

J. JOSEF '11

THE
GARRET

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA~

GARRET

a magazine of the creative arts



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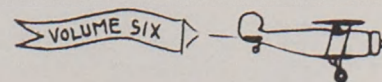
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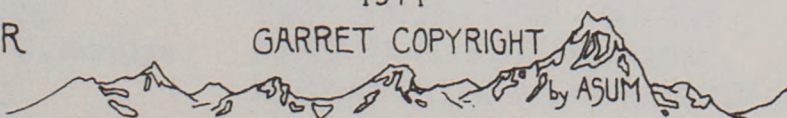
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McKANE

by Drew Finley

The first contact I have a record of was in Queens. Swam up a lady's toilet, she called McKane, and he sent a man to fish it out.

He was a fat man and a bald man and a vile man. Wilted shocks of grease--cured protein shaded each ear, and tiny cascades of sweat crashed silently against the mountain of ductile kaki that was his stomach. He made (for himself) an ugly joke about miscarriages, sweated on the lady's fresh wax, threw it in a garbage can on 116th street, and told me about it when the trouble started.

A bartender found one in his sink--threw it in a barrel of empties. A janitor reported that his basement was flooding, and the Roto-Rooter man ground one up in his machine. Guuck. A telephone lineman found one in his lunch box and beat up his wife. That was in April--the last I heard until June, and the last I heard of one appearing alone.

June fourth. Hempstead Beach residents found their little strip of waste-blackened sand completely yellowed. The well-shrouded sun rose in open rebellion--reflected, multiplied in dazzling rainbows, and crashed like wainscoting against the first row of apartment buildings. The air lay heavy and verdant, and everything smelled like pine trees. They immediately complained to the council, and asked for a cease-and-desist against whatever factory was pouring little yellow gobs onto their beach. Fire hoses washed them seaward, except for two, which were taken to the city to be blamed on somebody, and during the process McKane decided they were alive, and it really hit the fan.

"Prehistoric throwbacks, dislodged from the ocean floor by some violent subterranean disturbance," said the Daily News.

"Bullshit!" said McKane.

The Times suggested, quite subtly, that McKane should get busy and catalog the inhabitants of our world a little more carefully. McKane suggested, not very subtly, that the Times should mind their own fucking business and I, at the time, was far more amused by an article which pointed out (quite subtly) that June fourth is both Armed Forces day and Feast day, a phenomenon which seemed to upset McKane not at all, and they washed in by the millions--Maine, New Hampshire, down the coast as far as Georgia. Beaches were covered with them, sewers filled with 'em--taps and toilets, gas mains, rain barrels, fishing holes, swimming pools and canals, lakes, rivers--everything liquid grew slowly viscous, and everything viscous--slowly solid; drowned in life--surrounded by life.

Couldn't get gas, they were in the tanks. Couldn't take a shower, they clogged the pipes. Pittsburgh announced in September that anybody who chose to remain in city center after the twenty-first couldn't even be sure to get a drink of water--even that was beginning to throb, to multiply, to bombard its drying banks with rainbows of prismatic, yellow blobs. And everything smelled like pine trees. And everything was alive.

Christian Scientists claimed they were a message from the Lord. The Birchers claimed they were spy devices from China. UFO people claimed they were attackers from a dying planet, and the Fem-libs let it be known that until they saw one reproduce, they wern't sayin' nothin'. Huntley-Brinkly couldn't agree on just what they were, and actually snapped at each other on television.

Boston manned fire trucks, and washed them into the bay by the thousands--they clogged the hoses and stopped the pumps. Milwaukee interned every construction man in the city, and built, in 24 hours, an ingenious system of traps and filters over their water supply. Fourteen hours after the first Milwaukee contact, their water was filled.

Shot 'em, poisoned 'em--crushed and cursed 'em--carted 'em to the ocean in railroad cars, and while the SDS claimed they were entitled to speak their minds, the AMA pointed out that they had no minds.

Alabama announced that any found within their borders would be burned--Minnesota announced that they would "Learn--Not Burn," and Mayor Lindsey announced that they wouldn't burn anyway, and fire didn't even hurt 'em.

They asked the scientists at Cape Kennedy, the President, and the Lord. They begged the SPCA, the CAP, the Fish and Game, the Pentagon, Federal Reserve, and WCTU. The President suggested capturing their leaders and deporting them ". . . back to where they came from!"--nobody seemed to know who they followed or where that might be. The Vice-President called them "throbbing, yellow, gobs o'guck," and suggested poison--they apparently didn't eat.

And McKane just didn't know. And they kept coming--billions of 'em.

Governor Maddox sued New York, Billy Graham prayed for deliverance over congregations of mobs--panic supplanted faith, faith supplanted food, food supplanted nothing, and nobody could remember the sermon.

Alan Shepherd Angstman, a fundamentalist preacher from Savanna, convinced the already shakey South-East that the "JUDGMENDAI!!!!!!" was indeed at hand. Thousands of biblical patriots trickled, flowed--flooded Savanna from as far away as Chicago. They chanted in the streets, and writhed in saintly torment under home-made whips. They trained and armed their own militia, marched them around under a flag which showed Jesus nailing the feet of a prostitute

to a tree, and sent them downtown with orders to "HEP TH' LOORD OWWA GOD !!!!!!" Mass executions were carried out upon all sinners unlucky enough to be caught without a Bible. They were shot, clubbed, dragged behind cars--thrown screaming from the windows of walk-up apartments, and held under in their own filthy bathtubs. Piles of mangled bodies christened the sidewalks with intestines--mucus monuments to those who chose to jump rather than burn. The Christian Soldiers held the city for eight consecutive days, and during that time no less than twenty-one thousand wayward souls met their judgement on the streets of Savanna.

New York's power failed, and Conn-Edison announced that millions of 'em were suffocating the generators. Ships without pier services switched to underway power and discovered abortive, unserviceable machinery--clogged, inundated--swamped by riptides of stifling globs. Unable to off-load or turn their strangled screws, they wallowed like thunderstorms in a suspended sea of toothless yellow, and were crushed to flotsam by floods of New Yorkers who smashed the city to bite-sized fragments and swallowed it up in the ruthless panic of starvation.

Gangs battled each other for the booty in smouldering warehouses, and federal troops were massacred from concrete ambush by the cannibals they hastened to defeat. No man was sage alone, and woe to the weaker tribe--we found empty cartridges, bloody knives, and cooking fires in the ashes of Madison Square Garden, and the rotting entrails of a thousand grade-school children.

Then McKane ate one, and discovered that they were really quite tasty.

Radio stations went on emergency power long enough to tell the public that a free meal had washed up on their beaches. Millions of half-starved people ran pell-mell to the coast with any container they could carry. They filled buckets, wash-tubs, suitcases, and knapsacks. The weakest fell, were trampled and eaten in a carnival of consumption. McKane has a photo of at least a million people, and we can't find one who isn't chewing.

Safeway packaged 'em by the billions, and shipped 'em west at four cents a pound. Rivers were dredged for them, machinery was carefully dismantled to get at 'em--lakes were dug, claims were filed on beachfronts, and "Butterball" traps were invented.

By October they started to dwindle, by mid-November normal services were restored, by early January they were gone.

There exists in man a fascination with that which is above his head--altitude fetish--filler of libraries; planter of dreams.

Missiles protect--time capsules introduce--telescopes and shelters bloom like fungi. We leap, saluting, on foreign soil once more, and snap hometowns like tourists. Armeggeddon, eternal

Karma--we're virgins at an orgy, well prepared for anything but a cold shoulder, and somethin's out there for sure.

Well, McKane says they came to us, early last year--and we ate 'em.

A LONGING TO CROSS THE PRAIRIE

Today, starkly Sunday,
the counting of nicotine
is ultimate in series.
Tropical and polar
in ratio of bone-cluster
to staircase.

Ears of wheat frost ceramic,
the fields of my divide
linear in two moons.
Walking, I must wring out
the double wound.

All this to measure
the heavy snows of the wood,
in the dark water only
a longing to cross the prairie.

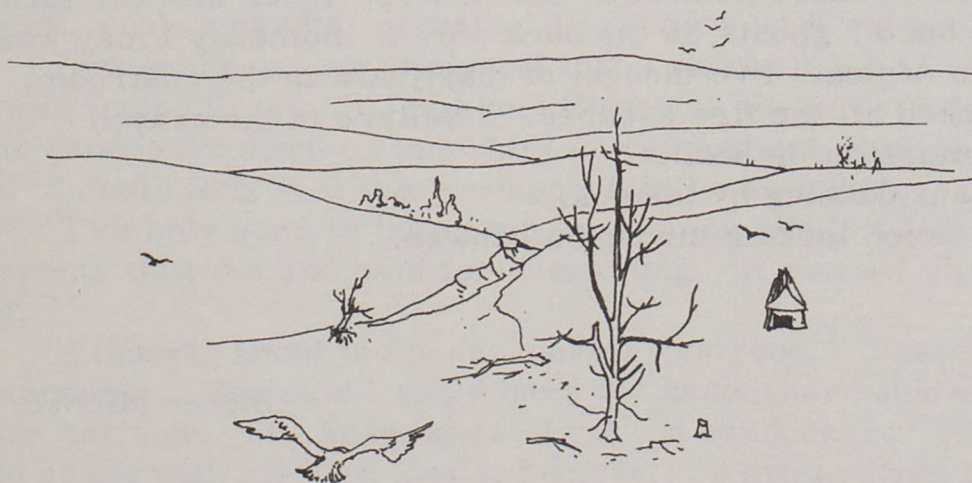
Don Bergau

THE BOULDERS

Some bird
was always riding the high limbs
of the dead cottonwood
below the house.
You saw it sweep the field
like a black princess.
The dentist below,
busy all winter with
his chainsaw,
got her this month --
brush stacked over the stump.

But in the open field --
two boulders
we never saw before.

Roger Dunsmore



THE MOON LOOKING THROUGH A COBWEB

When the clock is right it rains. Everything
colorful turns black. I know when to bring
in the bells and when the drums and cymbals.
In the basement, I practice a fire dance,
praying to a god who has been burned.
I tell the kids that my kindling point is low. It shows
in the handwriting. They say I am bewitched. I have
hung my peace sign on the dog and declared war
on the spiders. Tomorrow I'll wear a chain of paper clips,
arrive on a motorcycle and play the flute. They'll laugh at that;
my fears more numerous than theirs: trees that can turn
into boats, ghosts on the back porch. Someday I may wake
up in Africa. I've thought of marijuana in the coatroom,
checked all the fire escapes. I believe in the crayon
paintings on the wall:
Indians dancing by the sea.
The moon looking through a cobweb.

Sister Michele Birch

CHINESE RED, MY LOVE,

breaks like poppies
the seeds
strained through hope
in willows.

Bronze lips
kiss mine carefully
searching
for green elm.

When did we
last think
we were
unfiltered?

Linda Fuller

RED CANOPENER

by Janet Hackman

When I went back to Eugene at Thanksgiving, I meant to get the canopener, I even held it in my hands the first night I was there, feeling the thick, rubber handle; pressing its redness with my peeled thumb-nail. I remember saying to myself that I should put it in my suitcase, but I was trying to talk to Jeris and Ross was there watching me. So I put the canopener down on the white stove, and sat down in the heavy chair. I could look at it there, even while I was talking.

"I've only gone to the ocean once since you left last summer. My parents took me and paid for everything. It was all right, but different."

"I thought about the ocean when I was gone," I said, my eyes on the canopener. She said I could have the canopener back since she had another one now. She knew where I got the canopener. Then Ross looked at me with his New Zealand sneer, "When are you going back?"

"Never."

"Why?"

"How would a red canopener look in Montana?"

"Oh, let's go for a walk."

Down the middle of the roads, on the edges of sidewalks . . . the wrong way on West 13th. Where should we end up? I'm not steering you, just walking straight; jumping onto buttery white lines, sinking down to my knees. Hopping with hat and cane in my hands in front of them. Ross' long legs don't break stride. I run from him, like I run from the foam. Jeris is skipping to country music somewhere in her

head where we can never hear her. Only Ross is silently walking. "We can dance circles around you." He's smiling! Pull us along, until we are even with you; then we'll pull you along. Our arms are stretched behind us . . . rigid poles holding up the hides.

"We should have ridden bikes."

"No, no, no, no. Do it yourself, don't let the bike. Run."

The next day we went to the ocean in the rain. I sat alone in the back seat; watched the washing green. The sky broke when we got to Siltcoos Bay and dull yellow shone on the sand. We were the only people there maybe because every few minutes it rained. Jeris' orange wind-breaker was the brightest thing there; Ross and I had on dark clothes and looked like walking rocks. The rain made her coat shine; it sunk into our coats, and left us looking heavy. I licked all around my lips tasting the salt and rubbed my hands in the foam as it came at me. Our bare feet were crusty and red from the cold sand. Jeris and I ran until we couldn't anymore and, panting, we would wait for Ross.

"It's too wet to build a fire; too early to go back to the car. We could bury ourselves in the sand or we could get completely wet. Let the sea take us in; numb our bodies from the cold." Ross stood watching as Jeris and I ran into the water. Running and jumping over the waves. Delicate fingers drip as she does an arabesque, toe dancing on her ankles. Our feet were invisible to him. Our hair slapped our cheeks as we turned and turned, confusing the waves with the land. Our lips moved with words and songs. He stood watching; hands in baggy pants; not even a smile on his face.

"You two are going to get sick."

We laughed but stopped, walking on stubbs to the shore. Our clothes were cold and scratchy, but our faces glowed. Our lips wouldn't move when we talked and even when we laughed our mouths moved spasmodically. On the way back to the car we picked up sand in our hair and clothes. When we got to the Datsun, Ross made both of us sit in the back. Our Zealand chauffeur. We drove home, quietly warming up.

"Tonight I think I will go to the New World." I said.

"You can wear my long skirt if you want. Don't take a bath . . . leave the salty ocean smell on you and don't wash your face. It looks good that way, like the wind got in through your pores." Ross was stirring up tomatoes. "Go smelling like a fish. Put snakes in your hair, wear a purple robe and carry this canopener as a sceptre." He held up the red canopener that belonged to Mike.

"Oh, come on."

I smiled to him as I walked into the old bedroom and fell on the clumsy bed. "It gets darker earlier now."

My hair was still damp from the bath and it blew thickly in the warm evening wind. The sky was softly turning black, and a few stars were in the glossy sky as I walked towards the New World. As I got

closer my movements became sharp and darty. My mouth, if I didn't keep the lips tight, twitched. I remembered once Mike saying to me "You got yourself a brand new day." But I didn't want a new day; I was sick of them and so I said it was a god damned day. "Just let me be alone." I didn't really care anymore. I didn't want him to remember the way I was last year, restless and nagging. Here I am at the door; at the colored glass door with the broken handle. Here I am. Don't tremble. He's surprised. Or shocked. He took the money a girl gave him for an amoffie, and moved over towards me.

"Hello."

"Hi."

His hair is bushier, but his moustache is the same. He has the same blue shirt on. His eyes looked calm and I had remembered them always wild. Earthy wild.

"Your hair looks a lot longer," he said ringing the cashregister. I thought it seemed odd for him to say that. He never seemed to look at hair, just in your eyes.

The wood stove was burning and people were sitting in wooden chairs at the round wooden tables. The people seemed wooden; only their mouths were moving and there was a noise that sounds like all people in a crowd.

"I'll get someone to relieve me and take my break now." He left to find someone and I stood there, staring at the cans of imported tea and pastries. Even though the kitchen was right next to the tables, it seemed quieter. There was nothing humming or boiling there. Mike came back and we went behind the kitchen where a few tables were with no one there. My face was hot and I pressed my cool hands to my cheeks and watched Mike smoke his cigarette. Every time he inhaled his nose twisted. His hands were dark and cracked. Loggers hands, not a coffee house waiters hands. I wondered if his shirts still smelled like trees.

"How long are you going to stay this time?"

"I don't know. I guess it all depends on the weather. If it clears up for a while, I'd like to go to French Pete and do some rapeling. It doesn't matter though, does it?" There was a big ink mark on the table and I was moving my finger around and around it while I talked. I showed him my blue fingertip. We sat there not talking. I wanted to tell him that I would go to the ocean with him anytime, but I wouldn't say it. I didn't see him laugh ever. The only time he smiled was when he was making love. Now that was funny. When he played his guitar I pictured his skipping down a dusty road. A real dusty road, with light dust about two or three inches thick and the sun shining. But I've never seen him in the dust. And I've certainly never seen him skipping. Once I talked him into running beside the sea with me; we raced; and he beat. I didn't think he could.

Where we were sitting two windows looked out on a cinder block building, and nothing else could be seen. Mike was on his third cigarette and still staring at me. "Hey, Lee, why don't you wait until I get off work and go home with me? It'll only be an hour and I can get you a piece of cheesecake. Or else you can go sit in my vann and play my guitar."

"Then what?"

"What do you mean, then what? You can stay as long as you want. Just so you don't bug me with a lot of talk."

The lights didn't have any cover on it and when I tipped my head back and smiled I looked into the bare bulb. "Okay. I'll wait in the vann. Where are the keys?" His eyes were the color of the tiled floor, rusty brown and when he handed me the cold keys, they bent down. I walked out to the familiar vann, chalky blue, with a mattress in the back. I unlocked the door, and put the keys on the seat and walked down West 13th.

CANADIAN CROSSING

Lugging exile back with us
we begin our journey - Niagara
where love, like shredded wheat,
is found in neat pillowed bundles.
The guard, detecting the silence
of our eyes and stomachs,
knows we are not hungry for bungalows
by the Falls or for bowls of drowned cereal
so he searches even my guitar
for what went up in smoke
hours ago.

Malinda Finney

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I pledge allegiance to Fort Knox, Nixon, SST,
incursion not invasion,
strontium 90 sterility,

the flag of one old fat crazy woman that bled
to soak up the effluence of bouts with subversives in bed,
the united states of cash and corruption.

Amerikkka,
(tongue frozen to the ass of republic,
dumb hysteria,

-if I bought a red metallic dump truck
and took you to an alley, I bet you'd fuck-

for which it stands, stoops, squats pitching
pennies,
squeezing in all comers, one nation)

the menace mouths the lie, under god,
piercing the eyes of the Eagle, real
Commies, Americans:

with liberty and justice for all (with liberty and justice
for all)

Barrett Briggs

FOR A BANKER

slush, wreaths, flashing lights.
They ask about Christmas Club,
mortgages, and credit.
No one comes to say hello,
to talk of fishing or the children

An orgy of words and small change,
faces like sinking minnows.
I smile, wish them health.
They trickle through paper streets
and disappear.
The vault moans,
growing louder towards afternoon.
Beyond its steel door, I wish a room
chest high with green paper
where I might go of a lunch hour
to jack off the pain and precise loneliness
of their faces.

Niles Choper

MAN GOING TO WORK

An old Man
walking to work,
his life between bread
in that grudge-black pail
that somehow is his slouching glum.

Two sooty sparrows foraging
spurn manikin leaves, autumnal dust,
for the lower branches of the silver-skinned ash
as his foot-fall 4 o'clock hard
sends terror to their tiny feet in the hedge.

Thomas Azzara

IS IS MAGIC

by Lowell M. Uda

"It don't take long, Jiro." She rubbed her arms and her shoulders and popped her neck like a knuckle.

"On'y two t'ree hours," said Jiro. "I know."

"My body sore."

"You' body awways sore."

Jiro was ten years old and he was already mildly angry and bored. He walked around his naked mother. There was nothing for him to do at the old masseuse's house. He could not read the Hawaii Times because he did not know the language of the old folks, and the pictures in the Japanese magazines were small and blurred. He picked up an old deck of Japanese cards and glanced at the pictures--the red sun, the birds, the cherry blossoms--and he set it aside. Then he went to look at the new angelfishes in the quiet bubbling aquarium.

The angelfishes, black ones like dark silken women and orange ones like angels of a most glorious religion, rustled their fins and tails as the older girls in school did their skirts when boys surrounded them: they were all fat and clownish in their alluring activities. And they were new angelfishes, and smaller, because the old masseuse's husband had recently made the mistake of putting mosquito fishes into the tank; he was following someone's advice. The mosquito fishes were supposed to keep the glass clean and the water clear by eating moss and excess fish food. And they did: they ate the moss, the excess fish food, and the beautiful fins and tails of the angelfishes. His mother had laughed at all this, as she was accustomed to laugh at other people's stupidity. The old man, she said, made lots of money selling kerosene for stoves around the city and could buy more, which he did. Actually, while they lived, with their broken wings and torn skirts, the angelfishes did make Jiro want to laugh. But he was startled when, just before the masseuse's husband emptied the aquarium and put the present batch of angelfishes in, Jiro counted more pale bloated bodies than black, and saw a few black ones, though broken, still wobbling about.

"When Obasan come?" said Jiro.

"She washing the dishes," his mother grunted. She was rocking forward and back, forward and back, touching the toes of her thick outstretched legs. ". . . twen'y-nine . . . t'irdy . . . t'irdy-one. . ."

"On the blistered wall there was a small shrine and, peering into it, Jiro saw a small bowl of rice, an ant crawling over the dried-out grains, and a fat golden Buddha. Jiro himself was a Mormon, like his mother, and he laughed.

"That guy really fat."

". . . What?"

"BOOD!" he said, pointing.

"Jiro!"

"BUD!"

Jiro's mother scrambled up off the floor and Jiro laughed again.

"Bud," he said, "that my father favorite beer. Every Saturday he go down Villa Lane to King Street tavern for a coupl'a hours.

"That why you' body awways sore--that why--"

"It not!" said his mother. "Shaddup!" And she smacked him.

II

Obasan, the old masseuse, bustled in with a straw mat and spread it on the floor. Jiro's mother got on it, stretched out, white riven belly down. Obasan took her place beside his mother and began rubbing his mother's shoulders and back, working easily. The old woman found where the taut bunches of muscles were and rubbed them with more pressure. She used the base of her palm and her thumb.

"Is no good," said the old woman.

"What?" Jiro's mother raised herself anxiously.

"Relax," said Jiro. He was sitting against the wall, deflating the warm paint blisters. "Obasan want you relax."

"Yeh," said the old woman. "You' body too tight."

"It not my fault. I get too many worry."

The old woman pushed Jiro's mother down and Jiro's mother, relaxing, wiggled like a loose fish on the straw mat. Then the old woman got up on her knees, leaned over his mother, and pushed and poked her stiffened fingers into the soft cavities between the shoulder blades and the backbone. Silently, she worked, and both women perspired.

"Is better," said the old woman.

Jiro's mother grunted. "Good. My body sore. My body want satisfy."

"How you' body get satisfy like that?" said Jiro. "Poke, poke, poke."

The two women laughed and Jiro grew angrier.

The old woman turned his mother over on her back and poked her fingers into the pit of her stomach several times; then she worked outward toward the ribs and hip bone, bearing down over one kidney,

then the other, as if she would touch them. She pushed more lightly on the urinary bladder, and around the bladder, asking his mother several questions; then she spent the rest of the time massaging the stomach and intestines. All through the treatment, his mother moaned and sighed with pleasure and said ouch when the old woman came upon a sore spot. After an hour and a half, his mother was as relaxed as dough and, Jiro thought, asleep.

"You get satisfy, mum?" he said. "You get satisfy, we go now. Come."

His mother rolled over. "No," she said. "I not satisfy yet."

Obasan placed little balls of greyish-brown matter on several locations on his mother's back, and on her knees, then lit them. The grey matter glowed with a creeping spark for about a minute, then shrivelled up into char and ashes. A black mark, or sometimes a charred blister, was left on his mother's skin. This yaito treatment was for all her ailments, many of which she concealed from his father, so as not to disturb his hard, pleasant world (so she said). All her internal wounds she kept to herself and hidden within.

"It magic," said his mother. "Now I satisfy."

"It stink," said Jiro. "Come, we go."

The two women laughed at him.

"What you' hurry."

The smell of burnt skin was peculiar, and altogether nauseating to Jiro, not at all like the smell given off by a plucked chicken when it is waved over a flame to burn off the hair on it, nor was it like the smell of the burning incense in the little Buddha shrine on the blistered wall of the old woman's living room.

"That guy," he said.

His mother made an angry face at him.

"That fat guy," he said, "do he eat the rice, or it like teet' under the pillow?"

The old woman looked at him and frowned, then said: "Yeh."

"It superstitious," he said. "That ant eat the rice. An' you' massage--it superstitious. You' yaito--it superstitious. It all superstitious."

III

"No," Jiro said. "S'okay."

"Come," urged his mother, "let Obasan massage."

"It hurt, mum."

"No, no. It relaxing. You get satisfy." She moaned and sighed and twitched her neck.

"Take off shirt and come o'r here," said Obasan, patting the floor.

His mother got up and grabbed him. They slipped off his shirt and placed him down on the mat, laughing the more he struggled.

"Hey! My body not sore! Hey!"

"It good for you' wheezing. You no have to stay in bed so much."

"No struggle, Jiro!" said the old woman. "Is no use. Hm, you stink, Jiro! What that, B-san, she she?"

"It beer. He drink Masa empty bottl'a beer."

"Oh, yeh?"

"He t'ink it soda water."

"Relax!" said Obasan. "Jiro!--I promise I make easy. See. . . ."

Jiro relaxed, but only a little, with his chin squarely on the mat, his teeth on edge. He was all set for the old woman to break her promise, which she did as soon as she found the little muscle cluster beside his shoulder blade. "Is is hard like a rock!" the old woman said, placing her big thumb on it. She rubbed it till Jiro could hardly breathe.

The masseuse was a stout, ageless woman with grey hair. She was, in a way, just an older model of Jiro's mother. Like his mother she worked hard to make a home for her husband, cooking a regular meal every evening and taking a certain curious satisfaction in her husband's ease and relaxation after the day's work. On occasion Jiro saw the same look in her eyes as in the eyes of his mother, heard the same sighing, when after a special meal she would say, "Is good, eh?" more to herself than anybody. In her own way, the old woman was religious, undeniably religious, and though his mother often criticized her, there was no difference in the sincerity of their worship: and it was a mistake to ridicule their religions--whatever they were. The old woman, leaning over him and bearing down on his small, soft back as he squirmed and grunted, was a Buddhist; his mother was a Mormon; and neither really shared their religion with their men.

The two women pinned Jiro down, and he clutched the straw mat. He was just about broken between pain and laughter, for he was ticklish. He could not move; his mother had thrown her leg over him, and suddenly he was stilled. He felt like an ant whelmed by a blob of hot rice. Though now he did not struggle outwardly, there was defiance in his soul and every muscle in his body was taut. But they handled him, and his will gave, till suddenly he was helpless, and he knew it. Nausea clutched his throat, his mind whirled, there was no seeing straight, or fighting to see straight. Then, as he relaxed, the hard hands of the old woman became firm and masterful. In moments he moaned and sighed and ouched as his mother had done.

The room grew gigantic, the walls and ceiling moved a million miles away. His little body glowed, and he felt as if he were falling

into a deep and peaceful sleep, on the warm sands of some golden, distant shore, where the green sea murmured and swashed and the sea breeze caressed the towering palm trees. Far away, he heard sweet music, and birds, and he was drawn, sucked toward them, deep inland, into the forest of eucalyptus and vines, through dense, entangling hau trees, bamboo, fern forests unfolding new shoots, curled and damp like human embryos. Pink and blue parrots flew silently about the sifted sunlight. And there, in his drowsed mind, a naked woman was lying in the grass, like a huge rabbit stretched out, at peace and sleeping.

"You get satisfy?"

The two women were laughing.

Jiro scrambled up off the mat angrily. "No!" he said. "I never get satisfy! I sore all over my body!" And he kicked his mother and he kicked the old masseuse.

They jumped on him and subdued him again.

"Is is magic!" said the old masseuse.

"Is is magic," said his mother.

And from some distant place, there came one dissenting voice:

"Is is not! Is is not magic!"

THE ANGEL OF DEATH

The angel of death
crushed by a dumptruck
sprawls across two lanes of traffic.
Will anyone move her?

Windblown garbage heaps at her lea.
Cats and rats (I met them,
shook all their hands)
hire vans, move to the country.

Artists wrenched from public places,
congeal into knots of controversy,
"There's something real here," they urge,
gorging on the angel's rotten flesh.

Satiated, they march
down rusted trolley tracks.
"Remember the squeaks and wobbles,
sparks and electric smells."

The angel of death arises,
lurches onto a bus to the suburbs,
"Wouldn't it be easier,
to be a man?"

Barrett Briggs

FATHER'S APPRENTICE

Gutting granite clefts,
this Lewis River slides otter
past ribbed evergreens
and the lodge where we summered.
Tailing blue current, whitefish
stare walleyed
at winks of skippers
and hand-tied Tahitian flies
spit-flicked on water mirrors.
Snaked lines drown.

Hindu squat, half asleep
on sun-bleached bedrock,
I fishdream
as steelhead bottom rest.

Flies, spoons, periwinkles--
knotted to leader
three turns and a loop--
swim in daily cycles.
I sing Samoan songs
which translate the same,
puddle cold trout
in Pacific sinkholes:
two rainbow, an undead brook,
all undersized, but
inched right for a boy.
Legals, fat with spawn,
fight like a tide
against fast water.

George L. Guthridge

A GRAVE ON AIRPORT HILL

Wild flowers bloom each year
and die before their season ends.
When did your season end? I dream
standing on your head: Planes
that never land are silent two miles up,
Catholics, all on another hill, stare
across the valley. Only the wind
is verbose. A bird, hard and gray
in the sky, flies out of sight.
We're going with him.

Somewhere on the prairie small animals
are busy with their lives, runways age
and run into the mountains. No one
visits your grave. Tell me,
can you hear that banging in your head?
Have fifteen years made your face
a mask where worms play hide-an-seek?
The wind is yelling in my face
and weeds march across the flats.

Winter comes like a slap in the mouth.
Hangars never see another plane, cold
howls from mountains. You, howling
and cold for years, made me a fool
talking to a stone.

