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EVERGREEN REVIEW NO. 96

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**Complete Text of Samuel Beckett's THE LOST ONES
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Cover painting by Susan Wainer

in this issue...

Author and film critic Parker Tyler's comments on the arts have been appearing in *Evergreen* since 1967, when we published his "Dragtime and Drugtime: Film à la Warhol." A frequent contributor to *Partisan Review*, *Kenyon Review*, and *Art News*, Tyler last appeared in *Evergreen* No. 91 with his commentary on the film *Husbands*, a section from his book *Screening The Sexes: Homosexuality in the Movies*, brought out last year by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Grove Press published his *Underground Film: A Critical History* in 1970.

Dudley Gray's photographs have appeared in *Vogue*, *Camera*, *Popular Photography*, *Zoom*, and other publications both here and abroad. He is a graduate of the Maryland Institute's College of Art in Baltimore, where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Painting in 1968.

Jerome Tarshis, whose "Krafft-Ebing Visits Dealey Plaza: The Recent Fiction of J.G. Ballard" marks his second appearance in *Evergreen*, notes that he "...must be one of the few

writers to have been published both in *Evergreen* and *Boy's Life*, official magazine of the Boy Scouts of America." Thirty-seven, and a citizen of San Francisco, Tarshis is the author of two biographies published by Dial Press, and is currently completing a book of interviews with underground filmmakers.

Evergreen contributing editor Dotson Rader's new book, *Blood Dues*, will be published by Knopf next year.

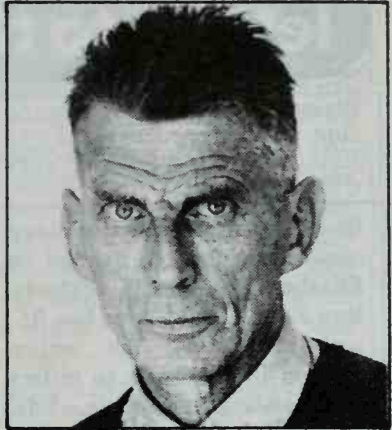
Nobel Prize winner Samuel Beckett's most recent work for the stage, *Not I*, received its world premiere recently at the New York Lincoln Center in a production staged by Alan Schneider and starring Jessica Tandy.

"God's Spies" is David Kleinbard's first published work of fiction. His articles have appeared in *The Nation*, *Psychoanalytic Review*, and other periodicals. Thirty-eight, and a teacher at Queens College, Kleinbard is currently completing his first novel, *In The Near Future*.

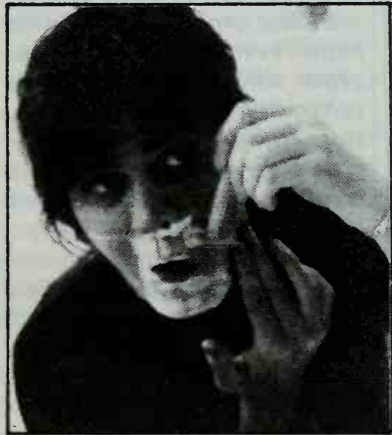
Twenty-eight-year-old Cecil Brown was born on a dirt farm in Bolton, North Carolina. Brown's first novel, *The Lives and Loves of Mr. Jiveass Nigger*, was published in 1970 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. His last appearance in *Evergreen* was in issue No. 78 with "I Never Raped One Either, But I Try Not To Let It Bother Me."

James G. Ballard was born in Shanghai in 1930. His father was a British businessman in China, and, after the war broke out, Ballard spent several years in a Japanese internment camp. Among his previous books are *Chronopolis*, *The Crystal World*, *The Wind From Nowhere*, and *The Drowned World*. In the fall of 1972, after a stormy prepublication history, Grove Press bought out his *Love & Napalm: Export U.S.A.*

Peter Tauber is a writer living in New York. A former journalist with the *New York Times*, his first book, *The Sunshine Soldiers*, brought out by Simon and Schuster and, as a paperback, by Ballantine Books, will soon be released as a motion picture. His new novel, *The Last Best Hope*, will be published by Charterhouse Books early in 1974.



Samuel Beckett



Dotson Rader



J.G. Ballard

letters to the editor...

Please send letters for publication to Editor, *Evergreen*, 53 East 11th Street, New York City, N.Y. 10003

Because of the unusually heavy reader response we've had to Elizabeth Anders' "Everybody Run Farragut!" in issue No. 95, we're devoting the entire column in this issue to letters commending her article.—Eds.

Miss Anders has given us a remarkable story, essentially of hope. Even one of the worst urban schools like Farragut is salvageable when students, teachers, and parents jointly have a hand in running it. The revolt at Farragut once more illustrates for me how schools can become a part of the cultural life of their clientele: Farragut became a black school with black culture for black students rather than a white fortress school for hostile pupils.

What American education needs, particularly in its black urban ghettos, is many more Farraguts. Unfortunately, as Miss Anders indicates, that will involve a long struggle with school bureaucracies. This is one of the best pieces on what schools can accomplish I have read.

*Maurice R. Berube
Queens College
Flushing, New York*

I wish we had more writing like Elizabeth Anders' direct, detailed, tough-minded narrative about what happens in

schools, and what is and isn't being done about it by the people running them. Then we would at least know why Farragut and other schools have to wait until the shooting starts before murderous situations are corrected and incompetents removed from office.

What it comes down to is a failure to trust people to run their own lives. Why can't the schools be run by teachers, students, and parents, with principals chosen by the schools themselves? Because the rules don't allow it, the hierarchy forbids it, the bureaucracy prevents it. One way out, if you have the money and the talent, is to start your own school. Another way is to throw out the present schools, not by shutting them down, but by making them into community centers where education is a form of community development.

In Great Neck, New York, sixty juniors and seniors and cooperating faculty members have their own Village High School inside the Great Neck system: the students make their own curriculum with the help of the faculty. The board of education agrees to the experiment. The reason it is possible in Great Neck and wasn't in Farragut until the lid blew off is that a well-to-do white community has privileges that the black and the poor

white don't have. It should not even be necessary any longer to point that out. The money and the power are in the wrong hands, and the long-run answer to the problems of disorder and violence in a democracy is more democracy, not less. Then the leadership will emerge from within as it did at Farragut with Ma Fletcher, Harold Charles, Larry Flournoy, John Moscinski, and their historian and witness, Elizabeth Anders. Otherwise the leadership will come from outside, with gangs in control and the supervisors cast in the role of collaborators in gangsterism.

On a larger political scale, that is fascism, and it is time that we called it by its name. When you say, Everybody run Farragut, you are saying, Everybody run America. When they say, Everybody can't run America, we have to run it for you, the answer is, The hell, you say, this is our country and these are our schools.

Harold Taylor
Former President,
Sarah Lawrence College
New York, New York

"They won't let us do what has to be done" is the standard cry of teachers whose confidence, initiative, and perhaps ability, consistently yield no change in our schools. And what an easy way to avoid doing anything, since neither they can be identified nor can what has to be done. Not so at Chicago's Farragut it seems. The forces that lurked in the minds and

hearts of the Farragutites, forces that made it different there, might be guessed. It looks like the last three letters of the name Farragut are a big clue. Charles, Moscinski, Tolbert, Rosen, Ma Fletcher, and even General Joe Lee, all had hard-line beliefs and attitudes that not only caused the original situation but also made possible the changes that occurred. In one way, Farragut appears to have been very much like Poshville High School, U.S.A., a place where, whatever purposes might have existed, they certainly were unclear to the staff, and perhaps non-existent to the students. In a Consciousness III society, it is difficult enough to complete tasks for which there are specific purposes, but to attempt a job where there is no identifiable purpose is frustrating to the point of chaos.

Enter from stage left just one man of conviction who is willing to take a risk, and the ball game changes—particularly when the one man has the cunning and timing to intuitively capitalize on a situation and follow it up by organizing for success. Harold Charles and entourage were able to rely on some intrinsic factors which helped them fight a prolonged battle against the establishment odds. How did they build the basis of trust which allowed them to formulate a viable organization, involve the Ma Fletcher forces of the community, win the tacit approval of Joe Rosen, stand up against

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Generalissimo Carroll, and eventually transform a defunct, gang-ridden school into a learning center? How were the good guys able to transform the initial incident and its purpose – that of unbridled revolution – into a new set of purposes: those of cooperation, leadership reform, and education? How did they develop the esprit de corps to sustain their efforts? How will these agents of change be able to stand successfully with, or against, the established forces of the central office which, in the face of what seems to be working, is able to insist upon reverting to the system which failed? And, finally, will the Principals Club pressure win a new principalship appointment for the lives and loves of those who called themselves Farragut?

Real people in our educational system who are interested in operating their schools by community and faculty control would be well advised to approach their goals with the full understanding that the task is dangerous, frustrating, and potentially hazardous to their mental well-being. Agents of change at large can learn from Farragut. The phenomenon at Farragut appears to have been organic and spontaneous. It is striking that Charles et al. seem to have taken reasonable (as opposed to revolutionary) stands in their list of demands. Though they didn't win very many points, they won enough to enable them to make changes. It is particularly notable that in the face of only

partially successful responses to their demands they were able to make significant changes. Tenacity as well as self-confidence must have been major factors. No reader can know the drama, the politics, and the daily confrontations that made the difference. But, to be sure, the daily changes were the differences that made the difference. The Farragut people changed the schooling process by changing the daily way of life. To accomplish this they must have been saturated with frustration and dedicated to the ideal that something better was possible. Their success was proportional to their faith, risk, and mettle, and therein lies the primary caution for all who are interested in change. It is easy to dream the good dream and talk the good fight. It is difficult to stand the gaff of change and its companion, constant battle, without solid faith. Hopeful change agents must beware of the uncommitted, the flexible backboners, the hangers-on, and those in general who are unwilling to do today's job for the cause. The philosophy of "Give me seven men and I will rule the world" is far more functional in educational reform than that which calls for the full cooperation of all factions.

Finally, Farragut offers a most reasonable approach to reform, if only because it succeeded. Any school can be converted, given the highly improbable cooperation of all elements and factions concerned

with the school. But, as in the case of Farragut, a school can be successfully subverted by the personal power, charisma, and guts of a few hard-driving believers.

A. Harris Stone
Southern Connecticut College
New Haven, Connecticut

Farragut High School will remain a part of my thinking for a long, long time. I cannot say when I have been so moved by anything that I've read. If you've ever experienced that inner quaking feeling that one gets after a particularly moving experience, you know the feeling I now sense. Why? Maybe because I have experienced in some small way the frustrations, anger, fear, and hopelessness that the children, parents, and some teachers felt at Farragut. It was like living the experience.

As I write this, I am thinking: "Of what value is all that I've written above? Does it really say anything? Can I really make a worthwhile comment on the WORD—the WORD in this instance meaning 'what more can be said.' Will 'Amen' suffice or can I release the feeling that is continuing to build, right now, by saying something like 'Right on' or "Power to the people'?" Though these words may well give evidence that I know the lexicon of the militant, they really don't tell you what I feel nor do they add to what I think should happen in the Farraguts around the nation.

Ma Fletcher proved at Far-

ragut that you don't have to burn schools down in order to provide a place for kids to learn. Harold Charles proved the point that being black and militant doesn't necessarily mean naked displays of power, blatant racism, ignorance, nor an inability to cope with the establishment power base in a power-full way. John Moscin-ski proved the efficacy of inter-ethnic/interracial coalescence. Each of these people recognized the strengths and weaknesses of the system and the needs of the pupils at Farragut.

It is so seldom that anyone recognizes the continuous orgy of sacrifices, in which children are the victims, made on the altar of conformity by teachers in public education. Assistant Superintendent Rosen recognized what was happening, and sounded the alarm at the Central Office. The opportunity proffered by Mr. Rosen to the administrators of public education was ignored by the administrative group (i.e., the principals' organization), and only abided by the board of education. When will educators begin to understand the impact of their actions upon the minds of the "little public"? Will they never understand that their posture is interpreted by blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Indians, and disconnected whites as being against them? Maybe we need a national Ma Fletcher to "fire" the nonthinkers among us. Maybe better yet a national reappraisal of our attitude

toward education: a recognition of the values of the "little public," and a wish to remain intellectually alive and a recognized part of the human race.

I cannot say I enjoyed reading the piece. I can only say once again that I was moved deeply by it.

Charles R. Twyman
New Haven Public Schools
New Haven, Connecticut

Elizabeth Anders gives such a spectacularly vivid case study of educational change that I can think of only one thing to add that might shed light on the process she describes. To wit, who is the villain of the piece? I don't think it is Principal Carroll. Let me put it this way: if he is, then Miss Anders' article is of little importance. One would conclude from it, for example, that the major obstacle to change in schools is self-serving, obstinate administrators. It is true that such people make change more difficult to achieve, but they are not the real problem. The problem, as I see it, is the assumption on the part of the parents, students, and teachers that education is something that is provided; something which they are not competent to govern; something which they have no authority to create. Miss Anders' article is important precisely because it is the story of how some people got rid of these assumptions.

