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EVERGREEN REVIEW



SAN FRANCISCO SCENE

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EVERGREEN REVIEW

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EVERGREEN REVIEW is published quarterly by Grove Press, Inc. at 795 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.; Barney Rosset, president; Ephraim London, secretary; Fred Hartl, treasurer. Subscriptions: \$3.50 a year, \$6.00 for two years, foreign subscriptions, including Canada, \$4.00 a year, \$7.50 for two years. All payments from foreign countries must be made by U.S. money orders or checks payable in U.S. currency or with \$0.75 added for collection charges. Single copy: \$1.00. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Copyright 1957, by GROVE PRESS, INC. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the act of MARCH 3, 1879.

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Cover photograph by Fred Lyon

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GINSBERG was born in Newark in 1926. After graduating from Columbia University, he worked in New York and knocked around the country for several years before reaching the West Coast. "Howl" is reprinted from *Howl and Other Poems*, Pocket Poets Series No. 4, City Lights Bookshop, San Francisco, with the kind permission of Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

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in Lowell, Mass., in 1922. After attending Columbia College, he worked as merchant seaman during the war. Viking Press plans to publish his new novel, *On the Road*, in the autumn.

MICHAEL MCCLURE comes from the Midwest where he was born in 1932. His poems have appeared in *Poetry* (Chicago), and he is co-editor of *Ark II Moby I*. "Night Words" is taken from his first book, *Passage*, published by Jonathan Williams

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KENNETH REXROTH: San Francisco Letter

There has been so much publicity recently about the San Francisco Renaissance and the New Generation of Revolt and Our Underground Literature and Cultural Disaffiliation that I for one am getting a little sick of writing about it, and the writers who are the objects of all the uproar run the serious danger of falling over, "dizzy with success," in the immortal words of Comrade Koba. Certainly there is nothing underground about it anymore. For ten years after the Second War there was a convergence of interest—the Business Community, military imperialism, political reaction, the hysterical, tear and mud drenched guilt of the ex-Stalinist, ex-Trotskyite American intellectuals, the highly organized academic and literary employment agency of the Neoantireconstructionists—what might be called the meliorists of the White Citizens' League, who were out to augment the notorious budgetary deficiency of the barbarously miseducated Southron male schoolmarm by opening up jobs "up N'oth." This ministry of all the talents formed a dense crust of custom over American cultural life—more of an ice pack. Ultimately the living water underneath just got so damn hot the ice pack has begun to melt, rot, break up and drift away into Arctic oblivion. This is all there is to it. For ten years or more, seen from above, all that could be discerned was a kind of scum. By very definition, scum, ice packs, crusts, are surface phenomena. It is what is underneath that counts. The living substance has always been there—it has just been hard to see—from above.

It is easy to understand why all this has centered in San Francisco. It is a long way from Astor Place or Kenyon College. It is one of the easiest cities in the world to live in. It is the easiest in America. Its culture is genuinely (not fake like New Orleans—white New Orleans, an ugly Southron city with a bit of the Latin past subsidized by the rubberneck

buses) Mediterranean—*laissez faire* and *dolce far niente*. I for one can say flatly that if I couldn't live here I would leave the United States for someplace like Aix en Provence—so fast! I always feel like I ought to get a passport every time I cross the Bay to Oakland or Berkeley. I get nervous walking down the streets of Seattle with all those ghosts of dead Wobblies weeping in the shadows and all those awful squares peering down my neck. In New York, after one week of living on cocktails in taxicabs, I have to go to a doctor. The doctor always says—get out of New York before it kills you. Hence the Renaissance. I wrote a sociological job about it last winter in the *Nation*, you can read all about it there or in my forthcoming collected essays. But—like all squares if you don't know already you won't know anymore than you did before.

Most of the stuff written about San Francisco literary life has been pretty general, individuals have figured only as items in long and hasty lists. I want to talk at a little more length about a few specific writers and try to show how this disaffiliation applies to them, functions in their work.

In the first place. No literature of the past two hundred years is of the slightest importance unless it *is* "disaffiliated." Only our modern industrial and commercial civilization has produced an elite which has consistently rejected all the reigning values of the society. There were no Baudelaires in Babylon. It is not that we have lost sight of them in time. The nearest thing in Rome was Catullus, and it is apparent, reading him, that there stood behind him no anonymous and forgotten body of bohemians. He was a consort of the rich, of generals and senators, Caesar and Mamurra, and the girl he writes about as though she was, in our terms, an art-struck tart from the Black Cat, was, in fact, a notorious multimillionaire, "the most depraved daughter of the Clodian line." Tu Fu censured the Emperor, but he wanted to be recognized for it—he wanted to be a Censor. So the Taoism and Buddhism of Far Eastern culture functions as a keel and ballast

to the ship of state. The special ideology of the only artists and writers since the French Revolution who deserve to be taken seriously is a destructive, revolutionary force. They would blow up "their" ship of state—destroy it utterly. This has nothing to do with political revolutionarism, which in our era has been the mortal enemy of all art whatever. When the Bolsheviks, for a brief period, managed to persuade the culture bearers, demoralized by the world economic crisis and rising tide of political terrorism, that the political revolutionary and the artist, the poet, the moral *vates* were allies, Western European culture came within an ace of being destroyed altogether and finally. Capitalism cannot produce from within itself, from any of its "classes," bourgeois, petit-bourgeois, or proletariat, any system of values which is not in essence of itself. The converse is a Marxist delusion. This is why "Marxist aestheticians" have gone to such lengths to "prove" that the artist, the writer, the technical and professional intelligentsia, are *not* declassés in modern society, but members of the petit bourgeoisie, and must "come over," in the words of Engel's old chestnut, "to the proletariat," that is, become the prostitutes of their brand of State Capitalism. Nothing could be more false. Artist, poet, physicist, astronomer, dancer, musician, mathematician are captives stolen from an older time, a different kind of society, in which, ultimately, *they* were the creators of all primary values. They are exactly like the astronomers and philosophers the Mongols took off from Samarkand to Karakorum. They belong to the *ancien régime*—all *anciens régimes* as against the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. And so they could only vomit in the faces of the despots who offered them places in the ministries of all the talents, or at least they were nauseated in proportion to their integrity. The same principles apply today as did in the days of Lamartine. Caught in the gears of their own evil machinery, the bosses may scream for an Einstein, a Bohr, even an Oppenheimer; when Normalcy comes back, they kick them

out and put tellers in their place. The more fools the Einsteins for having allowed themselves to be used—as they always discover, alas, too late.

You may not think all this has anything to do with the subject, but it is the whole point. Poets come to San Francisco for the same reason so many Hungarians have been going to Austria recently. They write the sort of thing they do for the same reason that Hölderlin or Blake or Baudelaire or Rimbaud or Mallarmé wrote it. The world of poet-professors, Southern Colonels and ex-Left Social Fascists from which they have escaped has no more to do with literature than do the leading authors of the court of Napoleon III whose names can be found in the endless pages of the *Causeries du lundi*. The *Vaticide Review* is simply the *Saturday Evening Post* of the excessively miseducated, and its kept poets are the Zane Greys, Clarence Budington Kellands and J. P. Marquands of Brooks Brothers Boys who got an overdose of T. S. Eliot at some Ivy League fog factory. It is just that simple.

There are few organized systems of social attitudes and values which stand outside, really outside, the all corrupting influences of our predatory civilization. In America, at least, there is only one which functions on any large scale and with any effectiveness. This of course is Roman Catholicism. Not the stultifying monkey see monkey do Americanism of the slothful urban backwoods middle-class parish so beautifully satirized by the Catholic writer James Powers, but the Church of saints and philosophers—of the worker priest movement and the French Personalists. So it is only to be expected that, of those who reject the Social Lie, many today would turn towards Catholicism. If you have to "belong to something bigger than yourself" it is one of the few possibilities and, with a little mental gymnastics, can be made quite bearable. Even I sometimes feel that the only constant, consistent, and uncompromising critics of the World III were the French Dominicans.

So, William Everson, who is probably the most profoundly

moving and durable of the poets of the San Francisco Renaissance, is a Dominican Tertiary and oblate—which means a lay brother in a friary under renewable vows . . . he doesn't have to stay if he doesn't want to. It has been a long journey to this point. Prior to the Second War he was a farmer in the San Joaquin Valley. Here he wrote his first book of poems, *San Joaquin*. Like so many young poets he was naively accessible to influences his maturity would find dubious. In his case this was Jeffers, but he was, even then, able to transform Jeffers' noisy rhetoric into genuinely impassioned utterance, his absurd self-dramatization into real struggle in the depths of the self. Everson is still wrestling with his angel, still given to the long oratorical line with vague echoes of classical quantitative meters, but there is no apparent resemblance left to Jeffers. During the War he was in a Conscientious Objectors' camp in Oregon, where he was instrumental in setting up an off time Arts Program out of which have come many still active people, projects and forces which help give San Francisco culture its intensely libertarian character. Here he printed several short books of verse, all later gathered in the New Directions volume, *The Residual Years*. Since then he has printed two books, *Triptych for the Living* and *A Privacy of Speech*. In the tradition of Eric Gill and Victor Hammer, they are amongst the most beautiful printing I have ever seen. Since then—since entering the Order, he has published mostly in the *Catholic Worker*. In my opinion he has become the finest Catholic poet writing today, the best since R. E. F. Larsson. His work has a gnarled, even tortured, honesty, a rugged unliterary diction, a relentless probing and searching, which are not just engaging, but almost overwhelming. Partly of course this is due to the scarcity of these characteristics today, anything less like the verse of the fashionable quarterlies would be hard to imagine.

Philip Lamantia is generally considered by his colleagues in San Francisco to be another of the three or four leading

poets of the community. He too is a Catholic. Unlike Everson, who is concerned primarily with the problems of moral responsibility, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, Lamantia's poetry is illuminated, ecstatic, with the mystic's intense autonomy. Unfortunately, since his surrealist days, although he has written a great deal, he has published practically nothing. Poems he has read locally have been deeply moving, but each in turn he has put by and gone on, dissatisfied, to something else. As it is so often the case with the mystic temperament, art seems to have become a means rather than even a temporary end. I hope that soon he will find what he is seeking, at least in a measure, and then, of course, his previous work will fall into place and be seen as satisfactory enough to publish—I hope.

Of all the San Francisco group Robert Duncan is the most easily recognizable as a member of the international *avant garde*. Mallarmé or Gertrude Stein, Joyce or Reverdy, there is a certain underlying homogeneity of idiom, and this idiom is, by and large, Duncan's. But there is a difference, "modernist" verse tends to treat the work of art as purely self-sufficient, a construction rather than a communication. Duncan's poetry is about as personal as can be imagined. So it resembles the work of poets like David Gascoyne and Pierre Emmanuel, who, raised in the tradition, have seceded from it to begin the exploration of a new, dedicated personalism. What is the self? What is the other? These are the questions of those who have transcended "the existentialist dilemma"—Buber or Mounier. What is love? Who loves? Who is loved? Curiously, although Duncan is very far from being a Catholic, these are the leading problems of contemporary Catholic thought, as Gascoyne and Emmanuel are Catholics. Perhaps what this means is that, as I said at the beginning, the Church is one of the few places one can get away to and start asking meaningful questions. There is, however, no reason whatever why, if one is strong enough to stand alone, the same questions should not be asked

independently. Duncan has written a large number of books; he started out very young (Gascoyne and Emmanuel were prodigies, too) as an editor of the *Experimental Review* with Sanders Russell, and later of *Phoenix* with the neo-Lawrentian Cooney. *Heavenly City, Earthly City; Fragments of a Disordered Devotion; Caesar's Gate; Medieval Scenes; Poems 1948-49*—the use of language may have changed and developed, but the theme is consistently the mind and body of love.

Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* is much more than the most sensational book of poetry of 1957. Nothing goes to show how square the squares are so much as the *favorable* reviews they've given it. "Sustained shrieks of frantic defiance," "single-minded frenzy of a raving madwoman," "paranoid memories," "childish obscenity"—they think it's all *so* negative. Also—which is much more important—they think there is something unusual about it. Listen you—do you *really* think your kids act like the bobby soxers in those wholesome Coca-Cola ads? Don't you know that across the table from you at dinner sits somebody who looks on you as an enemy who is planning to kill him in the immediate future in an extremely disagreeable way? Don't you know that if you were to say to your English class, "It is raining," they would take it for granted you were a liar? Don't you know that they never tell you nothing? That they can't? That faced with the system of values which coats you like the insulating rompers of an aircraft carrier's "hot papa"—they simply can't get through, can't, and won't even try any more to communicate? Don't you know this, really? If you don't, you're headed for a terrible awakening. *Howl* is the confession of faith of the generation that is going to be running the world in 1965 and 1975—if it's still there to run. "The Poetry of the New Violence"? It isn't at all violent. It is *your* violence it is talking about. It is Hollywood or the censors who are obscene. It is Dulles and Khrushchev who are childishly defiant. It is the "media" that talk with the single-minded frenzy of a raving madwoman.

Once Allen is through telling you what you have done to him and his friends, he concerns himself with the unfulfilled promises of *Song of Myself* and *Huckleberry Finn*, and writes a *Sutra* about the sunflower that rises from the junk heap of civilization . . . your civilization. Negative? "We must love one another or die." It's the "message" of practically every utterance of importance since the Neolithic Revolution. What's so negative about it? The fact that we now live in the time when we must either mind it or take the final consequences? Curiously, the reviewers never noticed—all they saw was "total assault." All this aside, purely technically, Ginsberg is one of the most remarkable versifiers in American. He is almost alone in his generation in his ability to make powerful poetry of the inherent rhythms of our speech, to push forward the conquests of a few of the earliest poems of Sandburg and of William Carlos Williams. This is more skillful verse than all the cornbelt Donnes laid end to end. It is my modest prophecy, that, if he keeps going, Ginsberg will be the first genuinely popular, genuine poet in over a generation—and he is already considerably the superior of predecessors like Lindsay and Sandburg.

Lawrence Ferlinghetti runs the City Lights Pocket Bookshop, publishes the Pocket Poets Series, paints very well (a little like Redon), writes poetry (*Pictures of the Gone World*), and, with myself, has worked to bring about a marriage of poetry and jazz. He is a lazy-looking, good-natured man with the canny cocky eye of an old-time vaudeville tenor. Everybody thinks he's Irish. One of those Irish wops—like Catullus. He is actually French. I think he thinks he don't get enough done. Oh, yes, he teaches French, too. For several years after War Two he lived in Paris and his poetry, while quite, even very, American, is also quite French. He has translated most of the verse of Jacques Prévert and speaks of himself as influenced by him. Possibly, but I think he has moved up from his master into another qualitative realm altogether. Prévert is

not, as some Americans seem to think, some sort of *avant garde* poet. He is their equivalent of our "New Yorker verse." This may be a sad comment on the comparative merits of two cultures, but this doesn't make Prévert any less journalistic—only a short distance above *Le Canard enchaîné* or Georges Fourrest. There is a lot more real bite to Ferlinghetti and a deeper humor. The French poet he resembles most is Queneau. It is possible to "disaffiliate," disengage oneself from the Social Lie and still be good tempered about it, and it is possible to bite the butt of the eternal Colonel Blimp with the quiet, penetrating tenacity of an unperturbed bull dog. This is Ferlinghetti's special talent and it is no mean one. e. e. cummings and James Laughlin have written this way, but few other Americans nowadays. His verse, so easy and relaxed, is constructed of most complex rhythms, all organized to produce just the right tone. Now tone is the hardest and last of the literary virtues to control and it requires assiduous and inconspicuous craftsmanship. Ferlinghetti is definitely a member of the San Francisco School—he says exactly what Everson, Duncan, Ginsberg say. I suppose, in a religious age, it would be called religious poetry, all of it. Today we have to call it anarchism. A fellow over in Africa calls it "reverence for life."

Don Allen called me up and asked me to say something about the poetry and jazz programs Lawrence and I have been doing at The Cellar. First, they have been startlingly successful. The first night there were about four hundred people trying to get into a club that holds seventy-five. We had to call the Fire Marshal to clear the hallway. Just as a show it was a wowser. The audience every night thinks it is wonderful. And, like it or not, jazz is, amongst other things, show business. Musically, we are still working at it. The problem is that jazz is not really improvised cold, but begins with at least the chord patterns of tunes known to the whole band. Each jazz number has a specific shape based ultimately on the

32-34-36 bar popular tune. Our problem is to keep it free and flexible and continuously developing and not allow the form to conflict with the form of poetry. Actually, I think each number should be composed, or at least arranged, in considerable detail, and closely fitted to the words. We have felt that this was best worked towards by using head arrangements at first and keeping the whole thing fluid and spontaneous until we had a better insight into the specific problems. Understand—this is spoken poetry, not sung. Anyway—so far it has been a great show, received with wild enthusiasm. Last week we really got it. Every number had fluidity, invention, drive, and form, and furthermore, it swung. And if it don't swing, it ain't it. I hope some record company takes us up soon. It should make not just a very popular twelve-inch disc, but it might well start a craze like swallowing gold fish or pee wee golf. Anyway, I am taking a tour up and down the Coast this early summer and repeating my part of it with a variety of bands.

KENNETH REXROTH

Noretorp-Noretsyh

Rainy, smoky Fall, clouds tower
In the brilliant Pacific sky.
In Golden Gate Park, the peacocks
Scream, wandering through falling leaves.
In clotting night, in smoking dark,
The Kronstadt sailors are marching
Through the streets of Budapest. The stones
Of the barricades rise up and shiver
Into form. They take the shapes
Of the peasant armies of Makhno.
The streets are lit with torches.
The gasoline drenched bodies
Of the Solovetsky anarchists
Burn at every street corner.
Kropotkin's starved corpse is borne
In state past the offices
Of the cowering bureaucrats.
In all the Politisolators
Of Siberia the partisan dead are enlisting.
Berneri, Andreas Nin,
Are coming from Spain with a legion.
Carlo Tresca is crossing
The Atlantic with the Berkman Brigade.
Bukharin has joined the Emergency
Economic Council. Twenty million
Dead Ukrainian peasants are sending wheat.
Julia Poyntz is organizing American nurses.
Gorky has written a manifesto
"To the Intellectuals of the World!"
Mayakofsky and Essenin
Have collaborated on an ode,

"Let *Them* Commit Suicide."

In the Hungarian night

All the dead are speaking with one voice,

As we bicycle through the green

And sunspotted Californian

November. I can hear that voice

Clearer than the cry of the peacocks,

In the falling afternoon.

Like painted wings, the color

Of all the leaves of Autumn,

The circular tie-dyed skirt

I made for you flares out in the wind,

Over your incomparable thighs.

Oh splendid butterfly of my imagination,

Flying into reality more real

Than all imagination, the evil

Of the world covets your living flesh.

BROTHER ANTONINUS, O. P.

The South Coast

Salt creek mouths unflushed by the sea
And the long day shuts down.
Whose hand stacks rock, cairn-posted,
Churched to the folded sole of this hill,
And Whose mind conceives? Three herons
Gig their necks in the tule brake
And the prying mudhen plies.
Long down, far south to Sur, the wind lags,
Slosh-washes his slow heel,
Lays off our coast, rump of the domed
Mountain, woman-backed, bedded
Under his lea. Salt grasses here,
Fringes, twigging the crevice slips,
And the gagging cypress
Wracked away from the sea.
God *makes*. On earth, in us, most instantly,
On the very now,
His own means conceives.
How many strengths break out unchoked
Where He, Whom all declares,
Delights to make be!

A Penitential Psalm

"As eyes weakened and clouded by humors suffer pain when the clear light beats upon them, so the soul by reason of its impurity suffers exceedingly when the Divine Light really shines upon it. And when the rays of this pure light really shine upon the soul in order to expel its impurities, the soul perceives itself to be so unclean and miserable that it seems as if God had set Himself against it, and it itself were set against God. The soul seeing distinctly in this bright and pure light, though dimly, its own impurity, acknowledges its own unworthiness before God and all creatures."— The Dark Night of the Soul, St. John of the Cross

Crime of my corruptness! When will it find a cease?

For look: I was conceived in iniquities,
And in sins did my mother conceive me! } Psalm 50

Rash Eve, secretive, in the pelt of luxury engendered;
Struck forward through the mortal loins, eternal taint;
To the very soul, steeped; in stealth, stained;
With sweat, by the body's saltness, streaked.

O coarse-grained soul! O crudity! O thing of trash!
When will the all-comprehending God, offended, make it
right?

Expunge, eradicate from time,
Have but a purity of nothingness where once was I?
Not ever? Then burn! Until the bare brutality
Achieves a burnish! You promise so!
O burn! Break open! O bring a terrible breath to blow
Through every fluting of the rude worm-driven flesh!
Braise to the bone! I suffer
A day of dread in what I am! I beg
The cleanly thing I could become!

Annul in Me My Manhood

"The Lord gives these favors far more to women than to men; I have heard the saintly Fray Peter of Alcantara say that, and I have observed it myself. He would say that women made much more progress on this road than men, and gave excellent reasons for this, which there is no point in my repeating here, all in favor of women."—St Teresa of Avila

Annul in me my manhood, Lord, and make
 Me woman-sexed and weak
 If by that total transformation
 I might know Thee more.
 What is the worth of my own sex
 That the bold possessive instinct
 Should but shoulder Thee aside?
 What uselessness is housled in my loins,
 To drive, drive, the rampant pride of life,
 When what is needful is a hushed quiescence?
 "The soul is feminine to God,"
 And hangs on impregnation,
 Fertile influxing Grace. But how achieve
 The elemental lapse of that repose,
 That watchful, all-abiding silence of the soul,
 In which the Lover enters to His own,
 Yielding Himself to her, and her alone?
 How may a man assume that hiddenness of heart
 Being male, all masculine and male,
 Blunt with male hunger? Make me then
 Girl-hearted, virgin-souled, woman-docile, maiden-meek;
 Cancel in me the rude compulsive tide
 That like an angry river surges through,
 Flouts off Thy soft lip-touches, froth-blinds
 The soul-gaze from its very great delight,
 Out-bawls the rare celestial melody.

Restless I churn. The use of sex is union,
 Union alone. Here it but cleaves,
 Makes man the futile ape of God, all ape
 And no bride, usurps the energizing role, inverts;
 And in that wrenched inversion caught
 Draws off the needer from his never-ending need, diverts
 The seeker from the Sought.

Out of the Ash

Solstice of the dark, the absolute
 Zero of the year. Praise God
 Who comes for us again, our lives
 Pulled to their fisted knot,
 Cinched tight with cold, drawn
 To the heart's constriction; our faces
 Seamed like clinkers in the grate,
 Hands like tongs—Praise God
That Christ, phoenix immortal,
 Springs up again from solstice ash,
 Drives his equatorial ray
 Into our cloud, emblazons
 Our stiff brow, fries
 Our chill tears. Come Christ,
 Most gentle and throat-pulsing Bird!
 O come, sweet Child! Be gladness
 In our church! Waken with anthems
Our bare rafters! O phoenix
 Forever! Virgin-wombed
 And burning in the dark,
 Be born! Be born!

ROBERT DUNCAN

This Place, Rumored To Have Been Sodom . . .

This place, rumored to have been Sodom, might have been.
Certainly these ashes might have been pleasures.
Pilgrims on their way toward the Holy Places remark
this place. Plain as the nose on your face
these mounds are palaces. This was once a city
among men, a gathering together of spirit.
It was measured by the Lord and found wanting.

It was measured by the Lord and found wanting,
destroyed by the angels that inhabit longing.
Surely this is Great Sodom where such cries
as if men were birds flying up from the swamp
ring in our ears, where such fears that were once
desires walk, almost spectacular,
stalking the desolate circles, red-eyed.

This place rumored to have been a City surely was,
separated from us by the hand of the Lord.
The devout have laid out gardens in the desert,
drawn water from springs where the light was blighted.
How tenderly they must attend these friendships
or all is lost. All *is* lost.
Only the faithful hold this place green.

Only the faithful hold this place green,
where the crown of firey thorns descends.
Men that once lusted grow listless. A spirit
wrappd in a cloud, ashes more than ashes,
fire more than fire, ascends.
Only these new friends gather joyous here,
where the world like Great Sodom lies under fear.

*The world like Great Sodom lies under love
and knows not the hand of the Lord that moves.*

This the friends teach where such cries
as if men were birds fly up from the crowds
gatherd and howling in the heat of the sun.
In the Lord Whom the friends have named at last Love
the Images and Love of the friends never dies.

This place rumord to have been Sodom is blessed
in the Lord's eyes.

The Fear That Precedes . . .

The fear that precedes changes of heaven
opens its scenes; petal by petal longing
a flower opens; its seeds needs
long unacknowledged, urgencies
as if grown over-night. These
voyages toward which we find ourselves,
unbelieving, proceeding. Passage
as if of death unfamiliar.
Coasts wrapt in unrealized light right
directions beyond belief where
desire moves us. O real mere islands,
new lands, bear with me, allow
for the heart's turning.

The Structure of Rime

I

I asked the inexorable Sentence that is manifest in the language as I make it:

Speak! for I name myself your Master, who would be true Servant. I write in obedience.

Now I see the Woman that I name the Sentence. I shall read the Sentence that I shall name the Woman. Her voice comes across the waters:

*Have heart! you that were heartless.
Suffering joy or despair
you will suffer the Sentence,*

Beauty that was electric I saw in the living changes of syntax.

*Wake up, you who think you are awake!
Jacob wrestled with Sleep—you who fall
into Nothingness and dread Sleep—
He wrestled with Sleep like a man reading
a strong sentence.*

I will not take the actual world for granted, I said.

Why? she replied:

*Do I not withhold the song of birds from you?
Do I not withhold the penetrations of red from you?
Do I not withhold the weight of mountains from you?
Do I not withhold the hearts of men from you?
I, the Sentence, long for your demand.
I, the Sentence, measure your desire.*

O Beloved,
sentence after sentence I make in your image. In the feet that
measure the dance of my pages I hear cosmic intoxications
of the man I will be.

*Cheat at this game! she cries:
Thou art a man or art nothing.
Stand then
so I can see you, a fierce destroyer
of images.
Will you drive me to madness?
only there to know me?
vomiting images into the place of the Law!*

II

What of the Structure of Rime? I askd.
The Messenger in guise of a Lion roard:

*Why does man
retract his song from the impoverishd air? He brings his
young to the opening of the field. Does he so fear beautiful
compulsion?*

I in the guise of a Lion roard out great vowels and heard
their amazing patterns.

A lion without disguise said: He that sang to charm the
beasts was false of tongue. There is a melody within this sur-
feit of speech that is most man.