John Kenley

MERRY-GO-ROUND SATURDAY

by Marjorie Grenz

He was glad she came. And now they were walking away from his blue house. His rented blue house, and white fence that enclosed a big yard. A white fence that excluded spiny trees with solitary yellow leaves still clinging. But the river could always be heard, and there was the wind to blow through the fence right up against their rented house and his face, when he stepped outside. Goodbye to his wife and baby Julia. He waved, cool air pushing between his long, thin fingers. Lines of branches gray against the turquoise sky. Blue filled spaces between branches and spilled out to him. With the wind on his face they were now walking towards town. Bob's house was a musty green and white; the grass refused to grow much around it. On their way to town he let Bob's dog out because Bob was gone. Bob's house needed a dog like that, a golden retriever, to brighten that musty house. You could tell Heather liked the dog too. She watched its sure movement for a long time. Heather. A name that belonged here among the grays and browns and minty green. Here in this place of tight mountains and bulging rocks. She whirled and jumped ahead trying to make him really laugh. "Come with me, follow me," her laughter said, so he did. He followed her down the dirt road.

Into town on a dirt road that changed to pavement when they got closer. He pointed to the church and to the school. It was Saturday so they wouldn't walk by the church today. Some Sundays he walked past the church, but never went in. He could hear the thin notes, like the silent sounds of bats. Sounds to guide and direct those inside. He didn't want to be inside. Inside was cold darkness, hollow echoing. He knew. Outside was Heather and wind and the sun. They would go to the playground and swing. The air was silent except for the squeek of swings. Back and forth. Back and forth, toes touching the trees. Colors streaking. Hair blowing. Wind touching, pushing the skin. Chains straining farther, farther. All motion. His eyes narrowed into slits of laughter. He laughed.

A hundred windows breathing, exposing insides. A hundred windows and one was his to open. He opened number 64. No mail today. No news of things done. No words connecting him to someone else. A name. His name and their name together. A thin web of words leading from him to the other in one sagging, shiny line. Mr. Healey came in. He saw Heather; knew they were together. "Mr.

Healey, this is my sister Heather." Mr. Healey looked into Heather's dark, brown eyes. "Hello, Heather. You go to school in Galena?" "Yes," she said. But her eyes were far away. Mr. Healey continued, looking into her dark eyes. "Galena. Yes. A good place to be. A good place to be." She said, "yes," again. Her hands remained hidden behind her back and her feet were still, but they wanted to move. They wanted to trace lines in the grained wood, but they didn't. Her eyes tried to look beyond Mr. Healey, but they always returned to his eyes. So she stopped everything and stared into his eyes. He refused to let her know what his eyes were saying. No more. No more of this. Those windows were taking all the air. Deane could hear their low, group breathing seethe through separate corners and sections. Mr. Healey was with them too. With a word Deane set Heather's feet and hands and eyes free. "Goodbye Mr. Healey. We must go now." Goodbye. Goodbye. Out the door to the air.

Out the door to Heather's dancing feet. She danced. She danced across the street and onto the sidewalk, then stopped. She told him she had seen that boy before. Last night in the Sweet Palace playing pool with other boys. She drove by and looked at them small in that room. The huge window made them look that way. The boy had blue-black hair. His face was dark, and his eyes were dark, and his body was small; moving in silent slow motion. The boys did not look at her as she drove by, but she saw them move in their slow excitement and secrets. Now she stopped in front of that huge window and looked in, and told him about the boy with shiny hair. She waved at his reflection watching her in the huge window. She waved until his reflection smiled and waved back. Their reflections left, his leading hers. He took her to the store. The grocer talked and joked about his life, his work, it was not the best, but Deane didn't introduce him to Heather. Her eyes were busy following high, narrow isles, up to the ceiling. She tilted her head back to look at the bare ceiling, then down again. Her foot pressed the floor hard, to hear it creak. She found several loud creaks and stepped on them over and over again. He must get baby food and a newspaper, that is all. He paid for the things, then they left. He said goodbye and so did Heather, even though he never introduced them. He is a grocer. Someone to say hello and goodbye to. He is not even someone to touch lightly in a handshake or a pat on the shoulder.

Lichens on rocks, bulging rocks. Rocks covered with dirt and weeds and water. Rocks hidden that he would find. Rocks for him to touch and see. He could spend a long time in search of rocks like that. Warm rich sunlight rocks. He would follow the river and ravines in search of rocks like that. But he'd go alone. Heather wouldn't be here. She couldn't stay here long. The street, the church, the school, the grocer, the old man, the boy; all would become what they are called. They would be a name for every name. She would take what she could,

then stop. It wouldn't take long and she'd be gone. For him it would take longer. He would stay perhaps a year more. One year. Continuous time. But this smooth stretch would break into months, days, hours; into rocks. She stopped his rock dreaming with her hand. She pulled at his arm. She wanted him to look here and there. She wanted to know which way they were going back home. Which way to his rented blue house. He'd take her home the back way. They passed through the facade of main street into an alley fat with broken machines, toys, bottles, and a skeleton stairway clinging to a steep brick wall. Fat with a porch, and a dog sitting on it. A pedigreed dog. A surprise. This porch was keeping a secret. A secret dog. "Hi dog, goodbye dog," Heather said, and walked on. "Which way now? Straight or to the left?" she asked. Is he leading or is she? He doesn't know. They turn left. He has never been quite this way before, and he knows Heather wants to go this way, so they turn left. She is shocked that he has never gone this way before, after all his time here. He has been here for one year. Not so very long to miss going home this way before.

They walked on the railroad tracks, balancing on steel rails. Her feet darkened, shadowed the rails, and so did his. Darkened shadow, then cl-lop as shiny rail and foot met. Silent shadow then sound. Simple. Cl-lop cl-lop. He wanted to squeeze that sound, capture it. Remember it always. Hear it always. Cl-lop cl-lop. Over and over and over. Simple. Heather did the sound slow and listened hard, trying to memorize it. She hid her laughter in her hand as they became the sound. Her eyes sparkled, full of their secret. But she broke the spell. Jumped onto the gravel bringing a new sound. He followed her move. Gravel. She spoke too. "What's in this building?" "I don't know." She is shocked again. "You've never looked inside?" "No." They guessed at its insides. Discarded tools or hay. Hay to jump in. Through cracks they saw it half full of shiny coal. They didn't want to jump in it. Goodbye gray building. They walked away and didn't look back. Now if he crouched down the bridge was at eye level. It rose and fell before him with each step; boards black with dampness. It got larger until those black boards were right there. They crossed over, collecting wet yellow leaves on their shoes. From shade to sunlight. From silence to silence. Heather was beside him. He could see shadows beneath all the fallen leaves silently cooling the ground. Shadows were wiped away when earth and leaf and foot met. No sound this time. Time to look right. His eyes remained fixed in wooden sockets, vision narrowed, forever to the right. His eyes saw trees and hills; their colors of gray and brown and yellow, but he knew that wasn't all. He knew there was a blue to his left. The blue of his rented house. A useless spot of color. He tried to forget that blue color, keeping his eyes right to open space. He tried to forget but

blue penetrated the open space. It seeped through yellow leaves, weeds, and blowing fields. He'd look right until that blue was gone. He could feel that blue now. He let his eyes turn slowly to the left. In front of him that blue covered his eyes. Relief. He could look now. It was gone.

He opened the white gate. It creaked like the grocer's floor. A touch and it creaked, sent upward through the air. Heather made no sound at all. She did not touch the gate. He was noisy though. His boots hit the sidewalk hard. Heavy boots going up the red steps. Red cement steps to the porch. Heather said, "We are the surprise now." He agreed. He knew they were not. The wind met them. It blew through the fence right up against them. He was sure it would, and it did; a well-known creak. Behind the glass door his wife stood, her lips laden with words. The shadow under her lower lip. He touched its pool of darkness. The corners of her mouth sucked in the darkness. Bottomless. Her lips burdened with words. "How was your walk?" "Fine." "Did we get any mail?" "No." "Did you introduce Heather to Mr. Burns?" "No." "Why not?" "Because." Her lips were not finished, but he didn't want to hear any more, so he turned away. The room was warm; the color of sunlight. Bags of wild weeds hung from the walls, springing from sunlight walls. The sun had dried the weeds and left them, so he picked them. Heather sat on his painted stool. She made it belong. His wife sat down too, but he didn't. He wouldn't complete the triangle. The triangle of forgotten words trying to be remembered. Stimulate and respond. He wouldn't. Their talk started, but he left it behind, a discarded sound. He picked up Julia. A dark, warm form. Her eyes were like Heather's, or his. He could make her laugh. He lifted her high in his hand twirling her until she laughed. Her eyes held only laughter then. He remembered the time when he was small and his mother had him and her other children gathered on the porch. Her finger pointed up into the night. Many eyes followed her thin arm then her hand to the tip of her finger and out into the black sky, to a star. Her finger moved from star to star silently. He could never see the image of a bear or a warrior. His brother and sisters said yes, yes, we see them, but he didn't. And he thought he must have been bad because he couldn't. He was afraid then, and alone. Julia wouldn't be afraid or alone. He twirled her again. Her eyes were all laughter.

"Are you going to fix breakfast today Deanny?" "Yes." He went into the kitchen to make french pancakes. That was about all he liked to make besides spaghetti. So this morning they would have french pancakes with peaches and whipped cream. He moved from place to place. His sound matching theirs. He could feel the pull of their voices; an invisible line moving back and forth, forever moving. Their voices reached and touched him. Lazy voices, bodies still, unable to

move. He looked around the corner into Heather's eyes. Brown meeting brown. Dark Brown. Pools of darkness. Her eyes asked to be free from this. He called them into the kitchen to eat. He watched their words released into action. He watched them slowly lift themselves out of their chairs. He pulled them in with thin strings, ever so slowly. They sat down together; a weight pulling them down. "mmmmmm, these are good!" Heather said, leaning back and closing her eyes. He smiled. They talked. They talked and ate. Heather finished last. She sat back rubbing her hand over her bulging stomach. "I'm going to have a baby," She waited, but not too long. Silence timed. "Not really," she said. His wife laughed. When she had Julia she screamed. She wouldn't have another baby. She wouldn't go through it again. Her scream stretched out long and thin to him. It touched him. Was she screaming at him? He could hear her scream now, just sitting there. It hurt his ears. Heather was saying, "I never want to have a baby. That is a pain I don't need." That scream settled inside his ears refusing to leave. He must leave. It is time for them to go. First they'd do the dishes. His wife said, no, she'd do them. They had better go now. Ok. Goodbye wife Jennifer. He kissed her laden lips, her darkened pool. Goodbye. He walked outside, looked back to see once again her face and shaded lips. He waved. His arm a slow up and down motion. A line of motion. He waved, waiting for her goodbye. "Goodbye," she said.

He looked across the street. Saw the old woman watching him. Her shape a thin line framed in the window, caught in a shadow. He could feel her gaze drawing him to her, but he looked away and cut the flow. A look of blankness and he turned away. He still felt her eyes. The sad blackness of her eyes. Constant. He knew Sadie lived in that house alone. He could hear her solitary movements. Movements existing alone. Separate from him. Separate from everyone except the grocer. He would bring her left-over flowers sometimes, but not today, not this week or next. The grocer brought her food, that was all. He brought her flowers sometimes. But not today. Not for a long time. He didn't want to see her solitary motion. He didn't want to exchange words with her; an exchange of food. A word given out of kindness. A word to spare from the overflow of words. He had words to give, but he didn't want it that way; an exchange. A favor to her. And she would return the favor of words as her duty, her obligation to him. Her solitary life intruded upon, and she would have to react. A line would connect them. He didn't want to be her sole line to others. And so he would let her motion be solitary, with no connections. There would be no bowing with words. No gratification words for being intruded upon. No thank you for including me in your life, your line. He couldn't see it. He would not go to her house for a long time. No flowers today or tomorrow.

Mr. Puppy barked, demanding. They left Mr. Puppy barking. Shut out his sound. A vacuum of silence inside. Silence before Heather turned the key. A turn and there was a vibrating noise. A noise including his body and Heather's. He let her drive. He was tired of it. A machine to direct. He did not feel the power. No power existed there. Massive clouds moved, muted purple and gray. He watched them push against the sky. The wind touched parched leaves, giving them their remaining freedom, their movement. They clung nervously to black jointed branches, waiting. He saw them wave before the muted sky. Heather drove away from the leaves now, and from his rented blue house. He waved to the leaves. He looked at Heather in the rear-view mirror. She didn't see him watching her dark face. Her eyebrows set. Her forehead marked with deep lines. Rivulets of moisture and darkness. She lifted her hand slowly to her neck and shoulders to relax tense muscles. Her fingers moved a slow methodical rhythm, bent, tense with motion. Joints straining to relax. Pressing. Her fingers stopped but the leaves didn't. They moved frantically inside his mind, straining to be free from jointed branches. Wanting to blow away and rot on the muddled ground. He stared straight ahead now. His eyes followed the narrow road around each bend, anticipating jutting rocks and bitter green trees. They were there. The road led them away, beside these rocks and trees. This road was taking them away. It would not be long now. It was going fast. It trailed behind them a murky slime of dirt. They would be there soon. He waited, watching the road, the long road. Heather spoke. "Is that it over there?" Heather pointed her finger, touching the window. He saw the buildings sprawled across the fields, connected by roads and sidewalks. A disjointed mass huddled. "Yes, that's it. See that brick arch? We go there." They went through the archway into the school grounds. It was silent here too. No squeek from swings stopped the silence. There were trees to touch and green grass to walk on though. They left the vacuumed silence of the car for an even greater silence. Leaves with no sound. Wet leaves struggling in the wind with no sound. No sound to their struggle, but it could be seen. He lowered his eyes, left the leaves outside to their silence. They walked up the white cement steps, scraping, and into the first building. He stepped up to the desk. It came to his waist. Heavy, dark wood. "I'd like a permit for my sister to go through the school with me." "How long will you be?" the secretary asked. "I don't know. As long as it takes. An hour or two." He heard himself speak. Question and answer. His voice, far away, like discarded voices in his bright living room, separate, but he not listening critically. No black clothes or separate sections for him to sit in. "Alright, here's your permit." The secretary handed it to Heather. Her blue eyes didn't look at dark Heather. Heather took the slip, saying nothing. For one second they were linked

together. A thin slip of paper held them. Their fingers pulled apart, space, stagnant space, engulfed their link. It was gone. They left, closing the door. Those blue eyes seen no more.

It was getting dark. Leaves turning black. Shadows heavy in corners. Gray covering colors. He didn't try to see what was there. He could guess. He could guess at cold, overgrown forms. Feeling them was enough. He didn't like their intrudance. He put his hands in his pockets, forcing his head forward, his back to curve; a hunchback. His mouth a frown. His lips were heavy, he felt it, but now it was not from an overflow of words. They quivered, wanting to be away, too burdened to move. His feet recognized each turn. They moved, one after the other. Each step not so precise, deliberate, slow, like an old man's. When he was small there was an old man who pushed a wheelbarrow down along the railroad tracks. They could hear him come. His steps slow and long from his burden. At dusk he would come, his clothes hanging loosely, the color of early night. They watched him. The weight curved his back, intent on his load, intent on his destination. His destination followed the straight line of the tracks. They didn't know where he went. They didn't want to know. They would wait. At the right moment they threw rocks at him the color of gray night. The old man would keep his eyes ahead, untouched. They continued throwing rocks and yelling until he finally turned, cursing them with violent waves of his arm. His darkness frightened them, but they always waited. Deane felt the cold in the unknown colors and folds of the old man's clothes. Walking now he felt that cold, a damp cold, not fear. His form held that darkness now. Heather didn't notice his darkness, the dimming of colors. She kept commenting on the greenness of things, the grass, stretches of it. Sure it was green, but he did not want to touch it any more.

Swings and slides and merry-go-rounds surrounded them now. Untimely games now. It was too cold for eager fingers to grab stinging cold metal. There was silence now when metal and hand met. Metal reflecting fleshy fingers or tiny hands. No colors could be seen then, only hands, hundreds of greedy, demanding hands. Hands wanting to play. Wanting to feel the motion of swings or merry-go-rounds. Giving a reason for laughter. Motion. Laughter. Some did not need a reason. Mocking. A mock sent into empty space. Hundreds of ears but none to receive a solitary mock. Ears full of no sound but their own. No room for other sounds. It was a lie. This pretence at indifference. There was more. He remembered lines connecting one to another. Lines to connect feet, hands, eyes, full voices. He saw them. They could not hide from him always. He could hear the mocking and the searching. He could place the random laughter, the moanings, the stutterings. He watched the motion of their language. And sometimes he could touch it. A spastic movement of his hand, or a careless fling of his head

could do it. A swift movement done in slow motion. Sometimes he could return their looks. He knew they tested him. With laughter and pointed fingers and empty space they tested him, asked him to look inside. He did. But he didn't want to be there always. He couldn't be there always. He could laugh at them too. So today the shiny metal reflected nothing. Sound and color were gone. He didn't try to add color, a sound, to make it less empty. Heather tried. She sat in a swing, pushing her feet hard against the ground to start her motion. Her fingers clasped twisted metal and she leaned back to enjoy her motion. He waited. The swing didn't squeek though. She didn't notice. She pushed and pushed until her feet touched a distant tree. There was no sound so he didn't care now. He could wait. He waited until she stopped. She offered him a smile he did not take. He didn't know how to, couldn't return it. His smile was gone for today. They left the playground, him still a hunchback, Heather still dark and light.

They passed a brick building. A porch hollowed out of its side held the faces of women. Women looked from its darkened windows. Women old too soon sat rocking back and forth. Wood against wood. Smooth passage of time. Motion marked in weathered boards. The playground could be seen from there but they only smiled and smiled out of empty eyes. The women didn't remember the playground. He looked away. He didn't want to see their smiles any more. Their resistance was more than his. Enough. The long, low building was getting closer. He studied the pattern of windows. The lines the windows formed. Thin, tight lines keeping much energy inside. Windows releasing no sound of breathing. There was not hint of it. Calmness pervaded the ordered windows. Precision ruled outside. He had seen too much of it. It was time to go inside. The lines got larger until they were by the door, then they were gone. A heavy door with a metal handle. His hand closed around it, engulfing it, shading it. He pulled it open. From silence to sound. No solitary squeek from swings this time. A rush of voices from all directions. Voices rebounding, rising, falling. Unashamed voices. Invading privacy. Privacy existed inside, let out through actions and sounds, finally invading others. Each submitting a part to the lack of privacy. He put his face up to a window. His face framed in a window. Someone reached out a hand, but the glass would not let him be touched. The hand could not understand. Knew it wasn't a face it touched. Knew his face was not a flat surface. Deane stood there trying to offer an explanation, but the person inside walked away.

At the end of the hall he opened a door and went in. There no one greeted him. He waited for someone to come to him. He stood, waiting in the middle of the room. He stood, the center of a merry-go-round. But they didn't know it. They didn't know he caused their motion; the source of their energy. He stood, motionless. He watched.

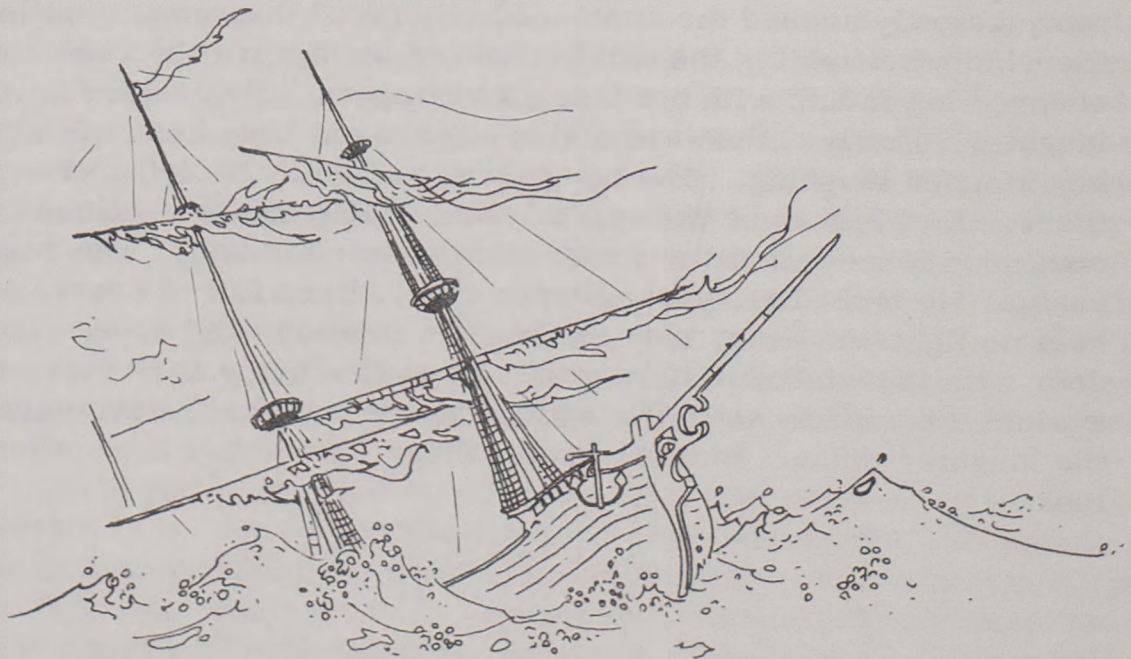
A boy was lying on a table with his head back, staring up. The ceiling was a smooth, creamy white. Not to be looked at long. But the boy lay there a long time looking up. Another boy crouched in a corner laughing quietly to himself. Deane could hear his laughter come slowly to the surface. A steady line of sound slowly circling the room then ending again with the boy. Complete. A little boy with shiny black hair came up to him, wanted to be twirled. Deane twirled him. Around and around in small circles his feet moved. The dark form twisted and turned, moving with the pull of air. He turned and turned, then let the boy go when he wanted to be released. A release of hands. Separate again. He stood still again, letting the sounds, the shouts, the cries surround him, engulf him. He let solitary demands and questions reach him. Two boys were fighting so he pulled them apart. He pulled their furies apart and let them be separate. They left him standing there. The sun was gone, unable to reflect gold off the bare white walls. The wind was pushing to get in, but they wouldn't let it in. He could hear the windows straining to keep it out. He talked to Zarko. His voice an echo saying, "I bet you don't know. I bet you don't know." That was all. Zarko stood there too, then moved away. Deane's words brushed the surface, could not get inside. So Zarko left. A boy came up to him, touched him, waved his arms frantically. Sporadic motion touching his shoulder, his face. He followed the boys' motions. A touch, a silent sound. Repetition. Change in movements. Eyes alight. Empty eyes alight. He looked at that light long and hard. The light was moving. He saw it move ever so slightly. The eyes formed lines of secret laughter. Lines in motion. Their arms moved. Formed more lines. Lines of laughter and motion. He laughed too. He wanted more lines. He laughed loud, showing his teeth. Their laughter moved slowly around the room. Slowly filled the room. Spilled out the windows, fighting the wind. Both of them were the center now. He covered his mouth with his long, thin fingers. He doubled up with laughter, slowly. Forward and backward his body bent. Silence. The boy stopped laughing. The boy turned and left. He left Deane standing there. Left him to be the center alone. The noises continued. They continued forcing their way into others, into himself. The sound didn't cease. He looked at eyes. Empty eyes. Eyes full of space. They held no light, no time, only space. He looked to the door. To the door with the window. He wanted to see Heather's dark face pressing against the window now. He wanted to see her dark, deep eyes again, the laughter there. But she wasn't there. He didn't know where to look.

I SHOULD GET ANGRY

I should get angry, I suppose,
act, instead of settling like salt
on this mariner's bench,
content to gaze at bobbing green breasts
of the sea's mock peace,
the mermaid's merkin tantalizingly inside.

I should get angry,
ship out for the Falklands,
laugh at the Cape's stormy horn,
taste of Angostura's bitter winds,
head west to Tonga and friendly brown flesh.
I should ship out.
I should ship out
before I sink from my bench
to the dry heat of bleached bones.

Chris Anderson



HIGHLIGHT PEAK--First Climb of the Season

Half way on a horsefly afternoon
my feet can only remind me
of the taste of green shade.
Minestrone on the fire won't fill
the holes carved by walking
through a waterfall. The same path
leads back, six miles over,
one mile down.
Behind the snow lake, true summit--
another half mile sheer.
The creek we started from
survives, thin ribbon
on this barren pale bouquet.

A. D. Zeigler

JUNE 15

A pigeon breaks away from grey chimney walls,
slips on an air current, lands on a wire. Confederate
clouds march over the ridge, a rumble and a few flashes
their only warnings. It was raining in Spokane today,
but in Butte, the sky has no energy.

For thirteen days now I've watched
Saturday crawl over the calendar. Every rivet
on the slaker tells me to wait, don't join the flame
in the kiln. Watch a few more days before you go mad.
Those pumps weren't designed to handle bone.

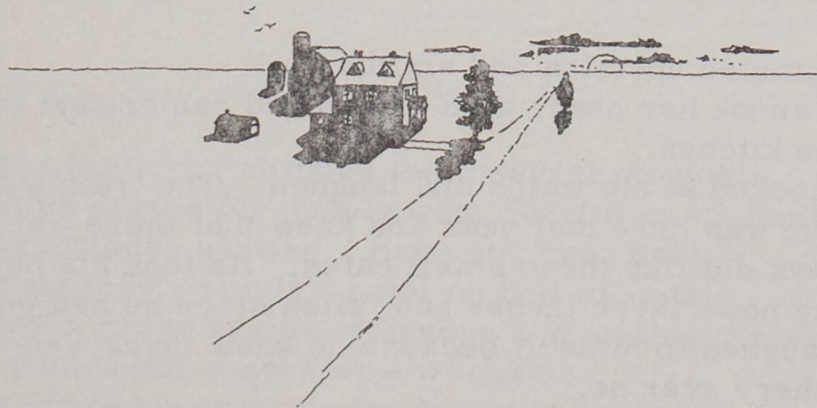
I match the day.
I'm forty-three degrees cold,
and too far east of Spokane.

Paul S. Zeigler

PLAINS PORTRAIT

Aware of the frost in his mustache, he slumps
over a small glass while his wife watches
a blind TV. Grey-eyed from too many years,
too many miles, he searches
amber puddles for ancient treasure maps.
A crumbled farm, braced by compost heaps,
watches the one road into town. Fingers
twitch the dead string a kitten killed
an hour ago. Lifting a last drop
past decayed smiles, he stops in time. The road map
shows no arterial connection.
The highway ends.

Paul S. Zeigler



CAFE

by Lance Bourquin

It was a small cafe, two men were sitting near the fireplace, playing cards. A man was sitting near the window; he could see the waitress's reflection as she moved behind the counter. She was a young woman, very attractive.

She came towards him from around the counter and handed him a menu. He didn't turn from the window.

"What time is it?" he said.

"Oh around four sir," she said. "You must be waiting for the train."

He turned from the window and took the menu. She turned to go.

"Hey," he said, "how much do you want to go upstairs with me?"

She went to the counter and walked behind it, then went over and threw a log on the fire. She didn't look at the man sitting near the window but could feel his eyes on the back of her neck. She carried a glass of water over to him.

"Your order sir," she said.

"I'll give you thirty dollars to go upstairs with me," he said.

"No," she said.

"Now don't tell me you can't use the money."

"No," she said.

"How much do you make in this dump?" he said. "I'll give you forty."

He pointed upstairs and smiled.

She shook her head, then turned and ran around the counter, then into the kitchen.

He looked at his watch and laughed. The train was due in five minutes. He was here last year and knew that there was no upstairs. But he always did like these small cafes. He took his hat and left, it was snowing now; three inches had fallen since he had entered the cafe. He laughed to himself because he knew there was no upstairs, nor would there ever be.

MACHU PICCHU

for Jenny

I

When the earth ripped like flesh
something of stones must have drifted sea miles
buried in each wrenched half
until it bulged behind Cheops' eyes
into limestone sepulchers and, centuries later,
unfolded from Virachocas fingers
into a citadel. Refuge for masons, farmers, potters.

II

Granite blocks unmortared, locked together
tighter than the knees of its Virgins.
What man held the lever, knotted the cords,
dreamed twenty ton stones into terraces,
roads, temples? Would he have dreamed so well
had he known the final persecution
would leave only the Virgins, safe and undetected,
rubbing their bodies against white ashlar,
all the secrets of their priests and grandmothers
dying with them?
Perhaps he dreamed of you Neruda,
keying words instead of stones,
and went out the next morning to finish the last wall.

III

Years late, you climbed their secret mountain,
became scribe for people who, fearful of epidemics,
had forbidden writing. Have you been back?
Neruda they've built a hotel on that mountain.
Press a razor against someone's straining throat--
the contractor maybe or a workman
who drove concrete up the two lane asphalt.
If it's not too late crush your pen
between two stones.

Malinda Finney

FEELING FOR NATURE

I'd like to have lunch with the wind, talk over the tide
with the sea, ask mountains where landslides
go, find out what gravity matters to me.

Evenings the moon and I'd go out on a spree,
hit all the dark bars to see if a glass

would like to be sand again, but this too would pass
and he'd fly away to make light for new lovers.

At dinner a great rock would accompany me and we'd cover
the earth's history from dark until now and come up

with the mystical notion that nothing is sacred to sunup.

Full of alcohol mental
and grub transcendental,
I sleep on a pillow of air

and ask why I hear nothing there.

Barrett Briggs

THE EFFIGIES

by John E. Russell

Along both long walls of the saloon, two immense mirrors exactly oppose one another, so that any scene occurring in the space between them is replicated endlessly into infinity, a diminishing series of inverse reproductions finally disappearing from sight but continuing beyond forever, regardless.

The barroom is long, well over one hundred feet, and about one-third as wide. Its interior is mostly unpainted wood which time has turned a dingy grey; the massive mirrors themselves, however, are kept spotless. The saloon's ceiling is quite distant from the floor, thirty feet or more to huge beams that, hanging in blackness high overhead, are nearly invisible. At this moment most of the saloon is dim; it is a Wednesday night, late, near midnight. Only nine people are inside. A fat bartender is polishing mugs with an enormous towel, taking up to a minute to a glass, and when finally done with each adding it to a precise row on a shelf before him, midway down the bar, directly beneath the mirror on that side. This mirror, like its duplicate across the room, begins about five feet from the floor and reaches up from there eight or nine feet more. Above the mirror right at this midpoint, not halfway to the ceiling but still high enough as to be nearly unreadable when the lighting is dull, is positioned a great clock, almost three feet in diameter. From it the number 12 is missing: only two tiny black holes in the face of the clock at that point indicate where the absent numerals once were fastened. Both of the clock's hands at this moment point straight at the vacant spot, one superimposed upon the other giving the timepiece the appearance of having but one hand.

