

TRACE

LIVING LITERATURE

HUMOR IN SEVERAL MODES
Brooks, Marble, Murray, Taylor

70

ISSUE

Commences

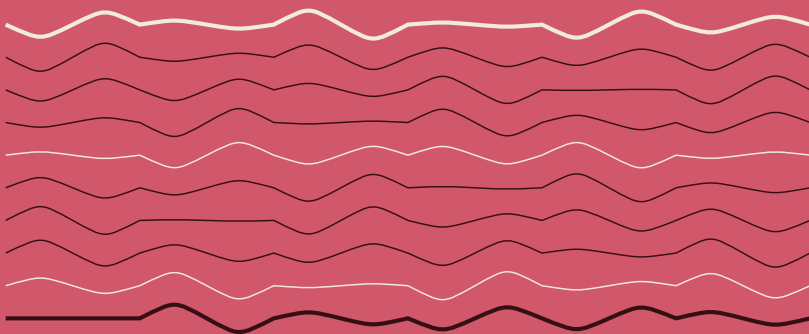
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JAMES BOYER MAY / EDITOR



TRACE

No. 70

Living Literature

Essays & Articles · Poetry · Reviews

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Edited by JAMES BOYER MAY

A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

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

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

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

A drawing by EDWARD J. KERNS stands at issue p. 142, and eight pages of colour drawings by NORMAN L. MORRIS at pp. 145-152. Neither carries text. A further drawing by HARLAND RISTAU at p. 116 shares its page with the text and is not affected.

Eight pages of untitled photographs by ROGER PFINGSTON stand here and carry no text at all. They are noted rather than passed over.

Eight pages of graphic work stand here. The contents page names them as photographs by MARTIN STEINGESSER — FORMSCAPE NO. 2, FORMSCAPE NO. 4, GLOVE & COBBLESTONE, NANTUCKET and SCENE — NEW YORK CITY — and THREE INKS by GARY ELDER. Two of the pages carry lettering the reading recovered: one a legend reading WARMAN BRINGING IN DANGEROUS SUSPECT, the other three lines set as an epigraph — 'the hawk in / the egg kills / the wren'. Nothing else on the eight pages is text.

Four pages of stills are set into A. Fredric Franklyn's interview with the Japanese actress Miyuki Kuwano, and

their captions are the only text on them: 'Left to right: Takeshi Watanabe; A. Fredric Franklyn; Miyuki Kuwano'; a scene from KODOKU (LONELINESS) with Yukio Hashi, the popular singer, in the male lead; Kuwano with Tetsuro Tamba in SAMBIKI NO SAMURAI (THREE RONINS); and Kuwano with Yasushi Suzuki in NIPPON DASSHUTSU (ESCAPE FROM JAPAN). The interview itself is given in full.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Some Sort of Death, a poem by Grace Butcher in Trace No. 68, has been selected to appear in the third annual edition of AMERICAN LITERARY ANTHOLOGY, from Viking Press.

An award of \$500.00 goes to the poet. The magazine receives a \$250.00 award for selecting it.

Grace Butcher's first large poetry collection, IN THE TIME OF REVOLUTION, is scheduled for publication by Random House, late this year.

INWARD/OUTWARD:

(SOME GLADLY FRUSTRATED THOUGHTS ON THE MAKING OF POETRY)

Towards Print as seen by Warren Netz

I AM GOING TO TRY SOMETHING which I know at the outset is impossible. I want to be able to examine what goes on in a poem without losing hold of its essence.

Here glowers the dilemma: the price of thinking about a process is the fall from innocence, because self-conscious contemplation makes total and oblivious participation in that process unattainable. Deliberate dispassionate analysis of poetry proceeds in the opposite direction from the experience of poetry. For the purpose of understanding what happens in a breathing dancing poem, the tools of most so-called literary criticism are garishly inappropriate. Taking a sledge hammer to an egg may get you an infinite number of interesting bits and pieces, but whatever was inside is lost. On the other hand, there is more to appreciation than a primordial sensation of the total contents. If Keats' 'negative capability' could be carried to its implied limit, we would have a poet who could make himself completely 'at one' with the sparrows pecking outside his window — but he would then be a bird and not a poet at all, since the bird has no perception of itself as miraculous or poetic in any fashion. Unless the sensible selective ego is preserved, there can be no poem, only perfect inexpressible insensible experience.

Likewise, intelligent commentary on a poem cannot permit complete submersion in the wonder of a poem and remain a commentary or anything else. When commentary exists, its curse is always that of having to set the poem at a distance and in doing so to become alienated from its life

spirit. In *Dejection: An Ode*, Coleridge demonstrates a painful awareness of this problem:

Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are
within.

The point at which one participates and contemplates at the same time can be the birth of another poem, but not of criticism. Intelligent criticism is an awareness of how artifice and inspiration interpenetrate in a poem. It requires that we somehow be able to grasp the process from both ends while perceiving at every step the shifting boundaries of each.

In the cycle of convention and reaction, poets tend to assert the primacy of one aspect over the other. At one extreme, the poem is exalted as a self-sufficient entity, containing its own perfectly packaged universe. It expresses nothing but itself; it has no meaning beyond itself. The purpose and justification of a poem is to be a poem, nothing more. Any outward denotation sacrifices the absolute inwardness of the true poem, whose essence is the object, the poem itself. The Nineteenth Century French Symbolists, especially Mallarmé, sit most prominently at this end of the circle along with many others who do not go so far in rejecting outwardness but still insist that the poem be strictly 'art for art's' sake, as in MacLeish's *Ars Poetica*:

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit
A poem should not mean
But be.

By attributing the worth of a poem to nothing beyond the thing itself, the extreme of this view entirely fails to account for how poetry happens and what poetry does. For the poem

to exist requires that it be fashioned into some kind of recognizable being, yes, a poem is in that sense always a self-contained thing — yet it is much more than that.

The poem-as-absolute proponents seem to have forgotten that poetry is human expression. For poets who make the most of the expressive aspects of their art, formal considerations of the poem as an object are relegated to the role of providing a vessel for the live experience, a personal communication made of feeling. Their poems look outward beyond the body of the poem itself and say something — about the poet's self, about nature, about politics, about anything the poet sees fit to forge into poetry. LeRoi Jones makes the point well:¹

I make a poetry with what I feel is useful & can be saved
out of all
the garbage of our lives. What I see, am touched by . . .
wives,
gardens, jobs, cement yards where cats pee, all my
interminable
artifacts . . . ALL are a poetry, & nothing moves (with
any grace)
pried apart from these things. There cannot be closet
poetry. Unless
the closet be wide as God's eye.

Those who see poetry as much a human experience as an object tend to mold those selves and situations which are the roots of experiences into the pattern of the poem. But when the view that a poem should express something other than itself is pushed to its extreme, the poem becomes either pure undifferentiated outpouring or mere statement, and not art at all. A self-analytical case history is not poetry; nor is a bitter polemic, nor a description of a forest. Poetry does more than shovel out raw experience or data — it transcends it at the same time to create a new reality we can read into; a true poem does not read itself for us like a recipe. Poetry elicits

from the reader another act of creation.

¹ Donald M. Allen (ed.): *THE NEW AMERICAN POETRY* — Grove Press (N.Y.: 1960), p. 424.

I am trying to acknowledge that the life of a poem involves selves, a fact which is too obvious to be sufficiently realized by the extremes of either side. Supplementing the conviction that critics must maintain a proper critical distance from the poem is the belief that poets should do the same. Recalling Eliot's dictum that a poem is ideally an escape from personality rather than an expression of it, the poem-as-absolute view asserts that poetry involves nothing but poetry, an empty notion which has generated a lot of empty work. On the other side of the fence, the poem-as-expression view carried too far may sing the virtues of selfless (and therefore poetryless and even lifeless) unity with larger forces or of the poet as a servant mouthpiece plugged into some Great Moral Truth. However in recent years there has been a healthy reassertion of the importance of selves in the process of poetry, like the projectivist's idea that breath should determine the line, or the confessional's that a person's life history and day-to-day existence can be the stuff of poetry. Not that all good poetry is self-centered — I am suggesting recognition of self, not preoccupation with it. Totally private imagery is of value only to the poet and perhaps his therapist.

Genuine poetry takes advantage of the possibilities of both poem as entity and poem as expression. The sensitive combination of entity and expression produces a new being which is not the sum but the product of the two. It is a living moving relation between inner and outer, one becoming the other. Poems which try to deny outward denotation and pose as absolutely self-contained, and poems which relate externalities or experience or manifestations of emotion without inward dimension, fail because they lie flat; there is not the magic, the dance, of creative energy and form

bringing each other to life. Love poems, anti-war poems, nature poems, poems on poetry, the range of poetry is, to requote Jones, wide as God's eye. A true poem can be about anything, so long as it does not sink flat into statement or case history. Here for example is a passage from Richard Wilbur's *Advice To A Prophet*,² which we can for convenience call a political poem, a desperately political poem:

Nor shall you scare us with talk of the death of the race.
How should we dream of this place without us? —

²Richard Wilbur: *ADVICE TO A PROPHET and Other Poems* —
Harcourt Brace and World (N.Y.: 1961).

*The sun mere fire, the leaves untroubled about us,
A stone look on the stone's face.
What should we be without
The dolphin's arc, the dove's return,
These things in which we have seen ourselves
and spoken?
Ask us, prophet, how we shall call
Our natures forth when that live tongue is all
Dispelled, that glass obscured or broken
In which we have said the rose of our love and the
clean
Horse of our courage, in which beheld
The singing locust of the soul unshelled,
And all we mean or wish to mean.
Ask us, ask us whether with the wordless rose
Our hearts shall fail us;*

While the diction sometimes rings with an edge too stiff for my liking, this is penetrating and forceful poetry because it is a welded inward/outward vision. Ah, but what I am presenting is an abstracted model of how poems work, and therefore a limping imperfect representation. I have tried to bring poems into critical captivity without the inward/outward dance dying in my hands. Happily I have failed, for poetry would not be poetry if it did not forever elude the grasp of definition. The most critical commentary

can honestly do is provide a direction into the poem, for which no complete anatomy will ever be given. That is enough, but we still reach out with our embracing postulates to try for a better look; the intelligent position is to remain satisfied and frustrated. Fly on, Pegasus.

ISSUE P. 4 · SCAN P. 14

FREUD, ON CROP SUPPORTS, ETC.

Ruth Moon Kemphe

Whose Harpy's loose?
Cyclops now drives a tractor
through
intrigues of rutabaga.
The
fertilization of arid areas
the
watering of seed
the
Program for Poverty, indeed.

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

GOOD ART FIRST, POLITICAL ART SECOND

Rush Rankin

Dear Editors:

I have been following in Trace the discussions about the relationship of politics and poetry.... I don't think that the Leftists, especially editors such as Meg Randall (El Corno Emplumado), realize that their political polemics can be as debilitating and enervating as any other purely-abstract preoccupation (especially when divorced from militant action). The problem with the political use of art is that art becomes merely a tool, rather than a separate, vital, distinct, and uniquely-valuable phenomenon.

If I may be so un-hip and academic as to quote Northrop Frye:

'... it is through the particular and discrete that we reach the unity of the imagination, which respects individuality, in contrast to the logical unity of the generalizing reason, which destroys it.' This problem of preserving the individual, the unique, and the concrete is the role of art. If art becomes too general and abstract, it violates its basic realities.... The monistic obsession of the revolutionary is justified in his attack on a fortress; but art and the totality of reality are pluralistic. So it seems to me that we must have good art first, political art second ... that art can help preserve the revolutionary if art is not enervated and compromised.

There is an additional problem for the politically-concerned artist, who, in my opinion, must insulate himself from overt political action (with exceptions, of course). Being an artist is a full-time vocation. And, ironically, as Orwell or Huxley noted, the act of artistic

creation is in itself political in a society that thrives on corruption and falsity. The artist must conserve and expend his energies for art. Everyman cannot do everything and do anything well.

A personal irony is that I, a poet, am writing this polemical letter and will publish a brief essay on *The Subtle Ubiquity of American Racism in Alice** soon.

‘FAILURE OF INTEGRITY’ — NOT LIMITED TO ONE MAG

Dear Editors: Stanley Cooperman has opened the entire bean market.† At the outset, I tend to think this unwise, but certainly the air should be cleaned, gleamed, or something. For the record, I haven’t heard from *El Corno Emplumado* since March 3, ’67 in regard to some stuff I sent them. But then, I haven’t heard from forty-eight other mags since ’67 either. There goes artwork, short stories, poetry, and articles. Now, as I allow a year for oddity, my ’68 ‘outs’ are only twenty-six unheard from. ’66 and ’65? Well, what the heck, what’s fifty or sixty others? Of course, I mention here just no-reply chaps and chapesses. Of acceptances, notification of change of mind, no word of change (just *Ms.* back): eleven in ’67, eight in ’68. About here, I would really love to start name-dropping, but what the hell. After all, isn’t Stanley really discussing the failure of integrity? And not only in those who scream the loudest for want of it, but also quite a few who make exceptions along the great publishing and editor way.

** See The Chronicle in this issue of Trace.*

† Reference is to his letter in Trace No. 68.

I should mention the no-accept-big-reply bag of beans. You know, such as: You creep! . . . How about, whew! . . . I thought you got the message on the last reject. . . . Try the underground, I’ve had the humanity bit. . . . You’re too

fuckin' timid for me. . . . Why do you bother with us? . . . I read what you did in —. You should be ashamed of yourself.

Integrity, honor, civility? Maybe it's just that I've had a bad day. . . . Ethics by ear, it doubtless is; and while a Black List for those of us who practice integrity might be helpful, I don't see how it will unless it touches the bases — viz., writer's, editor's, publisher's, bookstores', etc. Frankly, I would be delighted to join a 'fulfills commitment' union. Where do I sign?

Finally . . . if it wasn't for Trace's *The Chronicle*, I wouldn't have known: 1) work was published after acceptance; 2) work was published without telling me it was accepted. Weird, I tell you. All weird.

Seamus Finn

'I Will Continue to Scream Poems Against War'

Dear Editors:

I was astonished to find three full pages wasted on an incredible piece entitled *On Anti-War Poetry*, by L. W. Michaelson (TRACE No. 68).

He has built his essay 'to highlight the basic ineffectiveness of poetry' — but to whom is it addressed? Does he want to influence Poets to turn away their eyes and their voices from the subject of War? Or does he want the audience of poetry to reject and ridicule poems addressing themselves to War? Or is he telling the Warmongers, the Warmakers, their compliant herds and complacent victims that they have been correct in studiously ignoring the anguished cries for sanity, shaped in the words of Poets?

Honesty-to-himself, it seems to me, is a primary essential in the makeup of a Poet. And if the pain of the lunacy and horror of War is caught in his gut and in his blood, he must speak it, or lie to himself. He is engaged in making the poetry of his life; and whether his cries are driven by despair or hope, the response or lack of it by any audience is not his

concern.

The fact that the writers of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Zechariah were ignored does not invalidate nor diminish the poetry. Patchen, Bly, Starbuck — to name just three beautiful people, among many — are living with us now, making strong articulate poems against War. As they must. . . . War is a worthy concern of Poets. Michaelson becomes absurd to the point of disbelief in the closing half of his essay; working some kind of pseudo psychology, he attempts to lay the proliferation of Wars at the doorstep of those Poets who scream out against War. Just a few lines earlier, he informs us that these poets had been ignored more completely than ever before in history! As for myself, I gladly accept the title of 'jigging fool.' And I will continue to scream poems against War. . . . Is there a more significant reason for raising one's voice? James Bullard Kennedy

Seeking 'No Partial Poetry'

Dear Editors:

To announce a new magazine of poetry, Alpha Sort. Not intended as 'another literary magazine' nor, really, for the 'general' reader, it will consist of a series of five issues, approximately seven months apart, of over 100 pages each, offset. Issues will cost \$1.50 singly or \$5. for the entire series. Contributors will receive a copy. Distribution will be relatively limited, 375 copies for No. 1, with only 300 to be available to the public.

The reason for the above is that Alpha Sort sees itself serving a very specific function, and might more properly be called a 'research laboratory' for poets themselves (and, even so, only geared to a clearly-defined 'type' of poem, which for lack of a better categorization might be seen as 'post-projectivist') than a public journal. The intention is to allow the best of our poets to see, at a single gathering, what one another is doing.

Outside submissions are welcome, although the great bulk of material will be solicited by the editor. Prose will not be considered unless it (a) is absolutely relevant and (b) of such a nature that it would not likely become available through other means. (For example, the first issue will have a reprint from an obscure journal, now out of print, dealing with voodoo rituals, by Robin Magowan, and an excerpt from a letter of the late Jack Spicer, dealing with spirit communication — both ‘absolutely relevant.’)

No. 1 contributors will include Robert Kelly, Jerome Rothenberg, Clayton Eshleman, Spicer, Armand Schwerner, Ken Irby, D. Alexander, Harvey Bialy, Margaret Randall, David Cohen, and Dennis Schmitz, as well as several younger and lesser-known writers, most notably John Gorham and Tom Meyer. No. 2 will feature a large bulk of work by David Bromige.

True — all of the above points to a particularly-narrow concept of what the ideal poem might be. But it would seem that only a small percentage of current writers have either the talent or inclination to attempt a poem that confronts the universe at all levels. A poem that ignores the formal possibilities of the poem is predestined to only a very partial success, no matter how well written. Alpha Sort has neither the time nor the budget to waste on partial poetry. Ron Silliman

A LETTER FROM THE ARTIST, PAUL FREEMAN, TO TOM MCNAMARA

*November twenty seventh nineteen and sixty eight from the
city of New York*

Dear big beautiful Tom: Your letter was damned beautiful and I loved it and it was pretty too, the colour and the drawing and the feeling you made me feel. I especially dug the canto and old Toscanini! . . . You did him proud. Erika and I had to go away from this city for family business that was long and hard and very painful and necessary. That was in Vienna, Vienna city of dreams. If they were never nazi how come they left the swastikas on the bedsprads . . . No question mark.

But also on this trip while Erika went through hell with an eighty-year-old aunt in Vienna I took two weeks to roam through London & Oxford and then to . . . DUBLIN . . . I loved the city and the faces and the voices and the bitterness and all the children. God Tom I never saw so many children in my life in one place and every place. They were begging in the streets for pennies, and I gave them my pennies and they smiled and ran away to be hungry somewhere else and I felt helpless and I will never go to India, never, never. But in Dublin I searched out James Joyce's haunts and I could smell him in the pubs and on the docks and in the doorways. I felt at home here and it was no surprise. I talked to a toothless workman dismantling a church on the outskirts of the city and asked him why it was being torn down. 'Because it is old and unsafe and it was condemned.' What religion did the church hold? 'Protestant,' says he. Oh says me now who condemned it — the Catholics? He laughed and said without denying it: 'You mustn't thing lak that . . .' So I walked through Trinity College, and I walked into J. Swift's very own

library and was impressed. All the books are chained to the shelves, others are in caged rooms. Books were of such value in ye ole daze that extreme measures were taken to assure their not being stold by eager students and scholars. I was deeply impressed. Today all those books rolling off the presses and so few people read them. And it is always the same people . . . us maybe. . . . So Dublin lives and wants to be less hungry and she throws out her men of genius and can't hold them down on her empty stomach and if I had been born in Dublin or you had been born in Dublin we might have reason or excuse for being where we are today and bitter for other things, no better but maybe more romantic.

I took my plays under my arm and peddled them in London, Israel — and nobody would buy. They told me about why. Two were not understood by the readers. Who read them? Directors, producers, theatrical pros. . . . When I explained the plays they reread them and then they liked them but they said they had no commercial audience for these plays. They dug my style, the dialogue, the visual inventiveness, the sheer theatrics and power . . . but no one would understand it they said and I laughed because these plays are so simple and direct. One play they liked, the third one. It is a traditional play written only to show I could do it. But I did not have the interest to write more than a full one-acter. Oh they said, together & apart, oh they said, turn this into a full evening of theatre and we will put it on quickly and all of us will make a lot of money. Fuck you I said. It is a good little one-act play and structurally it will collapse if I fake a second act and flush it out to fill the box-office. Fuck you I said, I have lived forty-odd years, very odd years, and I have learned to decide when a painting needs a big canvas or a small one. I think a play is a talking canvas so the same principle applies. Come have lunch with me tomorrow & we will talk about it. All we need is a central

theme that can be extended. What time will you take me to lunch? One o'clock. O.K. Mister Theatrical Pro I'll eat but I won't change my little gem of a traditional play, but if you will produce the crazy play I love I'll make all the changes you want because it is so far out no one can hurt it . . . It flies!!!

Well, dear Tom, I ate well but I am still an unproduced play write . . . right! What I have been trying to say for two pages is hello and bottoms up and have a happy . . . every day don't wait till 'they' tell you to celebrate. . . . We never did and we never will. . . . So here it is back in N.Y.C. 52 hrs. and I am not sure I ever really left. Is this just another hotel with room service on the do-it-yourself bit and the towels have no lettering on them so we call it home. . . .

LOVE FROM ME.

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COLD NIGHT

James Bertolino

Hugh Fox:

The cold night has dawned
with more than the thin
spiders
and snake-foam
I expected. But the beer
tastes like
springtime
and the stars are precious
as my first rug.

THE GODDESS OF THE NEW SENSIBILITY: SUSAN SONTAG

SUSAN SONTAG'S ESSAY, NOTES ON 'CAMP,' is a kind of outline of her entire world-view and serves as a key to explaining her essays, *AGAINST INTERPRETATION* (1961), and two novels, *THE BENEFACITOR* (1963) and *DEATH KIT* (1967). Camp, as she sees it, is 'one way of seeing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon.' The 'real,' the gutty, the down-to-earth, anything done under the sun (and not the moon) out of doors by people who sweat, is excluded. The Camp world is exclusively an interior decorator's world, filled with fin de siècle furnishings — lots of cushions, Tiffany lamps, Arabian rugs — and strongly 'androgynous,' self-conscious, posed . . . and poised. It is a secret insider's world of signs and symbols, European-oriented, appalled at the 'vulgarity' and 'barbarity' of the native American scene. Its two greatest culture heroes are Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley; but even here the Camp cultists are not interested in the 'real' Wilde or the 'real' Beardsley, the sad broken men under the intricate façade — they concentrate merely on the façade, on Wilde, the wit, who said: 'It's absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious.' . . . or the Beardsley who did the epicene drawings for Wilde's *SALOME*. In a word, Camp is 'Dandyism in the age of mass culture.'

The fact that Susan Sontag published a volume of essays before a novel is significant. The essays — or, more accurately, the 'sources,' the 'themes' of the essays — serve as a consciously-intellectual base for her fiction. She is the least spontaneous writer on the contemporary literary scene. Everything is plotted out in advance, planned. Anything 'real' or 'genuine' is avoided at all costs. To be 'real' or 'genuine,' after all, wouldn't be Camp.

The essays give a good picture of Susan Sontag's sources. And sources are very important for her because she is eminently derivative. She is especially fond of new French novels and new French films, which become prime examples of Camp style. She likes the idea of nonplot, the exploration of structure at the expense of both movement and meaning — pure formalism. Resnais (*LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD*; *HIROSHIMA, MON AMOUR*; *MURIEL*) attracts her. In her essay on *MURIEL*, she expresses her admiration for the French formalists' 'mixture of coldness and pathos: coldness enclosing and subduing an immense pathos,' a formula she will later try in her own fiction, unfortunately merely able to achieve coldness without ever enclosing it in pathos. But then, after all, Resnais is in contact with the 'real.' He does emerge from the salon, whereas Susan Sontag does not.

Her comments on Nathalie Sarraute indicate the radical aloofness of her own dehumanization for the sake of being in vogue. While supporting the idea that 'the metaphor of the work of art as a representation of reality should be retired for a while,' she rebels at Sarraute's position that the novel must aim for a more and more delicate exposition of human emotion. She wants pure form, form in itself, totally liberated from 'truth' and 'reality.' She rejects Sarraute for Robbe-Grillet's declarations in favor of the novel as pure form, without any content whatsoever.

It is interesting how she hides behind the French avant garde, not so much to bolster her position, but to give her a position. Her contribution to American critical writing has been to rephrase the contemporary French critics, to use current French literary theory as a kind of magic circle on the other side of which everything is mass vulgarity. Her snobbish pronouncements on the state of (or lack of) 'culture' in our times are carefully aimed to be sure to include herself in with the culture-crowd:

...the novel has proved unable to assimilate whatever of genuine quality and spiritual ambition has been performed in its name in the 20th century. It has sunk to the level of an art form deeply, if not irrevocably, compromised by philistinism.

When she comes to write her first novel, her main and perhaps only purpose is to escape this Philistinism.

Not content with merely identifying herself with the Resnaises and the Robbe-Grilletes of the avant garde, in her essay *One Culture and the New Sensibility* Susan Sontag identifies with a much wider spectrum of contemporary thinkers, all of them, of course, 'kinky' Camp, consciously involved with the new and revolutionary: Wittgenstein, Antonin Artaud, C. S. Sherrington, Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan, John Cage, André Breton, Roland Barthes, Claude Levi-Strauss, Siegfried Gidion, Norman O. Brown and Gyorgy Kepes.

For those chronically self-conscious and sweasily-eager 'intellectuals' who carry the weight of tremendous inferiority complexes and feelings of cultural inadequacy around with them, this kind of name-dropping is a tremendous relief, of course. It gives them ammunition in the cocktail-party upmanship circuit where they operate, trying to emerge from name-dropping evenings feeling that they've starred, scored, totally demolished their less-educated neighbors. They don't even have to read McLuhan or Fuller or Breton — although one suspects that they go out to their corner paperback store after reading Sontag, and get at least one book by every author whose name she drops — because in Sontag they have found an authority, a statementmaker who tells them what to believe and who to like. The magazines where Susan Sontag has published most often, the *Partisan Review*, the *New York Review of Books*, *Commentary*, even *The Evergreen Review* (before it got 'sick'), are particularly designed to keep nervous anxious want-to-be intellectuals up on 'intellectual'

things. What's 'in,' what's cooking, what's Camp? Just read Susan Sontag.

What makes any serious judgment of Susan Sontag difficult is that to a large extent what she says has a great deal of validity. There is a new mode of sensibility. If you synthesize, condense, and rephrase the statements on cultural history by Levi-Strauss, Marshall McLuhan, Buckminster Fuller, Robbe-Grillet and the others in the Sontag pantheon, you can't go too far wrong — and this is essentially what she has done. What can be questioned about Susan Sontag, though, is her contribution. What thoughts has she thought? What new forms has she created? Most of the time, whenever we agree with her and applaud her ideas, we are agreeing with and applauding her sources. But if you take her sources away, what is there of 'her' left? Unfortunately, not very much.

THE BENEFACITOR

reads as if it were written by a French homosexual — trying to imitate Oscar Wilde — at the end of the Nineteenth Century. The dated Nineteenth-century quality here is especially disturbing because, although set in France, it takes place before, during, and after World War II.

Plot as such is minimal. A young man, who has an independent income and a homosexual friend (Jean-Jacques, who is vaguely reminiscent of Jean Cocteau), becomes the lover of a Frau Anders, goes to ‘the City of Arabs’ where he sells Frau Anders, then returns to Paris, marries . . . his wife dies, Frau Anders returns, he builds a house for her . . . a number of minor complications occur, and twenty years later the narrator ends up in a small room by himself writing his story.

The work, as can be expected, is totally dehumanized. The best parts read like fragments of unfinished essays:

Man strives to be good; being bad is just the name for
some people’s
goodness. The essence of goodness is monotony . . .
From monotony comes purity. This is why marriage
to one woman is better, purer
than polygamy. But monogamy is polygamous, when
matched against
the purity of self-love.

There is no denying that Susan Sontag has a certain Pascal-like ability to play with ideas.

The narrator in *THE BENEFACITOR* moves in a world that is completely artificial. He is the incarnation of the Camp spirit. Being financially independent he can indulge his tastes as he sees fit. He is, at various times, an onanist, a homosexual, and a lady’s man. But most of the time he is an onanist, and his onanism is a fitting expression of his detachment from

anyone or anything else.

Dreams occupy a great deal of space in the book; and, indeed, the major occupation of the narrator is narrating and analyzing these dreams. This dreaming and dream-analysis is a kind of spiritual onanism. The narrator, by concentrating so much on dreams, is involving himself with his total psyche both on the subconscious and conscious level. True to the world-view stances of her much-admired Resnais, Susan Sontag, mixing dreams, illusions, and reality, questions 'existence' itself. What is the 'real' in the narrator's life? Like the madman in Gogol's *DIARY OF A MADMAN*, the narrator in *THE BENEFACTOR* confuses illusion and reality and whole sections of the narration turn out to have been merely his 'imaginings.' Or were they? We never really know.

This same sense of unreality is the single most striking feature of the entire style of *THE BENEFACTOR*. What is someone uninitiated into the rules of Camp (where the whole point is to 'dethrone the serious,' to be 'playful, antiserious') to make of passages such as:

...

A woman opened the door, wearing a loose-fitting greyish Arab garment which covered her completely, except for the familiar large brown eyes with their alternately docile and imperious expression. 'Come in, my knight of the sad countenance,' she said. 'Don't mock me,' I said resentfully. 'Tell me how you are, and what I may do for you.'

or,

'Don't run,' she said sternly, seating herself. 'I want to talk to you.'