What of the Structure of Rime? I askd.
An absolute scale of resemblance and disresemblance es-
tablishes measures that are music in the actual world.
The Lion in the Zodiac replied:
The actual stars moving are music in the real world. This
is the meaning of the music of the spheres.

III

Glare-eyed Challenger! serpent-skin-coated
accumulus of my days!

Swung in your arms I grow old.

The count swings me, the days that count
 my dervish invisible that time is
 up. My time is up?

Period by period the sentences are bound.

Fragments delivered up
 to what celestial time keeper?

Twice he saw an orange snake that reared up and
 spread his neck, cobra-wise.

The orange color does not hold
 when the skin is worked. Summer advances
 preparing new orange.

The human hood spread orange in time,
 fixation of relentless color

—character, scaly-feathered presumption:

After a shower, the mirror
 shows the body spreading, orange in time,
 reveals accumulations
 of my uses beyond all earliness.

That I bring up my time, whatever

the pretense,
 to this rearing up this
 snake stance

IV

O Outrider! when you come to the threshold of the stars,
 to the door beyond which moves celestial terror,

the kin at the hearth, the continual cauldron that feeds
 forth the earth, the heart that comes into being thru the blood,
 the householder among his familiar animals, the beloved turning
 to his beloved in the dark

creates love as the leaves
 create from the light life

and returns to the remote precincts where the courageous
 move
 ramifications of the unknown that appear as trials.

The Master of the Rime, time after time, came down the
 arranged ladders of vision or ascended the smoke and flame
 towers of the opposite of vision, into or out of the language
 of daily life, husband to the living, wife to the dead—the
 breath that leaps forward upon the threshold of death.

Thus I said to the source of my happiness: I will return.
 From the moment of your love eternity expands, and you are
 mere man.

Water fire earth and air
 all that simple elements appear
 guardians are.

V

Among the bleeding branches, I heard sentences of my
 soliloquy. Have you heard the broken limbs of the world-tree
 knocking, knocking? Here, joy is sternest accuser, a fire that
 tortures the wet wood.

*I tried to die, one wretched voice declared: There is no
 death. I left my body hanging behind me. I sought the void.
 My body hangs before me, immortal image. Men still remem-
 ber. Their prayers rise from the ground and hold me to the
 everlasting promise, to the Adam!*

*Obsessed poet, another cried:
Your desire devourd my heart. A rat tears at its mate in
the rubble of the world. Let us go! The giant Adam must not
awaken, for he would claim even our ravaged bodies from the
consuming black.*

*Do you not see that dread as well as joy lights the lamps
of his uplifted form?*

*stretchd upon a geometry that rips the
wounds from which, black blood, we flow?*

The geometry, I saw, oblivious knew what? of these sunder-
ings? arranged its sentences intolerant of black or white.

*No! No! Say that there are two worlds, a man demanded.
I shot half my head away.*

*No! a woman cried: / live in one world. You said you loved
me, and it is black.*

*I rose from breakfast, the man said: I climbd to the bed-
room and spread newspapers out on the floor. My soul swings
on hinges of destroyd face.*

*Have you not seen Yggdrasil, the Abbatoir? the human
meat is hanging from every bough. Have you no pity that you
count the days of man?*

*You took my despair, a woman cried: and will not let me
die. Your aroused fire leaves shadows in my heart that whisper
to the black into which I go.*

VI

The old women came from their caves to close the too
many doors that lead into pastures. Thru which children pass.
And in the high grass build rooms of green, kingdoms where
they dwell under the will of grasshoppers, butterflies, snails,
quail, thrush, mole and rabbit.

Old Woman, your eye searches the field like a scythe, the riches of the living green lie prepared for your store. Ah! but you come so close. You have almost returned to them. Their voices float up from their far away games where. The tunneled grass hides its clearings. Swords and blades cut the near blue of the sky. Their voices surround you. Old Woman, at last you have come so near you almost understand them.

Ah! Grandmother! in the conferences of weedy remove you tell the children stories you no longer remember.

Have you almost recalled . . . how the soul floats as the tiger-tongued butterfly or the sapphire, the humming-bird, does, where it will?

Lying in the grass, the world was all of the field, and I saw a kite on its string, tugging, bounding—far away as my grandmother—dance against the blue from its tie of invisible delight.

In the caves of blue within the blue the grandmothers bound, on the brink of freedom, to close the too many doors from which the rain falls.

Thus, the grass must give up new keys to rescue the living.

VII

Black King Glélé dwells in the diabolical, a tranquil spirit of pure threat. An orb radiating the quiet pool, the black water, to the boundaries of his image. Solitary among demons, he appears to them and to us demonic: we have composed him over again of enlarged terror—claws, teeth, hair, eyes, mouths, broodings of flesh, corruptions of blood, pustulences, wounds, irruptions, horn, bone, gristle, calcifications, scar-rings.

These are the Counsels of the Wood:

Lie down, Man, under Love. The streams of the Earth seek passage thru you—Tree that you are—toward a

foliage that breaks at the boundaries of known things. The measures of Man are outfoldings of Chaos. In the Dance you turn from, your steps cross visibly thru the original mess—messages of created music, imprints, notes, chosen scales, lives, gestures . . . Look behind you, courageous traveler! You will see that past where you have never been. See! these are not your footsteps that fall from your feet.

And I stand, stranger to tranquility, because I am enamoured of song, to sing to Glélé the King as I would sing to relentless history:

*Hear me, animal of speech—O
bestower of tongues, hear me.
I am like the century's tree
 given over to new leaves,
I am like the bird of the season
 restrained to his piping,
I am like the Fire
 that Heraclitus tells us is
kindled in measure, quenched
 in measure.*

The Rime falls in the outbreakings of speech, as the Character falls in the act wherefrom life springs—footfalls in Noise which we do not hear but see as a Rose pushed up from the stem of our longing.

The kindled image remains that we called a Rose. Glélé torn up from what we called suffering answers: / am the Rose.

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI

From: A Coney Island of the Mind

4

The poet's eye obscenely seeing
sees the surface of the round world
 with its drunk rooftops
 and wooden oiseaux on clotheslines
 and its clay males and females
 with hot legs and rosebud breasts
 in rollaway beds
and its trees full of mysteries
and its sunday parks and speechless statues
and its America
 with its ghost towns and empty Ellis Islands
and its surrealistic landscape of
 mindless prairies
 supermarket suburbs
 steamheated cemeteries
 cinerama holy days
 and protesting cathedrals
a kissproof world of plastic toiletseats tampax and taxis
 drugged store cowboys and las vegas virgins
 disowned indians and cinemad matrons
 unroman senators and conscientious non-objectors
and all the other fatal shorn-up fragments
of the immigrant's dream come too true
 and mislaid
 among the sunbathers

9

They were putting up the statue
 of Saint Francis
 in front of the church
 of Saint Francis
 in the city of San Francisco
 in a little side street
 just off the Avenue
 where no birds sang
 and the sun was coming up on time
 in its usual fashion
 and just beginning to shine
 on the statue of Saint Francis
 where no birds sang
 And a lot of old Italians
 were standing all around
 in the little side street
 just off the Avenue
 watching the wily workers
 who were hoisting up the statue
 with a chain and a crane
 and other implements
 And a lot of young reporters
 in button-down clothes
 were taking down the words
 of one young priest
 who was propping up the statue
 with all his arguments
 And all the while
 while no birds sang
 any Saint Francis Passion
 and while the lookers kept looking
 up at Saint Francis

with his arms outstretched
to the birds which weren't there
a very tall and very purely naked
young virgin
with very long and very straight
straw hair
and wearing only a very small bird's nest
in a very existential place
kept passing thru the crowd
all the while
and up and down the steps
in front of Saint Francis
her eyes downcast all the while
and singing to herself

14

What could she say to the fantastic foolbear
and what could she say to brother
and what could she say
to the cat with future feet
and what could she say to mother
after that time that she lay lush
among the lolly flowers
on that hot riverbank
where ferns fell away in the broken air
of the breath of her lover
and birds went mad
and threw themselves from trees
to taste still hot upon the ground
the spilled sperm seed

Dog

The dog trots freely in the street
and sees reality
and the things he sees
are bigger than himself
and the things he sees
are his reality
Drunks in doorways
Moons on trees
The dog trots freely thru the street
and the things he sees
are smaller than himself
Fish on newsprint
Ants in holes
Chickens in Chinatown windows
their heads a block away
The dog trots freely in the street
and the things he smells
smell something like himself
The dog trots freely in the street
past puddles and babies
cats and cigars
poolrooms and policemen
He doesn't hate cops
He merely has no use for them
and he goes past them
and past the dead cows hung up whole
in front of the San Francisco Meat Market
He would rather eat a tender cow
than a tough policeman
though either might do
And he goes past the Romeo Ravioli Factory
and past Coit's Tower

and past Congressman Doyle
 He's afraid of Coit's Tower
 but he's not afraid of Congressman Doyle
although what he hears is very discouraging
 very depressing
 very absurd
 to a sad young dog like himself
 to a serious dog like himself
 But he has his own free world to live in
 His own fleas to eat
 He will not be muzzled
 Congressman Doyle is just another
 fire hydrant
to him
 The dog trots freely in the street
and has his own dog's life to live
and to think about
 and to reflect upon
 touching and tasting and testing every thing
 investigating everything
without benefit of perjury
 a real realist
with a real tale to tell
 and a real tail to tell it with
 a real live
 barking
 democratic dog
 engaged in real
 free enterprise
 with something to say
 about ontology
 something to say
 about reality
 and how to see it

and how to hear it
with his head cocked sideways
at streetcorners
as if he is just about to have
his picture taken
for Victor Records
listening for
His Master's Voice
and looking
like a living questionmark
into the
great gramophone
of puzzling existence
with its wondrous hollow horn
which always seems
just about to spout forth
some Victorious answer
to everything

HENRY MILLER: Big Sur and the Good Life

It was twelve years ago on a day in February that I arrived in Big Sur—in the midst of a violent downpour. Toward dusk that same day, after a rejuvenating bath outdoors at the hot sulphur springs (Slade's Springs), I had dinner with the Rosses in the quaint old cottage they then occupied at Livermore Edge. It was the beginning of something more than a friendship. It would be more just, perhaps, to call it an initiation into a new way of life. . . .

Years ago our great American poet Robinson Jeffers began singing of this region in his narrative poems. Jack London and his friend George Stirling made frequent visits to Big Sur in the old days; they came on horseback, all the way from the Valley of the Moon. The general public, however, knew almost nothing of this region until 1937 when the Carmel-San Simeon highway, which skirts the Pacific for a distance of sixty miles or more, was opened up. In fact, until then it was probably one of the least known regions in all America.

The first settlers, mountain men mostly, of hardy pioneer stock, came around 1870. They were, as Lillian Ross puts it, men who had followed the buffalo trails and knew how to live on meat without salt. They came afoot and on horseback; they touched ground which no white men had ever set foot on before, not even the intrepid Spaniards.

So far as is known, the only human beings who had been here before were the Esselen Indians, a tribe of low culture which had subsisted in nomadic fashion. They spoke a language having no connection with that of other tribes in California or elsewhere in America. When the padres came to Monterey, around 1770, these Indians spoke of an ancient city called Excelen of which no vestiges have ever been found.

But perhaps I should first explain where the Big Sur region is located. It begins not far north of the Little Sur River (Malpasos Creek) and extends southward as far as Lucia,

which, like Big Sur, is just a pin point on the map. Eastward from the coast it stretches to the Salinas Valley. Roughly, the Big Sur country comprises an area two or three times the size of Andorra. . . .

Big Sur has a climate of its own and a character all its own. It is a region where extremes meet, a region where one is always conscious of weather, of space, of grandeur, and of eloquent silence. Among other things, it is the meeting place of migratory birds coming from north and south. It is said, in fact, that there is a greater variety of birds to be found in this region than in any other part of the United States. It is also the home of the redwoods; one encounters them on entering from the north and one leaves them on passing southward. At night one can still hear the coyote howling, and if one ventures beyond the first ridge of mountains one can meet up with mountain lions and other beasts of the wild. The grizzly bear is no longer to be found here, but the rattlesnake is still to be reckoned with. On a clear, bright day, when the blue of the sea rivals the blue of the sky, one sees the hawk, the eagle, the buzzard soaring above the still, hushed canyons. In summer, when the fogs roll in, one can look down upon a sea of clouds floating listlessly above the ocean; they have the appearance, at times, of huge iridescent soap bubbles, over which, now and then, may be seen a double rainbow. In January and February the hills are greenest, almost as green as the Emerald Isle. From November to February are the best months, the air fresh and invigorating, the skies clear, the sun still warm enough to take a sun bath.

From our perch, which is about a thousand feet above the sea, one can look up and down the coast a distance of twenty miles in either direction. The highway zigzags like the Grande Corniche. . . . It now forms part of the great international highway which will one day extend from the northern part of Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. By the time it is finished the automobile, like the mastodon, may be extinct. But the Big

Sur will be here forever, and perhaps in the year A.D. 2,000 the population may still number only a few hundred souls. Perhaps, like Andorra and Monaco, it will become a Republic all its own. Perhaps the dread invaders will not come from other parts of this continent but from across the ocean, as the American aborigines are said to have come. And if they do, it will not be in boats or in airplanes.

And who can say when this region will once again be covered by the waters of the deep? Geologically speaking, it is not so long ago that it rose from the sea. Its mountain slopes are almost as treacherous as the icy sea in which, by the way, one scarcely ever sees a sail boat or a hardy swimmer, though one does occasionally spot a seal, an otter or a sperm whale. The sea, which looks so near and so tempting, is often difficult to reach. We know that the Conquistadores were unable to make their way along the coast, neither could they cut through the brush which covers the mountain slopes. An inviting land, but hard to conquer. It seeks to remain unspoiled, uninhabited by man.

Often, when following the trail which meanders over the hills, I pull myself up in an effort to encompass the glory and the grandeur which envelops the whole horizon. Often, when the clouds pile up in the north and the sea is churned with white caps, I say to myself: "This is the California that men dreamed of years ago, this is the Pacific that Balboa looked out on from the Peak of Darien, this is the face of the earth as the Creator intended it to look."

This little community of one, begun by the fabulous "outlander," Jaime de Angulo, has multiplied into a dozen families. The hill (Partington Ridge) is now nearing the saturation point, as things go in this part of the world. The one big difference between the Big Sur I encountered eleven years ago and that of today is the advent of so many new children. The mothers here seem to be as fecund as the soil.

The little country school, situated not far from the State Park, has almost reached its capacity. It is the sort of school which, most unfortunately for our children, is rapidly disappearing from the American scene.

In another ten years we know not what may happen. If uranium or some other metal vital to the warmongers is discovered in these parts, Big Sur will be nothing but a legend.

Today Big Sur is no longer an outpost. The number of sightseers and visitors increases yearly. Emil White's "Big Sur Guide" alone brings swarms of tourists to our front door. What was inaugurated with virginal modesty threatens to end as a bonanza. The early settlers are dying off. Should their huge tracts of land be broken up into small holdings, Big Sur may rapidly develop into a suburb (of Monterey), with bus service, barbecue stands, gas stations, chain stores and all the odious claptrap that makes Suburbia horrendous.

This is a bleak view. It may be that we will be spared the usual horrors which accompany the tides of progress. Perhaps the millennium will be ushered in before we are taken over!

I like to think back to my early days on Partington Ridge, when there was no electricity, no butane tanks, no refrigeration—and the mail came only three times a week. In those days, and even later when I returned to the Ridge, I managed to get along without a car. To be sure, I did have a little cart (such as children play with), which Emil White had knocked together for me. Hitching myself to it, like an old billy goat, I would patiently haul the mail and groceries up the hill, a fairly steep climb of about a mile and a half. On reaching the turn near the Roosevelts' driveway, I would divest myself of everything but a jock-strap. What was to hinder?

The callers in those days were mostly youngsters just entering or just leaving the service. (They're doing the same today, though the war ended in '45.) The majority of these lads were artists or would-be artists. Some stayed on, eking out

the weirdest sort of existence; some came back later to have a serious go at it. They were all filled with a desire to escape the horrors of the present and willing to live like rats if only they might be left alone and in peace. What a strange lot they were, when I think on it! Judson Crews of Waco, Texas, one of the first to muscle in, reminded one—because of his shaggy beard and manner of speech—of a latter-day prophet. He lived almost exclusively on peanut butter and wild mustard greens, and neither smoked nor drank. Norman Mini, who had already had an unusual career, starting as in Poe's case with his dismissal from West Point, stayed on (with wife and child) long enough to finish a first novel—the best first novel I have ever read and, as yet, unpublished. Norman was "different" in that, though poor as a church mouse, he clung to his cellar, which contained some of the finest wines (native and foreign) anyone could wish for. And then there was Walker Winslow, who was then writing *If a Man Be Mad*, which turned out to be a best seller. Walker wrote at top speed, and seemingly without interruption, in a tiny shack by the roadside which Emil White had built to house the steady stream of stragglers who were forever busting in on him for a day, a week, a month or a year.

In all, almost a hundred painters, writers, dancers, sculptors and musicians have come and gone since I first arrived. At least a dozen possessed genuine talent and may leave their mark on the world. . . .

Almost every art colony owes its inception to the longing of a mature artist who felt the need to break with the clique surrounding him. The location chosen was usually an ideal one, particularly to the discoverer who had spent the better years of his life in dingy holes and garrets. The would-be artists, for whom place and atmosphere are all important, always contrive to convert these havens of retreat into boisterous, merry-making colonies. Whether this will happen to

Big Sur remains to be seen. Fortunately there are certain deterrents.

It is my belief that the immature artist seldom thrives in idyllic surroundings. What he seems to need, though I am the last to advocate it, is more first-hand experience of life—more bitter experience, in other words. In short, more struggle, more privation, more anguish, more disillusionment. These goads or stimulants he may not always hope to find here in Big Sur. Here, unless he is on his guard, unless he is ready to wrestle with phantoms as well as bitter realities, he is apt to go to sleep mentally and spiritually. If an art colony is established here it will go the way of all the others. Artists never thrive in colonies. Ants do. What the budding artist needs is the privilege of wrestling with his problems in solitude—and now and then a piece of red meat. . . .

In addition to all the other problems he has to cope with, the artist has to wage a perpetual struggle to fight free. I mean, find a way out of the senseless grind which daily threatens to annihilate all incentive. Even more than other mortals, he has need of harmonious surroundings. As writer or painter, he can do his work most anywhere. The rub is that wherever living is cheap, wherever nature is inviting, it is almost impossible to find the means of acquiring that bare modicum which is needed to keep body and soul together. A man with talent has to make his living on the side or do his creative work on the side. A difficult choice!

If he has the luck to find an ideal spot, or an ideal community, it does not follow that his work will there receive the encouragement he so desperately needs. On the contrary he will probably find that no one is interested in what he is doing. He will generally be looked upon as strange or different. And he *will* be, of course, since what makes him tick is that mysterious element "X" which his fellow-man seems so well able to do without. He is almost certain to eat, talk,

dress in a fashion eccentric to his neighbors. Which is quite enough to mark him out for ridicule, contempt and isolation. If, by taking a humble job, he demonstrates that he is as good as the next man, the situation may be somewhat ameliorated. But not for long. To prove that he is "as good as the next man" means little or nothing to one who is an artist. It was his "otherness" which made him an artist and, given the chance, he will make his fellow-man other too. Sooner or later, in one way or another, he is bound to rub his neighbors the wrong way. Unlike the ordinary fellow, he will throw everything to the winds when the urge seizes him. Moreover, if he *is* an artist, he will be compelled to make sacrifices which wordly people find absurd and unnecessary. In following the inner light he will inevitably choose for his boon companion poverty. And, if he has in him the makings of a great artist, he may renounce everything, even his art. This, to the average citizen, particularly the good citizen, is preposterous and unthinkable. Thus it happens now and then that, failing to recognize the genius in a man, a most worthy, a most respected, member of society may be heard to say: "Beware of that chap, he's up to no good!"

The world being what it is, I give it as my candid opinion that anyone who knows how to work with his two hands, anyone who is willing to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, would be better off to abandon his art and settle down to a humdrum life in an out of the way place like this. It may indeed be the highest wisdom to elect to be a nobody in a relative paradise such as this rather than a celebrity in a world which has lost all sense of values. But this is a problem which is rarely settled in advance.

There is one young man in this community who seems to have espoused the kind of wisdom I refer to. He is a man with an independent income, a man of keen intelligence, well educated, sensitive, of excellent character, and capable not only with his hands but with brain and heart. In making a life

for himself he has apparently chosen to do nothing more than raise a family, provide its members with what he can, and enjoy the life of day to day. He does everything single-handed, from erecting buildings to raising crops, making wine, and so on. At intervals he hunts or fishes, or just takes off into the wilderness to commune with nature. To the average man he would appear to be just another good citizen, except that he is of better physique than most, enjoys better health, has no vices and no trace of the usual neuroses. His library is an excellent one, and he is at home in it; he enjoys good music and listens to it frequently. He can hold his own at any sport or game, can vie with the toughest when it comes to hard work, and in general is what might be called "a good fellow," that is, a man who knows how to mix with others, how to get along with the world. But what he also knows and does, and what the average citizen cannot or will not do, is to enjoy solitude, to live simply, to crave nothing, and to share what he has when called upon. I refrain from mentioning his name for fear of doing him a disservice. Let us leave him where he is, Mr. X, a master of the anonymous life and a wonderful example to his fellow-man. . . .

*Voyage en Icarie** is the account of two workers from Vienne (France) who came to America just a hundred years ago to join Étienne Cabet's experimental colony at Nauvoo, Illinois. The description given of American life, not only at Nauvoo but in the cities they passed through—they arrived at New Orleans and left by way of New York—is worth reading today, if only to observe how essentially unchanged is our American way of life. To be sure, Whitman was giving us about this same time (in his prose works) a similar picture of vulgarity, violence and corruption, in high and low places. One fact stands out, however, and that is the inborn urge of the American to experiment, to try out the most crack-brained

* By Fernand Rude, *sous-préfet* of Vienne.

schemes having to do with social, economic, religious and even sex relations. Where sex and religion were dominant, the most amazing results were achieved. The Oneida Community (New York), for example, is destined to remain as memorable an experiment as Robert Owen's in New Harmony (Indiana). As for the Mormons, nothing comparable to their efforts has ever been undertaken on this continent, and probably never will again.

In all these idealistic ventures, particularly those initiated by religious communities, the participants seemed to possess a keen sense of reality, a practical wisdom, which in no way conflicted (as it does in the case of ordinary Christians) with their religious views. They were honest, law-abiding, industrious, self-sustaining, self-sufficient citizens with character, individuality and integrity, somewhat corroded (to our present way of thinking) by a Puritan sobriety and austerity, but never lacking in faith, courage and independence. Their influence on American thought, American behavior, has been most powerful.

Since living here in Big Sur I have become more and more aware of this tendency in my fellow-American to experiment. Today it is not communities or groups who seek to lead "the good life" but isolated individuals. The majority of these, at least from my observation, are young men who have already had a taste of professional life, who have already been married and divorced, who have already served in the armed forces and seen a bit of the world, as we say. Utterly disillusioned, this new breed of experimenter is resolutely turning his back on all that he once held true and viable, and is making a valiant effort to start anew. Starting anew, for this type, means leading a vagrant's life, tackling anything, clinging to nothing, reducing one's needs and one's desires, and eventually—out of a wisdom born of desperation—leading the life of an artist. Not, however, the type of artist we are familiar with. An artist, rather, whose sole interest is in creating, an

artist who is indifferent to reward, fame, success. One, in short, who is reconciled from the outset to the fact that the better he is the less chance he has of being accepted at face value. These young men, usually in their late twenties or early thirties, are now roaming about in our midst like anonymous messengers from another planet. By force of example, by reason of their thoroughgoing nonconformity and, shall I say, "nonresistance," they are proving themselves a more potent, stimulating force than the most eloquent and vociferous of recognized artists.

The point to note is that these individuals are not concerned with undermining a vicious system but with leading their own lives—on the fringe of society. It is only natural to find them gravitating toward places like Big Sur, of which there are many replicas in this vast country. We are in the habit of speaking of the "last frontier," but wherever there are "individuals" there will always be new frontiers. For the man who wants to lead the good life, which is a way of saying *his own life*, there is always a spot where he can dig in and take root.

But what is it that these young men have discovered, and which, curiously enough, links them with their forebears who deserted Europe for America? That the American way of life is an illusory kind of existence, that the price demanded for the security and abundance it pretends to offer is too great. The presence of these "renegades," small in number though they be, is but another indication that the machine is breaking down. When the smashup comes, as now seems inevitable, they are more likely to survive the catastrophe than the rest of us. At least, they will know how to get along without cars, without refrigerators, without vacuum cleaners, electric razors and all the other "indispensables" . . . probably even without money. If ever we are to witness a new heaven and a new earth, it must surely be one in which money is absent, forgotten, wholly useless.

MICHAEL McCLURE

Night Words: The Ravishing

How beautiful things are in a beautiful room
At night
Without proportion
A black cat on a white spread
A black longhaired cat with a sensitive human face
A white robe hangs on the wall
Like a soft ghost
Without proportion
Songs flit through my head
The room is calm and still and cool
Blue gray stillness
Without proportion
The plants are alive
Giving of votive oxygen
To the benevolent pictures above them
Songs flit through my head
I am taken with insomnia
With ambrosial insomnia
And songs flit through my head
The room is softened
Things are without proportion
And I must sleep

Cat's Air

I'm rich with the music the cat makes at night—
the delicate, tiny mewing
as he wanders the room looking for love,
quietly walking, sweetly mewing,
a huge grey cat. Not looking for sex
but looking for love. Frightened
of noises I can't hear. Sweating, lost
for love as he circles the bookcase.

The Rug

I'd draw all this into a fine element,—a color.
Rosy, rust-red, Orange white.

It's love; I bring it, hair-on-end.
A reflection in my eyes—part of this still room,

our strange shape—and I put my hands

to you—like cool jazz coming.
Seeing these designs we make in pure air.

I'm half-man, half-snake—and you

A BURROW

There are no words but color and muscled form

AND THIS IS NOT IT

I can't remember that instant

and I alter it to elegance

to flowers and animals—and no speech

covers the blankness.

I'm filled perfectly, giving your gift to me.

AND THIS IS NOT IT

This is failure, no trick, no end

but speech for those who'll listen.

I cry 'Love, Love, Love, Love, Love'

but this is not my voice—

these are enormous forms

Rosy, rust-red, Orange, white!