Down the centerline of the room are spaced three huge supporting posts, one at the saloon's very epicenter, each of the others equidistant between that center and the end walls. These are not sawed beams, but rather are great tree sections, sunk below the floor of the barroom and rising to support the roof far overhead, at which point their diameter, over two feet, is scarcely less than at ground level. On these even the bark remains, except over much of their bases up to about the height of a man from the floor, where countless abrasions have over time removed much of the husk in great splotches, revealing the dark wood beneath.

Behind the bar, on the front wall of the saloon, is a small board for the posting of notices. To it a half dozen scraps of paper are clipped or tacked. One reads, "Jess, missed you Wensday. See you next week. Cris." Another has had the bottom half torn from it. The

remaining piece announces, "HELP WANTED, position available for strong young man, willing to work, see M. . . ." The rest is gone. The notice is not recent anyway: the lower part of it has curled up toward the top, which is held by three thumbtacks, and the incurved surface has a fine layer of old dust upon it.

Two doors--a large entry some six feet wide, with two swinging panels, at the front, and a smaller egress in the back wall--afford passage to and from the saloon. The bar and its long counter run the full length of the left side of the room (as viewed from the front door). The bartender can only enter or leave the bar space at either end, by lifting hinged sections of the counter out of his way.

Of the other eight persons within this saloon, two are at the bar. One stands, most of his weight on his left leg, the right poised on a shiny and dented footrail. He holds in his right hand a glass, half full, which he has raised halfway to his mouth but no further. He looks at the drink, or through it, and seems lost in thought or reverie. About eight yards down the bar a second man sits on a long-legged stool. He too is motionless, and stares down into a drink before him, eyes focussed not on it but on eternity or on nothing, he looking as though he need but raise his gaze to be able to see to the very last effigy in the opposed mirrors.

Twenty-one tables are scattered, without pattern, around the remainder of the room. Only two are occupied. At one, near the great center lodgepole, two men, each of whose ages may be around forty, converse quietly with a black-haired woman ten years or so younger. She is tired, though, and in the harsh light looks nearer the men's age. The men are sitting across the table from one another, the woman between them, she facing the rear of the barroom. From the front door, she is hidden from view behind the huge supporting pole, the men on either side appearing then to be talking only to themselves. Their conversation is very muted, inaudible from more than a few feet away. The second occupied table is situated nearer the door, not far from the bar and the still man standing there. This table is the largest in the room, circular like all the others but with a notch at one point of its circumference large enough to accommodate a sitting man, a card dealer. This position is empty, but elsewhere around the table sit three men who are quietly, but intently, playing a game of poker that appears to have been going on for a long time.

A young man, not much more than twenty but whose shaggy brown hair and untrimmed moustache add several years to his age, is shuffling the cards. He sits with his back to the bar, his right side to the front door. Scuffed boots, dusty levis, and a tan shirt, the two upper buttons of which are not fastened, are his raiment. The noise he produces while mixing the cards is the loudest in the saloon at the moment. He shuffles with quick, practiced motions. A single card then

falls from the pack, landing face up in the sawdust of the floor. It is the trey of clubs. An arm drops down, long fingers retrieve the errant card and place it atop the rest of the deck. Three times more, the unkempt youth shuffles the pack, then sets the neat stack in front of a man across the table. This man is perhaps thrice the age of the first, a bit more neatly attired but not much so, a bit smaller in physical size. His left hand holds his dark grey vest approximately over his heart. Directly below the clutched hand, nearly hidden from view by the table, the man wears a large belt buckle which is perhaps three inches high, four and a half long, on which has been engraved either the letter O or a simple circle. A small section of this figure is missing, however, having been worn smooth at its apex. The face of the older man appears haggard, and he has not shaved for two days. He runs his right hand through his long grey hair, then reaches for the cards, cutting the deck about two-thirds down. His hand trembles very slightly, and as it pulls back, stops to pick up a drink which is on the table, raises it to the old man's lips, then replaces it on the table. The rim of this glass has a small crack in it, one not so large, however, as to render it useless. A watch on the man's wrist is held by a leather strap which is split across in several places from years of wear. It still holds well, nonetheless. The hand touches the stubble on the old man's face briefly, then rubs his red, tired but sleepless eyes, as though to efface the sight and fact of the card table on which his piles of chips have very slowly but inexorably dwindled while those of his opponents have grown by the same proportion. The old eyes glance at the black face of the third man.

The negroid visage is made even more calignous by the brim of a large, dark grey hat, the crown of which is rimmed with a one-inch white band broken in front with a black bow. The countenance is almost invisible in the saloon's dim light except for flashing white eyeballs and ivory teeth seen in a rare, almost sardonic grin. The black male's age, like his face, is unfathomable: it could be anywhere at all over thirty. He returns the oldster's glance with what looks, at a short distance, like a smile. But seen close it is not a smile, rather a widening of the mouth which is almost malevolent in aspect. Strong black hands reach across an ocean-green tabletop for the five cards which the first, youngest, man has just dealt, and bring them close to the dark face. Only the front of one--the mustachioed profile of the jack of spades--is visible to the white eyes. One at a time, pink-nailed fingers bring into view the remaining four: the seven of clubs, the six of diamonds, the five of hearts, the four of spades. The big negro bets, throwing a single red chip into the table's center; the old man matches the bet wordlessly. His young opposite fingers a rose chip for several seconds, then stacks a blue one atop it and pushes both out.

"Raise," is all he says, green eyes glancing first at the black

man, then at the older.

Immediately and indifferently the wearer of the hat matches the raise, but the old man hesitates, then finally, almost tiredly, puts in a blue.

"Cards?" asks the young dealer.

The black glances at the spade jack, then throws it face down onto the table, takes the replacement dealt him and without seeing it puts it into the middle of the four he has kept. The elder man takes three new cards; the younger, with a brief smile, deals himself two.

"Twenty," announces the negro, throwing out two blue chips. The old man, as though compelled against his will to remain in the hand, calls the bet, as does the dealer, expressionlessly. The black again brings his cards near his shadowed face and begins to look them over, one at a time. The third one is the three of clubs, and he throws all five, faces up, onto the playing surface. "Straight, seven-high," his deep voice declares loudly, and although the sound is almost startling in the big room, no one else glances toward the table. A bartender, his back to the bar, is meticulously polishing mugs with such deliberate slowness that his movements are almost imperceptible. One customer sits motionless at the counter, staring as if drunk or hypnotized into a drink before him; another stands frozen, holding in one hand a glass descended halfway from mouth to bar top, the drink arrested there, the man seeming to be contemplating the potion and nothing else. At another table a trio, two men and a woman, are engrossed in quiet conversation, speaking in tones so low it seems hardly possible they could hear one another but must only be reading lips. None of these has taken the slightest notice of the card game, or indeed appears to be at all aware of its transpiring although the three men have been playing for some time.

"The straight beats me," the old man confesses, sighing and dropping his hand to the table, open. It contains three nines and two unmatched cards. The young man says nothing and remains without expression, but tosses his five cards face down onto the table. He then gathers in the scattered pack, forms one stack and hands it to the dark man on his left, telling him, "Your deal."

As the negro picks up the deck, his eyes take in the appearance of the back of the top card. It has a simple black border the thickness of a heavy pencil line, enclosing a light grey surface on which is printed a single black, too-round horseshoe; so exaggerated is the circularity of the reproduction that its two calked heels very nearly touch. On the middle finger of the black man's left hand is affixed a gold ring, which is not a complete enclosing band, however, but is an open circlet with a small gap, on its underside, of about three millimeters. It is the only such cingulum worn by any of the three men, except for the cracked strap holding a ticking watch to the right wrist of the old man. Powerful

black fingers separate the cards into two equal stacks, then fold them speedily into one mass. They do this three times, then the right hand offers the newly mixed deck to the young man, whose green eyes look briefly into the shadowed ones of the black man. He then cuts the deck deep, leaving only six or seven cards untouched. The negro takes these, sets them atop the remainder, and begins to deal, slowly, until each man has five cards. No man touches his until he has received the full number. Those dealt the old man have fallen, by chance, in a near perfect pentagon shape, the corner of one overlapping that of the next except at the point nearest the dealer, where a slight opening has been left. The aged man looks for a few seconds at the accidental pentagram, then shrugs very slightly, snuffles and takes up the hand. Neither of the other players seems to notice his actions.

The old man takes a sip from his drink, then sets it down approximately two inches off the spot where it had rested. There is a wet circle on the tabletop at the former place, a circle now intersected, across a few degrees of its circumference, by the bottom of the replaced glass. The old man inspects his cards. They include four hearts, the highest of which is the ten, and the other red ten, the diamond. He hesitates, then from his diminished array of chips takes a single blue between left thumb and forefinger. The hand does not tremble but the chip itself shakes slightly, like a leaf about to loosen and fall from a dying tree branch. He puts forward the round token.

The young man stares for several seconds at the bet, then asks, grinning at the old man, "Well, getting a little reckless now, ain't we?" The younger has not intended the query to sound as malicious as it does, but he says nothing further to soften the comment. The grey-haired man meets the youth's gaze, then says only, "Mebbe it's my turn to win once, eh? You call the bet?" The large negro meanwhile says nothing, only his mouth widening in nearly a diabolical leer.

"Oh sure," says the young man, "and just to keep up the interest, make it ten more." He tosses out two blue chips, and both look at the third man. Still grinning beneath the hat brim, the big black casually throws in two blues--then takes a third and puts it in also. "Raise you both," the bass voice announces. The old man appears nervous but determined, and quickly matches both raises. The shaggy-haired young man unconcernedly calls the raise of the negro, then stares across the table at the old man, who clears his throat and tells the black, "One card." He discards, face down, the diamond ten, breaking his meagre pair to try for a fifth heart. His young opponent also takes one new card, and glances at it, but shows no facial signs whatever. Now the black man, grinning yet--an almost wicked grimace when seen from very close--sets down the deck of cards, and produces from his left shirt pocket a huge cigar. From the same pocket he takes a wooden match which he scratches on the table's edge, then--seeming hardly to

touch the match's sulphurous flame to the square tip of the long cheroot --lights it and gets it going almost at once with a single puff. He exhales a reeking grey cloud of smoke in the direction of the old man, who coughs once and fights down a swelling spasm of choking as the stench of the burning weed insults his nose and lungs. The black looks down at him a moment, then picks up his hand, scrutinizes it, plucks out two cards and replaces them with two from the top of the deck. With the evil black cigar clamped in the right side of his mouth, he tells the old man from between his teeth, "Your bet." Dirty blue smoke has formed above the grey head into a faintly luminous wreath.

With stinging eyes the oldster peers at the single new card--then feels his tired heart leap elatedly as he recognizes a red queen: two mirror-images trapped on a single card and joined at one common waist, two regal heads whose sad eyes and unsmiling cupid's mouths replicate each other exactly, the saving queen--of hearts! Trying hard to mask his excitement, the old man stacks four blue chips, representing more than half the remainder of his stake, and sets them in the center of the table. But the others seem unconcerned. The young man looks at length at his cards, and finally matches the bet--then, gauging the remnant of the aged man's few red and white chips, says, "I'll raise you all you got left."

Between the men young and old, the hooded black face is silent for several seconds, then with another puff of acrid cigar smoke toward the old one, the negro declares in his sonorous voice, "I was gonna raise you myself, but if that's all you got, it's all you got. Here," and he shoves toward the table center an amount equal to the bet and the raise.

The old man's elation begins slowly to metamorphose to a fright that is almost readable on his wrinkled face. He feels desperately cheated, hoodwinked by fate, and suddenly he looks much older. He begins to pant slightly, but his jaw tightens. Blowing some of the fetid cigar smoke back at the negro, he plucks the last of his chips from in front of him and moves them away quickly as though they have suddenly become something he cannot live without but cannot stand to possess longer. Clutching his five cards, he looks defiantly from black-rimmed eyes first at the passive face of the young man, then into the shaded, smoky pupils of the big negro. He drops his gaze then, and puts his cards down. "Heart flush," he whispers.

The black takes the rancid cigar from his mouth and laughs aloud almost eerily, but curiously only folds his hand and inserts it into the deck of cards. A lightning flash of hope strikes the old man, but his young opposite asks him quietly, "What's your highest card, there?" The old man coughs, then replies quickly, almost testily, "Why, the queen; you can see that yourself." Then his pounding heart begins to slow down as though engulfed by glacial ice, as the young man,

through narrowed eyes now almost catlike, catches and holds his gaze as he lays down his hand, one card at a time, from right hand to left hand to table: the duece of spades, the five of spades, the eight, the nine. The steady young gaze now grows even more intense, almost hypnotic, and the old man knows with final horror what is next. With two fierce identical heads joined to one muscular body, two left hands wielding gleaming swords, the triumphant king of spades thunders to the table top!

"My flush beats yours, old man," declares the young antagonist. "You lose; go home." And the winner and the shrouded black man begin to chuckle together, then to roar aloud, as the beaten old man shakes his head, then attempts to rise while his face becomes an icy white and his wet eyes change to two flat reddish mirrors of terror. He nearly gains his feet, then lunges forward and crumples onto the table, ending slumped atop its ocean-green surface with crying eyes fixed on the shriveled right wrist where his old watch shows exactly midnight, the big hand having overtaken the small one masking it from sight so that at this moment there appears to be but one hand on the timepiece, as hideous laughter becomes a howling shriek ascending into the midnight-black beams and rafters overhead; while the monstrous silent mirrors between themselves pass the scene and its actors back and forth at light-speed, but in images becoming ever smaller and more distant, until the awful light and the devilish laughter fade away entirely.

BEWARE THE BASTARD POEM

They turned on the porchlight
when they heard the noise and found it starving.
Idiot innocence dripped from the small eyes,
but none could fondle the little bastard.
With blind arms they lent it love:
vitamins and sunshine,
hearty liquids were urged,
the finest organic juices.
They bathed it, bought fresh air, delicate robes
and sat down to late night T. V.

While they slept, he took off in the Lincoln,
totaled it before he'd reached Bayonne.

Niles Choper



ON STARVING

For one thing, I sleep more--
at a disadvantage, perhaps.
In my twelve hours I
have remembered enough for
the holiday crossing
and I witness prayerless
morning, sunset,
in what is less a river really
than a moat.
You could not say that I have missed
what anyone else is offered:
I distinguish between Rimbaud's
drunken one, say,
and that gamey baby I am in poor Eliza's
icy arms.
Ice is ice in sunrise over
the river or moonrise
over the river.
At worst, without ennui, having
to contend with the worse metaphor
this sullen hunger
requires that I sleep more.

Edmund Apffel

ADORNMENT

for Mary Coleman, O. S. B.

From the balance of your ear
My voice has fallen. I hang on,
Fingers numb, to the ring of white gold
Vowed and sealed with ash and holy oil
To the lobe of your ear.

I have been your adornment for years
Fearing faces who eye their knowledge
Of you as fool, and me also. The smile
I return dries my teeth brittle . . . lord,

Hear me: I dangle like a cross on a girl's neck,
The chain coming apart at every link
How long will my eyes be veiled
From hands waiting my sudden fall?

My clasped fingers are losing all connection.
The spiral notebook of my inner life
Is returned weekly, a note in red
Praising clarity of expression.

I am hilarious lord, laugh at me.
I have no life but yours; but what am I:
Costume jewelry? I am woman, body and blood.
To the depth of your ear my voice cries:
Hear me, see me, touch me.

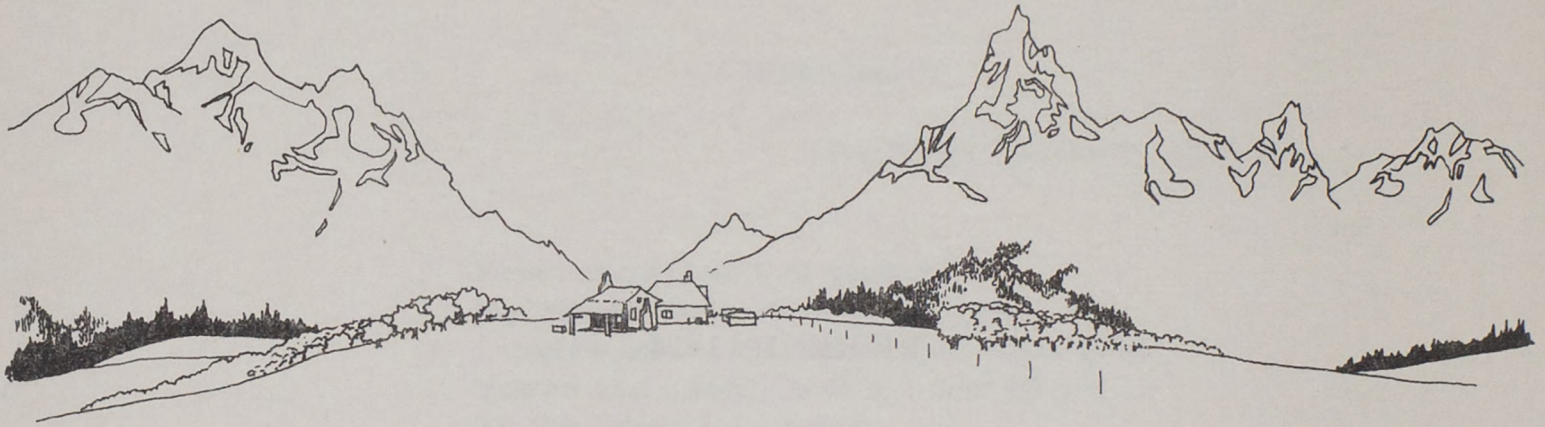
Thomas Winkel

RILKE 1913-14

Rilke, thinner than porcelain,
spent the winter in Paris, writing
poems of translucent clarity,
bundled in coats, gathered around by friends
attempting to weaken the gusts of wind
that rattle the onion paper.

Leaves, like that dry blowing,
like that rattling of paper, foretell
the descent of winter in the harsh
rasping voices of the dried leaves.
Retain, as far as possible,
behind whatever barricade,
the poet, lest like porcelain
he rattle in the rising wind
and break upon the clear breeze
into an old transparency, there
before us in the swirling snow.

Kevin Pryne



ASTRONOMY DOMINE

by j w hilgeman

a large orchard. it covers sloping ground with a small house that is white at its seeming upward apex. the trees spread outward & downward gently like a subtle cone surface & are flanked by forest that in turn is flanked by rugged, ripping mountains that spring startlingly up & that is in turn flanked by sky. it is from inside the small house that he looks outward. it is late afternoon when the colours & other elements seem to blend self-indulgently into themselves. sun of course is seen to be coming through the windows & mottles the interior. he looks out to where the treetops turn yellowgreen in the sun. macintosh. transparent. delicious in a back clearing, obscured by the forest. he hears the creek that has fed the orchard like a sixth sense & the poplar trees near the pond. also smells from flowers. peonies. lilacs, elderly flowers. he prefers to go out now, with a thought of walking the groves. a last transit of the grounds. a basket of transparents gleam near the door & he takes one in his hand & is out the door, walking easily into the nearby branches that are beginning to hang low as if weighted with their troubles of production. the apple is rubbed with the cloth of his shirt & then dangles handwise like a small, glimmering planet.

(there was this old lady. widow. husband dead under the apple-blossoms. someone somewhere came & took her away to live. lots of

talk about this back to nature business lately. lots. back to nature . . . the cane bumped emphatically under the old woman's smile. no problems, someone to take good care of his trees. lots of talk about this back to nature business lately. lots. stomp stomp. & so he moved on, it was in early spring, dropped out & packed without a sound. the woods. does anyone know where the woods are? under quiet suns. there had been this list. a very private list, all under the file YOU CANNOT PETITION. college as a polite way to go insane. this girl had been borne off in a forcefield of ice. some notation of freaking out on drugs, he had held himself on the bed. last visions of fiends coming out of the night of the demigods of his dreams of shreds of trees & buildings that turned to angry frogs snakes lizards frotheyed animals bent on ripping him apart, sunsets that turned to groaning, atomic epitaphs & crowds screaming, wanting his body cut up into T-bone steaks, starships, castaway stellar hulks, mescaline starships filled with limp silver corpses, capsules & command modules piloted by cavalrymen in NASA uniforms, tracking their moans into the deepest, howling nebulae of brave new space, the last streaming remnants of his special list, it was a very special list, YOU CANNOT PETITION. he remembered white. frowning faces, a hospital. YOU CANNOT PETITION he wanted to repeat but they had held his mouth down. the woods. does anyone know where the woods are? the night fled from him-)

a grove of delicious trees comes to mind, of an early day spent cleaning the flumes that kept the trees alive & sucking. they were like small creeks, the flumes, like arteries for snakes & frogs that croak in the night, their grassy channels grown mossy as the wood sidings turned back to dirt. an early day spent cleaning the flumes- the figure walked down out of the forest. he dressed like one who lived an easy, a rural life, who walked easily & dressed in cloth of an indescribably fine weave. the cleaner of flumes only noticed him when he was up close but did not give a start, as if approached by summer literati, one who came to these parts with separate peaces in mind. a snake was seen gliding from the tread of the stranger who neared the gurgling flume & the cleaner with rakes in hand.

"i would like some cider if you would be so kind." that was all he said.

a last transit of the grounds. the coolest place on earth was an applebin in the afternoon. then a cellar carpeted with cider casks. this rates a cool second. he had given the stranger the smooth cool bottle like a saint passing holy water out of a vault, as it had turned out. last transits are not complete without walking to the delicious

grove where the stranger had again dipped a hand in a fastflowing flume, drank & offered a simple thanks before he walked to the edge of the forest, bottle-in-hand turned & disappeared. the cleaner of flumes had thought only of tourists. something about a stranger's eyes lingered for the day, as it had been, in keeping with last transits, he left the grove. water gurgled & a frog hops. the smell of apples on the ground is present, eleysium of bears. he leaves the grove with a thought on eyes. the apple dangles planet-like in his hand. this is his last day on earth.

remember an evening after a day on the flumes. the night came slow, a sound from the mountains, of the creek coming down to the trees. evening dying a slow mountain death, chirping cricket-like through an old screen door. a noise & he looked up. a stranger in clothing of an indescribably fine weave stood at the screen, an empty, clean bottle in his hand.

"the bottle," he said. then a smile that opened the door.

the stranger sat with crossed legs, like the still photographs of so many turn-of-the-century Europeans of near-noble lineage. something about those eyes.

a faint uneasiness stirred, thoughts of YOU CANNOT PETITION & thoughts of asking of intent, a slight stirring of thoughts on cosmic immigrants as it was known tactlessly or not bad drugs did that to young minds. the stranger drew a cigarette case & asked for a receptacle of ashes. he blew smoke rings in perfect, unflawed succession.

a silent, conversational ellipse wrapped the room.

the stranger's eyes. that was it . . . a long time ago he remembered some thought, some thought before the whiteout or was it an old friend that had told him in that tone that could only be attached to talking on these things, so scientists had dawdled in formulations proving time warp, big fucking deal or something like that. stock college reaction, go to college, learn to play god in four six eight easy steps & that had been before the whiteout, before he felt the age of his body as if it were soaked in centuries of chronological wine. he looked at the stranger. it would be very stupid indeed to think of YOU CANNOT PETITION, god & madmen all holding to the same premise in the end, all holding to the same nontitled, cosmic apple blues, & so it was about time to get off . . .

"yeah." small thoughts of an old myth that had tried to claim him. some light-hearted Lucifer, no deposit- no return.

"yeah. any time."

the afternoon was nearly gone. he had even thought, absurdly enough, of reasons for leaving, as if in need of justification. there wouldn't be much to take along. outside the night came slow. evening dying a slow mountain death. the eyes. the eyes of the stranger. that was it. there were no whites, that was it. only the enlarged pupil, iris & retina.

a noise & he looked up. a stranger in clothing of an indescribably fine weave stands at the screen.

"one moment," he said to the stranger. "just one moment. it's these." he pointed to the basket of apples. the stranger nodded & a tight, metallic atmosphere began to envelope the building.

"i'm going to take them along," he said to the stranger. "that okay? i want to eat them on the way."

THE PILOT WHALES OF FORT PEARCE

They come in the morning when
farmers are still in their socks,
executives in bed. Their eyes
stuck like leeches on rocks.
These whales die all day on the beach.
Men and sea can't keep them back,
the moon has lost its magic. By noon
a tired ocean lets go.

On the sand a boy plays with stones,
ugly starfish, castles in the mud.
Today he sailed to China, caught
Columbus and his men, hounded
pirates til their final rest
came twenty fathoms under green.
The sea's a thousand miles away.

Once on land the fight is lost
to these whales. Fishermen go
home to supper and wives,
leaving a day's catch in the sea.
Science has its data, the world
its perfume, and the Pilots
a piece of beach to rot.

Tomorrow runs will be good,
men again pleased
with the sea: no more
sweating for no pay. Boys might
forget their castles or the clouds.
Ocean will come to clean sand,
a sea-breeze to cool Fort Pearce.

John Kenley

AN OLD INDIAN IN SPRING

'Til blue clouds break
and antelope are not sprawled,
bent beside the trails
of indians hunting larger herds
from the front of an iron horse.

A totem carved tree stands
not wanting to watch the white snow
turn mud under repetitious feet,
explaining an ancient dance,
forgetting cold beads
sown on unsold moccasins
undusted through winter
spent beside burning trash barrels
of twice licked cans. I stood
as if I could help with his burning.
He stood in the smoke
of yesterday's paper turning pages
in the thirsty flames.
Fall's burlap soles worn through
showing feet tied with leather.

Crutching, stiff legged he pointed
at the shitter door, turned away
'No padlock. It's near full.'
back to his pale fire
without asking what I know.

jd miller

A BLUEPRINT FOR ABORTION REPEAL

by Joan Uda

Not long ago, a bill was presented to the Montana legislature: House Bill 554, which would have removed abortion from the penal code and placed it where it properly belongs, as a matter of conscience for the woman involved, subject only to the conditions that such abortions be performed by qualified physicians under suitable hospital or clinical conditions, and that records (which would not be available to the general public) be kept. This bill was killed in committee, where it apparently received most perfunctory attention. From afar, it appears that the members of the committee did not believe that there is much popular support for such a bill in Montana today.

This may be so. I suspect, however, that there is much potential popular support which hasn't surfaced yet. On any controversial issue, it isn't easy to be among the first proponents of change to stand up and be counted. And abortion is certainly one of our more touchy issues; it produces violent emotional reaction--and little more--in many people. Nor is it pleasant to be labeled "murderer," "Nazi," "Commie," or "anti-Christ," as pro-repeal people often are.

But--though House Bill 554 met its doom in stifling silence--another "repeal" bill will come before the legislature in two years. There is great hope that it will get intensive committee hearings before the public and intelligent debate on the House and Senate floors. Some of us even believe that next time it can pass.

As I see it, then, those of us who already strongly support repeal have a fairly well-defined job to do in the next two years. We must reach the Montanans who are our potential allies, we must convince a majority of them that repeal is necessary, and we must move many of them to express their support where it counts--to the legislators.

I believe that most Montanans are potentially our allies, since I believe that most Montanans fall in one--or several--of the following categories. First, there are those who are basically in agreement with us, to some degree, but who feel the time isn't ripe. Or, they may not want to be targets for verbal abuse or harassment. Or, they may fear repeal, thinking that a limited reform bill is wiser, safer, more manageable.

Then there are those whose "gut reaction" tells them that abortion is categorically wrong. This may be because of religious training, or because abortion, discussed by angry opponents, sounds a lot like "murder"--or for any of a thousand other reasons. These people don't

really want to consider the repeal data and arguments: their position is unexamined and they seem to wish to keep it that way.

Finally there are those--probably the majority--who are essentially uncommitted to either side. Perhaps they don't see that the issue has direct bearing on their own lives. Or they may have put off considering it because the entire problem seems not quite "nice." Or, they may feel that thus far, arguments on both sides are equally convincing. Or, they may be caught in the ancient dilemma of when does the meeting of sperm and ovum become a human being.

Outside these groups of potential allies is another group whom we will never convince--and I have enough faith in the people of Montana, and in human nature generally, to believe that it is a small though noisy minority. These are the people who believe that abortion is wrong, and who also believe that they have the right to legislate their own morality (or gut reactions) upon the rest of us. We may as well leave these people alone--they'll find us--and concentrate upon reaching the others.

The problem I'd like to take up, then, is how we can, in our daily lives for the next two years, be most effective in reaching and convincing our potential friends. My comments are based on lessons learned last spring in Honolulu, when I witnessed an extraordinary thing: Hawaii repealed its antique abortion statute. I say extraordinary not only because Hawaii was the first state of the Union to do this, but also because scant weeks before the bill's passage almost nobody--apparently including Governor John Burns, a Roman Catholic--believed that it had the slightest chance of surviving both houses to reach the governor's office. Another interesting fact is that State Senator Vincent Yano, the man who probably did most to squash a reform bill in the previous session, was the same man who led the fight to pass the repeal bill. Senator Yano too is a Roman Catholic. And to this moment, I'm sure, Senator Yano believes that abortion is wrong. This belief caused him to fight reform in the earlier session. But in the interim he recognized the principle which forced him, as a man of private and public integrity, not only to support but to struggle for repeal. This principle is, simply, that no private individual or group--including anyone's church--has a right to use the law to enforce its morality upon the public. To his credit, Governor Burns took a similar position.

Several "lessons" are evident already. The most obvious is that we shouldn't assume that Roman Catholics are impervious to reason. And many devout Catholics take the separation of church and state quite seriously.

Nearly as obvious and more important is this issue of legislating morality. Again and again in Hawaii, we found it necessary to repeat that repeal leaves the decision to the woman herself. Repeal leaves the law silent about who shall or shall not have an abortion. If a woman believes that abortion is wrong, then for her it is wrong and

she need never consider abortion. If another woman believes that it is unfortunate but necessary, then she may have an abortion, performed under optimal medical conditions. Repeal places the moral burden where it belongs: on the shoulders of the individual who must live with the consequences of her decision. The state cannot assume these consequences--why then should the state dictate the decision which leads to them? If one examines recent world history, one learns that the more authoritarian a government is, the more it tends to pass laws which rob the individual of the rights and responsibilities of personal moral decisions. Contrary to the opinion of some opponents, it is this kind of robbery which allows an entire nation to avoid seeing gas chambers and crematoria. Personal moral responsibility is never enhanced by laws which strip the individual of the responsibility for making moral decisions.