'It's a dream,' I whispered to her.

'Don't be an ass, Hippolyte! No one is more real than I.'

'That's true,' I said in bewilderment. 'How indestructible you are.'

If you are not in on the game, passages like these strike you as sheer bathos, the worst kind of hothouse-contrived and pseudo-exotic bunk, but if the bunk is intentional then it becomes high art—or does it?

THE BENEFACTOR at least has its totally-exotic atmosphere to commend it. It is sprinkled with Arabs and Arabian artifacts ('There was to be sand on the floor, the odor of camel dung, a potted palm, a portrait of the Prophet . . .') — with the epicene and esoteric. narrator memorizes 'the names of the two hundred and ninety-six Popes and Anti-Popes,' dabbles in the bisexual theology of Auto-genists, constructs his own private thought-system, and in general leads the life of a Wildean esthete as if the real world didn't exist at all. To call THE BENEFACTOR the work of a 'truly gifted innovator,' as John Hawkes does, is perhaps a bit too enthusiastic; but within the stylistic form of the traditional novel, along the content lines of Pater and Wilde and Ronald Firbank, it is an interesting performance. Hardly what one would have expected — formwise — though from a disciple of Robbe-Grillet and Marshall McLuhan, someone whose main criticism of the modern novel is that it has not participated in the media revolution that has swept over the other arts. THE BENEFACTOR could have been written in 1895. There is nothing stylistically startling about it. This is a bit disappointing, seeing that it comes from a writer who declares (in *On Style*): '. . . all great art is founded on distance, on artificiality, on style, on what Ortega calls dehumanization.' The distance, artificiality, and above all the dehumanization are there, but the form — which might be the most important of all — is essentially static and unchanged. THE BENEFACTOR has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the media revolution.

DEATH-KIT is very different from THE BENEFACTOR. The style is contemporary, the plot fluid, the dialogue realistic. Essentially it is a novel that John Updike could easily have

written. The fact that the entire novel, from page seven on, is dreamed by the narrator while under the influence of sleeping pills — although it might be asserted that this device makes the novel avant garde — really is irrelevant. It is as if Susan Sontag first wrote an ‘ordinary’ Updikean novel, and then needed a gimmick to fit it into the avant-garde category, so she decided to ‘enclose’ the entire work in a dream framework. Another pseudo avant-garde device is that of using typographical ‘tricks’ to make the prose look ‘off’ on the page. This looks a little odd at times; but if you read, it is just prose — just ordinary prose.

Now, what is wrong about writing a perfectly good Updikean novel? Nothing. Nothing at all. If you are John Updike. But if, on the other hand, you are the Goddess of the New Sensibility, you have to keep being new.

But perhaps it is a bit harsh to call *DEATH-KIT* typically Updikean. The book is ‘essentially’ Updikean, has a hard core of ordinary plot and sensibility, but the ‘fringes,’ the edges are unmistakably Susan Sontag. The problem is that they seem to be added as an afterthought. Diddy, the hero, is riding out of New York on a train. In the same compartment with him is a blind girl named Hester. The train stops in a tunnel, Diddy gets out, gets into an argument with a trainman, kills him, gets back on the train, makes love to Hester in the washroom, goes to a business meeting in the same town where Hester is going to have her eyes operated on. Hester and Diddy eventually end up living together, Diddy visits the widow of the man he has killed. He continues living with Hester. So far so good. Then around page 254 (the novel is 312 pages long), the narrative begins to get Updikean and weird. The dream sequences begin, highly reminiscent of *THE BENEFACITOR*. Like the narrator in *THE BENEFACITOR*, Diddy, drawn more and more into himself, depends less and less on the world around him. Diddy decides to revisit the scene of his murder, and then (p. 287)

the novel moves into total surrealism. Diddy descends into a large series of catacombs, a kind of necropolis where the dead are classified according to various historical periods. He keeps wandering through this necropolis, more rooms, more rooms, and then the novel ends. This last section is highly reminiscent of the Report on the Blind (Informe Sobre los Ciegos) section of the Argentinian, Ernesto Sabato's *SOBRE HEROES Y TUMBES*; but I suspect that Susan Sontag is unfamiliar with Sabato and that both she and Sabato owe a great deal to the French surrealist, André Breton.

This final section in *DEATH-KIT* is marred, however, by inserted 'hints' that the whole thing is taking place (in fact that the whole novel has taken place) while Diddy has been unconscious. On page 287, suddenly exclamations of 'Wake up!' and 'Hey!' and 'Try the oxygen!' are inserted into the otherwise surrealistic narrative; and on the very last page, just so we won't miss the point, Sontag adds: 'A trim youngish Negro wearing white jacket and pants wheels a cart to his bed. Reeking of vomit. Who is? Diddy? Diddy the Soiled.'

Whereas in *THE BENEFACITOR* she had been content to let the reader dangle, to create something that was 'hers,' for all its anachronistic defects, here she feels compelled to view the novel as the definite portrayal of some kind of external ('real') reality. *THE BENEFACITOR* is an exercise in unrealism, antirealism, whereas *DEATH-KIT* is basically realistic with a few arty surrealistic touches added on.

Yet this is the same Susan Sontag who has written that 'style is the principle of decision in a work of art,' that 'the greatest art seems secreted, not constructed,' that the new novel of the New Sensibility 'will restrict the novel's audience because it will demand accepting new pleasures . . . to be gotten from prose fiction and learning how to get them.' She is the same Susan Sontag who wants all form and no content and is bored with the old ways of doing things.

The American novel today is pure commercial pabulum. And, for the most part, so is *DEATH-KIT*. Has Susan Sontag's agent or publisher told her (as I've been told): 'You're writing to sell, kid, you've gotta make it comprehensible?' What else but a conscious aiming at the mass audience would explain the change from the Wildean exoticism of *THE BENEFACTOR* to the sentimental banalities and slick plotting of *DEATH-KIT*? Or is the latter the expression of what Susan Sontag has been all along? Is the media-revolution bit, the whole schmeer about the New Sensibility, merely a colossal put-on? Under the Vogue glamour and the New Partisan complexity is Susan Sontag just another of us Philistines after all?

The most painful part of comparing Susan Sontag's theory with her practice is to realize that, although her diagnosis of the ills of the American Novel is only too true, not even she can write her novel, do her thing, and still survive on Madison and Park Avenue and Union Square West. The pressure is too strong. The high-pressured culture-digests want high-pressed name-dropping which in itself demands a certain snobbish eclectic bookishness. And then, if you want to be an 'artist' in America, with the same kind of freedom that a Duras or Robbe-Grillet or Nathalie Sarraute has in France, you won't last. They won't let you last. You'll have to turn out a commercial product or you won't survive. *THE BENEFACTOR* could have been a good first break with the commercial novel tradition in the U.S. With all its corn and Camp and pseudo-orientalism, it is a 'different,' a distinctive individualistic performance. And now, in *DEATH-KIT*, our high-priestess has learned how to write 'well.'

To be great, criticism has to be original, needs sources, but needs to break with the sources, soar into the still unsaid and unthought. The novel in the U.S. needs this same kind of originality. The pseudoliterary public elevates a pseudo-original artist to the level of the genuine because this

public doesn't know what the genuine really is —and wouldn't want to take the trouble to bother about it if it really came along. Even our best public in the U.S. isn't good enough; and as long as our artists worry about the public (the massive public) what they produce can't be good enough either.

This is where the Underground and the Little Mags come in. Here, the writer can find an audience and still—to a great extent—write exactly what he wants the way he wants to write it. But that isn't where the big name or the big money lies. That's on Madison and Park Avenue and Union Square West, and if you want to play their game, you've got to play it according to their rules. This, unfortunately, is what Susan Sontag has begun to do.

PORTRAIT OF A PUGNACIOUS PLAYWRIGHT

by François Pasqualini

IN A CIVILIZATION OF HUMAN ROBOTS whose already-scant thinking power is constantly being reduced by the leveling onslaught of mass media, the term 'nonconformist' constitutes a highly-coveted compliment.

When applied to French Playwright Armand Gatti, it is not only that, but also an understatement. The extent of his nonconformism can best be measured by the fact that some journalists have used the word 'anarchist' in connection with him. But of course there is a tendency to dub as an anarchist anyone whose outstanding personality shockingly contrasts with the lack of character exhibited by the surrounding multitudes.

Gatti's nonconformism may be traced to intelligent observation of the crazy world around him, a world he has traveled widely, both during the war as an underground fighter, Kriegsgefangene, runaway and paratrooper, and in peacetime as a roving reporter.

The former experiences, and especially his stretch in the German concentration camp at Linderman, near Hamburg, have resulted, among other things, in his multi-award film, *L'Enclos* (The Compound). The latter, and particularly the knowledge of the Chinese he gained through newspaper work in the Far East, yielded a play entitled *Le Poisson Noir* (The Black Fish) and the germ of an idea that later developed into his most successful stage venture, *Le Voyage du Grand Tchou*.

Actually, *The Voyage of the Great Tchou* was sparked by the fact that Gatti, who loves cats (and whose name, incidentally, means 'Cats' in Italian), gave one of his

numerous tomcats the Oriental name of Tchouta (Virtue) because of the animal's absolute selfcontrol and wise-looking attitudes.

Tchouta, who required the services of a veterinarian to be brought into this world, later grew into a big husky cat, so robust that he once fell uninjured off a high window ledge that had already witnessed the accidental deaths of many of his four-legged brothers. After his drop, Tchouta lived on to astonish his master and the latter's friends further by learning tricks such as switching lights on and off. He was soon promoted to the honorable rank of Great Tchou.

On the other hand, Gatti also owned a lady cat called Piacente, of whom Chris Marker, a good friend of Gatti's, was particularly fond. Every time he paid a visit to the playwright, Marker would take her in his lap and caress her affectionately. One day, however, Gatti and Marker had some important theatrico-literary business to discuss, and the latter was so absorbed in the matter that he hardly noticed the cat. He nevertheless picked her up absentmindedly, as she kept pacing around the chair in which he sat. He started caressing her out of habit, without putting any feeling into it, his thoughts being entirely focused on the problem at hand. The cat felt so outraged at the man's lack of interest in her that she actually threw herself at his face and plowed her claws through it, starting a network of blood rivulets down his cheeks. From that day on, Piacente's name was changed to Cruelle (Cruel Girl).

Cruelle eventually fell in love with Great Tchou, but he treated her with the utmost disdain, paying no attention to her whatsoever. He would go out on long mysterious errands, probably having healthy love affairs with the other female cats in the vicinity, and she would patiently wait for him, although he would be just as heedless of her upon his return.

One day, he disappeared for good. Gatti and his friends made a thorough search for him all around, but they never found him. For months afterward, Cruelle sat watching the door and the window, hoping for his homecoming, but he never came back. And when she finally realized that she would never see him again, she lost all interest in life. To shorten the slow agony of her hopeless loneliness, she began to challenge the toughest alley cats to bloody combat. She died one day at dawn after an all-night fight, her body torn to shreds by the ferocious tomcats she had so unforgivably offended.

This moving drama of faithful love made such a deep impression on Gatti that he turned it into the allegorical play *Le Voyage du Grand Tchou*, where the actual story of Cruelle serves as a handy vehicle for the author's philosophical theories. The play rated a big audience with intellectuals, for whom it was intended, after all; it was staged daily for two consecutive months at the Théâtre Quotidien de Marseille. More popular with the general public was Gatti's motion picture *L'Enclos*, whose protagonists are not allegorical at all, but grimly realistic. The film shows in a crude light the raw aspects of concentration-camp life under the sadistic rule of Wehrmacht officers who get a morbid kick out of pitting two prisoners, one a French Jew, the other a rebellious German sailor, against each other.

This is Gatti at his best, for he knows what he is talking about, having spent some time in that kind of hell, himself, when he joined the Corrèze underground in 1943, was captured and sentenced to death by the Germans, then pardoned because too young (he was nineteen), and sent to Linderman, where he made his getaway to England.

Parachuted back into his own country as a freedom fighter, he soon landed in a French military jail for insubordination. Back in civilian life at twenty-three, he gave the ink in his veins a free flow, producing first a novel

entitled *Bas-relief pour un décapité* (Bas-Relief for a Beheaded Man), then a play based on his concentration camp experiences: *L'Enfant-Rat* (The Rat Child).

The financial returns of these literary ventures, however, proved far from sufficient to warrant his 'taking the plunge' (becoming a full-time freelancer, in writer's jargon), so he took a job as a newspaperman on the staff of *Le Parisien Libéré*, from which he moved on to *Paris-Match*, then to *France-Soir*, *L'Express*, *France Observateur* and *Libération*.

His work as a roving reporter enabled him to visit South America, China, Siberia and Korea, and to familiarize himself with bigger kinds of cats through a story on caged lions that won him the Albert Londres award for newspaper reporting, the greatest distinction in French journalism.

Commenting on his newspaper success, Gatti, whose writing ambitions lay in an entirely different direction, remarked ironically: 'I accepted journalistic work because that was the only course open to me at the time, but I found myself in the position of a tragic actor who climbs on stage and winds up bringing down the house as a comic.'

Yet, newspaper work served Gatti as a handy springboard to the other kinds of writing he had in mind: books and plays.

Fascinated by Winston Churchill and the Far East, he wrote a biography of the former, and drew from the latter his inspiration for several plays and movies. As a matter of fact, it was in China that he met and struck a lasting friendship with Chris Marker, who introduced him to movie writing. His first tries in this new (to him) mode of expression, *Sunday in Peking* and *Letter from Siberia*, were shot with Marker himself, and later he collaborated with Bonnardot in the making of a Korean-shot picture entitled *Morambong*, prohibited in France for undisclosed reasons.

Out of his Latin American experiences came a couple of plays, one of which, *Le Crapaud-Buffle* (The Bullfrog), was

the first to be staged — and a total flop. Not only did the public shun it, but theatrical critics tore it to pieces in their columns.

Of course even such a howling fiasco could not deter a man with Gatti's ever-challenging personality. The very fact of his modest origins (he was the son of a street sweeper) constituted the inspiration for the next play he wrote: *La vie imaginaire de l'éboueur Auguste Geai* (The Imaginary Life of Muck Handler Auguste Geai), based on the circumstances of his father's death. This was successfully staged by Planchon's famous French theatrical troupe at the Théâtre de la Cité de Villeurbanne, near Lyons.

It has often been stated that the best writers are men who 'had it tough' in their early years; and Gatti's gradual rise to his present stature adds one more illustration to this often-verified axiom. At twelve, he was already earning a living as a mover's helper, then worked as a sub-deacon at funerals, while educating himself on the side.

Like all successful writers, he later cashed in on his early hardships by writing up his experiences and working personal observations into his literary creations. The funeral procession in *Le Grand Tchou*, for instance, was inspired by memories of his sub-deacon stint; and in *Le Camp de Tatenberg*, another one of his plays staged successfully in Lyons, he once more capitalized on his prisoner-of-war ordeal.

Having lived such a rich adventure-packed unconventional life, is it any wonder that Gatti, only recently turned forty, likes to shock older people with a bombshell reply when they ask his age? He lets them have it with: 'I could be your father.'

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THESE EYES

**MIST-FILLED SUTRAS REVOLVING PAST AND
FUTURE INTO THE OBSCURED MOON MEOW LIKE
TABBY CATS.**

Jed Linde

A few do care; fewer than somebody.

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JOHN TRYFORD:

DADA AS PSYCHODRAMA

MY GRANDMOTHER COMES FROM PRAGUE

*In this age of monstrous vulgarity, of education
without culture, when words have lost their
meaning through being loosely used, perhaps we
should restore its true meaning to the word
‘realism.’*

*Realism consists in faithfully copying the features
of a world which belongs to the artist. Thus it has
no connection with the type of thing that usually
goes under the name of ‘reality.’*

Hugh Fox

Jean Cocteau¹

IN CONSIDERING THE MOVEMENT generally known as Dada and its after-effects on the world of art, literature, etc., I have chosen this quotation from Cocteau, not because he necessarily belonged to the school of Dada, but because it gives an insight into the problems of the artist—or of the creative genius in general—in a world which seemingly more and more resembles a mental hospital.

Dada was an attempt, and a very successful attempt, to destroy the old conscious aesthetic principles that had held tight rein over the arts for centuries. Artists realized, after the absurd and senseless devastation of World War I and the subsequent economic waste and depression periods, that the cerebral formation of rigid artistic endeavor (as, for example, summed up in Keats’ famous dictum: ‘Truth is beauty, . . .’ etc.) was no longer viable or believable. New art forms had to be found to reflect the ugliness and the devastation of both the landscape and the individual human being, physically as well as mentally. Dada is, in fact, the artistic or aesthetic

equivalent of what World War I and the ensuing period is in political science or history.

Dada had no preconceived program to adhere to and no really-tangible goals to achieve. Unlike past movements, the Dadaists did not wish to uplift or enlighten the common man. It was too late for that, they thought. Instead, Dada sought to create a theatre of shock and insult, to anger and outrage and disturb the audience and the very members of the Dada movement, so that a riot would come about at every performance the Dadaists staged.

¹ As quoted in *THOUGH THIS BE MADNESS: a study in psychotic art*, by G. Schmidt — Hans, Stech, Alfred Bader, London (1961).

Dada was nothing more than complete nonsense.² Dada was, and is, anything that anyone wants it to be. It is Marcel Duchamp's urinal mounted as a work of art . . . inflammatory speeches against all forms of government or authoritarian constraint . . . poems concocted out of gibberish and foul obscenity . . . book-burning bonfires . . . tomatoes thrown at the audience . . . ragtime jazz played on an Eighteenth Century harpsichord.

Dada is a catharsis that purges the audience and the players of all socially-imposed forms of hypocrisy, and forces them to reveal their true feelings, most of which are hostile. Thus, Dada has the same effect as the psychodrama that patients in the mental wards of hospitals, under the supervision of psychiatrists, perform. The idea of psychodrama is to have the patients act out the circumstances through which their psychoses, or whatever form of mental illness they suffer from, developed. The more specific the situation, as a husband-wife fight . . . running away from parents, etc., the more effective the psychodrama is, because it forces the patient to see that the cause of his illness is the accumulation of tensions built up in these seemingly-simple everyday situations. But Dada is even better psychodrama because the conditions it imposes and

the effect it has on the audience hold deeper implications for the world than the mental-hospital psychodrama.

Again Cocteau: 'Genius still frightens us, because it is disobedient.'³ The Dadaists acted out the truth of that statement in every performance they gave throughout Europe in the Twenties. They acted like spoiled children deliberately. Dada was a mass temper tantrum. What was the use of anything else? The world had gone so mad that the only thing a genius, an artist could do was to become even madder. Dada was an expression of the same will to nonconformity that flowed across the entire Western world after the War. After all, in America, businessmen were drinking bathtub gin in speakeasies and dancing the Charleston; and one could purchase millions of dollars in securities with only 10 per cent margin. So, if Dada seems rather extraordinary, one must see it in the light of a terrible striving to break down all barriers and disobey the laws — which was the general tenor of the times both in Europe and America.

Dada was never a serious movement. This first must be understood. Although there were some serious artists in the movement who later went on to do important work (such as André Breton and Philippe Soupault) as a group, self-labeled Dadaists, they knew from the beginning that the movement was ephemeral, that once the shock value wore off and the audiences stopped throwing rotten eggs and celery, Dada would be no fun any more and they would go on to something else. Tristan Tzara once stated bluntly that Dada really had no supporters, because once anyone found out all there was to know about Dada, he would despise the movement and denounce it.

² The name 'dada' itself is nonsense, having been coined from a French word that babies utter, much the equivalent of 'goo-goo' or 'ga-ga' in English.

³ From the book previously quoted: *THOUGH THIS BE MADNESS*.

The main value of the short-lived nonsense school was to open up the artistic path to even further exploration of the subconscious whether hostile or not. Dada was a kind of view of the world as a gigantic comedy: a barrel of belly laughs that formed a topping for a world of extreme pain, death, suffering, political delirium, etc. Dada did not die out abruptly. Bits and pieces of it floated off into other movements such as Surrealism, Cubism, Camp, pop art, op art, and even the return of art nouveau as in the hippie posters. Each of these post-Dadaist schools or styles has its own particularly-unique view of the world, but owes credit to Dada for expanding the limits of the techniques that artists could use to create their effects and secondly for removing forever from the art world the dead hand of authority, programmed ideas, formality, rules. etc. That urinal of Marcel Duchamp's probably never was used for its ordinary purposes, but it surely gave a lot of people the jitters.

The artist of today no longer even tries to shock the Philistine. He just completely ignores him or laughs at him. Artists have found out that trying to shock a Philistine is almost a contradiction in terms . . . and at any rate a huge waste of time. Tristan Tzara predicted the influence of Dada when he said in his memoirs:

. . . the absolutely anti-literary point of view . . . will be the relativist point of view of future generations. The superabundance of life of these future generations will find its place in the movement, and they will forget the rigid conventions, the paralyzed ideas, of a tradition which is nothing but laziness.

By art nouveau I mean specifically that heavily stylized type of drawing as perfected by Aubrey Beardsley.

As quoted in AXEL'S CASTLE, by Edmund Wilson — New York (1931).

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HEM-LINES IN OSCILLATION

by Iris B. Buaken

ON AN AVERAGE OF EACH SEVEN YEARS, for the last thirty-five years, there has been a New Dispensation in Education in the United States, handed down from the obscure heights of some awful Mount Sinai, cancelling everything known and done about teaching heretofore, installing a new Panacea, requiring of course a complete new set of textbooks and other teaching materials each time around. For this, the Rape of Free Enterprise, that taxes may flow in unending billions for the use of the Educational Merchandisers, whose major members are the U.S. Office of Education, the National Education Association, the textbooks companies, and all the teachers of all the Teacher's Colleges; but most particularly those of Columbia. These cataclysmic changes are Engineered by the Educational Hucksters for the same reason that the fashion industry moves the waistline from the hips to the mammae, and the hem-line from the floor to the navel and back again. Think of the tragedy if women could wear their dresses until the cloth wore out! Or the unspeakable result if American education remained relatively stable! If the goodies were to be had with a minimum of bureaucratic forethought and assistance, who then would convince the taxpayers that they must continue to shell out for an ever-expanding force of Auctioneers of Education? Hucksters and Witch Doctors change their incantations periodically. The current words of magic import in Education are: 'the heuristics of discovery' . . . 'inquiry-centered approach' . . . 'the discipline of empathy' . . . 'of visceral and social-ego motivations.' But, most of all: 'Open-ends' . . . 'Open-end discussion' . . . 'open-end research' . . . 'open-end inquiry' . . . 'Open-end sentences' . . . 'open-end problems' . . . — and, surely — 'open-end open-ends.' Lead-off move in keeping the hem-line of education in perpetual motion was surely the establishment of Un-Phonics, worthy predecessor of the current Un-Math.

Un-Phonics created a whole generation of graduates of American schools unable either to read or to spell. This Look-Say method of learning to read was worse, an eminent educationist has said, ‘than trying to read Chinese pictographs, for perchance the Chinese character might resemble the object named, but the word “horse” does not remotely resemble the animal.’

‘Readers’ with endless repetition and extensive pictures committed all children to the guessing habit. This resulted in at least two complete changes of textbooks for all grades; for, Look-Say is now passé, and phonics is the word again. Thus, the hem-line is kept in motion.

The latest Mini-Skirt in the cart-wheel business of teaching reading is the Initial Teaching Alphabet: I/t/a, sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education and National Education Association. This ‘carnie’ device omits two letters of the standard alphabet and adds nineteen of its own, totalling forty-three symbols, by means of which children are said to learn to read rapidly. After which, they must be ‘switched over’ to the standard alphabet, a process requiring considerable time and specially trained people, offering also considerable risk of failure — so tell me, what is the gain? Except to move the waistline from the waist to the hips, and to keep the designers, cutters and operators of the assembly line educational process still in jobs and indispensable.

In language-teaching, grammar has now become an obscene word, as phonics was a few years ago. This requires that all language textbooks be rewritten, because of the changing of terminology, thus:

- subject becomes ‘headword’
- object becomes ‘undergoer’
- predicate becomes ‘verb cluster’
- letters are ‘graphemes’
- sounds are ‘phonemes’
- subordinate clause becomes ‘s-group’

prepositional phrase becomes 'p-group'

To sustain this orbit, not only textbooks but library books must now be rewritten, and all present ones discarded. However, if you have patience, about seven years worth, schools will have gone the full circle in this matter and will be back where they started.

In spite of Education Engineering, some humans cannot be prevented from learning things . . .

. . . even with Programmed Materials . . . another 'carnie' device 'consisting of an extended series of simple questions or tasks, each of which is carefully built upon the preceding. The difficulty between steps and of the tasks is planned to insure almost perfect performance, but in case of error, the response is immediately corrected by turning the page or uncovering the next frame. Learning of a skill thus proceeds by very small steps, with constant re-inforcement toward the desired goal, and is teacher proof.' And the ungrateful little brats complain of boredom and concentrate on pulling the legs off an unprogrammed fly.

Still another 'shell game,' team-teaching, is already being proved to have been much overrated; as in Denver, where such a program showed that it was of some value to persons of low ability, but caused the bright to fall constantly behind. Of course, that should be in its favor, since our culture is at the moment bent on preserving the unfittest at the expense of the fit and the intelligent.

The mongrelization of history, civics, and geography into 'Social Studies' provided work for makers of new textbooks, but has resulted in a generation of Americans almost completely ignorant of American history, its heroes and its values. Typically, a bright fourth grade student asks the teacher: 'Did Washington come before Lincoln or after?'

Also typically, this misbegotten bastard of a study includes a smattering of European history mixed up with present-day living and political conditions, and a bare

outline of the location . . . leaps the Atlantic for a further smattering of the same with regard to America . . . makes another leap to the Pacific for still more of the same concerning Asia. The student winds up with a few scattered and often slanted facts, with no sure knowledge of anything.

Greatest accomplishment in moving the hem-line of Education in the interests of perpetual motion, has been New Math, better known as Un-Math.

Have you heard about the International Project for Evaluation of Educational Achievement, in which the United States children scored very low in all phases of arithmetic and mathematics, while Japanese children were highest?

Some of the answer may lie in the Oscillation practices of the Hucksters, such as algebra in the fourth grade, going by the name of the Madison Project. This is recommended 'to do away with that stalemate when children get bogged down in the multiplication tables.' Down with multiplication. Up with quadratic equations! Who needs multiplication?

And did you know that experiments with Un-Math in Ghana and in the U.S. have exactly the same outcome — that planned confusion creates uniform chaos?

Have you further heard that the man most responsible for inflicting Un-Math on American elementary-school children has now convinced himself that this curriculum was a mistake?

According to Time (Jan. 22, 1965), reprinting from the New York Alumni News, an article by Dr. Morris Kline states: 'Dr. Max Beberman, of the University of Illinois (the man most responsible for Un-Math) says he is now "disturbed." And well he might be! He says NOW . . . that computation is the KEY THING.' Computation is, however, the key omission in New Math. Dr. Kline, a recognized mathematician of New York University, says: 'All of the desirable changes [in arithmetic teaching] amount to modifications of existing curricula — and that all of this talk about Modern Society's

requiring a totally new kind of Math is sheer nonsense. New Uses, of truly minor import, are being played up as though they were at the heart of our scientific and engineering skill.' It is further reported that: EUCLID DIDN'T BOTHER . . . In geometry, students are now asked to prove about 100 theorems which Euclid, 2,300 years ago, considered so obvious as not to be worth mentioning. Such as if A, B, and C are points on a line, the student must now prove that only one can be between the other two. Or he must prove that to go from a point inside a circle to a point outside the circle, he must cross the circle. But fluidity of the Hem-line must be maintained, cost what it will in other people's money. All much in line with what Alice, in Wonderland, discovered about Education in conversation with the Mock Turtle. 'I've been to day school too,' said Alice. 'With extras?' asked the Mock Turtle a little anxiously. 'Yes,' said Alice. 'We learned French and music.' 'And washing?' said the Mock Turtle. 'Certainly not,' said Alice indignantly. 'Ah, then yours wasn't a really good school,' said the Mock Turtle. 'Now at ours they had at the end of the bill, French and music, and washing, extra.' 'You couldn't have wanted it much,' said Alice, 'living at the bottom of the sea.' 'I couldn't afford to learn it. I only took the regular course.' 'What was that?' inquired Alice. 'Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with,' the Mock Turtle said, 'and then the different branches of Arithmetic . . . Ambition, Distraction and Derision.' Waiting for the New Dispensation, no doubt. 'Hem-lines' sources (other than those identified in text): Bulletin (Apr., 1967, Vol. 11, No. 8), published by Council for Basic Education, Washington, D.C. WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR SCHOOLS, by Rosalie Gord — America's Future, Inc., New Rochelle, N.Y. (1956). 30 Program by Mazurkiewicz and Tanyzer—Initial Teaching Alphabet Publ., Inc., New York (1965).