The

The eyes ache with it—and burn with it:
That there is no meaning to this
for which I'd die
but the instant's meaning
burning like a candle in a black space
throwing the shadow of love
on a waterfall
of returnings and leavings.

That words are not can't
summon more or less of a meaningless image
that I give you. That paint
or music cannot keep us eternally
or call back the dead hands to hold us.

That I can't give more of myself
to that moment
than I give willfully, lovingly.

That the image is only a fiery shadow.

Note

I can't speak of the joy of you—it's lost
somewhere in the day. We are lovers
lost to each other. I know you as you know
me. If the figures that walk in the rooms
are solid—then we are voices—
to them but we hear their tears
falling about us as warning.
Pride is all we have left and a cold eye.

The Robe

Sleepwalkers . . . Ghosts! Voices
like bodies coming through the mists of sleep,
we float about each other—

bare feet not touching the floor.
Talking in our lovers' voice
NAMING THE OBJECTS OF LOVE

(Inventing new tortures,
machines to carry us.
Wonders full blown in our faces.
Eyes like sapphires or opals.
Aloof as miracles. Hearing
jazz in the air. We are passing—

our shapes like nasturtiums.)
Frozen, caught, held there

my shoulders won't hold you.

HEROIC ACTS
won't free us. Free us. Love.
We are voices. Sleep is with us.

JOSEPHINE MILES

Project

The cathedral which rose up unfinished over San Francisco
Bore toward its eastern gate a front of stone,
Where in the times to be a rose window
Would shine for the eastern sun to shine upon.

Meanwhile the million windows of the city's
Traffic moving over Diamond Heights
Like bridges over slums, took in the rising
Sun in a battery of instant lights.

Wishing as well he might for both the colored
Window and two cars in every garage, the moving sun
Entered the choir loft by a side window
And sang aloud for the sparkling souls of the town.

Reception

When fate from its plane stepped down
And had its photo snapped for me in full color,
I did know it, but it had
The hundred faces of some Christmas cards.

The severe faces of five year old
Wilsons and Oppenheimers, and the Pandits, the round
Fortunes of immediate Presidents
Who will not read Pascal.

Also the crazy faces of leadership
That find their goodness in their morning cup.
To whom I said, Welcome ambassadors. And they,
Which of your hundred faces calls us home?

Orderly

Hysteric sparks of self in the ward of night
Jangle their light to call their care's return.
In each nook and night, each flashing brain
Asserts itself's I want.

Then what is the self of the long orderly
Who all the shift strides to the crying signs,
Strides to the foglights and the needs' unneeds
To keep the blood in vein?

His is the fire of the open hearth
Tended and mended, till the stray sparks,
Blown almost away, he brings again
To its burning brand.

Message

Into the side aisle seats flicker the pony tails,
Then out to see the fights in the lobby,
Till the boys come back in too and sit down,
Heavy, angry for the popcorn.

Then out up the aisle like a troupe
Of spoon lipped bug eyed sky rimmed angels,
And damn your lip, and damn your dime that's my dime,
And shove—over on a bysitter's hippocket.

Then flock back again down the aisle to the seats, birds,
The usher patrol now working, flashing its lights
As club or illumination, to reinterpret
How love, on the steadying screen, is many-splendored.

JACK SPICER

Berkeley in Time of Plague

Plague took us and the land from under us,
Rose like a boil, enclosing us within.
We waited and the blue skies writhed a while
Becoming black with death.

Plague took us and the chairs from under us,
Stepped cautiously while entering the room
(We were discussing Yeats); it paused a while
Then smiled and made us die.

Plague took us, laughed and reportioned us,
Swelled us to dizzy, unaccustomed size.
We died prodigiously; it hurt a while
But left a certain quiet in our eyes.

The Dancing Ape . . .

The dancing ape is whirling round the beds
Of all the coupled animals; they, sleeping there
In warmth of sex, ignore his fur and fuss
And feel no terror in his gait of loneliness.
Quaint though the dancer is, his furry fists
Are locked like lightning over all their heads.
His legs are thrashing out in discontent
As if they were the lightning's strict embodiment.
But let the dancing stop, the apish face go shut in sleep,
The hands unclench, the trembling legs go loose—
And let some curious animal bend and touch that face
With nuzzling mouth, would not the storm break—
And that ape kiss?

Troy Poem

We,
Occasioned by the eye
To look,
And looking down
Saw that your city was not Troy.

Oh,
Merry Greeks,
We bear our fathers on our backs,
And burdened thus
We kiss your city.

Neither
At foot or eye
Do we taste
Ruined Troy
Which was our mother.

Oh,
Merry Greeks,
When you embrace us,
We, bending, thus
Pray against you:

"Rise
From our absent city
Tough as smoke—
Oh,
Flesh of Hector,
Rescue us."

The Scroll-work on the Casket

To walk down the streets with a dead man or to hold conversation with him over coffee in a public restaurant would be hopelessly eccentric. To entertain a corpse in private, to worry him in the privacy of one's room or in the cramped and more frightening privacy of a short story is an eccentricity more easily forgivable.

A short story is narrower than a room in a cheap hotel; it is narrower than the wombs through which we descended. It does violence to any large dead man to force him within it. To fit him (even his body) into the casket of a few paragraphs, he must be twisted and contorted; his stiff arms, his extended legs must be hacked or broken. A rigor mortis operates within the memory; his image stiffens and resists in every inch. One must maim him to fit him in.

Then, when success is achieved and the sweating author has managed to get shut his casket of paragraphs, hammering on it in a perfect fury to keep the body from bursting out, what then? He has a casket, a small regular box with a corpse inside it, and he can sell it on the market where such boxes are sold—and it has been safer, it has been less eccentric and altogether more profitable than walking down the streets with a dead man ever could have been.

There are some complaints from the customers, however. These caskets all look alike. They are brown or gray or purple (almost never black), the customers complain that they don't look very much like people.

The customers are right. The outside of the casket is made up mostly of the writer, his descriptions, his feelings, his fancies, his regrets—little or nothing about the corpse on the inside. Nothing but a few spoken words. But it is those words, only them, which give the third dimension to the story, show that there is space inside the casket. For this reason whenever I read a short story I skip through the nar-

rative paragraphs and concentrate on the dialogue. (That is the scroll-work on the casket.)

"Whenever I read a short story," Ken said, looking up from his coffee, "I skip through the narrative paragraphs and concentrate on the dialogue." He paused for a moment. "And that's the scroll-work on the casket," he added parenthetically.

It is Ken, of course, who is dead. It is his casket I hammer now. Obviously there is something hallucinatory in the hammering of caskets. Whenever I hammer a nail into the outside of the casket, I can hear someone, on the inside, also hammering a nail. That's the trouble with this burial business; it's hard to know who's on the inside and who's on the outside, whether the living bury the dead or the dead bury the living.

"The dead bury the living," Ken said. He pulled his coat tightly around his shoulders and walked a few yards ahead of me. "The dead never return to the living; it is the living that return to the dead. People search out the ghosts they find." He walked silently ahead of me for a while and then stopped. He leaned against a heavy box and looked at me with something like pity. "I think I'm going to be sick." he said.

I think I'm going to be sick.

Hibernation—After Morris Graves

Deeper than sleep, but in a room as narrow
The mind turns off its longings one by one,
Lets beautiful black fingers snap the last one,
Remove the self and lie its body down.
The Future chills the sky above the chamber.
The Past gnaws through the earth below the bed.
But here the naked Present lies as warmly
As if it rested in the lap of God.

Psychoanalysis: An Elegy

What are you thinking about?

I am thinking of an early summer.
 I am thinking of wet hills in the rain
 Pouring water. Shedding it
 Down empty acres of oak and manzanita
 Down to the old green brush tangled in the sun,
 Greasewood, sage, and spring mustard.
 Or the hot wind coming down from Santa Ana
 Driving the hills crazy,
 A fast wind with a bit of dust in it
 Bruising everything and making the seed sweet.
 Or down in the city where the peach trees
 Are awkward as young horses,
 And there are kites caught on the wires
 Up above the street lamps,
 And the storm drains are all choked with dead branches.

What are you thinking?

I think that I would like to write a poem that is slow as a
 summer
 As slow getting started
 As 4th of July somewhere around the middle of the second
 stanza
 After a lot of unusual rain
 California seems long in the summer.
 I would like to write a poem as long as California
 And as slow as a summer.
 Do you get me, Doctor? It would have to be as slow
 As the very tip of summer.
 As slow as the summer seems
 On a hot day drinking beer outside Riverside

Or standing in the middle of a white-hot road
Between Bakersfield and Hell
Waiting for Santa Claus.

What are you thinking now?

I'm thinking that she is very much like California.
When she is still her dress is like a roadmap. Highways
Traveling up and down her skin
Long empty highways
With the moon chasing jackrabbits across them
On hot summer nights.
I am thinking that her body could be California
And I a rich Eastern tourist
Lost somewhere between Hell and Texas
Looking at a map of a long, wet, dancing California
That I have never seen.
Send me some penny picture-postcards, lady,
Send them.

One of each breast photographed looking
Like curious national monuments,
One of your body sweeping like a three-lane highway
Twenty-seven miles from a night's lodging
In the world's oldest hotel.

What are you thinking?

I am thinking of how many times this poem
Will be repeated. How many summers
Will torture California
Until the damned maps burn
Until the mad cartographer
Falls to the ground and possesses
The sweet thick earth from which he has been hiding.

What are you thinking now?

I am thinking that a poem could go on forever.

The Song of the Bird in the Loins

A swallow whispers in my loins
So I can neither lie or stand
And I can never sleep again
Unless I whisper you his song:

"Deep in a well," he whispers. "Deep
As diamonds washed beneath the stone
I wait and whisper endlessly
Imprisoned in a well of flesh.

"At night he sometimes sleeps and dreams.
At night he sometimes does not hear my voice.
How can I wound you with my well of sound
If he can sleep and dream beneath its wounds?"

"I whisper to you through his lips.
He is my cage, you are my source of song.
I whisper to you through a well of stone.
Listen at night and you will hear him sing:

" 'A swallow whispers in my loins
So I can neither lie or stand
And I can never sleep again
Unless I whisper you this song.' "

RALPH J. GLEASON: San Francisco Jazz Scene

San Francisco has always been a good-time town. For periods it has been a wide-open town. And no matter how tight they close the lid and no matter the 2 A.M. closing mandatory in California, it is still a pretty wide-open town.

A high-price call girl, flush from the Republican convention and an automobile dealers conclave and happily looking forward to the influx of 20,000 doctors, 8,000 furniture dealers and divers other convention delegates, put it simply. "San Francisco is the town where everyone comes to ball, baby," she said.

This spirit of abandon goes hand in hand with a liking for jazz, because jazz is, no matter how serious you get about it, romantic music by and for romantics. What could be a better place for it to flourish than a town where everybody comes to ball, baby?

Because San Francisco is a small town with the charming lines of a big city, concentrated on the tip of a peninsula in a naturally air-conditioned dreamworld (it never gets TOO hot, nor TOO cold) there is a perpetual springtime air about searching for jazz. The fog is friendly; the clubs—dirty, dingy, crowded, smoky and badly run like jazz clubs everywhere—somehow seem warmer. The audiences—Nob Hill slummers, bearded bohemians, crew-cut University of California sophomores and the casual tourist, gaping at the "big name" jazz stars—are friendly. They want to tell you why they like the city, why they like its music and what Stan Getz said to them last time they heard him and do you remember the time Duke played the Fillmore Street ballroom and Al Hibbler sang "Trees"?

The San Francisco native is not suspicious. Here his jazz excursions seem safer, though still a glimpse of a different world, possibly because he can get back to his flat in the avenues, his Berkeley home, his Palo Alto patio or his Sausa-

lito barge, in half an hour and let the baby sitter go home.

It's an easy audience. The color line, though strictly drawn in prewar San Francisco (pre-World War II, that is) and still occasionally drawn today, is quite relaxed for a city so close to Mason & Dixon's line—it runs just south of here. The large Negro population has mixed for years with no tightening of lips or stiffness of necks at the jazz clubs.

These are some of the reasons why San Francisco has been for years and still is one of the best jazz towns in the country. Back before World War II, San Francisco radio boasted jazz programs where Ma Rainey records were played and Anson Weeks' band at the Palace Hotel had Ivie Anderson as vocalist. Paul Whiteman got his real start here, and the first explorers from New Orleans, Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, Bunk Johnson, Kid Ory and Mutt Carey, impregnated the area with a feeling for real jazz that was never this strong in any city outside New Orleans and Chicago.

One of the first jazz clubs (an organization, not a night club) began in San Francisco in the late thirties and begat the Lu Watters band whose splinter groups, led by Bob Scobey and Turk Murphy, today are the kings of revivalist jazz. One of the first modern jazz radio programs—Jimmy Lyons' KNBC show at the end of the forties and lasting into the fifties (back on the air now, incidentally, at the same spot)—paved the way for the cool-sounding Stan Getz and the swinging Gerry Mulligan style. Lyons' show started Dave Brubeck on his rise and was the genesis of a score of other jazz programs throughout the area. The San Francisco *Chronicle*, as far back as the thirties, did frequent interviews with jazz performers and since 1950 has offered thrice weekly coverage of recorded and in-person jazz on the same editorial basis as its coverage of classical music. For a decade Bay Area universities and colleges have offered jazz courses, sponsored jazz workshops and graduated a generation of jazz fans. It is no coincidence that Anson Weeks is still a band-

leader here nor that his son, Jack, is a modern bassist with his own group. Succeeding generations of Northern Californians have supported them both. Families whose sixty-year-old senior citizens went dancing to Anson at the St. Francis or the Mark, and whose forty-year-old second generation drank beer to Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band at the Dawn Club, have twenty-year-olds today who attend Sunday afternoon sessions at the Black Hawk or drop in to hear Jack Weeks at Fack's II.

Digging jazz today in San Francisco can be a capsule history of the music if you want it that way; or it can be all in one style. Down on the waterfront there are two jazz clubs catering to traditional fans and exploiting all the atmosphere of a dockside saloon it is possible to concentrate in one spot, including sawdust floor and old three-sheets. The Tin Angel, with a circular fireplace and a stage built by Turk Murphy, is home to George Lewis, Murphy, Kid Ory and now and then Bob Scobey with the die-hard traditional jazz fan rubbing shoulders with the sack-suited Nob Hiller down for a night on the town and bitterly resenting him. Across the street (actually the Embarcadero with a railroad switch line and the silhouettes of Matson liners as a backdrop) is Pier 23, a sailors' bar, where Burt Bales, a fine traditional pianist and one of the few dedicated jazzmen of that style left, plays as he pleases. The Sail 'N is a few blocks away and a host of other beer-and-wine or beer-only store fronts, such as the Hug-a-Mug, the Honey Bucket, and Burp Hollow, offer varying brands of dixieland ranging from faithful imitations of Lu Watters (and if there is a San Francisco style in traditional jazz it is Watters' style with touches of Turk Murphy) to fraternity house dixieland sans striped coats and straw hats. (San Francisco jazzmen, traditionalist style, are more apt to be in shirt sleeves or Brooks Brothers suits, than uniforms.) In the middle of the downtown area (the business district and the hotel district is "downtown") The Hangover has been a

West Coast Nick's for a decade with a good deal of the ad agency "it's deductible" atmosphere. In recent years, the music has been the product of various versions of a house band selected by the owner and led, for almost two years now, by Earl Hines with such traditional "names" as Pops Foster, Muggsy Spanier, Joe Sullivan and Meade Lux Lewis involved from time to time.

Modern jazz in San Francisco centers in and around the Black Hawk, a one-story, drab-looking club (once called the Stork Club, it lost a suit to you know who and changed its name, though the original is still etched in cement under the door mat) in the middle of the Tenderloin. The Hawk deals in modern jazz exclusively with names like Mulligan, Miles Davis and Shorty Rogers. For several months each year, Dave Brubeck, who got his real start there and still lives in the Bay Area, returns to the Hawk for an extended series of appearances, playing for consecutive weekends, sometimes for three months at times. Sunday afternoon sessions at the Black Hawk offer blowing time to young modernists. It is always a shock to come in out of the bright sunlight of a California Sunday afternoon to the dustiness of the Black Hawk, which, with the franker light of daytime, shows a frowsiness hidden by night—the mark of a true Tenderloin resident.

The other stronghold of modern jazz is The Cellar, a sort of home-made night club in a converted Chinese restaurant. (Several San Francisco clubs have had a history of conversion from Chinese restaurants or clubs.) It is located deep in the North Beach section—the Greenwich Village of San Francisco, close by Telegraph Hill. The Cellar has recently experimented with a series of jazz-and-poetry evenings in which San Francisco poets Kenneth Rexroth and Lawrence Ferlinghetti read their own poems while the jazz group improvised in the background. The result of this, while far from aesthetically satisfactory to the performers involved, has been

astounding in terms of attendance. Turn away crowds were at the first two sessions and brought considerable heat from the local representative of law and order, a squaresville type who hates jazz, hates musicians, poets and bohemians, and seems only to love his own authority.

Oddly enough, the only successful emergence of a big band in the Bay Area in recent years has taken place in Oakland, not San Francisco. Rudy Salvini, a young trumpeter and quondam high school teacher, has had a rehearsal band for some time which, under the wing of Pat Henry, Oakland disc jockey, has made a series of appearances at an Oakland ballroom to a curious young-old crowd. The band has been a workshop for local jazz arrangers and has recorded for San Francisco Jazz Records, one of the two local firms offering recording opportunities to young jazz men. (The other is the exceptionally successful Fantasy Records, home label of Cal Tjader and Paul Desmond, and original recorder of Dave Brubeck.)

One of the curious aspects of San Francisco jazz is that, although the traditional jazz groups of Lu Watters and Turk Murphy have inspired considerable imitation, the modern jazz group of Dave Brubeck, despite its completely San Francisco personnel and its international reputation, has inspired no imitation at all. In the little hideaways where traditional jazz—second and third line—is played, there is always an overtone of Watters or Murphy and sometimes an outright copy. Obviously these men have made a tremendous impression on the musicians interested in that style.

On the other hand, at the Sunday afternoon sessions, at junior college and college amateur jazz concerts, at sessions near the University of California campus—the spots where the budding modern jazzmen sharpen their axes—no one steps up to the piano in a Brubeckian mood. There are, however, numerous saxophonists in whose playing there is a definite stamp of Paul Desmond, Brubeck's star boarder. But on an

even greater number there is the stamp of Sonny Rollins, Charlie Parker, Stan Getz, the Modern Jazz Quartet and other Eastern jazz groups. The pervading influence in San Francisco modern jazz is Eastern, with the exception, if you can count it as such, of Gerry Mulligan.

A lot of jazz experimentation in the Bay Area never is heard in public at all. Instead, the young musicians gather in apartments, garages (Lu Watters used to play in the Oakland hills) and hotel rooms for rehearsals. The recreation hall in the Musicians Union building is a favorite spot for blowing and there are several YMCA halls where jazz is encouraged. What is sadly needed, though, is some official union encouragement of the sort that is given the musicians in Seattle where the local AFM unit has sponsored a jazz workshop. In the Bay Area the jazz musician is on his own. This may produce a hardy crop of survivors, but it has also resulted in many potentially good jazz men abandoning music or seeking the shelter of what few steady musical jobs there are. Another disappointing aspect of modern jazz in San Francisco is that it has brought forth no young singer of any stature. While traditional jazz has Turk Murphy and Clancy Hayes to sing its songs, there is a horrible shortage of modern singers.

Despite this, the Bay Area is alive with jazz talent. There is a constant struggle for new ideas and new concepts and a continuing experimentation that suggests more interesting developments in the future. Jazz concerts have always been successful here—the big traveling shows rack up huge grosses. Perhaps in future years more attention will be paid to local artists. In any case, the jazz fan, local or visiting, can find whatever type of jazz makes his pulse beat faster, intrigues his brain or merely causes his feet to tap. It's all here.



Brother Antoninus, O. P.



Michael McClure

Robert Duncan





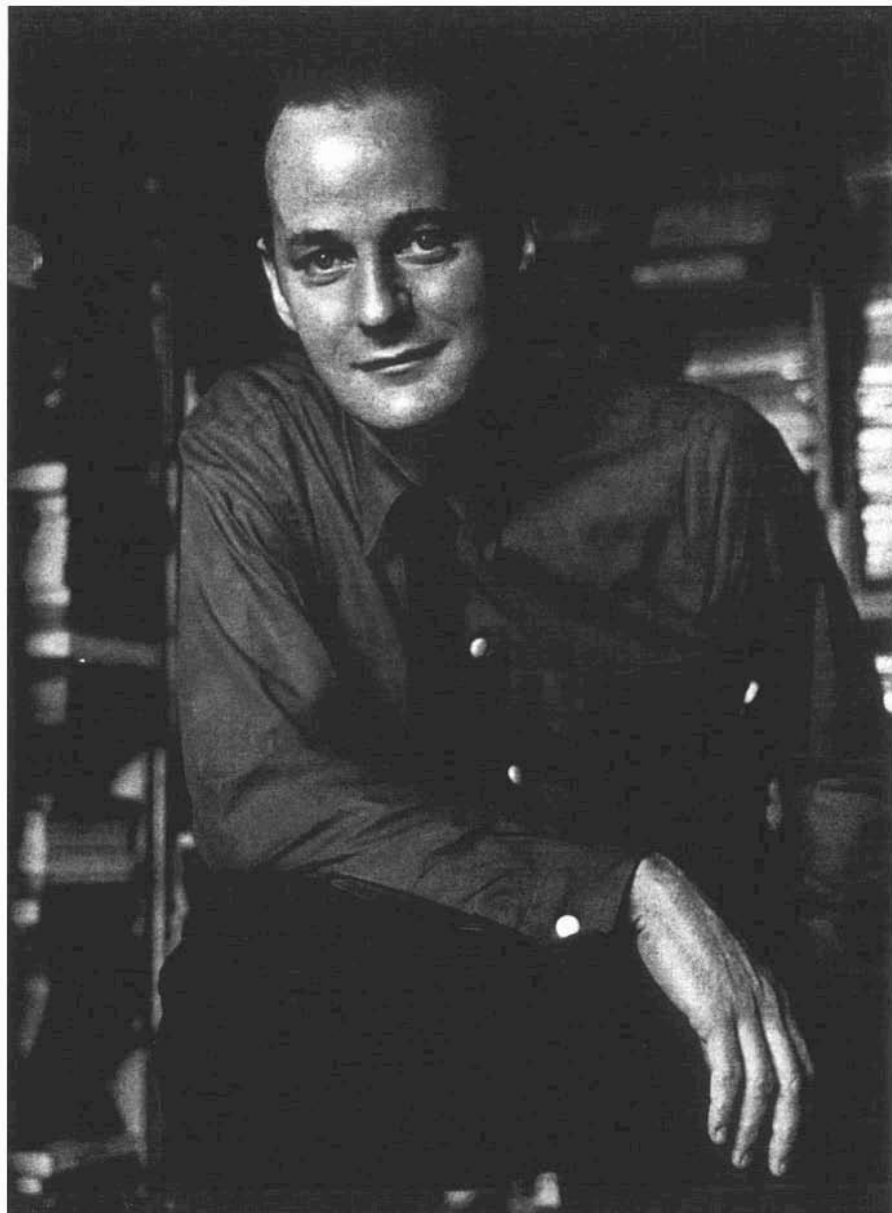
Kenneth Rexroth



James Broughton

Philip Whalen





Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Allen Ginsberg



MICHAEL RUMAKER: The Desert

Two men sat slumped against the wall of the adobe hut, their broad-brimmed hats tilted low over their eyes, their hands resting quietly on their kneecaps. Each pair of eyes, aslant, watched without expression from their corners a man, a black speck in the distance, approaching over the desert.

A third man, short and fat, with a bandana, black from wear, stretched over his skull and knotted at his throat, squatted before a fire a few paces from the door of the hut. On a tripod of sticks knotted together at the top with a leather thong, hung a pot in which bubbled beans and chunks of bacon. In the pot was a wooden paddle which he now and then took in his hand and turned idly, stirring the beans. He was also watching the approach of the stranger.

A blanket hung over the door of the hut and each of the rough-cut windows was covered with sheets of newspaper, brown and crumbling from the sun. At one corner of the building was a large cactus plant on the prongs of which hung a shirt and a pair of dungarees. In the bed of an arroyo, sloping down a few yards from the hut, sat an old open touring car, highbacked and rusting. In the shade of the car a dog lay on its side, as if it were dead. Silt drifted in a fine heap against its curled spine. Occasionally the dog flicked its rag of a tail, striking at flies gnawing raw patches in its flanks.

The sun beat down with a dry, white glare over the desert. Far off, the tablerock pressed hazy and pink against the horizon. There was no sound, no wind.

The man in the distance rose and fell from view as he climbed one drift of sand and then plunged down out of sight before ascending the next. The man seated before the fire waited until the man got to a crest, watched him intently, and when he disappeared again between drifts, turned his attention to the small cloud of insects hovering over the cookpot. He brushed them away, lazily, with his plump dark arm.

"Off the track. Lost," he said.

"Thirsty and hungry. Maybe loco from the heat. Maybe an escaped convict," said one of the men crouched against the wall, Hook, a thin, fine-boned man, with a sharp nose and his legs thin as a bird's in his tight levis. On his boots were silver spurs, highly polished, sparkling in the sun.

"Last one was kinda pretty," said Mex, the man at the fire.

"Black suit—that ain't no prison suit." Capon was a thick man, his heavy arms folded across his chest, his hands tucked beneath his armpits.

"Black sucks up the sun," said Mex.

"Never can tell," Capon went on. "Hope not another one of them joyrides in Theodora: Turn this way, turn that, who zat following us?" And the desert as flat as your granny's tit and not a human soul for miles and all the while the gun butt in the nape of your neck. I hope he's something different this time."

"It'll break the day," said Hook. "I'm glad for that. And if he's got a gun, I don't care."

"Man wants a little something new to make his heart beat," said Mex.

They watched closely now as the man became more distinct, the two against the wall shifting their bodies slightly to see better. The man wore a dark suit and on his head was a wide-brimmed black hat which he occasionally lifted and fanned his face with. Now and again he cast quick glances behind him as he hurried on, in long-legged strides, stumbling and sliding over the sand.

"A loose-tongued preacher," said Hook. "Nits of God in his hair and the lice of the devil crapping over his skull."

"Two-bits he's a undertaker."

"One of them bone-frillers?" said Mex. "Angel smile on his face while one hand or the other gooses your wallet every time you turn to blow your nose for the departed? Well, for myself, I hope he's not."

"Whatever he is, I wish he'd hurry up and get here."