Neil Postman
New York University
New York, New York

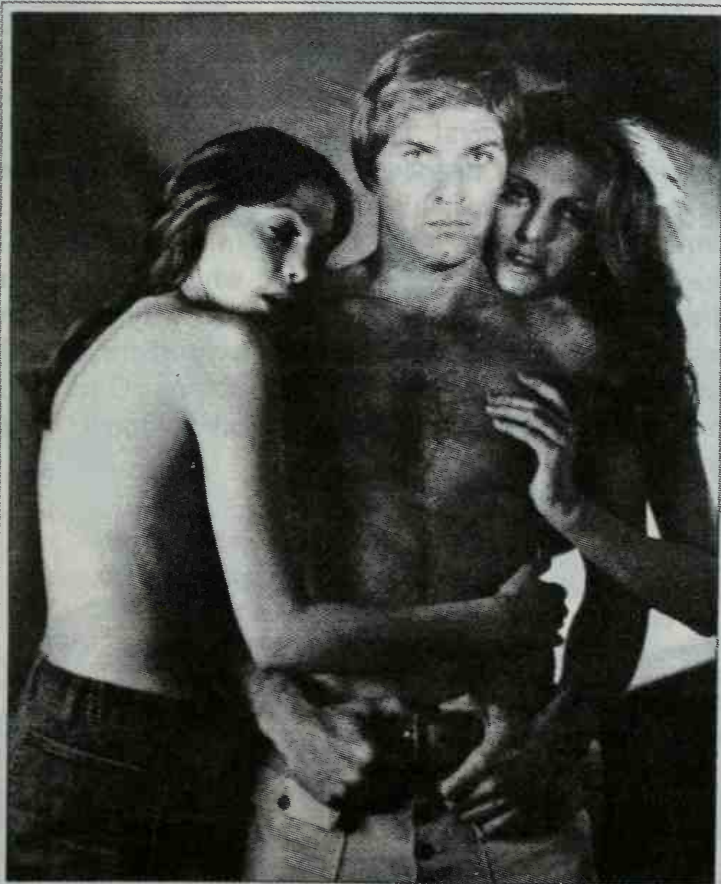
This article shows graphically an almost classic example of what community involvement can mean if it is channeled and controlled by concerned parents working with concerned teachers. It also pinpoints what has been allowed to happen in too many schools where nothing is achieved because nothing is expected by the teachers or the administrators. Inefficient, ineffective, inept, unconcerned, inadequately prepared, insensitive teachers and administrators should not be allowed to continue the destructive, defeating patterns which perpetuate and intensify the negative, harmful aspects of any community, be it inner-city or suburban. The drastic changes that took place at Farragut occurred because there were people involved who cared about what was happening to their children. So far, the situation has been ameliorated. The situation as it existed at Farragut is a microcosm of the conditions rampant in many inner-city schools. It was handled by direct community takeover. Such conditions should not be allowed to exist, but, when no one listens, what other alternatives are there? Such a system as the School Policy Committee could probably be utilized even with a principal, and may well be worth investigation.

Ewald B. Nyquist
University of the State of
New York
Albany, New York

THE HARD LIFE

by David Danziger

AN ORIGINAL NOVEL FROM GROVE PRESS



AT BOOKSTORES NOW!

notes from the underground

DEFEATS IN EXILE: ON LEARNING OF PAUL GOODMAN'S DEATH

Several months after Paul Goodman's son died in a mountain-climbing accident, I sat with Paul in the living room of his Chelsea apartment in New York City. Earlier we had spent the evening out together, the two of us, going to the General Theological Seminary, where he had read some of his newly written poetry (that is what he was proudest of, his poetry) to a small group of seminarians, perhaps eight students in all. The poems he read were about his son. He cried while he read them, unabashed by his tears, sitting slumped with his elbows resting on the crude folding table before him, a white handkerchief held over his face, sobbing. One of the poems he read was called "For a Young Widow," and it too was about his son, Matty.

*Playing too happily
on the slippery mountainside
my only son fell down and died.
I taught him to talk honestly
and without stalling come across
but I could not teach him the cowardice
and hesitation necessary
to live a longer life unhappily. . .
A young man is untrustworthy.
In the morning satisfied
he gets up from your bed
and in the evening he is dead.*

In his apartment, Goodman and I sat on the floor, our backs braced against the living room wall. Paul



complained to me about American youth, many of the brightest of whom he considered undereducated, far too cynical about history, and too ignorant of their countrymen. He saw in them tendencies toward violence, arising from what he believed was a deadly impatience in their lives. It disturbed him greatly.

He told me about speaking at a symposium at some college and of being interrupted by a group of students who subjected him to rude and, he thought, incoherent attacks against his conservative-anarchist politics. These were young men whose cultural consciousness he believed, quite accurately, had been created in part by the influence of his work: *Growing Up Absurd* and *Compulsory Miseducation*. He did not understand their hostility, and was baffled and resentful. "Why me?" he asked. "Is this the generation to which I gave such hope?"

The rejection of the youth wounded him for he was, as he freely admitted, a homosexual and was in great need of the attentions of the young. He was a person who viewed young men, especially loners and rebels, as his adopted sons. Clearly he was enthralled by them; he drew himself to them boldly, sucking in his breath and putting as good a face as possible on what was, at its root, a paternal loneliness. He gave a fierce attention to the young, exchanging knowledge for companionship, thinking it was a good bargain all around. He was a lover and a teacher, and if, near the end, the latter function nearly extinguished the former, still in him was the drive for physical contact with youth, the body hunger still keen. It was from that he took his energy and his hope. And with his son dead Goodman found himself beached and dry, without male progeny. He was cut off too soon.

In his apartment, Goodman was dressed in shabby trousers and an old shirt and sweater, his usual uniform. He always looked older than he was, so physically unimpressive on first sight that one took him for a janitor or plumber, an impression I am sure he would have been proud to acknowledge. He loved the doers of

manual labor, loved them as he loved street boys, seeing something as yet unbought, uncorrupted in their knowledge-from-experience, their empiricism and practicality, in their good humor and intelligence. He was a Romantic, not of this age, in that he saw nobility in modest intelligence, in simple work, in the bodies of youths without illusions about their sexuality; in boys with enough decent compassion—and Paul Goodman thought that native to the sons of the working poor—enough compassion for older men to permit special friendships.

Later that night, drawing on his pipe, his body slouched old-man against the wall, his face deeply lined with fatigue and sorrow, he again commenced reading his poems about Matty. He had told me that I was in many ways like his son. I was at least in this way: while reading to me that night, in his lonesomeness for Matty, I stood as surrogate.

Once more he began to cry. For a moment I sat listening to his weeping, deep and guttural as the growling of some ancient fur-tattered predator whose leg is clamped in the jaws of a steel trap, growling shaken and incensed.

The windows in the apartment were open, the air blowing in, the noise of trucks rumbling in the distance on the West Side Highway.

I stood up and went to the window, leaving Goodman to compose himself. I leaned against the sill, completely at a loss for words of comfort, for I am embarrassed by deep sentiment in men, by male tears. I could not handle it.

There was quiet. I turned. Goodman smiled at me, shrugging humorously at his lack of control. "I'm old. It's too damn easy to cry."

"You'll cope all right," I said. "You'll make do," the last line skimming on the edge of a parody of his book's title, *Making Do*.

"Yes," he said, pushing his glasses to his forehead and rubbing his eyes with his hands, "I have gone through so

many people whose absence I didn't think I could survive. Now I survive my son. It's wrong, isn't it? It's unnatural."

During the first week of August, 1972, I was in New Orleans, staying at the Prince Conti Hotel one block from Bourbon Street in the French Quarter. My room was painted black, and had a large canopied bed with a blood-red spread and four pseudo-Oriental-style posters with gilded dragons coiled around their crowns. Above was a skylight covered by a black curtain which I could draw open by pulling a cord . . . and that was pleasant, to wake in the afternoon and pull a cord and have the sky slide into view, pouring sunlight.

I was in New Orleans because it was the best drinking town in the country, and one could go there broke (which I was) and live on credit cards and wake late in the afternoon and spend the hours until the following morning in the 24-hour saloons, or in the humid streets crowded with Southern youths and their girls, witless and desperate with that sullen yet curiously optimistic, slow, indeed slovenly, drawling mentality of Southern street kids. Whether from Shreveport or Jackson or Panama City, Florida, they are poor white runaways from the backwater, dropouts from secondary schools and high schools. They were Paul Goodman's special concern. By the time they reach Bourbon or Dauphine or Burgundy Streets they are hooked on the All-American Hustle: the ability to spot the tourists under the commercial lights, easy lays, the lonely, the fed-up middle-aged; and once making the hit to turn the trick with natural although practiced charm, to you-all them into bed, or strip their pockets in bars, to clean them of cash and credit.

Paul Goodman once suggested that prostitution be legalized, moreover encouraged among teenage boys, for it was, as he saw it, useful work. Well, there are rules to the boy-girl hustle which the Southern kid accepts and respects. They play the game with less class but more

humanity than their peers in Chicago or New York. Maybe it is the lack of cold weather which frees them from the terror that drives their Northern counterparts early into petty theft and scag and speed and the nodding death. I do not know.

I was in New Orleans because I had a book to write, due in November, which I did not know how to begin. And because I had written a play which was a failure. I was unable to write or sleep, and I found myself becoming dependent on Seconals and Nembutals in New York . . . the consciousness of life gone bad (I am only thirty, and yet already I watch my friends begin to break, marriages split early in divorce, friends into drugs and alcoholism, in prison, several now gone to suicide, lost), and there, near my toes, or rather under them, where the nerves tingle when one walks on a hot beach, I feel the tendrils of future sorrow touching my feet. Paul Goodman had a favorite word for it: anomie.

The night before I left New York I celebrated my thirtieth birthday at a birthday party given by friends. It was a curiously depressing affair. At the party I asked Mick Jagger if he did not agree that turning thirty was an unhappy occasion. He looked at me a moment, his face gray and unlit, homely, unexceptional, yet wakened by amusement over my drunken melancholy, and said, "Man, listen, at thirty that's when the bloody sun begins to shine!" Jagger was twenty-nine.

So the following day, I climbed aboard a plane and headed for New Orleans, to drink it through, to hear, maybe once in my life, that click Brick keeps telling Big Daddy he waits to hear. Click! On the plane I thought on mortality . . . of my friend Jeremy recently dead of speed at twenty-two. Why do I live the life so badly? Ah, I thought, because I have no son.

The afternoon I left New York for New Orleans, I had lunch with Tennessee Williams. We were both hung over from my birthday party the night before. Since

Williams maintained a house in New Orleans and knew the city well, I asked him to give me the names of some bars in the French Quarter—good drinking bars.

“Defeats in Exile,” he mumbled, answering my question. “That’s a good bar. It’s open all night, baby.”

Open all night! Bingo! “Lovely name,” I said, the romantic in me breaking forth in the redundant pity of that name. “But what does it mean, where does the name come from, Defeats in Exile?”

He looked up at me, shaking his head, “No, no, baby! Not *Defeats* . . . it’s *Lafitte*. It has a fountain by the door with a flame burning in the center of it. Fire *and* water, baby!”

“Yeah. Blood and sperm,” quoting Rimbaud, playing him to my friend’s Verlaine.

“Uh . . . it’s a good bar, you know. The sailor bars are gone. That’s where I used to drink. Now . . . uh, now when I’m in the Quarter I drink at home. The Quarter, you know, it’s all gone down. . . .”

New Orleans. Two a.m. Outside Lafitte in Exile. I had been drinking since three that afternoon. I was feeling good, high but not drunk, given to giggling and open to provocation. The night before I had bought a whore (\$30.00) in front of the Château LeMoyne, bought her drinks, and took her back to my room where she lay on the bed stewed, her navy-blue pantyhose dangling like a warning flag from one ankle. She lay back and stared at the canopy, smoking a cigarette, and, in a thick delta accent, rattled on intensely about her old man beating on her in Baton Rouge and stealing her relief checks . . . apologies, bad sex, more drinks, finally sleep. But now it was two the following morning. I left Lafitte in Exile and walked down Bourbon Street into the dark end of it toward the black district. Young hustlers and a few whores paced slowly, some cooing as I passed. A wino out cold in a doorway. I carried a drink in my hand. It was very hot, maybe ninety degrees. I enjoyed the heat, sweating.

"Give me some of that stuff." A young man sat on the stoop under a rusted iron gallery tilting precariously toward the street. I guessed the kid was about sixteen years old, maybe less.

"Sure, why not?" I handed him the vodka.

He took a sip and spit it out. "What's that shit? That ain't bourbon."

"Vodka."

"Tastes like piss, man," he grinned, flirtatious. "You drink that poison?"