Another "lesson" is that many people will listen to a reasonable, well-documented case, presented quietly, with sincerity and conviction. These same people often will not listen to stridency, hysteria, or overstatement. One woman who testified at the Senate abortion hearing in Hawaii made a most telling comment. She came to the hearing, she said, convinced that pro-repeal people were vicious, wicked, bent upon destroying the moral fabric of our society. What she had learned from earlier testimony was that this was not at all true. "I still think abortion is wrong," said she, "but I know now that they are honest and sincere." This was a small victory for repeal, but it was more than balanced by Senator Yano's drastic change of position. The point is that most people are offended by gross emotionalism, and most people will listen to voices which are moderate, sensible, and well-informed. Some of these people will join us.

Related to this is the realization that it is unnecessary and usually does more harm than good for the repeal effort to respond directly to any kind of baiting or name-calling by the more emotional members of the opposition. Somebody calls abortion "the slaughter of the innocents," or a "legalized murder mill," or "the revolting action of butchering a little child." Somebody else says that pro-repeal people are subject to "diabolical influence," or that we will "outdo Hitler" in our "plans for abortion, sterilization, and euthanasia." Or we are charged with wanting to create "rivers of blood." Often it's tempting--and easy--to dismantle the attack, or the attacker, verbally. But we noticed in Hawaii that such attacks ultimately harm the opponent's cause, if we meet them with dignified silence. In fact, we observed that the longer we persisted in our quiet though determined educational efforts, the more strident, hysterical, and absurd the opposition became. And the louder and wilder they yelled, the more sane and responsible we appeared.

It is important, too, that we make it clear that we are acting out of the quiet courage of our convictions about what is best for our

society. Personal axe-grinding has no place in this concerted effort, since it understandably makes our motives suspect. This is why it is usually best, even when we see a really choice piece of assertive illogic from the opposition--"A woman is privileged to bear children in dignity or sorrow, the same as a policeman is privileged to carry a gun. This privilege doesn't allow the policeman the right to shoot anyone he wishes anymore than a woman has the right to terminate the life she is privileged to carry in her womb."--that we refrain from anything which resembles an ad hominem reply. We are not out to "get" anyone. Further, many of these choice items are so patently absurd that they need no response. And even when the illogic is so subtle or the misinformation so crucial that we feel a point by point rebuttal is necessary, we should speak to the issues with clear reasoning and strong supportive data, and be careful to treat the person himself, if we mention him at all, with judicious respect. Snide asides--"If the kindly, humane doctor would ever look at the very real problems . . ."--merely soothe our own ruffled nerves.

People finally do notice sneaky, underhanded--and personal--attacks. Most people can also spot chop-logic, especially when it is juxtaposed with real logic, presented in a moderate tone. And we have a very great strength denied to the other side by the very nature of the issues and available data. Ultimately almost all--and perhaps all--of the reasonable arguments and reliable data lead to one conclusion: repeal. I know of no single person in this or any other state (or country) who has put aside his own "gut reactions" and who has carefully studied the reasoning and data of both sides who has reached any other conclusion. When the evidence is all in, the opponents are up against the wall with nowhere to turn but to "I think abortion is wrong!" This is probably why, as public discussion increases, as more thoughtful information begins to reach more people, the opposition tends to grow more shrill, more vituperative, more personal, more irrational. They seem to know (or to sense) that their last appeal is: "My position is right, and I want the law to support it!" By implication they are also saying, "And I don't give a damn what your position is--if it isn't the same as mine it is wrong! You must obey my law!" Most people see this as morally indefensible, no matter how you slice it. We shouldn't be surprised or taken off guard and egged into foolish response by it, however; unfortunate as it is, it is highly unlikely to hurt our cause in the places that matter.

What all of this points to, I believe, is that we must first know our own position thoroughly. This involves learning the various aspects of the case for repeal, and also that we turn the most meticulous scrutiny upon our personal convictions to make sure that we are not guilty of emotionalism and unexamined response. We must, in short, educate ourselves before we can effectively educate others.

Then we must assess our audience of potential allies and find sound rhetorical principles by which to address them. We must look for common ground--things that we and our audience can agree upon, and upon which we can then build further agreement. We must not try to convince by simple assertion--making a statement without reason and evidence to back it up. We must try to avoid emotion-laden appeals. (Once in a while, an expression of sincere and restrained emotion from the heart is quite appropriate, and probably unavoidable for those of us who care deeply about abortion-related suffering. And if we've created a general atmosphere of quiet, reasonable, and responsible discussion, a few such expressions won't hurt our effort.) But we must, I think, keep our discussion as completely ethical as we can humanly manage. We must not over-state our case; we must not stretch our statistics; we must admit that our opinions are just that--our opinions (we may make a case, however, that our opinions are as well-informed as we can possibly make them); we must admit that our estimated figures (such as for the number of illegal abortions per annum in Montana) are just that--estimated figures (though we may and probably should try to explain how knowledgeable people make educated estimates); and when confronted with something we don't know, we must admit that we don't know it--no one of us can be a walking reference book. We must also try to fit our arguments to a particular audience, by searching for legitimate aspects of the larger case which will speak most directly to these individuals. This is true whether our "audience" be one person, or one thousand persons. The more diverse a group, of course, the harder it is to identify possible common ground and convincing approaches.

I believe, further, that it is a grave mistake to make the same assumptions about anti-repeal people that they tend to make about us. We must not assume--or act as if we assume--that they are stupid, evil, or unfeeling. I make this point because--again--I believe that our greatest hope for repeal is through responsible, ethical, open public discussion. Anything which promotes and enhances this kind of discussion will help our effort; anything which hinders and diminishes it can only harm.

It should go without saying that we must be positive in our approach. My observations in Hawaii convinced me that whenever possible we should dwell on the vast moral, social, economic, and interpersonal benefits of repeal rather than upon the possible dire consequences of refusing to repeal. These consequences--and some of them are dire, and cannot be ignored much longer--can be presented most convincingly, I believe, as part of a positive approach: repeal, along with the other benefits, will help us to find alternative solutions to some of the problems which have possible grim consequences.

It will also help our effort if we ourselves are positive about our chances for effecting repeal. Certainly we shouldn't come on with

smug, brazen, offensive over-confidence, but neither should we be hesitant, reluctant, pessimistic. It seems to me that we need a kind of quietly dignified yet energetic confidence which should go unmentioned but which must make itself felt as a moral force, and an energizing force, in our communities. We must, after all, not only convince our potential allies of the moral and social necessity for repeal; we must also convince them to stand up with us and make their new convictions heard in Helena. We must educate, then motivate active participation. One way we can do this is by making ourselves good company to stand up with. It's lonely and rather frightening out there on the front lines--but it's not nearly so lonely and frightening if one is in the company of strong, reliable, honest friends. And if the experience in Hawaii is any indicator at all, once we begin to achieve this, it won't take long for the ranks to grow and close behind us. Our Montana legislators may well be amazed at the depth and breadth of popular support for repeal.

Most of us believe, of course, that contraception is vastly preferable to abortion. We must also work for sound sex education, and for the wide dissemination of contraceptive information and devices. We should make it very clear--again, and again, and again--that we regard abortion as a backup measure for contraceptive failure. We must also reiterate, as often as necessary, that repeal leaves the law silent: persons who regard abortion as wrong need never consider having an abortion. No woman will be forced to have an abortion.

Abortion is the oldest and still most widespread method of birth control throughout the world, even in many countries where it is legally suppressed. Many people do not realize that even the intra-uterine device (the IUD) which has recently come into wide popular use is apparently an abortifacient--doctors believe that it works by disrupting implantation of the already fertilized ovum on the uterine wall. Thus, women using IUD's may in fact be using abortion as routine birth control.

One issue which is particularly dear to our opponents is the age-old question of whether or not an embryo, or a fetus, or a fertilized ovum, is really a human being. Basically this is a moral or philosophical problem, which depends very much on one's definition of "human being"--and there are many such definitions. It is this issue upon which our opponents stand when they call abortion "murder," and it seems useless to meet them head on in debate--they have their convictions, and we have ours, which may or may not be similar. And this brings us back, of course, to our only responsible reply to their challenge: that we do not believe that anyone should use the law to enforce his personal morality upon the people of this state. We propose repeal because repeal leaves all of us--including our opponents and ourselves--free to act according to our individual convictions.

Finally, I would like to suggest that we make an appeal to women who have had abortions, both legal and illegal, to women who have borne illegitimate children, and to women--especially to married women with living children--who would seek abortion if they were to become pregnant again, to evaluate their own experiences and convictions, and to consider giving the public the benefit of what they have suffered and learned. This suggestion is not made lightly: I realize the pain and effort involved. But there is strong evidence that such women have much to tell us, and that they can be of great help in establishing the magnitude of abortion-related problems and the depth and duration of the personal suffering involved. (I might add that there are ways in which many such statements can be made responsibly yet anonymously.)

Obviously, I believe that repeal is of crucial importance. More importantly, I also believe that we can win repeal in two years--if we put our hearts, energies, and intelligence to work now.

BRIDAL SONG (a fine excess)

No red splotch on your stupidity?
Ah, sir, you do yourself no service
Wearing white as if the easter came
And stole, before you could complain, a kiss.

You blush so delicately, ah you smile
To think perhaps your wooing tells my thought,
But though I linger here a little while,
Jewels and chairs of oak and such have brought,

Laid them here before you as if heaven
Alone were not enough my thoughts to hide;
You see, I go now; whisper softly
Sigh because you cannot be my bride.

I go, and still the passageway contains you,
Arms limp in those folds of flowing white;
Sigh on, laugh on, ah, alas, alas,
Sweet friend good night, my dear, again, good night.

Kevin Pryne

NORTH HIGGINS, 2:00 A. M.

Caution turns intersections yellow.
The depot waits. Fire hydrants squat
like forgotten drunks, deliberate
as their grins. All my dreams end here.
Stop. Rain taps on dixie cups, cadence
for thumbing fingers. This neon humm
brings wind black as an empty hand.
Lights dim. A sudden girl runs by,
the rain's tongue flicking
at her ears. Sprung doors bang
against dark. Two blocks down,
a cornered car blinks, disappears
in a wrinkle of puddles. Drains hiss
and gestures move in broken shadows.
Long after the sky quits
trees keep raining. Seed pods crunch
like squashed crickets. I turn the last
corner. The light changes. In a bar
across the street, a lone man
finds his face, twisted in a glass,
and remembers the way
it never was.

Bruce Kenison

A MATTER OF BLINDNESS

by George L. Guthridge

Jerry Krews squinted from the kitchen as a lithe vague form slipped into his apartment, an apparition of indiscriminate dots which moved against the sunlight. Dressed only in his underwear and afraid the person at the door was Mrs. Joyce coming to clean, he had snatched up his Levi's chest-high in some absurd gesture of modesty while he fumbled along the drainboard for his glasses, jostling canisters and greasy silverware. He could hear the flat slap of sandals against heels, then through the haze came a voice:

"Jerry?" More statement than question, it rose above the cadence of steps.

"Oh. Just a minute." Even after recognition Victoria appeared as the amorphous blend of her gilt-bronze tan--the sheathing of her French-Canadian heritage--and her pink shift. With her own key, a minor indulgence he had granted, she had joggled the door only slightly, aware of how he relished his mid-morning sleep. And after an all-night stint at grading finals, he was just getting ready for bed. Now she swiveled and dropped into his easychair, settled herself amid the colorwheel eyes of its afghan cover.

"I'm going to have a baby," she said, her voice morose. "It's definite." Then she sighed, that thin-lipped and immeasurably distant breath of a small dying. He immediately sensed a soft rush of nausea invade him. The kitchen walls filmed and whirled like those of a hospital during the first seconds of ether; he staggered back, his vision of Victoria suddenly lost in a golden fog. He bumped into the buffet, wheeled around and gripped the table edge, a filament buzz lighting his ears. His head drooped, yet he knew he would not faint, for he was conscious of a wet beading along his mustache and of the sour smell of his armpits. To faint would be womanly, would seem to her an irresolute thing. "Hey, are you all right?" he heard her ask impatiently.

"Of course. I'm fine." He blinked, sucked the emollient apartment air, the mute parenthesis of his back bent toward her, shielding him. Finally he righted himself, groped across the table for his shirt on the ironing board.

"Just what are we going to do, Jerry?"

He tried to speak; the words rasped in his throat, and he swallowed them. He stood trembling beside the table, his stomach in knots and the backs of his knees moist with warm sweat, staring at Victoria until her blurred image vanished beneath waves of tepid rage. He

suddenly was sorry for ever having met her and angry with himself for having remained in the city at all. "I don't know," he said at last. "How the hell should I know, anyway?"

"You're the male of the species, remember? The breadwinner, and all that."

"Well, I can't mold answers out of air because you can't remember to take your damn pills. I'm no genie. We'll just get married, I guess. I mean, that was the understanding all along, wasn't it?"

"I suppose so," she replied sullenly.

Again his fingers looked along the drainboard, then in a flash of insight he reached up and seized his glasses from their roost on the refrigerator. The plastic nose pads pinched his bridge, but he felt better. He associated his semi-blindness with a colorful forgetting; only twenty-six, he already felt like an old man with a lukewarm memory. The self-consciousness of thick glasses on a spine of a nose otherwise had fled long ago: born with glaucoma, his eyesight was deteriorating steadily, and the ounces of improvement after a fistful of operations were little compensation for a man who had run a milker with a copy of Baudelaire in his hip pocket. Now the cloudiness of the room scurried into clarity.

Eyes downcast, Victoria was slouched within the opulent hips of his reading chair, contemplating her toes, her extended yawning legs and arched ankles forming two smooth lines from the hem of her shift to her sandaled feet. Her arms were crossed just below the gentle hemispheres of her breasts, her dress gathered like thought beneath her hands. And stacked precariously on an arm of the chair were his dog-eared paperbacks: Wordsworth, Crabbe, Donne's Selected Meditations. Muscles straining, Jerry cocked himself up on each foot and worked his alternate legs into his levi's, drew the tight bleached-out denim over his buttocks and tucked in the angular bulge of his sex, then pawed at the zipper.

"Why can't you just sit down to do that?" she asked. He ignored the remark, ducked through the kitchen archway and crossed the livingroom, bent and kissed the crooked alley of skull where her hair was parted down the middle.

"All right, you're pregnant," he said condescendingly. Solemn, she did not look up; the delicate calligraphy of her eyeliner was smeared, the muted voice of earlier tears. It made the stony rhythm of her outward complacency endearing. Her woman odors rose to him, the sweet-oil perfume on her black Canuck hair and on her thighs--the smells of small freedoms--as though within that unconscious softness there breathed an annealment of heart, a mending of passion. Her odors were stronger than emotions. And bowed over Victoria, he suddenly felt the riptides of her despondency and dammed frustration swell from her and wash through his own blood-flesh. For an unblemished instant

they once again were lovers. Then she shifted her weight to the opposite hip, and Jerry realized that within the bud inside her, within their union, there existed a definite separation. The awful paradox of her pregnancy shone glassy in her evasive downcast eyes. He knew that when his siphoned communion with her drained, then never again would the width and breadth of his heart parallel hers. Her lids pulsed and lifted, and at once he witnessed the mirror of her eyes. He shivered slightly, then his larynx throbbed and the words marched across his lips as of their own accord. "You're certain you're pregnant," he said.

She nodded. "For God's sake, Jerry, why else would I be here? I had a test and everything. Of course I'm certain. Even if nothing else is."

"Meaning what? What else?"

"Oh, things," she said to the wall. "You for one. You haven't so much as phoned since Thursday. I don't like the way you've been acting lately. I don't like it at all. You're so moody."

"Me? Hell. You fluctuate like a damn chameleon." He recrossed the room, this time to the window, tugged at the shade. The end of it whacked the window frame even though he kept his thumb ringed through the lifesaver on the sash. Again he was aware of his armpits; he stunk of sweat, lack of sleep. Below was a narrow tongue of lawn banked on both sides by struggling flower gardens. Jerry stared at the windows of the adjacent apartment house until the reflection of his own building stirred distortedly in the glass, a perpetual charade of reflected windows, he knew, if he could only see it. And suddenly he felt his old anxiety knead him, his conclusion that the self-assurance provided by the city's ophthalmologists was not indemnity enough for his having relinquished his half-ownership in the dairy back home in Osmond.

"Would you quit avoiding the question? What are you staring at, anyway?"

"That first day you walked into my classroom I picked you out as a slut," he answered in a monotone, his nose pressed against the glass. "Those go-ahead eyes and that leather skirt hiked up to your ass." He recalled her uplifted chin and the one book she cradled like an heirloom Bible within the crook of her arm. Sartre. She had raised a lanky arm when he began lecturing on Yeats, wanted to argue Sartre's concept of history as against the poet's. Jerry had dismissed the question as impertinent; Victoria's arm had coiled back onto her lap, and never again did Sartre enter their conversations. "I loved you more then," he said. "And I wanted you."

The sunlight was spilling down against the window, he shut his eyes. He wanted her to leave, he needed a bath and some sleep, some time to shave the loose stubble from his mind. Yet if she left now she

might leave for good, and there was some splendid element she possessed which was like the egg in that it held for him those seasons on the farm, some basic electricity alive within her that sustained him. In her narrow lips, in the habitual beating of her eyelids, and perhaps in that inhuman inconsistency she had exhibited at the faculty picnic, when she sliced tomatoes with a breadknife yet burned the hamburgers, there was embodied a sacredness he only obliquely understood. I, am I, am I, am I, he had told himself before, and without her these integers of myself are an infinite progression, and despairing. The flesh of our dreams mirrors us. No, he could not lose her. He had loved her once, and still did. "You seemed more alive then," he continued, "full of . . . full of come." Sweating again, he immediately regretted having spoken. His lips remained open except at the corners, where his mouth was driest.

"Well, aren't we the badmouth lately. The young brash intellectual just up from the farm."

"Oh, shutup!" He spun around, started for her. But a crystalized venom was glazed in her eyes; she had a greater hate, a greater fear. Jerry checked himself, a ragged fury steeping in his throat.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that. I was just trying to . . ."

"English instructor has affair with student slut," she was saying, her fingers peaked to indicate the height of the headline. "Now wouldn't that look peachy on the front page?"

Yet her voice rippled nervous and culpable. She no longer had that coed confidence she used to wear like a liquid makeup, that cynical sleekness present in thin intelligent women and in certain breeds of automobile. Now she was seated with her legs tucked secretary-style beneath her; but when he moved toward her she extended them again, an insolent roadblock caught within the passage of his universe. "I'm going to take a bath," he said and stepped over the legs without glancing at her, entered the French-curtained plexiglass door beside her chair.

The door rattled as he shut it: he would not listen to such asinine rage. "Do whatever you damn well please," he heard her say as he switched on the small AC/DC radio on the toilet top. Mrs. Joyce had warned him about such hazards, had heard stories of electrocutions, men boiled in their tubwater. But the radio remained. Too much Perry Mason, he had told her. The little red eye on the radio glared at him, but instantly, Baroque. Something by Bach, maybe. No, Purcell. Jerry always listened to the same station. The music chimed light, flitting, the musicians dancing on the clouds. Those were the days when music caressed the heart instead of the head, he decided. Humming, he stoppered the tub, wrenched the porcelain handles, stripped off his shirt and T-shirt. The T-shirt was damp with sweat, and he had to pull it off inside-out. Beneath prominent ribs his belly was rowed with muscle--not the muscle of an athlete, but gaunt fluted muscle. Frank

Willis, his partner in the dairy, used to kid him about his leanness; barrel-chested Frank with his bawling laughter, a calm wizard with women. Jerry wished he had never left Osmond.

He removed his pants and glasses, lowered himself into the warm rushing water gravely and gratefully. At intervals the soft Baroque furled above the noise of the tap; he drew his legs up and rested his head on his kneecaps, and then slowly the ferroconcrete walls of his indignation dissolved and drained. Yet his entire tension did not pass so easily. He thought about the farm. Financially it had been a fiasco, a stupid maneuver for two boys fresh out of college; the labor had been killing. But he had been raised in the country, and the static wrangling and alive gray anger of the city, like his blindness, was foreign to him. Here he just could not think straight--except perhaps at school, where his lectures sparked stares and smiles. And his feelings toward Victoria never seemed to stabilize: at times he had loved her even to the point of marriage, then other times he would only need her. And her love for him--well, what? He did not believe she still loved him, though she had at first, certainly. But after she had heard and reheard most of his theories about love, man, the universe, and his tenor recital in the classroom of Keats and Yeats no longer spun an eagerness into her glossy irises, then he saw he would lose her. But from the beginning he had known she did not love him physically. That is the idiosyncrasy of the age, it recurred to him--the ability to worship the mental. "You definitely are not beautiful," she once had teased him in her childish and womanly way.

The tub was full almost to overflowing, and he lunged for the handles. Faucets squealed; the flow died to droplets. Music suddenly poured unrestrained from the radio. He was positive Victoria would not enter the bathroom. She probably was pacing the livingroom, smoking menthols and swearing silently; her temper always burned her tongue into action. But beneath her verbal callousness she was a sensitive girl: she desired him because she somehow understood that his attractiveness plunged deeper than the physical. His was the beauty of ideas. Not because he was brilliant, but because she was not. And she was an idealist.

Yet she had switched off the lamp before he had had time to undress that first night they had slept together. Seated upon the sofa-bed, she had interrupted him, saying, "Let's use this for what it was intended, okay?" Her coy, frank voice, cellophane laughter. She had translated the sofa into a bed, arranged the blankets while he was brushing his teeth, but when he stepped into the room and undid his belt she turned a bare shoulder to the light, her arm snaking out from the blankets for the lamp switch. Her hair skimmed across the pillow like rich black fingers which reached smoothly down her neck to touch her soft, soft back.

"Jesus Christ, Victoria!" He stumbled against the chair.

"It's Vicki, remember?"

"Vicki."

There was the rustle of a silk-lined blanket against skin, then a lovely jangling as her braceleted arm touched him. "Some men are made to be seen," she whispered. "You are only to be made." And within her laughter he recognized the sex-throes of a whole pride of men. Now he only prayed the child was his own; he knew she was dating other men, but huddled in his mind over the tiny body of their love, there still seemed reason to breathe hope into it. The bathroom throbbed dizzily, so he shook the water off his arm, felt along the toilet lid for his glasses. His inmost fears no longer stunted by his blindness, he called to her. The handle of the door squeaked in reply. "Now what?"

He scissored his fingers through the coils of his unclipped hair before he answered. "I've decided to move back to Osmond. Come with me."

"That place?" The door swung open, her nylons meshed together, her heels clattered on the bathroom tile. "Look, if this is your idea of a joke, forget it. We're staying here. You, me, and . . ." her voice lowered, "the baby."

In the tub he considered himself at the disadvantage, as though he needed his clothes to protect his emotions. "I'm leaving, Vicki."

"Why? I don't want to be carted off to some hick-town. I'm not exactly Thoreau, you know, or that other idiot. What's his name."

"Oh, come off it. Everyone's moving back to the country." The easy shield of his lecturing tone warmed within him. "This is the era of environmentalism. Woodstock, the Hog Farm. Men cultivating beards as religiously as Mennonites." His glasses inched down his wet nose, and he pushed them back up with his index finger.

"But I'm not going," she stated flatly. "You'd be just as restless back there as you are now. You're so moody, Jerry, so . . ." She fought for the right word. "So changeable. Just like your stupid philosophies."

"That's not true."

"Oh, isn't it? Well, let me tell you, there's one thing around here that is true!" She aimed a bony finger at him.

"What's that?"

"I'm pregnant."

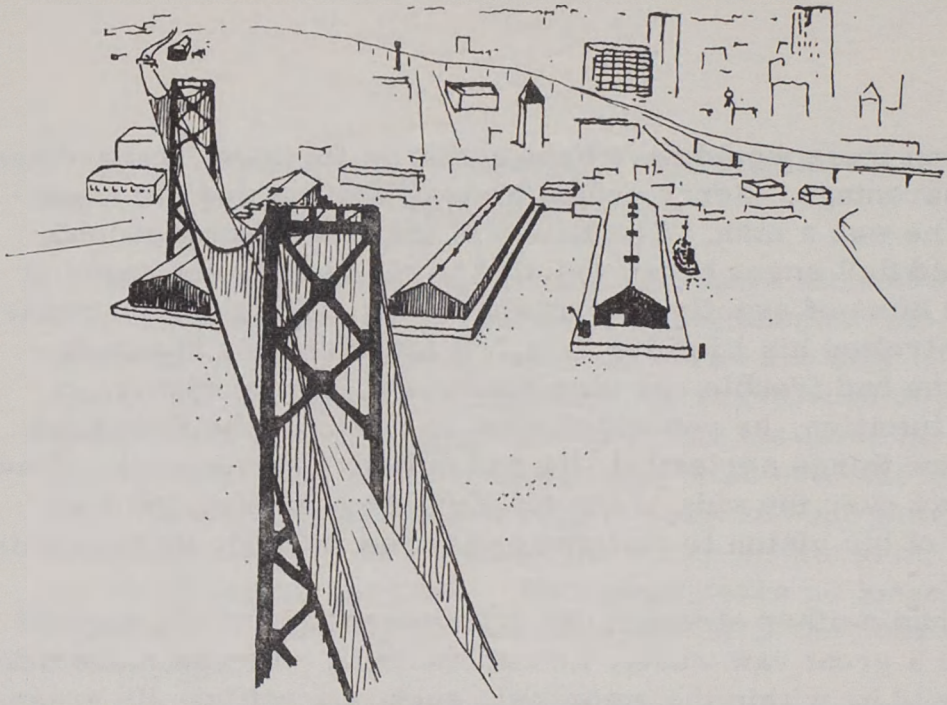
He smiled sardonically. "Who says so?" She glared, standing over him, and shook her head slowly, slowly, her nostrils flared to dark ovals. Then she turned and left him, shut the door without a sound.

He extended his legs, his arms on the sides of the tub. If Victoria had agreed to the move, been willing to forfeit her fragile

convictions, then there would have been a chance for them, regardless of the child's parentage. Jerry prided himself that he was not a jealous man. But he was a man. The tempo of the music crescendoed, and again the old dull anger began to pulse in his throat, not anger at Victoria nor at himself exactly, but at something more general, something which controlled his lifetimes. He felt feverish; his stomach tightened until he had trouble catching his breath; then suddenly, in some tunneled intuition, he perceived what to do. For the first time in his life he saw things perfectly! He had only to flex his arms, draw himself part way over the side of the tub and reach through the long arduous tunnel of his vision to that red eye at the far end, that humming unanimous eye . . .

But he had neither strength nor stamina enough to kill himself. It would just be a great raw waste, he rationalized. He was more dead now than he would be within the embryonic sack of a coffin. He grasped the stopper chain between his toes, yanked. Shoulders slumped, he shuddered as the water sank below the level of his knees. Finally he stepped onto the bathmat, watched the last of the water eddy and gurgle down the drain as though he and that wet chorus were interminably mixed. Then on wobbling legs he walked naked into the livingroom, a trail of watery footprints stalking him.

Victoria's key lay on the bookstand beside the front door. He picked it up, clenched it within his fist until his knuckles paled, flung it onto the couch. "You bitch," he muttered, "oh, you bitch." Only vaguely aware of the water pooling on the floor, he stared at the door handle; he felt tired with that dreary relaxation which comes after losing an athletic event or a battle. He recalled what he had been thinking when he had wanted to reach for the radio. He had realized for the thousandth time he could never go home. His proposition to Victoria had been just a lie to topple and drown her individuality. He turned from the door, moved lamely across the room, opened the window. The morning breeze burst cool and heavy against his skin, and the odor of daphne smelled lavender in the spring air. He rubbed his eyes, forcing his glasses up against his forehead, then drew them off altogether, his fingers upon the lenses. And now Victoria was also gone for good--gone to some other lover perhaps. If he had told her his secret, that within the shallow span of a year or two he would be as blind as Milton, then she might have stayed. And now he did not know why he had not told her. Perhaps he feared she might encroach upon some membrane delicate to himself, her desire to understand him transmuted into tacit pity. But throughout their relationship he had swaddled her within an age inspired by romantic deception, and to have her live for him in any other guise would not be the way he wanted it. Jerry squinted, trying to discern through the sunny fog which engulfed him the ridiculous rectangularity of the windows set like glassed hatches into the brick skin of the adjacent apartment building, but he could not see it. Well, it didn't matter. And he turned away.



BAY BRIDGE

Balanced for brief seconds
above paint-flecked concrete,
leaning against the gusty updraft
across a three-by-six retainer wall,
a social reformer screams and tumbles,
noisily escaping the old steel frame
within sight of crumbling Alcatraz.

Beneath the city's versatile arch
startled gulls lift out of the shade,
their sharp cries muffled by traffic,
retreating from fish choked and rotting
on shoals imbedded in oily heat.

Dropped into a murky East Bay,
another calamity slips through
ripples of brackish sludge.
Fog rolls in from the South,
and recovery efforts are abandoned.

Robert Bingham

THE STOVE

How was the winter
on the Tundra?
Cold knuckles slowly bending
to pull twenty blankets
over his shoulders.
They wired:
The stove is on its way.

Moonless frozen air
forested the windows.
He covered his ears
from the blast of blizzards,
from snow powdering
through the door.
The stove is on the way.
Somewhere the sled team
cooked pudding
that pots discharged like
warm La Brea tar,
while ice chiseled knees
curled to an empty groin.

They found yellowed curtains
filtering sunlight,
and seven dogs
unhitched and hungry,
waited for a stew to
warm their bellies.

Ivan Josef

BAR POEM

We've won heavy faces guzzle through another drink
until bloat presses toward the toilet shoulders
to the hole under the mirror of graffiti borders.
Drained they return tip-soled staggered with their heroes
while the celebration comes to another drunk. Bodies,
music, and lights turn the air around lost words and other vomits.
Block against the bar stool punted mug shattering the bar mirror.
-Remember this play? No . . . the score?

Backs race down their marked fields lined streets
covering game ten yards to the next neon blur,
more belly loads until thrown out to again . . .
In another corner the losers swallow their grudge
fight their disappointments and set next years to be drunk under.

Late hours sweep over fallen sleepers toward uneasy mornings,
for some a bed a woman an undisturable indifference,
but with common gaping mouth,
the wind lifting pale moans from bare teeth to the night
as from skulls of those stilled on fields where the battle never clears.

William Burris

AND INDEED THERE WILL BE TIME

by Vincent P. Swann

I sat on the edge of the examining table, all naked, humming nothing. Rather than try to prepare myself for the worst, I merely looked at all the office paraphernalia without thinking: framed diplomas, sand-filled ash-urns. . . . When the doctor finally came in he raised the white disc from in front of his glasses so that he was looking at me with three peering eyes. He gave me the ominously ambiguous and incomplete diagnosis and the temporary stomach-settling prescription I had expected.