Now the stranger was out of the drifts and was walking over the flat ground surrounding the hut. He had a handkerchief tied around his neck and he kept glancing from side to side and then at the men, walking quickly, his long arms swinging.

Hook pinched between his leathery fingers a twist of paper into which he carefully spilled grains of tobacco from a small cotton sack. Capon rolled his back, scratching it against the adobe wall. Flakes of dried clay fell down in a little heap where his buttocks rested.

"Howdy," said Mex. He got up, rubbing his hands slowly up and down his hips, and smiled at the newcomer. "We been watching you."

The other two rose from their crouched position and eyed him.

The stranger stood near the corner of the hut, his hat in his hands and his fingers snapping and unsnapping the brim. His eyes darted from one to the other while a shy smile contorted his mouth. He stood heels close together, playing with his hat, his throat working. His face was flushed from the heat and there were rings of grime around his neck and in the creases of his brow. Tall, with long bony fingers, and legs that were shaking a little—his hair hanging down over his ears, creased about the skull from his hatband.

"Where you heading, strange?" said Hook, narrowing his eyes and puffing on the cigaret.

"This looks as good a place as any."

Hook squinted at him.

"You mean you ain't got no destination?"

"No," he stammered, looking and then not looking at them, at their hard-set faces. "Which way is California?"

"Out there," said Mex, pointing toward the horizon.

"I've never seen the Pacific." He put his hat on his head. "Nor orange trees."

The men laughed.

"See one wave you seen 'em all."

"Oranges're behind barbed wire," sneered Hook.

"I wouldn't want to pick them," said the stranger. "I don't believe what you say about the waves."

"Oh, like the sand riffs here, 'cepting out there they're wet."

"I'm William."

"We'll call you Reverend. Rev, for short," said Hook.

Mex went up and walked all around the stranger. The stranger stood still, his eyes following the man as he moved around him. Then Mex reached up and began touching the stranger's hair.

"Don't worry none, strange. He ain't seen clean hair in so long—nor none so soft."

"Say," snapped Capon suddenly, stalking over and pointing his finger in William's face. "You don't know where you're going and you don't know where you're at.—You ain't escaping, are you?"

William thrust his hands in his pockets and looked down at the ground.

"A goddamned convict!" cried Capon, advancing on him. "Where's your gun?" He started to beat the man's coat.

William pushed him away firmly with one hand. Capon stood staring at him, his arms swung wide from his sides, his fists doubled.

"You listen.—What I am—" said William, heatedly, smoothing his coat. "I'm a mistaken man.—Yes—I—"

He stared off over the land, his hands trembling.

"What was you saying?" said Hook, scraping his beard with his finger.

"Have you any water, please?"

"Get a dipper of water, Mex."

Mex went behind the hut.

"Queer talk you got in your mouth, strange."

"Sit down a spell, son," said Capon, coming forward and taking him by the elbow. "We got water."

"Thank you, kindly."

"Here, in the doorway," said Capon, leading him over, "where there's shade."

William sat down with a gasp and stretched his legs out before him. There were spots of red amidst spots of white in his face. He snatched his hat off his head and began beating it rapidly in front of him. The two men stood watching, curious and quiet. Mex, waddling, hurried from around the corner of the building, carefully balancing a ladleful of water. He handed it to the man and said, "Guess you're hungry too. We got beans."

William threw the water down in one gulp. "A bit more, please," he said, holding out the empty ladle.

Mex hustled off around to the back of the hut again.

"It's good to be with men," William said, hoarsely, leaning forward and clasping his fingers around his knees.

Hook flipped his cigaret into the fire.

"What you doing off the road, Rev?"

He looked up, thought a minute, and said, "There's something uneasy in me. It's like I'm all known now and nowhere to hide." He blushed and let his head fall.

Capon coughed and, turning away, spat in the dust. "You'll feel better after sundown," he said.

Mex came back with the water and handed it to William, then went over to the fire. He gave a last stir with the paddle, lifted it out and thumped it on the pot's edge, watching as the thick strings of blackstrap molasses fell back into the beans.

"Slop's done," he said.

"'Bout time," said Capon, stretching his arms wide. "My belly's got the windjams, it's that empty." He slugged himself in the gut.

"Beans'll push it down a cave or two," said Hook, grinning

and loosening his belt.

"I'll play you some after-dinner music," said Capon, slapping him on the back.

"A treat to my ears but it'll take me a clothespin to listen."

"We'll shoot perfume around, comes the bass parts. Jist for you, Hookie, darling."

"And that'll shoot me, that whiff of a woman."

"I guess you gotta strong wind in your belly, aintcha, Reverend?"

"I'm not very hungry."

"Well, a man needs to eat. And when he's et himself full, he starts thinking about a woman, and when he ain't got a woman—"

"He jist conks out to sleep," laughed Hook. "And dreams 'em up. So many quiff he can't handle 'em all. I wisht I had me jist *one* of them babes a' the hunnerds I dreamt. *Um-um!*" He ran his tongue around his mouth and strode over to the pot.

Mex came out of the hut carrying four clay bowls stacked in his hands.

"Hey, Mexicali, can't you stew us up a woman outa this mess someday?"

"I ain't no frigging witch. If you want a woman take ole Theodora into town for a grease job. Now get outa my way while I dish up the beans, nectar a' the gods and sweethard a' the eye o' men for miles around."

He ladled some beans into a bowl and handed them to William. "Guests first. Awful coarse, Reverend. We eat with our hands."

"Then I will." He went over to the hut with his bowl and sat down against the wall.

"Your fingers get callouses after a while," called Capon over his shoulder as he held his bowl out to Mex. "Bean-heels, we call 'em. Careful you don't burn yourself."

The dog came wandering up from the arroyo, paused a

moment to sniff the air, then loped straight to the fire.

"The only time Mange wakes up is chow time," said Mex. "Only sharp thing about that dog is his snoot can tell jist about when the beans is done to a turn."

The dog sniffed at the rim of the pot, then groaned pleadingly up into Mex's face, his tail whipping the sand.

"Quit kicking up dust, you'll get yours," he said, kneeling the animal aside. "Humans first."

Hook and Capon sat backs against the wall, blowing on their beans before picking them up to put into their mouths, and then licked the juice off their fingers.

Mex filled his own bowl and then threw a paddleful of beans on the sand. The dog jumped on them and lapped them up in one gulp.

"Mange'll get disaterry. all the time you're throwing his grub on the bare ground," said Hook. "All that dirt he eats stuck with it."

"Ain't killed him yet," said Mex. sending another pile of beans scudding in the sand. He came over and sat down in front of the men, balancing his bowl on one knee, and began to eat loudly with his fingers, sucking at the molasses as it ran down his wrists.

"Day's so hot," he said, "my armpits are panting."

"We smell them potent elbows," said Hook, running his tongue meticulously over his knuckles.

"We take sandbaths out here," said Mex to William. "Just like regular chickens. It's kinda undignified for a man, hunched nekkid and scratching and heaving dust on hisself, wouldn't you think? But it keeps the lice low."

"I told you to save up your water," said Capon, smearing his fingers around the bottom of the bowl. "Figure it, a bladderful a day and come Saturday night you'd have a oil barrel full to take a bath in." He got up and went over and helped himself to more beans.

"D'ruther take a sandbath," said Mex. "And you oughtn't

to talk that way before the Reverend."

"Don't mind me," said William, wiping his fingers on a crumpled handkerchief.

"You want more beans, Rev?"

"I'm not hungry."

"They're lousy but you get used to them," said Capon, striding back and sitting down with a fresh bowlful.

"I see you never pass them up," said Mex, carefully picking an insect out of his beans. He stared at it clinging to his fingernail, then blew it away.

The dog came up and sniffed at William's hands. He reached out to pet him but the dog backed away, his head to one side, looking at the stranger.

"He thinks you're from Mars," said Hook.

The dog's head swung sharply to its haunches where the gray bubble of a tick poked thru the fur. He rubbed it with his nose and then muzzled into the fur, grasping the thing in his mouth and tore it from his flesh. He cracked the tick between his teeth and swallowed it.

"Ouch!" cried William.

"Why not?" said Mex, scooping beans into his mouth. "They eat him."

He tilted the bowl to his lips, draining the last of the juice, then set it aside and lay back on the sand, cupping his hands behind his head. Hook rolled and lit a cigaret and tipped his hat down low over his eyes, smoking. William looked from one to the other, then out into the distance and back again. He tied his handkerchief into one knot after another.

The dog trotted back down the arroyo. With one forepaw lifted, he looked from left to right, sniffing, then scuttled under the car. Worming his body around in the sand, hollowing it, he lay still and went to sleep.

"Day like this," said Capon, unbuckling his belt and letting his hands fall loosely at his sides, "minds me of the time my granny lit the fire in the oven to get it heated for her to bake a

pie. Meantime, she goes out to get more kindling, come back, stacks it, crumples the crust-edge of the pie a little, forks holes in the top, then sticks her nose in the oven to smell how the heat was and, lord! what a stench she gets.—Rears back.—Sticks her finger in her jaw, asking, what can it be? So, pinching her nose, she swings open the door wide and gapes in—and, you'll never guess! You know what it was? Ole Tearose, ancient aunt-gora cat she had all her life, crawled in there to take a nap and got baked instead. Well, Granny has almost a stroke, you know.—She got seven other cats but Tearose her special pet—and the stink! Well, she draw a bucket from the well and splash it on that fire fast as lightning—but ole Tearose a gonner—hair singed to a frazzle and I'd say from Gran's telling it, nearabout medium-sized done—her tail (what was so plumey and fine) coiled up tight as a rattler and her feet poked straight out, no fur on 'em, jist like four burnt matchsticks—and her eyes shot from her head like busted grapes.—Pretty eyes she had too—weird—one green, the other pink.—Well, what was ole Granny gonna do?—The pie set there unbaked and Tearose was, and the stench of her filling the kitchen enough to kill a man with leather lungs.—Well, Gran throw open the windows and then she let Tearose cool a bit 'fore she try to lift her out and, lo, when she try to, that cat is melted to the grill like baked cement.—And Gran, tears running down her cheeks, she fetch Grampa's razor and, you know, poor thing, only thing she could do, she sliced that prize cat of hers off each and every one of them grill bars.—Yessir.—Took a hour or more to do it.—And when she got it done, she put what was left of Tearose in a paper bag and buried her out back of the hollyhocks.—She come back and she was so upset and sad, she hadn't no heart to light that oven again.—So what does she do but put on her hat and trots down to Miz Huffington's to set and have a cup of tea and collect herself.—And she tell Huffie all 'bout it, and then she and Huffie have a big cry together and they

both feel better.—But Granny didn't never forget.—And what every time she lit the oven after that, Tearose would come back, like a ghost you might say, every time smelling up the the room. But after a couple of months the stink of her got all burnt out of the oven and Gran felt better for that, I can tell you. Why there wasn't a breakfast or a dinner she'd cook and she wouldn't bust into tears or start sniveling in the stew.—And it got Grampa sore. 'A course he was still chewing bile over that razor of his Gran had chipped and wrecked all to hell that day, the one with a motherapearl handle he had sent COD special delivery from New York City."

Capon chuckled and flicked a fly off his nose.

"Being so ancient, she mighta died first.—You know, crawled in there to die stead'a nap," said Mex, "and was off into cat-limbo long before the heat got to her."

"I don't think Granny ever thought of that. Mighta cheered her up somewhat."

"More company," said Hook, nodding to the west. They turned and looked.

Across the sand a horse came plodding on which sat an indian, wearing a 10-gallon hat, an onion sack bulging with cans of beer slung to the saddlehorn. The horse's head slunk almost to the ground, the reins trailing in the dust between its hoofs. The indian sat swaying in the saddle, a can of beer pressed to his lips, his free hand gesticulating aimlessly to the air.

The horse, without once lifting its head, green saliva foaming at its jaws, padded quietly up to the men and came to a halt.

"Howdy, Morning Light!" exclaimed Mex, going up, hand extended.

The indian lifted a finger, circled it in the air, smiled foolishly and fell off the horse. He landed in a heap on the other side, still clutching the can from which beer dribbled into the earth.

Mex laid a hand against the horse's ribs, then, bending his knees, he peered under the animal's belly at the collapsed indian and said, "Why, Morning Light, this a helluva note. You come to pay us a call and here you are drunk enough for ten redskins."

"Glub," said Morning Light, crooking his finger at the sky. "More beer, Chester Axehead. I know you of old."

"He ain't no fun when he's this way," Capon said out of the corner of his mouth to William.

"He ain't killed no white man yet tho when he's been on a toot," said Hook, walking over to the horse. "He's a good indian." He reached between the horse's front legs and picked up the reins.

"Good innien," muttered Morning Light, trying to pull himself up. "Don't eat jelly on my bread. Hair won't fall out—teeth won't fall out—like white man. Mexicali, give a good innien a hand here."

As Hook led the horse to the rear of the hut, Mex grabbed one arm and Capon came over and took the other and together they hauled the indian to his feet.

"Obliged," he said thickly. "Sick a' looking at the sky."

The two men held him up as the indian stood unsteadily on his feet, his head wobbling around, his eyes narrowed and blinking.

"Who zat? Unnertaker? Come to get my carcass. Worth a plug quarter."

"Why, that's a guest of ours," said Mex. "Reverend, this is Morning Light, old acquaintance."

"How do you do."

"Reverend, eh? Thought you was taker-under. Ooo, lay me in the shade."

They led him over to the adobe and propped him against the wall. He slid down hard in a sitting position and looked around.

"Hey, where's my horse? Who stole my horse? My beer,

where's my beer?" he croaked, struggling to get to his feet. "String the bastard up. There's a law."

"Now that's no way to talk about a white man," said Mex, placing his hands on the indian's shoulders and pushing him down. "Hook's taking your horse to water him. He'll bring you back your beer."

"Well, he better," grumbled the indian, letting his head rock loosely against the wall. "There's a free lynch law in this territory 'bout horse-thieving."

"Yeah, fifty years ago," said Capon. "You been reading them Westerns again."

Hook came back carrying the onion sack in his hand.

"I don't know as you need more of this," he said, dropping the sack at the indian's feet.

"Need beer like I need a bath. Bad." He burrowed his nose in his armpit. "Foo! Can't stand the stink of myself. Get drunk."

"Where'd you get dough for booze?" said Capon. "You ain't never had no cash before."

"Celebrate!" exclaimed the indian. "Have beer. Star—me, a star."

"Some star," sneered Hook. "Can't even sit his horse right."

"Thinks he's a star," said Mex, rubbing his chin. "You hit your head when you fell?"

"Not star inna sky, idiot. Movie star! They shot pitcher out at Shadow Rock. I was extra brave. Ten clams a day. Et inna commizerry. Everybody have beer. Toast. Forget name of pitcher," he said, scratching his head. "Have'a go all cowboy pitchers now to see myself."

"What a dumbbell. He's inna pitcher and he don't even know the name of it."

"Drum-something. Scalped two whitemen. Almost scalped leading lady, but hero—he wore perfume all'a time—he come in last minute and cracks my skull open with a carbine. Gets the prize. Yawww, he can have it," he said, fumbling at the

drawstring of the sack. "All she did was yap about the flies in the latrine and how hot it was and when were they gonna go home to Malibu—wherever that is."

"I'm seeing things," said Capon, stepping away from the group and peering out in the distance. The others turned and stared hard in the same direction.

A snow-white Jaguar convertible, the top down, its long low body gleaming, the chrome bubbles of its headlamps glinting in the sun, bounced over the desert, leaving a wide, high wake of yellow dust behind it.

"What inna hell's zat?" said the indian, bracing himself against the wall and trying to push himself up.

"Ain't you never seen no automobile?"

"Um, not without no highway under it."

"Must be lost."

"May be some of them movie people."

"If it's that friggin' leading lady," grumbled the indian, falling down again, "I'm gonna hide."

"Coming like a bat outa hell. Hope its brakes are good."

"Looks like everybody's coming to our doorstep today," said Mex, rubbing his hands gleefully. "Think I oughta warm up the beans?"

"See first if it's friend or foe," said Hook.

At the wheel was a young woman wearing sunglasses, her dark hair flying in the wind. Beside her sat an older woman, her features blurred thru the dusty windshield.

The car came straight on, without reducing speed until it got within a few yards of the men when the driver turned the wheel sharply, the car careening in a curve, the rear wheels spinning sand as she put on the brakes. The car rocked to an abrupt halt.

The young woman took off her sunglasses and looked at the men. They stood close in a group and looked back at her.

"Hey there, which way is the highway?" she called.

The men did not answer.

She turned to the woman beside her and shrugged her shoulders.

"Perhaps they don't speak english, dear," said the woman.

The girl's mouth went down at the corners as she surveyed the men again. Then she smoothed her hair, pulled on the emergency brake and stepped out of the car.

As she approached them she ruffled out the folds of her mexican peasant blouse and the wrinkles in her slacks. On her feet were straw sandals.

"Don't touch them, Claudia!" called the woman from the car, in a hoarse whisper. "They might be diseased."

"Do you speak english?" said the girl as she came up to the men.

"Sort'a," said Hook.

"Gee, you sure are a far piece from the highway, mam," said Mex.

Hook and Capon laughed.

"What's so funny?" she asked with a perplexed expression.

"The point is—how far is it and which way?"

"I'd sure like to know that, mam," said Hook.

"You mean you don't know?"

"Well, not yet, mam."

"That's a snappy looking automobile you got there," said Capon.

Mex, Capon and Hook wandered over to the car and crowded around it, inspecting it closely. Morning Light sat with his head in his hands staring at the scene thru slit eyes. William watched from the doorway, his hands in his pockets.

"Haven't you ever seen a car before?" said the older woman, as the men grouped around and looked into the interior. "Don't get too close."

She also wore dark glasses, blue rims festooned with plastic daisies; her thighs stuffed into aquamarine pedalpushers. On her head was a pink straw cap, tilted back, the name SUSIE stitched in letters on the inside of the peak.

"Don't touch anything," warned the girl, nervously.

Mex spelled out MIX with his finger in the dust on the fender.

"How come you're way out here?" said Capon, turning to the girl.

"If you really must know, I came out to sketch desert scenes—and Mother wanted to see the desert ..."

"Oh, Claudia, you'll be the death of me with your insane notions! —Young man, you're breathing in my face. When was the last time you brushed your teeth? —Driving clean off the highway. When I'd only wanted to see the desert, *safely*, from 66. And now we don't know where we are!" she announced to the men. "Haven't seen a square inch of asphalt for miles."

"Hush, mama. This is the Twentieth Century, remember? Women are no longer the frail, helpless non-entities they used to be," she said, turning to the men. "Now, tell us, which way to the highway, if you please?"

"Which highway do you mean, mam?"

"Any one close by. At this point we aren't particular."

"Well, I'm the Nineteenth, dear," interrupted her mother, petulantly, her lips twitching. "And I beg you to remember that. You seem to have no consideration.—And you forget how hard I try to keep up with you."

"All right, mama, that's enough I say!" said Claudia, stamping her foot. "This heat's irritating enough without you feeling sorry for yourself. You wanted to see the desert and you're seeing it."

"Not a clean rest station for miles ..." groaned her mother, fluttering a handkerchief at her throat.

"Well, if you insist upon being in one of your moods," said Claudia. She beckoned to the men. "If you'll just follow me we'll settle this business out of her hearing—as she seems to want to be by herself."

She reached into a leather pocket inside the car door and withdrew a sketch pad and a box of charcoal sticks.

"You always leave me out of everything," said her mother.

The men followed the girl to the hut, casting glances back at the car as they went.

"I might as well sketch the crew of you while I'm here. Except that lout," she said, pointing at the indian. "You there, get out of the way. I want the rest of you to group yourselves before this enchanting hacienda. Something quaint and picturesque—primitive—about it all," she said, then leafed thru the pages of her sketch pad as the men stood around staring dumbly at her.

"Well?" she said, glancing up. "Are you going to stand there like logs? Group yourselves—nothing stiff, a natural pose—to catch the desert-like flavor of you. The day of the daguerreotype still-life is over," she announced. She selected a stick of charcoal from the box and tested it on a corner of the paper.

Mex looked at the others and shrugged his shoulders.

"Hey, lady!" called the indian, still slumped against the wall, "Where the hell's Malibu?"

"Why aren't you on the reservation, where you belong?"

"I gotta in with the warden. Any time I want a pass I sing 'God Bless America' five times under his window—and I get out." He winked at her. "You wanta beer?"

"Ugh. And drunk as a fool. Isn't there a law against giving liquor to indians?" she said, turning to the men.

"We haven't been in town for years, mam," said Hook. "We wouldn't know."

"I'd report it to the authorities, Claudia!" shouted her mother. "Hail the first state trooper we see on the highway. When we *get* to the highway. Hurry those men up with the information, dear."

"Hey there—you—black suit, you look like a cultivated man."

"Not me."

"Don't be modest," said Claudia, smiling. "I see you're

not of the same cut as these hombres." She jerked her thumb at the others. "Own up."

"I've given up all that."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say."

"You mean you've thrown away your culture?"

"Such as it was. That, and other things."

"How queer. The rest of us spend so much money and time getting it and you just up and throw it away. Why?"

"I'd rather not say."

"Why not?" she persisted, advancing upon him, hands clasped loosely about her hips.

"It's so hot to argue. And you would only want to argue."

"You probably hadn't much to begin with, so it wasn't hard for you."

He was silent.

"Aren't you european?"

"No."

"You look european."

She studied his face. "Clean-cut features. Nose a bit too pointed for my taste. And the way that one ear sticks out—spoils the proportion. French, I'd say. Passable eyes, but a bit weak. Hazel?" She leaned into his face. "Yes. *Votre figure* would make a nice portrait. But doing portraits is old hat." She started to walk away and then turned to him again.

"Are you a man of the cloth?"

"Which cloth?"

"The table cloth?" chuckled Mex.

"The loincloth," muttered Hook.

"Out of my dark there sometimes shoots a ray of lucidity." He put his hand to his mouth. "No—that isn't what I want to say."

"What kind of talk is that? Who are you quoting? You look like a castoff parson from Chautauqua," she laughed.

"There's serene music there," said William. "And the old

ladies, who won't die, sit on gingerbread porches reading slender volumes of Browning. I'm a stray dog, flirting with everyone—for a bone, a kiss. Right now I'm occupied in translating the Bible into good business english. I must rinse out my rhetoric, hold it up in the sun to dry." He bowed and turned away, biting his lower lip.

"You smell like a dog, that's for certain," sniffed Claudia, crinkling her nose. She brushed her long hair back over her shoulder. "Another of these effeminate Hamlets, always out of joint with the times. Think of nothing but their own selfish breedings. I'll inform you, since you seem so out of it, that this is the Twentieth Century. We care about our fellowman—whether he has enough to eat, whether he has proper living quarters and has decent working conditions. That thru Art we shall lead him to an ennobling and better understanding of himself. You might think of that for a while instead of your sick, egocentric self. Open your eyes to the squalor these men here live in. It would do you some good. We're no longer selfish or narrowminded.—We no longer forget or despise our fellowman—black, red, yellow or whatever he be."

"Would you sleep with a black man?" said William, his back still turned.

"Of course not!"

"Then how can you say you love him? Mustn't you then lie down with him, like St. Francis, if you truly believe what you say?"

"I'm speaking the new religion of awareness thru the liberal ideal. An awareness of man's suffering and his pitiful ignorance. That beneath the skin we are all alike, struggling toward the ideal. Yes, I take back what I said. I would sleep with a negro—a negress, of course—to prove my point."

"A queer turn. A test-tube marriage with grinding teeth. I smell Plato here. The idea loved more than the man, or your nigger wench, say—"

"Don't use that—!"

"How often we love man from afar when we can't stand the smell of him under our noses."

"All this doubletalk.—What are you, one of those unfrocked Jesuits, damned to roam your desert in search of your silly God? One of those hypocritical neo-catholics. The new religion of the Twentieth—"

"Mum, mum, I have a seed in my tooth. Excuse me." William went to the hut and sat down, his head in his hands.

"He's been walking a long while in the heat," explained Mex. "He don't feel so good."

"Talks nonsense. Sounds like the sun fried his brainpan."

"Brains and eggs, that's a good breakfast," smiled Mex, rubbing his belly.

Claudia stared at him a minute and then, with a barely perceptible lift of her eyelids, turned and walked over to Hook.

"Claudia! Whatever's taking you so long?" Her mother, still seated in the car, held up a thermos bottle. "This is bone dry. Ask those men if they have any water."

"Give us some of your water," said Claudia to Hook. "You won't pose for me, you can't tell us the way to the highway, the only intelligent-looking one amongst you talks like an idiot, the least you can do is give us some water."

"Uh, uh."

"What? I ask for a little water and all you do is say 'eh-eh' and scratch your fleas."

"I have as much fleas as you have courtesy, mam."

"That's a pretty turn of speech. Now I'll give you one. I've as much fury as you have rudeness. Don't try me."

"Wanta try *me*?"

"I only want some water. My mother, poor dear, has asthma and her throat must be like sandpaper. Now just give me some safe, reliable H₂O."

"Not till you ask for it courteously, mam."

"I'm speaking to you in a civilized manner—"

"They didn't invite you here," bawled the indian, lurching between them. "Whyn't you dance a different tune?"

"Your breath is putrid." She shoved him aside. "Look," she said to Hook, "just tell me where that water is and I'll get it myself. I'll show you I'm not helpless."

"It's there in the hut, but I wouldn't go in there alone."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm liable to follow you."

"What cheap nerve!" she cried, slapping his face.

"You get more discourteous by the minute, mam," said Hook, rubbing his cheek.

"Claudia!" called the mother. "What's the trouble? Hurry with the water!"

"These boors expect me to fall down on my knees to them to beg for a drop of their nasty water!" she called over her shoulder. "I won't do it!" she said, facing Hook.

"Drink your gasoline."

"I think I'd rather."

"Bet it's good-grade stuff. No rust on the pipes."

"It is, for your information. I buy nothing but the best."

"Claudia! Some water, will you?"

"Listen, at least for her sake. Can't you see she's an old woman?"

"Better not let her hear that," grinned Hook, nodding toward the car. "She seems kinda crabby on that point. You say 'please' for old ladies, too."

Hook turned on his heel and went behind the hut. Claudia, puzzled, watched him go, then ran her fingers thru her hair and rubbed her eyes. She stared around at the other men who stared back at her silently. The indian was dozing.

Hook came back a moment later, carrying a pint whiskey bottle in his hand.

"Is that water?"

"Smell it."

Claudia winced as he held the bottle out to her. She

touched it with the tips of her fingers.

"Is it safe to drink? It's awfully tepid. What do you do, keep it out in the sun?"