"All the time. What the hell do you drink, straight soda?"

"Bourbon and Coke. Bourbon and Coke."

He stood up. This is how he looked: about five-foot-nine, dirty brown corduroy trousers with large buckled pockets front and back, a pair of Frye stomping boots, a blue T-shirt. He had acne, large blue eyes, high cheekbones, his face gaunt and hungry. In a word, a schoolboy. His long hair was dyed orange-red with blond roots, like the hair color of black hookers on Manhattan's Eighth Avenue. The hair was dyed because he thought it made him look older, and when you are sixteen and preoccupied with hustling money and avoiding the vice squad—i.e., with entry into bars—it is important to look at least eighteen.

An hour later he and I were sitting in the courtyard of Dirty Pierre's Bar having breakfast. The kid was starved, and I, who was paying, sat in wonderment over the kid's dialect, his idiom and syntax, the intimate, familiar way he bent language unselfconsciously to his own devices. Paul Goodman loved this kind of boy, brash, naturally bright, pugnacious, speaking *un*Standard English, at home in his body and his natural world; free of the conceits and dishonesty of formal book learning, an exercise Goodman profoundly distrusted. I had seen Goodman on occasion grow excited in the presence of similar boys, Puerto Ricans in most circumstances,

listening to them with a sympathy and patience he gave to few other people. For he admired their strong capacity to make do, to survive.

I asked the kid where he was from.

"I'm from Arkansas. They call me Arkansas 'cause my folks plant there. We all come from the Ozarks."

"What town?"

"Huh?" His mouth was full of food.

"What town are you from?"

"Ummmm, Camden. Hear of that? Camden, Arkansas? You ain't been there? 'Bout a thousand people I guess. Naw, hell, I'm lyin'. Maybe nine hundred thereabouts. What's this thing?" He held up an olive on the end of a toothpick, showing me with obvious disgust what he had discovered on his plate.

"That's a black olive."

"A what? That ain't no olive, them's *green*. What you want, huh? You after some boodie?" Suddenly suspicious.

I thought "boodie" meant loot. I said no.

"You ain't getting none. No how! I run away when I's fourteen. On the road and this old man drives up and says, 'I give you ten dollahs to suck your pecker.' *Ten dollahs!* Man's crazy! Then I go to Shreveport. Trashy town, Shreveport. Houston. Mobile. Biloxi. Now here."

"Why do you stay here?"

He looked at me as if I were mad. "Why you think, huh? Ain't got no place else to go."

"Go home," I said. It seemed simple enough.

"Old man dead."

"I'm sorry. I really am."

"No shit, the old sonofabitch got hisself cut over." He ran his finger across his throat to illustrate. "Nigger done it."

All the while he spoke he shoved biscuits and runny eggs and home fries and bacon into his mouth as if he had not eaten in days (he hadn't), talking of missing ham jowls and grits and easy sex in the morning with the

Baptist girls of Camden. And under it all I think the kid was scared and working hard to keep this New Yorker's interest, maybe building it into some kind of working affection to take him beyond this one paid meal on to others . . . working, hinting, teasing, finally asking for a place to stay the night.

"My back's 'bout broke from sleeping on them streets. Shit, this ain't no fit way for nobody to live!" Then narrowing his eyes, "Man, I don't give boodie to nobody, you hear?" I nodded. "I ain't no nigger. Why I got to live like one of them niggers when I ain't one?"

I stood up and went to the men's room. When I returned to the courtyard I stopped at the bar before going to the table to rejoin Arkansas. I asked the barman to deliver another round of drinks. There on the bar was a copy of the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*. In it a short paragraph telling of the death of Paul Goodman in New Hampshire of a heart attack. He was sixty years old. He was gardening when death came.

I returned to the table shaken.

"What's wrong?" Arkansas asked. "You look heart-broke." It was asked sincerely, his hand reaching across the table and touching mine tentatively, shyly.

"It's nothing. Where's my drink?" I couldn't take in the fact of his death. It was unreal.

I called the waiter and asked him to hurry with the booze. I did not want to talk anymore. All I thought about was Paul Goodman alone up there on that farm when it came for him. I thought of the last time with him, of the bitter edge to our words. It was an unhappy moment.

"Hey, what's wrong, man? Come on!" Arkansas shook my arm.

"My friend died."

"What?"

"My friend. Paul was his name. He died."

"When?" He was already indifferent.

"Yesterday. In New Hampshire."

"What's that?" He did not catch the name.

"New Hampshire. That's a state."

"Shit, man, I knows that. There's fifty-two of 'em!"

"No, just fifty."

"Hell, what you think, I ain't dumb! Fifty-two! Alaska and Hawaii." Of course.

I gave up. "Okay. So what? He's dead anyway."

Arkansas grinned, a little maliciously. "Hell, easy come, easy go."

Later, at the hotel. The skylight covered with its black curtain to keep out the morning. I lay on the bed. I told the kid to take a shower.

"I don't need no damn shower."

"Like hell you don't. Arkansas, you stink real bad."

He grumbled and headed for the bathroom, leaving his clothes scattered across the floor, the clothes filthy, giving the room an acrid, acidic odor.

I lay on the right side of the double bed. Arkansas came out of the shower dripping water on the floor as he walked to the bed. He lay on the bed, his back propped against the headboard. He lit a cigarette.

"Wait a minute," I said, "your hair's all wet. You're getting the damn bed wet."

"It ain't wet," and then he pulled up the spread and ruffled it towel-like over his head. "That okay now?"

"Sure," I said. And then I noticed his arm under the light as he reached for his cigarette. "Let me see." I grabbed his arm. Track marks.

"Ain't what you think! Ain't shit, just speed."

"You *shoot speed*?" I was worried for him, remembering how my friend Jeremy died with a paralyzed heart the first time he shot amphetamine into his veins.

"Ain't really speed." He went over to his clothes and pulled a handful of vials out of his trouser pocket. He threw one to me. Demerol.

He got back on the bed. He spoke a bit about his past, the dirt poverty, too many brothers and sisters, too much illiterate despair known too long. No wonder he

was a beat-down angelic looking to be stoned. I listened to him with great sympathy, thinking how much better Goodman would have been with this boy, what he could have taught him, given him, when I had nothing, no advice, no wise counsel, just some overcharged credit cards.

He changed the subject. "Look at that," he touched his cock, causing it to grow erect, grinning at it like some half-wit saint before his stigmata. "Ain't no fourteen inches but it's a *good* pecker."

"Go to sleep, Arkansas."

"What you got me here for? Huh? Ain't goin' to get no boodie." I didn't know whether that was a question or a statement of fact.

"No what?"

"*Boodie*, man! *Ass!*"

"Go to sleep." I had no interest in his boodie.

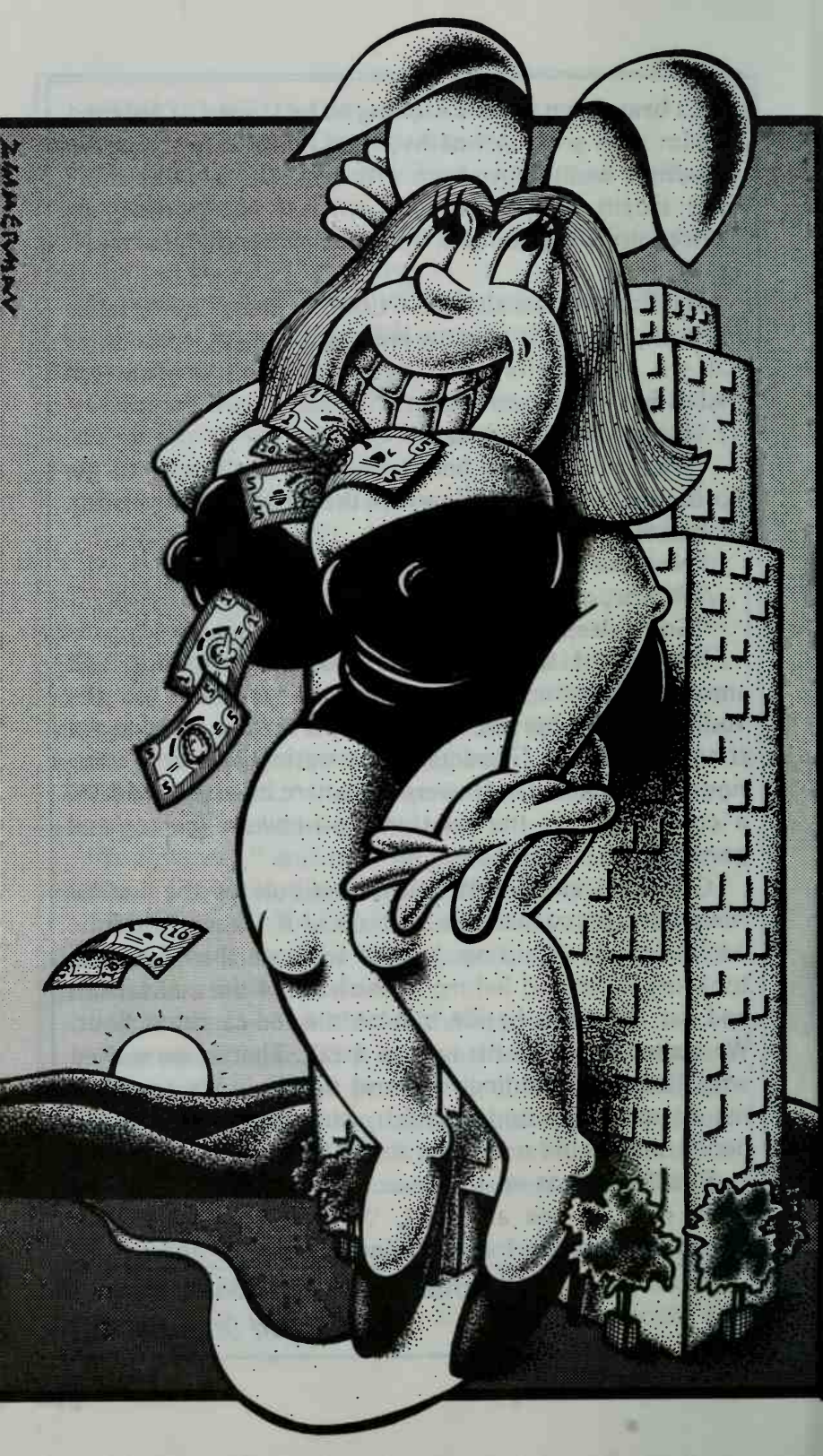
He slept. I sat up on the bed, the lights out, and smoked cigarettes and occasionally reached for the vodka on the bureau. It was good not to be alone. I thought of Paul Goodman, of meeting him one afternoon at Rockefeller University, where he was to address a conference on the relationship between science and government.

Goodman and I met in the vestibule of the auditorium. He approached me and asked if I knew when he was to speak. I said no. "Come with me then," and he took my hand and led me to the back of the auditorium and sat me down beside him on the red-carpeted floor. We waited there for his turn to speak. That is, we waited with Goodman holding my hand tightly in his, touching me on my thighs and stomach, whispering to me of his nervousness. I did not know then of the death of his son.

Finally, he got up to speak. When he was finished he came over to me and said, "Please come tonight to General Seminary. I am reading my poetry there." He

Notes From The Underground
continued on page 185

ZIMMERMAN



REPORT FROM BUNNY HOLLOW

by Peter Tauber

Dear Hef, Sir:

I have been an admirer of your magazine for fifteen years, ever since I found a copy buried among my Uncle Bud's photography magazines. Bud wasn't really a photographer. But then he wasn't exactly a sunbather, and that didn't stop him from reading *Bronze* and *All-Over Tan*. Well, anyway, Hef, I don't remember the gatefold or the cartoons (or the stories) from that first issue—but don't panic—I don't remember much from back then except that it was Thanksgiving and none of the grownups touched Aunt Miriam's cranberries. But I do remember one thing from that issue: Sophia Loren. She was just standing there holding some kind of water vessel on her head and she was naked to the waist. I seem to remember the caption said something about a beautiful big jug. Anyway, I just want to tell you this stayed the most significant event in my life until I saw Kim Novak strip in *Pal Joey* at Loew's American.

I mention all this because I was, as it were, weaned on *Playboy*. I think, in fact, your magazine had a lot to do with a sustaining fantasy I had between the ages of ten and fifteen. I wanted to own a huge playroom, padded all over

with two-foot-thick foam rubber (just like a girl in my homeroom class) wherein I could entertain girls, with the express purpose of leaping at them and tackling them, ignorant as I was then of the subtleties of sexual mechanics.

So you can imagine how excited I was when I was asked last year to spend three days at a conference to be held at the newest Playboy Club Hotel, at Great Gorge—less ignorant now of those mechanics, I find the name infinitely fascinating—New Jersey. And since this is your first effort in the New York convention scramble I expected the raid to be reminiscent of Peter Rabbit's foray into Farmer McGregor's garden.