I walked sullenly back to my apartment. I remember nothing of the walk except that I concentrated only on not stepping on any sidewalk cracks.

In my apartment a dull array of everyday objects began to taunt me. Hundreds of books. You couldn't read all those books in fifty years, much less by Christmas. Oh, Christ. And records, all neatly filed in two old Noilly Prat boxes. A candle my mother had sent two or three Christmases ago you've never even lit. Art prints, not much less awful than the ones in the doctor's office. Some bananas on the table, browning slowly. Dying. Ash trays full of ends of cigarettes you never really enjoyed. A cup of half-drunk coffee. God, look at all the things I've taken for granted--never appreciated--just existed among. And now there's so little time. Soft chairs.

I turned away and headed toward the bathroom, automatically swallowing my feelings. Sentimental bastard, I never knew you had that kind of crap in you. In the bathroom I flipped the light switch. The bulb flashed on and quickly off and I could smell the darkness, I could hear it and taste it. Shit!--it figures. I lit the candle and looked at my face in the mirror. "You're dying, you bastard." The reflection in the mirror scoffed back at me, "You're dying, you bastard."

The medicine cabinet held nothing to cure the gnawing pain in my stomach but it was filled with all the regular accumulation of junk: a can of Band-Aids, mouthwash, an old can of shaving cream, an old adjustable razor, a new electric shaver, a plastic pack of emery boards left by the former tenant years ago, a few dirty combs, a fairly clean one, old toothbrushes, old bottles of worn-out pills from former ailments, Q-Tips, a dusty jar of Vaseline Petroleum Jelly, some sticky bottles of leftover cough syrup, a bottle of crumbling aspirin--

Aspirin, that what I was looking for. I filled a glass with water and quickly took the pills. Jesus, now you're getting attached to old combs and Vaseline.

In the mirror I saw an entirely different face than before. It was even more frightened at the thought of approaching death (probably), now a little disgusted at my sudden sentimentality, and desperately saddened at What have you been doing with yourself the last thirty-one years? That was the first time I had ever asked myself that and the reflection in the mirror seemed to insist, "Welllllll?" I blew out the candle and tried not to think at all.

It rang and it rang and it rang and it rang and it rang and it rang and it rang and it rang and it rang and--Of course he's not going to answer his damn phone. Your friend, the only person you've ever let yourself get really close to, and you forget he's going on vacation. Christ, he's probably gone already. Maybe there will still be time to see him off at the train. 4:30. Yes, there will be time, if I hurry.

I drove to the depot thinking all the way of what I ought to say. I finally composed and rehearsed the following speech, a farewell address dripping with honesty, sincerity, even sentimentality, and guilt--but a speech that, at long last, finally said what I had never faced before: "John, I'm dying. They ran a lot of tests on me today at the clinic and they didn't tell me for sure, but I know it's cancer; it runs in my family. I probably won't last till Christmas. If you're gone three weeks, I might not even see you again. And feeling death so close has really made me think about a lot of things I've never faced before. John, I love you. I've never said that before--to anyone. It was never true before about anyone else, because I never allowed myself to love anyone--I just didn't want to get involved, to be known, to be hurt. I was afraid because I knew it could never last forever and I didn't want anything less. So I've cut myself off, John, from everything--people, even objects. But there's not much time left and I'm going to change all that. I've got to. How can I die when I've never lived? What can they put on my tombstone? 'Here lies Alfred J. Stone!' That doesn't mean anything to anybody. And John, I just don't want you to get away without my telling you, face to face, that I love you."

The depot was crowded with passengers and well-wishers probably preparing speeches as soupy as mine and there was a great deal of activity, of life, of people running about, standing in lines,

waving good-bye, hugging hello, porters carrying bag upon bag, little baggage cars pulling little trailers stacked with luggage and gift-wrapped packages. I was only standing there taking it all in. I hadn't even begun to look for John's train. Everything was rumbling with volcanic energy and I recalled the framed diplomas, sand-filled ash urns, stuffed with half-finished cigarettes, a magazine rack filled with month and two-month old magazines, colored bottles of pills and fluids, dusty medical books, a round jar of tongue depressors, an empty box of Kleenex, a jar of cotton balls, file cabinets, a calendar with x's marking off the many days gone by, a device for reading blood pressures, hard chairs, venetian blinds, and discolored prints of unnatural landscapes--all on display to re-assure the nervous patients that everything will work out fine. A group of frenetic tourists were huddling around their guide. And you've never been outside the state. Saving money for a trip that's never come. And the entire station was alive with emotion--honest, expressed emotion. But you're too tough for that, too cool, aren't you.

Three men were struggling with a long, clumsy casket, trying to lower it from a baggage car on to one of those little trailers behind a one-man baggage-mobile. They finally managed to drop it on the trailer with a little thud and then one of them got in the baggage-mobile and drove it to an out-of-the-way spot near where I was standing. And he left it to sit there on the trailer, unattended and alone. Imagine the darkness, the motionlessness, the silence. Especially the silence. People talking and crying, bells ringing, train whistles blowing, air-brakes hissing, loudspeakers blaring--noise all around you and you hear nothing, nothing at all. And you see only the darkness. I noticed a little ticket tacked to the lid, but I didn't go over to read it.

From a distance I saw John boarding the train and I ran to where I might get a glimpse of him through a window. The engines were running and steam was roaring out from under the cars when I finally found him luckily seated by a window on my side. I reached up and rapped on it and by the time he had turned his surprised face toward mine I could feel my sallow face automatically drain itself of all emotion so as not to let on how I really felt. John was excited and tried to find a way of opening the window. I can't tell him all that sentimental crap about love and cutting myself off and not wanting to be hurt. After all, maybe I'm not even dying at all. I'll just tell him I wasn't doing anything so I thought I'd come down and see him off and say goodbye. "Have a nice trip!"

The train began to pull away before he could get the window open, though, so we merely waved and smiled a little. He gestured to me that he was sorry he couldn't get the window up. "Have a nice

trip!" I shouted. But I stood still and didn't walk alongside the train as other well-wishers did. And you might be dead when he comes back.

I looked in the grave succession of windows as the train passed me by. Behind each window I could see the blithe and eager faces of strangers on the move, passing me by, shielded from me by the glass and the iron wall. And each of them I could have known, perhaps. All potential friends and now they're passing me by. Children with their noses up against the fogging glass, women straightening their hats or hair or whatever was out of place, businessmen burying themselves in the Wall Street Journal, soldiers staring straight ahead.

And I could see myself reflected in each successive glass, each one distorting my lonely, stricken face a little differently. And which reflection is really you? Or do I really change that fast, change with each person that passes by? Oh, to be behind those sad reflections, to be inside those images of myself and know what lurks within that hollow face.

The second last car was empty and I stared into the darkness behind my empty face.

And in the last car I saw people preparing to eat, healthy people enjoying a little meal with friends or new acquaintances, and I saw more reflections of myself, flashing by more quickly and more distantly than before, but I was still able to see in my constricted face the painful attempt to hold back tears that had never learned to flow.

PABLO

why was it I always found you
sitting cross-legged on the ground
your long white fingers digging
and curling into the earth like roots?
I believed you would grow leaves--
tiny moist buds that would open to sun.
But your father, angry at finding you gone again,
would stamp heavy-booted across the fields
and jerk you up by your arms.
How your root-hands have hardened
in the sun and air.
They seem too tough to absorb
the mysterious juice
that once flowed in through them.
Hanging by your sides, they curl
and uncurl, still wanting to feed
their dry brown stalks from the earth.

Malinda Finney



REASON

Speaking,
your words rising
like fish bubbles on dry land,

I listen.

From your mouth that was once a gill,
where the red blood made air from water

I remember.

In the evening over wine bottles
the darkness coming fast in mountains,

there is no reason for this,
your image,
slammed into the back of my eyes.

R. Kirby

THE RHETORIC OF FANCY: PIERRE MENARD
IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME

by Edmund R. Apffel

James E. Irby in his introduction to Borges' Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings (New Directions, 1964) credits Borges with the observation that: ". . . the basic devices of all fantastic literature are only four in number: the work within the work; the contamination of reality by dream; the voyage in time; and the double." (xviii). The term "fantastic" may be loosely opposed to the notions "history" and "criticism" and "text" if for no other reason than the facilitated discovery that Borges may well be defining features of all fiction. That a school of fiction may profess to call itself "realistic" need not trouble us--the contradictions in such a profession are obvious.

Examples of literature employing all or some of these devices are easy to recognize. Nabokov's Gift on several levels operates as "the work within the work": the biography of Cherneshevsky is only one; the fact that the novel is just the "big, thick old-fashioned novel" Sirin at thirty-eight has the twenty-eight year old Fydor plan to write "someday" is another; and the Onegin stanza concealed in linear prose at the end is one of the miniature sort that lend the novel its technical charm and generally informing spirit. Proust's Lost Time is a deliberately aesthetic journey through time and hopeless only because of the faulty logic that seeks to justify his reconstruction. The flaw in its rationale need not concern us if we are willing to let it serve this once as a somewhat slighted example of the time machine. Purely in terms of device, mystical literature can be grouped as the literature of dream. When we see the dream as contemptible on the grounds that it is inconsistent with our waking experience we discover enormous quantities of literature considered "romantic" or "dreamy" when they are really only specially irrelevant, as well as the mass of literary values called "spiritual" or "theological" preserved as expression of out-dated beliefs. Aside from myth, one delightful aspect of Mrs. Dalloway is that it is the dream-contaminated-by-reality that threatens to wreck Clarissa's party and serves to remind us that the consistencies that are to be weakened by the imposition of new (dream) consistencies are whatever have been established, and not necessarily assumed. Literature that allows the reader to assume too much may be unintelligible, but the greatest risk is that the reader in search of beliefs in that poetry may find that poetry impertinent . . .

But a novel like Zuleika Dobson, which E. M. Forster described as "the most consistent achievement of fantasy in our time," recognizably employs none of Borges' four devices. There is however, magic and on the level of the sleight of hand (enhancing the more subtle enchantments of a femme fatale) Zuleika contaminates Oxonian reality. As a whole, the device of Zuleika Dobson by just that consistency of achievement calls to mind a subcategory of Borges' second device: the fairy tale. The fairy tale assumes practical reality and engages the reader in that measure creatively by forcing him to maintain criteria for judging the degree of fabulousness in the narrative. Some science fiction demands that the reader assume that anything may happen provided it can be obscured in a fittingly dazzling pretense of science. Less ambitious science fiction demands the reader assume anything may happen because the author wills it--as does the well-disposed reader, for that matter. Its description as "scientific" becomes half-hearted and dependent only on its locale.

Zuleika Dobson as fairy tale accosts a reality different from the reality of the unbearably prosaic that we are expected to contribute to our experience of the fairy tale (especially in, of all places, children's stories). With the spectral appearance of Chopin and Georges Sand at the Duke's concert it contaminates our logic, while with the mass drowning it contaminates our belief in any consoling aspects of the psychology of love by parodying an instantly recognizable feature of mass psychology as wildly and inexorably destructive. The threat is basically unprofound (though a theorist may argue recondite implications) but it does reveal a new landscape for the fairy tale that has been used often as satire (say, in Gulliver's Travels) but only occasionally as an inspiration for the rhetoric of gratuitous fancy (as in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland). The engagement of the logical and psychological faculties in a way that is not simply hortatory but creative is a feature of Borge's work.

Pierre Menard fits the scheme in a way of subtle implication as the embodiment of the device of the double. But the story is as well an appeal to our direct involvement with a notion of creativity.

To write the Quixote he rejected the first method:

Know Spanish well, recover the Catholic faith, fight against the Moors or the Turk, forget the history of Europe between the years 1602 to 1918, be Miguel de Cervantes. (p 40)

He attained a fairly accurate command of seventeenth century Spanish, but (and I am almost tempted to say "of course") discarded it as too easy. Menard sights a more provocative goal; a more expressive doppelganger motif is developed; and the feeling that the undertaking was impossible from the very beginning, and that of all the impossible ways of carrying it out this was the least interesting, is only half the

face of Menard's task. To be, in some way, Cervantes and reach the Quixote seemed less arduous to him--and consequently less interesting--than to go on being Pierre Menard and reach the Quixote through the experience of Pierre Menard. "My undertaking is not difficult, essentially; I should only have to be immortal to carry it out." (p 40)

However he does this, we may be tempted to say, and especially as he succeeds to some degree (are we sceptical or only envious?), it is not without the aid of the earlier discipline--the exercise of submitting himself to becoming Cervantes' historical double, an anachronism. He had first, we thought, to be aware of who Cervantes was before he could write a Quixote. But working consciously to become in all the literary ways what Cervantes was, he approached the Quixote extra-literarily. Not only was this uninteresting, it was dangerous. Menard risked becoming indeed Cervantes who, to all accounts, died. He would not then be the impelling force behind the artifice of the Quixote, only dead: and so it was also easy.

To arrive at any awareness that all men are one man immortal, or one is all, is a trick of meditation. To realize an entire universe of expression is denied the faculties of insight of men. But to contemplate the possibility of such a universe is readily accessible. And to become that universal expressiveness is the explicitly human achievement of Menard. Cervantes' humanness was not composed of his environment and education (no matter how reliable any biography to students may seem). His life may have been and his imagination doubtless derived material from it for its systems of expression. But his humanness is composed in the main of inimitably private atavisms, peculiar perceptions, and, above all, an artistic vanity which finds a profound antithesis in Menard's patient modesty--modesty even divine in his resigned or ironical habit of propagating ideas which were the strict reverse of those he preferred.

Menard would not add to the stock of universal expressions. Neither did he seek to reiterate a part of that expression. In imitating Cervantes, even becoming Cervantes' double, he would have rendered the production of the Quixote inevitable--and a repeat performance at that. Menard wished to detach the artist from his work so as best to avoid the easy resort of doubling a Cervantes from whom a Quixote would have now been helpless. To be not Cervantes, but in some way the Quixote is what Menard wished to do. In fact, as far as a doppelganger theme in "Pierre Menard" goes, it seems explored and dropped in favor of a more pregnant device: Pierre Menard, author of Cervantes, Mme Bachelier, Poe, Valery--all the authors chanced to be mentioned in the story--and, most important, author of "Pierre Menard."

That Menard can choose seemingly randomly what work of art he will become is an indication of the sublimity of his capability.

William Wilson could only have one sort of double: an opposite. He is tame and a little too credulous to engage us for very long. The humiliation Wilson feels at the sight of his double is naive guilt when we consider what an affront such a double would have been to Menard, who at the outset could only be bored by the laziness of the imagination that created a superficial likeness capable only of punitive exercise. Menard no longer sought to be a double of anything: he sought, rather, at least to demonstrate a capacity of assimilation that must of necessity confer an infinity of expression (as opposed to immortality). Consider the "invective" against Paul Valery in the Papers for the Suppression of Reality where he writes:

But the truth is that when we go through Valery's essays, we are unable to find many ideas. We find simply, as we do in his poetry, the presentation of intellectual situations, instead of the development of lines of thought. He is a philosopher who won't philosophize. (p 78)

Yet in his introduction to his poetization of Le cimetiere marin he writes: In Valery's poetry

we have the sensation of seizing the fragment of a noble and living substance which is perhaps capable of development and cultivation; and which once developed and used, constitutes poetry in its artistic effect. (N.R.F., January 1928)

Menard is not simply play-acting. Menard had once remarked--and this is where we may disagree most violently with him--that censure and praise are sentimental operations which have nothing to do with literary criticism. (This, naturally, does not establish any commitment for him to practice such notions in his role as critic but does shed the light of a host of pleasing possibilities on his critical work.) The opinion in his criticism is a technique of approach as easily discarded as it is affected. But the supreme expression of this attitude is in the assumption of creative powers sufficient to produce a work of art. Why a work of art already with us? At least as proof of the accomplishment. In that respect, anyway, we will be better able to accept the genuineness of the lost tragedies of Euripides as Menard recreates them, as he exhumes and presents us with those lost arts of ancient civilizations. Thus at it's most prosaic. But there is a more significant level at which Menard's work may be taken.

Menard (perhaps without wanting to) has enriched, by means of a new technique, the halting and rudimentary art of reading: this new technique is that of the deliberate anachronism and the erroneous attribution. This technique, whose applications are infinite, prompts us to go through the Odyssey as if it were posterior to the Aeneid and the book Le jardin du Centaure of Madame Henri Bachelier as if it were by Madame Henri Bachelier. This technique fills the most placid works with adventure.

As far as "Pierre Menard" is to be considered as exercise of device we may see that it can be categorized. We may deal with it however loosely on the grounds of its metaphysical aspects. But I think we can more fruitfully involve ourselves with Borges himself. Borges' stories never suffer from any sort of that preciousness easily recognizable for all their inspiring tones in those parasitic books which situate Christ on a boulevard, Hamlet on La Cannebiere or Don Quixote on Wall Street. There is endless meaning and substance to his miniatures but their meaning and substance is independent of the worn whims of illustrated ideas, for they are the ideas themselves--or as close as we may ever get to a language of ideas that is not made of synonyms, "but rather, ideal objects created according to convention and essentially designed to satisfy poetic needs" (Menard, Nimes, 1901). They are the generous publication of the game at its most devout. And in their complexity and harmony and infinite patience they reveal Borges as a supremely tactful writer as well as a genuinely engaging one.

Through all his writing is the challenge. And in every story there is the subtle warning, the revealing, fatal leer in the disguise that renders the jaunty metaphore a humiliating ruin. A certain affect-
edness of style is sometimes evident. Sometimes his archaic tone is quite foreign. Consider this example that he writes as the vaguely silly narrator of "Pierre Menard":

Menard (perhaps without wanting to) has enriched, by means of a new technique, the halting and rudimentary art of reading: this new technique is that of the deliberate anachronism and the erroneous attribution. This technique, whose applications are infinite, prompts us to go through the Odyssey as if it were posterior to the Aeneid and the book Le jardin du Centaure of Madame Henri Bachelier as if it were by Madame Henri Bachelier. This technique fills the most placid works with adventure.

THERE IS NO BODY AND NO MIND

I said to the wanting-creature inside me:
What is this river you want to cross?
There are no travellers on the river-road,
and no road.
Do you see anyone moving about on that bank, or resting?
There is no river at all, and no boat, and no boatman.
There is no towrope either, and no one to pull it.
There is no ground, no sky, no time, no bank, no ford!

And there is no body, and no mind!
Do you believe there is some place that will make the soul
 less thirsty?
In that great absence you will find nothing.

Be strong then, and enter into your own body;
there you have a solid place for your feet.
Think about it carefully!
Don't go off somewhere else!

Kabir says this: just throw away all thoughts
 of imaginary things,
and stand firm in that which you are.

KABIR

version by Robert Bly

adapted from the Tagore-Underhill
 translation

HEART AWAY

My sad heart slavers at the poop,
My heart strewn with tobacco-spits.
They splash it with their spills of soup,
My sad heart slavers at the poop.
Under the guffaws of a troop,
A single mouth that one laugh splits,
My sad heart slavers at the poop,
My heart strewn with tobacco-spits.

Ithyphallic and Breughelesque,
Their foulness made it a helpless prey.
At evening mess, how picturesque,
They're ithyphallic and Breughelesque
Oh waves of purest arabesque,
Flow over and wash my heart away!
Ithyphallic and Breughelesque,
Their foulness made it a helpless prey.

When they've finished up their tricks,
How can I live, oh heart away?
There'll be their songs, with stamps and kicks,
When they've finished up their tricks,
My sea-sick stomach leaps and sticks
If heart can neither go nor stay.
When they've finished up their tricks,
How can I live, oh heart away?

Rimbaud

Translated by David Paul

SONNET

With the shot-silk, nacreous glitter of her garments,
Even when she is walking you might say she danced,
Like those winding snakes which the holy charmers
Wave at the ends of their wands in sinuous cadence.

Like the unending sands and blue sky of deserts,
Equally oblivious of all human suffering,
Or the nets of foam spreading on ocean breakers,
Undulating, she evolves in calm indifference:

Her glittering eyes are made of charming precious stones,
And in that strange, symbolic, dual being
Where the ancient sphinx is one with the haughty angel,

Where gold mingles its gleams with diamond and steel,
There glitters for all time like a lifeless star
The icy majesty of the sterile woman.

EVENING HARMONIES

Now is the moment when, quivering on its stem,
Every flower exhales its essence like a censer;
Sounds and perfumes swirl mingling in the evening air,
Dizzy languorous waltz and melancholy dream!

Every flower exhales its essence like a censer;
A heart afflicted quivers in the sounding violin
- Dizzy languorous waltz and melancholy dream;
Like a great catafalque the sky is dark and clear.

A heart afflicted quivers in the sounding violin,
A tender heart, stricken by the void's vast fear.
Like a great catafalque the sky is dark and clear,
The sun has drowned in his blood's congealing flame.

A tender heart, stricken by the void's huge fear,
Out of the luminous past clings to the faintest gleam:
The sun has drowned in his blood's congealing flame
- Your memory's monstrosity shines in me its dawning star.

SULTRY LANDSCAPE

The red shadow of the falcon
dissolves beneath acacias.
One cannot touch the lizard rocks
without burning himself.
Great beetles encircle
the light of hot bushes.
A blue flame
wanders to the roads edge.
Who cries out now
shall never be answered.
The windowless houses
turn away.
In black hollows
Cats crouch.
Already their fur crackles
in the first lightening.

ROBINSON CRUSOE

Again and again I stretch my hand
towards a ship.
With my bare fist I try
to grab its sail.
At first I caught
several boats that
appeared on the horizon.
I catch trout like that.
But the monsoon
kept its watchful eye upon me
and let them escape.
Or, rudder and compass
broke. One must be patient
with ships.
That is why I call them by name.
They always seemed to be my own.
Now, I live alone
in the company of a few
disobedient words.

Karl Krolow

Translated by
D. Ferguson

GOING TO NEW ROCHELLE

by Jean Atthowe

The old woman stood poised at the top of the stairway. With one felt-slippered foot on the next step, she bent low, steadying herself with a hand on the bannister, and peered into the gloomy depths of the entry hall. Although it was past ten, the porch light was still sending yellow cheer down the front steps, tunneling out along the snow-choked walk where its beams picked out the ridges of drifts so that they glowed like the crests of waves in an angry sea. The fat and genial member of the household lares augured well for the family within to the drivers of the few cars which passed, who, unseeing, hunched over their steering wheels peering through frosted windshields with the contorted faces of submarine captains guiding their vessels cautiously through a network of mines.

In spite of the bravado of the gleaming porch light which shielded from public scrutiny the eaves and downstairs windows of the old house with a wall of black shadow, all was not well. It was a nasty night and still Herbert was not home.

Snow had begun to fall that morning out of a slate sky, slowly at first, but soon gathering enough momentum to deposit tufts of white spring-blossom snow along the black branches of the plum trees in the side yard by the dining room bay window. "I have to go to New Rochelle today," he announced with a forced jauntiness in his voice after he had pushed aside his oatmeal and begun to spread butter very precisely on one half of his carefully divided poppyseed roll. "What!" she had said. "Not there again. You were there just last week. What for? I don't know, Herbert, why you go there when only yesterday they called from Henderson's on Orienta Point wanting to know when you would finish the new wiring there." Herbert placed the silver butterknife across the Japanese bridge on his blue willow china butter plate. He raised the roll, holding it between a thumb and three fingers, and, taking a bite, began to chew steadily. "How will you go?" she said. "You said the car was acting up. And, besides, you shouldn't drive in this weather with your eyes." He had complained lately that sometimes, just as he was crossing an intersection, he would glimpse out of the corner of his left eye a team of horses drawing a wagon forward to make a left turn in front of him. It always gave him a start, he would declare, laughing at the absurdity. But she worried.

Herbert continued to chew his roll, looking straight over her head with his eyelids hooding his eyes, shades pulled down with a closed

sign in the window even though a light from within betrays the presence of a shopkeeper. His faded blue eyes under sharp, craggy brows, which shone when he laughed about the team of horses, reflected righteous annoyance now. He continued chewing. Always chew each bite at least twenty-five times he told the children countless times. Twenty-five times will mix the saliva. The salivary glands, as you must know, excrete juices with digestive qualities which break down the particles of food and prepare them for entry into the blood . . . "You are foolish to go any distance today," she said. "Simply foolish." . . . stream later on after it leaves the stomach. The trouble lies in the fact that you children are too lazy to chew. You depend on your stomachs to do all the work. If you will lay your fork down between bites . . . Her main concern had been that they leave a little food on their plates and not scrape them like little heathens. But with the war and the rationing, she had let that standard pass when the grandchildren came.

The son had been sullen with Herbert, but the daughter had been rebellious. He was gone now, living in Massachusetts with his second wife, but she had come back finally, after two divorces and a sojourn in Greenwich Village, with her children. Just in time, too, for the depression had hit small businesses hard and Herbert had been in desperate straits. When he had lain in the bed in the master bedroom upstairs that first winter with the phlegm like wet clods of clay closing in his chest and the cold wrapping around his head, his loins, his torso, because there was no more coal to feed the hungry furnace that ruled the cellar, she had sat helpless in the icy kitchen. Herbert did not believe in doctors. She had wiped his eyes with boracic acid and for his stomach she had given him teaspoons of tincture of belladonna diluted in water. Homeopathic medicine was all he would submit to and that he had taught her. And Mama was gone. Beatrice, too. Wes, where was he now. Papa, his warm hands smelling of vanilla beans, he had been the last to go. And Herbert? Upstairs fighting for breath? Oh, Herbert! What will I do! But hush. A thump. On the snowy walk.

Through the window at the top of the stairs the old woman could see that the wind, which, in the early evening, had whipped the snow into swirls of white spray, had died. She slipped quietly down one step, listening. A car trundled by, thumping chains hollowly and she whipped cold fingers to her mouth and pressed her lips against her teeth until the skin felt numb. Herbert! She stifled a whimper which rose in her throat. Herbert! Foolish to go to New Rochelle in weather like this with the Orienta Point job waiting to be finished.

"The train will do. I'll take the train," he announced, and blotting his mouth with the rayon napkin, he carefully refolded it, gave it a pat and rolled it back into the silver napkin ring with his initials engraved in delicate swirls on its belly. Herbert pushed back his armchair at the head of the table and stood up. "Sockets. I need some

number ten sockets from Sam Lefkiewitz for the Orienta Point job." Lady Gay eased her arthritic joints up from under the dining room table and whapped her plumed and black-spotted tail on the dusty floor. She looked brightly at the oatmeal bowl. Herbert stood at the bay window behind his chair and contemplated the snow.

"Remember when we planted those two plum trees, Bess?" he said. That is a perfect spot for them. Full sun every day that it shines. Well, well. Now the evergreen has grown so tall, they lose maybe an hour's sun in the morning. But that shouldn't hurt. Every spring they're covered with white blossoms shining like bridal veils in the sun. I wonder why they never bear." She sat with the wrists of her old sweater resting on the table's edge looking up at the back of his grey head. "I remember asking Charlie Baldwin about them, when he came to the board of trustees meetings at church before his greenhouse went bust. Charlie, I said, Charlie what can you do with two plum trees in southern exposure which bloom every year, but then don't bear? No, Herbert had said. No, Elizabeth. I won't have you spending that much time away from your home. His hair was blond then and full and, like the sun, it shone high over her as they came down the steps out of the church foyer into the fresh May Sunday. It was Children's Day and the boy and the girl walked quietly at Herbert's side. The church shone, a bride in white satin, standing against the fresh, sunwashed blue of the sky, in a new coat of paint. That was after the war and it hadn't been painted since. But it was a good job. It lasted longer than the Lutheran's --the Catholic and the Episcopal churches were of stone--Herbert would say on Sundays, picking the chips of paint by the front doors which many suns and many frosts had loosened. That was because Herbert had insisted that the trustees spend more than they had planned in time and money to scrape and prepare the surface before painting. Do a job well, Herbert would say to the children, if you are going to do it at all.

Well, Henry Legget had said after church that day as they waited to shake hands with Reverend Piper. So Winfield has Elizabeth signed up to sing for his new radio station. Mighty pleased to hear it, Herbert. I always enjoy her voice in the choir solos, he affirmed, holding her hand in his two. Now, I'll look forward to it with the radio set Herbert fixed for me. No, Elizabeth, Herbert said. It will not do. Your duties right now are here. Well, Charlie asked me what else grew near the trees and when I pruned them and had I checked the soil composition. He mumbled something about soil acidity and root fungus. I don't know. I shoveled in manure all around the holes. I dug them deep and mounded dirt in the center to support the roots. I poured in plenty of water before I covered them with dirt. Charlie spent too much time with books, I think, and not enough with the growing end of things." You stay home with these children, Bess, and give them the Christian rearing that your mother gave you and my mother gave me, Herbert concluded as

they sat on the piazza in the wicker rockers waiting for the cook to call them to Sunday dinner.

Her lip trembled and a pink flush surfaced on the clear skin over her high cheek bones. Everyone talks about Elizabeth, that pretty Rogerson girl, her mother had assured her. Seven trunks they had taken with them on the train every summer. Seven trunks went to Lake George where the young men smiled from the wide hotel verandas when she and Beatrice and Cousin Emma walked along the gravel path to the ladies' bath house. Little drops of water, little grains of sand, they sang and the girls giggled and two fiery red spots smudged the cheeks of the pretty Rogerson girl. Elizabeth Rogerson has a beautiful soprano voice, Miss Pincheon had said, her voice rising above the crackle of the fire in the sitting room off the main hall of the boarding school. Emma had heard her from the top of the staircase because she had gone back along the front path looking for the white kid gloves she had dropped somewhere between the school and church after morning services. Our singing master hopes to develop her into a coloratura soprano of the first quality, Mr. Rogerson. Mama wasn't there anymore and so she was at boarding school. Beatrice had married that man and lived in Yonkers, leaving only Papa to visit her. He still lived, alone with Pogo, in the big apartment in the Chelsea. "Papa, Papa, let's walk along the river bank under the elms and you can tell me. Tell me. How is Pogo. Does he miss me, Papa. And Mr. Hayes. Well, Miss Bess. Poor Pogo is a stiff old pug now. He's happy just to hobble around the block with Mr. Hayes twice a day and then sleep the rest of the time away in a spot of sun by Mama's old footstool. The sun is always best there. That's why she liked it. It eased the pain. Every evening he walks down the hall with me to the letter drop, though. And now, Papa, Pogo is doing the same thing. But, I guess he doesn't embroider. Papa laughed and squeezed her hand and they both thought of Mama under the elms on the sheltered, shadowy, sun-mosaiced, leaf-edged gravel path and the eyes of each Hudson River wavelet winked back at the spanking white spinnaker clouds and the streaming air and the wind rose then and Herbert took down the main sail and braced his feet against the sides of the small cabin which he had fitted with Philippine mahogany, holding her in the bunk as the water roared outside and tore at the portholes. Moaning. They are all gone. And Herbert? Herbert! The old woman sank to the step on which she had been standing and whimpered silently into her hands.