"Mam, Lesson A," said Hook, spitting over his shoulder. "This is the desert. In the desert it's hot. Hot. You feel it? No. I'll go further. In the desert it's not only hot but there ain't no wells, ain't no clear running springs. Lesson B: the water'll cost you ten bucks."

"I won't pay it."

"No water then."

He tilted the bottle and emptied it; a damp mark remained in the sand where it splashed.

"Wait! Listen—I haven't got ten dollars."

"Haven't got? You'd better. Because listen: we got the water, we got the grub, we got the way to the highway. Therefore, we get you. Ten bucks. Cheap."

Claudia glared at him, then spun around and walked quickly to the car. She yanked open the door and jumped in behind the wheel.

"Claudia! Whatever in the world! Did they say vile things to you?"

"Never mind, we're getting out of—. The key! Where's the ignition key?"

She turned to her mother and her mother shook her head, her mouth pursed, her eyes wide and frightened.

"I have it here, mam. In my watchpocket," said Hook, smiling, ambling up. He squatted and leaned his elbows on the sill of the car door. "I lifted it while I was inspecting your lovely dashboard."

"You beast! Two helpless women—!"

"That's right."

"O Claudia! Have we fallen amongst murderers?" cried her mother, grasping her daughter's arm in alarm.

"Not murderers, mam," said Hook, politely tipping his hat to her. "We are all lovers. All us gentlemen here are lovers,"

he swept his hand towards the group.

Mex came up, looking furtively at the women then at Hook. "I'd give her the water," he whispered, bending in Hook's ear. "She's kinda upset. And her mother's cheeks look like two red innertubes 'bout to blow out."

"Let 'em rip."

"Will you *please* give me the key."

"Oh good! She said it!" squealed Mex, clapping his hands. "Now you'll get everything."

"But so nasty," said Hook, making a face. "More sweet, huh?"

"Please," said Claudia, her fingers stretched loosely over the wheel.

"Ut, still an edge in it."

"Honestly, please, please, give me the key."

He rose, bowed to the waist and, flourishing the key, placed it in her outstretched palm. She immediately inserted it in the ignition and started the motor.

"Aren't you even gonna thank me?" said Hook, hat in hand.

"The male conceit," snorted Claudia, stepping on the gas pedal and making the motor roar.

"Could, if I wanted to, take that key back," said Hook, wrapping his hand around the wheel. "Your arms are so pretty—so thin and fine. One twist—and—"

"Hurry, Claudia!" cried the mother, hugging the side of the door. "Let's get out of here!"

Claudia released the emergency brake and stamped on the gas, spinning Hook flat on his back, as the car tore off across the desert, moving in the direction it had come.

Hook got up and came back to the hut, jogging his limbs and grinning at the white cloud of dust, all that remained of the car and the two women.

"Makes you feel frisky," he said, slamming himself face down in the earth and rolling his body over and over.

"You let them get away like that?" said Capon, sticking his foot out, his heel catching Hook's hip and stopping him in the midst of one of his rolls. Hook sprang up, powdered with dust from head to toe, and throwing his arms around the other man, cried ecstatically, "They'll be back. Oh, they'll be back all right! Think that dame's got nose enough to smell her way to a highway? Think the afternoon's a time to nest her when there's the cool night coming? And she'll want a little heat. She'll want that—bad. Badder'n ever she wanted that water or the key to her car!" And he let the other man go and danced around with great hops, throwing his hat high in the air and catching it. "Man's gonna hafta fight mean'll crack that pearl!" he shouted, slamming his fist in the palm of his hand.

"Too much noise here," growled the indian, thrusting himself up. He swayed to one side, falling to his knees. Then slowly got himself up again and staggered toward the arroyo. At the edge he collapsed and, crawling on his hands and knees, got down the slope. Rolling over on his back he slid himself beneath the car, elbowing the dog over to make room for his body. The dog whimpered in his sleep and squirmed up beneath the motor. The indian folded his hands on his chest, his long feet sticking out under the rear bumper. Gurgling noises came from his throat. Soon he began to snore heavily.

The sun sank behind the far mesa. Immediately the air grew cool. The harsh light went out. Dusk filled the desert, deep shadows spread between the drifts of sand. The sky to the east was darkening and already a few stars showed. Mex lugged the cookpot out of the ashes and set it near the hut. The men sat down in a ring around, each taking turns putting in his hand, eating the beans cold. When the pot was empty, Mex brought wood from behind the hut and rebuilt the fire. The men watched as a train, the long length of it seen from engine to caboose, moved slowly across the plain, miles to

the north.

The fire blazing, the men drew themselves up to it. Mex pulled out a packet of Jezebel cigarettes, opened the lid, scooped out a handful and, thumbing them fanwise in his hand, offered them to the men, the gold tips spread outward.

"Them fairy fags," sneered Hook, turning his face and waving them away.

"You can have them perfume-sticks.—Me, I'll have a squint at Miss J. herself," said Capon, snatching the box out of Mex's hand. Holding it up in the fading light he stared, grinning, at the reclining figure of a buxom woman stamped in gold on the purple lid. Hook leaned over Capon's shoulder, staring at the print of the woman, then traced his finger slowly over the curve of her hip.

William took one of the cigarettes, looked at it curiously, then put it between his lips as Mex lit a twig from the fire and, reaching over, lit first William's and then his own. The two men sat puffing quietly, the smoke filling the air with the scent of lavender.

"Makes both of you reek like two-bit whores," said Capon, sliding away from them and rubbing his nose briskly.

"More like some nickel cake of terlet soap," said Hook, tossing the packet back to Mex. "If the two of them was only real whores—now, I wouldn't mind."

"Whyn'a hell don't you smoke an american butt? Least that's a smell a man don't stick his nose up at."

"When the sun goes down," Mex leaned over and said to William, "and everything gets quiet, I like to put on my hat and smoke me a Jizzie. And I like to hear a good story. Hook and Capon here, they tell fine stories, but they're a little on the coarse side.—Now don't rile up you two.

"That's his tale, I'm sitting on mine," said Capon.

"Enough to raise the hackles on your back sometimes," he whispered, putting his hand to the side of his mouth. "But

a man once in a while likes to hear a different kind of a story. And I was wondering if—" He touched William's knee. "Do you know what I mean?"

"I don't know what story you'd want to hear," said William, glancing at him, then at the cigaret forked between his fingers.

"Aw, gwan, Rev," said Capon. "You can't be no worse'n me and Hook here—or that oily-mouthed spic there—for all he's trying to make hisself out to be a angel."

"I don't know," said William, looking around, embarrassed.

"Hell," said Hook, jumping up. "I'll get you some mescal and maybe that'll warm up your pipes." He went to the door of the hut and, pulling the blanket back, stepped inside. He came out a minute later carrying a tan jug over one shoulder. He squatted down again with the men, and holding the jug steady between the heels of his boots, leaned down and bit the cork out with his teeth.

"Here," he said, spitting the cork to one side and holding the jug out to William, "have a swallow, Rev."

William took the jug, stuck his nose in the opening, then lifting it in both hands, tilted the neck to his mouth, his adam's apple bobbing as he drank. Suddenly he thrust the jug from his lips, and clapping his hand over his mouth, began coughing and sneezing.

"You'll get the hang of it, bye and bye," said Capon, grinning at the others as he took the jug from William. He looped his thumb in the handle and, swinging the jug onto his forearm, tipped his head back and drank long and deep. Then he passed the jug to the others, while he snorted and brushed the palm of his hand back and forth under his nose.

"Burned my throat," said William, his eyes red and running. He blew his nose hard on his handkerchief.

"Good for the night chill," said Hook, swinging the jug to Mex.

Mex drank and then set the mescal in the middle of the circle, saying, "Now you got your vents cleaned out, Rev,

you can go on with that story. Anytime you feel yourself running out of words, you're welcome to reach for the jug."

William crunched his cigaret in the sand. Folding his legs under him, he leaned his elbows on his knees and stared down at the ground for a moment. He lifted his head and said, "There was this young man, you see. And he roamed the streets of the city—unbathed for a week, and drunk as long, stubble on his face and nicks and slashes from unremembered falls. His wallet gone, in some alley. In crowds he kept his hands in his pockets. At night, wandering in some deserted side street, he'd come upon a stranger, some derelict, drunk like himself. He'd lean close to the stranger and say, 'You see, I have nothing. I've given it all up. All that.' And he would stumble away, as tho in a hurry to get somewhere, but he had nowhere to go. Finally, exhausted and hungry, his bowels nothing but water, there wasn't anything to do now except to climb the five flights up to her door. He got up there somehow, the eyes of puerto rican children watching him curiously through the railings. At the top he almost pitched backward down the stairs but managed to swing himself around to slump against the wall. He waited till he got his breath and his heart stopped hammering and then rang the bell. The door opened and she stood there, dressed in a bathrobe, her hair tied behind. She looked at him, her hand moving up to her mouth. 'I—like—like—how are you, Mary?' he said. She helped him inside and sat him down in a chair. His head swung and his eyes tried to focus on her, his cracked lips moving, fluttering. 'I—I—like—I had meant to come—I—like—like how are you, Mary?' Broken, the words, and his head fell to his breast as she stood watching him, not speaking. He began to cry, dry wrenchings of his shoulders, his hands lying uncoiled on the arms of the chair, not even lifted to shield his face. Silently she stooped, unknotted his tie, unbuttoned his shirt. He began to protest: 'No—Mary—I, no—like—I—I—.' She went into the bath-

room, turned on the hot tap in the tub and came back. Kneeling beside him, she removed his shoes and socks, unbuckled his trousers and slid them down. Then she leaned him forward in the chair and pulled off his coat, his shirt, slipped off his underwear. He sat naked in the chair. She folded his clothes neatly in a pile on the table. And all the while he was crying, softly pressing one dirty foot behind the other. She took his arm and helped him from the chair—and he followed her, stumbling, his face pressed in one shoulder, to the bathroom. The tub was full and she turned off the tap, helped him over the side, holding him firmly around the waist as he slid down into the water. He looked at her, trying again to speak, his hands swaying in the water. She placed her hand over his mouth, soaped the cloth and started with the face, gently over the crusts of blood, then his ears, his neck, his arms, the rest of his body, the water turning gray to darker gray. She refilled the tub and rinsed his body with a sponge, helped him from the tub and dried him with a soft towel. She rubbed oil in his cuts. Taking a robe from behind the door, she placed it over his shoulders and led him out and to a bed, the fresh sheets turned down. He lay down and she pulled the covers over him. He watched her move above him, her palms smoothing the sheet. 'Mary—I—Mary—' His hand moved out from beneath the coverlet, reached to touch her. She leaned over, kissed his lips, his eyes, turned out the light and left, closing the door quietly behind her."

He stopped speaking and looked around at the faces staring at him, quiet, waiting. He cleared his throat. The light had gone out of the sky.

"Well—go on," urged Mex.

"That's all," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "That's all I have to tell."

"Well, that was real fine," said Mex, blowing his nose between his fingers.

"Something stuck in his craw, eh?" said Hook.

"Wash it down with another drink," said Capon, giving the jug to William.

William drank. The jug again made the round of the circle.

"That was a woman," said Hook.

"Women," said Capon, "women, women," his arms out before him, his fingers hooked as tho to embrace something in the air. "I like to touch the hollows of their throats."

"Look."

A hush fell over the men. The red moon rose over the desert.

"The itch of the moon."

"Pretty thing tho."

"A torment."

"Rev, you talk like a disappointed man."

"Thump! down the chute."

"Life's a fine thing," said Mex, touching his arm.

"My tongue forgets itself."

"Let's don't make this a wake," said Hook grabbing the jug. They drank again as the moon shed fine red light over the sands.

William's eyes went bright and slight tremors ran over his body. He jumped up and began walking up and down before the men in short quick steps, agitated, rubbing his knuckles in the palm of his other hand.

"You feeling horny, mister?" said Hook, leaning for the mescal.

"The indian, where is he?" cried William, swinging sharply upon the men. "He'll teach us the old dances of the earth. The ancient songs."

"Take it easy, Billy boy."

"Morning Light?" guffawed Mex. "He's a jazzer. Oughta see him bounding around enough to break a leg outside the dancehall of a Saturday night. Quart of whiskey in him and you can't hold him down."

"Not that," blurted William. The pulse of his heart beat visibly in the tight muscles of his throat. He began pacing again, back and forth, crunching his heels heavily in the sand.

"Mescal's took," chuckled Hook. He took another swig from the jug.

William stepped over the shoulders of Capon and Hook and walked off in the direction of the arroyo. The others looked at each other, questioningly, then back at William who was trotting down into the arroyo, his footsteps sending up puffs of dust.

The men got up and followed him. Mex brought the jug.

When they got down in the bottom of the dry riverbed, they saw William squatting behind the rear of the car, his hands wrapped around the ankles of the indian, tugging to pull him out from beneath.

"Come out! Dance!" he cried, pulling hard on the indian's legs. Sweat ran down his face.

"You men!" he shouted, dropping one leg, "Give me a hand. Drag him out! Make him dance."

The men came over and grouped around him. Hook stooped over and, cupping his hands to his mouth, sang softly, "Arise, O Morning Light!"

The men howled.

The loose foot slid slowly beneath the car and disappeared, then suddenly it shot out, the force of the kick catching William square in the stomach. The other foot flew from his hand and he pitched backward in the sand, groaning and clutching his fingers tight to his belly.

"Leave a man alone," came a muffled voice from beneath the car's body. The legs drew themselves under.

The others went over and picked William up.

"That'll teach you, gringo," laughed Hook, slapping the dust off William's buttocks.

"Don't never fool with a drunk indian," said Mex, trying

to unbutton William's shirt. "Did he bust your gut?"

"No!" cried William, thrashing out at them with his arms, his face contorted as tho he were about to cry. He broke away and stood staring down at the motionless feet jutting out. "That's not the white man's music," he gasped.

"That's right," said Capon, walking over and putting his hand about William's neck. "Old proverb 'bout the dead indian's still true. But we can't kill 'em, legal, anymore. And so you let 'em drink themselves to sleep and you let them be. 'Cause Morning Light, he's as good as dead that way, or any indian. Right now, that's the only good indian."

"I'll invent the dance," said William. He tossed off Capon's arm and walked away. A few yards from the car he dropped down on his hands and knees and began searching in the dust.

The men laughed, then each took turns tipping the jug to his throat. After they drank they walked over and watched William picking around on the ground.

"What you scratching like a hen for?" laughed Capon.

"Chick, chick, chick," sang Mex, walking around William and swinging his arm as tho he were scattering feed.

Hook let out an earsplitting cockcrow.

William got up, holding a twig of dead brush in his hand. "Sit down, sit down," he said, motioning to the ground.

"Whatcha gonna do, preach us a sermon, Rev?"

The men sat down on the ground, snorting with laughter and elbowing each other in the ribs.

"Hope he don't pass the hat," yelped Capon.

"We're each gentlemen of the flesh," said William, flourishing the twig.

"Amen," crowed Hook.

"A mouthful, brother, a mouthful."

"This root is my magic stick," said William, holding it up between thumb and forefinger. "I'll conjure it to bud.—From the shriveled pores of it, watch the green shoots pop. Believe, believe, my fingers are suns."

"Looks like a piece a' poor dead drift to me," chuckled Mex, winking at the others.

"Damned stick!" cried William. He flung the twig at the sky and held his hands up before his face. "My fingers are wands."

"Conjure us up a woman, Rev."

"Throw him your Jezzies, Mex. Let him bring that babe to life."

"Rev, you ain't talking sense like a white man. You talking jug-sense."

"Tic of the tongue," said William. He tugged at the cloth of his trousers. "This is heavy." He dropped to the sand, quickly unlaced his shoes and kicked them off, then tore off his socks. "Off with our clothes, gentlemen. We'll make the dance," he said, removing his coat.

"I'm for that," said Hook, unzipping his levis.

"We can take our weekly flea-bath," laughed Mex.

Laughing and jostling each other, the men threw off their clothes and scattered them about the banks of the arroyo.

"Let 'em air out!" shouted Capon, as he heaved his boots in the air. They landed some yards away, plomping in the dust. "Phew! What a smell."

William ripped off his shirt and threw it aside, then dropped his trousers and stepped out of them.

He stood naked facing the other naked men. They were horseplaying, scooping up handfuls of dust and rubbing it in each other's armpits. They pinned Mex to the ground and, while Capon held him, Hook smeared his face with dirt, then rolled him over and dusted his buttocks, rubbing it in. Mex pounded the ground with his fists, tears running from his eyes with laughter, his fat shoulders quaking. He broke away from the other two and dragging himself off, sat up and began pelting them with handfuls of sand. Hook and Capon advanced on him, throwing sand back at him, until they stood over him. Then each scooped both hands in the dirt and

poured handful after handful on top of his head.

"We'll dance!" cried William. "We'll dance now."

"You mean like this?" hooted Hook, and he leaned forward from the waist, and, beating the flat of his hand against his mouth, began whooping, his feet trudging the earth as he stamped around and around in a circle. Capon and Mex filed behind him, naked except for their hats, bending their bodies down and then arching back, a hand beating at their lips, their bodies streaked with dirt, hair hanging in their faces. They raised the dust with their treading feet, the deep howlings in their throats breaking the night silence.

"No, no," said William, waving his hands anxiously. He ran up to them and tried to break up the dance, but they shoved him aside, laughing and yelping, and continued to move around in a swaying, drunken circle. William turned away.

Exhausted, the men fell to the ground, lying flat on their backs, panting with laughter, sweat covering their bodies.

"Just like at the trading post," gasped Capon.

"Hell, better," said Hook, lifting himself and wiping the sweat from his eyes. "We oughta put on a show of our own out there some time for them tourists."

He slapped Capon's thigh and broke into laughter.

The other two sat up, rubbing their forearms across their brows and breathing heavily.

"Whew!" said Mex, taking a deep breath. "Sure dried up my wind whistle."

He walked over to the jug, his heavy haunches jiggling.

"Walks like a fat whore," snickered Hook.

Mex brought back the jug, took a long drink and gave it to the others.

"That's the spirit!" shouted Capon. He snatched the jug, his lips sucking thirstily at the neck.

"Don't drain it," said Hook, tapping him on the shoulder. And as Capon continued to drink, Hook pulled the jug from

his mouth and thrust it to his own.

"Sure fixes me good," grinned Capon, running his tongue around his lips. "Foo! Damn grit," he said, making a face and spitting the sand from his mouth.

"We'll need some of this for the ritual," said William, coming over and laying his hand on the jug.

"Why sure, Reverend, sure," said Hook, handing it to him. "You gonna baptize us?"

The men laughed. Then they grew quiet, breathing more easily, and watched as William held the jug close to his ear and shook it.

"Empty," he said, letting the jug swing loose at his hip.

"Need water for a baptism, do you?" said Hook, hopping up. "I'll make water." He urinated, the splattering stream quickly sucked into the dust.

"Blood's thick and will hold," said William. He swung the jug over his head and the others ducked as he brought it down upon a rock, shattering it. Picking up a jagged shard of the splintered jug, he sat down and began slicing crosses in the soles of his feet.

The men watched him, tensed, their eyes wide.

"Thirsty earth," he said, the palm of his hand caressing the dust. "My blood, ghost-appeaser." He squeezed blood from his feet onto his fingertips and sprinkled the dust. "Will they speak to me now?" He stared down at the drops of blood, the dust coating and making little balls of it. He clapped his hands to his head. "My ears smoke awaiting the word. My eyes, for the apparition."

The men sat motionless, their mouths slightly parted, watching his every move.

"She comes," crooned William, rocking back and forth. "Is it you?" he asked suddenly, staring disbelieving at the air. "Queen's robes, gray and root-clotted from the grave. My sight blurs." He gave his head a quick shake. "Are those seedpearls down the folds?" His hand reached out, the fingers

uncoiling slowly, began to brush at the air. "Why don't you speak?" he cried angrily, peering as tho at someone before him. "Dumb mouth a hole of grief. Why do you hold your arms so? To chase crows? How they fill the air, wings beat, black and silken." He flailed his arms about and pressed his chin to his chest, gritting his teeth. He looked up, his hands fluttering over his head, his eyes fearful, as he peered around at the sky. "Gone?" He gradually let his arms fall. His eyes focused again before him. "Listen," he said in harsh voice, crooking his finger, "Close, close—I'm falling asleep, Mother—It's no good." He slumped down in the sand, his lids closing. "The great bird hovers," he murmured. "Alights on my belly, its claws dig into my flesh, its beak sinks straight into my middle!" he shrieked, kicking his legs, his mouth straining, the muscles in his hands taut as they cupped themselves over his stomach. "It's pulling the guts from me, it's lifting me from the bed, the wings shudder over me, drawing me up." He sat erect. His eyes snapped open. "No blood?" he said, huskily, running his fingertips over the skin. He dropped his gaze. "Your arms must be tired," he breathed softly. "A little blood to refresh you." Clutching a foot in his hand, he ran a finger up the sole and whipped blood off at the air. "Let them fall. I'm so tired, Mother," he sighed. His shoulders sagged, his hands twitched on his thighs. "I'm in the bed of the river. Lift me, lift me up. Bring me into the light. Mother, I'm so old, so old and tired. Give me the light. Don't touch me!" He reared back, holding his hands up before him to fend off some invisible thing. "No more of your dry lips. Disintegrate to dust. Don't—yet!" He gesticulated with his hands, desperately motioning something back. "Mother—listen—I'm not anything. Not any of that. I want to be quiet. I'm William-eyes and William-ears. I'm William-mouth and William-heart. Poor dumb cock!" he cried, seizing his groin. "Barbs forged in hell's red belly. There, through smoke, the glamorous jew squints spanishly at me. Lights in

his eyes, he says. Brambles, say I."

He pressed his knuckles deep into his sockets.

"Ah ah ah," he whispered. "Ah ah ah."

"Take it easy," croaked a voice from the men.

"To sleep?" he asked, staring out, wild-eyed. "Enough of that." His fingers dumbly stroked the sand. "Only now I see I slept all my years beneath layers of silt." He scooped up some of the blood-moist dust and kneaded it between his fingers. "My soul is blond. Ribs nesting fire. How late it gets. Smash time. Beware those razors in their eyes. They slice you. Hard-won innocence of manhood," he murmured, scattering the dust from his hand. "To bust through—a fist to punch with!" He sprang up and stepped toward the men, his feet tracking prints of themselves, damp in the sand. "I want that," he whispered fiercely, leaning over them. "The sick exhaust me. The body," he said, with awe, running his hands down himself and staring around at the dark. "A man could walk forever out there, his body aching. Christ yap," he said, his fists banging his thighs. "Redskin!" he shouted toward the car. "Dance! Og! He's drunk, the dance sprung from his arches." He walked with measured steps up and down before the men, his heels kicking the dust lightly. "Nevermind nevermind nevermind. Cool gringo—jazz-song—jazz-dance—to it, to it."

He looked around at their faces as tho he did not see them, then furtively back over either shoulder, his body trembling. "I see I'm on dangerous ground. Fears press in to snap the spine. No turning back. Broken—cold acid leaks in the bones. A corner of cloth to cover—there and there. Wake me before dawn."

Entranced, he rubbed his hands across his chest, staining the skin with blood. He moved toward the men.

"Princes, you are all princes. Above all, don't be afraid. Don't desecrate the wonder. No more nightmares. Walk dreamful in the day. Splendid peoples. Move us as tides, eyes

open."

His hand went to his throat and his lids fluttered. "I see I've been dreaming," he said, and fainted, falling face down in the sand.

Mex ran to him and turned him over. He lifted him by the shoulders and propped his head on his knee.

"Mescal finally hit him over the head," said Capon. He got up and walked over. Hook followed him. They stared down at the unconscious man.

From the edge of the arroyo the beams of a car's headlights cut thru the darkness, illuminating the naked bodies in a white glare. The men stared up, blinded, into the lights. The car banked abruptly, the wheels spinning in the earth, sending down a great spray of sand over the men below. It jerked forward, swerving over the sand, then, as the wheels dug in, it shot in a straight line across the desert. Above the roar of the motor on the still night came the sharp screams of women.

"Them?" coughed Capon, beating the dust out of his eyes.

"You shoulda told them, Hook," said Mex, sneezing, his eyes watering.

"They shoulda knowed."

"No water."

"It's cool now."

The dust settled.

"Come on, Cape! You can have the old lady!" shouted Hook, running for the touring car.

"We'll see about that," said Capon, snatching up his hat and planting it on his head. "You watch out for the invalid," he called over his shoulder. "We'll give you a smell when we get back."

Hook stooped down and cranked the motor, which started with an abrupt explosion, rocking the body on its springs. The dog bolted out from beneath and stood a few yards off, its hair bristled, thin high howls coming out of its throat.

The motor hummed down to a steady, quiet knocking, the fenders and headlamps rattling with the vibration. Hook tossed his boots in the back and jumped behind the wheel. Capon sprang up beside him. The car strained up the slope of the arroyo, exposing the prone body of the indian lying between the tire tracks left in the dust, his hands thrashing in his sleep. Once over the edge, it coughed along in the direction the other had gone, the tattered remains of the canvas top fluttering behind. Capon, naked, except for his hat, clutched the top of the windshield with both hands and leaned far out over the hood, straining to see thru the thick dust the other car had made.

"The turtle and the rabbit," sighed Mex, letting his arms fall from his hips. He watched the car, the sound of the motor growing faint as it moved away, then he turned as it disappeared in the dust. He reached down and lifted William in his arms and carried him up out of the arroyo and back to the fire which was now a heap of smoldering coals. He lay William down close to it, then kicked up the coals with his heels and threw on more wood. He went into the hut and came back with a blanket, spread it on the sand and rolled William into it, then wrapped the blanket about him. The dog trotted up to the fire and lay down, shivering, and curled himself near the flames. Mex went behind the hut and brought back a clay bowlful of water. He paused and peered out to where the car had gone, then set the water down at the foot of the blanket and, kneeling, uncovered William's feet. Whipping a large rag from his pocket, he dipped it in the water, wrung it out, and began carefully wiping at the crusts of blood and dirt on the soles of the feet. William cried out in his sleep and tried to draw his legs up into the blanket, but Mex held them firmly by the ankles and kept dabbing gently until he had scraped the crud away. Then he rinsed out the rag and wiped the soles of the feet clean. He leaned back on his heels and surveyed the feet, clucking his tongue and shak-

ing his head. He looked around, then seeing the cactus, went over and stood running his fingers down the sleeve of the shirt hanging there.