In fact, Hugh, right away I had to hand it to you: Ralph Ginzberg got shipped to The Slam for mailing stuff from Intercourse, Pa., and Blue Balls and such. But you go and build your fantasyland and call it Great Gorge and no one blinks. Even though it's really in McAfee, too. (In McAfee did Hugh M. Hef/A Pleasure Home decree....)

Well, Hef, I think I can level with you. I mean, I was raised more by you than Doc Spock. So I wouldn't tell you these things if I didn't love you: you got a pretty spastic operation going there, Hugh. Xanadu may be the wrong image. Gothic Horror is more like it lived. Alas.

First of all I realize that you opened early, so I forgive you a little. I *understand* that if you miss the Xmas trade you've blown the whole season. And I understand that I may have been aboard for the shakedown cruise. But I'll tell you, Hugh, there was more shakedown than cruising.

As soon as I arrived, three guys in rabbit's-head (Reg.) blazers helped me unload my car. One of them took the car. One unloaded the bags. One carried the bags into the lobby. In the lobby another guy carried my bags to the registration desk. Another put them on a cart and dollyed them to an elevator, ready to go wherever I commanded. The only thing, Hef, was that I didn't have enough quarters for all those outstretched palms. Actually, I kind of felt I had done them enough of a favor. The way they ran around from person to person, touching and moving luggage, oftentimes imperceptible distances (one guy just lifted a girl's bags up and down in place, and would not leave till he was paid) gave me the distinct impression that they had a pathological need to touch leather, or, in my case, Naugahyde. I was going to give the first guy fifty cents, which works out to about ten dollars a furlong. But he—no foolin'—grabbed my hand as it emerged from my pocket



with a one-dollar bill. He wrested the buck from my grip, giving me the clear understanding that if I resisted—or if the bill was old and wrinkled—I'd wind up with a broken arm. The whole place there at Great Gorge has that kind of charm.

At the registration desk, I asked if they had my reservation. They did not, the clerk said as he walked away. I finally got registered and wasn't too upset, considering that they also lost the reservation of the girl who had made her whole group's reservations.

I was, despite these setbacks, still pretty cheerful. Glad to be in Bunny Heaven. Grateful enough to go over and straighten up your picture, which was hanging crooked. It's a good likeness of you, Hugh. But, do you always wear velvet tuxedos and Little Lord Fauntleroy ties? My impression was Sammy Davis, Jr., at a bar mitzvah; but never mind. Better, in fact, than a good likeness of *you*, it's a great likeness of an *oil painting*, and only the second time I've ever seen a photograph aged, cracked, and faded to look like an Old Master c. 1972.

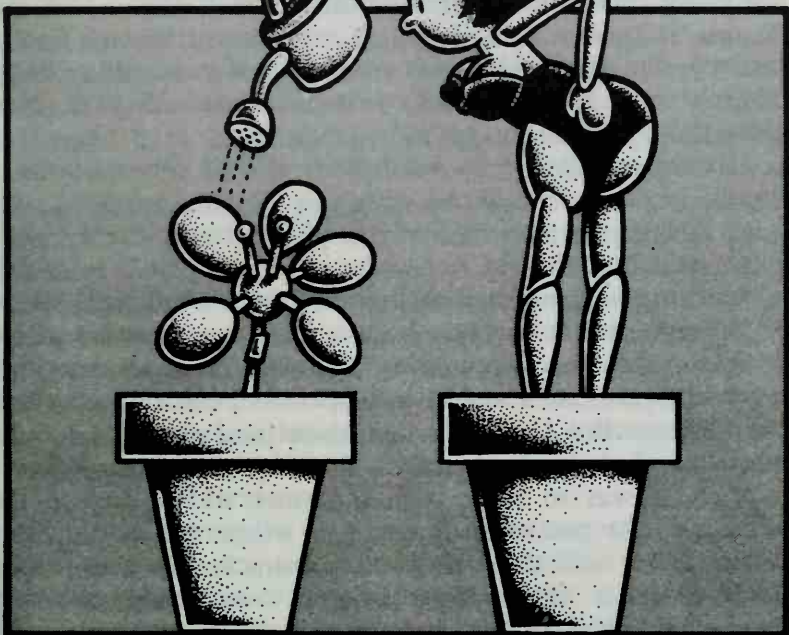
Well, Hef, straightening that picture was the high spot of the stay. Things started to go downhill right there. A

bellman noticed my tennis racket and began to snicker rudely. I reminded him that the ads said indoor tennis. Giggling, he told me that the indoor tennis courts would not be ready until the spring, and that outdoor courts wouldn't be ready until the next winter. O.K., so what about the indoor ice-skating? It wouldn't be finished till summer. Listen, man, I once knew a girl who had timing like that. For three years she was a regular on the New York-San Juan shuttle, if you know what I mean. Well, anyway, I figure, there's always the skiing, right? Wrong. I know you don't make the weather, and I know indoor mountains aren't economical just yet. But you shoulda seen those muddy faces come off the slopes.

But, hell, I guess if you go for a weekend at The Mansion, you don't take your golf clubs. So if you go for three days to Bunnyville why worry about athletics? So I went to check out the gym of primary concern: the bedroom. I'll tell you, Hugh, I was a little dismayed by the appointments in the room. Not that I'm complaining, mind you. But honest, Hef, Gideon Bibles? Twin beds? At the *Ramada Inn*, for Chrissakes, you get king-size double—with magic-fingers-vibramatic-only-25¢-extra. And you really blew my ego to pieces with the see-through shower curtain. It's got this opaque strip at the level of what you're now showing in the magazine for the first time; to ensure some modesty for the Gideon Bible set, I guess. Well, you gotta be six-foot-seven for it to work. Covered my ribs real well, Hef. "What kind of man reads *Playboy*? He's a starting guard on an NBA team."

And speaking of ribs, someone's pulling your leg about the main restaurant, The Living Room. Never mind that as you walk in you stand a good chance of getting hit on the head by a twenty-pound swinging provolone which hangs from the ceiling next to a sheep's carcass and a ham hock. Never mind the cold food. But for *your* sake, Hef, wherever you got the designer from, send him back. First, though, if he told you he was planning something *intime*, sue the bastard. He stole the plans straight out of Stark's on 90th and Broadway (and other convenient locations): formica tables, bent-aluminum chairs, imitation Vertes mural. (By the way, what's this artist guy LeRoy Neiman got on you anyway? There must be six thousand copies of each of two of his prints hanging all over the place. Holiday Inn stuff.)

You *gotta* know what I'm talking about because the



Bunny who served us, when she came back with the rewashd glasses and plates we asked for, told us the food was, well, leftovers from your party of the night before, Hugh. I don't mind getting sloppy seconds from you, Hugh—honest.

I know it's true that you were there because I heard a desk clerk tell an eager lady who had paid her money and wanted to see some celebrities that "last night Hef was here. And so was Huntington Hartford—the millionaire." I hope Hunt isn't giving you business advice. I mean, they used to call him Huntington Hartford the *multimillionaire*.

Well, O.K., suppose you brave the mid-air delicatessen's revenge and the food (served by Bunnies, who insist that they are working their way through grad school—a slight variation on an old theme), despite the fact that it's, well, dangerous, man. What do you get? Well, you can chalk it up to flu season, but one of our group was hospitalized for food poisoning. An even dozen hit the springs early, clutching hot-water and Pepto-Bismol bottles. I struggled along past a breakfast cooked in Dachau and made it to lunch on the second day when somebody at my table said, "Hey! These peas taste . . . strange." I gave up vegetables.

At dinner that night the waitress—no Bunny, she, but a surly old lady in Viet Cong pajamas—told me that I could only get my roast beef medium or well-done. And the longer it took me to make up my mind.... When it finally arrived, the gravy, Hef, was congealed. If *you* ever go back, there's an O.K. McDonald's just outside of McAfee, New Jersey, where you can get a decent meal.

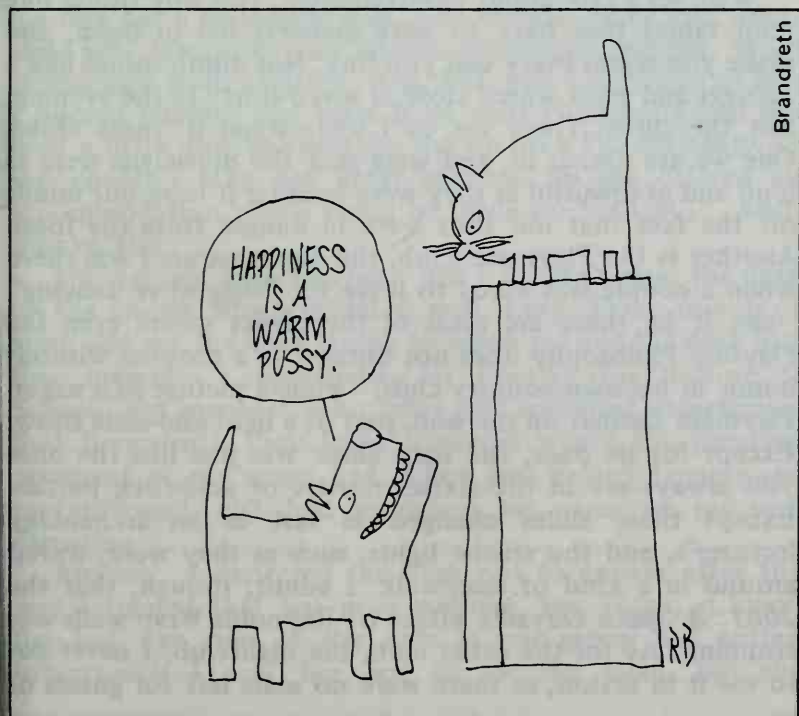
I want to talk to you a minute here, Hef, about plastic. I know it's not a bad word with you, Hugh. I bet you even take it as a compliment that one of the Bunnies said to me, "Hef and his friends . . . they're so . . . *plas-tic*." In fact, I even think *she* meant it as a compliment. And, in a sense, you ought to be proud, 'cause, compared to the porno magazines with which the Club drugstore is stocked, *Playboy's* polymers and airbrushes look positively sexy and wholesome. But I want to talk about *real* plastic. Like one member of our group couldn't sleep for two nights because her room was so thick with the smell of vinyl. And the walls! You've got seven floors, two wings, maybe ten miles of walls, all with these tiny round Palm Springs rocks stuck to them. It's like a giant Butter Crunch bar, or what happened when the Puffed Rice factory reached critical mass. I guess it's supposed to be Palm Springs though, huh? Because the flowers and bushes give the impression of living with nature: desert-living in New Jersey. But how come you pay a guy to water plastic bushes? And what in nature or technology this side of *The Andromeda Strain* causes plastic flowers to drop their petals?

Not that I mean to be critical, Hef, because I see the reason for some of the decorations. For example, I think you did a good thing with the tree in the lobby. I agree that a dead three-story tree, pressing up against the floor of the fourth story, bare and dry, would look pretty stupid. So I think it was a good thing, hanging the red and silver balls from its limbs. Same thing with the cozy corner fireplace. I think the wipe-clean leatherette couches are much more attractive than any dirty old upholstery; and, with tourists the way the are, there's much less chance of being ripped-off. As for the fireplace itself, I personally applaud you. It's ecologically faultless the way you've got it: gas jets on asbestos logs. I think your setup, by the way, is much swankier than the one down at Charco-Burger.

I didn't mind the out-of-order toilets or the beat-the-price-freeze shops, but you know what I did mind? Trauma in the loo, Hugh. See, there are no buttons to push

or levers to pull (no souvenirs, as they say at the Kennedy Center) so you stand there wondering how you chase the stuff down the tubes; or if you *do* chase the stuff down the tubes; or whether you are doing the right thing in the right place. All of a sudden the plumbing goes crazy, and everything flushes at once from some secret control center. I jumped back kinda quick, just in case some primal fears were about to become real. Like, you know, maybe I was gonna lose more than my heart at Great Gorge. Anyway, in tomorrow's mail you'll find a bill for a pair of Hush Puppies. You'll be pleased to know at least that the urinals work, like Old Faithful, every twenty seconds. Which is, at least, better than the west-wing elevator. The second night we were there it fell in love with a vacuum cleaner on the fifth floor and raced up and down with its passengers, stopping to open its doors only on Five, where it kept on opening and closing them as long as its light-o'-love, the vacuum cleaner, was running.

You'll likewise be pleased to know that the workmen were going at it day and night, like unionized beavers, sawing and pounding with great enthusiasm. Actually, Hef, they were a boon, because it prevented our group's speakers



from lapsing into mumbling, and kept the listeners from rudely dozing off.