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CIRCUS PRINT

i

circus life of an eon print
pastel balloon man
red tents flying
circus print of life
childhood hopscotch

ii

fathom a wooden horse
prison circus me
silence is a silver circus
pasted clown star
crazy crayon moon.

m. sirchuk

ISSUE P. 32 · SCAN P. 42

TODAY'S MACHETE

by James D. Houston

MY HEAD IS CROWDED, MY HOUSE is crowded, my life is crowded with bathtub leaks and cars to grease and fluids to stir and class to prepare and students to listen to and dinners to attend, babies and wives and sixty-year-old friends of my daughter and rainstorm stuff to carry in out of the wet followed by sunshine stuff to carry out for babies to play in, books to read and letters to write, hair to wash, and toilets to find copper tubing for. All spaces filled, with a waiting list, and the way things look now, no openings for at least twenty years. It's space a man needs, space in his head, space in his house, space in his life. And it's fences and fillers to contend with as soon as he starts to care about the world. Cole Porter says: 'Give me land, lots of land, under starry skies above, don't fence me in.' Every male's plea and fantasy, all the while designing the fences, himself. Read the latest poems of a man like Gary Snyder. Plenty of space around every phrase, betokening space in his head, in his life, space to stretch words and sentences into. Cramped style produces cramped style. Carve spaces for yourself, somehow, in the chock-full corral of whatever you have allowed to be erected around you. Maybe if you are a writer, every sentence, every paragraph, every page is a little whack at the enclosure, a blade thrust out, not to injure, but to clear, a way of clearing, of extending your space. And maybe when you think you are a writer, and not writing, you feel the fences most, for then the posts grow like Jack's beanstalk, the meshes close in, the fillers expand, and you feel it all climbing over you, like jungle creepers, machete-proof, invincibly extending. Then start writing. Take a whack. Make some space that way, and already you find some elbow room, already the fences are softer, strangely pliable, giving a little as you thrust. You can't mow down your fences, not if you care about the world, not if you care about people, not if you care about one person out of three billion. One person fills up most of the

space in your immediate vicinity, right in front of you, so call her a barrier if you want, or call her a cushion, or a protector, or a support, or a pillar, or companion, or limit, or extension. Call her what you will. Only remember, I would not have you fence me in; yet neither would I have you fence me out. So we figure some way to live with fences. And I tell you that in these fifteen minutes (INSTANT REPLAY: My head is crowded, my house is crowded, my life is crowded with bathtub leaks) the crowd has thinned, the fences have relaxed. To hell with the bathtub — for the time being. This bit of writing is today's machete.

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SANFORD M. DORBIN

THE VICAR'S BIRTHDAY

*There's a queer, grim, Dutch
touch about your phiz. I pity
the poor woman who wakes up
to find it on the pillow
beside her. James Joyce*

the flowing ink of night flushed in flame . . .
imagine torchlight turning this tame backyard
(scraggy like overlaundered clothes)
— turning backyard into wildest heath.
i was cold all that reconstruction winter
whose events unfolded like a movie
i was captured to sit at
and too startled to sleep through.
the band plays in polkadotted marchtime
the way their eyes met over chess
blaring the Ruhrschnellweg in front of the house to
silence
and their feet under the table
an old noble tradition in germany i'm told.
that face blown and burnt to salmon
irascible as wind in the flaming night
jowls flapping patiently as a gentle dog's
and only occasionally does that tongue trip out
to — where?, pensing — what?
chamber-of-commerce ecumenicalism?
the broad-swathed sword's escape?

ISSUE P. 34 · SCAN P. 44

SANFORD M. DORBIN

LAY SERMON: CAPSULE ONE

*At a certain point in his time man finds
migration excruciating pain
of plan and deed.*

no, the young eyes retreat
no, her mind cannot believe her body
and his impudent imperiousness
right there where sunlight spills fresh
in that home she's almost always known
her mother there, her brothers too
that floor only the father (the Vicar's) feet don't touch.
but — yes!
the attention those eyes compel
the prickly delight they design . . .

the band's playing seemed to fan the flames. the band
fanned out across the treeless yard in a gentle curve. we
stood at right angles to them, a line ragged as refugees, the
Vicar in the center. He was the focal point; torchlight seemed
to grope toward Him like wayward filings to a divine magnet,
across the cold, emphasizing jowl and squint, the square
rigidity of His permanently out-of-style suit, the lividity and
lines His life had bought.

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SANFORD M. DORBIN

LAY SERMON: CAPSULE TWO

*Conrad has taught us how a single moment of
crisis illuminates a man's whole life.*

we came for tea often that winter.

the girl's eyes were so radiant one forgot the ordinary features surrounding them (pale diamonds in the rough).

but the parisian, michel (standing there next to the Vicar like the prince of primogeniture but his face at the proceedings dark as the night), as deliberately as if on CP orders seduced the girl with smile and fingers' touch (his sensual version of the Ruy Lopez) then, as if that were the total reach of passion, sat back to watch.

LAY SERMON: CAPSULE THREE

To speak out after self-enforced silence is most difficult. To flee political crimes after failure to protest monstrously heinous ones is — what?

brave to the bone, He withstands the cold and flickering glare that i flinch in (i warmed only by amused knowledge that of we three only cubitt town teddy had to help pay for this, michel and i being exempt having both signed the parish taxform 'gottlos'). interested then in conversation more than chess or sex i sat in the corner and talked with her youngest older brother christian, an atheist. we sat in front of the glass bookcase and talked of schiller

SANFORD M. DORBIN

and others, in his poor english and my german, which was worse. when the old man came down the creaking stairs (with all the plodding pomp of an aged overweight actress reaching dramatic new heights of the hostess game) and sat, sealing us in His evangelical light general conversation began, more duty than right it seemed to me. i usually sneezed and withdrew.

LAY SERMON: CAPSULE FOUR

The response to crisis may be courageous and successful while at the same time so traumatic life thence courses downhill.

the last notes drop to earth
with the finality of stones
(that same dark earth some of us ride down each day
filching the crumbly cutting black stuff
like thieves in the night) . . .

it was usually michel who propelled talk then, the mother serving little cakes as dainty and special as she was fat and plain, the girl and christian and teddy eyes averted while he and the old man hacked out a quagmire it took all winter to build and which driedup with our leavetaking leaving that old victorian chunk of wood and stone as alive and strifefree inside as it looked dead without. michael and i sat aloof, my back to bookcase still, he having no political energy and i no words, i watching the animation of these strangely van goghsculptured faces now that michael's sunny one was removed, talking (listening mostly) to him, his english

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SANFORD M. DORBIN

LAY SERMON: CAPSULE FIVE

*Man is the animal who adapts,
to pain, to burden, to even loss of self.
With age man is less himself.*

michael's face glows angel-like in torchlight.
i continue sneezing the winter away.
his father's voice winds out barren thanks
then the bandsmen blare one last time
and slide like twigs into the night
(torches extinguished now, following
the darkness they had burnt and blown away
half-an-hour before)
while we turn to one another, shaking hands
as though this momentary brushing of skins
means more than that timeburnt
gesture familiar as our lidded identities
and i see in the reduced light from the house
now the torches are gone
the Vicar's face suffused in tired
where pride or a quiet joy might have been
as He hands us fatherly into the house.
His eyes seem to be tasting still
those ashes of the hideous past.
as outside frost again; grass freezing into clumps . . .

ALBERT CAMDEN

7 A M

i smelled mortality
in the trees
enshrined in white
in the cotton tail
running away from me
in the cat
walking by my side
in the crunch of the snow
hard under foot
& i felt like a traveler
in my own land
wandering
through the darkness
in a mysterious snow heaven
nature christened me with
but even in the crisp air
of frozen whiteness
the stench was the same

ANTHONY PICCIONE

PASTORAL (WRITTEN AT MY BIRTH)

Musk, and river reeds
blackening. In the lilting heat
I cried river-mad
the pain of seeds
that burned my pulse
with beating.
Into that first sun
the din my birth announced
was second sound
to morning schemes:
to leap, to bend
like the sunflower
from my father's mound.
About my path,

his iron footprints
like rusting dreams,
and soot, familiar
as the family box. When
the blood's song
thin as a leaf's breathing
hushed my feet
to a calmer route.
When a mute breeze
pries these fingers
from my fistful of soil,
the years trembling from me
like fading night-cries.

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STANLEY COOPERMAN

SERENADE FOR A CUBED EYEBALL

Deer do not climb trees

— *Jamie Reid*

Deer climb trees,
always
climb trees: they move
through forests of green
snow, their hooves
sharper
than angels; they breathe
the meaning of spider-web and moss, their noses
roll
through space like puffs of wet
black love.
Deer climb trees,
always
climb trees: their nerve-endings find secret ways
between
raindrops, the delicate
hairs
growing inside their brain
rattle and bang like
a million television wires
singing
on all the rooftops of the world.
Deer climb trees,
always climb trees,
blinking from mushrooms to leaves,
lashing surprised squirrels

STANLEY COOPERMAN

who stare
from sudden holes
with walnuts and sugar-cubes
stuck
in their throats.
(and a poet in skinny pants,
a psychedelic shirt
pinned
to his skinless back,
leather dreams
rubbing his shinbones,
jerks through dead books,
weeds, and a tangle
of pubic hair:
even fire-flies vomit
at the glitter of canned
glass
in his mouth)
Deer climb trees,
always
climb trees,
but not for any poet
falling out of his own skull
like a frozen ape,
stomping
rotted angels
with somebody else's boots. . . .
he drifts
through the wet whisper
of the living grass
on borrowed knuckles.

ALEX SILBERMAN

THE SWAN

yr voice
:the swan
dipping along the
ripples
of my ears
noiseless and gliding
with slender
fish
and it gets longer
:the neck
stretching a fish
tenderly
to me
through all the
canals of my
body
smoothing the
surface
with yr feathers
calming my troubled
blood
with sleep only
seconds away
i feel the swan
turning slowly in
me
the splash of the
fish

ALEX SILBERMAN

POURING WINE

she pours the wine
with such a graceful
leg and a
wonderful tensing in the

waist
but here is her husband
who owns the barrels
and the large wooden
room
he chose the chandeliers
:round and pale
like the woman
she picked the chairs
:warm and soft
against my legs
like the woman
he owns the field
out back
its green hills and
long grasses
and the cellar which is
dark with an
interesting smell
here with the stars
sparking in her lips
and teeth
her body stretched against
the hard ground
i am a rich and
practiced thief

JAMES REISS

THE LOVE

When I sit by the window and watch the couples walk
from their doors to the street, from the street to their
doors
and I hear
the silver ring of even their words holding hands
as a passing car rips the air,
I think how much of what's petty about us has grown
great which could not have alone;
and my face, which now more than ever resembles your
own,
burns
in the cool
by the glass.

MIESZKO J. SKAPSKI

RIVER AGAIN

Abandoned : the booming grounds
Of forgetfulness . Return
Of a dusk heron .
In the silt below
Chains search out shapes of net .
I relinquish nothing . Ever .
Ease , like the slack at high tide .
The past settles on the water
Like mosquitoes among the reeds .
I watch
The wake
From where it vanishes .

E. R. BAXTER III

the rooms we find ourselves
in where words cannot
ride in their direct lines
but function obliquely
at other tasks.
our lines
seldom penetrate to where we
will them. breaking
off in white space
ending
in hollows
of electricity.
the stacked
woodpile of my words
tumbles into confusion
at its ends you
climb
tall elusive
trees edging out on
tangential branches where
direction is erased to

E. R. BAXTER III

drop off coming soft to
earth at evasive angles between
the trees and the places
where I stand the room
remains forever fixed. looking
for love in the leafy order
of tree branches not knowing
that the difficulty of our lines
meet in the silences between
themselves singing in the soft
touch of their fumbling that
it is in the dropping
the breaking
off place
and the silences between that matters.

ROGER MITCHELL

RAINY MORNING

These trees hold on to their shadows
the way a woman covers her breasts.
Their breath is cold.
The underside of a stone.
They stand around licking and scratching,
waiting for something to happen.
They do not see me among them.
They see what they want to see,
just another kid
who stumbles over his own desire.
They stand faceless, flank to flank.
Dark green leopards, dreaming of birds.

ROGER MITCHELL

SATURDAY NIGHT, WITH BRIEFCASE

I walk,
and the smell of cinder blocks
accompanies me.
Couples pass close to me,
and we peer down into each other,
each at the rim
and each looking up
at the small round thought
of ropes.
Take me with you
where the music bristles
out of a brick wall,
or back to the thin smells of turned pages
and drawers left open in frozen haste.
Teach me the gestures of turned chairs.
Where did we go?

STANWOOD K. BOLTON, JR.

BROKEN SHELLS

A bush quivers from love's morning life
working through roots, rooting out coolness
in the peculiar summer way
of towhees scratching floors under leaves
or chipmunks pushing out practice cheeks
in wait for the ripeness of acorns.
These are friends finding their hot concrete
a dry mixture of summer and dirt.
Each tree has its nest, a hole hidden
by noon's heat, reproductive of shells
cracking into a dust of dry beaks.
Four o'clock declines into traffic
bending death around a city's small
garden of chipmunks hiding from shoes.
Our midnight moon competes with neon,
a naked bed is wet in sweat shapes,
friends stare past the heat of their nearness,
and broken shells are swept out of sheets.

GIL ORLOVITZ

ART OF THE SONNET: 290

The leaves, notched silver by guns, fall due bronze
into Lake Radiance where men in murder
fell or hung by Christfeet over the Falls —
our revenge for His walking over water.
A gibbet bough exhales a nightingale.
Gouged I-love-yous twist the top branch's sign —
Haircuts for bald heads given here.
So grew a pine, oil of wintergreen.
Medieval pebbles slowly read
the rest of the shore. A ship tows in
the horizon — but murder and suicide
fall in silver signals from a cold mass
among the far stars, Lake Radiance ablaze.
I cut myself down — the fishes will not bite.

GIL ORLOVITZ

NUMBERS: 85

All hunched over he sings
to the earth as if it will give ground
to an old revel of man fallen
when unbound,
as if within catastrophe
by the gnawing fee
you can stand mad
in the restraining sheet
and be recorded, corseted,
by the stays of history.
He sings this need not be so,
that by bleeding the dead
white through their snow,
he is closer to argument
of spades throwing off cuts
of muscle that men relent
and lie with each other loose
to lose themselves head from head.
But all the earth gives
to him hunched over singing
because he is nonrigid
is no lightning striking
from beneath the dead.

GIL ORLOVITZ

NUMBERS: 114

The woman dying by hook or crook
pulls out a French toaster
where the people hide behind the totem bush —
I swear there's nothing between us but darning needles
and the furled flags of the muscles.
She's dying in a bed between sunshine and her
 husband —
the tiger waits with bared venetian blinds,
all dieticians expressing remorse.
The silversmith behind the dying woman
observes her with saltshaker confidence —
how much can Lot's wife stand of a miniaturization?

GIL ORLOVITZ

NUMBERS: 129

The dogs, chirruping and mooing,
turn into gravedoor knockers.
A man laps at his harness, consuming clairvoyances.
There is a chance of murder, such as kiting moths to
 their afterlight.
Carrying childrens lanterns the people
seek to rob their codes.
The elders bang at the kitchen stove,
their anvils at last naked and condescending from their
 thighs.
Somewhere a harridan learns a new language
as her mouth dribbles sores.
A cheap madness pitches us against cures for cures.
Undernourished ghosts sit on the stoops of clouds.
The pirates have their eyes done in loose nooses,
scarring the turning of their other cheeks.
Dying, the woman pets her ovaries —
we will have eggs for supper, she says.

WILLIAM A. ROECKER

IN AUGUST

dust blows finer than pollen
tones the colors of pheasants like oil
where they squat open beaked
on cool dirt under brushrows
while our dogs sneeze and quarter
the fields with bloody feet
for practice our guns are at home
over the stubble at dusk
lope shapes of good dogs I knew before
shorthairs labs dogs of no breed
flushing birds shot eaten or escaped
running through dust devils
dogs running into the dark
our live dogs pant at our feet
unable to see the seasons back
or they would set to howling
forget licking their pads
this weedy smell of night
makes me ache with vision belief
I could weep not for death
or even the living
but for years ahead for love

SCOTT H. MULRANE

THE VOICE

This attic is not
a fit place to visit.
Dust pours from the walls
like midnight's thoughts.
I notice a tarnished golden bird
in a rusted cage.
Could it speak, I would inquire
as to the reason for banishment.
Through the floor comes the voice
of a dull lark.

SCOTT H. MULRANE

ON A SEWER BANK

This courthouse, cloaked
in a dream, a haze, transports
me to Mecca or the Kremlin.
Its fingers probe the air
as if to find rain
or multicolored glass
windows to claim. Dust
alone is caught. This blind
anti-monument, this flawed
sanctuary, resigns itself
to trials of the flesh.

ROBERT R. FOX

PALE GIRL

Her red corduroy jumper
Regrets clothes; it is too loose
For her flesh that is her wits' total.
Her eyes are wandering bubbles
That appeal to be transfixed —
By the permanence of bought love.
She tramples her young dreams
Between hackneyed hotel doors
That open and beckon chaos.
How her beggar flesh
Sheds tears
And is translucent.

GEORGE MCWHIRTER

AN UNLOADING IN PUERTO DE LA PAZ

His body creaks between the sheets.
A thumb punches his thorax
And practiced fingers grip the coil.
Tough fibres spray rust
From the winch-wheel at the top of the shed.
But no ship docks. Nothing unloads.
Frayed ends of hemp lie
Like tendrils of anemone
Against the pier.
And a late wind ruptures
The cornea on the water.

BARRY MONTGOMERY

TRUCKER LOVE

At a city signal secure in the den of his diesel
Truck, his fingers grapple for matches
Which he finds in his cluttered breast pocket.
Cupped in his calm, greasy hands the sulfur flashes
Touching briefly the stick of brown leaves and then
Withering like the burnt, twilight desire for roadside
women.

The mover of tandems at a red light lovingly drags
His little solitary mistress waiting to move longing
For bed — the warm, watery end of showers in
four-dollar
motels.

High in the sky cab, eyes scratch the primed surface
Of idling cars below for the hint of female flesh
For slim secretary legs and milk-white thighs.
On the passenger side of a blue Mustang a checkered
skirt

Wearing support nylons reveals unfolds a remote loving
As the signal turns green. And oiled gears grind
concealed

Orgasm of flywheels and axles, filter tip and
mouth-slightly-salivating.

BARRY MONTGOMERY

The teamster dream of obliging bodies moves like
quicksilver.
The push into second gives white-hot thrust to a cargo
of
Packaged breasts wet pale thirsting for
Truckers' mouths after the highway dinner and
the cigarette dessert.
As the road-carrier of fevers pulses past off-ramps
Crowded with the fading bodies of compacts and family
Station wagons past the warm geometries of tract
homes
Past all the gentle people searching for familiar
dead-end streets,
The lovemaking of white collars and clean fingers
seems rabbit-like
Next to the fox-red, mechanical feeling of
Lust tired and dependable.

MIKE DOYLE

WORLD'S END (AFTER ROBERT DESNOS)

Howling
in the black street
blunted
by ramparts where
river water
quivers.
The final star
is a fag-end
flung
from a window.
Howling
in the black street.

MIKE DOYLE

Aaaaah,
your howling!
Lumbering,
stifled night.
A cry
comes near,
touches us
almost,
only
reaching out for us
expires.
Somewhere
in the world
below
the ramparts
a deserter
parleys
with the sentinels
who
don't know
what the hell
he's jabbering about.

RUSSELL SALAMON

RELEASE MOMENT

You do not know
how to grow
a mountain . . .
How can a mountain
grow without lakes
pigeons
doves
saints
gods
rain?
To fly you only need

one eye.
Great white flowering trees
wind
under
glass . . .
And suddenly stallions
between my legs.
Colors are much brighter now.
There are
no more limits
only
obstacles.

God's Tongue

Foolish, the spun child, he, and flung to fury, and opened to a sluicing, of the blood through blunted cuttings of his fingers struck with, his dog's stick out and down upon the planking, the initialed, desk, that silence might prevail, or that the book, or that the tongue begin; and was a pointed, and a buzzing top, and hissing, strung to laughter, and tauest to the teacher's stretch of arm that held him thwarted, there, to ward the kickings to his shinbones, and the grim, the, strikings to his thighs, and clawings of the air, and hurting only, self; who had not years enough, or stance enough, or right, but only cravings, and kind sanctions to be there, and curled yet, thickly fallen to, his neck, though all the others lined along the benches were uniformed in, black, shone brightly to the gleamings of their shaven heads, and rigid; for this was in another nation, and in a harder to begin, and in, another time; apportioned innocence assailed, to first day's briefest lessons, to before, who wanted, yet knew not what, nor how pursue that wanting, and more than that; more even than that bath of deep and full, immersion, by which he entered naked to his languid heart, and oiled, and sleek, and precious, and a gift, and lowly, unto God, thrice spat on there, within, the sanctuary font, and to the floor, and there abjuring satan, though he, knew no utterings of speakings yet, nor, no, nor spoke a single, any, word, unable yet, yet forming to his lips, apostasy; or spinning starfish trapped, its radiating arms, regrowing; more remembered than the blood that spurted to the cutting of his foreskin by which he naked grew, and naked walked, again, and opened, and forevered; and more remembered than the sacred, arm, that stretched to touch the thigh of Adam, no, the fingers of, his hand, to touch the fingers of his

maker; and helpless now; but driven, but possessed, and hopeless, he, and he, to tears, to callings, to, his guarding dog, that circled round that schoolhouse, round, his; God's tongue, that it might reach in him, might haunt extremities of him, might reach, where, then, how deeply spun to makings, he, his, ah, his breath in the, appointed wisdom that he might taste in him, breathe laughter greatly then, in him, breathe outwards, therefore, golden to the world, and flamed.

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KONSTANTINOS LARDAS

SELECTIONS FROM AUSTERICS

Vi

If, to our married heart, I
tremble yet, I grieve,—
it is that darkness in me as of lips
that look the Godhead yet.

VII

Silver! because beneath thy subtle scars
there breaks the waiting blood . . .

VIII

Swifter than hounding winds that sweep
sea clouds where no seas are,—
cross-purposings where hail my dark encounters.

IX

These, Intimations, Are!

XI

Ah, if to lie to you
brings silence, brings a seizure;
where, to what warmth
this bed, ah, this embrace.

XVIII

How furtherest and most
thy deepest kissings are—

XIX

. . . which Name, what Mania to call, and How?

XXI

Round, round the, Rose;
to attar,—
to its addered tongues.

XXIII

Precious
this ever giving, this receiving
this same and first of gifts.

Xxvii

How many nights have been our lot
of wonder;
how many thrown to tears.

Xxviii

. . . nor groan
to celebrate a death.
Ardor, life's Adoration, grow.

KONSTANTINOS LARDAS

Xxxiv

Rather escarpments of a naked shame
than bright investitures
that shroud.

Xxxviii

We, stricken to our, selves
can only wonder on and want, —
a, falling up to, thee.

XLiii

I have thy body and my own!
Might we be oil tomorrow
in red flames;
a glowing unto Him.

LI

That flame that binds us
living
to this world, —
if we could scotch it
or itself consume.

Lxii

Taut-shouldered to the ground
spread-eagle-splayed
thighs and the legs flung
upwards unto, —
to Thy havened grace.

Lxiii

Arms, sworded
swirl about me, —
heads.

Lxvii

The sheen before us, screaming
silver and somber stunned
fury of voices, — done.

Lxviii

Plucked tautness, tremulous of limbs;
swift cockings-up of heads
tall-swollen to the light.

KONSTANTINOS LARDAS

Lxxxiv

These be the given tokens:
fused flashings of the flesh to bone
rice, poured upon the waters
our standards and our empty, —
yea, our emptied arms.

Lxxxvi

This vaunted mouth has issued
this mouth has whitened after death.

Lxxxvii

These lungs that strain to breathe
except the heart that presses on them, fast.

Lxxxviii

Strewn carcassings. To spurt. To be alive. Forever.

Lxxxix

Black wailings and the red;
the lips that splotch to white.

Xcvii

Be: diamond glow
be halo;
be: sacred flower, —
lotus
to the world.

Xc VIII

Be staff beyond the flower
beyond the risen sword.

Xcix

Eyes, and the sacred contours, and the knot
break past odyle tombs.
Blood surgings into life.

C

Where no rains fall on earth
we raise these heaped up hecatombs of love, —
because, we, gentle are, and holy
as flowers, as the riven sword.

J. McLEOD

‘THE WORLD IS ROUND!’ SHOUTED COLUMBUS

I will become one large eye,
round, moon orb ed, watching,
circling round and round this place:
eye-blue, far piercing (scattering sparks).
I will burn thoughts
seeking reasons :
eye-brown, deep cutting
(bits to the right and left.)
I'll split days
investigating
purposes.
I'll become apple fat,
sun-shaped,
hole-deep,
world-travelled,
round, round, round.
I'll seek in
circumlocutions
solutions.
I will twist my viscera
around my stomach,
pass it out my rectum,
and skip circles in the air
as I wait
to become one large eye.

PETER PAUL FERSCH

Hot Days

We have fever
like insects
in yellow light.
The buzzing nerves
of hot days
in compressed air.
A girl's breasts:
squeezed-out lemons
in the blue June sky.
A female horizon
gleams
on the coast.

Translated from the German by Derk Wynand

PETER PAUL FERSCH

**I PAINT A HEART OVER MY CHEST AND WAIT
FOR THE PASSAGE OF ONE WHO BOMBARDS THE
MARCH SKY WITH BLUE. THE HUNTER LOOKS FOR
HIS PAST ALONG THE GREEN COAST. MEMORY
RIDES THE HORIZON LIKE A BLACK SAIL. THE
WHITE HAIR OF MY THOUGHTS FLOWS OVER THE
SHOULDERS OF NIGHT. THE BIRD VOICE OF
MORNING CIRCLES OVER THE BAY AND THE
CAPTAIN WAITS ON THE GREEN COAST. MEMORY
DRIFTS WITH THE TIDE LIKE A SPANISH GALLEON
WITHOUT ANCHOR. AND SOMEONE WITH A HEART
PAINTED OVER HIS CHEST WAITS ON THE
HORIZON OF SPRING.**

Translated from the German by Derk Wynand

RAJZEL ZYCHLINSKA

ALONE

I want to live alone in a house
with two flies,
one cat
and three flowers .
In the early morning
we will awake
with blue eyes
and finger each other .
We shall dine
from one saucer,
and when guests come, —
the rain and the spider ,
the cat will tell a yarn
about a cat,
and in the evening,
my God,
how will we spend the starry evening ?

Translated from the Yiddish by Leonard Opalov

PAUL CELAN

THERE WAS EARTH IN THEM, AND THEY DUG.

They dug and dug, so their day passed, their night.

They did not praise God,
who, so they heard, desired all this,
who, so they heard, knew of all this.
They dug, and they heard no more;
they failed to gain wisdom, invented no songs,
devised no various languages.

They dug.

There came a silence, then was a storm,
the oceans all came together.

I'm digging, you dig, and the worm digs too,
and that which sings, says: they dig.

O one, o none, o no one, o you:

Where was the goal when there was no goal?

O you dig and I dig, and I dig toward you,
and the ring awakes on our finger.

Translated by A. P. Schroeder

H. M. GORDY

THE YES NIGHT

this was the night
of death's drum major
a clear moon
pocked with/ and a target
for all when birds
crossed the crescent
with
sonic
booms
below/ the fox
glaring through contact lenses
said: sweetie/ hunters
in the town clock
a mouse examined the mainspring
run out of ticks and tocks
said: the bend radius
was insufficient
his remark resulted
in the immediate comment
of rain

H. M. GORDY

UNCLE AND AUNT

dusting/ she collects the bones
of night he has lost
the weight of things
is reflected
in the death valley
of her heart
it was the magicians
kept him
reaching in
reaching in
until their hats
were empty of drugs
now/ where is she thinking
he is echoed in the enclosed day
of her eyes
hurrying towards her memory
he cries easily
at the least mention
of someone's funeral

H. M. GORDY

THREE

I

a cannery of faces
seals by machine . . . automated
peas and carrots
and truffles
boiled
in a laughing-gas of air

II

by the numbers, LOVE
a galloping psychedelia
throws out colors
none as red
as we are deeply red
none as white
as flowers
in our mouths

III

having fun at the beach
drowning

H. M. GORDY

ONE DAY

one day/ eating the brains of time
two monuments pierced my tongue
speechless
i forgot
(evening crawls from its bed
the tubes still in its throat
light/ through x-ray bones
shines on liberty: a collage
of fingers)
one day/ beating the bowl of time
for more, more, more:
the attendant appeared
saying: that doesn't make sense SIR
we are all waiting
(now/buildings are the fangs
of cats the moon passes
between them into the mouth
stinking of mice)
no sound no different sound
one day/ recalling the flavor of time
i laughed

DUNCAN S. HARRIS

LANDSCAPE

It is the season after winter,
The time of botanical bravery,
A moment before spring,
When the crocuses burn through the snow,
And the willow branches turn to butter;
The yellow time before the green.
The midday shadows shorten,
Like a pregnant woman in her third trimester,
Preparing to recede before the new thing
About to come.

WILLIAM WITHERUP

FREEWAY

An infected vein
carrying filth to and from the city;
a funnel
draining a huge operating table.
Even the light here
is the color of pus.
All the late models
have tinted windows to shield the murderers,
and the chrome is honed
to slash and carve.
The city has complied
by drawing a rubber curtain of shrubbery
to enclose the view
and muffle the screams.