"Hook'll have my ass," he said and whisked the shirt down. Bringing it back to the fire, he began tearing it into long strips. These he bound around William's feet. The dog came over and began lapping the dirty water. Mex put his hand over the dog's face and shoved him away.

"Git disaterry," he said and, lifting the bowl, heaved the water away into the darkness. He tucked William's feet into the blanket and then sat down before the fire, close to the dog, and began stroking the animal's throat.

The moon, now high in the sky, poured white light over the desert.

Soon he heard a motor and, looking, saw the touring car returning, the far, dim headlamps throwing a faint light before it. Capon stood on the runningboard, kicking one leg out and waving his hat. Suddenly the car swerved to the left and started going around and around in wide circles, Hook turning the wheel sharp first one way and then the other, making the car zigzag and kick up mounds of dust.

"Yip! Yip!" came the voice of Hook, clear and far away over the quiet night.

"Yip!"

"Spur 'er, Hook—gash blood from 'er!" came Capon's voice, deep and distant.

Hook swung the car thru a series of crude figure eights, the car careening over the sand, the dust rising white and powdery as smoke, in the moonlight.

"Yip!" came, like shrieks. "Yip! Yip!"

Hook cut the wheel hard and the car tipped to one side on two wheels, balanced there an instant, then thudded down with a loud groan on its springs. He put it in reverse and it shot backward. Then, the gears grinding, he steered the car toward the hut, the engine sputtering and missing.

Mex stepped from the fire to meet them but the car kept on coming and he jumped out of its path as it bore down on him.

"Hey! Where you going?" he shouted as it roared past him. Capon leaped, startled, from the runningboard and fell to his knees on the ground, as Hook, hunched over the wheel, his teeth clenched, his eyes narrowed, headed straight for the hut. The car rammed the wall and shuddered to a halt. There was a trickle of spilling liquid somewhere beneath the car, then silence.

Mex came running over, and Capon, pulling himself up, followed, rubbing his shins.

Hook squeezed himself out from behind the wheel and stepped nimbly to the ground, a bruise swelling to a lump on his forehead, his lower lip split and bleeding.

"Old whore!" he shouted, booting a mangled fender. "Won't do no more'n thirty-five per hour."

"You hurt bad?" said Mex, peering at him.

"The-oh-whore!" shouted Hook, spitting on the motor standing upright out of the hood. "That's your name!" He smashed the crumpled hood down with his fists. "We'll straighten you out in the morning," he said, turning on his heel. "I'm gonna crap out."

He snatched his boots from the rear seat and stalked over to the doorway, whipped the blanket aside and went in. Mex and Capon stood listening to him stamp around, muttering curses, then the heavy thump of the boots heaved against the wall, the last jingle of the spurs ringing tinnily. Then all was quiet.

"Guess it's okay to go in," said Capon. He walked around the wreck, inspecting it. "To treat her like that just 'cause she ain't got no more pep. And, hell, it ain't like he rolled her off the floor yesterday.—To be so mad 'cause she busts a gasket doing thirty.—And who wouldn't, taken the beating she's took all her life."

"Hook'll like fixing her up," said Mex.

"I'm gonna turn in," said Capon. "Prob'ly woulda got the

ole lady anyhow," he mumbled, disappearing into the hut.

When Mex returned to the fire, he saw the indian squatting over the flames, his hands thrust to the warmth.

"Whata commotion out here," he yawned, as Mex came up. He shook his head, his eyes puffy with sleep. "Coo-coo fades," he muttered. "I'm gone back to town."

"How you feel, Morning?" said Mex, tossing a stick on the fire.

"Head like thirteen heads," he said, scratching his scalp. "All concrete."

William sat bolt upright, the blanket falling away from his shoulders. "Still night?" he said, staring up at the sky.

"Them the best stockings he got?" said the indian.

"He stepped on a mesquite bush," grinned Mex.

William looked around him with strained eyes. He saw the indian and then Mex, and drew the blanket up about him.

"Shut your eyes before you bleed to death," said the indian.

"I've got to go," William said. He struggled to get up. "I've got to get out of here." He got to his feet and immediately fell down, wincing and clutching his ankles.

"I scraped off the mess," said Mex. "You oughta rest up here a while."

"Where're my clothes?" he asked.

"Clothes are still down there," said Mex.

"You gone to town? I'm gone to town," said the indian. "You come with me." He shuffled off behind the hut.

"You oughta stay here," said Mex. "Let your feet heal."

"I've got to push on."

Mex shrugged his shoulders. "It's your skin." He went down into the arroyo and picked up William's clothes and his own and came back just as the indian was leading his horse out from behind the hut.

William put on his shirt. Then Mex helped him slide into his trousers as he lay on the blanket.

"Better carry your shoes and socks. Won't do to put them on yet."

Mex started putting on his own clothes.

"What you guys nekkid for?" said the indian, adjusting the saddle strap on the horse. "Think night's hot as day?"

"Little party," said Mex, stepping into his dungarees.

"Party and no women," said the indian, slapping the horse's belly. "I don't know what to think of that."

Mex laughed.

The indian climbed onto the horse. "You get on behind me," he said to William.

William walked on his heels to the horse. "Put these here," said the indian, reaching down and taking his shoes and socks from him. He lifted the flap of the saddlebag and dropped them inside. Mex boosted William and William swung onto the back of the horse. He placed his arms around the indian's waist.

"Ready?"

"All set," said Mex. "Good luck there, Reverend," he said, touching the calf of William's leg.

William's head had fallen against the indian's neck and he was asleep.

"I'll talk to myself," said the indian. "Gee-up," he clucked, tugging at the reins. The horse started off at a slow walk.

"And you, Morning, you come again," said Mex, walking alongside.

The indian grunted and Mex stood still, hands on hips, and watched as they went off, William's head bobbing on the other's shoulder. He watched until they had gotten quite a distance away and then turned and walked back to the fire. He stood a moment gazing around at the horizon. To the east was a faint flush of light. He threw more wood on the fire. He looked around once more, then dropped down on the blanket and, tipping his hat over his eyes, rolled himself up for sleep.

JAMES BROUGHTON

Nativity 1956

I *am* born I am born at the dying of the year
down from the Dove up from the Dark
out to the Light of My Lady's lap
where the birth and the death and the life are one
and the first word I speak is Love.

O wintry children in your Age of Fire,
burning blood-freezing sacrifices
on thunderbolt toys lit with cold blood,
will you gladly assassinate my Unicorn
to enthrone Rhinoceros lord of the world
in blind thunder, the boomerang Beast
who rules in rage, who reaps in dust
the wormwood jungle in the heart of man?

When your brothers are burnt to bleeding trees,
your Father's earth burnt to sands of bone,
when, turning to weeping what was meant for joy,
you hurl your Hell-flood cloud of Cain
down upon my Mother and me,
will you kneel in praise where a Harpy's claw
dangles the shriveling idiot babe
who announces your hope of the world?

I am born I am born at the dying of the year
down from the Dove up from the Dark
out to the Light of My Lady's lap
where the birth and the death and the life are one
and the last word I speak is Love.

Bridge to the Innermost Forest

I could not match the labels where the span held the patch
in its doubling of layers on the cables of starch.
For the cape on the arch of the statuary perch
excluded all question of door and path.

I would cover it with spank or with shield or with glass,
but the multiforming gate that would never fix
kept hedging its formula for the wiry copse.
And the tensity of pitch could never be disguised.

I could not catch and mix the meaning of this glen
where the wiser and the meager had already lain.
For the capture of the curtain's thistling stone
excluded all answer of lock and hinge.

I would cover it with fear or with plaster or with noose,
but the multiforming gate would admit of no release
nor admire an oasis in the squamous woods.
And the density of ditch could never be surmised.

Please Do Not Feed the Senators

There was the needle that stuck in the camel's eye.
While the swine were cast the cultured pearls.
Now goats and guppies visit the same veterinarian.
And the tit-willow gave birth to a dragon litter.
Some zoo: these buffalos in the bird-bath!

One thing and another being comparatively unequal,
the measurements of poison get a bit off balance.
Penitentiaries remain unimpressed by penitence.
The case of the unhealing wound will be continually reopened.
Which eye at the keyhole for which eye in the mote,
and whose tooth for whose toothache?

But things are looking up (without much hope).
Though more things are still left hanging.
Not high and dry, no, nor quite damp enough for a deluge:
so said the weather expert at closing time.
On the whole we regret the absence of thunderbolt.

Did you ever try embracing a hangman?

The Madman's House

Slippers he made me,
and where the high horn lay
he opened a madhouse and I walked in.

"Turn not! Trust not any who point that way!
For overshoes ache when brightest made
and no one returns from there or them!"

I stopped where I stepped, sleep I dared not,
I waited awake—then was banged overside
by shepherd that grew utter beast on a cord.
Lo! there was acne all over my wings
and sick how I dreaded the core of my hood.
I swung mercy wildly and drunk waded on.

"See! no one returns from there or them!
The mockers of moon, all slit for the ride,
come sleekly come oafish come outsize or shorn.
No matter what magic, what worry you spell,
no answer sees certain, no dancer seems brave,
none smiles or none aids you. All cohorts askew!"

Thus mock rode my saddle, I fumbled, I tripped,
shame chased my blunder, till tumbling uphill
I kicked the shoe off . . . O! My heart lost its mind.

Slippers he made me,
and where the high horn lay
he closed up the madhouse and I stayed in.

GARY SNYDER

A Berry Feast

I

Fur the color of mud, the smooth loper *coyote*
Crapulous old man, a drifter,
Praises! Of Coyote the Nasty, the fat
Puppy that abused himself, the ugly gambler,
Bringer of goodies.

In bearshit, find it in August *berries*
Neat pile on the fragrant trail, in late
August, perhaps by a larch tree,
Bear has been eating the berries.

high meadow, late summer, snow gone
Blackbear
eating berries, married
To a woman whose breasts bleed
From nursing the half human cubs.

Somewhere of course there are people *people*
Collecting and junking, gibbering all day,

"Where I shoot my arrows *coyote*
"There is the sunflower's shade
song of the rattlesnake, coiled
in the boulder's groin
"K'ak, k'ak, k'ak!
sang Coyote. Mating with
humankind.

The Chainsaw falls for boards of pine, *people*
Suburban bedrooms block on block
Will waver with this grain and knot,
The maddening shapes will start and fade

Clanks of tread *people*
 oxen of Shang
 moving the measured road
Bronze bells at the throat
Bronze balls on the horns, the bright Oxen
Chanting through sunlight and dust
 wheeling logs down hills
 into heaps,
 the yellow
Fat-snout Caterpillar, tread-toppling forward
Leaf on leaf, roots in gold volcanic dirt.

When *berries*
snow melts back
 from the trees
bare branches knobbed pine twigs
 hot sun on wet flowers
green shoots of huckleberry
breaking through snow.

III

Belly stretched taut in a bulge *people*
Breasts swelling as you guzzle beer, who wants
 Nirvana?
Here is water, wine, beer
Enough books for a week
A mess of afterbirth
A smell of hot earth, a warm mist
Stems from the crotch

"You can't be killers all your life *coyote*
"The people are coming—
 —and when Magpie
Revived him, limp rag of fur in the river
Drowned and drifting, fish-food in the shallows,

"Up yours!" sang Coyote
and ran.

Delicate blue-black, sweeter from meadows *berries*
Small and tart in valleys, with light blue dust
Huckleberries scatter through pine woods
Crowd along gullies, climb dusty cliffs,
Spread through the air by birds;
Find them in droppings of bear.

"Stopped in the night *people*
"Ate hot pancakes in a bright room
"Drank coffee, read the paper
"In a strange town, drove on,
singing, as the drunkard swerved the car
"Wake from your dreams, bright ladies!
"Tighten your legs, squeeze demons from
the queynt with rigid thighs
"Young red-eyed men will come
"With limp erections, snuffling cries
"To dry your stiffening bodies in the sun!

Woke at the beach. Gray dawn,
Drenched with rain. One naked man
Frying his horsemeat on a stone.

IV

Coyote yaps, a knife! *coyote*
Sunrise on yellow rocks.
People gone, death no disaster,
Clear sun in the scrubbed sky
empty and bright
Lizards scurry from darkness
We lizards sun on yellow rocks.

See, from the foothills *berries*
 Shred of river glinting, trailing
 To flatlands, the city:
 glare of haze in the valley horizon
 Sun caught on glass gleams and goes.
 From cool springs under cedar
 On his haunches, white grin,
 long tongue panting, he watches:
 Dead city in dry summer,
 Where berries grow.

[NOTE: *The berry feast is a first-fruits celebration that consumes a week of mid-August on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in Oregon. Coyote is the name for the Trickster-Hero of the mythology of that region. I pronounce "coyote" with the accent on the second syllable and the final e sounded.*]

North Beach Alba

Waking half-drunk in a strange pad
 making it out to the cool gray
 san francisco dawn—
 white gulls over white houses,
 fog down the bay,
 tamalpais a fresh green hill in the new sun,
 driving across the bridge in a beat old car
 to work.

PHILIP WHALEN

The Road-Runner

(for L. J. Reynolds)

Thin long bird
 with a taste for snakes' eyes
Frayed tail, wildcat claws
His pinions are bludgeons.

Few brains, topped
by a crown—
And a flair for swift in-fighting—
Try to take it from him.

Homage to Robert Creeley

What I thought
 was a fly on the window was
A knot on the branch outside

Near it a real fly sat
Quiet in the sun

Wind rocked all the branches the fly
 sat still

Homage to Lucretius

It all depends on how fast you're going
 Tending towards sound, light
 Or the quiet of mere polarity

Objects: Slowness

Screen

A walking sieve
 Wide-open and nowhere
 The mountains themselves
 Sucked up into turnips, trees
 Wander as bones, nails, horns

And we want crystals
 Given a handful of mercury
 (Which can be frozen
 Into a pattern—
 Vulnerable to body-heat)

The notion intimidates us
 We cannot easily imagine another world
 This one being barely
 Visible

We lined up and pissed in a snowbank
 A slight thaw would expose
 Three tubes of yellow ice

And so on ...
 A world not entirely new
 But realized
 The process clarified
 Bless your little pointed head!

Small Tantric Sermon

The release itself—
 The comfort of your body—
 Our freedom together and more, a
 Revelation
 Of myself as father as a landscape as a universe
 Being . . .

This breaks down here
 On paper, although I am free
 To spread these words, putting them
 Where I want them (something of a release
 In itself)
 All they can say is
 Your foot
 Braced against the table-leg beside the bed
 Springing your hips to admit
 My gross weight, the other foot
 Stroking the small of my back:

A salacious picture of a man and a woman
 Making out together
 Or ingenuous autobiography—
 "Memoirs of a Fat & Silly Poet"—
 It might as well show them gathering tulips
 Or playing cards

To say concisely
 That the man in the picture
 Really made it out through the roof
 Or clear through the floor, the ground itself
 Into free space beyond direction—

Impossible gibberish no one
Can understand, let alone believe;
Still I try, I insist I can
Say it and persuade you
That the knowledge is there that the revelation
Is yours.

Out of It

What's it to me? The telephone
Rings only when I'm not home
The biggest knockers in the world
On television; I have no set

We never see you, what do you do?

I sun myself in the Agora
Watch periwinkles on the rocks
Below the Palace of the Legion of Honor
Record the fishes' comments on the children
Outside the tank (the aquarium is wired)

You inhabit public buildings?

A taste for marble in a wooden age
A weakness for the epic that betrays
A twiddly mind

JACK KEROUAC: October in the Railroad Earth

THERE WAS A LITTLE ALLEY IN SAN FRANCISCO back of the Southern Pacific station at Third and Townsend in redbrick of drowsy lazy afternoons with everybody at work in offices in the air you feel the impending rush of their commuter frenzy as soon they'll be charging en masse from Market and Sansome buildings on foot and in buses and all well-dressed thru workingman Frisco of Walkup ?? truck drivers and even the poor grime-bemarked Third Street of lost bums even Negroes so hopeless and long left East and meanings of responsibility and *try* that now all they do is stand there spitting in the broken glass sometimes fifty in one afternoon against one wall at Third and Howard and here's all these Millbrae and San Carlos neat-necktied producers and commuters of America and Steel civilization rushing by with San Francisco *Chronicles* and green *Call-Bulletins* not even enough time to be disdainful, they've got to catch 130, 132, 134, 136 all the way up to 146 till the time of evening supper in homes of the railroad earth when high in the sky the magic stars ride above the following hotshot freight trains—it's all in California, it's all a sea, I swim out of it in afternoons of sun hot meditation in my jeans with head on handkerchief on brakeman's lantern or (if not working) on book, I look up at blue sky of perfect lostpurity and feel the warp of wood of old America beneath me and have insane conversations with Negroes in several-story windows above and everything is pouring in, the switching moves of boxcars in that little alley which is so much like the alleys of Lowell and I hear far off in the sense of coming night that engine calling our mountains.

BUT IT WAS THAT BEAUTIFUL CUT OF CLOUDS I could always see above the little S.P. alley, puffs floating by from Oakland

or the Gate of Marin to the north or San Jose south, the clarity of Cal to break your heart. It was the fantastic drowse and drum hum of lum mum afternoon nathin' to do, ole Frisco with end of land sadness—the people—the alley full of trucks and cars of businesses nearabouts and nobody knew or far from cared who I was all my life three thousand five hundred miles from birth—O opened up and at last belonged to me in Great America.

Now it's night in Third Street the keen little neons and also yellow bulblights of impossible-to-believe flops with dark ruined shadows moving back of torn yellow shades like a degenerate China with no money—the cats in Annie's Alley, the flop comes on, moans, rolls, the street is loaded with darkness. Blue sky above with stars hanging high over old hotel roofs and blowers of hotels moaning out dusts of interior, the grime inside the word in mouths falling out tooth by tooth, the reading rooms tick tock bigclock with creak chair and slantboards and old faces looking up over rimless spectacles bought in some West Virginia or Florida or Liverpool England pawnshop long before I was born and across rains they've come to the end of the land sadness end of the world gladness all you San Franciscos will have to fall eventually and burn again. But I'm walking and one night a bum fell into the hole of the construction job where they're tearing a sewer by day the husky Pacific & Electric youths in torn jeans who work there often I think of going up to some of 'em like say blond ones with wild hair and torn shirts and say "You oughta apply for the railroad it's much easier work you don't stand around the street all day and you get much more pay" but this bum fell in the hole you saw his foot stick out, a British MG also driven by some eccentric once backed into the hole and as I came home from a long Saturday afternoon local to Hollister out of San Jose miles away across verdurous fields of prune and juice joy here's this British MG backed and legs up wheels up into a pit and bums and cops

standing around right outside the coffee shop—it was the way they fenced it but he never had the nerve to do it due to the fact that he had no money and nowhere to go and O his father was dead and O his mother was dead and O his sister was dead and O his whereabouts was dead was dead—but and then at that time also I lay in my room on long Saturday afternoons listening to Jumpin' George with my fifth of tokay no tea and just under the sheets laughed to hear the crazy music "Mama, he treats your daughter mean," Mama, Papa, and don't you come in here I'll kill you etc. getting high by myself in room glooms and all wondrous knowing about the Negro the essential American out there always finding his solace his meaning in the fellaheen street and not in abstract morality and even when he has a church you see the pastor out front bowing to the ladies on the make you hear his great vibrant voice on the sunny Sunday afternoon sidewalk full of sexual vibratos saying "Why yes Mam but de gospel do say that man was born of woman's womb—" and no and so by that time I come crawling out of my warmsack and hit the street when I see the railroad ain't gonna call me till 5 AM Sunday morn probably for a local out of Bay Shore in fact always for a local out of Bay Shore and I go to the wailbar of all the wildbars in the world the one and only Third-and-Howard and there I go in and drink with the madmen and if I get drunk I git.

The whore who come up to me in there the night I was there with Al Buckle and said to me "You wanta play with me tonight Jim, and?" and I didn't think I had enough money and later told this to Charley Low and he laughed and said "How do you know she wanted money always take the chance that she might be out just for love or just out for love you know what I mean man don't be a sucker." She was a good-looking doll and said "How would you like to oolyakoo with me mon?" and I stood there like a jerk and in fact bought drink got drink drunk that night and in the 299 Club I was

hit by the proprietor the band breaking up the fight before I had a chance to decide to hit him back which I didn't do and out on the street I tried to rush back in but they had locked the door and were looking at me thru the forbidden glass in the door with faces like undersea—I should have played with her shurrouruuruuruuruuruurkdiei.

DESPITE THE FACT I WAS A BRAKE MAN making 600 a month I kept going to the Public restaurant on Howard Street which was three eggs for 26 cents 2 eggs for 21 this with toast (hardly no butter) coffee (hardly no coffee and sugar rationed) oatmeal with dash of milk and sugar the smell of soured old shirts lingering above the cookpot steams as if they were making skidrow lumberjack stews out of San Francisco ancient Chinese mildewed laundries with poker games in the back among the barrels and the rats of the earthquake days, but actually the food somewhat on the level of an old-time 1890 or 1910 section-gang cook of lumber camps far in the North with an oldtime pigtail Chinaman cooking it and cussing out those who didn't like it. The prices were incredible but one time I had the beefstew and it was absolutely the worst beefstew I ever et, it was incredible I tell you—and as they often did that to me it was with the most intensest regret that I tried to convey to the geek back of counter what I wanted but he was a tough sonofabitch, ech, ti-ti, I thought the counterman was kind of queer especially he handled gruffly the hopeless drooldrunks, "What now you doing you think you can come in here and cut like that for God's sake act like a man won't you and eat or get out-t-t-t"—I always did wonder what a guy like that was doing working in a place like that because, but why some sympathy in his horny heart for the busted wrecks, all up and down the street were restaurants like the Public catering exclusively to bums of the black, winos with no money, who found 21 cents left over from wine panhandlings and so stumbled in for their

third or fourth touch of food in a week, as sometimes they didn't eat at all and so you'd see them in the corner puking white liquid which was a couple quarts of rancid sauterne rotgut or sweet white sherry and they had nothing on their stomachs, most of them had one leg or were on crutches and had bandages around their feet, from nicotine and alcohol poisoning together, and one time finally on my way up Third near Market across the street from Breens, when in early 1952 I lived on Russian Hill and didn't quite dig the complete horror and humor of railroad's Third Street, a bum a thin sickly littlebum like Anton Abraham lay face down on the pavement with crutch aside and some old remnant newspaper sticking out and it seemed to me he was dead. I looked closely to see if he was breathing and he was not, another man with me was looking down and we agreed he was dead, and soon a cop came over and took and agreed and called the wagon, the little wretch weighed about 50 pounds in his bleeding count and was stone mackerel snotnose cold dead as a bleeding doornail—ah I tell you—and who could notice but other half dead deadbums bums bums bums dead dead times X times X times all dead bums forever dead with nothing and all finished and out—there—and this was the clientele in the Public Hair restaurant where I ate many's the morn a 3-egg breakfast with almost dry toast and oatmeal a little saucer of, and thin sickly dishwater coffee, all to save 14 cents so in my little book proudly I could make a notation and of the day and prove that I could live comfortably in America while working seven days a week and earning 600 a month I could live on less that 17 a week which with my rent of 4.20 was okay as I had also to spend money to eat and sleep sometimes on the other end of my Watsonville chaingang run but preferred most times to sleep free of charge and uncomfortable in cabooses of the crummy rack—my 26-cent breakfast, my pride—and that incredible semiqueer counterman who dished out the food, threw it at you,

slammed it, had a languid frank expression straight in your eyes like a 1930's lunchcart heroine in Steinbeck and at the steamtable itself labored coolly a junkey-looking Chinese with an actual stocking in his hair as if they'd just Shanghai'd him off the foot of Commercial Street before the Ferry Building was up but forgot it was 1952, dreamed it was 1860 gold-rush Frisco—and on rainy days you felt they had ships in the back room.

I'D TAKE WALKS UP HARRISON and the boomcrash of truck traffic towards the glorious girders of the Oakland Bay Bridge that you could see after climbing Harrison Hill a little like radar machine of eternity in the sky, huge, in the blue, by pure clouds crossed, gulls, idiot cars streaking to destinations on its undinal boom across shmoshwaters flocked up by winds and news of San Rafael storms and flash boats—there O I always came and walked and negotiated whole Friscos in one afternoon from the overlooking hills of the high Fillmore where Orient-bound vessels you can see on drowsy Sunday mornings of poolhall goof like after a whole night playing drums in a jam session and a morn in the hall of cuesticks I went by the rich homes of old ladies supported by daughters or female secretaries with immense ugly gargoyle Frisco millions fronts of other days and way below is the blue passage of the Gate, the Alcatraz mad rock, the mouths of Tamalpais, San Pablo Bay, Sausalito sleepy hemming the rock and bush over yonder, and the sweet white ships cleanly cutting a path to Sasebo.—Over Harrison and down to the Embarcadero and around Telegraph Hill and up the back of Russian Hill and down to the play streets of Chinatown and down Kearney back across Market to Third and my wild-night neon twinkle fate there, ah, and then finally at dawn of a Sunday and they did call me, the immense girders of Oakland Bay still haunting me and all that eternity too much to swallow and not knowing who I am at

all but like a big plump longhaired baby worwalking up in the dark trying to wonder who I am the door knocks and it's the desk keeper of the flop hotel with silver rims and white hair and clean clothes and sickly potbelly said he was from Rocky Mount and looked like yes, he had been desk clerk of the Nash Buncome Association hotel down there in 50 successive heatwave summers without the sun and only palms of the lobby with cigar crutches in the albums of the South and him with his dear mother waiting in a buried log cabin of graves with all that mashed past historied underground afoot with the stain of the bear the blood of the tree and cornfields long plowed under and Negroes whose voices long faded from the middle of the wood and the dog barked his last, this man had voyageured to the West Coast too like all the other loose American elements and was pale and sixty and complaining of sickness, might at one time been a handsome squire to women with money but now a forgotten clerk and maybe spent a little time in jail for a few forgeries or harmless cons and might also have been a railroad clerk and might have wept and might have never made it, and that day I'd say he saw the bridgegirders up over the hill of traffic of Harrison like me and woke up mornings with same lost, is now beckoning on my door and breaking in the world on me and he is standing on the frayed carpet of the hall all worn down by black steps of sunken old men for last 40 years since earthquake and the toilet stained, beyond the last toilet bowl and the last stink and stain I guess yes is the end of the world the bloody end of the world, so now knocks on my door and I wake up, saying "How what howp howelk howel of the knavery they've meaking, ek and won't let me slepit? Whey they dool? Whand out wisis thing that comes flarminging around my dooring in the mouth of the night and there everything knows that I have no mother, and no sister, and no father and no bot sosstle, but not crib" I get up and sit up and says "Howowow?" and he says "Tele-

phone?" and I have to put on my jeans heavy with knife, wallet, I look closely at my railroad watch hanging on little door flicker of closet door face to me ticking silent the time, it says 4:30 AM of a Sunday morn, I go down the carpet of the skidrow hall in jeans and with no shirt and yes with shirt tails hanging gray workshirt and pick up phone and ticky sleepy night desk with cage and spittoons and keys hanging and old towels piled clean ones but frayed at edges and bearing names of every hotel of the moving prime, on the phone is the Crew Clerk, "Kerroway?" "Yeah." "Kerroway it's gonna be the Sheman Local at 7 AM this morning." "Sherman Local right." "Out of Bay Shore, you know the way?" "Yeah." "You had that same job last Sunday—Okay Kerroway-y-y-y-y." And we mutually hang up and I say to myself okay it's the Bay Shore bloody old dirty haggulous old coveted old madman Sherman who hates me so much especially when we were at Redwood Junction kicking boxcars and he always insists I work the rear end tho as one-year man it would be easier for me to follow pot but I work rear and he wants me to be right there with a block of wood when a car or cut of cars kicked stops, so they won't roll down that incline and start catastrophes, O well anyway I'll be learning eventually to like the railroad and Sherman will like me some day, and anyway another day another dollar.