I have to give you credit, too, for not letting The Mob muscle in and make you set up a dry cleaners or a hairdresser. A high point of my stay was seeing this girl come down to the lobby in curlers asking the way to *le salon*. Should have seen her face, Hef, when the desk clerk told her that the only people who could dry her hair were the electricians. She's the same one, I think, who had a sweater dropped in a mud puddle by a bellboy. Man did *she* ever make noise. Served her right, too, when he told her it would take a week to have it dry-cleaned by the village dry cleaner. That's the night desk clerk, by the way, who finally shut up this kitchen worker, after she had fled the kitchen screaming how she couldn't work anymore in "that high-pressure malfunctioning mess." She kept whining how things were falling apart and filthy, and that the working conditions were pretty miserable. In all, Hugh, a bad mouth. Well, he shut her up, he did. He looked her straight in the eye and said, "Look, sweetheart, if they had experienced people, do you think they'd fly me all the way from Miami?"

Well, let's talk about entertainment. Not silly things like pool tables that have to have quarters fed in them, and make you regret every ball you sink. Not dumb things like a Jacuzzi and pool which close at seven-thirty in the evening. But the clubs. There are, as I understand it, three clubs. One we ate dinner in, and were glad the musicians were as loud and as dreadful as they were because it took our minds off the fact that our lives were in danger from the food. Another is the Playmate Club, the discotheque. I was there when a couple was asked to leave for "suggestive dancing"—can it be there are areas of the planet where even the Playboy Philosophy does not obtain? Is a prophet without honor in his own country club?—while a picture of a naked Playmate flashed on the wall, part of a light-and-slide show. Except for its pace, the light show was just like the ones you always see in the sixties movies of acid-rock parties. Except these slides changed as fast as an archeology lecturer's, and the strobe lights, such as they were, waved around in a kind of sleepwalk. I admit, though, that the *2001: A Space Odyssey* effect of Reynolds Wrap walls was stunning. As for the other club, the nightclub, I never got to see it in action, as there were no seats left for guests of

the hotel (what did the guests do New Year's Eve, I wonder, considering that the room radios don't get any stations. Read their Gideon Bibles?).

I did go into the nightclub in the daytime to look around. Pretty snazzy, Hugh. I mean it was really swell. Just like a George Raft movie: booths, tiers, intimate banquettes, leather and velvet, reds and blacks. But the main floor kind of got to me: four long refectory tables abutting the stage, seating twenty-seven at each, with one seat facing *away* from the show. All that swank decor and then a hundred people have to sit like Camp Chippewa.

My last night at the hotel I just sort of walked around and talked to people. There were sad young couples floating around; little girls hoping that this place would turn their husbands on (again, or at last); young single guys looking for some action—believing that you can't touch the Bunnies more than the Bunnies believe it—unaware, it seems, that there's more action at the New York Hilton; couples hoping that a *Playboy* weekend may forestall that trip to the St. Looie Sex Clinic; large mixed groups coming oh!-so-close to I-dare-you near-orgies, then splitting, frustrated and unfulfilled, into unisex rooms for the night.

I talked with a Bunny, who was friendly enough and let me buy her a chocolate milk. She mentioned guards, spies, and job insecurity as strong arguments against more meaningful fraternization. Well, Hef, you'd be proud of me. I quoted chapter and verse from your Philosophy and she bent a little. But, she said she was up for a Playmateship, so she couldn't take any great chances. So she offered an accommodation which could be made on her feet . . . well, thanks, Hef.

The day we were to check out I couldn't raise the desk on the phone, which is just as well, I say. Three friends of mine *did* get the desk trying to reach me and the desk lost their messages. I suggested to Mr. Fred F. (for "Future"?) Schock, the manager, who left a card soliciting suggestions, that henceforth they leave messages where the previous occupant of my room had: some guy named Tommy—or his girlfriend, eh?—had scratched his name on my wall carpeting.

Anyway, I *expected* the desk not to answer after the way I treated that last poor waitress. See, Hugh, at lunch the last day one of the girls in our group had gotten tummy-sick—I *told* her not to eat the salad, but she

persisted. She asked the waitress for a Coke. It was a complimentary lunch, mind you; came with the package. So this waitress returns with about six cents' worth of cola and says, "That'll be fifty cents extra." That's when I threatened to throw the whole meal across the room. The maitre d', in a fit of generosity, offered—honest—to let her *have* the Coke. Instead of coffee. Which is why I expected to be sandbagged when I checked out.

I was.

You remember, Hugh, about the three guys who kidnapped my car when I arrived? It seems they were holding it for ransom: three bucks a day to park at a resort hotel at which I'm a guest. Well, I'm a pretty cheerful guy, y'know, so I figure, hell, good to be going home anyway. Can't begrudge a millionaire for trying to beat Phase II. So I say to the clerk, "Put it on my bill, and put on a twenty-five percent tip for the boys." I'm really a sport at heart, Hef. But waddya think he says? He tells me that the parking lot is a separate concession and I have to pay them. In cash. Separately. I've got about twenty bucks in cash and now here are some more hungry fists to feed. Well, I gave up. I started to raise hell. Told 'em I didn't mind paying the parking fee, even if I was slightly duped, and definitely shanghai'd. But I'd be damned if I'd be shaken down by some pirates who transact business in their very lobby while the desk clerk pretends he never saw them before. I mean that rabbit head on the parking lot attendant's blazer says right below the ears: "Reg."

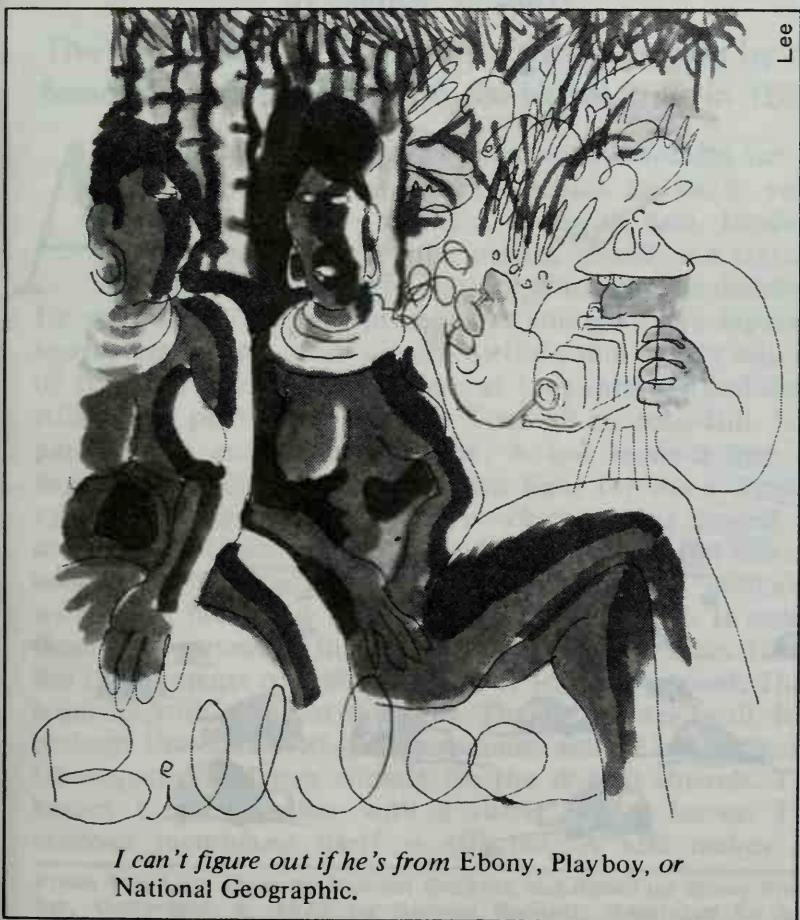
The manager took the time to tell me about the free lower parking lot—down the hill half a mile away—for next time. And then, Hef, after some negotiations, they ripped up my parking check. That was fine with me, Hugh, although I had my doubts about ever seeing my car again.

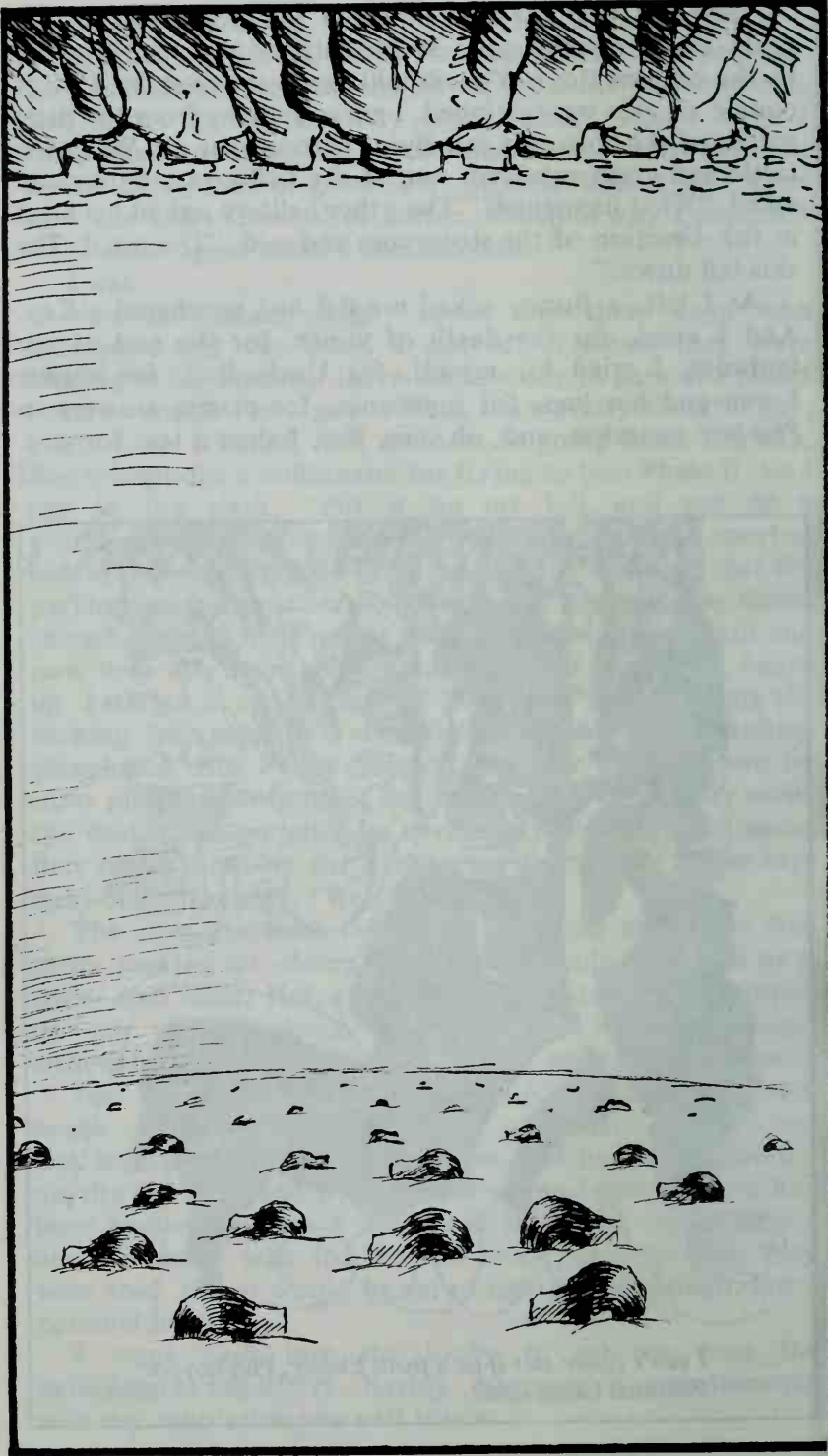
Just before mine came roaring up with the emergency brake on, two other men were told that: a) one's car had mysteriously gotten a flat tire, and had been moved—on the flat tire—and b) the other's brand-new Camaro had been backed up into a ditch and that both would have a healthy hour's wait for the tow truck to arrive. But, they were told, things would be set to rights soon enough. For a nominal fee.

I went back into the lobby to get my bags—the pathological bag-lifters having disappeared simultaneous with my reputation as a soft touch.

Suddenly there was a crash. In the storeroom by the desk, about twenty pairs of pre-shipped skis had tumbled to the cement floor. You shoulda seen the dust fly, Hef. A couple of skis were chipped, I guess, judging from the little pieces of ski bottom I saw flying through the air. When the rattle and crash subsided, one of the bellboys ran over and asked, "What happened?" The other bellboy jerked his head in the direction of the storeroom and said, "The usual. The skis fell down."