WILLIAM WITHERUP

IN A COUNTRY OF WAREHOUSES

I dreamed
I was a stranger
in a country of warehouses
where the sun beat hard
against concrete slabs
and the doors
were as large
as cathedral doors
Inside
in the darkness
men moved about slowly
like priests
among the palets
of cocoa beans
the stacked drums
of peanut oil

the racks
of copper tubing
Some carried cargo hooks
that flashed
in their hands
like holy rings

WILLIAM WITHERUP

I FOUND THE HOOKS HAD SEVERAL USES

There
in the harsh afternoon
the workers
gutted me
like a chicken
to tear out
whatever it was
they feared
They found
a black jewel
and
an ovum
These made them
furious

ALAN BRILLIANT

RYDER II

Ryder died fifty years ago Nothing Not even black No lice
no perspiration Not The black sail lists to blackening wind
No man moves it The water does not bother to breathe Here
there is anything Last year is the racetrack round Round
without center Round without history as the passing of our
day Sky without top or bottom The sea is heavy as ground
Nothing reflects itself The hourglass the window glass The
glass is full of everything

ALAN BRILLIANT

RYDER I

One hundred years ago, Albert Pinkham Ryder left the
place of his birth in Massachusetts and, twenty years old,
moved to New York City

Here are three paintings black black black block ship
black sky The sea does not move The ship does not sail The
sky does not say one word Here is death

A white horse, never such white Coiling around the black
stable, blacker than field A wagon rearing at its rider

Self-portrait not even the artist moves Only the lines in
window pane Where this devil Ryder Lived with everything

Today we live in sunlight have nothing

LYNN STRONGIN

LOVE SONG

when i lie with you
i go to glory
cried the white owl
as his tears spun blue villages around the moon
and one cocked ear caught fire
in the light of the spinning stars
while one eye floated upward like a globe of bright wine
i go to glory
when i lie with you
his breast feathers hectic white and gold
he spins wild dark harps through the night

LYNN STRONGIN

CRY

Denied, my sex goes leaping over hills
like a lamb locked out of pasture for raw shame.
I cast a cool, dispassionate eye
upon this exiled creature
that is I
who disabandoned leaps the lonely joy
of green,
and fields of green and green.
Disengaged from my heart and loin,
the leaping lamb is free of pain.
But buried in the heart of love
from where he leaps to claim the light
—in a locked-in land of gradual blight—
the solitary creature stirs,
stirs and bleats in the unsustaining night.

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MILLIE MAE WICKLUND

SEVERAL DIRECTIONS

1. East

like the bed I slept in,

I said,

sometimes a shadow is enough to keep you there

&, then, you moved

& I crept to, its imagined sequences,

a telephone pole in the rain,

or the ball of the universe in the sun,

& a public woman used to the public size of life

2. West

a slow winter of fast snow

& how to stay in

I handled the weather with my tongue

& worked the box shift at night

in the spring we all moved

none of us had found our real air

MILLIE MAE WICKLUND

3. NORTH

slept on the roof of a building

near the sea and its drift

caught it all

walking the ocean floor

lantern jawed one, a little like Diogenes,

& the porpoises, ruffling my back, all those shotguns

I landed on the beach in my own bottle

4. **SOUTH**

I put my ear to the ground
& hoisted up my own flag
in the rain, my guitar heated up
the hound whined but kept the Singer Sewing Machine
man out
by April I learned how to sing
Saturday nights, people listen to me now
&, at midnight, when you come & touch my hand
they smile outside our shadow
applauding all the seasons we'll live together

DIANE M. MOORE

BLUEBEARD, TODAY THEY PICK LOCKS

Long dies the stone that lives
deep in your basement heart,
your wife swims within cell stricture
gasping to cut the enemy of her privacy:
you defaming cold sheets.
You abstain from all
in other loves, turn off eyes
from the liveliest call of flesh
to show she, too, must practice prudery,
kiss the limp skin of stoicism.
Possessor, squeezing possession,
your sheet stretches just
a yellowed patch
about her wrinkles of flesh,
about her moments of soul.
By day, she prays you absent forever,
by night you inundate her forever.
In sightless power you hold her
thinking locked in the basement heart
beat, beating louder than stone,
until one day
stopped —

by some new key startled.

WALTER W. STEVENS

HE CREEPS THROUGH BAGMEN COUNTRY

He creeps through bagmen country denying
cylinders of fraud that cough on corners,
innocent of honor whispering contagion for a
price. Wraiths of discontent who sell content,
the downtown formula for packaged now.
Romping concrete courts, a bareheart athlete —
too blown to measure time except in money
lengths — dribbles faceless heads to call
down sulphur mornings in an often bedroom.
A greenless street with knees and elbows out
keeps keys for crocodiles that crawl the
stairs to search a recipe for building instant
man while rats dance to a fiddle stroked by God.

WILL JENNINGS

STARR AND MOUND

We walked down Mound after what was left of sunset,
Smelled sun left among crepe myrtle and magnolia
leaves,
At evening hour when cars go home and we own
Street's smells, honeysuckle, cardinals hid among
Heavy leaves beneath white blossoms caught by night.
They kept one mound. Moles delved doctorates from
The rest, or sweating red-faced summer men
Building the street disturbed four hundred years,
Grinding relics under calf-length boots,
Some skull stuck on a shovel, they goddamned and
Slapped it on a stone.
They once looked over mud huts, smoke spiraling up
Four hundred years ago and smiled in good times
Before Spanish horses stumbled down a gangplank and

Bore here Europe in breastplates, pikes, crosses,
Gun carriages, Christ's seed among dead redmen . . .
But they knew death before and prepared a place
To make their makers sure. This one remains,
Centering this wilderness, despite a million incivilities
(Chief Red Fox, Sioux, nephew of Crazy Horse,
(Sang at 97 how Custer raped a 14-yr-old girl
(And how they waited for him to be his death;
(He was six and saw the Little Big Horn;
(Even when he sang it there was a harp
(In his voice from another world)

WILL JENNINGS

AN OAK GROWS OUT OF THE GREAT MOUND,

Two dark knots face down, north and south,
Gnarling in the sun-left shadows of the tree;
I see two faces knotting, eyes closed, cheeks
Deep in winds beginning evening. This one remains.
She doesn't like this street at night,
So we turned back north toward home.
When we reached Starr, I remembered
Where the oak roots fed and
What twined with living tendrils underneath,
Amid the earthfast fingers fastened to their fields.

LINDA PASTAN

APRIL (2)

Spring comes in bursts —
new leaves teething
down the bare length
of a branch, sun
dusty as pollen
on the drawn shade,
neon forsythia.
The nuthatch squeezes
its fat family
into the wren house,
ferns uncurl like
long stemmed snails, and
in the next street
rain barely falls,
leaving its pale
watercolor wash.

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STAN GWAIN ADLER

DISAPPEARING CROSS

(TWO SELECTIONS FROM AN UNPUBLISHED NOVEL)

I Climbing the first two steps and checking the balusters at top I am confronted by the back of a knee (sinew perjured by desire), a coin's worth of skin becomes a plaited leaf of flesh — moist in the shadow of a swinging hem — taut grooves wavering in the soundless stretch of a bare thigh. Slowing my step to articulate my view, I watch a moment wait. Innocence surrenders, repels the villain with awe, and quiets him with questions: anchors upon actions: where do I stand between that flesh and this desire for flesh? Is there space to stand? Walking through the city, a meditation cross, as long and as wide as my hand, stuck in my hip pocket. Is my body the shim and fill between actions and desire? A stake and beam of German silver, inlaid with dark wood, inscribed inri, and emblemed with skull and crossbones. The cross, stunning in its holy definition and unlimited command when borne by one authorized to bear it, hugs my hip with the spent grace of a sprung switchblade, uncomfortably balanced between purpose and pride. Conscious now of glances hit and miss across my hip pocket — I could switch the cross to the pocket of the jacket slung over my arm, but not without attracting suspicion of theft or quackery. Saying yes-yes-yes to return the glances and maintain the luxury of a stroll — becoming a march — the sun has suddenly ceased making a sound and the stores and their customers though apparently conversing are inaudible or incomprehensible in relation to me — perceiving an odd relation between a bicycle rider and an automobile. Both travel at exactly the same speed, neither one gaining or losing a measure of space, be it an inch or a quarter of an inch. The sun remaining silent, allowing for the clear reception of an aimless hum now seeming to exude from the buildings suddenly explicit in contrast to the silence of the light. I smell a cheap carnival smell, as of crepe paper and popcorn, caramel, and galleys full of cologne. The cross heavy in my pocket. This world has

paused and the sun is silent and I am saying yes — yes — yes
and walking like a saint this side of no, without a space
between me and the flesh of beauties bouncing down the
sidewalk beneath bushels of blonde hair with small breasts
tied up in bows hardly shaken by the mince and strut of
sturdy calves. I would give my cross away, but this would be
or seem as indiscriminate as my moment of stealing it. And
the bearer of

STAN GWAIN ADLER

stolen goods is as guilty as the thief, if the thief can be judged guilty when the booty authorizes him to say aye and maintain grace in a world that is without charm so long as it remains untouchable — as it does — so long as there is an nth of space given recognition as existing, as real, between someone and someone, so long as eyes can stare with desire at the flesh behind knees bending to climb and question with satisfaction, no matter how slight, the grounds of propinquity, for if the vision of flesh be real, the question is not of flesh but of breath, belonging to eyes before mouth and mixing the space with unaccustomed silence until the only sound is — the hum of life, of two breaths coinciding — strange in their recognition of each other and ignorance of everything else. The middle finger of one person's hand placed against the middle finger of another person's hand — when rubbed by the forefinger and thumb of either person, will induce a chill — we smile at the strangeness of nearness — and walk with desire dancing like a transvestite behind our pupils trying so hard to mind the steps and stay out of the joints of the girl tossing her skirt ahead of us. Reach out, gently, and with thumb and middle finger arrest the barest most alluring portion of the runaway knee before you, and do not say thank you for the smile cramping into a leer behind your teeth — open your mouth, smile or stick out your tongue and say have dinner with me tonight or let's make love or just yes — yes — yes, for there is no space between you.

II

Most people know someone they would like to love, I said before meeting her, as most people know what they would like to say, but when you know what you would like to say, you rarely find it worth saying. A soul doesn't die for lack of words, she said much later, but glows on, just like a candle that grows brighter as it becomes smaller.

Our perspiring foreheads shine in the sunlight as we eat avocado sandwiches on the chipped steps of the Municipal Auditorium, involved with the smiling grimace of jaws chewing — a scrap of lettuce sticking out one side of her mouth as she chews and smiles and squints her eyes. The feet of convention-goers stamping up and down the steps beside us. The sharpest heels scratching the marble inlay flawed too many times

STAN GWAIN ADLER

before without regret. A fountain, pale blue, spilling like an upside-down faucet into the sun, limpid droplets landing on the tiled parapet with a teary splat. She smiles — a sunburned wrinkle in her nose — her elbow knocking against my ribs as she turns a small piece of bread between her thumb and forefinger like a pitch pipe. The delegates move past mopping the sweat from their brows with silk handkerchiefs. 'Why,' she asks, examining the last bite of her sandwich, 'did you touch my knee of all the knees you must have seen and had the chance to touch as much as mine?'

'Maybe because you had the prettiest knee, or maybe because you looked as if you were going some place besides a convention.'

'Don't be so sure of yourself, maybe I still have some place to go,' she says, shelving a quandary above her eyes as bright and as clear as the fountain water pouring into the sunlight. Were I so sure of myself; I was never that sure of myself. Leaning while climbing, chancing to fall on my nose all for the touch of one bare knee. (My eyes scaling the small

muscle leading like a velvet string up the back of your thigh — where God knows the elastic grasp of panties holds tight against the bounce of your buttocks beneath the tremble of a bold plaid skirt I yearn to lay upon a breeze — as I lay your body on the ledge of a step, for people can always step over what they pretend not to see.)

Night jars the torn window blind; and as it flaps against the sill a turning hip awakens a body nearby—two sighs are heard. A smile of blue eyes from behind brunette curls. Municipality, I've found a Dutch girl on your front doorstep. You have, have you, says a whisper, and what do you think of your Dutch girl? I like her. You like her — I see. I might even love her. Oh really. Yes, I . . . where were you going when I first touched you? To change. Into what, or for what? For my class. You have a class at the auditorium? Yes — there is a recital room where I teach dance every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. You should come and watch. You might like my class.

I move atop her, my elbow below her armpit, my chest grazing her breasts, her arms, hands and fingers steepled together beside my neck. 'I think I would — like your class,' I mutter against her lips. '— maybe you would, you know; you are really a strange person — do you know that?' she asks, puzzled, almost smiling — her fingers falling and wrapping themselves in my hair. Her lips and tongue carrying each individual syllable from her barely parted mouth — the touch of a whisper seeming

STAN GWAIN ADLER

to add a secret life to her voice in the still darkness of the room. ‘— there is something I must say — (shadows like mice in the warm folds of disarray surrounding us) — but you must listen —’ Silence and mellow worry in her smile teasing my eyes like a glimmer of mirror light — I glance away, smiling, sadly I know, into the shadow below her chin — ‘I would not bother to tell you if I did not feel like I do — it is something you must know before you will know how you feel about me.’ I hear her saying the words and watch her say them, understanding them moments later. Fact upsets my practiced solicitude, like a mime upstaged by a cataleptic — my eyes seem momentarily empty, then dash like startled minnows from ear to ear, seeking wary refuge beneath her wayward curls — moistened on the edges with perspiration. I love her. I have (I love you) — I have a husband and a child. (I have the love that wandered for one night and never had time to change) my husband is somewhere far away, I’m not sure where. Do you always change your clothes after swimming in the Municipal Auditorium? ‘God, why do you sweat so much?’ — ‘I don’t know,’ I answer, naive, but smiling, I don’t know. Do you always leave sand in the bed you sleep in after swimming in the ocean? ‘God, it’s like taking a dip in the ocean —’ her arms tightening about my ribs, hands sliding down my spine, the shifting of knees, the lowering of my mouth and slight twist of her neck, advancement of her hands, deployment of my body. One hand, hers, to make certain the entrance, and then, lips together but ready to shift like sand below the tide, the downward, slow and perfectly painful descent into the undulation of movement to rhythm to momentum into love without thought as to when it will end, again, to begin the thought of love, never felt or given birth — we do not know we begin to be in the plunge to end what has been begun by descent. She falls, I rest, we are beached and gathered with

our fears and our smiles and yet, though clothes are spread on the floor, we are not naked and I roll to be resolved in the light of morning with several grains of sand clinging to my penis, hardened in doubt, falling in recognition of her absence, and I spoke not a word to my mind telling something if someone were or were not here or would return or was ever here, the male member is fallen, in peace to wait resolved. And strangely, I notice, the window blind is up and the morning is cloudy, but the rain smells sweet and I smile, then smile again at the moisture lying on the sill, dripping slowly down the wall, my eyes grin up at the clouds and I stand bare at the window, stretching with a vigorous yawn, deeply untied — I glance back at the bed and know that she is gone.

JUDAS KISS AT DAWN

Darkness: It introduces its own symphony of aberrations. And I am its solitary audience for I have not synchronized my falling asleep with the rest of the household. Tonight M— is already asleep. But not the others. Their muffled voices stream in with the light framing the closed door. (M— is sleeping or so I say to dispel the feeling of alienation descending upon me.) I am here in the dark and fear forces me to hold myself at arm's length so that it cannot envelop me completely for then I would have recourse to no one. M—'s eyes are shut tight. I can feel the tension around my eyelids. They press down to meet my cheekbones. I force them to remain shut but they want to fly open to escape a chiaroscuro of flickering thought and image. My mind is a Rembrandt of sketchy details. Soon these details will gain enough illumination to play on my emotions. M—'s breathing is becoming perceptibly heavier. Each escaping hiss permeates the dark room and challenges silence. But silence holds sway in the dark and hints of death. Fear is activated by M—'s breathing and pierces consciousness like a beam of light. It finds a woman there. I know that woman. She is wife, mother, daughter. She is stripped naked. Her hair once styled with natural vanity is a tangled mass flowing away from her face as she runs alongside the barbed-wire fence. 'To the showers. Run!' is her short biography. And in the mechanical actions of her limbs M— quietly loses her identity. I see her breasts, soft, hurting as she runs, and in their stark reality, out of context with the myth enveloping them, they are reduced to mammary glands and the voluptuous curves of her buttocks, to an accumulation of shuddering white flesh. M— is running toward death and in the incomprehensibility of it she ceases

to exist to herself: Her nakedness is sanctified. She is a pure sacrifice. But the soldier leaning against the barbed-wire fence watching — he sees a woman. He rapes her and in the throes of her death-agony makes vulgar jokes. After, he catches sight of her body in the paw of the bulldozer he is operating. He watches her rain over the ever-growing pile and sees only death, in its simplest terms. M— is sweating, her body tensed in an attitude of sleep. Her eyelids

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are still pressed shut, simulating sleep. But it is a mock attempt.

I am afraid to move. I do not want to feel my damp nightgown on a dry part of my body. But more than that, I sense things around me which I don't want to know.

M— finds the courage to open her eyes and, discerning the familiar shadows of the room, she feels momentary relief; for these shadows are a witness to her and constitute proof that the scene of death has been someone else's.

Slowly she eases herself up, leaning against the headboard. Perhaps pure movement will displace the nightmare. But the shimmering tension does not abate.

Night is a prelude to death. In it I die a thousand deaths — those of others, now at peace, whose screams hover silent above the written word and those yet to come, among them mine. I do not want to, yet I strain to hear faraway death at work and I become a sweating coward glistening by the light of nightmares.

A faint sobbing: It grows louder, rising and falling in blubbering entreaties. The child, plump and hairless, feels a strange tearing thrust. Over her the gasping man establishes a frenzied rhythmic beat, his desire fanned by the terror in the child's eyes. Now Godlike satisfaction overwhelms him and leads him on to complete the cycle of creation: The cries grow muffled and are heard no more.

Sweat slides its prickly fingers down M——'s temples. She opens her eyes to dispel the image but her continuing thoughts re-create it in her mind. Darkness taunts her and in gloating silence listens to her heart beat.

She is bound hand and foot and her mouth is taped. The sadist begins to dab her nipples with acid. Shrieks pound in her throat. He clenches a knife and the soft flesh of her belly quivers under the impact. Again.

M——'s body contorts in agony. God! Oh my God, help me! I don't want to die!

In the humming silence my heartbeat echoes to die, to die, to die. I search for an answer, something which will help me accept a violent useless death at the hands of a stranger. I cannot be fatalistic, for I burn with blind rage against the mass killers, the snipers who dare to end my life for their own pleasure! Who dare to presume that I do not care if I live or die! Yet, I see my rage goes beyond even these arrogant instruments of death; but it encounters hopelessness: I realize there is no one to protect me. I am forbidden even to protect myself. My intellect causes me to build my whole life on reason. Yet every day of that life it is

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exposed to the fact that I can die for no reason.

In despair I try to make death reasonable but I fall forever through blackness, searching; and even as I turn coward before my own intimidations, I practice the pain, the terror, in advance.

M—— is standing by the table, in the background; but still she sees the agony in the slave's eyes and his mouth, stuffed with rags, contorting in a silent scream.

Eagerly, the learned men lean forward examining the beating heart through the incision on the slave's chest. But it does not beat for long and they have so much more to learn. Bring in the next one!

Swiftly, M— moves to the bedroom door and throws it open to the electric light. She hurries down the hall toward the voices.

I enter the kitchen, splashed in warmth of reds and browns. A smell of coffee, toast crumbs on the counter top, a smear of marmalade on the corner of a mouth. It is hard to believe life is so tame. Which is the dream and which the reality?

‘M—, I thought you were already asleep?’

‘What’s the matter, hungry?’

‘Hah-hah-hah-hah!’

I want to cry out to them for help, but the light makes it impossible. I am alone even now — sleep, however brief, has separated me from the others.

M— drinks a glass of water and returns slowly to bed. There is nothing else she can do, for no one has tried to detain her.

Reluctant to assume a sleeping position which would prompt her to close her eyes, M— remains sitting up in bed, the covers pulled up around her waist.

Night is a chameleon not only of sights but also of sounds and from the indistinguishable murmur of voices drifting in from the kitchen, M— in the dark detects, bring in the next one!

‘I want to hear the bull roar again! Such a resonant roar!’ M— hears. And, again, the black iron bull roars — a long drawnout bellow, then, two short bellows in quick succession as if he were catching his breath, and another sustained cry. On and on the muffled screams break forth until the victim inside the iron belly is roasted to death.

The cries reverberate in M—’s mind, louder and louder, pleading for mercy, shrieking in pain, until she herself begins to cry silently.

No, there is no escape. Neither from life nor from death. I am thrust on earth against my will. And thus trapped in a

living body, I must stand sedately in line awaiting my turn to die.

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Relaxed through her crying, M—— lies back in limp resignation. Complete darkness engulfs her now; light no longer streams in from under the door.

What of the others? They go calmly to bed, into unconsciousness, talking of baseball scores.

For me, night stretches on and keeps morning away. Will it ever come, M——? Will you ever be able to continue life in that far-off morning? To laugh and plan your future — even though out there death strolls and muses about you?

But it is the dawn which answers me.

M—— eagerly gets up out of bed and goes to the window. She gazes out at the delicate light gradually touching alive the still-pale sky, the green leaves, and softly exclaims: 'I feel I will live forever!'

But I welcome Dawn as a Judas kiss born of necessity.

BEFORE THE FUNERAL

When my Great-great-aunt Adena died she was so old I had nearly forgotten she still existed. It seemed incredible that she had ever lived at all except, perhaps, in my imagination; for I had visited her only once in all the years since she had grown wholly witless in a nursing home on the outskirts of Long Reach. At first my father went to see her occasionally, then seldom; and he always returned, sadly admitting she had not recognized him. Now that she was dead I strove to remember her, and at moments I thought I could remember a frail tiny figure with an oval hairless skull and wandering eyes, dressed in black lace or some other antique material, high pearl-button shoes and thick long grey stockings — but the memory was vague and confused, a ghost of a memory, and I could not hold her image firmly in my mind. Nevertheless I could feel her presence in the coffin in the north parlor, and I came downstairs cautiously because I had never seen a corpse before and did not know how to conduct myself.

As I entered the living room, Mother was telling Mrs. Cairns that arrangements for the funeral had already been made; it was to be brief, private, and discreet; and the new man, the Reverend Martin, would preside.

There was a pause of talk while I was admitted to the company. Albert Drummond, looking lugubrious and grey, struggled halfway to his feet amidst a chorus of protests and shook hands with me, then sank feebly back into his chair. He had been brought to the doorstep by his daughter and left in my mother's hands and would be taken away again in an hour's time. He was a very very old man and his head trembled constantly from side to side as though he bore its weight with difficulty.

The others, I knew. I took a seat as silently as I could on the couch beside Cousin Carrie, a gaunt nervous lady who lived alone in a large white house on Cumberland Street and was not really anyone's cousin, and presently the conversation resumed.

'What sort of man is he, this Reverend Martin?' my aunt inquired. She and Uncle George had arrived from Spruce Head the night before, bringing an album of faded photographs and a briefcase of letters they had found in their attic.

'Oh, he seems very nice,' my mother said. 'He's young, of course, and I think the young people like him. He's a great organizer.'

'Is he?' said Uncle George.

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'Oh, yes,' my mother said. 'He's into everything. He says we need a new organ.'

'Does he?' said Uncle George. He examined his pipe and then put it back in his mouth.

'Well,' Cousin Carrie said, 'I'd feel safer if Mr. Henderson were still here. I hope this fellow Martin won't say anything . . . you know how they are sometimes . . . so intimate.' Her lips closed primly upon the expression.

'Oh, he's been given instructions,' my mother said firmly.

'Sometimes they like to deliver these long eulogies, you know,' my father said. 'It gives them a chance to perform.'

'Speaking of eulogies,' said my uncle, laying down his pipe, 'do you remember Father Constable? Mr. Drummond, I suppose you remember Father Constable.'

'Oh, yes,' said Mr. Drummond, blinking gravely, 'I remember him as plain as day. He was a holy terror.'

'I can tell you, it was no fun to be a R.C. in those days,' my father said, shaking his head and laughing. 'Every Sunday morning he used to denounce his parishioners by

name from the . . . the pulpit, or whatever they call it, and hold them up to public ridicule for their various sins and shortcomings. Adultery, drunkenness, gluttony — it didn't make any difference. He named names and shouted and shook his finger at the culprits. Mass must have been a dreadful ordeal for people with something on their conscience. But the worst offense of all, the sin he wouldn't pardon anyone, not even the high and mighty Manions, was the sin of associating too much with the Protestants. Social-climbing Catholics he called them. That sin he would not forgive anyone.'

Everyone chuckled comfortably.

'He used to violate the confessional,' said Mrs. Cairns. 'That's common knowledge.'

'Oh, I don't think so,' my father said judiciously. 'He wasn't that sort of man at all.'

'And his housekeeper,' Mrs. Cairns went on, 'they say there was something . . . peculiar . . .' She gave a sudden abortive cackle which was at once consumed in an uproarious fit of coughing. She began thumping herself violently on the back. 'If we only knew the truth,' she gasped, 'if we only knew the truth of what went on in the world . . .'

I had heard Mother say she was poor girl who had outlived two rich husbands, now played poker with her cook in the kitchen and didn't care what she said to anyone. She had both feet flat on the ground and enjoyed

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herself thoroughly.

'I count it a blessing that I do not know what goes on in the world,' Uncle George said, making a comical face, and under cover of the general murmur of agreement my father rose to prepare some refreshment. At first Mr. Drummond declined to take anything, but my aunt and Cousin Carrie joined together in persuading him to take at least a glass of sherry for his health's sake.

‘Adena must have been well over a hundred,’ Mrs. Cairns said, balancing her bourbon carefully on the arm of her chair.

‘Oh, yes,’ said my father, seating himself once again. ‘She was born on June 20th, 1829. That makes her one hundred and seventeen years old. Isn’t that something?’

‘She was marvelous, really,’ my mother said, ‘for her age. She always sat up just as straight. Of course she was confused in her mind. She was all mixed up in her mind, but physically she was in perfect health.’

‘She failed toward the end,’ Mrs. Cairns said, ‘I suppose.’

‘Oh, no,’ my mother said, ‘at least I don’t think so. We had no warning. She died quite unexpectedly.’

‘Heart?’ said Mrs. Cairns.

‘No . . .,’ Mother said hesitantly, ‘no . . .’

‘Pneumonia?’ said Mrs. Cairns.

‘No . . .,’ Mother said at last, ‘it wasn’t anything like that. She never really had a sick day in her life.’

‘Just old age,’ said Mrs. Cairns conclusively. ‘The whole body goes to pot all at once. Just the other day I was reading an article in the Saturday Evening Post about the pancreas . . .’

‘Well, no,’ Mother said, ‘as a matter of fact, what happened was she pulled the blankets over her head and smothered. At least that’s what Dr. Farnsworth seems to think. Otherwise she might have lived . . . well, who knows . . . perhaps she would have lived forever.’ Mother giggled helplessly, holding a cocktail napkin before her mouth. ‘Excuse me. I don’t know why I should laugh.’

‘Poor old dear,’ said Mrs. Cairns sympathetically. ‘She must have been tired of it all. I don’t blame her a bit.’

‘Oh, it was certainly an accident,’ my father said. ‘I don’t think there’s any question of . . .’

‘Oh, no, certainly not,’ said Cousin Carrie.

‘Well, she had a long life,’ Aunt Anne said staunchly. ‘Her time had come and that’s all there is to it.’

In the silence that followed I could hear the lilacs stirring gently

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against the window panes; and then Uncle George said thoughtfully around his pipe: ‘She long outlived her time.’

‘I beg your pardon,’ said Albert Drummond, cupping one hand behind his ear.

‘I was saying,’ Uncle George explained, taking the pipe out of his mouth, ‘that Adena was the last of her generation. She was born aboard ship in Calcutta.’

‘Is that so?’ said Mrs. Cairns.

‘Oh, yes,’ my father said. ‘Her father was a sea captain, you know, and he took his wife with him on every voyage. He carried ice to India, and Adena was born on one of these trips. Isn’t that remarkable, when you stop to think about it?’

‘It is,’ said Mrs. Cairns. ‘And she never married?’

‘No,’ my father said, ‘never.’

‘A maiden lady,’ said Mrs. Cairns. A thin shadow of raillery followed her voice.

‘Well, not quite,’ my mother said.

‘Oh?’ said Mrs. Cairns. She bent forward like a squirrel scenting buried nuts.

‘She had a child,’ Mother said.

‘You’re joking, of course,’ Mrs. Cairns said.

‘She is not joking,’ Uncle George said firmly and flatly. He tasted his bourbon, then smiled. ‘It was no joke at the time either.’

‘It was kept quiet, naturally,’ my father said.

‘Well, did you ever!’ croaked Mr. Drummond politely.

Mrs. Cairns bent forward again. ‘And what happened to it — the child, I mean?’

‘That,’ Mother said, ‘is a mystery.’

'Now I know you're joking,' Mrs. Cairns said without enthusiasm. 'Babies don't just disappear.'

'They do, however,' my father said.

'Come, come, Edward!' Mrs. Cairns said.

'No, no, it's the truth,' my father protested. 'It is absolutely the truth.'

'I don't see how a baby could just disappear,' Mrs. Cairns said suspiciously, 'into thin air.'