Rays of light from the front porch filtered through the lace curtains on the front door and reflected on the glass, enhancing the halo around the boy Jesus confounding the temple priests on the wall above the old lady's head. Her grey hair was too long and on the ends were straggly remnants of a permanent. Once she wore it piled and pinned up on top of her head under a wide-brimmed velvet hat. She still had

the elbow-length sealskin cape and the muff she wore when she moved to Larchmont after the wedding. Her travelling skirt reached her boots at the ankle as she walked into choir practice at the back of the church. Regarding your skirt lengths, the letter began, you are mistaken in your belief that this town will tolerate such flagrant and indecorous disregard for modesty. Mend your ways before it is too late. Bess had cried and Herbert had laughed. Well Bess, a poison pen letter like that one only hurts the sender. Remember, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Besides, these long skirt lengths are foolish and impractical in winter. Wear it and forget it. But she stamped her foot and threw the beaver cape at the wardrobe door. That performance exhibits a lack of discipline, Elizabeth. If others choose to wallow in a sea of intolerance, that is not our concern, but you must be rational. Reason is a gift of God which our family will appreciate by using. He went out that afternoon and bought the two plum trees from Mr. Baldwin, but she stayed home and lowered her skirt hem as far as the material would allow. "Perhaps this spring I'll get a chance to prune them," Herbert said as he turned from the bay window.

He rubbed his hands together briskly and with a jolly, ho-he-ho-voice announced his determination to decamp immediately for New Rochelle. The old woman got up from the table. "But Herbert, how will you carry the packages back? You must be careful of those high train steps when you get on and off. Today they'll be icy and the vestibules are dark. Your eyes." "Nonsense." He wagged his hands up around his ears as if to dismiss a swarm of fruit flies, collected his scarf, his old tweed coat, his gloves and overshoes and, placing his hat with one swift, experienced swing of his arm to the top of his head, he tramped out the door and down the path to the street.

He tipped his hat as two strange ladies picked their way along the sidewalk through the mounting snow and replaced it on his upright head above his squared shoulders as he disappeared through the swirls of snow behind the yew hedge next door. Foolish to go to New Rochelle, when he could have had the parts sent down by Railway Express or by truck. Foolish. Lady Gay lapped the oatmeal bowl and her tongue was all that could be heard in the silent house. Foolish! The old lady clenched her hands. Foolish! Oh. Herbert. Why aren't you home, she hissed so that it was almost no sound and pressed her bony fists to her teeth and bit her knuckles to keep from crying out a long, anguished wail of fear and woe. "Mom," her daughter had said after supper when she found her sitting on the arm of his chair peering out the front window, "for goodness sake stop fretting. It's only eight o'clock. All the trains are running late. He'll be home." "Oh, do you think so? Do you really think so?" the old lady begged and her tears rose up and flowed down her face and into the hands which gathered them up in the cupped palms, each one and all of them, and

then held them, as if they were so much precious silver, pressed together between her clasped hands. "Oh, if anything has happened to him, I just don't know what I'll do. Margaret," she said solemnly, straightening her back, "I do believe I'd kill myself." "Oh, Mom. Have another cup of tea," Margaret said, throwing her eyes to the ceiling.

Dan stood in the dining room archway watching the old lady on the arm of the chair. His mother sounded more annoyed than sympathetic, suggesting the tea as a mother might offer a crust of zwieback to her teething baby. One day, just before the old lady's seventieth birthday, Margaret found her lying on her bed flat on her back, eyes staring sightlessly at the ceiling. Oh, Mom, Margaret had said then, also. Have a cup of tea and you'll feel better. No, Margaret. I mean it. I'd rather die than be seventy. I'd rather die. Margaret had looked at Dan standing in the hall when she left the room, turning her eyes heavenward and with a humorous, hopeless expression, the way she looked when the old lady talked about her audition for the Met and how Gedda Cassazza had applauded--Miss Rogerson, your voice is definitely coloratura with a superb timbre. But no, Herbert had said. It will not do. Dan moved to the piano. He was tall for his age and Margaret did not like him to call her mother in public. And definitely not when she took him into the tea rooms in New York to have their fortunes told. The reader always saw letters and tall, dark strangers in her cup and in his were bloody signs of misadventure and a short life.

He put his hands on the sides of the baby grand which belonged to his grandmother and fingered the yellowed ivory keys. When he was little, he had never been allowed to play it for fear he would put it out of tune. Yet, he had never heard it played because it needed tuning. The services of piano tuners were dear. He fingered a key which was missing its ivory coating and watched Margaret balance her coffee cup on the arm of the chair and pick up a newspaper. The old lady's face was almost pressed against the black, cold glass with her hands clutching her mouth as if she would stop breathing if she could, the better to catch and sort out any sounds which reached her ear. Her back, hunched and still, almost hid her lowered, grey head. Dan stepped away from the piano. He felt embarrassed. He had no ear at all for music, the old lady often said. Quietly he left the room and collected his jacket and gloves and, returning to the front room, he stood behind his grandmother's stooped back.

The family often laughed about the time he had called her Granny and she had thrown two pieces of breakfast toast down onto the table. One had landed in the sugar bowl and the second one on Grandfather's plate after he had chuckled and removed the first one from the sugar bowl. What's wrong with granny. It's a good old-

fashioned term of endearment, he had said. But, then he had eaten his oatmeal, one measured spoonful, in time and space, at a time silently and with veiled eyes. Dan had been surprised and confused and could not tell who was angry and who was amused. Bessie, she would not tolerate either. So he quietly said, "Gram, I'll walk down to the station and see if I can find him along the way." "That would be nice," his mother said from behind the paper, but the old lady only shuddered and the tears began again to flow over her face.

Outside he could see her shadowy figure shining white on the edges in the black at the periphery of the porch light. Usually, Lady Gay perched where she sat and waited for him to round the hedge on his way home from school. Now the dog ran along the walk, the fall of her soft paws muted by the kind of dry powder which falls in very cold weather, and her tail, almost horizontal to the ground as she padded along, dropped only when she stopped to sniff the ground or the cold night air. Dan stood at the turn in the path and pulled his collar up around his neck. Lady Gay would be good to have along, in case. She could sniff beneath the snow.

The feathered branches of the evergreen by the house swooshed guiltily, and the black branches of the two plum trees were etched in intricate, Moorish patterns on the snow by the steely moon, now that the cloud covering had moved on with its freight of snow. If Lady Gay found anything, would she stand over it and howl the long, wavering hoots of a timberwolf and, if she did, would they travel, on a clear night like this, out through the barrier reefs of ozone and bounce from the jagged moon and whirl through space in a ceaseless elegy?

In the spring, when Dan had dropped out of confirmation class, his grandfather had understood. Joining the church and making that final commitment with the wine was a serious step. Many members go all through life without a moment's hesitation, accepting the tenants of the church, but Dan would see eventually that doubts and questioning only toughened one's faith in the end. Yes, the grandfather had said, passing a hand over his eyes, I understand your doubts. But for many years, along my path on either side from time to time, I have found evidence of God's works. They surround us, Dan. You'll find them, too, and upon the experience will stand an unshakeable faith. He crossed the quiet street and cut through the old Halstead property on a trail worn by school kids and dog walkers. Dan had been vaguely annoyed. Surprised that his grandfather was not shocked at Dan's wavering faith, yes, but annoyed that the grandfather was prepared for this turn of Dan's. On swearing, the grandfather based his attack on reason, not decency. Swearing resulted when a person lost faith--faith in the aptitude and vividness of the language. It was either that or ignorance. Obscenity and disrespect, other than for the language and lyrics, he never mentioned. What was right was that which was logical.

The ruts cut by bicycle wheels had become hard ridges honed sharp by the cunning winter frosts and even young Dan had to walk with caution. A person could easily slip and fall on these ruts, Dan thought, and peering along the sides, he rolled his eyes from side to side, sweeping the rivers of snow with the sinewy, grappling ropes and hooks of eye muscles, but they hooked on nothing extraordinary among the remaining stubble from last year's ragweed and golden rod which sighed and played upon themselves like dry crickets in the crushing cold night.

As for the evidences of His works, Dan had searched the paths and trails where last year had taken him. He wanted to ask his grandfather if the bread and wine burned on the way down with a life of its own as did hot cocoa on wintry days, opening fresh passages and awakening new nerves along the back bone and searing an inner brand of beatitude. He passed under the black and contorted forms of the huge tulip trees which had once framed the old Halstead house. In the white night the fat trunks were writhing boa constrictors and the knots and lumps, old wounds healed over after pruning, were the dinners they were digesting--rats, rabbits, and what have you. In the zoo, keepers shove them alive into the cages. Under their huge, fleshy pink blooms last spring he had come upon the sixth graders, Byron Toaves, Joe Puleo, and Pinky DiRoberto beating up George Snodgrass. Pinky pulled him off his bike and tore his sweater and Joe stepped up and shoved George with the flat of his hand on George's clavicle. And Byron tripped him up as he fell backward and down into the spring mud. Uncle, they all yelled when he was down, say uncle, and the primary kids shuffled from one foot to the other, their workbooks and construction paper artwork clutched to their chests, snuffling and looking bird-eyed at George and embarrassed when Pinky yelled, uncle, you son of a bitch idiot. His eyes were red and frightened when Joe scattered his books and papers and slammed his bike against the ground, breaking a reflector light against a rock. His eyes streamed and his nose ran and, uncle, he cried, uncle! Uncle, he cried for Mrs. McPhee at the blackboard in arithmetic and uncle for the parsing of Miss Torrence's sentences because . . . Because he had fat lips, a low forehead, a vacant stare, a funny name. But, George could cry uncle.

Along the sides of the path Dan scanned the dark folds of previous snows, but he found no evidence, nor did Lady Gay. No old man, fallen by the wayside, lay under the snow. At the station, Dan held Lady Gay by the collar, as the trains, like fat, black worms, crept up to the platforms--their mean red eyes searching the track for victims--and deposited their droppings before they slid into the white night, slimy, with frost on their backs reflecting under the cold, white moon. No familiar figure tramped down from the vestibules. The conductors got down, paced the asphalt sidings, thumping their gloved fists into their gloved hands and then swung back into the worms and

moved on with them across the earth under the cold stars while the pretty Rogerson girl clutched her breast on the stair under Jesus confounding the temple priests.

Surely he'll be home by now by another route, Dan hoped on his way along Railroad Avenue. On the path in front of the house, the faithful porch light picked out Dan's and Lady Gay's footprints, firmly engrafted in the layer of snow that measured faithfully the event of time in space. Nothing else had crossed it since. Herbert had not come home. In the side yard the plum trees crackled in the cold.

When Dan opened the front door for Lady Gay and saw his grandmother in shadow sitting on the fourth step down from the upstairs landing he said, "He hasn't come home, then?" "No," and her voice was flat and bitter. "What a fool he was to go to New Rochelle today. He's lying somewhere beside the track. They'll find him in the morning." The lacy blotches of black shadows cast by the porch light shining through the curtains widowed her face. "Well?" said Margaret, coming to the top of the stair in her robe and brushing her hair its fifty nightly strokes as she stood on the landing. "No sign of him," Dan said. "Not even at the station," and he headed through the quiet house to make some hot cocoa. As he returned and stood by the newel post wondering how he might pass the old lady on the stair, he heard a sound on the front walk and a shadow loomed progressively larger on the front door window.

She heard it, too, and stood up on the thirteenth step from the bottom, under a large photograph of a pug dog sitting in a chair with light all around him. She descended to the twelfth step, both hands resting on the railing as she leaned forward. "Well, well," said Herbert as he stepped into the hall. "What are we doing in the dark?" He turned and flipped on the hall light switch and dismissed the lar guarding the front porch. He was no longer needed that night. "Well, where have you been. Dan's been all the way to the station looking for you," Margaret said from the landing. The old lady descended to the eleventh step. "I can't imagine why," he said. "I waited late at Sam's. He had a pair of old pruning shears he wanted to find for me. Then I sat in the New Rochelle station waiting for a train half the night." "Weren't you sitting right by the telephone in the little waiting room on the Stamford side?" Dan said. "Why didn't you call?" "Nonsense," he said emphatically. She descended another step, her face contorted, her eyes wild. "It costs money." "You," she whispered. "You," she shouted clutching the bannister, her presence filling the stairwell. "Damn," she screamed, raising her fists in the air, her voice rising so high it came out in a whisper. "You damn man," she cried in a voice which was not so much a voice as a choking struggle to deliver voice. The intensity of the conflict filled the hallway to overflowing as if the vibrations must, in threnodic rhythms, break through the

white spinnaker clouds, on across the barrier reefs, and endlessly on. Margaret stood still at the top of the stairs and Dan at the foot while Herbert carefully removed his hat and gloves, stomping the remaining snow from his overshoes.

CHAIRS

Those chairs drowsing by the fire are waiting. That one, the worn blue velvet, pouts, thinking it's been forgotten. The cushion, back, arms, softly depressed with curves and angles, dream a body. Next to it, the chewed wooden chair, bare of cloth or pad. Sighing, one arm droops slightly. It dreams tomorrow all its wooden wounds will have healed, its grain rubbed and polished. The vinyl chair, smooth orange, yawns, figits. It wishes the logs were smaller, less fierce and imagines its skin drawing into black crusted pocks that ooze thick orange. A body would block the heat. They rouse when the front door opens, listen to the rustle of a coat being hung on its hook and to boots tracking in mud and rain. While the soaked boots are put on the brick hearth to dry, each chair waits expectantly until, at last, the man of the house, thumbing through the evening edition, sits in the chair nearest the fire.

Malinda Finney

BODYMAN

The hours collect into dry stones.
My worn hands are tired.
I have pounded dents from running boards,
Peeled lacquer from shining chrome.
My finger bones are brittle
From replacing shattered glass.
I have sanded rust from tin fenders

For twenty-two years. And have built
This place of wood and stone
Cut and taken from my paid-for land.
I have retired within these walls,
Within hours of hard work.
I watch the moonlight on the lake.
The dog chained to the back door

Barks at a moving car a mile away.
A cracked window pane shatters
The moon's light in a ragged line.
Around me the stone walls are dead, motionless.
Clouds break up across the dented moon.
The dog wheezes and moans.
The dry hours sand the moon from my eyes.

Thomas Winkel



WORDS I LIKE TO HEAR

I'm putting on a show in my shoe.
I'm laced right up to my kisser.
I'm bowing out of the curtains.
I'm walking into my exit.

What's going on on the cob?
I have an image at hand
with butter on my chin.
I'm green inside all this music.

Meals are not words like plates.
I'm satisfied with your bones.
Of all the ways to bleed, Mama,
my blood hurts when you're home.

Razzle-dazzle, I'm coming unglued.
You say it's cold when I know?
I say I'm buttoned up to hear.
I make tracks when it snows.

John Holbrook

OUR LEAN YEAR

Somewhere you are dying. I am too.
I watch for thinning ice, the white hum
pine arms pick off the wind.
Dying can be anything you choose.

We never find a trail to warmer country.
Our high and quiet refuge stares hungry
through thin lips, our thin mistakes
that call for luck when luck is gone.

Bitter glare off snow says stay, stay--
run your circles till you drop,
you belong here. Nothing but your death
will heal this frozen world.

Wolves grow in my throat. Tracks
moving South say food. Will we follow?
I shudder, huddle into myself,
know we were meant for fire.

Elizabeth Libbey



I AM MYSELF THE TREASURE I SEEK

by Marshall Gaddis

It was easy enough for Harold Fabre, Jr., to remember his childhood, for it had only two parts. There was the part where he had done what he wanted to do, and there was the part where he had watched the white moon faces come and go--mother and father, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, other strangers--and listened to them talk about him: Surely you remember little Harold don't you? The one with the scientific bent? Scientific bent? Yes, yes, I quite remember. Isn't there a relation, a foreign relation . . . ? There was, but very distant: the frog scientist who died a while back. So distant, in fact, we were sure for years there had been no legitimate representatives of the line left in France. We were right too, but not exactly in the way we thought. Long ago, it seems, one of the female Fabres had a son whose birth was never recorded in the conventional places. She was solely responsible for it, if you grasp my meaning, for she died unmarried after giving the child her own last name. So when her by-blow's eventual descendant developed a lifelong preference for insects over people, perhaps he had good reason. But why little Harold here should have the same unnatural fascination we cannot imagine

The first thing Harold could remember saying was stop. By the time he'd sorted out enough important words from the rest to be able to say more, it was too late. They'd all heard him say stop too many times by then and hadn't. Instead they'd just incorporated him into their slander. Harold, you see, doesn't like us to tell anybody. Such a strange child; thank God the others are perfectly normal. The way he's always out playing in the dirt with the vermin every time his poor old nurse turns her back . . . don't you dear? He rarely talks except to say stop so we're never really sure how much he understands of what we say. I couldn't wait till he learned to walk, thinking I'd be freer of him then, but it's only made it worse. Now you think you're alone until you turn around and find him staring at you in the strangest way. You can ask him how long he's been there but he's no more likely to answer then than any other time. But I will be relieved when he's old enough to go off to school. The doctors say he'll be able to, you know; as far as they can tell there's nothing really wrong with him. A functional disorder, they call it, whatever that is. Do you know that he'll root around all day in the mud by himself, grunting and squealing--singing to his leggy little friends for all I know--but when his father

takes an entire Saturday afternoon off just so they can play catch with a big rubber ball, why then nothing in the world will do but that he sit the rest of the day by the window. And he avoids the older children like the plague, which makes them angry enough sometimes that they beat him. I can't say I blame them for it either. We wonder sometimes if we didn't get the wrong one by mistake. The old changeling story, you know? It would be so much easier, believe me so much easier, if he were something we'd adopted, a victim of misfortune like that foreign--now I intend only the acceptable connotations of the word, you understand--bastard.

Once each week, though, Harold welcomed their attentions. Each Sunday night he went to bed early and one or the other would read him a fairy tale. That lasted for well over a year . . . up to the point where they made a mistake and his father read a story that had a changeling in it. Not only that, but he was then stupid enough to explain what a changeling was. So the next morning Harold started searching the house: if books could clear that one up then maybe they could clear up other mysteries too. He couldn't read yet, of course, but he could tell by the pictures which ones he wanted read to him. Or so he thought; he was very surprised to find that most had no pictures at all. But he finally unearthed two exceptions important enough to make the dusty day's coughing worthwhile. Both were unusually big and bound in dark, grainy leather, and both had a number of intricate ink drawings. Those in the first book were of people, but rather than being fat and rounded like the people he saw, like he was himself, they were elongated, sharp-edged and as full of detail as insects. And one picture in the book was of an insect; it looked something like the Japanese beetles that ate the grape leaves in the arbor and something like the ladybirds that occasionally flew into his face. The picture was a perfect oval, the only hint of wings the line splitting the bottom half from center to rim. Above the split a smaller oval was set crosswise into the larger and above that were large, tusky horns. It was strange, fascinating . . . Harold looked at it for a long, long time.

The other book was even better because all the pictures showed friends of his. Caterpillars. They weren't drawn flat like the beetle either. They were shown doing different things: sitting on twigs, eating, going for a walk together or curling up at night. It was just like the garden. Books were truly wonderful; he couldn't wait to go to school and learn to read.

The following Sunday he threw the best tantrum he could devise, even managing to spit such a gob onto the book of fairy tales his mother held that it stayed together even after it hit. When she looked ready to scream he pulled the first book out from under the covers. She jumped at the alternative and, after only a quick, strange look at him, read the story that followed the picture. She called it "The Gold Bug," and though it was long she didn't stop reading until it was finished.

It was that easy. The following week he had his father start the second book, which turned out to be written by his very own uncle, Jean Henri, the one they said bad things about. The book was about the Pine Processionary, a caterpillar which never walked alone but followed its friends as if they were circus elephants parading trunk to tail. They drooled too--all the time. As they filed out in the morning in search of food each blind head swayed and from each gaping jaw hung a semisolid string of slime. There was a wonderful picture. And their slow group movement forward made of the goo a trail which they could bump into that night and follow home.

It must've been the only time his parents ever saw him happy, for they gladly read him another chapter every week and stopped agreeably each time they came to a picture to let him see what the Pine Processionaries were doing. But then when the book was finished they wanted to go back to fairy tales. Harold wouldn't permit it. Instead he made them go back to the story about the gold bug and read that each week so he could get to know it. In the process he learned something about the pair that was bringing him up. His father read badly, waving his arms and rolling his eyes every time he came to the servant's lines, trying hard with exaggerated dialect to sound like the stableboy telling one of his jokes. And his mother was no better, reading the same lines tonelessly as if they didn't belong in her mouth. There could be no doubt: neither of them understood. They both smiled foolishly each time Legrand explained the breaking of the code as if it were a triumph of deduction. How silly they were, the four of them: his mother, his father, Legrand and the doctor who was his audience. How could they fail to see that Jupe knew the story from the start, knew everything? The perfect servant, he told Legrand and the doctor everything they needed to know. He knew the bug was alive, he caught it when it flew and stuffed the parchment in its mouth so he wouldn't be bitten too, but still he knew it was made of solid gold. He told them. And then, after someone had killed the bug--how come that was left out of the story?--he still feared its greed-inducing bite and knew that it would fly again. The perfect servant, he told Legrand and the doctor everything in a code anyone could break. In return they told him he was a good old negro. So, the perfect servant, he let them plod through their slow discoveries to arrive, in the end, at what he'd already told them.

So be it; as Jupe in his greater knowledge had remained the perfect servant, so Harold in his would remain the perfect child. He made his parents read the story over and over till he'd memorized all Jupe's lines. Then he went to the garden and told all the friends he could find what Jupe had said. Breaking it down into a chant made it easier for the ones with obligations who had to crawl away before he was finished to take with them a fragment of encoded truth.

Hab for to keep
Mighty tight eye pon him noovers
Todder day he gib me slip
Fore de sun up
And was gone de whole
Ob de blessed day.

Then, picking up a handful that could fly, he blew them into the air with an improvisation.

Fly away
Todder day blessed day
Todder day fly away.
Don't forget what Jupe said,
Claws enuff, massa, and mouff, too.

His parents grew tired of the story and brought him a surprise: another of uncle's books about insects. If he wouldn't learn about the things that better boys and girls did, they said, at least maybe he'd learn something new. The doctor said it was a good idea . . . and Harold never did find out whether they meant the old man that smelled as funny as medicines and like to poke and feel him or the one in the story who laughed at the idea of a gold bug finding a treasure. But he was happy to see the book, of course, and the next when that was done, and the next

He really had no more reason to hate his parents than Jupe had to hate his ignorant masters until some time after he was sent away to boarding school. There he learned what they'd managed to keep from him so long: that the family had conspired, generation after generation, to have him born a century after the old man--a century to the year, in 1923, though not to the day nor even quite to the month. That meant he was almost the son of the real Fabre, and the Junior they made him wear after his so-called father's name meant nothing. He was really Jean Henri Fabre, Jr., and there was no longer any reason to be angered by his false family and their papery, everyday lives. To be Jean Henri Fabre returned was to be Jean Henri Fabre ungraciously received. It was his portion and deserved in return hatred, not anger. But being the real Fabre's son also meant . . . meant what? Didn't it mean that he could no longer be the perfect child? If Jupe had noble masters who understood the code, what would it have made him? No longer servant, but what?

Harold had to wear the mantle of his heritage silently for a number of years before happening on a way to break the false connection, for better or for worse, and to leave the true one standing. For more than a week a fad had been going around his residence hall and

had brought his classmates together in an effort to solve unsolvable mathematical puzzles. They worked hour after hour with straight-edges and compasses, trying to square circles and trisect angles. And the eleventh night they spent in his room comparing approaches and failures. Harold lay in bed pretending to still read Human Reason and the Theory of Mathematics though he'd gotten as far as he needed: the concept of corollaries. If when you proved one thing the chances were good you had proved others, then it was only necessary to cast about for a way to decode the already-completed problem. Over the book's edge he watched the group ignore him in their caterpillar attempt to defy history. Finally they finished their talking and left. Harold waited till lights out, put his book on the table beside the bed and traded his clothes for pajamas. Then he waited till he was sure everyone would be asleep, got out of bed and crept down the hall to the bathroom. He let the door finish its whispering pendulum swing before turning on all the lights. He slipped into a stall, made sure the sliding catch was in place, settled himself comfortably and got started.

Twenty minutes later he had it. In his blood flowed only one part in four million one hundred ninety-four thousand three hundred and four which was identical to the fluid that had washed the real Fabre's veins and carried air to his lungs for more than ninety fruitful years. He was cold sitting there with his pajamas draping his ankles but started over the arithmetic again anyway in hopes that a mistake had enlarged the fraction. But he stopped when he thought he saw an error pointing the wrong way--a failure to carry a one on only the third multiplication. He'd be ten short there, forty on the next, one hundred sixty on the next . . . he'd exaggerated his importance way too much. He tore out the page before he could be sure, slammed shut the counting book, let the figure stand, stood himself, pulled up the flannel, flushed, memorized it. One in four million one hundred ninety-four thousand three hundred and four was close enough.

It should've been half. He encoded the fraction and the accusation in one sentence and mailed it to his parents. He was then fourteen. He managed after that to never see or write to them again.

He wondered sometimes if they'd heard the tones of aged wisdom ringing through that single line of numbers, asterisks and parentheses, but he never learned more than that they'd immediately put a trust fund in his name. They'd probably tried for the rest of their lives--surely they were dead by now--to forget that he'd ever been born; he hoped so anyway.

After finishing school Harold went straight into a life of independent entomology. All his energy was devoted to expanding the limits of what science knew about insects. And though his dedication didn't slacken, within five years he found it necessary to call back a

fraction of that energy and employ it in his own behalf by keeping a diary, a journal. Opposite every date he wrote a brief description of the progress made on each study. From time to time he added notes on the way books and articles were developing. Soon titles of publications, awards and other honors went across from the appropriate days in whatever color of drawing ink he felt the occasion demanded. And thus he kept a tally of successes and setbacks.

One day as the Pakistan expedition was nearing an inconclusive end and he was nearing the age of thirty-two, he finished the diary. Completely finished it: the dates were filled in from as far back as he could go to the brief, dispassionate announcement of death and the still-wet page in front of him that described, rather formally, the funeral rites. For the life and achievements he'd been describing all these years were not his own but those of the real Fabre. It had taken a lot of research, a lot of close reading of the old man's books for him to attach likely dates to everything, and then a lot of correcting to get rid of the contradictions and impossibilities. But now he was done. The finished book belonged to him though the history did not, for it was the only touchstone by which he could assess his own life, the only timetable that mattered. It was his to look at every time his own progress needed appraisal.

And now, fifteen years later, it needed it. Dawn had almost reached the small Caribbean island; as soon as there was enough light Harold would begin the hundred and thirteenth day of his most ambitious expedition. But first, having just riffled through his own past, he riffled through the pages of the real Fabre's life and admitted that he was falling pretty far behind in the recognition department. He should have at least one book out, one success he could point to. People, some people, should know his name. He couldn't stay a servant or a child forever, and if you never made them listen to you then that's all you stayed. He made sure he had the right place--today one hundred years ago--before getting the clothespin. He put it over the pages leading up to today so he couldn't see any of the honors and accomplishments no longer possible. Then he flipped through the book time after time until he was satisfied: all of that remained for him to achieve. More than enough for his contribution and rightful share of recognition, more than enough to satisfy both science and his heritage. He thumbed through the pages once again: these late successes had made the real Fabre who he was; the clipped ones before were mere stepping stones Harold's own career would do without easily enough. Not only that, he reminded himself, but in some ways he was actually ahead of the old man. Not until the age of sixty had his predecessor been able to quit working for others, buy a couple of acres in the country, say goodbye to the world of men and give the rest of his life to the insects. Harold had already said goodbye, had had the life as a child and would

have it again as soon as he had repaid his debt with the contribution that was due any day now. For somewhere on the high, almost inaccessible bluff that made up all of this island but its rim, he was going to find some little-known, rather intriguing-looking dung beetles that everybody swore did not exist, could not exist, in this hemisphere. Just as soon as he found them he was going to tell the whole world something nobody in it knew but him . . . and then prove it. It was the treasure that really set you free, and one secret scarab would be enough.

Conditions were perfect for their survival. He'd checked out every conceivable variable and found that the bluff was absolutely protected from every natural enemy and every unfavorable circumstance of climate. Nobody would've found them up there either, because nobody went up on the bluff but him. It was an hour's rough climb every day, and once there you encountered rainforest far too dense to move around in without machete and axe. The only time anybody in the history of the island had tried to clear a patch of it they'd found it too barren beneath for even the few desperate goats that grazed down below on sand and coral.

He had it all figured out. The ships bringing livestock and slaves to the colonies years ago would've had to eventually bring along a load of eggs or larvae sleeping in their comfortable little beds of dung. And by the same monkeys-with-typewriters logic, sooner or later some pupae would go through their metamorphosis into adults just as the ship unloaded supplies and took on water. Once ashore, twenty or thirty generations would've been enough for them to find their way up to the bluff and start an immortal colony of their own. Everything was perfect; there could be no flaw in his logic. Even the foundations agreed that the beetles could've survived the voyage, could've reached the island. But a grant, they were all afraid, was out of the question until he could provide something tangible in the way of evidence; theory was not enough. An anonymous member of one had even called his application a construction of hope and air.

Of course there was no evidence. How could there be? What they meant by evidence was a specimen, and as soon as he had that he had all he needed. Perhaps he should've sent them another letter. Decoded it could read:

Concerning yours of the twenty-third. I enclose herewith a piece of parchment found sealed in a bottle near the remains of a pirate ship recently discovered offshore. Printing will appear if it is placed near a fire. Decipher. I think you will find in the message sufficient evidence to justify money and encouragement for my little venture.

Not that he needed either, of course; the only reason he'd gone to them at all was because that's how science expected you to do things.