As I left, a Bunny asked me if I had purchased a Key. And I cried, for the death of youth, for the end of my fantasies. I cried for myself, for Uncle Bud, for Sophia Loren and her jugs, for innocence, for plastic answers to *Playboy* promises, and, oh, yes, Hef, I shed a tear for you. □





THE LOST ONES

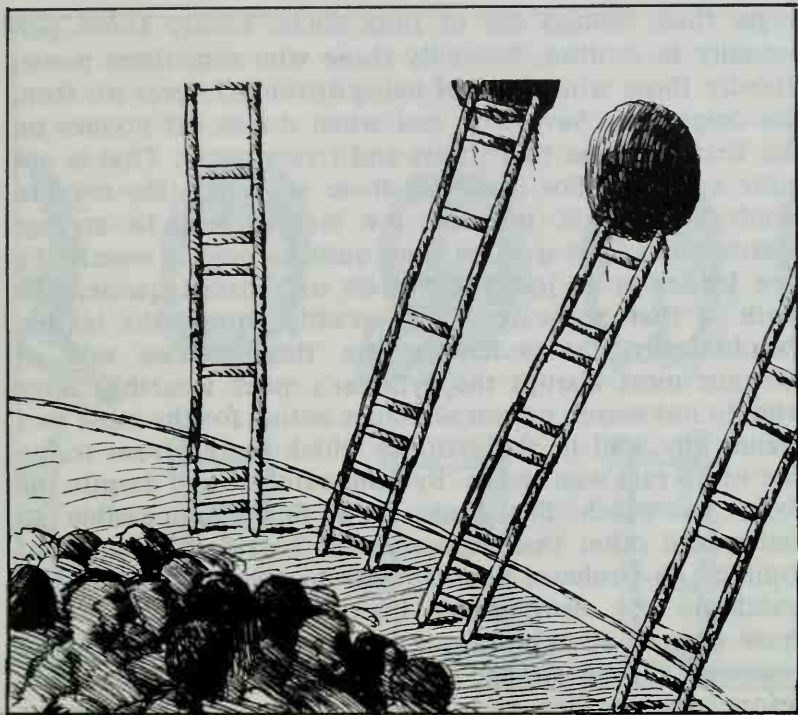
by Samuel Beckett

The complete text of the most recent fiction by the famous writer since he won the Nobel Prize in 1969.

Abode where lost bodies roam each searching for its lost one. Vast enough for search to be in vain. Narrow enough for flight to be in vain. Inside a flattened cylinder fifty metres round and sixteen high for the sake of harmony. The light. Its dimness. Its yellowness. Its omnipresence as though every separate square centimetre were a gleam of the some twelve million of total surface. Its restlessness at long intervals suddenly stilled like panting at the last. Then all go dead still. It is perhaps the end of their abode. A few seconds and all begins again. Consequences of this light for the searching eye. Consequences for the eye which having ceased to search is fastened to the ground or raised to the distant ceiling where none can be. The temperature. It oscillates with more measured beat between hot and cold. It passes from one extreme to the other in about four seconds. It too has its moments of stillness more or less hot or cold. They coincide with those of the light. Then all go dead still. It is perhaps the end of all. A few seconds and all begins again. Consequences of this climate for the skin. It shrivels. The bodies brush together with a rustle of dry leaves. The mucous membrane itself is affected. A kiss makes an

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indescribable sound. Those with stomach still to copulate strive in vain. But they will not give in. Floor and wall are of solid rubber or suchlike. Dash against them foot or fist or head and the sound is scarcely heard. Imagine then the silence of the steps. The only sounds worthy of the name result from the manipulation of the ladders or the thud of bodies striking against one another or of one against itself as when in sudden fury it beats its breast. Thus flesh and bone subsist. The ladders. These are the only objects. They are single without exception and vary greatly in size. The shortest measure not less than six metres. Some are fitted with a sliding extension. They are propped against the wall without regard to harmony. Bolt upright on the top rung of the tallest the tallest climbers can touch the ceiling with their fingertips. Its composition is no less familiar therefore than that of floor and wall. Dash a rung against it and the sound is scarcely heard. These ladders are in great demand. At the foot of each at all times or nearly a little queue of climbers. And yet it takes courage to climb. For half the rungs are missing and this without regard to harmony. If only every second one were missing no great harm would be done. But the want of three in a row calls for acrobatics. These ladders are nevertheless in great demand and in no danger of being reduced to mere uprights runged at their extremities alone. For the need to climb is too widespread. To feel it no longer is a rare deliverance. The missing rungs are in the hands of a happy few who use them mainly for attack and self-defence. Their solitary attempts to brain themselves culminate at the best in brief losses of consciousness. The purpose of the ladders is to convey the searchers to the niches. Those whom these entice no longer climb simply to get clear of the ground. It is the custom not to climb two or more at a time. To the fugitive fortunate enough to find a ladder free it offers certain refuge until the clamours subside. The niches or alcoves. These are cavities sunk in that part of the wall which lies above an imaginary line running midway between floor and ceiling and features therefore of its upper half alone. A more or less wide mouth gives rapid access to a chamber of varying capacity but always sufficient for a body in reasonable command of its joints to enter in and similarly once in to crouch down after a fashion. They are disposed in irregular quincunxes roughly ten metres in diameter and cunningly out of line. Such harmony only he can relish whose long experience and detailed knowledge of the niches are such as to permit

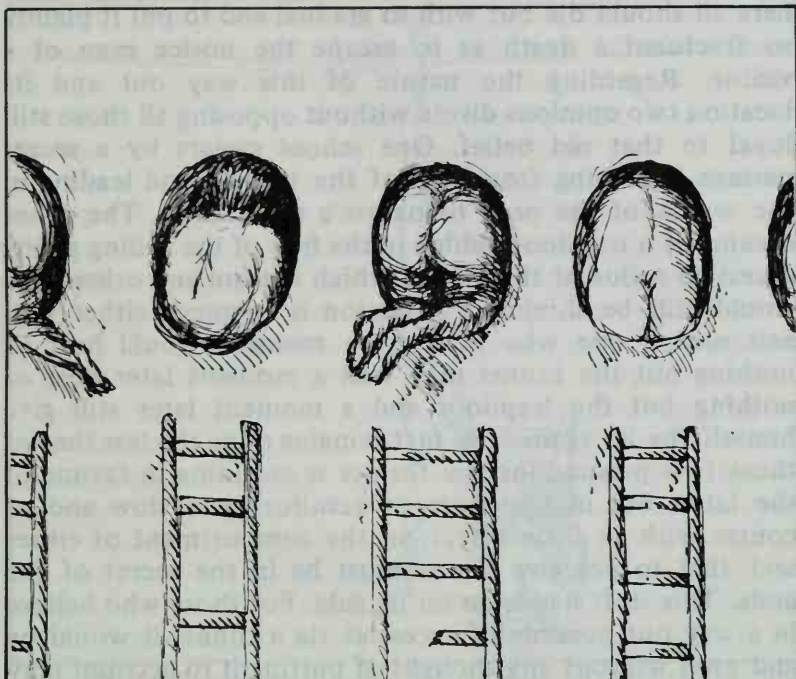


a perfect mental image of the entire system. But it is doubtful that such a one exists. For each climber has a fondness for certain niches and refrains as far as possible from the others. A certain number are connected by tunnels opened in the thickness of the wall and attaining in some cases no fewer than fifty metres in length. But most have no other way out than the way in. It is as though at a certain stage discouragement had prevailed. To be noted in support of this wild surmise the existence of a long tunnel abandoned blind. Woe the body that rashly enters here to be compelled finally after long efforts to crawl back backwards as best it can the way it came. Not that this drama is peculiar to the unfinished tunnel. One has only to consider what inevitably must ensue when two bodies enter a normal tunnel at the same time by opposite ends. Niches and tunnels are subject to the same light and climate as the rest of the abode. So much for a first aperçu of the abode.

One body per square metre or two hundred bodies in all round numbers. Whether relatives near and far or friends in varying degree many in theory are acquainted. The gloom and press make recognition difficult. Seen from a certain

angle these bodies are of four kinds. Firstly those perpetually in motion. Secondly those who sometimes pause. Thirdly those who short of being driven off never stir from the coign they have won and when driven off pounce on the first free one that offers and freeze again. That is not quite accurate. For if among these sedentary the need to climb is dead it is none the less subject to strange resurrections. The quidam then quits his post in search of a free ladder or to join the nearest or shortest queue. The truth is that no searcher can readily forego the ladder. Paradoxically the sedentary are those whose acts of violence most disrupt the cylinder's quiet. Fourthly those who do not search or non-searchers sitting for the most part against the wall in the attitude which wrung from Dante one of his rare wan smiles. By non-searchers and despite the abyss to which this leads it is finally impossible to understand other than ex-searchers. To rid this notion of some of its virulence one has only to suppose the need to search no less resurrectable than that of the ladder and those eyes to all appearances for ever cast down or closed possessed of the strange power suddenly to kindle again before passing face and body. But enough will always subsist to spell for this little people the extinction soon or late of its last remaining fires. A languishing happily unperceived because of its slowness and the resurgences that make up for it in part and the inattention of those concerned dazed by the passion preying on them still or by the state of languor into which imperceptibly they are already fallen. And far from being able to imagine their last state when every body will be still and every eye vacant they will come to it unwitting and be so unawares. Then light and climate will be changed in a way impossible to foretell. But the former may be imagined extinguished as purposeless and the latter fixed not far from freezing point. In cold darkness motionless flesh. So much roughly speaking for these bodies seen from a certain angle and for this notion and its consequences if it is maintained.

Inside a cylinder fifty metres round and sixteen high for the sake of harmony or a total surface of roughly twelve hundred square metres of which eight hundred mural. Not counting the niches and tunnels. Omnipresence of a dim yellow light shaken by a vertiginous tremolo between contiguous extremes. Temperature agitated by a like

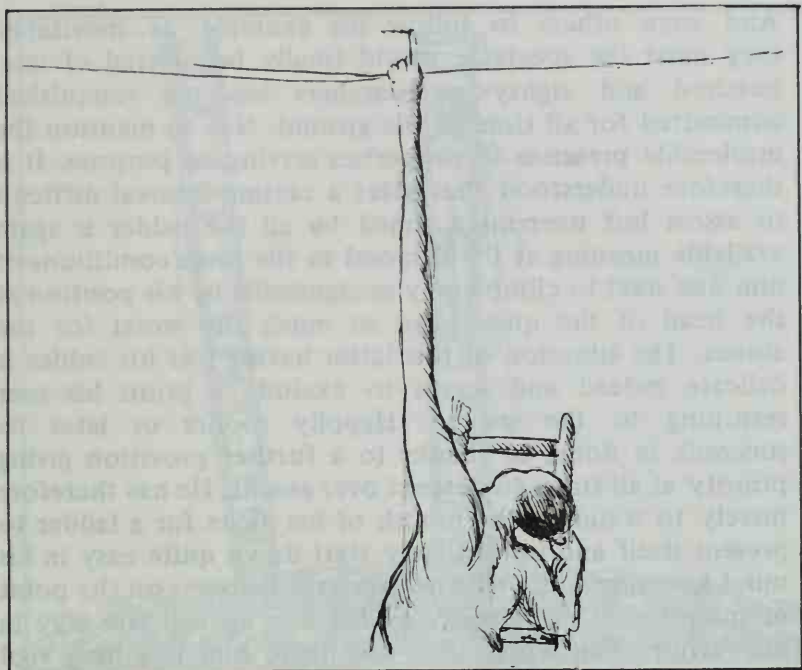


oscillation but thirty or forty times slower in virtue of which it falls rapidly from a maximum of twenty-five degrees approximately to a minimum of approximately five whence a regular variation of five degrees per second. That is not quite accurate. For it is clear that at both extremes of the shuttle the difference can fall to as little as one degree only. But this remission never lasts more than a little less than a second. At great intervals suspension of the two vibrations fed no doubt from a single source and resumption together after a lull of varying duration but never exceeding ten seconds or thereabouts. Corresponding abeyance of all motion among the bodies in motion and heightened fixity of the motionless. Only objects fifteen single ladders propped against the wall at irregular intervals. In the upper half of the wall disposed quincuncially for the sake of harmony a score of niches some connected by tunnels.

From time immemorial rumour has it or better still the notion is abroad that there exists a way out. Those who no longer believe so are not immune from believing so again in accordance with the notion requiring as long as it holds that

here all should die but with so gradual and to put it plainly so fluctuant a death as to escape the notice even of a visitor. Regarding the nature of this way out and its location two opinions divide without opposing all those still loyal to that old belief. One school swears by a secret passage branching from one of the tunnels and leading in the words of the poet to nature's sanctuaries. The other dreams of a trapdoor hidden in the hub of the ceiling giving access to a flue at the end of which the sun and other stars would still be shining. Conversion is frequent either way and such a one who at a given moment would hear of nothing but the tunnel may well a moment later hear of nothing but the trapdoor and a moment later still give himself the lie again. The fact remains none the less that of these two persuasions the former is declining in favour of the latter but in a manner so desultory and slow and of course with so little effect on the comportment of either sect that to perceive it one must be in the secret of the gods. This shift has logic on its side. For those who believe in a way out possible of access as via a tunnel it would be and even without any thought of putting it to account may be tempted by its quest. Whereas the partisans of the trapdoor are spared this demon by the fact that the hub of the ceiling is out of reach. Thus by insensible degrees the way out transfers from the tunnel to the ceiling prior to never having been. So much for a first aperçu of this credence so singular in itself and by reason of the loyalty it inspires in the hearts of so many possessed. Its fatuous little light will be assuredly the last to leave them always assuming they are darkward bound.