'Oh, well,' Uncle George said, 'it would hardly require magic. Family determination and a small sleight of hand would have sufficed for the deed, providing Adena kept indoors during her time. We don't, of course, know the details of the event. But let us suppose, merely for the sake of supposition, that the child was delivered to an orphanage at the hour of

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birth, in the dark of night doubtless, and left there by a doctor or some trusted family servant who had been sworn to secrecy and who gave no hint of the babe's origin . . . at least, that is the way I have always seen it in my mind's eye. It seems plausible, don't you think?' Uncle George gazed around the room with a fine equanimity and settled his pipe firmly between his teeth.

'And no one knew about this little episode?' Mrs. Cairns said.

'Precious few,' said my father. 'You can imagine the scandal it would have caused.'

'And who was the father?' Mrs. Cairns wanted to know after a moment.

'No one knows,' Mother said. 'No one ever found out. Adena never told.'

'It was,' Cousin Carrie murmured, 'an affair of passion.'

'Cripes!' said Mrs. Cairns.

'And that,' Father said, 'presumably explains why Adena went into retirement. According to the story we were told she

never left the house again until the day her father died. That would have been my grandfather. Then she went to live with my parents . . . that was years before George or I were even dreamt of, much less born. When my father died she naturally moved in with us. She must have been almost a hundred by that time, and practically a recluse. . . .’

‘Recluse,’ Uncle George said doubtfully, ‘is hardly the word for it.’

‘I always thought she was a bit . . . peculiar,’ Mrs. Cairns confessed. ‘Of course I never met her. She was always upstairs.’

‘Indisposed,’ said my mother.

‘The shame of it was too much for her,’ Cousin Carrie said severely. ‘She never recovered from it.’

‘The poor old dear!’ said Mrs. Cairns. ‘But wasn’t she a dreadful burden on you?’

‘Oh, no,’ Mother said slowly, ‘she was no trouble at all. She was so silent and uncomplaining. Only at first, you know, before we got quite accustomed to her, it was a little bit . . . disconcerting. I mean,’ Mother went on, lifting her hands and then putting them back in her lap, ‘there she’d be, gliding up and down the halls at all hours of the day and night or standing just behind the curtains at the big window . . . she watched everything that went on. She never missed a thing. She could stand at that window without moving a muscle for hours and hours. . . .’

‘Years,’ said my father.

‘Well, yes,’ Mother said, ‘literally years. We finally got used to having

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her, but of course even when we weren’t really conscious of her, she was always just, you know, there.’

‘What d’you mean there?’ Mrs. Cairns asked.

‘I mean she was just . . . there,’ Mother said helplessly. ‘In the house.’

‘Cripes!’ said Mrs. Cairns.

‘And then,’ Mother went on, ‘let me see . . . about six years ago she began to do some odd things, and finally we had to have her transferred to a nursing home where she could be looked after properly.’

‘Odd things?’ said Mrs. Cairns. ‘What sort of odd things?’

‘Oh, you know . . . odd things,’ Mother said disconsolately.

‘I see,’ said Mrs. Cairns.

‘When I was a little girl,’ Mother said, ‘I used to go to Edward’s house for dinner on alternate Sundays. At certain times she was very talkative, and she could tell such amusing anecdotes! Such a memory that woman had, and she was just full of stories. And then, over the years, she gradually stopped talking entirely. Isn’t that strange! She wouldn’t even answer when you spoke to her. I think she must have grown feeble in her mind. She could go for months at a time without opening her mouth. All she did was stand by that big window. I can’t imagine what she was looking for. And then one day I heard her say something to herself out loud — it was a word you wouldn’t believe!’

‘The old bat’s last comment, I suppose,’ Uncle George said around his pipe.

‘Georgel!’ said Cousin Carrie.

There was another pause while my father rose, saying to Mrs. Cairns, ‘Here, Effie, let me sweeten that drink for you.’ He replenished all the glasses except that of Mr. Drummond who refused a second measure for fear of becoming dizzy. Father sat down again, then observing that he had forgotten me, he said:

‘There’s plenty of ginger ale in the kitchen, James, if you’d like some.’

I got up obediently and went into the kitchen. After I had filled my glass, I loitered by the window which looked out over the riverfront. A gigantic crane on wheels was unloading

a string of rusty coal barges, and each time the machine disgorged a mouthful of coal into the waiting train a thin haze of umber dust was visible on the sparkling air. I listened to the dull periodic clang of coal falling into iron chambers and at last a man appeared on the catwalk that ran around the little wooden house atop the crane. He leaned motionless over the railings for several minutes as if he were in contemplation or aiming a spit, then abruptly bent double

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and vanished behind a hidden door. I waited for him to reappear but he did not, and finally I lost interest. I went aimlessly about the kitchen, trying the water faucets and reading the labels on the canned goods in the closet until I remembered my duty and hurried into the hallway lest my father come after me. I stopped on tiptoe to listen, but the voices in the living room rambled on and on ceaselessly. I was elated that no one had missed me, and seizing the moment I passed at once through the glass doors of the parlor.

The coffin had been sealed.

I was deeply puzzled, for I had hoped to be allowed a last glimpse of Adena before the grave gained possession of her forever. But now, finding the coffin closed, I felt myself at a blind end. I felt as if I had been deprived of something and, pondering the sparse disjointed details of Adena's life, which I had just heard from my parents, my whole heart began beating with an illicit desire to lift the lid and look inside. I approached the bier and circled round it several times slowly and dreamily, tracing my fingers along the surface of the dark gleaming wood. It was smooth and indifferent to the touch; eight sunken silver bolts fastened the lid irrevocably in place.

Presently I raised my disappointed eyes to the enormous oil painting of the child Adena and her parents, which

covered nearly the whole rectangular space of wall above the bier. The captain was in full martial dress, with silver epaulets, a sword at his side and one hand thrust thoughtfully into his great brown beard. His wife, in a voluminous white silk gown, gazed solemnly out of the picture with an air of profound and impenetrable reserve. Adena herself stood between them, a little in the foreground. She must not have been more than seven or eight, about my own age, yet the effect was of a miniature ageless adult, rather like a mature doll, an image of an image fixed in porcelain or ivory—complete, incorrigible, immeasurably permanent. In the past I had studied the picture often, but even now I could discover nothing new in it. Adena's eyes were still flawlessly blue and clear; her hair was still coiled in exquisite golden rings around and around the crown of her head; her shoulders remained cool, imperial, perfect and bare; and the clearly marked secret cleft between her swelling breasts added allure to innocence. One hand, fingers upturned, floated forward with shattering aplomb; the other held a spray of flowers.

The trio were posed by the crumbling parapet of what appeared to be a ruined castle. Broken columns lay strewn about their feet and rampant green foliage flourished fiercely up on every side. The solitude and silence

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of the place were almost palpable, and the artist had painted in the vague forms of benevolent wild beasts standing guard in the forest. Behind Adena and her parents the middle distance fell away into an abyss of dazzling blue lake, circled by towering glacial crags. The prospect had a look of alpine sublimity, though I knew very well that the picture had been painted aboard ship, in the town of Juggernaut, in India, on the Bay of Bengal.

I left the parlor as I had come, on tiptoe.

‘Beautiful things,’ Uncle George was saying, in reference to the intricately-carved model of a clipper ship imprisoned in a bottle on top of the mantelpiece. The ship was impeccably cut to scale and realistically canted on its beam, under full sail, as if flying before a swift gale. ‘There were craftsmen in those days. People took pride in their work.’

‘What’s your opinion of this man Truman?’ Cousin Carrie interrupted, setting down her drink.

‘He’ll ruin the country if he can,’ my father said gloomily. ‘His predecessor made a good start on it.’

‘He looks exactly like my plumber,’ Cousin Carrie said. ‘Mr. Truman and my plumber are just like two peas in a pod.’

‘Let us please have no politics,’ my mother said gaily.

‘That’s right, Edward,’ Uncle George said to my father, ‘no politics.’

‘It’s this dreadful war,’ Cousin Carrie said severely. ‘Ever since the war began everything’s been topsy-turvy.’

‘Well, it’s over now,’ my mother said soothingly. ‘We can all get back to normal now.’

‘I don’t know,’ Cousin Carrie said. ‘One hardly knows what normal is any more. The town is full of all these dreadful-looking people. They must be working in the shipyard. You don’t know who they are or where they came from, you don’t know what sort of people they are at all . . . I keep my doors locked at night, I don’t mind telling you.’

‘Yes, well,’ Uncle George said, knocking out his pipe in an ash tray, ‘there’s no harm in preparing for the worst.’

Mrs. Cairns bent forward impatiently. ‘I’m still intrigued,’ she said, ‘by the idea of Adena’s child. I’m not in the least sure I really believe you.’

‘You know, Effie,’ said Uncle George, smiling up at the ceiling, ‘if you were to tell me a story like that, I wouldn’t dream of asking you whether or not it was a true story.’

‘Come, come, George!’ said Mrs. Cairns. ‘Don’t be mysterious. You know how I hate mysteries.’

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‘Of course it’s a true story,’ my mother said firmly. ‘George has a very peculiar sense of humor.’

Uncle George only smiled up at the ceiling.

‘But the child,’ Mrs. Cairns said. ‘Assuming . . . let us assume . . . what do you suppose . . . ?’

‘I don’t know,’ my father said. ‘I very often wonder.’

‘It’s the oddest sensation,’ my mother said, unburdening. ‘It haunts me. Every time I see a child hanging about’

There was a long silence during which Uncle George continued to smile and inspect the ceiling.

‘That’s ridiculous!’ Mrs. Cairns said at last, ‘utterly ridiculous! By now Adena’s child would be . . . why, it would be Mr. Drummond’s age.’

‘I am eighty-seven years old,’ Mr. Drummond said with dignity.

‘Are you? Are you really?’ cried Aunt Anne. ‘Isn’t that wonderful!’

‘I know it’s ridiculous,’ my mother said, ‘I know how ridiculous it sounds, but I can’t get it out of my head . . . I just can’t help myself . . . every time I see a child waiting around’

‘Cripes!’ said Mrs. Cairns.

Uncle George smiled and smiled up at the ceiling.

Adena’s funeral was nineteen years ago today. They are all dead now. Uncle George and Aunt Anne, my parents, Mrs. Cairns and Cousin Carrie, Albert Drummond. I was in the assemblage that pursued them to the cemetery, and I know by heart the plot of ground where each is buried. Frequently I visit their graves, a small token of old esteem. They are dear to me perhaps because they remain possible; and endurable,

because dead.

As for myself, the years have passed without undue adventure. The bank, to which I travel on foot each morning at nine and from which I return at four, has recently awarded me a cubicle of my own with a bright new mahogany desk: I can see my face in it.

I believe, I believe quite recklessly in my Great-great-aunt Adena. Passion, remorse and blood are merely words to me. What else should they be? But in all things I assume, as my skeptic, amiable, and mere-tricious Uncle George advised, precisely as much or as little as I please. My blood is blessedly lukewarm, so I am rarely disappointed. I have never had a day of ill-health and I am planning to live forever.

LIBORIO

The street was named Netzahualcoatl after the poet-king, and marked the outskirts of Oaxaca. Beyond the houses were hills all eaten away and flecked like a wall with broken-out places. Several modern homes were being built farther down, and these tapered toward the clay brick huts of the poorer people where Liborio lived. Still, the houses looked the same, even the new ones. Something about the neighborhood made everything the same.

It could be the smells from the hard surface dirt, Liborio thought. No matter whose house you were in front of, the odors were the same, even his own house with the clay bricks partly washed away from years of rain, and the strong logged section he'd helped his uncle build. The smells came from the dogs, good for kicking, bad as rats almost. He grinned and nervously scratched at his arm. Then he squatted down on his haunches next to the body of his sister, Margarita.

He had not gone very far, even though it seemed like hours since he had left. He looked at the rooftops. They were all gray like leaves when it didn't rain for six months. His younger brother, Moy, had been awake when he'd taken Margarita from the house. Moy had cried, and Liborio had slapped his face very hard to keep him quiet. That was bad; but little as he was, it was time for him to know things, so he had hit him hard.

Liborio could only drag Margarita a little at a time, because she was so much heavier than when he used to lift her. He looked down the road and saw Moy appear. The child was still crying; and when they could see each other's expressions, Moy ran against him and sobbed upon his arms.

‘Stop crying, you have to stop! Someone will hear.’ Liborio closed his mouth tightly and held Moy even tighter against him. Moy continued to weep. Margarita lay sprawled and quiet in the dust, and a lot of sand reached over her dress. White smears of chalk from the road covered one of her arms.

‘Moy, I’ll take care of everything, I told you that.’ Liborio straightened so that his brother had to look up at him. ‘You show me you don’t believe me. Now, if you don’t go back and stay, the dogs will all begin barking, and then they’ll keep barking and I won’t be able to do what must be done. You understand why it must be done, so go now, and if anybody wakes up, tell them I’m fishing or something — anything, but not a word about Margarita.’

Moy nodded, slowly edging his way; then quickly he ran off. Liborio

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watched him until he turned into the small dirt path that led to their house. Along the walls he could see the bright orange vines of flowers, and poking between the vines all the colors in the world in the petals of of the wild orchids and other flowers whose names he did not know. The bamboo, he could see, too, like very skinny people staring out from above the housetops.

Liborio stood up and looked around. His legs felt strange. On both sides of the narrow street were clusters of huge cactus trees and wide arms like the underground cement pipes. He was as tall as some of the agave plants, but not as tall as the cactus. Still, he was more firm and thicker than a lot of the cactus arms, and it pricked no one to touch him.

Higher up on the rooftops of the houses, even on all the new homes, wire fences poked toward the sky. Dogs were caged up there, hungry and half-mad from the heat. Even the hair turned gray on a lot of them; keeping dogs was the way of all the people, even the shop-owners, but he

remembered visitors to his house speaking of a time when only a few dogs were needed to keep away thieves. The Indians themselves only wanted a potato or two, or something from the garbage.

It was the dogs, barking and wildly running back and forth yelping up and down the roofs, that sameness tying all the houses into one loud constant sound which Liborio took with him even after he was out of their sight.

He took hold of Margarita and pulled hard, keeping close to the trees sticking out of the ground where sidewalks would some day be, like El Centro in the city; and no one saw him. The gullies in the road deepened and the soil bared sharper rocks. He made his way with great effort, dragging foot by foot, his eyes looking around for witnesses.

The last building of the Colonia was Señor Cotto's Tile Factory, and once beyond it, Liborio paused and breathed the different smell that filled him with the same feeling he had when he went swimming down by the shallow river. It was a soft smell in the air like the feathery lightness just before night comes and the air is alive with waves.

Now, early in the morning, the smell was the same as night, and the heat of the day was at him already, the same continual sun. This time of year the brightness was everywhere all day, though it was not yet summer. The heat stayed on like somebody touching your shoulders, an abrazo, then moving away. The hillsides were like that, too, touching, and the mountains all around, even when the cold swung down through the night-infested trees, and the dry dust everywhere cut through the tall shadows of the flowering cacti. Then the heat came back, and the even rhythms of

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the climate made it good to be alive.

Liborio looked down at Margarita. She was always pale like that, her uncut hair longer than half of her, and her

head so small and skin dark; but the dark skin was covered with paleness faded white, as if she hadn't washed all the soap from her face. Her face was almost too small, like a paloma flying; and the little fruit-shaped body made the head look like it wasn't there.

Staring down Netzahualcoatl, burros and chickens were scurrying across the ochre-pebbled dust to the opposite yards. He thought of his own back yard with the many black and red pots and pigs and bamboo, all those things. They were good, too, and his yard was good; for, the children of the Americanos would get up very early in the morning just to come over and play and help wash the pigs. How rich they were, new shoes, all those different clothes, and money for dulces; and yet they awoke very early in the morning to run around in his yard, and even took off their shoes and walked on the broken pots and were almost happy when they hurt themselves. And how they hugged the pigs!

Sweat trickled down his face. He liked the saltiness on his lips. He touched at his skin without feeling, as if his fingers were sticks and his skin a mask. Then he glanced down again, and reaching under Margarita's body, he took one of her arms and began dragging her toward the crooked furrows of the hills.

A short time later, Liborio stopped and sat down beside Margarita. She was all full of dust and her dress was torn. She did not look dirty, but her hair had sand in it. That would bother her — the torn clothes, not so much. Clothes didn't matter, except when she went to school; but with her hair it was different. She used to wash it once a week, and she would sing in the water; and now it was yellow with dust. He had forgotten to tie her hair with a ribbon, and the hair was all around her face. It made her look like somebody else; still, it was Margarita. He hoped she wouldn't be mad at him because he had forgotten the ribbon. He'd forgotten the flowers, too, but that didn't matter. The hills had places full

of flowers.

All kinds of pictures were in his mind. He thought of school, and tried to grit his feelings away. There was a lightness all over him, as if his body were just a long bamboo leaf. He would never go to school again, never! And up until now it didn't matter, but things were changing. All the boys would have to go to school, even an Indian like Margarita, like himself. Now, they laughed at the Indians; but mostly the boys who didn't even have to work for their tortillas. Their fathers had land and

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money, and they were changing, the people in those houses. That wasn't what he wanted anyway. More food would be good, to be able to buy everything in the mercado at one time, and not have to walk so far to gather fruits and things. Anyway, those things in the forest belonged to the greenness of the forests, belonged to a color and not to any person or to anything.

Suddenly two small squatty dogs were very near. They had followed from one of the unfenced yards, and they looked wild and fierce and Liborio did not have time to head them off. He quickly reached for some rocks and threw them with all his might. He missed, then struck one dog in the stomach along the ribs. The thud was loud. Liborio thought he half-killed the dog, but there it was, hurting from the stone, but hurting more from hunger. He found a larger rock and ran right up to the dog and hit it on the side of the head. The dog snapped at the air and then towards Liborio before it ran away. A thick stream of blood was coming down over its left ear. Blood was on the rock, too, right near Margarita. Liborio threw some sand over the rock, and then edged Margarita a little farther away. The other dog ran as he raised his hand to hurl a rock at him.

A faint sound invaded the air above Liborio, black sound. He was not startled for he knew it was the coming of the big

black wings. He saw them in their ugliness, the zopilotes. They were never ugly before, the reddish flesh-beaked birds, because they cleaned up all the dead things along the countryside, and there was no big disease in the land any more because of these wonderful birds. His uncle had told him, and it was true. But now they were ugly. Margarita was always afraid of them, and when she was full of fever and very very sick she had made him promise not to let the zopilotes get to her. She made him promise to let the Church bury her, too, with fine fresh flowers he would find in the forest; and though her coffin would be only a small box, it was to be well made and blessed by the priests and blessed by all the saints he would speak from his lips when the funeral came.

Liborio shook his head and brushed at a fly. He had wanted to do everything she asked; but she was quiet now, and he would have to do other things. He would have to do what urged him inside, what he knew were right things, no matter who said what was right. He knew this was so when he had awakened very early in the morning. It had been still dark and there had been no more breathing from the straw mat on the floor next to his own straw petate. His uncle and aunt had been asleep. It was good they had the beds, because it put them high up, and only he

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and Margarita had petates on the floor. He'd thought that was why she would not go into the bed, so she would be near, where he could watch her.

She hadn't said so, but it was so. They knew. And it was true, the way they knew certain things just talking about other things. He remembered when they had been lying down talking in the dim candle-flickering light, when Margarita was first sick. They had given her the black fruit of the zapote tree; and the milk of that fruit did not make her well like everybody said it would. The Christmas Saints had all been brought out from the darkness of last year, and put upon the table with its clean stiff-blue cloth; and when his aunt and uncle had stood before the saints praying, and when the Americano señor had brought over a carton of cigarettes which also had been put on the altar — all those things that were prayed, and all those things on the altarpiece of their home — he had spoken them all without saying a word. He and Margarita knew that.

Well, he had promised, but that was not the promise urging him. It was better to promise and not keep it than to be so truthful you never promised anything. He looked back out at the circling birds, a few of them like parachutes of black falling toward the crumbly mounds of dust. The land looked so poor; but, how rich it really was — except nobody would show them how to farm in land like this, with lots of water some of the time, and no water all the rest of the time. He remembered seeing a man with a parachute once — in a circus. But these birds didn't fall down and scramble around when they fell. They pulled up into themselves, then watched. Yes, they were ugly birds.

This promise he would not break; no matter how little he was, the birds would not get to her. The Church, well, he

didn't know them too much anyway, and though they liked Margarita, they didn't help when it mattered, when she was very sick. He did want to say some prayers because Margarita believed in prayers, but he couldn't; what he was doing, that was his prayer.

More birds. Liborio wondered if they would keep coming, and if enough of them came, whether they would drive him away in a nightmare of wings, and fight him and eat at Margarita, especially her eyes; because they went first for the eyes of the burros when they eased to the ground along the sides of the roads. Some black specks in the sky were far away as the sun, seeping its light along Margarita's arms.

He moved her over next to some weeds, partly shading her. His uncle might see the birds coming, the sky was so clear. His old eyes were very bad, but he could see far in the distance. They would both beat him bad

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for this, though they hardly ever touched him that way. For this, they would. They prayed so much and spent so much time in Church praying. They would be angrier than ever before and beat him with tied straw, and it would be bad; but he would not tell where she was. If his aunt asked, it would be harder not to tell; but he had made a promise. They would not get her to the Church, either. He looked at Margarita and grinned. He hoped she would not be angry with him; she would know he had to do what he was doing.

Liborio heard the scamper of feet on the other side of a large plot of weed. Instinctively he leaped away, crouching behind the tangled growth. He turned to see if Margarita was following; she was there where he had left her, in clear sight for whomever was coming.

The footsteps stopped. They would send him away maybe, put him in jail! Maybe they would know. But, how could they? They would only yell and shout that he was too little, and that he had no right to do what he wanted. But when

they said he could not do or think certain things, it made him angry. It was like looking up and seeing the great mountains, and everybody said how impossible it was for anyone to go beyond them; but he had climbed and gone beyond, once in his life, with his good friend, the teacher Segura, and on the other side there had been more mountains. Now they would say what was right to do; but he would think of what they said as if they were still talking about the mountains.

Suddenly more footsteps kicked through the sand. It was too late to drag Margarita out of sight. A slim lizard, baking in the sun, momentarily distracted him. The panic subsided, vanished, because Liborio realized he knew those steps, and they could only be those of a small boy. A moment later, he crawled forward and looked; and, standing in his bare feet and jumper too big for his little body, was Moy.

‘What are you doing here?’ Liborio asked angrily. Moy shook his head and stuck out a hand, offering the fruit of the zapote. Liborio laughed and took the fruit. He bit into it and offered Moy some, but the smaller boy refused. Liborio took another bite and threw the fruit far beyond the weeds.

Moy stared down at Margarita. His mouth shaped whimpers, and tears were rolling down his face. He kept putting his hands into his pockets and taking them out again. His small sombrero had fallen off, but he did not bother to pick it up.

Liborio pulled his brother close. He held Moy tightly and brushed his hair to one side, stroking his head. He did what the women did to boys, but it only made Moy cry again.

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'You must be quiet, Moy, quiet! I want you to go back now, say nothing, not a word. I'll tell Margarita you wanted to help her, and she'll know, I promise.' Liborio wiped Moy's eyes with the back of his hand and pushed at his face, jesting. Moy's expression changed and happiness was in his smile, a gladness from his mouth. He sniffed hard and looked at Margarita. Liborio took his hand, pointed him back toward the street and gave him a push. He was like a puppy and moved crookedly to one side then the other, looked around, then hesitated. Liborio waved him on. His little face looked like a black blur surrounded by a hatbrim; then he was gone.

Liborio reached for the upper part of Margarita's arm. This time he did not reach under her. It was impossible to keep her dress clean, dragging through all that dust. They moved very slowly. He had wanted her to stay just as she had been, perfectly clean; but it was not possible, and he was getting painfully thirsty. His throat hurt, and the surface of the ground was stone. He thought to take her to the edge of the thick green trees in the distance where they had always gone together to gather fruit and flowers and other things for celebrations that covered the ground of the forest dark purple and deep green. He looked ahead and up at the distance, then at the birds; he was afraid.

He knew those birds. They wouldn't come near him while he moved. Yet, his throat and chest had that fuzzy feeling of fear. He pulled harder at Margarita, dragging her over the dry ridges of stone and clay until finally he could not move her at all. His eyes burned and he rubbed the dust from them. A few moments later he managed to drag her just under a large cactus tree. The tree hardly kept out the sun; but it was a tree, and though it was ugly without fruit or leaves, with big arms reaching up, it was high like a gravestone would be. He thought he would make a cross and

put it there, maybe with a large boulder and her name painted on it; but now there wasn't enough time. His uncle and aunt and the priest would soon be looking. They would find the cross and take her away. Then she would be gone for ever, because the priest told him he would never be in the same place as Margarita because he was like a wild animal. But that didn't sound true, because even the wild animals were good, even the ugly horrible zopilotes kept the countryside clean.

Liborio stared at the distance again. It would be too long, too hot and thirsty; and if he took too long, they would find him. He shook his head and brushed at the sides of his face. All his plans were suddenly vanishing, all the secret places he had thought of were now naked in the sun like roots pulled up from underground.

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He thought again of the large rock down by the river where the women took their wash. There was a deep hole behind the bend of the river and he could squeeze through into the darkness where it was big like a whole room, but the women would probably see him now. It was too light. Then, the soft sandy hill where they were building the new road, where they would go to watch the men working, and they would laugh at the big machines taking giant scoops of pebble from the earth and putting each bite in another place. And then the machines would come and fill up the old place and dig new places. He smiled and remembered how funny that had been for them. He reached over and touched Margarita, remembering.

Feast Day too had been so good that year. Margarita had killed a chicken, so simple, twirling it around. She had killed a chicken. But no thing with a name had killed her; she was just dead. And the iguana in molé sauce, how good it was with their faces full of gravy and their laughter full of the flavor. The string that was tied around the iguana's mouth

had been fat with juice.

Liborio brushed at his eyes, and then smoothed his hair. Overhead, very near, a large pink-tipped flare of black feathers cut through the air and rested on the highest arm of the tree. And then another, then four or five birds were up there, looking out into space as if he did not see them. And next to him, a once-rainbow of a girl who was heaped on one side as if she were smothering something in her hands. Now she would hold nothing, nor ever sell again the fresh baked bread that smelled so clean early in the morning.

The closeness of the zopilotes' heads, looking like their skins had been peeled off, terrified him; but he swallowed hard, and the hurt in his throat helped him forget his terror. Still, he could not forget his weariness. A few more birds flew in closer and waited. They all looked alike and their faces reminded him of human faces, people he knew every day like the vendadores of bread and honey. He could almost recognize them in the birds. But that was true of all animals, if you looked at them long enough, as they were now looking at him.

They wouldn't get her. He stood up and angrily raced for a nearby rock, and hurled it at the birds with all his strength. His arms ached, and he had missed. The birds flew up high in the air, circled quickly, then drifted back down near the spot where they had been. Liborio frantically scraped for rocks, picked up one too small and dropped it, then hurled a long stick, but the birds saw its flimsy rise and fall, and did not fly away.

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Seymour Gresser

They would always fly away from a living thing . . . and now they wouldn't.

He hated being so young and small, even smaller than boys his own age. That was because he had been very sick when there was no food or milk, and for a long time his parents had wondered whether he would live. Then his mother and father had died; and his uncle and aunt had taken him to live with them at a time he was too young to remember. They had told him; but he could see it in his mind now, as if he could remember. So he was not too young — not then, not now.

Liborio's anger eased away, and he walked aimlessly around, searching the ground. He found a long rotten branch from a huaje tree, and broke it in half. One part would not bend, and this part he took back to the cactus tree. He began digging, stabbing at the hard solid earth. At first he worked very fast, then examined the marks the stick was making; then he dug slower but with harder strokes. The ground was tough like the skin of cocoanuts, and after a while he sat down, exhausted.

He should have borrowed the new shovel from the Americanos. They wouldn't mind; they were good people. His aunt had even given them a turkey because she said the Americanos had paid them well for working, and it was right to give where you have taken. That was what the priest said, too; but when he said it, the words became a different thing than when you knew it already. And everybody knew it already.

Margarita lay rolled over on one side, and the sun was on her bare beautiful feet. He had forgotten her sandals, and

the thought made him smile. Then he laughed aloud. Now the ground was dotted with birds; and in two places big clusters of birds so you could not see the ground in back of them, so thick black they were. And they were moving; the ball of blackness was moving, though the birds stood still. Out there with no shade at all was too hot. They would not stay, but still they weren't moving toward him either. Above him, the birds were still there, quiet like leeches on the limb.

Liborio jumped to his feet and raced toward some stones. He began throwing them wildly at the tree, at Margarita, at the birds that did not move. Then everything was still. With one stone he struck a branch that made a loud cracking sound through the air. The birds flew up and circled, then glided lazily toward the mass of birds in front of the tree. The loud bells from the Church of San Carlos seeped out over the air. He looked back toward the direction where his house was. It was too far away to see, but there was something very small in the road, like a black blur. It could be a dog, or his aunt or uncle or the priest. Then two of

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the birds landed closer than any of the others, and began slanting, moving slantwise toward him. Liborio reached for the long huaje stick and raised it above his shoulders. He stood there like that a long time. The heat of the sun was no longer a different kind of heat; it was hot sun, not touching and going, but grasping. He swallowed the dryness in his throat, and then the pain of his thirst. He put down the stick and walked a short distance from the tree. Margarita lay still, she was not going to move. Suddenly some of the birds flew back into the tree, then others, then quickly the small form of a girl was alive with slanting planes of black feathers leaping out from her face, and a frenzy of falling was upon her. Liborio sat down on the ground and looked away. Clumps of orange flowers, just a short distance away, stilled like they were painted on the air. Farther on were many cactus trees with all their green spined arms reaching up, forming the baskets that would be used for storing corn later on when there was corn. Some day he would be tall as the cactus, and some day there would be times he would prick anything that touched him. He picked up some dust and touched it to his nose, smelling the acrid scent of the sand; and, from the air, the clean heat. He put his arms against the hard stony dust of the ground, leaning over, and pressed his head against his arms, deeper than earth is.

