essential honesty of purposes and the vitality exhibited by these poets could ensure the emergence of any of the nine to greater prominence. The contingent factor will lie in the degree to which they are able to grow self-consciously by standing aside from their work and analyzing both their own methods and thematic intentions.

ISSUE PP. 463-483 · SCAN PP. 167-187

THE CHRONICLE

The Chronicle — the running trade directory of little magazines and presses that TRACE carried in every issue — occupies twenty-one pages in this annual number, some 273 entries, and is offered ‘for use in conjunction with Evolving Directories in Nos. 64 and 65’. It is omitted here, with its capsule notices: it is a working address list rather than reading matter. What follows is a note of what this instalment records.

This is the underground-press year, and the directory registers it entry by entry. Twenty-six of them carry the note MEMBER UPS — the Underground Press Syndicate — among them BERKELEY BARB, THE EAST VILLAGE OTHER, THE FIFTH ESTATE of Detroit, AVATAR of Cambridge, THE SAN FRANCISCO ORACLE (‘emph. new religions — incl. LSD’), BLACK MASK, BAY GUARDIAN and WIN, ‘peace & freedom thru nonviolent action’. The Editor lists them in the same nine-point type, with the same keys for format and periodicity, as the university quarterlies — which is itself the record of something.

The single most consequential entry is CATERPILLAR, announced from Clayton Eshleman at 10 Bank Street: ‘a magazine of the leaf: a gathering of the tribes’, its first number carrying a chapter from Robert Duncan’s book on H. D. BROADSIDE PRESS of Detroit adds Langston Hughes’s THE BACKLASH BLUES and S. Carolyn Reese’s LETTER FROM A WIFE to the Broadside Series at fifty cents each. SOMETHING ELSE PRESS offers a ‘balloon poem’ with its 1967-68 catalogue. From Vancouver: BLEW OINTMENT, care of the Horizon Bookstore, and VERY STONE HOUSE with Red Lane’s GOD IS A SPONGE and Lionel Kearns’s BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY McLuhan — ‘media parables & other assaults on the interface’. From London, FULCRUM; from San Francisco, THE GOLIARDS and OYEZ’s neighbours.

The full list of names is in Trace_66_1967_chronicle_names.txt beside the transcript. — ED.

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THE 1967-68 ADDRESS LIST

Fourteen pages close the issue — the magazine calls it the 1967-68 ADDRESS LIST — naming every magazine and press in the Evolving Directories of Nos. 64, 65 and 66, alphabetically, with its address and the issue numbers in which its notice stands. It is an index to the three directories rather than a directory itself, and it is omitted here for the same reason they are — it is apparatus for a working address book, and the addresses have been dead for fifty years. The names it indexes are recorded in the Chronicle notes of Nos. 64, 65 and 66, and in the name lists filed beside those three transcripts. — ED.