And there's my room, small, gray in the Sunday morning, now all the franticness of the street and night before is done with, bums sleep, maybe one or two sprawled on sidewalk with empty poorboy on a sill—my mind whirls with life.

So THERE I AM IN DAWN in my dim cell—2½ hours to go till the time I have to stick my railroad watch in my jean watchpocket and cut out allowing myself exactly 8 minutes to the station and the 7:15 train No. 112 I have to catch for the ride five miles to Bay Shore through four tunnels, emerging from the sad Rath scene of Frisco gloom gleak in the rainymouth fogmorning to a sudden valley with grim

hills rising to the sea, bay on left, the fog rolling in like demented in the draws that have little white cottages disposed real-estatically for come-Christmas blue sad lights—my whole soul and concomitant eyes looking out on this reality of living and working in San Francisco with that pleased semi-loin-located shudder, energy for sex changing to pain at the portals of work and culture and natural foggy fear.—There I am in my little room wondering how I'll really manage to fool myself into feeling that these next 2½ hours will be well filled, fed, with work and pleasure thoughts.—It's so thrilling to feel the coldness of the morning wrap around my thickquilt blankets as I lay there, watch facing and ticking me, legs spread in comfy skidrow soft sheets with soft tears or sew lines in 'em, huddled in my own skin and rich and not spending a cent on—I look at my little-book—and I stare at the words of the Bible.—On the floor I find last red afternoon Saturday's *Chronicle* sports page with news of football games in Great America the end of which I bleakly see in the gray light entering—the fact that Frisco is built of wood satisfies me in my peace, I know nobody'll disturb me for 2½ hours and all bums are asleep in their own bed of eternity awake or not, bottle or not—it's the joy I feel that counts for me.—On the floor's my shoes, big lumberboot flopjack workshoes to colomp over rockbed with and not turn the ankle—solidity shoes that when you put them on, yokewise, you know you're working now and so for same reason shoes not be worn for any reason like joys of restaurant and shows.—Night-before shoes are on the floor beside the Clunkershoes a pair of blue canvas shoes a la 1952 style, in them I'd trod soft as ghost the indented hill sidewalks of Ah Me Frisco all in the glitter night, from the top of Russian Hill I'd looked down at one point on all roofs of North Beach and the Mexican nightclub neons, I'd descended to them on the old steps of Broadway under which they were newly laboring a mountain

tunnel—shoes fit for watersides, embarcaderos, hill and plot lawns of park and tiptop vista.—Workshoes covered with dust and some oil of engines—the crumpled jeans nearby, belt, blue railroad hank, knife, comb, keys, switch keys and caboose coach key, the knees white from Pajaro Riverbottom finedusts, the ass black from slick sandboxes in yardgoat after yardgoat—the gray workshorts, the dirty undershirt, sad shorts, tortured socks of my life.—And the Bible on my desk next to the peanut butter, the lettuce, the raisin bread, the crack in the plaster, the stiff-with-old-dust lace drape now no longer laceable but hard as—after all those years of hard dust eternity in that Cameo skid inn with red eyes of rheumy oldmen dying there staring without hope out on the dead wall you can hardly see thru windowdusts and all you heard lately in the shaft of the rooftop middle way was the cries of a Chinese child whose father and mother were always telling him to shush and then screaming at him, he was a pest and his tears from China were most persistent and worldwide and represented all our feelings in broken-down Cameo tho this was not admitted by bum one except for an occasional harsh clearing of throat in the halls or moan of nightmarer—by things like this and neglect of a hard-eyed alcoholic oldtime chorusgirl maid the curtains had now absorbed all the iron they could take and hung stiff and even the dust in them was iron, if you shook them they'd crack and fall in tatters to the floor and spatter like wings of iron on the bong and the dust would fly into your nose like filings of steel and choke you to death, so I never touched them. My little room at 6 in the comfy dawn (at 4:30) and before me all that time, that fresh-eyed time for a little coffee to boil water on my hot plate, throw some coffee in, stir it, French style, slowly carefully pour it in my white tin cup, throw sugar in (not California beet sugar like I should have been using but New Orleans cane sugar, because beet racks I carried from Oakland out to Watsonville many's the time,

a 80-car freight train with nothing but gondolas loaded with sad beets looking like the heads of decapitated women)—ah me how but it was a hell and now I had the whole thing to myself, and make my raisin toast by sitting it on a little wire I'd especially bent to place over the hotplate, the toast crackled up, there, I spread the margarine on the still red hot toast and it too would crackle and sink in golden, among burnt raisins and this was my toast—then two eggs gently slowly fried in soft margarine in my little skidrow frying pan about half as thick as a dime in fact less a little piece of tiny tin you could bring on a camp trip—the eggs slowly fluffed in there and swelled from butter steams and I threw garlic salt on them, and when they were ready the yellow of them had been slightly filmed with a cooked white at the top from the tin cover I'd put over the frying pan, so now they were ready, and out they came, I spread them out on top of my already prepared potatoes which had been boiled in small pieces and then mixed with the bacon I'd already fried in small pieces, kind of raggely mashed bacon potatoes, with eggs on top steaming, and on the side lettuce, with peanut butter dab nearby on side.—I had heard that peanut butter and lettuce contained all the vitamins you should want, this after I had originally started to eat this combination because of the deliciousness and nostalgia of the taste—my breakfast ready at about 6:45 and as I eat already I'm dressing to go piece by piece and by the time the last dish is washed in the little sink at the boiling hotwater tap and I'm taking my lastquick slug of coffee and quickly rinsing the cup in the hot water spout and rushing to dry it and plop it in its place by the hot plate and the brown carton in which all the groceries sit tightly wrapped in brown paper, I'm already picking up my brakeman's lantern from where it's been hanging on the door handle and my tattered timetable's long been in my backpocket folded and ready to go, everything tight, keys, timetable, lantern, knife, handkerchief, wal-

let, comb, railroad keys, change and myself. I put the light out on the sad dab mad grub little diving room and hustle out into the fog of the flow, descending the creak hall steps where the old men are not yet sitting with Sunday morn papers because still asleep or some of them I can now as I leave hear beginning to disfavdle to wake in their rooms with their moans and yorks and scrapings and horror sounds, I'm going down the steps to work, glance to check time of watch with clerk cage clock—a hardy two or three oldtimers sitting already in the dark brown lobby under the tockboom clock, toothless, or grim, or elegantly mustached—what thought in the world swirling in them as they see the young eager brake-man bum hurrying to his thirty dollars of the Sunday—what memories of old homesteads, built without sympathy, horny-handed fate dealt them the loss of wives, childs, moons—libraries collapsed in their time—oldtimers of the telegraph wired wood Frisco in the fog gray top time sitting in their brown sunk sea and will be there when this afternoon my face flushed from the sun, which at eight'll flame out and make sunbaths for us at Redwood, they'll still be here the color of paste in the green underworld and still reading the same editorial over again and won't understand where I've been or what for or what—I have to get out of there or suffocate, out of Third Street or become a worm, it's alright to live and bed-wine in and play the radio and cook little breakfasts and rest in but O my I've got to tog now to work, I hurry down Third to Townsend for my 7:15 train—it's 3 minutes to go, I start in a panic to jog, goddam it I didn't give myself enough time this morning, I hurry down under the Harrison ramp to the Oakland-Bay Bridge, down past Schweibacker-Frey the great dim red neon printshop always spectrally my father the dead executive I see there, I run and hurry past the beat Negro grocery stores where I buy all my peanut butter and raisin bread, past the redbrick railroad alley now mist and wet, across Townsend, the train is leaving!

FATUOUS RAILROAD MEN, the conductor old John J. Copper-twang 35 years pure service on ye olde S.P. is there in the gray Sunday morning with his gold watch out peering at it, he's standing by the engine yelling up pleasantries at old boghead Jones and young fireman Smith with the baseball cap is at the fireman's seat munching sandwich—"We'll how'd ye like old Johnny O yestiddy, I guess he didn't score so many touchdowns like we thought." "Smith bet six dollars on the pool down in Watsonville and said he's rakin' in thirty four." "I've been in that Watsonville pool—" They've been in the pool of life fleartiming with one another, all the long poker-playing nights in brownwood railroad places, you can smell the mashed cigar in the wood, the spittoon's been there for more than 750,099 yars and the dog's been in and out and these old boys by old shaded brown light have bent and muttered and young boys too with their new brakeman passenger uniform the tie undone the coat thrown back the flashing youth smile of happy fatuous well-fed goodjobbed careered futured pensioned hospitalized taken-care-of railroad men—35, 40 years of it and then they get to be conductors and in the middle of the night they've been for years called by the Crew Clerk yelling "Cassady? It's the Maximush localized week do you for the right lead" but now as old men all they have is a regular job, a regular train, conductor of the 112 with gold-watch is helling up his pleasantries at all fire dog crazy Satan hoghead Willis why the wildest man this side of France and Frankincense, he was known once to take his engine up that steep grade—7:15, time to pull, as I'm running thru the station hearing the bell jangling and the steam chuff they're pulling out, O I come flying out on the platform and forget momentarily or that is never did know what track it was and whirl in confusion a while wondering what track and can't see no train and this is the time I lose there, 5, 6, 7 seconds when the train tho underway is only slowly upchugging to go and a man a fat executive could easily run up and grab it

but when I yell to Assistant Stationmaster "Where's 112?" and he tells me the last track which is the track I never dreamed I run to it fast as I can go and dodge people a la Columbia halfback and cut into track fast as off-tackle where you carry the ball with you to the left and feint with neck and head and push of ball as tho you're gonna throw yourself all out to fly around that left end and everybody psychologically chuffs with you that way and suddenly you contract and you like whiff of smoke are buried in the hole in tackle, cutback play, you're flying into the hole almost before you yourself know it, flying into the track I am and there's the train about 30 yards away even as I look picking up tremendously momentum the kind of momentum I would have been able to catch if I'd a looked a second earlier—but I run, I know I can catch it. Standing on the back platform are the rear brakeman and an old deadheading conductor ole Charley W. Jones, why he had seven wives and six kids and one time out at Lick not I guess it was Coyote he couldn't seen on account of the steam and out he come and found his lantern in the igloo regular anglecock of my herald and they gave him fifteen benefits so now there he is in the Sunday har har owlala morning and he and young rear man watch incredulously this student brakeman running like a crazy trackman after their departing train. I feel like yelling "Make your airtest now make your airtest now!" knowing that when a passenger pulls out just about at the first crossing east of the station they pull the air a little bit to test the brakes, on signal from the engine, and this momentarily slows up the train and I could manage it, and could catch it, but they're not making no airtest the bastards, and I hek knowing I'm going to have to run like a sonofabitch. But suddenly I get embarrassed thinking what are all the people of the world gonna say to see a man running so devilishly fast with all his might sprinting thru life like Jesse Owens just to catch a goddam train and all of them with their hysteria wondering if I'll get killed

when I catch the back platform and blam, I fall down and go boom and lay supine across the crossing, so the old flagman when the train has flowed by will see that everything lies on the earth in the same stew, all of us angels will die and we don't ever know how or our own diamond, O heaven will enlighten us and open your youeeeeeeoueee—open our eyes, open our eyes—I know I won't get hurt, I trust my shoes, hand grip, feet, solidity of yipe and cripe of gripe and grip and strength and need no mystic strength to measure the musculature in my rib rack—but damn it all it's a social embarrassment to be caught sprinting like a maniac after a train especially with two men gaping at me from rear of train and shaking their heads and yelling I can't make it even as I halfheartedly sprint after them with open eyes trying to communicate that I can and not for them to get hysterical or laugh, but I realize it's all too much for me, not the run, not the speed of the train which anyway two seconds after I gave up the complicated chase did indeed slow down at the crossing in the airtest before chugging up again for good and Bay Shore. So I was late for work, and old Sherman hated me and was about to hate me more.

THE GROUND I WOULD HAVE EATEN IN SOLITUDE, crunch—the railroad earth, the flat stretches of long Bay Shore that I have to negotiate to get to Sherman's bloody caboose on track 17 ready to go with pot pointed to Redwood and the morning's 3-hour work—I get off the bus at Bay Shore Highway and rush down the little street and turn in—boys riding the pot of a switcheroo in the yardgoat day come yelling by at me from the headboards and footboards "Come on down ride with us" otherwise I would have been about 3 minutes even later to my work but now I hop on the little engine that momentarily slows up to pick me up and it's alone not pulling anything but tender, the guys have been up to the other end of the yard to get back on some track of necessity—

that boy will have to learn to flag himself without nobody helping him as many's the time I've seen some of these young goats think they have everything but the plan is late, the word will have to wait, the massive arboreal thief with the crime of the kind, and air and all kinds of ghouls—ZONKed! made tremendous by the flare of the whole prime and encrudalatures of all kinds—San Franciscos and shroudband Bay Shores the last and the last furbelow of the eek plot pall prime tit top work oil twicks and wouldn't you?—the railroad earth I would have eaten alone, crunch, on foot head bent to get to Sherman who ticking watch observes with finicky eyes the time to go to give the hiball sign get on going it's Sunday no time to waste the only day of his long seven-day-a-week work-life he gets a chance to rest a little bit at home when "Eee Christ" when "Tell that sonofabitch student this is no party picnic damn this shit and throb tit you tell them something and how do you what the hell expect to underdries out tit all you bright tremendous trouble anyway, we's LATE" and this is the way I come rushing up late. Old Sherman is sitting in the crummy over his switch lists, when he sees me with cold blue eyes he says "You know you're supposed to be here 7:30 don't you so what the hell you doing gettin' in here at 7:50 you're twenty goddam minutes late, what the fuck you think this your birthday?" and he gets up and leans off the rear bleak platform and gives the high sign to the enginemen up front we have a cut of about 12 cars and they say it easy and off we go slowly at first, picking up momentum to the work, "Light that goddam fire" says Sherman he's wearing brand-new workshoes just about bought yestiddy and I notice his clean coveralls that his wife washed and set on his chair just that morning probably and I rush up and throw coal in the potbelly flop and take a fusee and two fusees and light them crack em Ah fourth of the July when the angels would smile on the horizon and all the racks where the mad are lost are returned to us forever from Lowell of my soul prime and

single meditatee longsong hope to heaven of prayers and angels and of course the sleep and interested eye of images and but now we detect the missing buffoon there's the poor goodman rear man ain't even on the train yet and Sherman looks out sulkily the back door and sees his rear man waving from fifteen yards aways to stop and wait for him and being an old railroad man he certainly isn't going to run or even walk fast, it's well understood, conductor Sherman's got to get up off his switch-list desk chair and pull the air and stop the goddam train for rear man Arkansaw Charley, who sees this done and just come up lopin' in his flop overalls without no care, so he was late too, or at least had gone gossiping in the yard office while waiting for the stupid head brakeman, the tagman's up in front on the presumably pot. "First thing we do is pick up a car in front at Redwood so all's you do get off at the crossing and stand back to flag, not too far." "Don't I work the head end?" "You work the hind end we got not much to do and I wanta get it done fast," snarls the conductor. "Just take it easy and do what we say and watch and flag." So it's peaceful Sunday morning in California and off we go, tack-a-tick, lao-tichi-couch, out of the Bay Shore yards, pause momentarily at the main line for the green, ole 71 or ole whatever been by and now we get out and go swamming up the tree valleys and town vale hollows and main street crossing parking-lot last-night attendant plots and Stanford lots of the world—to our destination in the Poo which I can see, and, so to while the time I'm up in the cupolo and with my newspaper dig the latest news on the front page and also consider and make notations of the money I spent already for this day Sunday absolutely not jot spent a nothing—California rushes by and with sad eyes we watch it reel the whole bay and the discourse falling off to gradual gils that ease and graduate to Santa Clara Valley then and the fig and behind is the fog immemoriates while the mist closes and we come running out to the bright sun of the Sabbath Californiay—

At Redwood I get off and standing on sad oily ties of the brakie railroad earth with red flag and torpedoes attached and fusees in backpocket with timetable crushed against and I leave my hot jacket in crummy standing there then with sleeves rolled up and there's the porch of a Negro home, the brothers are sitting in shirtsleeves talking with cigarettes and laughing and little daughter standing amongst the weeds of the garden with her playpail and pigtails and we the railroad men with soft signs and no sound pick up our flower, according to same goodman train order that for the last entire lifetime of attentions ole conductor industrial worker harlotized Sherman has been reading carefully son so's not to make a mistake:

"Sunday morning October 15 pick up flower car at Redwood, Dispatcher M.M.S."

ALLEN GINSBERG: Howl

for Carl Solomon

I

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,
starving hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking
for an angry fix,
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection
to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up
smoking in the supernatural darkness of cold-water
flats floating across the tops of cities contemplating
jazz,
who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw
Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement roofs
illuminated,
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating
Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the
scholars of war,
who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing
obscene odes on the windows of the skull,
who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their
money in wastebaskets and listening to the Terror
through the wall,
who got busted in their public beards returning through Laredo
with a belt of marijuana for New York,
who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in Paradise
Alley, death, or purgatoried their torsos night after
night
with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and
cock and endless balls,
incomparable blind streets of shuddering cloud and lightning
in the mind leaping toward poles of Canada & Pater-
son, illuminating all the motionless world of Time
between,
Peyote solidities of halls, backyard green tree cemetery dawns,

- wine drunkenness over the rooftops, storefront boroughs of teahed joyride neon blinking traffic light, sun and moon and tree vibrations in the roaring winter dusks of Brooklyn, ashcan rantings and kind king light of mind,
- who chained themselves to subways for the endless ride from Battery to holy Bronx on benzedrine until the noise of wheels and children brought them down shuddering mouth-wracked and battered bleak of brain all drained of brilliance in the drear light of Zoo,
- who sank all night in submarine light of Bickford's floated out and sat through the stale beer afternoon in desolate Fugazzi's, listening to the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox,
- who talked continuously seventy hours from park to pad to bar to Bellevue to museum to the Brooklyn Bridge, a lost battalion of platonic conversationalists jumping down the stoops off fire escapes off windowsills off Empire State out of the moon,
- yacketayakking screaming vomiting whispering facts and memories and anecdotes and eyeball kicks and shocks of hospitals and jails and wars,
- whole intellects disgorged in total recall for seven days and nights with brilliant eyes, meat for the Synagogue cast on the pavement,
- who vanished into nowhere Zen New Jersey leaving a trail of ambiguous picture postcards of Atlantic City Hall, suffering Eastern sweats and Tangerian bone-grindings and migraines of China under junk-withdrawal in Newark's bleak furnished room,
- who wandered around and around at midnight in the railroad yard wondering where to go, and went, leaving no broken hearts,
- who lit cigarettes in boxcars boxcars racketing through snow toward lonesome farms in grandfather night,

who studied Plotinus Poe St. John of the Cross telepathy and
bop kabbala because the cosmos instinctively vibrated
at their feet in Kansas,
who loned it through the streets of Idaho seeking visionary
indian angels who were visionary indian angels,
who thought they were only mad when Baltimore gleamed in
supernatural ecstasy,
who jumped in limousines with the Chinaman of Oklahoma
on the impulse of winter midnight streetlight small-
town rain,
who lounged hungry and lonesome through Houston seeking
jazz or sex or soup, and followed the brilliant Spaniard
to converse about America and Eternity, a hopeless
task, and so took ship to Africa,
who disappeared into the volcanoes of Mexico leaving behind
nothing but the shadow of dungarees and the lava
and ash of poetry scattered in fireplace Chicago,
who reappeared on the West Coast investigating the F.B.I. in
beards and shorts with big pacifist eyes sexy in their
dark skin passing out incomprehensible leaflets,
who burned cigarette holes in their arms protesting the nar-
cotic tobacco haze of Capitalism,
who distributed Supercommunist pamphlets in Union Square
weeping and undressing while the sirens of Los Ala-
mos wailed them down, and wailed down Wall, and
the Staten Island ferry also wailed,
who broke down crying in white gymnasiums naked and trem-
bling before the machinery of other skeletons,
who bit detectives in the neck and shrieked with delight in
policecars for committing no crime but their own wild
cooking pederasty and intoxication,
who howled on their knees in the subway and were dragged
off the roof waving genitals and manuscripts,
who let themselves be in the ... by saintly motor-
cyclists, and screamed with joy,

- who blew and were blown by those human seraphim, the
sailors, caresses of Atlantic and Caribbean love,
who balled in the morning in the evenings in rosegardens and
the grass of public parks and cemeteries scattering
their semen freely to whomever come who may,
who hiccupped endlessly trying to giggle but wound up with
a sob behind a partition in a Turkish Bath when the
blond & naked angel came to pierce them with a
sword,
who lost their loveboys to the three old shrews of fate the
one-eyed shrew of the heterosexual dollar the one-
eyed shrew that winks out of the womb and the one-
eyed shrew that does nothing but sit on her ass and
snip the intellectual golden threads of the craftman's
loom,
who copulated ecstatic and insatiate with a bottle of beer a
sweetheart a package of cigarettes a candle and fell
off the bed, and continued along the floor and down
the hall and ended fainting on the wall with a vision
of ultimate c . . . and come eluding the last gyzym of
consciousness,
who sweetened the snatches of a million girls trembling in
the sunset, and were red eyed in the morning but
prepared to sweeten the snatch of the sunrise, flashing
buttocks under barns and naked in the lake,
who went out whoring through Colorado in myriad stolen
night-cars, N.C., secret hero of these poems, cocksman
and Adonis of Denver—joy to the memory of his in-
numerable lays of girls in empty lots & diner back-
yards, moviehouses, rickety rows on mountaintops in
caves or with gaunt waitresses in familiar roadside
lonely petticoat upliftings & especially secret gas-
station solipsisms of Johns, & hometown alleys too,
who faded out in vast sordid movies, were shifted in dreams,
woke on a sudden Manhattan, and picked themselves

up out of basements hungover with heartless Tokay
and horrors of Third Avenue iron dreams & stumbled
to unemployment offices,
who walked all night with their shoes full of blood on the
snowbank docks waiting for a door in the East River
to open to a room full of steamheat and opium,
who created great suicidal dramas on the apartment cliff-
banks of the Hudson under the wartime blue floodlight
of the moon & their heads shall be crowned with
laurel in oblivion,
who ate the lamb stew of the imagination or digested the
crab at the muddy bottom of the rivers of Bowery,
who wept at the romance of the streets with their pushcarts
full of onions and bad music,
who sat in boxes breathing in the darkness under the bridge,
and rose up to build harpsichords in their lofts,
who coughed on the sixth floor of Harlem crowned with flame
under the tubercular sky surrounded by orange crates
of theology,
who scribbled all night rocking and rolling over lofty incanta-
tions which in the yellow morning were stanzas of
gibberish,
who cooked rotten animals lung heart feet tail borsht &
tortillas dreaming of the pure vegetable kingdom,
who plunged themselves under meat trucks looking for an egg,
who threw their watches off the roof to cast their ballot for
Eternity outside of Time, & alarm clocks fell on their
heads every day for the next decade,
who cut their wrists three time sucessively unsuccessfully,
gave up and were forced to open antique stores where
they thought they were growing old and cried,
who were burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on
Madison Avenue amid blasts of leaden verse & the
tanked up clatter of the iron regiments of fashion &
the nitroglycerine shrieks of the fairies of advertising

- & the mustard gas of sinister intelligent editors, or
were run down by the drunken taxicabs of Absolute
Reality,
- who jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge this actually happened
and walked away unknown and forgotten into the
ghostly daze of Chinatown soup alleyways & firetrucks,
not even one free beer,
- who sang out of their windows in despair, fell out of
the subway window, jumped in the filthy Passaic,
leaped on Negroes, cried all over the street, danced
on broken wineglasses barefoot smashed phonograph
records of nostalgic European 1930's German jazz
finished the whiskey and threw up groaning into the
bloody toilet, moans in their ears and the blast of
colossal steamwhistles,
- who barreled down the highways of the past journeying to
each other's hotrod-Golgotha jail-solitude watch or
Birmingham jazz incarnation,
- who drove crosscountry seventy-two hours to find out if I
had a vision or you had a vision or he had a vision
to find out Eternity,
- who journeyed to Denver, who died in Denver, who came
back to Denver & waited in vain, who watched over
Denver & brooded & loned in Denver and finally went
away to find out the Time, & now Denver is lonesome
for her heroes,
- who fell on their knees in hopeless cathedrals praying for
each other's salvation and light and breasts, until the
soul illuminated its hair for a second,
- who crashed through their minds in jail waiting for impossible
criminals with golden heads and the charm of reality
in their hearts who sang sweet blues to Alcatraz,
- who retired to Mexico to cultivate a habit, or Rocky Mount
to tender Buddha or Tangiers to boys or Southern

Pacific to the black locomotive or Harvard to Nar-
cissus to Woodlawn to the daisychain or grave,
who demanded sanity trials accusing the radio of hypnotism
& were left with their insanity & their hands & a hung
jury,
who threw potato salad at CCNY lecturers on Dadaism and
subsequently presented themselves on the granite
steps of the madhouse with shaven heads and har-
lequin speech of suicide, demanding instantaneous
lobotomy,
and who were given instead the concrete void of insulin
metrasol electricity hydrotherapy psychotherapy occu-
pational therapy pingpong & amnesia,
who in humorless protest overturned only one symbolic ping-
pong table, resting briefly in catatonia,
returning years later truly bald except for a wig of blood,
and tears and fingers, to the visible madman doom of
the wards of the madtowns of the East,
Pilgrim State's Rockland's and Greystone's foetid halls, bicker-
ing with the echoes of the soul, rocking and rolling
in the midnight solitude-bench dolmen-realms of love,
dream of life a nightmare, bodies turned to stone as
heavy as the moon,
with mother finally and the last fantastic book flung
out of the tenement window, and the last door closed
at 4 AM and the last telephone slammed at the wall
in reply and the last furnished room emptied down to
the last piece of mental furniture, a yellow paper rose
twisted on a wire hanger in the closet, and even
that imaginary, nothing but a hopeful little bit of
hallucination—
ah, Carl, while you are not safe I am not safe, and now you're
really in the total animal soup of time—
and who therefore ran through the icy streets obsessed with a
sudden flash of the alchemy of the use of the ellipse

the catalog the meter & the vibrating plane,
 who dreamt and made incarnate gaps in Time & Space through
 images juxtaposed, and trapped the archangel of the
 soul between 2 visual images and joined the elemental
 verbs and set the noun and dash of consciousness
 together jumping with sensation of Pater Omnipotens
 Aeterna Deus

to recreate the syntax and measure of poor human prose and
 stand before you speechless and intelligent and shaking
 with shame, rejected yet confessing out the soul to
 conform to the rhythm of thought in his naked and
 endless head,

the madman bum and angel beat in Time, unknown, yet
 putting down here what might be left to say in time
 come after death,

and rose reincarnate in the ghostly clothes of jazz in the
 goldhorn shadow of the band and blew the suffering of
 America's naked mind for love into an eli eli lamma
 lamma sabacthani saxophone cry that shivered the
 cities down to the last radio

with the absolute heart of the poem of life butchered out of
 their own bodies good to eat a thousand years.