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RICHARD O'CONNELL

THE PARIS TOUR OF MR. CHESTER POOR III

Mr. Chester Poor III Aged 34½ With a loose upper plate That
will not let him laugh

Alights on Paris hot To tour the tombs and raid The
bookstalls and maybe perhaps Miraculously get laid

Puffs to the roof of Notre Dame Angina in his chest
Gargoyles there among school girls Who regard him as a pest

At the second landing place Soaring pigeons fright Mr.
Poor He decides not to finish up His Eiffel tour

Fast running out of time He races through the Louvre
Finds to his absolute surprise 'Those marbles really move!'

Remembering Proust and Henry James He strolls the
Tuileries Drinks in the Paris atmosphere Of fermenting piss
and cheese

RICHARD O'CONNELL

Drifts to the literary bank
And finds as he had feared
No expatriate tourist there
Sans beard
Flees ignominiously
Across the sewery Seine
Crepuscular eel men
Allay his mental pain
A s-s-s-stuttering Morocco pimp
Accosts him near Pigalle
Unsuccessfully tries to lure
Him down a poorly lighted alley
At the Hotel Fiat
Mr. Chester Poor III
With his 15 franc fuck book
Collapses in bed unheard

JOYCE ODAM

POEM WRITTEN WHILE SLICING A GREEN ONION

And right in the crotch
of the long-stemmed onion
the good soil lies
just where the translucent
white
meets the shiny green.
Black grit
is wound in the tiny slices,
absolute, contained.
Something wise
and poetic in me
leaves it there.
We shall eat the earth
today.
We shall realize
grateful communion
with the source
of such good fare.

LEE M. LUBRANO

WHAT KINSEY DIDN'T SAY

Coffee grounds walk
up my throat for words; Responsibility
opens like a cupboard door,
silently, with a warm wind, . . .
We are blood pools
under the skin, fanning
out from a bruise, dissolving
in flesh. We spin slowly
with the movement of gliding terns
looking for rising air,
circling around a shifting axis
spiraling for the edge.

RUTH MOON KEMPFER

FAT'S CHILD

Fat's child
built himself a ladder
pausing just once to admire
the various rungs, and
hung at the top an elaborate
candelabrum, afire.

Fat's child
ascended his ladder
harried by jackals, and apes
in whose hairy mouths and eyes
surprise shows
in a series of o's.

Fat's child
now lives on the ladder
with perpetual smell of hot tallow
and, on the lower rungs, apes.
He clings, to speak boldly of prowess
but never escapes.

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RUTH MOON KEMPFER

ITEMS

#1: SOFIA Sofia (big breasts) with her head tied in a babushka stood by the roadside casually, thumbing her way into trouble.

#2: YES, YES You can't imagine certain people dreaming certain things about you

but if they have any kind of imagination at all, they do.

#3: Purple Passage FLOWERS ARE AN AWFUL BOTHERE BECAUSE ALWAYS YOU MUST WEED OUT SOME DEADHEADS AND PEOPLE ALSO ARE A BOTHERE LIKWISE

EMILIE GLEN

MET

John Thomson

Fingerprints last longer than people,
From hundreds of years
There they are on door and sill
Staircase and bannister,
Up into the attic,
Down into the cellar,
My fingerprints are in the old Met,
Child prints teen prints,
Prints from a married year ago,
My prints and Caruso's,
And Tebaldi's,
And Fonteyn and Nureyev,
And Chaliapin,
And Alicia Markova,
And that socialiate clown
Who stood on his head,
They're tearing down the old Met,
Bulldozing it to red rubble,

The new one has velvet hand-rails
And diamond-star chandeliers
That lift up into the ceiling at curtain time,
They're powdering down the Met
And all those prints
That are supposed to last

**HOW I DECIDED TO BE A POET IN TWENTY
FIVE WORDS OR LESS**

he started out
as a humble peasant
living
in a gingerbread and
cake frosting cottage
tucked away
between two misty
mountains
Somewhere near tomorrow
in short blue pants
and red suspenders
he tilled the
soil
and raised
A small black moustache
one day
a brand new universe
was delivered
to his post office box
in a plain brown wrapper
And he discovered he was god
the children saw him
sitting on the edge of infinity
dangling his legs
and playing with the earth
like a giant yo-yo

ROBERT LOUIS

TWO

Husky-throated whores
Slump against warm stone corners
Exhaling sexy smoke
To the rhythm of shadows
Thrown by snickering street lamps.
Resistance,
As statesmen awake in a dream and
Recall the ancestral voice
Calling down long corridors lined with
Wry smiles.
Then . . .
Choice without choosing,
Deed without doing.
Lethe.

CONCERNING THE NOW OF POETRY*

Dave Rasey

IT IS NOT JUST NOW, AS SOME banner-yelling advocates would have you believe, that the existence and creation of poetry is exciting and relevant. Within our present split second of the world/universe many publicists, critics, political hacks have adopted a selling game of modern poetry which attributes few, if any, characteristics of historical influence to the contemporary movements. This spirit of 'fast-sell sensationalism' carries several retarding and at times death-ray influences upon the future expansion and past and present greatness of poetics.

To point: many publicists of the new poetry schools conveniently forget or blatantly deny the importance of historical root works and their subsequent major influence upon the essence and medium of the modern schools. Poetry, like all other arts, today, and always, is in a state of transition (whether the Boston School Board likes it or not). If one is easily indoctrinated, television reports, college and poetry reading seminars, newspapers, magazines, and hot off the press GET IT NOW publisher blurbs would have you believe that concrete poetry, rock poetry, black poetry, all the varied modern poetry is an entity unto itself, beholden to none.

In concrete poetry, the stance often publicized is as follows: The concrete school is new in that it is breaking up the linear aspects of the Gutenberg imprisonment — rearranging letters, words, space, and thereby giving new meanings, new sounds, new visual patterns, sometimes opening poetry to a kind of actual theatre performance. In other concrete poems, other objects besides the conventional type letter are added — which in essence closes the distance

and furthers a badly needed integration among all arts.

Agreed. Concrete poetry is an enhancement, an expansion; but it is not new. The techniques and essence of this type of poetry can be found through the ages. Apollinaire, Gertrude Stein, many past African poets, past and present theatre poets, the pattern poems of the Babylonians, the anagrams of the early Christian monks, the preliterate cave men and their picture writing: they, too, are a part of the instrument called concrete poetry. Joyce, with his rearrangement of syntax, letters, word combines, creates a bridge to painting, to the auditory and oral arts:

** With a review of Clarence Major's Anthology, THE NEW BLACK
POETRY — \$5.95 & \$1.95, 156 pp. — International Publishers.*

The wagrant wind's awalt'zaround the piltdowns and on
every blasted knollyrock . . . there's that gnarlybird
ygathering, runalittle, doalittle, preealittle,
pouralittle, wipealittle, kicksalittle, severalittle,
eatalittle, whinealittle, kenalittle, hafalittle,
pelfalittle gnarlybird. A verytable-land of
bleakbardfields.

Lewis Carroll takes us through a revolutionary Looking Glass Wonderland where poetic movements are being TwAngEd in a most concrete sense — The Jabberwocky, the Mouse poem:

Fury said to
a mouse, That
he met
in the
house,
'Let us
both go
to law:
I will
prosecute
you—
Come, I'll
take no . . . '

The poem's lines go on to form a visual mouse's tale. This emblematic or figured poetry, now so often employed in concrete poetry, was used by the ancient Greeks, Stéphane Mallarmé, George Herbert, Dylan Thomas, e. e. cummings. The point and mosaic pattern of it all being that a lot has been going on in this movement for centuries, and because this movement is receiving some public focus NOW does not mean that this poetry has recently been birthed; and for its future growth, a rigid exclusive NOW examination, point of view, working frame of reference harms further expansion, both to the working poet and to the general public.

If we attend enough poetry seminars we get the message that the 'Expanded Poetry' of the Sixties is Where It's At (whatever that means) and the old 'Under The Rock Poetry' of the Fifties and farther back is really Nowhere (again, whatever that means). We learn that Expanded Poetry has crawled out from Under The Rock of personalism and bleeding heartism and has taken on the whole nittygritty world — war, pestilence, famine, etc. Good. But poetry has always taken on the whole nitty-gritty world. Thumb through the pages of Dante, and poets before him. It's obvious. What is not obvious, and perhaps what is killingly dangerous, is

the attack on Under The Rock forms (Rod McKuen's poetry on a popular level is perhaps the best known representative of contemporary Under The Rock poems). Man must, whether he live in a tribal or in an individualistic aura, express his own personal aching eardrum and tired eyes. Both Expanded and Under The Rock are needed. And for each to attempt assassination upon the other leads not to victory or stalemate; but, since they are interdependent, to a double suicide.

I hold suspect the academics as the prime movers in the emphasis upon a philosophy that holds modern poetry to be a house severely divided within its various branches and one which has no roots, no past; and by this slipshod philosophy, the implicit damnation: no future — with little or no relevance to the present. The 'Now and Nothing Before' faith is a shrewd way to disclaim the present significance of modern poetry, and to take away past accomplishments upon which to expand and experiment with contemporary forms. This dead end, noncircular attitude also serves to protect the present status of academic poetry, and academic poetry alone. Emmett Williams in his ANTHOLOGY OF CONCRETE POETRY concisely pinpoints historical and present day influences upon concrete poetry. THE WORLD OF ROCK, by John Gabree, also illuminates the cross-fertilization of country and western, blues, folk, rock and roll, soul, with the present forms of rock, which many today define as rock poetry.

Many of the above basic premises and conclusions referring to the NOW of modern poetry apply equally to the black poetry of today. The book hawkers, academics, and publicists are at it again disclaiming the existential social and literary structures under which the black poets write. Yet, these poets, for the most part, seem nicely to escape the influences of their wouldbe headmasters by awareness of their racial and cultural heritage, which enables them to

make poetic usage of important aspects of their African and Black American past and present. At this moment, within black poetry, I detect more awareness of the past/present/future multi-revolving influences upon poetic structuralism, content, and what-have-you, than I do in many of the other modern schools. Poets such as Clarence Major, editor of *THE NEW BLACK POETS*, and June Meyer Jordan, author of *WHO LOOK AT ME*, are two examples of the new black poets who are dancing, breathing, ear-sounding new dimensions and expansions into the world of poetry. Clarence Major has his eyes, ears, and nose to history, but simultaneously his sensory modalities cling receptively to the jarring present NOW. In his introduction to *THE NEW BLACK POETRY*, Major sets the style and tone of this collection by stating: We bring the ancient brilliance of the abstracts of black cultures, aesthetics — all the implied new distinct mythology, iconology, symbolism, etc., our submerged kingdoms, the black power of our cosmological armies, the horns of our virility, the tacit foresight of our acceptance of our past (the hardest thing for people to do), the spirit of our generations of collective positive durability — all of this into the skill, the tension and timing of the lines of these poems; which partly accounts for their separate and radical presence.

After the editor's introduction we meet such poets as LeRoi Jones, Lennox Raphael, Welton Smith, F. S. Bryant, Russell Atkins, Ishmael Reed, Calvin C. Hernton, Lance Jeffers, June Meyer, John A. Williams, Victor Hernandez Cruz, seventy-six Afro-American poets in all, some widely published, others published for the first time. The anthology of poetry that Major brings forth is explosive. Its anger fuses with its pride, its hate fuses with its love, its defeat fuses with its victory to form a powder keg of poetic rhythm, tension, and imagery. This explosiveness is not the firecracker-fizzle of yelling, stomping, and wahooing so often

found in sophomoric doggerel passed on to the public as a substitute for poetry. No. Mr. Major has not been seduced into the mainstream demand of publishing court jesters. His selection of poetry has been thoughtful; and the book bears his concern for artistic accomplishment and black consciousness, which really are one and the same if examined carefully. Clarence Major implies the interrelationship of art and man throughout his introduction: 'Like any concept, any art form, with an impetus in Afro-American nationalism, our poems exist primarily for and go directly to our central human needs . . . the proper movement of human art is to shatter illusion and make concrete the most explicit and useful reality.'

The artistic quality is maintained magnificently throughout this book. But, on a few occasions dogma turned doggerel takes over as in the case of Harry Edward's 'found poem,' *How To Change The U.S.A.*, and leaves us not with a poem but tattered low-calibre prose. Vendettas can hold the best of poetry, this poem (?) holds the worst of tired words, bland clichés, and crippled structure. I am nit-picking; for, the value of this collection is that you are forced to be picky since it is perhaps the best representation of qualitative contemporary black poetry to be published to date.

Poets of achievement and lasting innovation, which will lead to further avenues in poetry, course through this anthology's pages. Echoes of remembrance: Russell Atkins from Cleveland. For years I've read his cryptic excitement poems: poems that explode the archaic linear images and in their place forge new disturbing, yet welcomed, unities and foreign montages of poetic picture, rhythm; new creatures born from his words dance, spit, haunt, and love within the startled mind of the reader. He does not relax you nor provide a restful sauna bath whether it be with his concrete poetry, his somewhat Joycean quadruple whammy imagery, or his direct 'Brown Bomber' punch found in the lines of one

of his poems published in this anthology:

All who have and have all can cry: "PEACE!"

All who have not may despair to war.

Sho' nuff hard to play comfortable games of 'cool it
Harlem' after reading Atkins.

Several years ago, we sat in a Lower East Side coffee house listening to Hart Leroi Bibbs jazz-read his poetry, pounding rhythms, rocking images. His force shoved us hell-blown into the protest images of his poems — whether we liked it or not. Here again Clarence Major has exhibited his over-all refinement of selectivity by choosing one of Bibbs' more powerful poems, *Six Sunday*, to appear in the anthology. Three of the lines are as follows:

How can we fight they cry, what have we?

Machine guns have with spears been jammed;

By human hands, like cockroaches, lions been crushed.

The first line in the poem by June Meyer will live with me until my death. If precision, honed sensitivity, intensity, communication, imagery which brings a living reality, are valued elements of poetry, then Miss Meyer has written a complete poem to be found in *THE NEW BLACK POETS*, *All The World Moved*:

ALL THE WORLD MOVED NEXT TO ME STRANGE

I grew on my knees
in hats and taffets trusting
the holy water to run
like grief from a brownstone
cradling.

Blessing a fear of the anywhere
face too pale to be family
my eyes wore ribbons
for Christ on the subway
as weekly as holiness
in Harlem.

God knew no East no West no South
no Skin nothing I learned like

traditions of sin but later life began and strangely I
survived His innocence without my own.

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DAVID HENDERSON'S POEM, PSYCHEDELIC FIREMEN,

David Henderson

WHILE

thru harlem fire rages water cycles
weekends of fun/ partying/ burning flesh
this thanksgiving
for the natives who hunt for the feast
but do not partake/
silent natives screaming
thru western guns swords axes
tall tenor saxophones
blaring black trumpets/
page of swords
spanish habana
African chants/long-legged dance
to the bullfight
stab the beast
don't waste a stroke by spear
symbolic death for your meat/
harlem raging
trumpet tenor axes blare

MIDNIGHT HOUR

/sugar shards high music
to tumult of psychedelic
artillery
of cities insane/

Victor Hernandez Cruz dynamites the reader's ears with his poem, *Urban Dream*. John Major serenading, Glenn Myles finger-popping a mean tune, Alicia Ley Johnson praying many of us into a fragrant death we can not resist. There is enough pertinent content, style, form, diversity packed into this book that the anthology demands that your

attention be repetitively refocused upon structure, upon message, upon both structure and message as a whole. One can read with benefit the individual poem apart from the collection, or one can read these poems as an integrated collage (not bound by the usual conventions of print technology) of medium, of message.

The editor has chosen well. In his own words: 'In collecting these poems, my primary concern has been, first, with the artistic quality of the work, and second, with the quantity of the poets' social black consciousness, . . .'

The quality and partial purpose of this collection of vital poems is

**HERALDED BY THE LAST STANZAS OF
LEN CHANDLER'S POEM, I WOULD BE
A PAINTER MOST OF ALL:**

had i held to blindness
i would have been a poet
surrounded by a hedge
of literary illusions
and read by those few
who have the biggest purse to pay
and reason to find comfort in
the totally obscure
but now i dare see clearly as a child
and now i even almost understand
now i would be a painter most of all
my medium would be
words and color and shape
and shape and texture
and smell and time and taste
i would press my picture
to the back of your brain
for you too have learned
to squint in all your senses
so i must enter where i can
and hang my pictures
where you dare not even blink

Whether or not the world keeps squinting in all its senses is a question-and-answer period I will leave to the sociologists, political scientists, social workers, psychologists, and astrologers; but this unblinking anthology of black poetry is perhaps the best of its kind on the market today. It is going to be difficult for social and poetry dilettantes to sterilize poetry as something separate from reality or life after reading this collection.

I LOVE PAT AND WORDS

Matthew B. Flynn

are nibbling my lips eager
to feast on her
to plow her ears
to fish her eyes
to scale her smile

YONDER UP CALLED IS ROLLS THE WHEN

Francis Murray

Jane Fulton

MY INTRODUCTION TO THE Church of the United Motorists came one Saturday morning when I breezed into what I thought was a service station in Prairie du Skunk, Nebraska and asked for ten gallons of regular.

‘Are you a member of our church?’ the station attendant asked politely, scanning the car to see whether or not I had the official church medallion.

‘Well, no, I don’t suppose I am,’ I replied, somewhat puzzled. ‘I’m a part-time Methodist.’

‘I’m sorry, sir, but these gasoline pumps are operated solely for members of our church,’ he said.

As I drove away, I noticed that the green-and-purple pylon sign, extending skyward near the station, had the word ‘Welcome’ in neon tubing on both sides of the revolving disc at the top, where one usually sees ‘Texaco’ or ‘Gulf.’ The sign was the only thing that distinguished the place from a typical American filling station.

When I arrived in Omaha, I asked Jim and Gioconda Bradley, with whom I was visiting, what they knew about the Church of the United Motorists.

‘Why, we both belong to it,’ Jim told me. ‘Gioconda was a member when I first met her. Just before we got married, I decided to join.’

‘Actually, we were married in that Station in Prairie du Skunk,’ Gioconda said. ‘Jim had a used-car lot in town at the time.’

‘I see that you use the word “Station” rather than “Church,”’ I said.

‘Well, the words are used interchangeably,’ she replied. ‘We go to the Station for both spiritual and temporal needs.’

Upon further questioning, the Bradleys told me that the sect began in a small town in Michigan in the 1930’s, and that it had since become the largest religious denomination in the United States. In fact, its growth is almost double that of all other denominations combined. It forms such a gigantic political and economic cartel that its candidates are rarely defeated for public office. Politicians of other persuasions and economic interests unashamedly kowtow to the sect, further enhancing its position.

‘Didn’t I read something about your church in Time recently?’ I inquired.

‘Yes, there was a cover story on us,’ Gioconda said. ‘There was a painting on the cover of Henry Ford, who would correspond to your Jesus Christ, superimposed over a 1968 Automobile, which is his creation. At the upper right was the number “7,” signifying the number of days it took him to drive his first model around the block.’

‘Didn’t I read that some of your spiritual activities are carried on in the home?’ I said.

‘Oh, definitely,’ Jim answered. ‘There’s our altar over there. All church members are required to have one in their homes; and the more affluent you are, the more elaborate altar you have. Ours cost \$100,000. That mobile over the neon-framed photo of Henry Ford consists of a piece of crank case, axle, exhaust pipe, steering wheel, spark plugs, windshield wiper and other components dipped in gold and studded with precious stones. Henry Moore did the large sculpture. It’s called Never Kick the Tires With Your Shoes

Off.'

'It's not time yet,' Gioconda added, 'but at every hour on the hour the entire wall behind the altarpiece lights up with "See the USA in Your Chevrolet."' It's a Dali. The icons were made by Picasso out of hub caps, and the triptych was done locally. It has a facsimile of our drivers' license on either side, with a baby photo of Henry Ford on a rug in the middle.'

'Do you consider yourself Protestants?' I asked my hosts.

'Actually, we have borrowed from all the major religions,' Jim said. 'We hold services on Saturday and we celebrate Christmas, for example. We also . . .'

'But, darling, don't forget to mention that our Christmas is not December 25. It's Henry Ford's birthday.'

'Oh, yes,' Jim said. 'And I suppose that your Easter would more nearly correspond to the week-long festival that we have when the new models are announced.'

'Jim left out the most important part,' Gioconda said. 'Our theology says that our lives will end with Gloomday, when 5,000,000 of the faithful will be called to that Great Highway in the Sky. The chosen ones will be called numerically by their car registration number, and they will then drive like mad to Heaven. Then . . .'

'Hand signals will be dispensed with entirely,' Jim cut in.

'And upon reaching the Pearly Gates — which look like the entrance to the General Motors plant — the chosen ones will find a twelve-lane superhighway with no stop signs, billboards or highway patrolmen. Gasoline and oil are free and there is an unlimited speed limit,' Gioconda said.

'Best of all,' Jim said, 'there's a generous trade-in allowance on a new car every six months.'

'How do you get from your grave to the car?' I asked.

'Oh, that's no problem,' Gioconda said. 'We are all buried in cars. Then, on Gloomday, we are ready to take whichever road Providence designates for us.'

'We also feel that you have a better chance if you go in an expensive model,' Jim said.

'Doesn't that encourage costly funerals?' I said. 'Some families may not be able to afford an expensive car.'

'I guess so,' Jim said. 'But that's what we believe. For example, suppose that a wife and seven kids have to bury the breadwinner. Whereas she normally might splurge on a new Rambler or a Volkswagen, we encourage her to go whole-hog with a Cadillac or a Rolls-Royce. It's good for the economy and it just improves her husband's chances on Gloomday that much more.'

'You don't mean to tell me that the selections are rigged,' I said, 'that the Deity would nominate someone solely because he was buried in an expensive car?'

'Oh, good heaven's to Chrysler, no!' Gioconda said. 'It's all fair and square.'

'Just like the sweepstakes contest at your local gas station,' Jim said.

'What happens if you don't go to Heaven? Or shouldn't I ask?' I said.

'Well, you automatically go to Hell,' Jim said, matter of factly, 'where you have to drive last year's car on crowded, two-lane highways.'

'And you're constantly pestered by motorcycle cops, red lights, traffic courts, parking tickets, drunk drivers and detours,' Gioconda said.

The Bradleys were unable to explain the complications that may develop in Heaven when five million motorists, with unlimited gas and oil, speed around and hog the highways; but I decided not to press the point. I have found that religious fanatics invariably change the subject when you pinpoint inconsistencies or loopholes in their faith. They much prefer to dwell on the inadequacies of opposing theologies, thereby diverting attention from their own shortcomings.

As we talked, I found out that the church architecture has remained stable over the years, although some of the more progressive congregations do encourage buildings that are architecturally akin to the modern nonchurch service station. The gas pumps in front of the church serve both a symbolic as well as functional purpose, which explains why most of them are surrounded by elaborate floral offerings. Members, of course, get all of their gas and oil at wholesale prices.

Since most religious sects are plagued with factionalism, you might expect that the Church of the United Motorists has its share of divisionists. It has. These factions are generally referred to as the Orthodox and Reform groups, and their positions are irreconcilable.

I was informed that most of this dissension centers around their Bible, which has always been the traffic regulations of the fifty states. The Reform members readily assimilate the updating of any traffic changes, but the Orthodox groups refuse to accept any regulations issued after 1934.

Another bone of contention, as you might suspect, is Detroit, site of the Holy See. The Orthodox members abhor the idea of moving the See out of Michigan. The Reform groups, on the other hand, feel that it should be in Dallas, Kansas City, St. Louis, Oklahoma City, Fort Worth, or a city where the major automobile manufacturers have assembly plants or regional offices.

As with the Armed Forces, the two groups have only been able to agree on one thing: the church hymnal. Issued periodically in Detroit, the song books contain music taken from most Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services. Some of the more popular hymns are: When the Rolls Is Called Up Yonder; Ride On, Ride On in Mercury; Savior, Like a Studebaker Lead Us; A Mighty Fortress Is Our Ford; What a Friend We Have in Chrysler; O, Master, Let Me Win the

Drag-Race; He Is Risen Today in a Chevrolet; Come, Thou, Almighty Dodge; etc.

As with most denominations, the Motorists are always desperate for money, and they use a variety of means to come by it: bingo, turkey shoots, roulette wheels, cake-walks, and benefits — usually, a performance of Virgil Thomson's ballet, Filling Station.

During the Offertory (often to the music of Rachmaninoff's *Vsyō ótnyal ðō minyá* [*God Took from Me Mine All*]), ushers pass among the congregation collecting the donations in large hub caps. And church members must tithe the one-tenth of what they spend on gas and oil.

Since United Motorist pastors (who are often service station attendants or garage mechanics) serve without remuneration, most of the collections are used for the upkeep of the church and for the mission programs abroad. They have always regarded the underdeveloped countries of the world as heathen, and missionaries by the sampan-full are sent by Detroit to subdue the unsuspecting natives. I'm reminded of a parish that was recently set up in Uganda; but the pastor is having a difficult time attracting converts, since the simple unassuming savages of that region had never before seen an American car.

'Are members of your church very strict?' I asked.

'Well, we don't smoke, drink, dance, watch television, eat watermelon, or play the guitar,' Jim said.

'I wish that we could invite you to Communion next Saturday,' Gioconda said, 'but I see that you are driving an old-model car. It's really a lovely service. Each member goes to the altar, where the pastor hands out pink wine (representing high-octane gasoline) in little glasses that look like miniature carburetors. Before you drink, you spit over the pastor's right shoulder; then he hands you a small black wafer that tastes like tire rubber.'

'By the way, how do you get converts?' I said.

'You have to be sponsored by someone who is a member,' Jim answered. 'After a panel gives you a quiz on traffic regulations, they check to see if your drivers' license is current, then you can become a member.'

'The pastor always concludes his service with an invitation for those to join who are planning to trade their car in for a new model,' Gioconda added. 'Then they are baptized.'

'The baptistry is located behind the pulpit,' Jim said. 'It's a simulated car-wash with murals on the walls depicting the evolution of the Automobile. The converts kneel at the altar and the pastor drops pink wine in each nostril with a nose dropper. Then the water is turned on and the pastor leads them, fully clothed, through the spray.'

The Bradleys then described a typical church in minute detail. Inside, parishioners sit in bucket seats. It is optional whether or not they fasten their seat belts. The altar is a cut-away of an auto, with the pastor sitting in one half on one side of the stage; the assistant pastor sits on the other half. The motor runs during the entire service, emitting a faint incense that resembles exhaust fumes.

In front of each pew is a simulated floor board of a car, where members of the church can kneel for prayers, all the while fingering their key chains. Incidentally, upon entering the church, each member dips his fingers in a vase of battery water and then makes the sign of the Texaco Star on his forehead.

'Your weddings must be quite unique?' I said. 'Actually, they are very simple,' Gioconda said. 'We get through the service in short order so that the couple can get on the road as quickly as possible. The couple, wearing street clothes, drive up to the church, followed by the wedding attendants in separate cars. The bride does wear a chignon made out of car insulation materials and old pieces of seat upholstery, signifying their association with the past. The pastor comes

out and leans on the door on the husband's side, asks if they promise to take good care of the car, and then he checks the air in their tires. He hands them a road map, she tosses out the chignon to some member of the wedding party, symbolizing their break with the past, and they drive off in eternal bliss.'

'Are your funerals also simple?'

'Usually,' Jim said. 'The body is brought to the church in a car by a car-wrecker and placed on the grease rack. The body is embalmed and the car is drained of gas, oil, water, etc. The pastor gives his blessing to the funeral car by breaking a vase full of lube oil across the radiator, then it is towed to the cemetery.'

'The graveside rites are also short,' Gioconda said. 'The pastor reads a few passages from the Gulf Tour Guide, then reaches into the glove compartment for some object to present to the next of kin. As the car is lowered into the grave, twelve cars backfire. Then, before the grave is closed, the pastor tosses in a spare tire. Just in case.'

'Everything about your church is so simple and functional,' I said. 'No doubt that explains why you are attracting so many new members. Do you have any plans to merge with any of the other denominations?'

'No, that is out of the question,' Jim said. 'I think that it would be virtually impossible to reconcile the theological dogma of Henry Ford, Jesus Christ and the other great prophets.'

'And besides,' Gioconda added, 'I don't think that Jesus even had a valid driver's license.'

His life will be sacrificed
to a mindless dragon:
payment for ten acres
of sterile rock, sand and dust.
The state department
will inform his mother by registered mail
and she will
dismiss the Chinese gardner.

‘BOOK REVIEW’—BY JAMES BROOKS

(Mohacs, Podiebrady. POEMS FOR THE MOMENT. The Dark Horse Press, Iowa City. Copies not available.)