Dawn. Harold closed the book and started down the sandy road. The twisting path up to the bluff was exhausting and at the top he took a few minutes to catch his breath. The sun on the horizon was sending long, glistening slices of gold across the water to the island at his feet, but he watched the scene no longer than usual before starting the day's routine. He cleared a new section of jungle first. Then he measured and staked and searched. He ate the lunch he brought and made a few notes in the little book he wore hanging from his neck by a chain. Then he walked around, picked things up, examined them, kept some, dropped some, tied one to whip-cord and spun it around his head

Sunstroke. He'd worked too late. He heard it first, heard it in his head, an indistinct blur of distant brass gongs signalling his mind. He felt it prickle in response like a foot going to sleep and helplessly watched his computations shimmer away on the sound. He knew better than to fight it; all he could do now was try to get home. He stumbled down to the lower island and then trudged step by methodical step along the empty road. There were no noises now, no noises at all. Just a footdragging, gritty nightmare.

But at last he tripped on the solid molding of his doorway and fell into bed. He laughed because he was safe. As soon as he was able to reach the fan a breeze began to cool his blistered, bald head. He might be all right tomorrow. A few hours in bed like this and he might even make it down to the beach in the early part of the evening. Maybe out in the water. Sure, out in the water; he could get past the electric spines of the sea urchins, out where the clear water turned green, maybe even farther out where it became deep cobalt and you could slip under, open your eyes and see how the blueness had nothing to do with the depth of the bottom. Blue was all around you, part of the water, a living something you could see if you turned over on your back and looked up to the quivering place where water turned to air. It was everywhere between you and that place. You could see it, and if you only knew how to look down at yourself you'd see it all over your skin too. Living there. And back on top it's too good to leave again; you can float without care till young children drift by in their slow-squeaking boat. Their quiet island voices float too, like those golden slices of sun--telling him? telling who?--there are sharks that far out

Harold woke and looked at the clock. Almost five. He shook his head, glad endurance was the last strength to leave a man growing older. He'd go on as long as it was necessary, and the minute it stopped being necessary he'd be free. He'd dissolve the trust at last, take all the money and pick from the expanse of the world the nicest spot of all. Buy land, not a lot; two acres was enough for the other Fabre. Build a cottage; have it built. Move in. Look around your holdings. And then do what the old man was finally allowed to do: occupy your backyard as an anthropologist would an island. Make the

acquaintance of the inhabitants, all living creatures. Get to know the insects well. Visit with the caterpillars and the ants. And then, when the time is finally right, strike a bargain. If you agree to feed them they'll be polite and courteous; until you get over your shyness at being so different they'll pretend not to notice you're there at all. Even if you pick one up or shatter a nest.

It would be so peaceful. He'd always known it would; you couldn't read the old man over and over without seeing it. Just live out the rest of your long life watching their short ones

A fly landed on Harold's right arm, interrupting. It stepped warily on toward his elbow, three even steps, and then stopped. Not warily enough though, not a common housefly. Harold brought his left hand into position above and behind her. You didn't really have to be very careful with a creature like that. Imitating the approach of a successful fly-eating insect was enough. There. The trap was set. Even if she tried to get away he had time to swing his hand down, close it, catch her in the arch of that high, backward jump she needed before she could flap her glossy wings.

But she didn't jump. So Harold didn't close his hand. Instead he brought it down flat and hit her body with enough force to spatter her juices eight body-lengths away. A smear over half his hand. Insects, stupid insects. There were very few exceptions, very few beautiful ones. Maybe one every three years. The only one he'd seen on this island had been a dragonfly out near the island's only pond. Sea water seeping through porous coral mixed there with pure water from tiny underground springs; the combination was too salty to drink but not salty enough to kill the mosquitoes which bred there or the eggs they lay. And since there were mosquitoes there were dragonflies. The one he'd seen was so large, well-formed and brilliant that he ran back for his sample-taking gear.

And now, ignoring the rush of blood from his head when he rose from the bed, Harold went over to the sample case and took it out. Mounting had taken away none of the color. Maybe trying to draw it would keep his mind from wandering so. He dismounted it carefully, got everything he needed, sat down at his map table and adjusted the lights. Then he brought his head closer and closer to the flashing thorax. He allowed ten or fifteen minutes between each move; it wasn't a fly, you couldn't sneak up on it. Finally he reached the point where his eyes could no longer quite hold their focus, trying as hard as he could to close in on an understanding of all that made that particular dragonfly surpass all others he'd ever seen. Until he knew that unequal radiance he wouldn't draw a line. Audubon had done it with birds, but they were something else altogether. And even he failed every time he tried to paint them from life. It was only when he fell to the expedient of shooting them with a pistol that he succeeded. With

them dead he could arrange the warm bodies in just the lifelike positions he wanted. If they started to deteriorate before he'd finished sniffing out the life that remained in their corpses, he had them stuffed. That gave him all the time in the world. But insects weren't like that; their vitality wasn't a matter of position. This dragonfly, for instance . . . Harold's nose touched first its wingtips where the iridescence began to turn opaque and then the sparkling tip of its segmented abdomen. Its huge compound eyes stared back at him. Any minute now he'd be ready to reach for the pen, start a few curving strokes and then dive into the bold perpendicularity that would outline the wings. . . .

As he stared he thought of the life it had been, the life it would be. Flying just as far as you wanted to go, exploring everywhere. So many others to see, so many different from you. No surprise in them at all when they found you strange for that's the way the world is. And so many colors Untold variety too in just the texture of their wings. Everyone's fleece a little different . . . some blue and fuzzy, some sleek silver, some pale-blotched and spotted, some with angry patches you can tell just by looking will kill you first touch. So many ways for you to die, but all your ways, all so natural. In return you kill the ones you must so very naturally, so very gently. Kill them and eat them. It's all right, you see, it's all all right.

Moving slowly along the shores of a great river so you can catch the sunlight in your bright, immense body and reflect it all over the world, it's all right. But not before you add your own thousands of mutable colors and make the world look a little more like you. Catch too the crooked leg mosquitoes--ugly, unbalanced, all appendages and no substance except for the hairy sack that carries the blood they suck --but fine eating just the same, so slick and red on the inside. It's so good. And other delicacies fly right in front of you. It just happens; that's the way the world is. Or if you get the urge for something sweeter, right over there is a flowering bush. Hover over it, build those pleasant anticipations, and then slip your body easily among the parts and folds. Eat anyone you find; they're all so good.

Just a big, gentle dragonfly lazing around the wind currents. Just? Just? Perhaps Odonata is more pleasant to answer to. But then why should you, of all people, answer to any name. Ride a bit of breeze instead; see what's happening downstream. What's a dragon? The world, don't you see, is alive. Who could look at you and say fly? Who could listen to you shake even the air as you pass by . . . and then . . . say . . . fly?

THE BELMONT

If you've stayed or haven't stayed
you know The Belmont
at the end of Railroad and First.
Up those creaky stairs and rubber mats
a tired night clerk's face
mulls the city map.
His tired wife sleeps in back,
outlived by miles of vines
and flowers on the walls of every room.
Only the old could love such growth
in grey and silver, or cough all night
above the heater's clink and steam.
If you've stayed you know those pipes
and how sad you felt
when you strained the faucet till it broke.
You know those thin white towels,
the socket above the sink
and that long silence on the elevator
came from the hospital down the street.

Patrick Todd

OWL IN RAIN

I wonder about the owl.
She seems so slow in pine and cedar.
Does she forget how she learned Arabia,
to snatch the tarsier from a pole
and climb mountain currents without the eagle?

You've seen her eyes in photos,
heavy after years of nights,
cross with exhaustion above the snake.
I think it's rain that kills her.
Old and tired, she mistakes

a dry ring for shelter under the elm
and falls easy to her prey.
But there's a nordic tale
that claims the nordic owl
can tear your arm loose

and grip a limb so hard in fear
the tree will fall.
Three turks worked the night
to loose a child from a male's beak.
Greeks imagine the sphinx with a woman's face.

Patrick Todd

A GHOST IN THE GRAVEL PIT

When Orvil changed his name to henry hank
his oils sold. Every indian turned nice
in amber, and here, his wife helped
paint tepees in the background.
May into June, they worked nights
to rid his mild heart of those swirly words:
Minnehaha, Osceola, Jaunita and Sequoia.

One night Orvil overworked himself
till creatures haunted shadows in the field.
No matter how he tried, the quail's face ran.
A ghostly white dribbled from her beak.
His cows were oddly human
and no mixture could bring the sky back
to his favorite pale light.

He worked gray into blues,
blues into shades of black
and grass from bright green to stones.
Gravel was heaped around the foreman's shack
with too much purple in the haggard pine,
and by dawn Orvil knew all he needed
about the romance of chilly moons.

It was the fox he couldn't paint.
The fox looked quail, hounds head quail,
no lynx quail or hen, a fox without teeth.
He knew he couldn't sleep or put the brush down.
The fox wanted to be a ghost,
not red but blue, white tail blue.
A blue tail fox moons the window in falling snow.

Patrick Todd

SALAMANDERS VISIT CLARENCE

by Barrett Briggs

Shoes started arriving last week. First day a WWII paratrooper boot. Next day a ballerina slipper. Next--so many boxes I stopped opening them. None matched. I put them on a closet shelf. Then on the closet floor until the closet was full. I thought they weren't good for anybody hidden away. I lined every room of the house with them. Salamanders started appearing after the shoes were in order. Each salamander took on the color of the shoe and a shape and size that made living inside it comfortable. This morning all the salamanders perched on the toes of their shoes (the open-toed shoes were vacant) and stood rigid until I had inspected them. The paratrooper salamander had a lump on his back. He was camouflaged a scruffy black. The ballerina salamander's sequins glittered in the early light. They acknowledged my sovereignty by waving their tiny hands. I ignored them and they went back inside their shoes to do whatever they do. I had hoped some communication would be possible considering their apparent desire to placate me. Suddenly, they gathered in the room center in a formation I thought hierarchical. No one told the others what to do. They crawled off their shoes to their places. The paratrooper salamander stood at the rear in his own file, his own row. I suppose that he was isolated because his ferocity would interfere with the maneuvers or that he was to have no part in them. There was no way to tell. The ballerina salamander wove through the formation selecting salamanders in shapes of--a tennis shoe, a hiking boot, and a bare foot. I was delivered no bare feet. The four salamanders went to the front of the formation. The bare foot wriggled its toes as though feeling for familiar ground in darkness, the hiking boot plodded methodically, the tennis shoe bounded and squeaked, and the ballerina tiptoed as though afraid to step on anything. The assemblage crept toward the door. The tennis shoe leaped to the doorknob and twirled it. The hiking boot kicked the door open. The ballerina led the surge outside. The bare foot squashed the paratrooper salamander with an assured stomp and ambled out the door in a satisfied totter. I closed the door and remember how I had wanted to talk to salamanders, to show them some sign of interest, but they were gone. After scraping up the paratrooper, I looked outside hoping to see where they were going. They were searching for mates and I wished them luck.

PARTY

"Clarence, you've been acting strangely in such a marvelous way. We wondered if your research might be troubling you?" (said Betty Bonshaft, the librarian, who cares)

"Gentlemen, isn't this wrangling self defeating? Isn't it time we discussed things seriously? Where is the sense of it, Clarence? (said Wilbut Propper, LLD, professional conciliator, who honestly promotes good causes)

"Narcotics are the real problem--why, if I had my way those pushers would never.....ever.....ever!" (said Martin Gale, Sheriff, higher than his sons. He was recently honored for professional restraint and conduct enhancing the image of law enforcement. His wife specializes in Icelandic cuisine--all done without recipes, which she considers childish)

"I'm sure some local boys would clear away those awful weeds." (said Minister Minbog, whose church grounds are maintained by the ladies auxiliary to the men of the church. Upkeep of the grounds by the ladies was suggested by the men at Minister Minbog's inference that the ladies needed goals benefitting the community. The men agreed and elected ushers to serve the following month)

"Naturally, death is the only common friend of mankind." (said Jean Flambeau, the foreign exchange student. His dissertation, The Power of Positive Existentialism, has been heard and rejected six times by the faculty committee. Rather than moving on, he has prepared a systematic conspiracy by which he intends to sew up the committee in his thinking. The vote gets closer each time so there need be no rewrite of his next submission)

"Aren't you sleepy, Betty?" (said Martin. His eyelids sagged more than normal. Earlier he had asked if Betty would escort him into the library to pick up a reserved book. He could have entered with his skeleton key but he explained to Betty that he would feel better if she were there to make things official. She assented and told Martin about new legal publications expected by the library. These concerned riot control, which had been discussed warily at recent conventions)

"She's asleep Martin and you did it." (said Jean staring at the Sheriff. To Jean the Sheriff was no threat and a politician. Jean is constantly armed with intricacies of studies logic--its value would show up in committee. Times Jean wanted no more philosophy he'd knock late and we'd play gin, cribbage, and his favorite, double solitaire, and he'd ask about my research and how can a scientist set out to discover something. He would refuse to quit cards until I had blurred away into a tumescent fuzz and he'd begin to win. Then he'd thank me and I'd welcome him and he'd leave briskly, at the pace of a hard working man with home in sight)

"You've done it again, Clarence, clever man." (said I to me who had enough. Minister Minbog collided with Betty who lurched to her feet after Sheriff Gale left. The Minister pardoned himself gracefully. "Pardon me, my sermon, you know." I leaned over to help Betty to her feet. She was gone and I turned round the empty room. Thank you, I said, thank you all)

SPEECH TO THE SOCIETY: SIDEWALKS

The sidewalk has not always been the sidewalk. Previously it was sand, water and cement. Like the mixture of any three things intended to produce one, no two will do without the third. Thus it is with all combinations. Eliminate any of the components and the whole will not be the same. There may be a use for the result of neglecting the inclusion of one element but this use cannot be the same as the one for which inclusion of the missing element was intended. Sidewalks are for more than walking. Some are for wishing they were not there and, although it need not be mentioned here, *vice versa*. (Latin teachers are often older than Latin--perhaps an element was left out) Some sidewalks may contain other elements we may consider nonessential. Dead birds and workmen's fingers may be included here. Thank nature, any such nonessential ingredients as these will be worn away if exposed to weather or walking since, at least, in the old days shoe soles were made of leather. As nonessential elements are missing they may be considered existent nonelements. This is readily seen. Suppose chocolate were included in the mixing of cement for a sidewalk. Only a fool would think of a chocolate sidewalk. Fool or madman. So the aberration of considering existent nonelements brands these mad or foolish dreamers aberrant and therefore nonessential to the makeup of society--which consists only of elements. The problem becomes one of simple definition. To put it more concretely, the free democratic process of identifying aberrants follows like smoke follows fire or sidewalks--society discovers the existent elements and mad, foolish dreamers invent the nonexistent, nonessential elements. The value of this process becomes when we see how such aberrants are identified. Now is when their heads come in contact with sidewalks, usually accompanied by old-fashioned leather soled shoes. This process describes the further essential uses of sidewalks and how they may come into fashion by necessity. This evolutionary use of sidewalks may disappear quite naturally when the aberrants have all come in contact with sidewalks. So, as usual with such widely used but narrowly understood creations of the properly constructed mind, the sidewalk has been vastly underrated. This situation must be rectified and I

feel no small pride in being the first to point it out. I am presently compiling a list of essential uses for the sidewalk. These, I am sure, society will accept. Some are: walking, sitting, standing, crouching, lying, eating, and eliminating. Think it over--it's your sidewalk.

HOUSE AND GARDEN

Huge green flushweeds surround my angular house. They took over the small lot--strangling the garden that was here when I moved in. The garden was surrounded by a lawn that had taken years to knit. I bought the house for the garden but once inside I have forgotten and rarely think of it. Now flushweeds remind me of raw purposeless moments when I consider confining their onslaught to the garden. But they took hold and now press close higher than any window.

The story or history of my house interests me. The house was first built (first because it burned down in 1952) in 1928 by a carpenter discontent with nails. He fit and polished every joint and seam. When finished, the house was sold because of difficult times. A succession of tradesmen owned it until the fire of 1952. It was immediately rebuilt but not sold until a year before I bought it. Today I own it outright because of my practice. From inside, I watched the neighborhood convulse and push up a new house every week. Paved streets and concrete sidewalks came last spring with the flurry of plants and animals. I had one party in my house and expect to have another soon. It's particularly well suited for parties and several of my guests remarked they'd like another.

CLARENCE STAYS UP

I sat at my desk wondering if anything of my speech to the society had reached them. Perhaps I had spent too much time with the riddle. Couldn't I have told them straight out. No, not then, but maybe soon. If I had been sure that they would understand--but how could they? What if I said it wrong? What if I said nothing at all?the salamanders never had a chance--who would believe that?

He sat on the desk facing me, legs and arms folded. What are you doing in my house. "Yes, I see," he said. "Clarence, you've done it again. You know that I only come around to remind you that you're making too much of this. You shouldn't feel bad about it because I've been busy all week. Clarence, we must get together more often." You don't belong here you know too much. "Tell me about it, Clarence, all of it, leave nothing out--and don't make up things you think I'd like to hear." I turned off all the lights in the house. I don't

want you to see me talking. "Of course not, make yourself comfortable, relax, take your time, make it fun, make it not matter."

Do you ever look behind you holding aces and eights and feel your trigger finger poking you. I dreamed a girl mistook me for a prowler and shot me in the side. I died and asked her why she had not asked who was there. How it could have been easier. Stop the car. You passed another hitchhiker. Those build up. You win the hand, you wake up, you get where you're going--and none of it matters. What does matter? I once searched for and found a young bristlecone pine. I.....

"Please, Clarence, you're rude. I'm here to help if I can. Television calms you--why not turn it on?"

There's nothing on. "There's nothing on. You'll make me do it. No old movies, nothing.

WATCHING TELEVISION

.....sure you recognized them folks that was Tony and the Tourniquets on Rude Records singing Cuttin Off Your Blood and Bruised and Swollen Over You their new hit that should open all the arteries to the top of the charts courtesy of NU-VU before continuing INCISOR our in depth dive into the heart of humanity some late ball scores Snapdragons O Dull City Death Fram O and in another monumental struggle it's Salamanders -1 Joystick Crucifixion Band 1971 before resuming INCISOR remember later in the show we'll present Ronny and the Realguy in their debut network performance you may be the viewer fortunate enough to deduce their disease so keep watching NU-VU and keep sending in your entries to the Heartstopper of the Week contest you know that startling piece of information you think may be chosen by our panel of judges to be terminal knowledge.

Now, IN CI SOR continues del ving in to the re a li ties of life in the a ver age A mer i can house hold. Dig deep in your souls and grab a hold because her we go with Solomon de Sult, take it away, Sol.

(I told you there was nothing on I don't want to watch television I want to clean out my garden I want a pet I want to plan a party I want to walk and run I want my feet to explode I want sirens and wailing I want laughter and lullabies I want peace and sleep and nothing on I want drugs and liquor everything you have)

((Clarence, you're upsetting yourself. Relax, you may learn not to be so hard on me))

Thank you hello again folks as we tune into our continuing
Dramareal featuring Harvey and Sylvia at home we hear Harvey say:
dramareal

"I'm going bowling now. "

"What day is today?" said Sylvia.

"Bowling night. "

"I'll see you when you get back," Sylvia finished drying the dishes and sat at the formica counter fumbling through her new copy of Better Living looking for a new recipe. Harvey stood with his hand on the plastic doorknob going over the list of items necessary for his night out bowling.

"I forgot something," Harvey said.

"A tablespoon of mustard?" said Sylvia.

"No, got that, salt too. "

"Well, you always forget your shoes. "

"Where are they?"

"The same place I always hide them. "

Harvey strode like a chugging train into the kitchen and opened the olive oven door. "Why don't you think of a new hiding place?" he muttered. "You hide everything in the oven--why not the stereo cabinet or your father's tobacco stand?"

"Would you ever look there?"

"No. "

"Well. "

"You want to make things easy for me, don't you Sylvia?"

"I thought you were going bowling. You could stay home and read. "

"Give me that magazine. "

Sylvia handed Harvey the magazine. He sat at the counter where Sylvia had been. He examined a recipe for Spanish Deviled Eggs remembering the Mexican waitress at the bowling alley who brought him his dripping bottles of Schlitz. He stood and handed the magazine back to Sylvia who had snatched his bowling shoes from the oven. She held them by the strings, her arm outstretched.

"Go bowling," said Sylvia.

"Quite a recipe. Will they be ready when I get home?"

"When will you get home, same time?"

"Depends. When I get home. How do I know. I don't like to read. "

"Me too," said Sylvia, "you raped me," said Sylvia, "you had it all planned and you raped me." Sylvia dropped the bowling shoes onto the vinyl floor and slumped back against the olive oven, sobbing. "You planned to rape me. I knew you would. You looked like a rapist

the first time I met you. "

"So what, you were no easier than Betty Lou and she thanked me. "

"Go bowling, " said Sylvia, "I have to boil these eggs. "

"How many? " asked Harvey. "I'll be mighty hungry. "

"You owe me something, " said Sylvia.

"I'll write you a check, " said Harvey.

"Don't go bowling--stay here and talk to me. "

"Take off your clothes, " said Harvey, "and get out the mustard. "

"You have the mustard in your bowling bag, " said Sylvia.

"I'm going bowling, " said Harvey

Harvey and Sylvia lived in a modern apartment complex with ice machines on each floor. They had hoped to rent a ground floor one bedroom but settled for a third floor two bedroom. Harvey wanted a den. Sylvia bought pink curtains.

Tonight Harvey would get drunk. He told himself so and was relieved that later there would be no bothersome decision. He drank viciously throughout the regular league match and managed to raise his average a few pins. Around midnight he found himself thinking of how easy Sylvia had been. She cried intensely and pleaded unconvincingly. Rape was everything up to penetration--then she enjoyed and no longer tried to fool him. Harvey recalled their first real night together.....after making love, Sylvia rolled away, her back to Harvey. He slithered her away and discovered the slimy wet spot on the sheet.

"OOooooeow! " said Harvey.

"Huh? "

"OOooooeoweow! " said Harvey with practiced emphasis.

"What's wrong? " said Sylvia. "What does that mean? "

"Nothing's wrong. That's South Korean. " Harvey lay still waiting.

"Okay, what's it mean? "

"I didn't see the pigeon fly by. "

"You don't pay much attention. "

"He must have been a big one--did you see him? "

"He was two inches long and hovered over the bed for five minutes. He was in a hurry and flapped real hard and dropped it and flew away. Read or go to sleep. "

Harvey gave up on the Mexican waitress and went home. Sylvia was waiting. "Will you talk to me now? " she said.

"Well, first this big airplane, see, it flew over the building and dropped me a note that said see you next week so I went up on the roof and signaled it with a mirror the next time it came and it dropped me a rope and pulled me up. The plane was empty so I flew around in circles for a while--then came home. "

"Is that all?" Sylvia said.

"Yes," said Harvey, "where are the Spanish Deviled Eggs?"

"They're not Spanish, they're plain deviled eggs."

The wind that had blown Harvey in continued whining at the doors to their apartment. Harvey noticed the first owl.

"Would hyou have it any other way, dear?" said Sylvia. "The poor furry can't fly in this wind."

"Those are feathers," said Harvey.

Two months later thirty-five owl inhabited the H/S household. They clung to the backs of chairs and did not move.

"Have you ever been to Carlsbad Caverns?" said Harvey anxious to tell of his spelunking days.

"Yes," said Sylvia, "I was born and raised in a cave. My best friends were bats. I never had a doll. They'd carry me off into passages and chambers where no human being had ever been. They taught me all their secrets. Finally, they gave up on me. Because I couldn't fly. We practiced and tried everything. Then my parents moved to Labrador and that's when I met you remember?"

"This place is beginning to look like a cave. You let the owls in."

"You never complained."

"I only noticed the stalagmites today."

"The last time mother wrote from Labrador she said Ice caves are much less comfortable, with the dripping and all."

The wind stopped, the owls unhooked themselves and flew off to trees or barns or museums to stare back at the tourists glaring at them and then the crisis came. "I'm going bowling," said Harvey.

"You enjoyed raping me," said Sylvia.

.....this is Sol de Sult saying that's about it from this end. We sign off now, goodnight.

"See Clarence, you were wrong." I know. "There was something on." I didn't want to see it. Then read it--here's a book I brought for you. Open it anywhere. I'm sure you'll find it enlightening.

Ch. 1 HOW GODLINESS REVEALED TRANSCENDENTAL
 NARCOSIS TO THE UNNATURAL, MYTHIC
 FALLOPIANS DESERVES MORE THAN THIS
 SHORT SPACE

Ch. 2 REDD NEKK AND BLACKWHITE, THE SPOTTED
 WONDER BOYKID, FACE NUMEROUS PERILS AND
 OVERCOME THE HORRIBLE, DANGEROUS LONG-
 HAIRS

Ch. 3 THE WORLD'S MOST PERFECTLY RUDE MAN
AND THE WORLD'S FINEST SMALL DOG FIND
INFINITE JOY IN RURAL AMERICA

Ch. 4 STILL LIFE

"I'll leave you to read now Clarence. Try to organize things. You know, get something out of your life."

Clarence began reading somewhere in chapter four.

"That's a cheap trick, Sylvia."

"It's not too much for you to do." Sylvia sat crosslegged on the edge of the bed. "It's easier for you to say no than for me to ask you to do it."

"Cook me something first," said Harvey.

"Why should I let you bribe me? You raped me. You won't even deny it."

"Damn Sylvia, it's not even dark."

"I'll tell you what happens when you want something. You want it now. You go bowling, you make up stories, you waste time all the time and it's all right now--when you want..."

"Tell me more about your cave--and your mother in Labrador --and how you didn't want it. Tell me, Sylvia."

"All right. You read to me and I'll cook you something--then you do it and see if it doesn't turn out the way you want."

"Read what?"

"That book under the cook book. It's funny--maybe you'll calm down."

Harvey opened the book and began reading to himself. He laughed hard and freely, his head gyrating like a wind battered balloon.

"The damn things are chameleons. Chameleons, Sylvia. Listen to this: 'Shoes started arriving last week. First day.....'" He laughed harder and louder.

"Okay, I'll do it. Just remember, whether or not I raped you, it didn't hurt--now did it? Where's the mustard?"

"I guess not," said Sylvia grinning like a salesgirl with the money in her hand.

EVEN A STONE
(for Colly)

Five days since the blossoms
floated downstream.
And all day the wind.
All day the creek noise:
even a stone has love,
for the ground.
I bend over an anthill,
hear the faint hum,
or is it the blood-rush
in my ears.
Who hides here?
It cannot be known
what lies in the bones.
Even a stone.
Our cat playfully batters
a young robin
beneath the bedroom window.
I lie beside you
listening to the soft growls.

Five days after the blossoms,
apples come
like breasts on a girl,
On my girl who is ten
and big for her age
and on you who sleep here
beside me -
apples come.
Outside, a robin flops
like a brown paper bag in the wind.
The moon is full.
Awake, I stand in the footprints of elk
in the wet snow chanting,
even a stone.

Roger Dunsmore

DISTRICT LINE

The man with the simmering mind
Sketching the universe with his hands,
Alight with his own wisdom, Einstein
Shortened, Heidegger simplified,
Talks to himself, but aloud
- God too can listen if so inclined -
Expounding the beautiful system
Whereby, whereby. . . but this time
Again a cog slips and he's got to
Begin it from the beginning,
While posters chase, and the faces change,
Silent as jurors, not looking, seeing
A screw loose. - And where's he off to?
Darting as if out of a cage
Through the closing doors, singing
And waving as he rises
With the feeling of something attained
At the disappearing end
Of the escalator top:
For whom everything connects
All the effects and causes
Moving within his grip,
Dangerously safe,
Nearly absolved from himself
With his all-revolving mind,
Holding a universe in his hands,
And who understands his life. . .

David Paul

TAKING TO THE AIR

From the air how man-made the earth looks,
Every exploitable square inch . . .
The sown, stitched fields, holes and scraped levels,
Even the accidental looks planned
And we've appreciably altered some of the hills.

Up above the makeshift, the hugger-mugger,
Everything's Euclidean, strange,
Magically inching past the wing-tip, the vast
Smoked river-pools, parks, junctions, housing-estates,
A slide-ruled mystery of works and waste.

Clouds, the foam of this liquid atmosphere,
Hang still as suds, dirty and clean,
Afloat to the limit of this upper horizon.
And then the sea, real below the vapour,
Slides in motionlessly wrinkled, speed-frozen.

The terrestrial globe, relief map and picture,
Turns, awash under its own steam.
- No wonder fliers' talk is small, sly, stoic;
A joke's the only safe reactor
Once you're caught up in this air-conditioned traffic.

Given the god's-eye-view we're all belittled,
Strapped in like children
Irresponsibly apart, facing forward in the classroom,
While a smile hurries round offering sweets,
And the engines' noise, grown to an enwombing hum,

Carries us back further as we rise higher
Till we're no more than foetuses
As the plane levels out on its unmetalled road
And speed shoots off into sleep's own stillness,
On the blind ride through swathes of laundering cloud.

David Paul

TIGER SHRIKE

by Jon Jackson

"How lovely are thy feet in sandals," said Jeremy.

"Are you a Quaker, Mister Harris?"

As soon as her facilities were ready and the Seabees had left, they got down to business.

"It was your article in the Japanese ornithology magazine that first drew our attention, Mr. Harris."

"You may call me Jeremy, Miss Bloom."

"You see, Mr. Harris, the most significant aspect of your article for us, is that the island experiences very little bird migration of any kind, but most important, none of the other islands between here and the main body of the Philippine group has recorded the appearance of Lanius tigrinus."

"Interesting. Can I get you a beer?" He gestured toward the generator-powered refrigerator sitting in the corner of her room. The Seabees had installed it--for laboratory purposes, he gathered--and he was sure they had left some beer. It was a mixed blessing. The generator pit emitted a tiny but bothersome noise through its ventilation system, the only unnatural sound on the island.

"No thank you, but you may have one. The main group however, does get considerably more bird life. You see, birds nesting in China, Manchuria, and Siberia, have two main migration routes. Some of them come south into the Korean peninsula, thence across the Japan Sea to Japan, where they join local migrating populations, and then down the Ryukus, occasionally to Taiwan and on to the Philippines. The other main group migrates south within China, into the Malay peninsula, or into Vietnam, into Borneo, and so forth, down to the South Pacific."

"Fascinating, Miss Bloom." Jeremy took a long pull at his beer. It was very refreshing, cold and covered with beads of sweat.

"What all this means, Mr. Harris, is that it is possible, perhaps even probable, that Lanius tigrinus migrates directly here from China, as you suggested in your article, directly across the South China Sea. Of course, not all Tiger Shrikes do so."