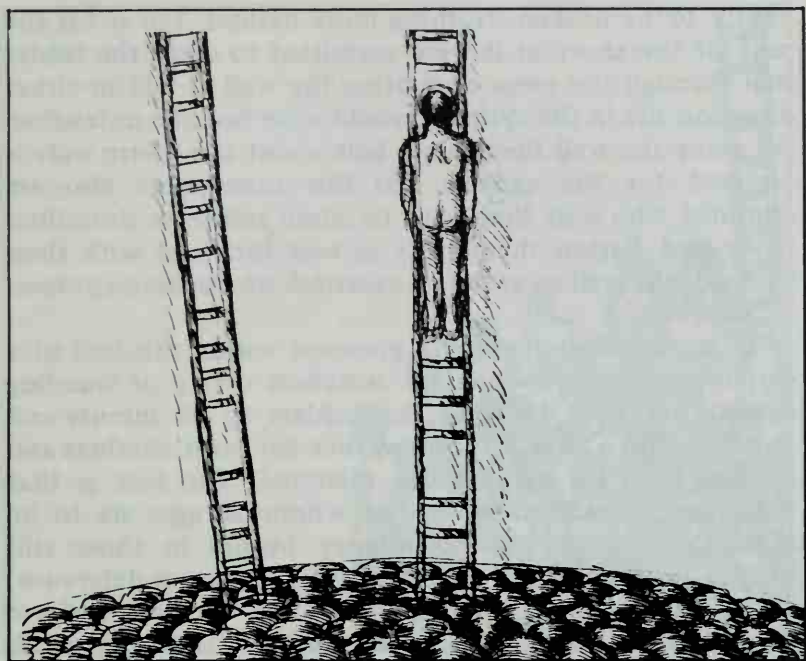
Bolt upright on the top rung of the great ladder fully extended and reared against the wall the tallest climbers can touch the edge of the ceiling with their fingertips. On the same ladder planted perpendicular at the centre of the floor the same bodies would gain half a metre and so be enabled to explore at leisure the fabulous zone decreed out of reach and which therefore in theory is in no wise so. For such recourse to the ladder is conceivable. All that is needed is a score of determined volunteers joining forces to keep it upright with the help if necessary of other ladders acting as stays or struts. An instant of fraternity. But outside their explosions of violence this sentiment is as foreign to them as to butterflies. And this owing not so much to want



of heart or intelligence as to the ideal preying on one and all. So much for this inviolable zenith where for amateurs of myth lies hidden a way out to earth and sky.

The use of the ladders is regulated by conventions of obscure origin which in their precision and the submission they exact from the climbers resemble laws. Certain infractions unleash against the culprit a collective fury surprising in creatures so peaceable on the whole and apart from the grand affair so careless of one another. Others on the contrary scarcely ruffle the general indifference. This at first sight is strange. All rests on the rule against mounting the ladder more than one at a time. It remains taboo therefore to the climber waiting at its foot until such time as his predecessor has regained the ground. Idle to imagine the confusion that would result from the absence of such a rule or from its non-observance. But devised for the convenience of all there is no question of its applying without restriction or as a licence for the unprincipled climber to engross the ladder beyond what is reasonable. For without some form of curb he might take the fancy to settle down permanently in one of the niches or tunnels leaving behind him a ladder out of service for good and all.

And were others to follow his example as inevitably they must the spectacle would finally be offered of one hundred and eighty-five searchers less the vanquished committed for all time to the ground. Not to mention the intolerable presence of properties serving no purpose. It is therefore understood that after a certain interval difficult to assess but unerringly timed by all the ladder is again available meaning at the disposal in the same conditions of him due next to climb easily recognizable by his position at the head of the queue and so much the worst for the abuser. The situation of this latter having lost his ladder is delicate indeed and seems to exclude a priori his ever returning to the ground. Happily sooner or later he succeeds in doing so thanks to a further provision giving priority at all times to descent over ascent. He has therefore merely to watch at the mouth of his niche for a ladder to present itself and immediately start down quite easy in his mind knowing full well that whoever below is on the point of mounting if not already on his way up will give way in his favour. The worst that can befall him is a long vigil because of the ladders' mobility. It is indeed rare for a climber when it comes to his turn to content himself with the same niche as his predecessor and this for obvious reasons that will appear in due course. But rather he makes off with his ladder followed by the queue and plants it under one or other of the five niches available by reason of the difference in number between these and the ladders. But to return to the unfortunate having outstayed his time it is clear that his chances of rapid redescent will be increased though far from doubled if thanks to a tunnel he disposes of two niches from which to watch. Though even in this event he usually prefers and invariably if the tunnel is a long one to plump for one only lest a ladder should present itself at one or the other and he still crawling between the two. But the ladders do not serve only as vehicles to the niches and tunnels and those whom these have ceased if only temporarily to entice use them simply to get clear of the ground. They mount to the level of their choice and there stay and settle standing as a rule with their faces to the wall. This family of climbers too is liable to exceed the allotted time. It is in order then for him due next for the ladder to climb in the wake of the offender and by means of one or more thumps on the back bring him back to a sense of his surroundings. Upon which he



unfailingly hastens to descend preceded by his successor who has then merely to take over the ladder subject to the usual conditions. This docility in the abuser shows clearly that the abuse is not deliberate but due to a temporary derangement of his inner timepiece easy to understand and therefore to forgive. Here is the reason why this in reality infrequent infringement whether on the part of those who push on up to the niches and tunnels or of those who halt on the way never gives rise to the fury vented on the wretch with no better sense than to climb before his time and yet whose precipitancy one would have thought quite as understandable and consequently forgivable as the converse excess. This is indeed strange. But what is at stake is the fundamental principle forbidding ascent more than one at a time the repeated violation of which would soon transform the abode into a pandemonium. Whereas the belated return to the ground hurts finally none but the laggard himself. So much for a first aperçu of the climbers' code.

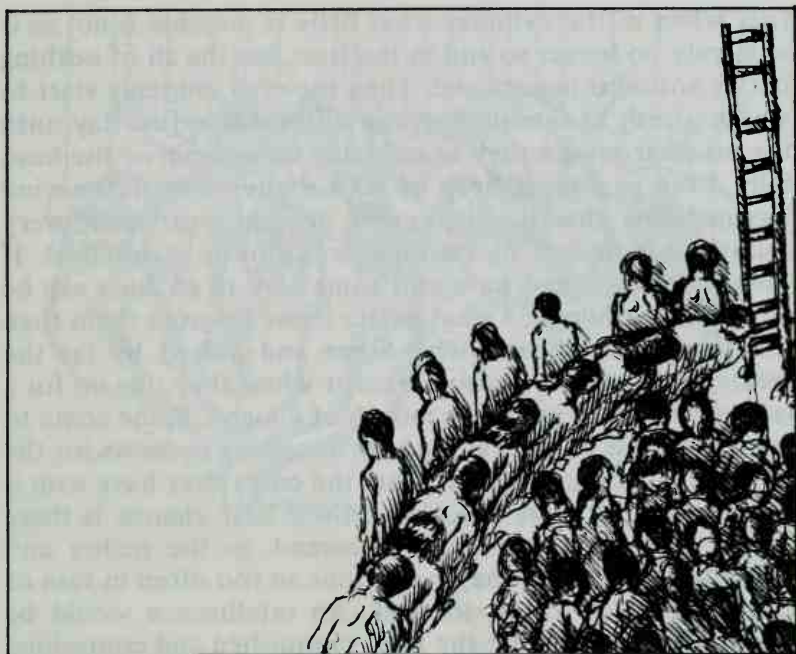
Similarly the transport of the ladders is not left to the good pleasure of the carriers who are required to hug the wall at all times eddywise. This is a rule no less strict than the prohibition to climb more than one at a time and not

lightly to be broken. Nothing more natural. For if for the sake of the shortcut it were permitted to carry the ladder slap through the press or skirting the wall at will in either direction life in the cylinder would soon become untenable. All along the wall therefore a belt about one metre wide is reserved for the carriers. To this zone those also are confined who wait their turn to climb and must close their ranks and flatten themselves as best they can with their backs to the wall so as not to encroach on the arena proper.

It is curious to note the presence within this belt of a certain number of sedentary searchers sitting or standing against the wall. Dead to the ladders to all intents and purposes and a source of annoyance for both climbers and carriers they are nevertheless tolerated. The fact is that these sort of semi-sages among whom all ages are to be admired from old age to infancy inspire in those still fitfully fevering if not a cult at least a certain deference. They cling to this as to a homage due to them and are morbidly susceptible to the least want of consideration. A sedentary searcher stepped on instead of over is capable of such an outburst of fury as to throw the entire cylinder into a ferment. Cleave also to the wall both sitting and standing four vanquished out of five. They may be walked on without their reacting.

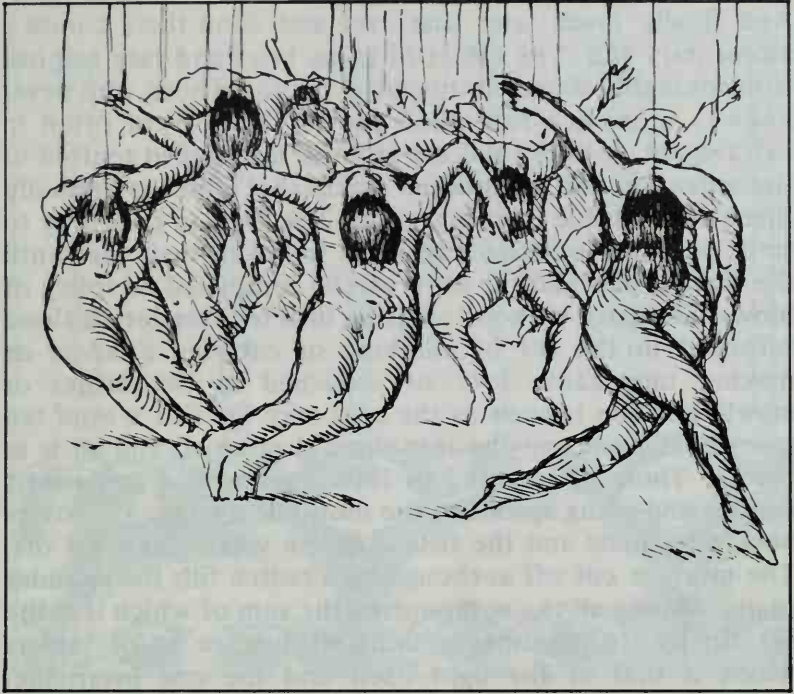
To be noted finally the care taken by the searchers in the arena not to overflow on the climbers' territory. When weary of searching among the throng they turn towards this zone it is only to skirt with measured tread its imaginary edge devouring with their eyes its occupants. Their slow round counter-carrierwise creates a second even narrower belt respected in its turn by the main body of searchers. Which suitably lit from above would give the impression at times of two narrow rings turning in opposite directions about the teeming precinct.