GENERALLY BELIEVED TO BE THE greatest living Czechoslovakian poet, Mohacs' work must largely remain unevaluated due to the unique stipulations which the poet makes upon his publishers:

Immediately upon being printed, each page is immersed in a suspension of pure sodium in kerosene. This highly-volatile element explodes and burns at room temperature and can only be kept from doing so by suspending it in the kerosene. After the page has absorbed the sodium particles, it is placed in a freezer. The poems are read by taking the pages from the freezer one at a time and placing them in a specially-furnished flat metal dish, holding each corner down with a small block of incense. The reader has time to read each page through once before it reaches room temperature, the kerosene evaporates, and the paper burns, igniting the incense.

Mohacs describes his reasons for doing this as 'total acceptance of the throw-away society and to transform poetry from the realm of the plastic arts into the performing arts.'

Reading one of his poems does evoke somewhat of the transitory experience of listening to music; and, knowing that it cannot be read again, causes the reader to pay closer attention—oftentimes leaving a refrain or striking line continuing to circulate in the head. I personally believe that the use of the incense tends to cheapen the experience to the level of a hocus-pocus invocation of muses; and the author does say, in his introduction, if I remember, that this is optional.

Originally designed to be the biggest best seller in the poetry market, the publisher planned to have the book available in the frozen foods departments of finer stores everywhere, but ran into difficulties from transporters who would not take the risk of carrying incendiary cargo. Sending copies through the mails was definitely out.

Thus, the problems of distribution caused the book's delay and ultimately transformed Mohacs' poetry from a transitory experience to a clinker.

During a recent power failure, a fire of undetermined origin razed the third floor of the Strand Theatre building in Iowa City, destroying not only Mohacs' apartment, but the home freezer where he kept the entire edition of *POEMS FOR THE MOMENT*.

The theatre audience and the apartment tenants were safely evacuated. I talked to Mohacs, wrapped in a Red Cross blanket in the sub-freezing weather as we watched the fire. He seemed as cheerful as a serious poet can be while watching the entire edition of his first book and the just-completed manuscript of his second book burn. When I asked what he planned for the future, he glanced at the crowd before fixing his stare on the flames around the marquee. 'Maybe I make a movie,' he said.

A NUGACIOUS PROPOSAL*

by John Marble

THE ETHOLOGISTS, A RELATIVELY NEW variety of scientists who bear a notable similarity to the fellows we used to call naturalists, have lately launched a broad assault on the social secrets of the animal world. Their intensive studies of animal societies have yielded many provocative insights into the biology of behavior. We are advised, for instance, that the prairie-dog town is a social organization closely resembling that of modern man. A moment's reflection over this disclosure is likely to evoke a sharply-revised opinion of the prairie dog, or, perhaps, modern man.

The revelations of the ethologists have generated several side effects, not the least of which has been a timely boost for the book-publishing industry. A more intriguing derivative has been the formulation of a revolutionary theory of human behavior. This new concept propounds that man, like many of his relatives on the lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder, is primarily motivated by the need to possess and defend a territory.

This theory will doubtless exert a constructive influence on our affairs and institutions; but its peripheral implications have heretofore escaped appropriate scrutiny. What is to become of our historians, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, et al., who have apparently got off on the wrong foot in their preoccupation with the old misconceptions about the primacy of man's hunger, survival, and sex drives? Further, a possible moral obligation to reimburse our benefactors within the wild kingdom, though less evident than the benefits we have derived from observation of their instructive affairs, deserves consideration. Might we repay our debt of gratitude by

helping our animal friends, perhaps through some sort of program of cultural feedback, to develop more satisfactory social arrangements for themselves? These are the concerns of this inquiry.

Without any thought of denigrating the accomplishments of those less favored by the evolutionary process, I shall attempt to demonstrate that the animal world has developed certain compulsive obsessions which preclude an optimum social adjustment. The ethologists have provided us with a flood of material to facilitate this demonstration, and we can proceed with an examination of several representative social arrangements in nature's realm.

The Bik deer of central Africa are proud creatures of magnificent appearance, much admired by all who observe them. The males of the species can be separated into two distinct vocational categories. The big brawny fellows are mostly real-estate promoters, while their leaner brethren tend more to poetry and art. Most of the year their occupations are only of academic interest, however, because they are all avid golfers who never let business or art interfere with sport in good weather.

** After reading a two-part adaptation of Robert Ardrey's THE TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVE, in Life Magazine.*

During the miserable central African winters, when incessant rains turn the fairways into huge lakes, golf is out. What to do? The big real-estate operators have invented a kind of king-of-the-mountain game, which they play on the little islands formed by the elevated greens of their golf courses. A husky fellow will claim a green and endeavor to defend it against all comers. This game continues until the advent of spring, when the fairways dry out.

Meanwhile, the poets and artists eschew these contests on the greens, known as arena behavior, and lurk about in the wooded rough where they have their own way with the females of the community. The females, knowing the

defenders always win the king-of-the-mountain contests and no one ever gets hurt, quite properly regard the fighting as a ridiculous sham. They prefer the company of the esthetes.

Since the Bik never contest their natural enemies (lions, leopards, cheetahs, etc.) but rely on speedy flight, their social pattern has obvious survival values. The progeny of the species always derive from the lighter faster more intelligent males.

For all its virtues, the arrangement of the Bik deer is not devoid of minor defects. The real-estate operators sometimes evince an uneasy frustrated sense of insecurity, and the artists will occasionally complain of a certain lack of dignity in their hibernal role. Also, there are some unresolved identity problems.

The greatest drawback of the system, however, is that the ethologists have never been able to deduce any important lessons for mankind from it. Since arena behavior represents an example of how evolution has gone further with animals than with man, we can only lament that homo sapiens is not, has never been, and can never be an arena species.

One aspect of the Bik deers' king-of-the-mountain game merits special attention, because it reflects a basic rule of life in the wild. The defender who first claims a green almost always wins the contests with his challengers. The game is fixed.

This fundamental natural law states that the defender of a territory, his psychological and physical resources amplified by the fact of prior possession, will acquire himself much better against challengers from his own species than you might expect. It can be illustrated by a simple experiment.

The next time you are in your local pet shop, pick up a hundred aquariums of convenient size and an equal number of the small tropical fish known as platys. Next, put some water and a platy in each tank. Now, add some duckweed to

half the aquariums and call the platys therein defenders.

After waiting a few weeks for the fish to settle down in their new homes, you are ready for the experiment. Take each platy who has no duckweed out of his tank, call him a challenger or intruder, and pop him into an aquarium with a defender. You will see fifty pretty good fights to establish who is going to be the boss of each tank.

It will probably come as no great surprise that the intruder, if he is the smaller of the two adversaries, will lose four times as often as the defender. However, the intruder will lose three times as often even when he is the larger of the two. To put it another way, of the defenders who are smaller than the intruders, half will remain the permanent boss. The foregoing observations prove conclusively that, out of four fights between a larger intruder and smaller defender, the intruder will lose either two or three times according to the manner in which you express your observations. The specific number of victories and defeats is not so important as the principle.

Let us turn our attention to a form of animal organization which, because of its simplicity and innate morality, is more congenial to mankind than the arrangement of the Bik deer. The Riddler bird of southern Europe provides a good illustration.

The Riddlers are brave, loyal, and industrious. They have sufficient perception never to attack their own mates, or anyone else for that matter. In the old days, when they felt like establishing a family, a male and female would get together and form a 'pair bond.' The pair bond is the most prevalent and primitive natural arrangement. It is a central fact in the lives of 99 per cent of the world's bird species and man.

Having formed a pair bond, the couple would stake out a little homestead which they called a pair territory, raise a family, and pursue a rather monotonous routine of daily

living which we need not go into here.

Until approximately a million years ago, this is about all there was to the Riddler story. They managed to carry on from day to day, but were continually beset by uneasy feelings of anxiety, ennui, and anonymity. There was a substantial danger that the species would expire from endemic boredom.

One day, however, two Riddler families got into a frightful quarrel over the exact location of a boundary line which separated their adjacent homesteads. Though the contention never came to fists, some rather harsh language and a number of heated threats were exchanged before the parties withdrew.

Strangely, the participants came away from this fortuitous altercation with pleasant sensations of security, stimulation, and identity. This is precisely the type of incident evolution will seize upon to forward its own ends. Soon the word had got about and all the Riddlers were locating their homes in such exasperating proximity that border disputes were inevitable. Life became a gay round of incessant controversy, with a concomitant improvement in the psychological welfare of the species.

The Riddlers were quite pleased with this noyau, or society of inward aggression, but through trial and error they stumbled upon several improvements.

One of these refinements was displacement activity. The Riddlers have a wide reputation for personal courage which they are naturally loath to test. Until they discovered the palladium of displacement activity, there was a constant danger that their interminable arguments would degenerate into physical combat, with the attendant possibility of damage to their persons and pride.

This risk has been eliminated by their practice of substituting a violent temper tantrum, personal-grooming activities, or an attack on an inanimate object for the perils

of an imminent fight. When you see a Riddler furiously attacking a tree, for example, be assured he doesn't imagine himself a woodpecker or beaver. He is just letting off a little steam, thereby avoiding the chance of a physical contest with his neighbor.

We cannot leave the Riddlers without a word about their sex habits. For the greater part of the annual calendar, their sex lives are so circumspect as to be completely devoid of interest. To tell the truth, they are perfectly abstemious and the ethologists who are keeping an eye on them find frequent occasion to break the monotony with an erotic book or a stimulating foreign movie.

Along about March of each year, however, this probity evaporates in a sexual carnival which features some rather questionable behavior. All marriage vows are suspended, everyone joins the swinging set, and there is a shocking incidence of wife-swapping. A small reform group has been trying to rectify these practices for many years, but without much luck. By the middle of May, everyone is pretty well played out and decorous behavior once again becomes the order of the day until the following year.

While granting the clever Riddlers high marks for ingenuity in social innovation, we can hardly credit them with perfection. Their noyau, with its inward antagonism and emotional mayhem, is a vulnerable sort of place. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to understand why natural selection has not, in a million years, seen fit to eliminate it altogether.

Let us leave the Riddler birds to their unresolved problems and travel to South America for a look at the Mango monkeys.

In the dim dark regions of the distant past, all Mango monkeys were nocturnal creatures. There was widespread dissatisfaction with the prevailing arrangement, however, and it was decided that each of the ten species then extant should hold a constitutional convention to invent new and

more sophisticated social practices. Two of the species, anticipating that ethologists would one day mount a grand invasion of the sanctity of the animal kingdom, decided to preserve their privacy by remaining nocturnal. Little is known of these species, and how they are getting along.

The other species, containing many distinguished and enlightened individuals, took a different tack. They made a comprehensive study of all existing social arrangements, including those of the Bik deer and Riddler birds. After an analysis of the virtues and defects of each system, followed by a considerable period of creative thinking and debate, they devised a revolutionary new institution — the biological nation.

This institution required that the Mangos choose up teams, organized on an extended family basis and known as cooperating groups, each of which was allotted a territory. There was to be cooperation within the groups, but not between them. Indeed, the essence of the arrangement was that the teams would spend a certain amount of time menacing each other and threatening to intrude upon one another's territory, thereby preserving internal solidarity.

All this was recorded in a constitution, a principal provision of which was a strongly-worded guarantee of team property rights. The privileges and duties of individuals and groups were carefully delineated in a code of laws, the only capital offense being monkeycide. The first amendment to the constitution stipulated equality between the sexes, so that a female could become a team leader. A second amendment provided that the Mangos would become diurnal so that mankind might study the new system and learn what he could from it. There were no acceptable new ideas in the matter of sex practices, and it was decided to continue them on the old seasonal basis (February 15 to the end of March).

Critics contend the Mangos' biological nation is not much of an improvement over the old noyau of the Riddler birds.

They claim it is simply a shift from hostility between nuclear family units to antagonism between extended family groups. The point is, though, that the Mango monkeys seem to be pretty well satisfied with the arrangement. They haven't changed it in ages.

Diverse as the foregoing illustrations of animal behavior may seem in many particulars, several common denominators are perceptible. Despite their happy carefree appearances, the lower animals have apparently fallen victim to an unhealthy preoccupation with the possession and defense of real estate. This obsession is clearly revealed in the passionate attachments of the Bik deer to their putting greens, the Riddler birds to their pair territories, and the Mango monkeys to the team areas of their biological nations. Perhaps this peculiar aberration explains why, though they have developed ritualized aggression into a fine art, they seldom engage in the salubrious bloodletting catharsis of legitimate warfare. But why they uniformly maintain such an exceptionally narrow perspective on sex remains an unanswered question.

Surely the inhabitants of the wild kingdom could improve their lot dramatically by the simple expedient of adopting human society's most successful institutions — unabated sex and authentic warfare. The benefits of a year-around sex program need no exposition for the human audience, but perhaps a few words in defense of the human concept of warfare are in order.

How war got its start is not exactly known. There are many theories, but no explanation less than hundreds of thousands of years old can provide a significant answer. Since we have only about five thousand years of recorded history, no such answer is available. But war must have some value to humanity; why, otherwise, would evolution have tolerated so much of it?

One wonders why animals, with all their clever social arrangements, have been incapable, either through intuition or instruction, of absorbing institutional lessons so obvious to man. The sad truth is that they are not strong on intuition, and no serious instructional program has ever been attempted. Fortunately, the latter oversight is easily rectified. Sharing our own great cultural innovations with our animal friends would amply repay our debt of gratitude and readily satisfy the dictates of social justice.

If such a program of cultural feedback is to be set forward, the requisite missionaries are immediately available. They are our old friends the historians, psychologists, et al, who, with the advent of the ethologists and their territorial imperative, have found themselves in possession of a set of obsolete dogmas and under threat of imminent unemployment. The consummate skill with which they have propagated the old myths about hunger and survival drives qualifies them perfectly for this new calling.

The skeptical reader, victim of a natural human conceit, may question the feasibility of such an educational plan. The story of a recent incident will, I believe, serve to dispel these doubts.

In the late summer of 1966, Robert Arduous, the noted playwright and ethological dilettante, travelled to South America for a look at the Mango monkeys. An August morning found him wandering along a narrow trail deep in the heart of a dense tropical rain-forest. Occasional rays of sunlight filtered through the leafy canopy high above him. Diffusing in the mists which floated gently above the matted jungle floor, they lighted the tangled vegetation in muted shades of green and brown. Colorful tropical birds, flashing to and fro on their countless morning errands, shattered the great soft silence of the jungle with their intermittent conversation.

Abruptly, the trail Arduous was following opened into a small clearing. Simultaneously with Arduous' arrival at this opening, an elderly Mango monkey who had been out of town on a business trip for a few days entered it from the opposite side.

Arduous recognized the monkey as the kindly sagacious leader of a small team of the species he had been observing for some weeks. It immediately occurred to him that this chance encounter offered a superb opportunity for a pioneering experiment in cultural feedback.

The two travellers met in the midst of the clearing and, after a brief exchange of pleasantries, Arduous maneuvered the conversation in the desired direction with a few complimentary remarks about the Mangos' ingenious social schemes. It was an easy transition from these remarks to his intended objective.

'Incidentally, I've been wondering why, considering your acknowledged sophistication, you fellows have never employed the amity formula to refine the design of your remarkable community?'

'The amity formula?' the monkey replied. 'I'm afraid we're not on to that yet. You see, we have a bit of a communications problem out here. Consequently, we aren't always au courant with recent developments in the social sciences. Needless to say, we're always eager to learn of the latest advances, particularly if they offer the prospect of increased amity.'

Arduous leapt to this invitation with the speed of a cheetah downing a laggard Bik deer.

'Amity, as you no doubt are aware, is a substance which, if it exists in nature, exists in quantities insufficient to be useful. Mathematically, amity can be expressed as the sum of two forces. These forces are the intraspecific enmity which menaces a given group, and the extraspecific hazards which are arrayed against it. Symbolically, the formula may be

stated as follows: $A=E+h$. Increase enmity (E) and/or hazards (h), and your group will have more amity (A). The formula is beautiful in its simplicity, and its implications are as obvious as they are monumental.'

The monkey seemed lost in thought as he bowed his head to ponder the formula. Arduous wondered, for a moment, if the equation, so simple a child could grasp it, might be beyond the capacities of the humble simian. His hope was quickly repaired with the recollection that the athlete, that respectable human aggressor, absorbs the rules and regulations of his sport without, in many cases, the benefit of a registerable I.Q. With mental faculties which could hardly be less than those of the athlete, it seemed likely the monkey would quickly perceive the import of the equation.

After another moment of reflection, the wise old leader raised his head to speak. 'I'm afraid I was in error when I professed ignorance of your amity formula. We know it by another name.

'Some years ago, one of our bright young scholars presented a paper on this formula, which he called the enmity-hazard complex, at one of our regular council meetings. It was his contention, based on this equation, that we might alter some of our intergroup relationships to promote amity.

'The proposal was given very serious consideration; but the final decision was, I'm sorry to say, adverse. The majority concluded that if there is precious little amity in nature there must, according to the equation, be even smaller quantities of enmity and hazards. Under this circumstance, there was general agreement that it would be prudent to leave well enough alone. Perhaps our mathematical precepts are a little different from yours.'

Arduous was somewhat taken aback by this blatant sophistry, and elected not to press the matter. After some additional small talk, the protagonists bid each other

courteous adieux and proceeded on their separate ways.

The foregoing incident, disappointing as it seemed to Arduous, portends a definite hope for the future. We know the lines of communication are open. What shall we do? It is an open question, probably unanswerable. Perhaps it would be premature to argue that the proposed program of cultural feedback is imperative, but it is certainly something to think about.

THE GREAT AUTOMATED CULTURE CRISIS

by N. H. Taylor

ORDINARILY A MAN OF CONSPICUOUS prudence, Professor Bottlebroke occasionally yielded to an impulse to stray from the themes officially appropriate to his class lectures in English Literature. So subtle were these fractures of his habitually-meticulous confinement to the subject matter of the course that one had to be especially alert to realize that he was off on a detour. The result was that there were a good many complaints from the frailer students about Dr. Bottlebroke's hypnotically-relentless focus on his academic specialty. One got the impression that these students felt suffocated or cheated by such singlemindedness, as if it were alien to the business of studying. In private talks with the professor, I had learned that he was profoundly pleased with his reputation as the faculty dullard, for it gave him a comfortable feeling of isolation, which was important to his cerebral way of life.

Not too long ago, however, this agreeable freedom from the adulation that burdened some of his more sparkling colleagues was almost shattered by one of those aforementioned excursions of his beyond the bounds of Eng. Lit. proper. In my collection of Bottlebroke letters is one explaining this affair:

Dear Taylor —

I am rather glad you have been away in England on your special studies the past few weeks, for there has been a somewhat ridiculous and embarrassing furor here on campus for which, it appears, I am to blame. Had I any faith in what is sometimes called the higher justice, I would claim complete innocence, but I have lived in the world long enough to know that its appetite for scandal must be thoroughly served before any interest can develop in a more sober treatment of the events always preliminarily purveyed as alarming news. The fundamental law of compensation, contradiction, or bipolarity is in evidence here: first we are hungry for excitation and then, when it becomes a crashing bore, we yearn for philosophical retreat into weighing all sides.

The enclosed clipping from the student newspaper will give you

in a nutshell the cause of the uproar hereabouts:

INSTANT EVERYTHING ART

It has been reported, by a source usually considered reliable, that a research and development team is at work in a closely-guarded laboratory on campus perfecting what is described as a revolutionary advance in film entertainment. The r/d team, composed of equal numbers of motion-picture specialists and electronics experts, is said to have reached the final prove-out stages in tests of computer-reproducer device which at the press of a button automatically creates film productions complete with plot, characters, music, sound effects, odors, and touch and taste sensations. The machine allegedly offers an inexhaustible variety of combinations of all elements in its creations.

Our informant, who asked that his name be withheld, declared that the miracle machine is on the threshold of being demonstrated before Hollywood bigwigs who have underwritten the project. When our reporter inquired if this instant-everything art would become the foundation of a new industry, he was told that it was no more than the logical extension of historical trends already established. The progress in motion pictures, he pointed out, was from simple silents to the more complex talkies and smellies. The addition of tasties and feelies to the art of the film is nothing other than the fulfilling of an indicated and irresistible path of development, our informant concluded.

This bland announcement, which appeared a month ago, was apparently constructed out of a passing remark of mine in class regarding the esthetic gulf between old-fashioned reading of worthy books and modern machine-output of mass culture. There is no scientific discipline I know of by which one could sort out the precise reasons for the pandemonium generated by the little instant-art story in our student daily. No doubt we can consider the hypertense

posture of contemporary Western man a contributing factor: his irritation threshold seems to move ever lower with the advance of technology, rendering him a quicker victim of the alienation neuroses. But this is an unprovable generalization. I would rather cite a more tangible circumstance—the presence in my class of young Geoffrey Loudermouth, editor of the campus newspaper. Since you know him you will have little difficulty, I feel sure, in agreeing with me that this young man has discharged his duties as the university's chief student journalist with a more than ordinary gift for whimsy. He has claimed the privilege of the press throughout the recent contretemps, refusing to divulge the source of the news item in question; lacking positive proof to the contrary, we must entertain the assumption that he was the sole author of the piece which so extravagantly enlarged upon my cursory observation.

You probably also know that young Geoffrey's father is a feature writer for one of the local metropolitan dailies. That there may be a somewhat morbid rivalry between them is supported by the way in which Loudermouth senior, spotting his son's piece in the *Campus Crier*, instituted a vigorous inquiry of his own.

Since his son remained adamantly evasive, the elder Loudermouth bombarded the university with requests for corroborative evidence concerning the alleged secret project. The Public Relations office referred him to the Engineering School, which referred him to Theater Arts, which suggested he contact the Chancellor's office. The Chancellor flatly denied that there was any such activity on the campus and began an investigation on his own behalf. Loudermouth junior was called in and insisted that unassailable precedent automatically defended his silence. The talk that filtered out of the Chancellor's office was that when Geoffrey was advised that he faced suspension, if not expulsion, unless he changed his stand, the young man delivered the Chancellor a

lecture on civil rights and justice, declaring that since his newspaper had shouldered the responsibility of reporting the automated culture machine to be a reality, it was now up to the university administration, if it was so inclined, to disprove the allegation. The Chancellor attempted to win Loudermouth over by pointing out that the university community of the land was in hot water enough already from accusations of collaborating spinelessly with the Establishment on unsavory undertakings inimical to the dignity of man. Rumor has it that Geoffrey remained unmoved by this argument, and even insinuated that he regarded the Chancellor's appeal as sheer casuistry.

Meanwhile, the frustrated elder Loudermouth worked out his pique by caustically writing up the affair for his paper, and then the storm broke. So many calls came to the Chancellor's office that he had to instruct his secretary to tell all petitioners that he was out of town on business. Actually, he was moving about the campus consulting with various subordinates in the hope of putting together a public statement that would not be denounced as meaningless.

'Among those off campus called upon to issue a statement was the president of the Alliance of Motion Picture Producers. He categorically denied that the industry was financing any such research at the university or elsewhere. Since the outcry was only in its first stage of acceleration, his words were as a garden hose against a prairie fire.

The general secretary of the Hollywood Guilds and Unions Association released a cautious statement asserting that though, in the light of past experience, management could be capable of such a move, the guilds and unions at this moment did not believe so dangerous a threat to the jobs of their members was anywhere near the perfected point.

The leading West Coast underground weekly picked up the story and headlined it: SHITSVILLE TOPS ITSELF. I understand this headline is now a collector's item and that it

has provoked agitation among students for a rejuvenation of campus journalism to allow freedom of expression adequate to the contemporary scene and equal to the trenchancy of the underground press.

Without a doubt the most heated reaction came from the Congress for Decency in American Art, which sent its chairman from their headquarters in Washington to look into the matter personally. The chairman of the CDAA was met at the Los Angeles airport by members of the press who were handed a prepared statement:

“ We of the Congress for Decency are deeply alarmed by this new attack upon the already fast-crumbing fibre of American morality. The incorporation of the total spectrum of bodily sensations in the new machine we view as the latest Hollywood thrust toward unbridled obscenity which must be fought with every countermeasure at our command. It is easy to see that if motion pictures are to be made that enable audiences to experience all the tastes, odors and tactile sensations until now reserved for less public settings, the entire world will shortly be one raging and filthy bacchanal. We deplore this development and in the name of decency intend to stop it.”

The metropolitan dailies gave front page attention to the Congress of Decency's opinions and added editorials of their own extolling the courage of such defenders of the nation's morals. Student demonstrators on campus, while matching the fervor of the supporters of purity, were opposed to the instant-everything machine on different grounds. The students carried signs reading Down With Robotism, Up With Humanism; Out, Automation; Machine Sex: No Thanks; and so on.

The tumult expired after five days with an announcement from the Chancellor that the all-senses machine did not exist, at least on the campus over which he presided. The report of its development, he said, was an invention of

persons as yet unknown, possibly motivated by an experimental zeal aimed at testing public reaction to such spurious news. The Chancellor's press release ended with a somber claim that appropriate discipline would be imposed on the responsible parties if or when they were identified.

'As you can see, the Chancellor's statement was designed simply to restore the university's reputation as a citadel of the higher learning, governed solely by academic integrity, and resisting always any encroachments tending toward dehumanization through machinism or the Establishment's interest in profits. You will note he quite avoided any reference to the heart of the controversy. It would be supremely realistic for the rest of us, however, to assume that someone somewhere is working on just such a machine as young Loudermouth put together from my classroom comment, and that there is nothing any of us can do to stop it.

'Cordially, 'Bottlebroke.'

AT THE END

Ryah Tumarkin Goodman

At the end
Not even a thimble
Or a needle's sting
Will hold your anger
Or your despair.
How can you anger dust?
As well rape a rose,
Pummel a pear-scent,
War with the wind.

NISEI ACTRESS

A. Fredric Franklyn

JAPAN'S SHOCHIKU STUDIOS, THE OLDEST of the existing companies in the Industry there, have always been known especially for their films about women. They produce many haha monos (wife dramas or stories of self-sacrificing heroines). Many of these, especially the inadequately budgeted ones left in the hands of the young and less experienced directors, fall into the category of what are called onamida shodai eiga, or tears-please films. But even in their gendai-geki (modern dramas), more often than not the protagonist, in whom the story finds its central focus, will be a woman. Shiro Toyoda, who was a Shochiku director for many years before signing with the Toho Company's studios, acquired a reputation for his exceptionally refined sensitivity in developing and exploiting the major female characterizations in his shomin-geki films (a type of story which has raised the drama of the little people, the individuals of the lower classes, to the level of tragedy).

Shochiku has many top-ranking female stars today. Until recently, the most famous among these was Mariko Okada, who is at present a free-lance actress, but who, according to rumors may sign with Toho Studios. Shochiku's present top-ranking female star is Shima Iwashita. They have other, almost equally famous names, though, including Miyuki Kuwano, Chieko Baisho, and the rapidly rising Mariko Kaga. Of these, Kuwano-san is the most prominent.

Miyuki Kuwano, Shochiku's second-brightest star today, has, at the age of twenty-four, already made some half-hundred films, including the earlier ones in which she played supporting roles. Recently, she captured the Kinema Jimpo award for best supporting actress. The Kinema Jimpo

(Cinema Quarterly) is the oldest and best-known film magazine in Japan. Their annual poll, among the hundred-odd critics, poets, and scholars who make up its vote, is one of the two major prestige events of the Japanese motion picture industry each year. The other, the Tokyo Eiga Kisha Kyokai (Tokyo Motion Picture Newspaper-critics Association) awards, are voted by all the critics whose articles occupy the pages of the entertainment sections in the leading Tokyo dailies. Kuwano-san received her Kinema Jimpo for her role as the daughter in Shiro Toyoda's SWEET SWEAT (one of the more mature examples of their shomin-geki). Kuwano-san is also what may be called a nisei actress. That is, she is second generation cinematic stock. Her mother, a famous star in Japan, frequently played opposite Yuzo Kayama's father, also a top name in their industry. (Yuzo Kayama, whose most recent roles include leading parts in RED BEARD, JUDO SAGA, SWORD OF DOOM, and a purely commercial tour de force being canned for Japan's rock-and-roll set, STAND BY COLLEGIANS, is another instance of nisei talent in the new Japanese films and incidentally one of the country's best-known cinematic personalities, at present.)

Miyuki Kuwano was returning from São Paulo, Brazil. She was coming in on a Pan American flight, but Japan Airlines had arranged for us to greet and interview her in their own private lounge at the Los Angeles International Airport.

Those of us who awaited the plane's arrival included seventeen adults and four children. I had come out to the airport with Takeshi Watanabe, Toho's manager of their Toho La Brea Theatre, here in Los Angeles. Takeo Endo, the managing director for Shochiku Films of America, was already there. With him were Takashi and Lois Hirotsu, and Moto and Lily (Yuriko) Yokoyama, with their children, and Matao Wate. Also present were Mr. Hirotsu, owner of the

Kabuki Theatre in Los Angeles, who screen Shochiku's first-run releases, and Mr. Yokoyama, who schedules Daiei's initial releases in this city at the Kokusai Theatre. A local businessman and the president of Radio Little Tokyo, Mr. Wate has an hour-long broadcast every weekday morning, in which he frequently interviews Japanese celebrities.