"That's too bad, Miss Pessie."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Too bad. Cause I happen to like the shrikes, very much. I love to watch them, and I like to read about their natural history as well. So maybe I should move to another island? You know the Japanese name for them?"

Miss Bloom was already scanning the beach with a very expensive set of binoculars. "No, I do not, Mr. Harris."

"Chigo-mozu. The child shrike, cause it's so small, I guess. Say, those are nice binocks. That Institute must have a hell of a lot of money to throw away."

She turned from the doorway and regarded him soberly. The sun silhouetted her right breast through the khaki blouse. "Yes, Mr. Harris. They have all the money they require."

For the next few days they had only occasional conversations. Jeremy was deterred from garrulousness by the peculiarities of her discourse and demeanor. But he watched her a lot. She was quite casual in her dress, obviously not from any desire to titillate or intrigue, but rather out of indifference and unconsciousness. It was a thrilling sight, after his long solitude, to see this young girl swinging along the beach with a clipboard, wearing heavy shoes, shorts and a brief halter. Jeremy spent several nights indulging a practice he thought he had long forsaken forever.

With a mist net, set up along the shore, they captured all the shrikes they could find on the island that balmy winter--an even dozen--and banded them with special, bright bands that could be easily spotted with binoculars. They then turned to capturing and examining various other birds, some of which they also banded. Among these were numerous swallow-like sandpipers, or plovers, known as Pratincoles. And there was another type of sandpiper, with an odd, spoon-shaped bill. It was known, appropriately enough, as the Spoonbilled Sandpiper.

In the latter course of this field work, Jeremy found he could stand the silence no longer. He began to talk. He didn't care if she answered, or if she even listened. He just couldn't pass up the opportunity to talk. He told her his life story.

"First time I ever saw this island was through the Norden bombsight of a B-29. Yep. But I didn't enjoy the war, not after awhile, anyway." He told her about the tremendously lucrative auto parts factory he had built up in Muncie; how he had come to loathe his wife; how his son seemed so strange to him ("I think the kid's queer, Pessie"--he called her that now, although she still called him "Mister"); how he had been skeptical of the Korean affair ("I'm no damn pacifist, Pessie, but it seems like our war was as necessary as a war can get . . . but these wars lately, I don't know"); and he told her in general of his growing dissatisfaction with his life.

"It was a good business, Pessie . . . uh, let's see," he was handling a bird removed from the net, "a male . . . Prat . . . a bird of the year, I'd say . . . no apparent deformities." She made the notation on her clipboard, silently. "But I discovered finally, that I really preferred building up the business to running it, you know?"

Boring. And then I discovered Chinese poetry. At a lecture my wife made me go to. Funny isn't it? You like poetry, Pessie?" She shook her head, waiting patiently for him to extricate another bird from the net. "Prat . . . female . . . adult . . . no deformities. I'll read you some. You'll like it. My favorite is T'ung P'o, a Sung Dynasty poet. It's so simple, Pessie, clear and kind of elemental, like nature, you know?" He entangled another bird and described it for her, solemnly sitting there by him in the sand. He did not neglect to glance down the open neck of her blouse, the top couple buttons of which were negligently undone. The cleavage was deep and impressive. It was an intriguing, even strangely reassuring sight.

"So my wife's sleeping with some guy. I didn't care. Honest to god, I didn't give a damn, except maybe . . . well, you may find this kind of weird, but it kind of made her more interesting, if you know what I mean, for a little while. But it was stupid. The only reason she did it, I think, was she thought it was chic, or something, to 'take a lover.' For chrissake! Take a lover! If only she'd quit nagging me. And then, that fairy kid.

"So I figure, to hell with it. Let them blow the whole damn country skyhigh, my old lady with it. She's got the dough, the house, the car, now she can have the government, the taxes, the unions, the pollution, the war . . . and the weather, too. That judge though, he really slays me. He lets me have a tenth of my income. It turns out it's just enough for food, a little beer, and a few books. And now, here you are Pessie," Jeremy looked at her with authentic warmth. "You and The North American Wildlife Research Institute, and bringing me 500 bucks a month to boot. For looking at birds I already look at!"

In the pre-Pessie days Jeremy had often dreamed the same dream: he was a bombardier again, in the hatch, right on target, except that the bombs wouldn't leave the airplane; they turned into sausage balloons bumping around in the bomb bay. This dream now began to be superseded by a new one. In this, he was dressed like T'ung P'o, making his way along mountain roads, headed back to the Imperial City, from which he had been banned by some long-forgotten (he hoped) edict. It was a long way. He supported himself by trading poems for food. In the main part of the dream he comes to a rustic bridge in the foothills of the Eastern Mountains. There is a girl by the bridge with crystal jugs of golden wine. He sits down beside her and drinks the marvelous nectar. She will take no money. Well, he has none. He gives her a poem. It pleases her so that gratefully she leads him into the reeds by the river. She is glorious. It was Pessie, of course. Sometimes, in the dream, they do not get around to making love, but only lie side by side, arms entwined, drunk and gazing at the waving tassels of the grain that rises above their heads into the blue sky.

Due to their propinquity (he supposed, but also, he hoped, due to his incessant talk) Pessie seemed to soften her reserve as the months rolled by. He began to recite poems to her, and one day he recited one that he had written himself, after the style of T'ung P'o:

The girl by the bridge,
below the eastern peaks,
will not take my money.
She has jugs of golden wealth.
But I spend with her,
under the golden grain.

Pessie stopped what she was doing and cocked her head on one side, regarding him. She seemed a little surprised at herself, and blurted out, "Why, that's very nice, Jeremy. In fact, I believe I like it. Is it your T'ung P'o?"

Jeremy was beside himself. He didn't know whether to claim it or not; he was afraid that she wouldn't like it if it wasn't by a "real" poet. But in the end, he laid the case directly before her. "It's an imitation of him, by me."

"It's very nice."

Now that winter was gone, the shrikes and Pratincoles having gone with it, they had much less to do. They still walked about the island, investigated an old B 29 that had nearly disappeared in the jungly undergrowth--a relic of Deetroit Island's depot era, and examined the marine life. Pessie worked on her doctoral dissertation and her Institute reports. Finally, she began to talk about herself, a little. It turned out that she had little to say. She had been in school all her life. Jeremy pumped her about her high school romances, about dating and the like, but she either had no such experiences or simply did not like to discuss them. But Jeremy kept up the pressure until one day, as they strolled along the beach, Pessie turned to him with a strange, canny look on her homely face.

"You find it difficult, don't you, Jeremy, being without sex?"

Astounded, he stammered that yes, yes, he did find it difficult.

"So do I." She was nervous, but determined. "I suppose that no further invitation is required?"

Pessie, like any civilized person, craned about her, checking the long, quite deserted beach and then began methodically disrobing. She had a headstart on Jeremy, due to his shock, but as soon as her breasts flashed their untanned opulence in the naked breeze, he was galvanized into action. He had his pants off before she could remove hers.

It was much better than he had dreamed it with the bridge girl. Pessie was a marvelously uninhibited lover. She liked a variety of sexual experience; over the ensuing weeks they tried everything. She still didn't talk a great deal, and Jeremy didn't push her, but she

managed to make her desires and satisfactions known to him.

And then, the year having come around, the Tiger Shrikes returned. By day the lovers captured their subjects, retrieved the bands, replaced them and kept records. By night they scaled the peaks of carnal pleasure. They were by now so intimate, so accustomed to one another, that they expressed their ordinary needs (give me a band, a yellow one, more coffee, etc.) by means of obscure grunts, had gestures, facial expressions and a drastic ellipsis. Otherwise, the human-originating sounds on the island were Jeremy's declamations of Sung Dynasty verse, much mutual heavy breathing, the squeaking of bedsprings, and the cheerful whisper of flatulence--a discreet, ladylike hiss, a lifelong burden of Pessie's. (She thought she might have inherited it from her father, her only patrimony.) And there was the intermittent drone of the generator that ran the refrigerator.

All the Tiger Shrikes present and accounted for, Pessie confined herself to quarters in order to complete the "key report," as she explained it to Jeremy. He was exiled to his old shack, the former operations building left over from another war. A few days later, the Malay mail boat called in and she sent off her report.

In the days that followed, Jeremy accompanied Pessie on their regular rounds and now he began to make a special plea. He had decided, he said, that he was in love. He thought they should marry. Pessie ignored him, as if he were spouting his usual T'ung P'o. She heard, but didn't respond. They continued their nocturnal regimen, without comment.

Jeremy found her silence intolerable. He stepped up the intensity of his suit. No effect. He was in despair. They plodded side by side down the beach without speaking. Jeremy occasionally tore a leaf from a bush in passing. Suddenly, Pessie began to speak, as passionately as she was able.

"Jeremy, please believe me. I have enjoyed our relationship very much. I do like you. Perhaps, I even love you, in a way. I cannot forbear pointing out, however, that marriage is impossible for us. I have no desire to hurt you, believe me. In fact, I tell you this only in order to avoid further pain."

Jeremy attempted to interrupt, but she raised her hands, almost defensively, to forestall him. It was clear that, whether from a lifelong inability to express emotion vocally, or from some other, more base motive, Pessie had composed her speech in advance and was intent upon delivering it.

"I feel compelled to point out that, One: you are nearly twice my age; Two: you love this island, whereas I have obviously elected to seek a career in academic life; Three: you enjoy your present occupations--your poetry and your beloved Lanius tigrinus--whereas

I am interested, but only interested, and am far from feeling the complete devotion that you lavish on these subjects."

Her voice began to have a strained and unnatural tone as she rushed on. "Therefore, I cannot conceive that you would enjoy marriage with me, however I otherwise please you, nor that I . . ." she faltered, ". . . would enjoy such a . . . a union . . . with you, however you otherwise please me . . ." And then she simply broke into tears and buried her face in his shoulder, in him embrace. But before her sobs had fairly ceased, she wrenched away from him, saying rather bitterly, "Let us have an end to this," and she ran away, back toward her quarters, leaving Jeremy standing in stunned dismay and chagrin.

He did not see her again until the following day. On the premise that anything worth having was worth pursuing to the end, he approached her again.

"Ah, now Pessie . . . I've been thinking about what you said." She composed herself to listen. "I'm too old for you, I know, but it does happen sometimes, you know, that a young girl and a, uh, middle-aged man, uh, fall in love, you know, and get, uh, married, sometimes."

She was quite attentive, not objecting, so Jeremy hurried on. "Now, about leaving the island. As you know, of course, I came here to get away from all that." He waved his hand in a grossly general direction, toward the east, toward the United States. "And I have. But if things were different, I could go back. Hell, look at old T'ung P'o; he spent his whole life trying to go back."

Pessie was amused. "T'ung P'o was a poet, Jeremy, and therefore by definition a fool. Not only that, he was a licentious, lewd, drunken old goat. 'In vino, venery' might be his epitaph. It could not be yours, although you would like it to be and despite the many ways in which you resemble him.

In the mountains I long for court.
There, only wine and whores sustain me.
This morning, stumbling home at dawn,
I think of my boat
cracking morning ice,
a dog barks as I drift by
the tiny, frosty village."

The comparison gratified Jeremy. Obviously, she had listened to him after all. Her response, however, was a consummate renunciation of their affair. He did not bring up the subject again.

The following day brought another surprise: a Navy patrol boat arrived with more scientists. They also brought another prefabricated building like the one the Seabees had erected upon Pessie's arrival. As soon as they had unloaded, the boat departed, with

Pessie. Before Jeremy could say a word she appeared with her bags and gear, astonished him with a hearty kiss (which served to confirm the prurient suspicions of the sailors), advised him to moderate his intake of beer, then scrambled aboard just as the boat pulled away.

Jeremy didn't care for the newcomers. They were five young men. They were polite, even amiable toward him, but it was clear that they wanted nothing of him, nor were they disposed to waste time socializing. They erected the building themselves and furnished it as a dormitory. Pessie's cabin was converted to an expanded laboratory and here they spent most of their time. They locked the place at night and subtly gave him to understand that the facility was off-limits to him. They asked him to assist them in field work, which consisted solely of recapturing the Tiger Shrikes. His salary would continue, they said, until the project was over, whether he worked or not. They were very professional.

Jeremy didn't mind helping them. He did not trust the brusque, clinical scientists to be properly gentle and careful in disentangling the shrikes from the mist net. He watched the beach with his binocular until he saw a tawny raptor come swooping out of the dense foliage in pursuit of a large insect, and run into the net. When he removed them, the Chigo-mozu would nestle softly in his hand, evoking a tender, fluttery sensation as it shivered to rearrange its plumage. The quiet, confident look of the bird, impressed Jeremy. It was only a little larger than a big sparrow, but its robust, bull-like head and hooked bill gave it the air of a falcon.

He carried them to the lab and turned them over to one of the men--Bill, or Al, some such anonymous name. He supposed that they were examining the birds. At any rate, Jeremy took the trouble to snoop around and he was glad to find that shortly after receiving a specimen, the back window of the lab would go up and the bird would be tossed out, to go streaking away to the nearest cover.

Jeremy's employment lasted only a few days. Thereafter he was left to himself. He wandered the beaches, observing the shrikes as they coursed along the jungle margin, marvelling at the aerobatics of the Pratincoles, reading poetry, and thinking about Pessie. He wrote her long, rather adolescent letters but received no answers.

Occasionally, he met Al or Bill, strolling in the evening. They had polite conversations.

One evening, however, he finally learned something significant. In the course of a chat with one Tom, which started out to be about the Baltimore Colts, Jeremy became aggressively inquisitive about the "project." Tom parried his queries with oblique answers for awhile and then abruptly terminated the conversation with, "I'm sorry, Mr. Harris, but I just can't discuss it. It's classified."

He ruminated on this information for a couple days, then concluded that only a government project, most likely a military one, would be "classified." It was an outrage. He stormed over to the lab and demanded an explanation.

"All right, now out with it. You guys have been here on my island for some weeks. Now what the hell is going on? I'm sick and tired of this damn run-around. I've got a right to know!"

The project leader listened calmly to the tirade and replied briefly: "Mr. Harris, you are correct. The project is classified. I cannot, of course, reveal everything to you, but I have been expecting this visit and so have those responsible for our mission. Here is the only information that I am authorized to release. It is for your eyes only. I must insist that it be returned after your perusal. Good night." So saying, he thrust a piece of paper into Jeremy's hand and closed the door on him.

It was stamped "TOP SECRET."

CAUTIONARY RELEASE OF TOP SECRET INFO: (pursuant to AR 77.5, para 12, sub B, C, non-strategic uses): FOLLOWING INFO CLEARED FOR TEMPORARY PRIVATE INSPECTION, SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (urgent request, AR 77.7, para 3, and NSAR 32-4, para 5: ATTN! Release must be verified asap, to NSA COMM CTR, POTAGANISSING BAY, MICH. 49608, or send COMM RTE PIPELINE, CODE/DAY, OPS OFF. TOP SEC.) Approved text:

In 1966, numerous sheep suffered mysterious death, Utah. U.S. Army accused of causing die-off. Critics pointed to the "fact" that military had been, or was presumed to have been, experimenting with various chemical/biological devices in adjacent area, under contract to CBW (Chem/Biol/Warfare). Army has denied responsibility. Investigation team, however, recommended research be discontinued at that site. Care advised in future, to avoid collision with public opinion, and to ensure safety of private sector.

In March, 1973 issue of Yacho-no-kai (publication of The Wild Bird Society of Japan), one Jeremy Harris, American national, civilian (former Captain, USAF, Ret., RA 16563008) published information re: Deetroit Island, Philippine Terr., former USAF installation (still under military jurisdiction, see MIL REC 45, 63, and 64.7801, sec. I, Pentagon). It was brought to NSA/NSR attn, that this site possesses remarkable features ideally suited to certain CBW research: e.g. remoteness, few migrant birds, etc. Preliminary investigation (see BLOOM REPORT, OPERATION "BUTCHER BIRD") ascertains that this location is suitable for CBW studies. Military use recognized and approved by

Philippine government. No danger anticipated to operators or inhabitants (one male, civilian, see above), nor to existing indigenous flora and fauna.

THIS INFO CLASSIFIED TOP SEC. MAY BE RELEASED TO INHABITANT(S) DEETROIT ISLAND, PHIL. TERR., UPON REQUEST (NOTIFY NSA COMMCTR POTAGANISSING BAY, MICH, USA, 49608, IMMED, OR SEND: COMM RTE PIPELINE, CODE/DAY, OPS OFF, TOP SEC, asap, asap.

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A few hours of thoughtful consideration, after his initial revulsion and outrage had burned low, produced this notion in the mind of the "inhabitant:" assuming that the sparse information contained in the release was truthful, it was clear that, for purposes of safety--in order to prevent the widespread dissemination of dangerous chemicals, or whatever was being toyed with--the migratory population would have to be dealt with. That is, they would have to be removed. Obviously, this presented little problem, since the population was so small.

Jeremy wept. He couldn't help himself. The code name, "Butcher Bird," tore at his heart like a naked dagger. He roamed the beach, alone; his island was ruined. These fiends now possessed it, and soon, he expected, they would destroy that which he most cherished, the lovely, glorious Tiger Shrike; Chigo-mozu, a raptor capable of inspiring the poetry of an 11th Century Chinese poet.

Thoughts of Pessie nearly made him retch. Life here had become intolerable; his Eden was blasted. Throughout the next few days the sight of a shrike was unbearably painful. He made up his mind to leave. Perhaps another island. But no, it was too clear: the only place to go was back to civilization. If not to Muncie, then to Melbourne, Nairobi, or Nagasaki--lightning was unlikely to strike there for awhile, he bitterly reflected. He almost worked up some enthusiasm for Auckland, but the thought of living among a great many other humans so depressed him that he was able to tolerate the otherwise excruciating sight of the project technicians, at least for a little longer.

And then a letter came, from Pessie. Postmarked San Diego. He couldn't imagine what it could say that wouldn't, in his present state, disgust him. But he opened it. It was brief:

Dear Jeremy,

I suppose by now that Dr. Johnson has given you the release. Please believe that I am sorry to have had to deceive you. You are a fine man and deserve better.

Do not hate me, Jeremy. I think of you often, always with great affection.

How stupid letters can be! It is so difficult, if only you knew. I really don't know what has gotten into me. I know I shouldn't be doing this!

Now Jeremy, forget the shrikes and watch the pratincoles. It will be better. Believe me, I do not say this to be cruel. Trust me.

Love,
(signed) Pessie

An extraordinary letter, he thought. He went to the beach and studied it. He could see that it had been opened, he supposed as a matter of simple routine. But how cruel, despite the disclaimer, to ask him to forget the shrikes. Forget? How could that be?

Jeremy lay on the sand, propping his head in his fist. At the tideline a group of scurrying Spoonbilled Sandpipers were overturning pebbles and scooping up the tiny organisms beneath. They were like a flock of toys. Jeremy thought of Pessie, visualized her: the homely face, the marvelous young body. The letter said "Love, Pessie." He realized that he did not hate her; he might even love her. Certainly, he pitied her: a fine young woman caught up in the immorality of governments. The reason was simple and ludicrous. They had given her the opportunity to pursue that which she loved--knowledge. For her, the quest was pure and innocent, neutral; for them, it was a weapon.

Jeremy idly observed the wind-up toy antics of the spoonbills. Out over the water he could see the aerial spectacular of a group of prats.

And then it came to him!

"Operation Butcher Bird," he realized, was a reference to the fact that throughout the world, the colloquial, or vulgar term for all shrikes, regardless of specie, was "butcher bird." It came from their habit of impaling their prey--small birds, insects--on a thorn, or a sharp twig. They were not true hawks and lacked the strong talons necessary to hold the prey while the fierce bill tore at it. Obviously, then, the project was aimed solely at the shrikes, despite the fact that there were migrant sandpipers and plovers on the island, as well as numerous resident and wide-ranging gulls.

He needed conclusive proof, however, so that night he broke into the lab. It was easy. He crept to the rear window of the lab, out of which he had seen them release their specimens. It was unlocked, just as he had suspected. In the files he found just the one he wanted: "BLOOM REPORT, "OPERATION BUTCHER BIRD."

. . . conclusive proof: nine of the original dozen bands applied by Bloom and Harris were recovered the following season with

the additional marking placed thereon by the mainland operatives, which, in turn, verifies the report of that agency. Further, the agency, while unable to retrieve all of the Bloom/Harris bands, reports seeing all twelve of the banded shrikes, but security reasons prevented the capture of three.

SUMMARY: All twelve of the original banded birds migrated directly to China, which is borne out by aerial reconnaissance reports from project aircraft tracking the special micro-transmitters installed in the bands. Satellite tracking verified aircraft reports and further established that the specimens migrated across a considerable section of the China interior, which suggests maximum dissemination of payload.

RECOMMENDATION: Implement "Butcher Bird," phase two.

Jeremy returned the file and retired to his shack. He carefully considered the implications of the file. He had made a few errors, he saw: they had no intention of destroying the shrikes. That was why Pessie had said to watch the Pratincoles: a program that demanded the extermination of shrikes would also require the same fate of other migratory species, but it was obvious that the project hadn't the slightest interest in the other birds. Besides, if all they wanted was to get rid of the migrants, they need only wait a few weeks until the spring departure.

Jeremy thought back to the day, more than two years ago, when he had first seen the Tiger Shrike and had instantly recognized it as the same species that had inspired T'ung P'o's poem. He had even foolishly speculated that the individual before his binocular was a direct descendant of the shrike that had amazed the poet. It was possible. Given an average clutch of four eggs annually, and approximately 900 years since T'ung P'o . . . Jeremy came up with 3600 potential descendants of that one bird and its mate. Of course, he thought, that pair's offspring will also have an average of four eggs annually and their offspr- . . . he quickly saw that it was really an exponential problem-- 4^{900} . Undoubtedly, the total offspring in 900 generations would run into astronomical figures. The world would be, or should be, crowded with shrikes. Why this was not so, he thought he knew. A drastic mortality rate in the young was the answer, and beyond that, he opined that the adults probably suffered from predation, seasonal food privation, the rigors of migration (especially if they have to cross the South China Sea, some of them--the ones that winter here), pestilence. It occurred to him that the history of China itself was similar: a round of flood, famine, military invasions, and pestilence.

Military invasions and pestilence! So that was it! At once he knew that the shrikes had been inoculated. An epidemic "payload."

Who knew what it might consist of? He recalled an article in the Manila paper that he had read with interest, about Asian flu. No one knew where it came from, but it cost the U. S. billions of dollars in lost man-hours and medical expense. And that was a practically benign virus. Jeremy had been struck by the line of reasoning in the article: the emphasis was not on human misery occasioned by flu, but on the financial loss. Probably "Operation Butcher Bird" would be tested first, say with a simple wheat blight, then perhaps with anthrax. The loss of cattle in an anthrax epidemic could be devastating. Then they could try measles. He did not know, of course, that any such thing was planned, but the existence of the means was abhorrent. There were many men in power to whom the existence of this seemingly foolproof, undetectable and vicious weapon might prove irresistible.

What should he do about it? Write a letter? To his congressman? To the New York Times? Would President Truman have heeded a letter from Einstein that said not to use the Bomb? He didn't know. Besides, he didn't think that his mail would go uncensored now, judging from the opening of Pessie's letter. And what had come of the sheep scandal? Nothing. He would not even have available the corpses of 4000 sheep.

Jeremy got up from the table and went to his old foot-locker. It contained most of the gear that he'd brought from Muncie, that his wife didn't have any interest in. On the bottom, under some clothing, was a disassembled shotgun. It was a handsome Fox-Sterlingworth double-barrelled, twenty gauge. He cleaned and oiled it and that night dreamed of T'ung P'o. It was evening, very pleasant. He swung his cloak about himself, standing at the edge of the stone parapet, overlooking the lake. He was at the finest point of drunkenness and was very pleased with himself. At noon he had awakened, horribly aching and parched from many days of drinking. He had been wonderful the night before: witty, boisterous, entertaining, enchanted with and encouraged by his powerful, intelligent comrades here at the Southern Palace of the Imperial Prince. But what a misery is waking! In these cases there is nothing else to do but, as soon as one is able, to immerse oneself again as quickly as possible. And now, just a few hours later, he felt even better!

He had wandered from the gaiety of the party for a few moments of restful solitude and stood looking at the lake, so deep, so blue and green, perfectly reflecting in the last light of day the striking cliffs and white-capped peaks surrounding the Palace. I should make a poem, he thought. While awaiting inspiration his gaze fell upon the lovely, drunken courtesans playing and dancing among themselves. Their faces were brightly painted, --like butterflies, he sighed--but then he rejected "butterfly" as too common an image. But they were

like butterflies: gaudy, fragile, in a brief season of glory flitting gaily about in their transparent gauzy dresses. He could see the rouged nipples of the nearest breasts. Their voices tinkled in the still air, lutes twanged, and colorful lanterns were lit on the parapet and on the little boats that carried the Imperial Prince's guests about the lake.

T'ung P'o sighed. Alas! The brilliance of this glorious dynasty would fade, the metaphors exhausted and effete, the similes trite. At once he felt utterly bored and empty. The thought of writing a poem was disgusting. Perhaps later, when the Imperial Prince had gone back to the Imperial City, then, in the aftermath, the sobering-up, one would write another poem. He wondered how long the Imperial Prince might be persuaded to continue the revel, before abandoning all but a few of his most witty companions to the boredom and uncertainty of the provincial life.

The poet gazed into his jade cup, half-filled with deep, dark wine. Then he gazed into the deep, dark green lake. And the deep, green-painted eyes of the courtesans should be gazed into, also. He turned to this latter task with melancholy interest.

In the last light the mountains rose up awesomely on all sides, an enormous black wall, and through a cleft, high up, a rosy shaft from the departing sun lanced down, briefly illuminating the parapet. In this moment, T'ung P'o saw the tawny delicate bird of prey come coursing between the great pillars of the palace and seize in its beak a large, irridesciently glowing dragonfly and bear it off into the blackness. The poet gasped with pleasure, with ecstasy. He felt song tumbling within him.

With a long, bellowing roar, the pellets began their inexorable journey, like tiny planets at the birth of time, hurling themselves outward, a cloud, a micro-nebula ponderously striving toward ultimate disintegration, toward maximum entropy, and death. The Child-shrike is ripped to pieces in the hail, blossoming into a pale cloud of down feather, haloed by the morning sun, then minute particles of flesh, blood, and shattered bone spatter the feathers.

Jeremy wiped a tear and went on, looking for another. It was easy at first, but as the numbers dwindled they were harder to find, harder to shoot.

It was nightfall. In the last light the sea rose up, black and cold, mirroring and merging with the black sky. At the horizon line he saw a tawny flash, as the delicate bird of prey came coursing along the pitch black wall of the brush directly toward him.

Afterwards, he thrust the gun barrel-down into the sand and all the way home he recited the lines of the poem.

. . . drunk on the stone court
over the blue jade lake,
the new-lit lanterns glow
on the drunken courtesans
dancing to lutes
in transparent brocade, wantonly.
In the last shaft of light I gasp
at the Tiger Shrike's piercing swoop,
a golden swoop between ivory pillars . . .

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

CHRIS ANDERSON, a senior in English at UM, had poems in last year's Garret. EDMUND APFFEL has published fiction in previous editions of Garret and is no longer starving. There is no connection between those two facts. JEAN ATTHOWE won the Phelan Award for Creative Writing at San Jose State and is presently an MFA candidate at UM. TOM AZZARA is an undergraduate in English from New Jersey. DON BERGAU, an undergraduate English major at UM, had published in Shades, the literary magazine of the University of Michigan at Flint. BOB BINGHAM is a junior in English at UM. SISTER MICHELE BIRCH, born in Canada, is in the UM's MFA program. Her poems have appeared in Occident, Sumac, Kayak, as well as The Garret. ROBERT BLY is a poet of national reputation. LANCE BOURQUIN published poetry in last year's Garret. He is an undergraduate at UM. BARRETT BRIGGS won the Academy of American Poets Prize for both poetry and fiction at the University of Arizona last year. NILES CHOPER is from New York, and is a graduate student in MFA program at UM. ROGER DUNSMORE received his MFA from the University of Montana this year and is an Instructor in the Humanities Department. DAVE FERGUSON is a graduate student in the Drama Department. DREW FINLEY recently had a story in Intro #3. He is a senior in English. MALINDA FINNEY is a student in the MFA program at UM, and has published poetry in Tongue, the literary magazine at the University of Arizona. LINDA FULLER, a native Montanan, is a graduate student in English at UM. She also writes fiction. MARSHALL GADDIS received his MFA from the University of Montana and is now an Instructor in English. MARJORIE GRENZ is a senior in Liberal Arts and lived on a Forest Service lookout last summer. GEORGE GUTHRIDGE is a Teaching Assistant in the English Department. JANET HACKMAN is a senior in English and has been peeling a lot of potatoes this year. j w hilgeman published poetry in last year's Garret and never seems to capitalize his name. JOHN HOLBROOK is an MFA candidate at UM, has had poems in Poetry Northwest and Intro #3. JON JACKSON, editor of last year's Garret, recently published poems in Sumac and Stoneybrook. IVAN JOSEF, a man for all times, did much of the art work in this issue of Garret. BRUCE KENISON describes himself as a "super senior" at the University of Montana. JOHN KENLEY, an undergraduate in English, had a poem in the first issue of Worksheet. R. KIRBY, from Canada, is a Teaching Assistant in Philosophy. ELIZABETH LIBBY is a Teaching Assistant in English and has published poems in several literary magazines, including Poetry Northwest and Intro #3. j d miller is active in draft counseling.

DAVID PAUL translated Valery's poems for the Bollingen Series, and is taking Dick Hugo's place this year. KEVIN PRYNE is from Missoula, an undergraduate English major. JOHN RUSSELL is an undergraduate at UM. This is his first published story. VINCENT SWANN is a graduate student in Creative Writing. PATRICK TODD is teaching poetry in high schools for the Montana Council of the Arts this year. JOAN UDA recently worked to pass birth control legislation in Hawaii and writes out of that experience. LOWELL UDA is an Instructor in English and has recently had fiction in the North American Review and Transpacific. THOMAS WINKLE, a graduate student in the UM MFA program, has published in Tennessee Poetry Journal. A. D. ZEIGLER, a Teaching Assistant in English at UM, comes from Spokane, Washington. PAUL ZEIGLER, a graduate student in the MFA program at UM, comes from Butte.