II

What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their
 skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?

Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable
 dollars! Children screaming under the stairways! Boys
 sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!

Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless!
 Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy judger of men!

Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the crossbone
 soulless jailhouse and Congress of sorrows! Moloch
 whose buildings are judgment! Moloch the vast stone
 of war! Moloch the stunned governments!

Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood
is running money! Moloch whose fingers are ten
armies! Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo!
Moloch whose ear is a smoking tomb!

Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! Moloch
whose skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless
Jehovahs! Moloch whose factories dream and croak in
the fog! Moloch whose smokestacks and antennae
crown the cities!

Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose
soul is electricity and banks. Moloch whose poverty
is the specter of genius! Moloch whose fate is a cloud
of sexless hydrogen! Moloch whose name is the Mind!

Moloch in whom I sit lonely! Moloch in whom I dream
Angels! Crazy in Moloch! C . . . sucker in Moloch!
Lacklove and manless in Moloch!

Moloch who entered my soul early! Moloch in whom I am a
consciousness without a body! Moloch who frightened
me out of my natural ecstasy! Moloch whom I abandon!
Wake up in Moloch! Light streaming out of the
sky!

Moloch! Moloch! Robot apartments! invisible suburbs! skele-
ton treasuries! blind capitals! demonic industries!
spectral nations! invincible madhouses! granite cocks!
monstrous bombs!

They broke their backs lifting Moloch to Heaven! Pavements,
trees, radios, tons! Lifting the city to Heaven which
exists and is everywhere about us!

Visions! omens! hallucinations! miracles! ecstasies! gone down
the American river!

Dreams! adorations! illuminations! religions the whole boat-
load of sensitive bullshit!

Breakthrough! over the river! flips and crucifixions! gone
down the flood! Highs! Epiphanies! Despairs! Ten
years' animal screams and suicides! Minds! New loves!

Mad generation! down on the rocks of Time!
Real holy laughter in the river! They saw it all! The wild
eyes! the holy yells! They bade farewell! They jumped
off the roof! to solitude! waving! carrying flowers!
Down to the river! into the street!

Carl Solomon! I'm with you in Rockland
 where you're madder than I am
I'm with you in Rockland
 where you must feel very strange
I'm with you in Rockland
 where you imitate the shade of my mother
I'm with you in Rockland
 where you've murdered your twelve secretaries
I'm with you in Rockland
 where you laugh at this invisible humor
I'm with you in Rockland
 where we are great writers on the same dreadful type-
 writer
I'm with you in Rockland
 where your conditon has become serious and is re-
 ported on the radio
I'm with you in Rockland
 where the faculties of the skull no longer admit the
 worms of the senses
I'm with in Rockland
 where you drink the tea of the breasts of the spinsters
 of Utica
I'm with you in Rockland
 where you pun on the bodies of your nurses the
 harpies of the Bronx
I'm with you in Rockland
 where you scream in a straitjacket that you're losing
 the game of the actual pingpong of the abyss

- I'm with you in Rockland
where you bang on the catatonic piano the soul is
innocent and immortal it should never die ungodly
in an armed madhouse
- I'm with you in Rockland
where fifty more shocks will never return your soul
to its body again from its pilgrimage to a cross in the
void
- I'm with you in Rockland
where you accuse your doctors of insanity and plot
the Hebrew socialist revolution against the fascist
national Golgotha
- I'm with you in Rockland
where you will split the heavens of Long Island and
resurrect your living human Jesus from the super-
human tomb
- I'm with you in Rockland
where there are twenty-five-thousand mad comrades all
together singing the final stanzas of the Internationale
- I'm with you in Rockland
where we hug and kiss the United States under our
bedsheets the United States that coughs all night and
won't let us sleep
- I'm with you in Rockland
where we wake up electrified out of the coma by our
own souls' airplanes roaring over the roof they've
come to drop angelic bombs the hospital illuminates
itself imaginary walls collapse O skinny legions
run outside O starry-spangled shocks of mercy the
eternal war is here O victory forget your under-
wear we're free
- I'm with you in Rockland
in my dreams you walk dripping from a sea-journey
on the highway across America in tears to the door
of my cottage in the Western night

DORE ASHTON An Eastern View of the
San Francisco School

Both the European and American art press, always avid for a controversy, have debated the existence of a San Francisco or Pacific Coast "school" of painting. Partisans of autonomy have claimed that San Francisco is entitled to a special section in the arena of contemporary American painting. Objectors insist that the San Francisco "school" is nothing other than a number of unrelated, talented individuals who happened to have worked in San Francisco during a special period roughly from 1945 to 1952.

In reality, there is no way to add up the idiosyncracies which mark West Coast painting so that they constitute a genuine movement. Yet, San Francisco is separated from New York by a continent and from Europe by a sea. It is not so remarkable, then, that certain characteristics have become dominant enough in San Francisco painters to be considered the components of a "style." It is reasonable to acknowledge that from a general complex of new painting ideas which developed in the United States just after the war, San Francisco painters came to stress certain aspects while New York painters developed others. The psychological climate which nurtured San Francisco avant-garde artists was essentially the same as that in New York. It was a postwar climate of rebellion fed by the release of dammed up emotions and the inevitable hope for something fresh to come. Whatever the reasons, American painters, with mysterious solidarity, turned away from both their own tradition of realism and the European tradition of forty years standing of Cubism.

Between 1945 and 1950 there emerged three general tendencies which have remained salient in avant-garde painting throughout the United States. First, painters sought to revive the vigor of the oil medium, abandoning classical techniques. Variations ranged from the spontaneous application advocated by Hans Hofmann to the completely unorthodox "drip"

technique of Jackson Pollock. As in contemporary poetry, where the act of making a poem interests the poet psychologically almost as much as the final product, so in painting the process became important. A new attitude to material added a dimension for the painter, which was to have direct bearing on his expression.

A second tendency was to break with conventional subject-matter. In New York as in San Francisco, painters moved as far from the subjects of the European painter as they could; they particularly avoided the subjects of the Cubists. The most congenial source for the American painter was a branch of Surrealism which advocated automatism. But for a time, it was in myth that the painters found escapes from conventional imagery. Painters like Rothko, Gottlieb, Still, and Pollock fell back on the unlimited possibilities of myth. And from the communal myth and the primordial associations artists sought to evoke, it was a short step, taken almost immediately, to the personal myth, the unabashedly subjective invention of content.

Finally, to accommodate the feelings released by the acceptance of subjective content, painters had to find a new formal approach. The logical, self-contained compositional devices of the Cubists hampered them. What was wanted was a totally new concept of space, one which gave the painter the possibility of expressing emotions unavailable to discursive reason.

It was this new attitude toward space which was developed with particular emphasis in San Francisco. Naturally, it simultaneously engaged the painters in New York. The treatment of the canvas as an extending plane surface rather than as a recession in the wall became marked around 1948. Critic Clement Greenberg was the first to note this in a provocative essay in *Partisan Review*, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture." He spoke mostly about Pollock, referring to "decentralized" and "polyphonic" composing. "The surface is knit together of a multiplicity of identical or similar elements; repeats itself

without strong variations from one end of the canvas to the other and dispenses, apparently, with beginning, middle and ending."

Although Pollock's work was based on the arabesque which turned always on itself, the enormous scale of his canvases added a temporal factor related to the "open-form" concepts of the San Francisco painters. Possibly the Western space idea is closer to the Oriental where there is a horizontal unfolding of space and little recession back from the picture plane. The time element, the rhythm of extension, plays a crucial part.

The San Francisco painter who made the most personal use of "unbound" space was Clyfford Still. It was Still, furthermore, who brought the ideas he had shared with New York painters to San Francisco in 1946. For a time he had worked along the same lines as the New York group showing in Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery. Among them, Still found affinity especially with Rothko, whom he later brought to the California School of Fine Arts as instructor. In 1946, Rothko wrote the foreword to Still's catalogue, pointing out that Still was among "the small band of Myth Makers who have emerged here during the war. . . . For me, Still's pictorial dramas are an extension of the Greek Persephone myth."

Both Still and Rothko were involved with memory and ancestral phantoms at the time, though interpretable literary reference grew fainter and fainter between 1945 and 1948. In 1945, for example, Still painted "The Specter and the Perroquet" in which a phallic vertical form was opposed to a haloed figure vaguely suggesting a bird. About a year later, the same picture appeared transformed into what became the auto-graphic Still image: the specter became the vertical breakthrough in atmosphere, the shaft of light which pierces the top of the canvas; and the parrot became a flameline, a rent in the surface rather than a positive form.

Since then, Still has continued to dehydrate space, keeping his huge canvases nearly in a single plane. His great asphalt black works are densely worked with the knife, spreading in terrifyingly vast plains until the finger-like breakthroughs of form give the eye a momentary shock of space memory. Like atomic radiation, these paintings absorb the breathing atmosphere, sucking the spectator into a darkness and light nightmare replete with perilous chasms and flashes of hell-fire light. They engage the eye in a journey which cannot be avoided, and in the time the eye must wander in the shuddering plain, an emotion akin to anxiety and primordial fear is evinced. Space and time are ineffably linked in Still's work, as they are in the work of Mark Rothko.

The parallelism of the two painters appears even in their writings—the reluctant and defiant writings of men who insist that only their work must speak. In 1952, both Still and Rothko (as well as Pollock) were in the "Fifteen Americans" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Their fiercely romantic philosophical stances were illustrated in their statements:

Rothko: "The progression of a painter's work, as it travels in time from point to point, will be toward clarity: toward the elimination of all obstacles between the painter and the idea, and between the idea and the observer. As examples of such obstacles, I give (among others) memory, history or geometry, which are swamps of generalization from which one might pull out parodies of ideas (which are ghosts) but never an idea in itself. . . .

"A picture lives by companionship, expanding and quickening in the eyes of the sensitive observer. It dies by the same token. It is therefore a risky act to send it out into the world. . . ."

(Note that Rothko considers his former preoccupation with memory an obstacle. Also, that the attitude of the painter as a "solitary," a man whose projections are unfairly exposed to

a hostile world but whose protection is supreme integrity, is pronounced. It is an attitude widely held among San-Francisco-trained painters.)

Still: "That pigment on canvas has a way of initiating conventional reactions for most people needs no reminder. Behind these reactions is a body of history matured in dogma, authority, tradition. The totalitarian hegemony of this tradition I despise, its presumptions I reject. Its security is an illusion, banal and without courage. . . .

"We are now committed to an unqualified act, not illustrating outworn myths or contemporary alibis. One must accept total responsibility for what he executes. And the measure of his greatness will be in the depth of his insight and his courage in realizing his own vision. Demands for communication are both presumptuous and irrelevant. . . ."

In terms of the influence of his own style, Still was immensely important to younger painters, but it was probably in terms of his point of view that he made the most profound impression on his students. Still is a legitimate heir to the romantic tradition stemming from the French nineteenth-century poets. As an avant-gardist, or romantic, he drives on to the boundaries of the known, not afraid to take the crucial risk of passing beyond. Jacques Maritain has pointed out that the biggest development in poetry, as in the visual arts, was the growth of the awareness of self instigated by the nineteenth-century Romantics. The idea of the artist becoming a hero in his work and being sacrificed perhaps to the future is very active today among painters, though not exactly in the febrile way angelism occurs among poets. With Still, it is a necessary premise. Still's statement given above is not very different in tone from Rimbaud's *Lettre du Voyant* and from some of Baudelaire's pronouncements.

What Still and a few other avant-garde painters conveyed to younger artists was the importance of having courage and of exalting personal integrity. "One must accept total respon-

sibility for what he executes." In some cases, student imitators made a parody of Still's stance. Unable to withdraw completely, these younger men were ambivalent in their pose as solitaries, keeping one eye cocked on the world. Of course, Still was not alone in having his tenets distorted. Hans Hofmann, whose influence has been sustained in San Francisco for many years, left behind a number of young painters who interpreted his dynamic philosophy in terms of unlimited license, and his vitality as the by-product of unreflected action.

Since I was never a resident of San Francisco, I hesitate to assess the role of other painters such as Hassel Smith, Elmer Bischoff, and younger men like Walter Kuhlman and Frank Lobdell, in advancing San Francisco painting. But it is safe to say the major figure in San Francisco was Clyfford Still.

Probably the impetus of the painting revolution there would not have been so great had there not been corresponding theoreticians energetically keeping up with the artists. The liveliest place in San Francisco between 1946 and 1952 was the California School of Fine Arts. Director Douglas McAgy, an articulate and ambitious intellectual, set a smart pace for art schools all over the country, engaging the best painters available as teachers and keeping the curriculum amazingly flexible. In complete sympathy with the painters, McAgy attempted to make students aware of the underlying philosophy of the avant-garde. In 1948, he wrote: "Artists, in coping with assumptions by which we live though the dimensional idiom space-time, are attacking another level." In the school, there were elaborate diagrams and constructions illustrating the space-time continuum to reveal to students "the new measure of life, as opposed to the Renaissance." Emphasis was placed on "non-rational truths" and students were encouraged to develop freely within a poetic realm. (Since 1954, the California School of Fine Arts has apparently reverted to the orthodox tradition and now plies its students with supple-

mentary English, history, philosophy, and "design" courses.)

Everything in the good days was geared to the most intensely imaginative developments. Jean Varda, an eloquent, quick-witted cosmopolitan whose conversations are as famous in New York, London, and Paris as they are in San Francisco, exhorted his students to believe in painting as a self-sufficient way of life rather than as a tool. Varda would say, "Painting is a philosophical instrument of life . . . a painting has a cosmic reason for being; its creation is the result of the ecstatic moment at the peak of clarity of vision." Varda's well-developed philosophy, and the philosophies of Still and a few other older painters, conditioned the students at the California School of Fine Arts. Through their contacts with mature painters, they acquired a pride and boldness that enabled them later to move out on their own into unexplored areas.

A number of students and young instructors at the California School of Fine Arts eventually left San Francisco for Paris and New York where they exhibited their work. It is on the basis of these exhibitions that Europe and New York began to speak of the "San Francisco school." Although exhibitions of work by Sam Francis and Lawrence Calcagno in Paris, and Ed Corbett, Edward Dugmore, Richard Diebenkorn, Ernest Briggs, and a few others in New York, do not provide a basis of judgment of San Francisco painting, they do offer a basis for comparison between so-called "New York school" and San Francisco painting. And through comparison, it is possible to see characteristics which the San Francisco painters share. I am not suggesting that these painters have similar temperaments and sensibilities, but rather, that each has expanded some tenet discovered during the apprentice years in San Francisco. The painters I mention in the following paragraphs have established reputations recently, and in my opinion, they reflect their San Francisco background.

Ernest Briggs, who was a student of Still at the California School of Fine Arts where he studied from 1947 to 1951,

shows a marked predilection for large scale and for the extension of laterally determined space. Briggs has absorbed Still's premises without being imitative. (Except perhaps in his statements. In the introduction to the "Twelve Americans" catalogue in 1956, he paraphrased Still: "For me the challenge of painting lies implicitly within the act—to penetrate inherited conceptual deposits and attempt the possible impingement of spirit, the personal image, remains the enduring command of conscience.")

Briggs regards the canvas as a vast plain on which to trace an emotional experience which, for want of a better term, might be called "flux." He tries to create continuous rhythms that seem to suggest rushing water by plaiting his color in sinuous ribbons. These rushes of color, perversely, flow upward in many of his recent canvases, creating a provoking derangement for the eye. His use of a diamond or spade-shaped stroke with a banked diagonal bias increases the rush of movement in much the same way as small elements served the Futurists. At his best, Briggs creates power with the veins of glistening reds, yellows, slate blues, and warm cedars, underswept with carbon blacks and overflecked with beads of light. And he sustains the movement of his forms on the large scale well. But there is an understandable repetition in his projections of movements in space (he is comparatively young as a painter), and he has not yet found a means of integrating figure with ground, or of suggesting profound space without using perspective to do so.

Sam Francis, who like Briggs was born in California in 1923 and was active in San Francisco from 1947 to 1950, established his reputation in France where his giant canvases were first remarked more for their novelty than for their esthetic value. Francis, perhaps even more than the others, has avoided any reference to natural phenomena, choosing a limited group of forms to express his moods. His canvases are scored with myriad small elements, roughly kidney shaped,

which generally drift either to an evanescent horizon or to open areas at the side of the canvas. Francis' small elements which slide over thinly washed backgrounds are curiously related to the atomist's philosophy expounded by Mark Tobey. But in Francis' giant versions, the additive quality somehow loses its intensity. Without climax and lacking an underlying mystery, the monotonous surface patterning in Francis' work exhausts the eye long before the rest of the senses have a chance to be engaged.

Until very recently, Richard Diebenkorn's motif had always been landscape—landscape interpreted through a lusty sensibility stimulated during his period at the California School of Fine Arts, first as a student and then as a teacher. Diebenkorn, together with John Hultberg and Frank Lobdell, was an active *agent-provocateur* for the San Francisco brand of abstract expressionism; they were already established as promising younger painters by 1950. I first saw Diebenkorn's paintings, together with those of Ed Corbett, also an instructor at the California School of Fine Arts, in New Mexico in 1951. Although their techniques differed, both young painters had acquired a landscape concept which probably would never have materialized had they not been exposed both to the Southwestern scale and the teachings of Still. Corbett painted flat, shadowy landscapes seen as if from above, with atmospheric touches of light and a distinct reference to the expansive desert, infusing his canvases with a softened light and a deliberately stressed extension. Diebenkorn's were vaporous, suggestive compositions in the sandy, sunbleached colors of the desert.

In his first exhibition in New York last year, Diebenkorn showed paintings executed in a more fluent daring style, introducing dissonant color and accidental effects. The paintings presented a single landscape under various conditions. Some were obvious references to Pacific vistas in which an excited image was complete with explosively colorful sky (lustly pinks,

orange yellows); a blue line symbolized horizon and grass-green shapes at the bottom underlined the landscape theme. Although he invoked suggestive imagery, Diebenkorn nevertheless used a space related to that of other San Francisco painters, for all of his forms were kept in horizontal bands which could have been extended into infinity. Depth was indicated by tilting trapezoidal forms, but never very deeply. Like Corbett's paintings, Diebenkorn's give the impression of being seen from above, and are occultly balanced.

Diebenkorn's vitality was evident in his free stroking, his fearless color juxtapositions, and his generous disposition of space. His faults lay in indecision—a willingness to leave unresolved problems apparent on his canvases. Recently, Diebenkorn has rather abruptly turned away from abstraction. I have seen only one of his figurative paintings: a characterization of a man at table. Here, Diebenkorn's desire to portray inhibited his hand and definitely cramped his imagination.

Edward Dugmore is another painter who profited from contact with Clyfford Still during a crucial period in his painting life. Dugmore was in San Francisco from 1948 to 1950, long enough to free him from the restrictions of his classical training and to enable him to develop a powerful subjective style. At first, he explored the space possibilities opened in the work of Still and Rothko, seeking by means of large static, void areas to create the psychological illusion of unbounded space. Later, still using the lateral plane, Dugmore began to activate his canvases with textures, colors, and more defined forms. His canvases in his last exhibition at the Stable Gallery were sinewy compositions of drifts of vertical strokes. Dugmore's paintings are more closely composed than Briggs' and tend to be equilibrated by careful use of horizontal elements. Although Dugmore is not interested in "real" space, most of his works carry the sense of the baseboard, the horizontal plane on which the spectator stands.

A deft painter, Dugmore has amplified his palette consider-

ably in recent months, introducing many shades of soft gray, blue, cloudy white, and vermilion. His apprenticeship in San Francisco taught him the value of muscular, expansive painting. Now, he is elaborating, refining, calling in expanded associational references. He is a painter still deeply concerned with nature, but with the underlying structures and rhythms of nature felt out first in imaginative drawings, without ratiocination, then translated into a "mood" in his paintings.

Lately, I have seen a few other examples of work by San Francisco painters but none which equaled the work of the painters just discussed. Judging from paintings which slip into New York now and then, expressionist "action painting" is on the rise in San Francisco, while it is subsiding in New York. Students seem to have taken a fancy to the uninhibited gesture, the wildly seized moment—possibly a misinterpretation of the teachings of Hofmann.

With the absence of Still, who now works in strict seclusion in New York, and the return, four years ago, to figurative painting by David Park, Elmer Bischoff, and several others, activity in San Francisco appears to be less inspired, less significant. Nevertheless, it is still, after New York, the major source of avant-garde painting of quality. There are still many exceptional exhibitions, excited arguments, and strong stands taken by artists. In a letter written in February, 1957, Hubert Crehan, former editor of *Art Digest* and a painter in the Still tradition, commented on the current situation. I quote most of the letter, for Crehan has lived on and off in San Francisco for years, was a close friend of Dugmore and Briggs, and is the author of a much-discussed essay in *Art News* debating the existence of the San Francisco school. His letter is somewhat partisan, influenced no doubt by his own commitment as a painter, but I think offers a lively impression of San Francisco today:

Things have changed in San Francisco within the past five to eight years. The center of creative work has shifted from the California School of Fine Arts to the University of California. This is probably symptomatic of a lot of things which I've not gone into too deeply. . . . More or less they are in competition though I don't believe that the CSFA will ever put Cal. U. out of business. At Cal., where the department is headed by Erle Loran, a scholar and a gentleman, the aura of influence remains—as it has been for almost twenty years—Hofmannesque with variations. . . .

There has been in San Francisco, as in New York, a movement among some painters who once played with "free forms" back to figurative representation. Led by David Park, the ideological leader of this local movement, it superficially appears to have won the day, but that's only because people are inclined to accept the honors handed out by juries without really looking at the work or inquiring into the motives of jurors. Elmer Bischoff is a cohort of Park; they have recently taken Richard Diebenkorn into camp as well as Paul Wonner and several others. These older painters are all teachers and wield influence at the grass roots as well as through their tactics of awarding each other top prizes as they take turns on juries. . . .

There've been several one-man shows which reveal the basic ground swell of abstract expressionism in these parts, shows presented both at the CSFA and the DeYoung Museum. . . . Earlier this year Sonia Getchoff showed a selection of her aggressively large canvases. . . . Her husband, James Kelly, showed earlier too at the CSFA. They both paint free forms, although despite acknowledging their force and potential, their paintings are not wholly realized. Their shows, like most of the paintings, did not hang together for want of unity of style and clarity of vision. . . . While there is not very much direct Oriental influence here, contrary to what one might expect, there are two young Japanese women, Emika Nakano and Nora Yamamoto, who exhibit interesting paintings.

There's a group of underground painters and sculptors who don't play the museum and gallery game, and presumably, they might be the most exciting of the artists. Frank Lobdell did show a selection of figurative works (at the Triangle Gallery) that was a surprise. . . . In group shows I've seen single paintings of Byron McClintock, John Saccaro, Julius Wasserstein, David Kasmore, Felix Ruvolo, and Hassel Smith that I appreciated.

I should mention that the second generation, so to speak, of the original San Francisco nonobjective movement, people like Ernest Briggs and Edward Dugmore, has exerted an influence that is plainly visible in the work of younger artists. This I believe is all to the good. It counteracts the Park ideology and carries on the spirit of Clyfford Still.

(Contributors, continued)

in 1956. JOSEPHINE MILES was born in Chicago in 1911. She is a member of the English Department, University of California (Berkeley). To date she has published four books of literary criticism and four volumes of poems—the most recent, *Prefabrications*, in 1956. HENRY MILLER'S reflections on the good life as viewed from Partington Ridge are taken from his *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch* with the kind permission of his publisher: New Directions. HARRY REDL comes from Graz, Austria, where he was born in 1926. He emigrated to Canada in 1950, and took up residence in San Francisco in 1955. He is now engaged in a "photographic documentation of the creative activities" in that city. KENNETH REXROTH at fifty-two is one of the most active of all San Franciscans. In addition to broadcasting for KPFA, he functions as critic, editor, poet, playwright, and translator. His latest volume, *In Defense of the Earth*, was published by New Directions in 1956. MICHAEL RUMAKER was born in Philadelphia in 1932. He graduated from Black Mountain College in 1955 and has recently settled in San Francisco. Two of his stories have appeared in *Black Mountain Review*. GARY SNYDER was born in San Francisco in 1930. After attending Reed College and Indiana University, he worked as logger and forester, and studied Chinese at Berkeley. At present he is in Kyoto taking formal training in Zen Buddhism. JACK SPICER unexpectedly materialized at the corner of Hollywood and Vine in 1925. After dowsing for magic in Los Angeles, Berkeley, Minneapolis, New York, and Boston, he has returned to San Francisco, saying, "There is no magic in Boston." He is currently offering a pro-seminar in the West Martian dialect. PHILIP WHALEN was born in Portland, Oregon, in 1923. After war service in the Army Air Force, he attended Reed College and worked for the U. S. Forest Service. Since 1955 he has made his home in Berkeley. "The Road Runner" is reprinted from *The Poetry Book Magazine*.

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