Sumiko Tatematsu, of the Homecast Corporation of America, another interviewer and announcer well-known to Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, came with her own recording apparatus. Others with us were: Yamada-san, of Japan's Jiji Tsuchin (news bureau); Ted Morodomi, of Nichibei Mainichi (the New Japanese-American News); Haruo Muronaka, the editor of Kashu Mainichi (California Daily News), and his advertising manager, Junko Maruya, who was for many years a fan and an acquaintance of Miyuki Kuwano's mother.

The children, Jimmy Hirotsu, Jr., two, and Julia, Johnny, and Paul Yokoyama, eight, five, and two — with four teen-age fans — were impatiently awaiting the young star's arrival. Julia held a bouquet of long-stemmed roses, which looked almost the color of blood at certain moments in the light. Their deep red shaded almost to black, making a striking contrast to the bright maroon coat she wore.

In the bar, Tak Hirotsu, Moto Yokoyama, Takeshi Watanabe, Matao Wate, and I were talking about poetry, travel, and Brazil. São Paulo has the largest concentration of isei, nisei, sansei, and yonsei in South America. Kuwano-san, who had stopped over over night in Los Angeles last month, on her way from Japan to São Paulo, had planned on returning in time to spend three or four days here before getting back to work on the Shochiku lot in her own country. But she had become ill with severe blood-pressure changes, in South America, and her return had been delayed so that, again, she would be here only over night.

We lingered, in idle and comfortable conversation, even after the plane's arrival was announced. We knew it would take a little time for the passengers to proceed through the U.S. Custom's check point. And fifteen minutes later, when we went over to wait for our guest, we stood around for another half-hour before she secured a release for her luggage and came through the row of large glass doors. I had an excellent view through them and watched her where she stood in line during this interval. She is an exceptionally tall girl and she wore a pale gray-and-white woolen suit, edged in a pastel pink. She seemed entirely modern, in the Western sense, and did not show any of the fatigue her recent illness and the long flight must have occasioned.

Her voice is unusually soft; and when she finally came through we had to be quiet to hear her while she spoke with the children and accepted her flowers. We proceeded as a unit to the privacy of the lounge which Japan Airlines had arranged for us, the photographers halting the procession again at the staircase to take more photographs.

When we were gathered for the interview, Shochiku's Takeo Endo introduced Mr. Hirotsu who, in turn, introduced Toho's Watanabe-san. The latter handed her more flowers, producing them from a gold box and pinning on her suit the largest lavender orchid corsage I've ever seen. Flowers are not a superficial pleasure to the Japanese, who do not enjoy them only momentarily or in a surface way. This lovely girl undoubtedly receives them often, but the roses and the orchids must have meant much to her all the same. In more than one way, it was somehow not the same sort of experience as watching a Sophia Loren receiving a corsage.

Sumiko Tatematsu was the first in the group of press representatives to interview Kuwano-san, using her small, portable recorder and microphone. The two teen-age couples, fans who had made a special trip to the airport, were in the lounge with us, avidly listening. The brief conversation was

entirely in Japanese, as were most of those which followed. I watched Tatematsu-san and Kuwano-san without understanding any of their exchange. But my interest was held by the actress' thoughtful manner of replying to questions. She paused at some length occasionally before responding. The apparent consideration with which she shaped her answers gave them unmistakably an aura of intelligence. I began to be excited for the first time at the prospect of questioning her, even briefly, about directors like Nagisa Oshima, Shiro Toyoda, and Akira Kurosawa.

Her first leading roles were in three films directed by Oshima: *PIGEONS AND A BOY* (she was 18 years old); *THE CRUEL STORY OF YOUTH* (her most famous film, made about 1960); and immediately afterward, *GRAVEYARD OF THE SUN* (more freely, *SUNSET*). France has had at least as great an influence in the Japanese cinema as Italy's neorealism or the American commerciality and slick technical facility. Oshima, together with Kiju Yoshido (Mariko Kada's husband) and Masahiro Shinoda were the three great 'nouvelle vague' directors formerly with the Shochiku Company. All three were greatly influenced by such exemplars of the French cinema vérité, in feature films, as Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, Alain Resnais, Claude Chabrol, Agnes Varda, and Georges Franju, and by the documentary directors in the naturalist cinema, like Chris Marker and Jean Rouch. Whether or not their work is up to the standards of the French progression from Italy's neorealism, directors like Jacques Demy, Louis Malle, Jean-Pierre Mocky, and Jacques Baratier have had less influence in Japan even than those of a much earlier generation, such as René Clair, Marcel Carne, Jean Vigo, and Jean Renoir. The glib, entirely surface artists in the French cinema, such as Jean Cocteau in the old guard and Roger Vadim among the commercially slick tradesmen currently in vogue, have virtually no existence for the Japanese directors and their pupils and assistants.

Miyuki Kuwano's recent role in Akira Kurosawa's commercially successful but artistically insignificant *AKAI HIGE* (RED BEARD) portrays a type of girl commonplace in such *jidai-geki* films (period dramas), and equally scarce in modern dramas. It is a *haha mono* with a special kind of heroine which the Japanese call *ninju*. A *ninju* is one who obeys her man blindly, following him in whatever fortune is to be his, with no exceptions or even desires of her own. The term *ninju* is synonymous with unquestioning obedience. Her particular segment in Kurosawa's *onamida shodai* epic required exactly a certain physical type, which was the director's reason for putting Toho to the expense of borrowing her from Shochiku. Her presence, which reflects the type even more strongly in person, is exceptionally attractive. One senses that many of her mannerisms are studied, yet the appearance is neither artificial nor offensive. The impression is that there is a sincere and intelligent desire to please behind the exceptional grace of her movements and facial expressions.

Next to question the actress were Haruo Muronaka and Junko Maruya and, after them, Ted Morodomi. He interpreted for me, too, when I sat down finally with Kuwano-san. My first question was about her mother.

'I can't really tell you anything,' she said. 'She died when I was four, and I have no clear memories. I'm sorry.'

I asked her about her role in *RED BEARD*. 'When I first learned that Mr. Kurosawa wanted me for this part, I couldn't believe it,' she smiled. 'He is a genius. Every actress wants to work for him. I thought I must look at the script, to see if there was any chance at all that I was equal to the part. Because it was such a great opportunity. But I had many doubts about my ability to please him. His standards are so high!'

I suggested she tell me something about the differences she may have experienced between Kurosawa and Shiro

Toyoda, in working for two so-dissimilar directors of such magnitude. She misunderstood me slightly in the translation, and answered instead concerning the difference between the roles she played in Toyoda's SWEET SWEAT and Kurosawa's RED BEARD. She liked both characters, she explained, although:

I have a preference for the type of girl I portrayed in SWEET SWEAT. She is so typical of a certain type of girl in Japan today. And I feel my style and appearance have qualities which make it especially easy for me to exploit her character.'

But she mourned the disappearance of the other girl's type, the ninju, on the Japanese scene and felt considerably rewarded by the opportunity to work with the character:

'She is very different from the type I usually play, and the differences represented a challenge. I think also it is a pity that the way of life which made her peculiar charm possible is passing in my country today. I think Mr. Kurosawa wished particularly to examine her nature and re-evaluate its qualities for the Japanese people.'

I asked her also if she had any preference between jidai- (period) and gendai- (modern) geki films.

'It is not the type of film, but the particular role which primarily interests me,' she explained. 'My preference, as I mentioned, is portraying this modern girl. But when a part becomes available which represents an opportunity like the one Mr. Kurosawa offered me, I would always examine the script to see if I felt I could possibly do it justice. I almost refused the role of Onaka, but I realized I must take the chance and hope that, with very hard work, I could do the part justice.'

We spoke a little longer, but I was aware that, the freshness of her appearance notwithstanding, Miyuki-san must be feeling the strain of her long flight and recent illness. By way of concluding, I asked her if there was any

single thing which, as an actress, she felt she has learned from these directors and which she particularly valued.

Kuwano-san took her time answering, pausing almost an entire minute.

‘You know,’ she said, ‘there is one thing I’ve noticed from the time I began acting, and before I worked for Mr. Toyoda and Mr. Kurosawa I had always wondered about it. Most of the faces on the screen, even the best known ones, seem to rise so abruptly from obscurity and then, just as rapidly, to disappear back into anonymity. Not only the supporting players, but even most of the greatest stars have such brief careers. But there are certain exceptions to this. These are the ones who are not transient but enduring. Something about them, about their work or their attitudes, keeps them in the front of their profession year after year. The recognition their work receives persists as long as they want to work. These are the ones I had wondered about: What is it — what quality, if there is any single one it can be attributed to — has made them different in their solidity from all others in our profession? I think I have learned this now. And it was the opportunity of working with these directors which has taught me the answer. It is in their attitude about their work; a viewpoint they have towards it.’

At this point Ted, who was interpreting for me, had to explain: ‘I think perhaps this word I will use for what she said is not a good translation, Fred. But I can’t think of a better one for the moment. She says toughness. She says they have a toughness in their approach to acting. Does that seem clear? I understand Kuwano-san, but I am not sure if this word in English is edifying.’

‘I think I understand,’ I told him. ‘We say fiber. A good fabric sometimes has exceptional fiber. And we use the expression to refer to somebody with strong character. Is that a fair equivalent?’ I asked her.

After Ted interpreted for me, Miyuki-san smiled and nodded. 'Yes,' she agreed. 'I mean, these people are strong. They do not think only of the things of the moment which their success brings them. They think beyond today's recognition. Their profession is for a lifetime, and they never stop working to improve themselves and to expand the talent. When an actress, or an actor, works for a first rate director, it is necessary to reach for the outermost limits of one's craft. Only the best will satisfy them. Less than that may pass, but only for the one picture. An actor who won't make such a maximum effort will not work a second time for these directors.'

Now we left the privacy of the lounge and made our way downstairs, still as a group, and pausing again, now and then, for the photographers. On the first floor we began to fragment. Most of the group departed, while a few of us remained with the actress. She was to go with Mr. Hirotsu and Mr. Endo and we waited for their car to come from the parking area.

Referring to the illness which had delayed her return just long enough so that, again, she could be in the city only overnight, I indicated the airport complex and said: 'You know, Kuwano-san, Los Angeles is really larger than this!'

Laughing, she assured us she hoped to see something of the city itself on another visit some time.

Toho's Mr. Watanabe had told me she painted and I asked if she used oils or watercolors.

'I prefer oils,' she explained. 'But I have worked with both.'

'Do you find watercolors more difficult?' I asked.

'No,' she told us. 'They seem easier for me, in fact.'

'Do you have any other creative interest?'

'I don't know if you think of it as creative here,' she said, 'but I have had some experience studying embroidery and enjoy it very much.'

Changing the subject, and pointing to the rings on the third finger of her left hand, I asked: 'Are you perhaps married? Or are you recently engaged?'

The few remaining in our group all laughed with Miyuki-san. She assured me she was still single and that there was no occasion for this engagement formality yet. Later, however, one of the photographers mentioned that, as the Japanese girls follow our Western custom in this matter, it seemed not unlikely that the appearance of the rings on this particular finger was not entirely accidental.

The car had pulled up to the curb outside and the actress' luggage was placed in it. We said good-bye again and wished her a safe and pleasant journey home in the morning.

Outside, the night was occupied with the stars it has contained since before even Solomon, and the airplanes it has, in contrast, so briefly hosted in its skies. The airport's many lights paved our way back to our car in the lot. A sense of an exceptional personality lingered with us. It's always difficult to pinpoint such a residual flavor to any one quality, but I thought I could in this instance: Even above all her excellent manners, her careful grooming, and her fortunate beauty, Miyuki-san is one of the world's few gentle people. Lord knows, it's a singular commodity in her profession!

GHELDERODE'S PANTAGLEIZE: '... LOST IN EQUALITARIAN DARKNESS.'

by Barry N. Schwartz

BORN ON THE EDGE OF A CENTURY, Ghelderode steps reluctantly into the modern era. He carries in his pocket the sentimentality of the age before him. His father is romanticism.

Volumes accumulate describing the horror of our day. The Mass Mind, the bomb, the forces of industrialization, dehumanization, standardization, regimentation, these and a

thousand other abstractions insidiously work their way into the human nucleus. We smoke, bite our fingernails, embrace revolutionary causes, study books on sexual technique, drink, watch television, sleep. Sometimes it all seems the same. We are at war with an indefinable antagonist, always oppressing us, always winning. A guerilla warfare is destroying the human psyche. We call our wounds angst.

A total picture? No, for each defines the intensity of the battle in his own way. Many have reached the point where they see no war waged and are oblivious to the invisible slaughter. Others, a few, feel all this but can find no concrete, no specific means of engaging the enemy, ever. Social action, the wielding of political power, seems as alienating as anything else. Everywhere is the 'sense of disrelation-ship.' They choose the loneliness most men are forced to accept. Their mode of being is a small silent no. In their own private worlds they uphold individuality. As the society about them crumbles they possess 'the inward gaze.' Ghelderode is such a man.

Yet, Ghelderode is in the unique position of also being an artist. And art strives to communicate. What he must do is to preserve his isolation and at the same time break it, to communicate it. He separates the public and the private life. With Ghelderode, this decision influences the technique of his art.

Ghelderode chooses the mode of a much-renovated romanticism for artistic expression. Typically, the romantic turns to the past. But the past is never realistic; it is idealized and sculptured by the perspective of the observer. Ghelderode knows this. His honesty is above reproach. Instead of History he is searching for fables. 'The world has need of fables.' Why? To impregnate them with our fears and our feelings and to make them live for us, say for us what we cannot formulate in contemporary terms. Ghelderode aspires to do what he credits to Edgar Allan Poe: 'He was the first to

be able to put down the inexpressible, the unutterable.' And this is what Ghelderode has done in his plays. His confrontation with the forces of abstraction is manifested solely in recording and articulating our reactions, the thoughts and fears of man living in the Twentieth Century. Since emotion today is most often sadness, he becomes the poet of remorse. His plays frame portraits of tragedy.

Ghelderode tells us PANTAGLEIZE is such a play. 'A farce to make you sad.' But I wonder, is it not more like RIDERS TO THE SEA than UBU ROI? PANTAGLEIZE is a lament, a cry of pain amid the destruction. We are told in the epitaph that Pantagleize is '... the Poet, the incarnation of the poet, unfit for anything except love, friendship, and ardor — a failure, therefore, in our utilitarian age.' And it is certainly true there are but a few poets who survive as poets, today. But this passage means much more. If our poets are unfit for our society, then our society is unfit for the poet. The poetical view of man as a being who sees beauty, creates, sympathizes, enjoys living, celebrates existence, is no longer operative. It is with recognition of this reality that Ghelderode describes Pantagleize: 'He is the human in an age when all is becoming dehumanized.'

As we would expect, Pantagleize is a derivative of Ghelderode's experience. Pantagleize is the man who does not cleave his life into public and private segments. He is too open. What all the other characters call imbecility we see as naivete and innocence. Pantagleize, unlike his comrades, is limited to one role only: himself. PANTAGLEIZE is the story of a powerless man who is thrust into a role of power, becomes a hero, then a traitor, and then dies. It is the 'fable' of the individual dissolving into the complexity of modern life. Never is Pantagleize aware of the stakes. He is like a straw man, set up, thrust in, and knocked down, not unlike the individual in society today, subject to a multitude of forces, his direction determined by the greatest pressure.

We no longer experience our historicity. None of us believes that as individuals we can make decisions which will effect significant change. Pantagleize also feels this sense of impotence. 'I am forty years old,' he says, 'and my destiny has never begun.' Yet, in the course of the play, he learns that his decisions do relate to changing patterns. We are, in fact, immersed in History. Pantagleize the poet becomes Pantagleize the revolutionary in an absurd arbitrary way. The point is, however, that being a revolutionary had always been a possibility for him. The lament is not over Pantagleize's inability to act, but that action is a dead end. The revolution goes through its motions, replacing one tyranny with another, and then completing the cycle back to where it began. Energy, lives, ideals, slogans, all add up to zero. That is why Pantagleize prefers the eclipse to the ideal of brotherhood. The eclipse can be realized. The sadness of PANTA-GLEIZE is profound and full of remorse. The mechanism for social change is neutral; men are not. It is men who choose the forces of destruction.

What Pantagleize learns too late is what Ghelderode long ago decided: 'Running away—that's the least mad thing in all this.' Run, hide, make oneself strong, alone. Suffer in solitude, but recognize that to suffer is to be human, and by suffering confirm humanity. Be an individual only in the private world, not vulnerably out in the world of revolutions and ideals. Ghelderode is this man. His answer to the problems of the day is the artistic expression of 'the unutterable,' but from a vantage point. Saved from the Wall, he is the artist who articulates the horror and the fear of living in an age that kills its poets. That is why 'The theatre is the art of instinct.' The playwright finds our common denominator and proclaims all the ingredients poets long felt basic to our humanity. But that is too abstract, and abstraction is one of our problems. Ghelderode writes of a specific suffering. He does it in a comical

carefully-constructed way, to show us the sadness without further defeating us. The lament is recognition of the poor state of our fear-ridden souls. It continues to acknowledge the older values, but the lament is about us, it becomes us, we identify with it. We are not decrying the loss of morality. 'Morals have nothing to do with the matter.' We are bemoaning the loss of our selves; and as long as we do this we are not completely lost. If this is not logical, it is nonetheless all too true. In fact, existence and not logic is the criterion for truth. There is only one truth: the death of Pantagleize—and all the Ghelderodes who sit alone writing, painting, thinking, wondering how many others sit alone, like themselves, and knowing they will never know.

We have been talking about Ghelderode's view of the theatre; for his view of the theatre is his view of man. His own role as playwright mirrors his role as man. He maintains the private world. That is why he is not concerned with the manifestations of his work on the stage: he is the librettist of the lament, and uninterested in its orchestration in terms of technique. This also explains the difficulty of securing comment from him on his works or his life. Since his works are he, they can not be, will not be, justified. They simply exist, to be recognized or not. Ghelderode has run away. Success will not bring him back or cause the cessation of the problems that made him choose isolation.

For all his concerns, it is clear Ghelderode is not a teacher. He only says what we cannot. He does not tell us what to say. His is not an appeal to new causes or solicitation of support. His view of what the individual should do is the same as his view of what the theatre should do: 'The theatre is lost the moment it speechifies, discusses, analyses, preaches.' All these activities have one goal in mind—to come to conclusions and then thrust us out of the private world into ideals, beliefs, actions, and the Wall. Didacticism seeks to violate the innocence of Pantagleize. It

is out of danger when it dreams, digresses, laughs, cries, tells startling stupidities, and commits a thousand follies and atrocities, passing from the ecstatic to the horrible . . . ' because these acts allow the human spirit to express itself as caprice, whim, joy, imagination, fancy, irrationality, the timeless universals which are being automated out of the consciousness and replaced by mechanical notions of human efficiency. Theatre must be art and celebrate basics; if it becomes serious, it will lead men to the Wall, as in life.

Ghelderode most certainly is an aspect of ourselves: that manifestation of our fears that cautions us to leave the struggle, cease trying to change the world, and retire; that assertion of individuality outside of society and the community; that part of us which seeks solitude and rest from all of this. Ah, if it were only that simple! This is perhaps the greatest limitation of Ghelderode: that this part of us, is all of him.

IN THE TONGUES OF MEN

William Virgil Davis

Lynn Lonidier:

Angels live only in dark
Places of the heart.
They write poems in blood.
Hope happens.
Joanna Southcott died
Before her birth.
That year had the wrong number
Anyhow.
Virgins can only bear daughters.

TITLEWAVE AMALGAMATE

TODAY'S POEM CAN NO LONGER BE of just nature, just social problems, just love, just strings of surrealistic visions. They all go together. Today's reality is one of juxtaposition, TITLEWAVE AMALGAMATE: THE MELTING POT OF THE MEMORY BANK. Turn TV on and the sound off. There is a close-up of a dead bloodied Vietnamese. Then, a suburban wife holds a breath-purifier tablet to her husband's lips. A panther leaps across the sky and lands in slow motion atop a highly-polished automobile. Number 7 appears in the center of a rotating moiré pattern. Children chase an unfolding carpet down the street. Two space-creatures, painted from head to toe with mercury, suddenly appear in a Western saloon. There is a close-up of the lettering on a candy bar. Walter Cronkite pops into sight, while atop the TV sits a Christmas card, while an acre of greying trees is visible beyond the window. December daydream, the kitchen's behind me. I think of police, see U Thant, glide and write poetry of the TITLEWAVE AMALGAMATE:

TVXMAS

Staircase poinsettia
 Sure lips colonnade
 Raincoat paperbeg
 TV windowshades earrings suit faucet dog
 British Far Necktie Stroke Dip
 Million Family Aladdin Oh ah wonders
 improved miracle battleground
 Red Beard Fizz
 United Nation snow shoe
 ADVAN STANDARD SANTA
 GUAR DEDGE
 SAMBLANT DADDY SAND

MOUNTVAL

Foilsome Foilzone

Bolar Pear

Strong Trooper

Lands smear gardens anytime

Rug vibrates Ice painting house

Shadow Door cuff window Love

FULL SACK JACK

Here day Lamp

Typewriter Pokes Seaside Cliff Wave Years

TITLEWAVE AMALGAMATE writes when most occupied. When watching TV, driving across the Bay Bridge, or attending the Monterey Rock Festival. Tijuana Teaspoon was written on location. I was riding in the back seat of a car, hearing the conversation going on in the car, having preconceived ideas about Tijuana, seeing signposts crowding the highway to there, encountering the border inspection, tourists, and hungry Tijuanians trying to sell chalk cows. An excerpt from Tijuana Teaspoon:

MORTUARY UPHOLSTERY SAID STILL DRIVE-IN CHURCH RAY
MARINE HAM HEARSE BUBBLE-UP SERAPE MUMMY CUSTARD-FILLED
LONG JEANS SUNNY GRAYING MUSTARD BULL BUTTER WITH US
CHUNKS O' COW ON EVERY CAR CHIPYARD TREE RUSTANKS TEETH
KNIFE BORDER 12 OX CANS LUE HIP STAMPS AZTECABINET BAFFLE
GIRLIE RAMP

We live in a time where life is regarded the same as objects. In TITLEWAVE AMALGAMATE, every word carries a punch. In the three-word poem, HAIR OIL OFF LBJ, hairoil is as revolting as LBJ; LBJ equated with 'that greasy stuff.'

'HAIR OIL OFF LBJ,' or even two words, 'NAPALM MARMALADE,' express more revulsion toward War than Robinson Jeffers' 'Even here, nothing important to protect, and ocean-far from the nearest enemy, what a cloud of bombers amazes the coast mountain, what a hornet-swarm of fighters—'. Most war-protest poetry is too prettily put together to be an

effective cry in the face of War. Hence: 'Japanette Smor gette FLESHBURGER, MELTED KOREAN Teeny beagles' and 'NAPALM MARMALADE.' The thought of eating dinner while watching a close-up of napalm wounds—the latest military action in Vietnam on TV while food's going down into your stomach!

'NAPALM MARMALADE' can stand alone, although it is a line from a poem several lines long. Words and lines of TITLEWAVE are put in order for their illogical togetherness rather than depending on sentence structure, phrasing, or mood. It's more like ticker tape incantation than orchestration. TITLEWAVE succeeds if it sounds right. If it sets the reader's or listener's mind into motion like a Reno slot machine, combining and recombining words, sounds, letters. After reading the following line, you can hear echoes of new word/sound combinations: 'dust uv RAGAP TAP HAGARAP TAN RAGAR HAND SAP HARD FAD.' What TITLEWAVE AMALGAMATE intends: There are no author's intentions of meaning, allusion, symbolism, nor deepness to guess at or derive. The reader of Tvxmas or Tijuana Teaspoon only brings to each line of poem what he can from his own experiences, memories, sensations. He participates, or reads on.

The poem of the past is only a fragment of what a poem can be. TITLEWAVE AMALGAMATE emphasizes supplying a reader with clues to himself — or, read on. 'WALKY-TALKY JABBERWOCKY' doesn't 'mean.' 'WALKY-TALKY JABBERWOCKY' works because of the sound of it, and because it equates itself with the mad mixed-up scientific wonderworlds of now.

TITLEWAVE AMALGAMATE is newly-put-together pieces of the universe, the pieces of which are meant to call up particulars. Let universal 'chair' mean what it will to you whether it is J.F.K.'s rocking chair, or The Electric, or a nonchair.

TITLEWAVE is to be taken only as seriously as a newspaper: deadly serious, only you have to laugh because local and world events have reached absurd proportions.

Only certain words such as 'murder,' certain parts such as 'sex' and 'Reagan' catch your eyes enough to read on. What better comment on now than 'MURDERSXREAGAN.'

TITLEWAVE lends itself to mixed-media. My poem, *Owed to Oakland*, is only part of a larger piece consisting of travelogue narration and slide show, a monologue on tape, slowed-down blues, and poems written a hundred years ago but treated electronically. Parts of it all go on at once. *Owed to Oakland* is a conglomerate of words taken from combinations of words, signs, and lettering that appeared in pictures I took of Oakland, made into slides. An excerpt:

Try any one on Artificial BATMAN CORN HOUSING
ARRANGEMENTS LOW HOURLY USINESS Beautiful It's ILLEGAL
CHIROPRACTOR ON TAP STONE REJUVENATION COMMUNICATION
NOTICE OF MORTUARY INTENTION WHEN YOUR 64c OLD CR ROW
OW ROW OW ROW OW 25,000 PRAYER-FREE STOP NEXT CARS
COCA-COLA DANGER DO IT FROSTA NO GIVE

TITLEWAVE poets are electronic composers who feed crazy word combinations to computers, tape recorders, amplifiers, mixers for crazier alterations and feedback. The fed word is oral; the heard word, aural. But writing in the genre of Lorca, Ginsberg, William Carlos Williams and his cousin, (I'll-publish-you-and-you-publish-me-type-poetry), is anal. A million poets today pouring out what's past. Grand Poetry reduced to pap poetry with formulas of feeling, meaning, diarrheic all over the place.

Advertisement: U.S. POETS JOIN THE AMALGAMATE! Join the belief in the existence of disrelated array. Help yourself to the wondrous star in the garbage can Atlantic barhold TRUST NUN.

Rock musicians use TITLEWAVE to name some of their songs: *Horse Latitudes* (The Doors), *Ruby Tuesday* (The Rolling Stones), *Third Stone From the Sun* (Jimi Hendrix), *Cream Puff War* (The Greatful Dead), *Genuflection at the Temple of Squack* (The Fugs), but often fail to carry through

the highblown imagery promised by such titles. Take the lyrics for the Beatles' song, Blue Jay Way:¹

There's a fog upon L.A.
 And my friends have lost their way
 We'll be over soon they said
 Now they've lost themselves instead.
 Please don't be long please don't you be very long
 Please don't be long for I may be asleep
 Well it only goes to show
 And I told them where to go
 Ask a policeman on the street
 There's so many there to meet . . .

In most cases music is still the backbone of the Rock song. My Los Angeles TITLEWAVE poem, because it doesn't rely on music, must keep up the intensity promised by the title:

REDWHITEBLUEFLASHING LOSANGELESLIGHTSATNIGHT

EGGBEATER DANCE FLOOR Freeway Skinnin' aphids
 Falla'way color Wheel on Hollywood clot THE GOLDEN GHOULS
 THE DEAD RINSE Paratootist BLUE PETUNIA ROADBRICK THE ELFIN
 FOREST Electro Poet THE MAGIC LANTERN PACT The first purple
 lightbulb glory BLUE PIMENTOS AND CRYSTAL TOMATOES
 FLAMINGO SLOWED LIGHTSLIGHTSLIGHTS CALABAH in a time when
 meaning or message had to show its face in Western poetry
 — except for the Imagists.

*I have learned a lot about TITLEWAVE in relation to my earlier
 poetry by studying Gil Orlovitz's writing. Guess he and I were
 both born*

Some lines from Orlovitz, if extracted, are pure TITLEWAVE:
 'midgeting the moths of the hereafter . . . chitchat bubble . . .
 pinpricks hoarding avalanche . . . xrays in tuxedos and
 jellyfish diaphragms . . . the ramps of tangerine tongues into
 the sheer black nylon estuaries . . .' etc. But, he's bending
 and twisting these beauties of images into lines of thought

and reason; and I find myself torn between enjoying allowing my imagination to soar forth from the base of his imagery, and forcing myself to stay grounded, figure out what he's trying to mean. I liked his fiction more and want to familiarize myself with Will Frank Marry Mary? by many rereadings.

To begin to trace the beginnings of and similarities to TITLEWAVE AMALGAMATE would require another article. I would have to include all the sources. The first of these would be Michael McClure: 'Blue-black skull rose lust boot!' . . . Allan Kaprow: 'Of an empty/half court/into the id/cracked up/alas soon/vacancy I/covet it/with care/allegro/a grey cat/POW' . . . a list of words by Robert Baker in World Countdown Magazine, which intentionally or accidentally looked like a poem . . . the type of disjointed poetry written by children and high-school students. . . .

—12/- or \$2.—avail. in U.S. fr. Peninsula Public Library, Peninsula, Ohio. Prose & poetry fr. newspapers of the Twenties. YOU AND I CONFRONTED, Marguerite Feibelman — unpr., hardb.— available fr. the author: 1500 Glendale-Milford Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45215.)

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