One body per square metre of available surface or two hundred bodies in all round numbers. Bodies of either sex and all ages from old age to infancy. Sucklings who having no longer to suck huddle at gaze in the lap or sprawled on the ground in precocious postures. Others a little more advanced crawl searching among the legs. Picturesque detail a woman with white hair still young to judge by her thighs



leaning against the wall with eyes closed in abandonment and mechanically clasping to her breast a mite who strains away in an effort to turn its head and look behind. But such tiny ones are comparatively few. None looks within himself where none can be. Eyes cast down or closed signify abandonment and are confined to the vanquished. These precisely to be counted on the fingers of one hand are not necessarily still. They may stray unseeing through the throng indistinguishable to the eye of flesh from the still unrelenting. These recognize them and make way. They may wait their turn at the foot of the ladders and when it comes ascend to the niches or simply leave the ground. They may crawl blindly in the tunnels in search of nothing. But normally abandonment freezes them both in space and in their pose whether standing or sitting as a rule profoundly bowed. It is this makes it possible to tell them from the sedentary devouring with their eyes in heads dead still each body as it passes by. Standing or sitting they cleave to the wall all but one in the arena stricken rigid in the midst of the fevering. These recognize him and keep their distance. The spent eyes may have fits of the old craving just as those who having renounced the ladder suddenly take to it again. So true it is

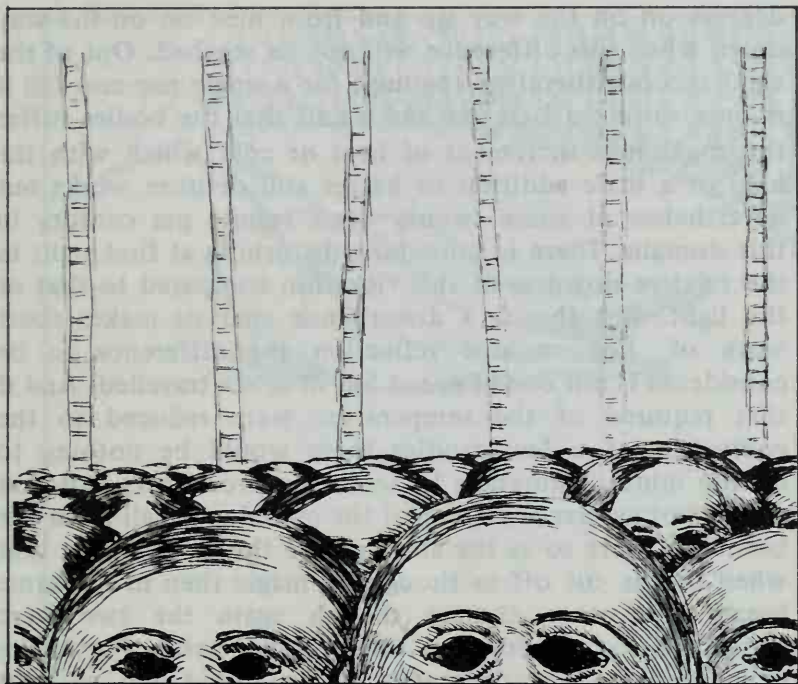
that when in the cylinder what little is possible is not so it is merely no longer so and in the least less the all of nothing if this notion is maintained. Then the eyes suddenly start to search afresh as famished as the unthinkable first day until for no clear reason they as suddenly close again or the head falls. Even so a great heap of sand sheltered from the wind lessened by three grains every second year and every following increased by two if this notion is maintained. If then the vanquished have still some way to go what can be said of the others and what better name be given them than the fair name of searchers? Some and indeed by far the greater number never pause except when they line up for a ladder or watch out at the mouth of a niche. Some come to rest from time to time all but the unceasing eyes. As for the sedentary if they never stir from the coign they have won it is because they have calculated their best chance is there and if they seldom or never ascend to the niches and tunnels it is because they have done so too often in vain or come there too often to grief. An intelligence would be tempted to see in these the next vanquished and continuing in its stride to require of those still perpetually in motion that they all soon or late one after another be as those who sometimes pause and of these that they finally be as the sedentary and of the sedentary that they be in the end as the vanquished and of the two hundred vanquished thus obtained that all in due course each in his turn be well and truly vanquished for good and all each frozen in his place and attitude. But let these families be numbered in order of maturity and experience shows that it is possible to graduate from one to three skipping two and from one to four skipping two or three or both and from two to four skipping three. In the other direction the ill-vanquished may at long intervals and with each relapse more briefly revert to the state of the sedentary who in their turn count a few chronic waverers prone to succumb to the ladder again while remaining dead to the arena. But never again will they ceaselessly come and go who now at long intervals come to rest without ceasing to search with their eyes. In the beginning then unthinkable as the end all roamed without respite including the nurselings in so far as they were borne except of course those already at the foot of the ladders or frozen in the tunnels the better to listen or crouching all eyes in the niches and so roamed a vast space of time impossible to measure until a first came to a



standstill followed by a second and so on. But as to at this moment of time and there will be no other numbering the faithful who endlessly come and go impatient of the least repose and those who every now and then stand still and the sedentary and the so-called vanquished may it suffice to state that at this moment of time to the nearest body in spite of the press and gloom the first are twice as many as the second who are three times as many as the third who are four times as many as the fourth namely five vanquished in all. Relatives and friends are well represented not to speak of mere acquaintances. Press and gloom make recognition difficult. Man and wife are strangers two paces apart to mention only this most intimate of all bonds. Let them move on till they are close enough to touch and then without pausing on their way exchange a look. If they recognize each other it does not appear. Whatever it is they are searching for it is not that.

What first impresses in this gloom is the sensation of yellow it imparts not to say of sulphur in view of the associations. Then how it throbs with constant unchanging beat and fast but not so fast that the pulse is no longer felt.

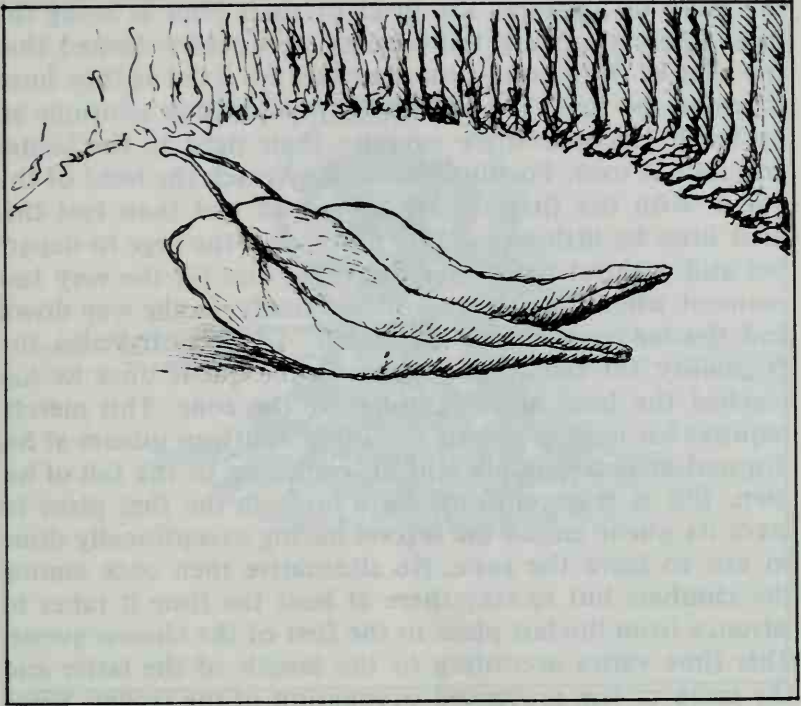
And finally much later that ever and anon there comes a momentary lull. The effect of these brief and rare respites is unspeakably dramatic to put it mildly. Those who never know a moment's rest stand rooted to the spot often in extravagant postures and the stillness heightened tenfold of the sedentary and vanquished makes that which is normally theirs seem risible in comparison. The fists on their way to smite in anger or discouragement freeze in their arcs until the scare is past and the blow can be completed or volley of blows. Similarly without entering into tedious details those surprised in the act of climbing or carrying a ladder or making unmakeable love or crouched in the niches or crawling in the tunnels as the case may be. But a brief ten seconds at most and the throbbing is resumed and all is as before. Those interrupted in their coming and going start coming and going again and the motionless relax. The lovers buckle to anew and the fists carry on where they left off. The murmur cut off as though by a switch fills the cylinder again. Among all the components the sum of which it is the ear finally distinguishes a faint stridulence as of insects which is that of the light itself and the one invariable. Between the extremes that delimit the vibration the difference is of two or three candles at the most. So that the sensation of yellow is faintly tinged with one of red. Light in a word that not only dims but blurs into the bargain. It might safely be maintained that the eye grows used to these conditions and in the end adapts to them were it not that just the contrary is to be observed in the slow deterioration of vision ruined by this fiery flickering murk and by the incessant straining for ever vain with concomitant moral distress and its repercussion on the organ. And were it possible to follow over a long enough period of time eyes blue for preference as being the most perishable they would be seen to redden more and more in an ever widening glare and their pupils little by little to dilate till the whole orb was devoured. And all by such slow and insensible degrees to be sure as to pass unperceived even by those most concerned if this notion is maintained. And the thinking being coldly intent on all these data and evidences could scarcely escape at the close of his analysis the mistaken conclusion that instead of speaking of the vanquished with the slight taint of pathos attaching to the term it would be more correct to speak of the blind and leave it at that. Once the first shocks of surprise are finally



past this light is further unusual in that far from evincing one or more visible or hidden sources it appears to emanate from all sides and to permeate the entire space as though this were uniformly luminous down to its least particle of ambient air. To the point that the ladders themselves seem rather to shed than to receive light with this slight reserve that light is not the word. No other shadows then than those cast by the bodies pressing on one another wilfully or from necessity as when for example on a breast to prevent its being lit or on some private part the hand descends with vanished palm. Whereas the skin of a climber alone on his ladder or in the depths of a tunnel glistens all over with the same red-yellow glister and even some of its folds and recesses in so far as the air enters in. With regard to the temperature its oscillation is between much wider extremes and at a much lower frequency since it takes not less than four seconds to pass from its minimum of five degrees to its maximum of twenty-five and inversely namely an average of only five degrees per second. Does this mean that with every passing second there is a rise or fall of five degrees exactly neither more nor less? Not quite. For it is clear there are two periods in the scale namely from twenty-one

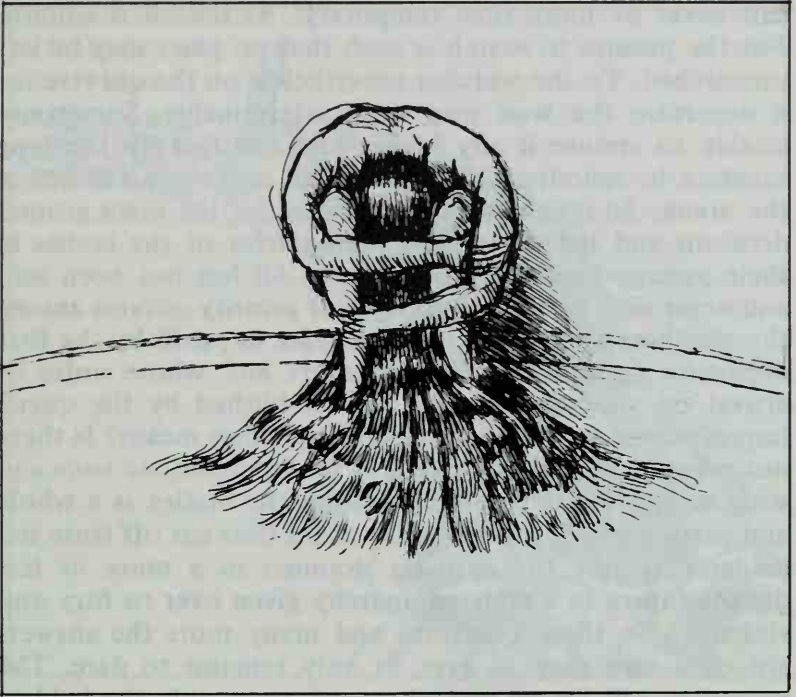
degrees on on the way up and from nine on on the way down when this difference will not be reached. Out of the eight seconds therefore required for a single rise and fall it is only during a bare six and a half that the bodies suffer the maximum increment of heat or cold which with the help of a little addition or better still division works out nevertheless at some twenty years respite per century in this domain. There is something disturbing at first sight in the relative slowness of this vibration compared to that of the light. But this is a disturbance analysis makes short work of. For on due reflection the difference to be considered is not one of speed but of space travelled. And if that required of the temperature were reduced to the equivalent of a few candles there would be nothing to choose mutatis mutandis between the two effects. But that would not answer the needs of the cylinder. So all is for the best. The more so as the storms have this in common that when one is cut off as though by magic then in the same breath the other also as though again the two were connected somewhere to a single commutator. For in the cylinder alone are certitudes to be found and without nothing but mystery. At vast intervals then the bodies enjoy ten seconds at most of unbroken warmth or cold or between the two. But this cannot be truly accounted for respite so great is the other tension then.

The bed of the cylinder comprises three distinct zones separated by clear-cut mental or imaginary frontiers invisible to the eye of flesh. First an outer belt roughly one metre wide reserved for the climbers and strange to say favoured by most of the sedentary and vanquished. Next a slightly narrower inner belt where those weary of searching in mid-cylinder slowly revolve in Indian file intent on the periphery. Finally the arena proper representing an area of one hundred and fifty square metres round numbers and chosen hunting ground of the majority. Let numbers be assigned to these three zones and it appears clearly that from the third to the second and inversely the searcher moves at will whereas on entering and leaving the first he is held to a certain discipline. One example among a thousand of the harmony that reigns in the cylinder between order and licence. Thus access to the climbers' reserve is authorized only when one of them leaves it to rejoin the searchers of the arena or exceptionally those of the



intermediate zone. While infringement of this rule is rare it does none the less occur as when for example a particularly nervous searcher can no longer resist the lure of the niches and tries to steal in among the climbers without the warrant of a departure. Whereupon he is unfailingly ejected by the queue nearest to the point of trespass and the matter goes no further. No choice then for the searcher wishing to join the climbers but to watch for his opportunity among the searchers of the intermediate zone or searcher-watchers or simply watchers. So much for access to the ladders. In the other direction the passage is not free either and once among the climbers the watcher is there for some time and more precisely the highly variable time it takes to advance from the tail to the head of the queue adopted. For no less than the freedom for each body to climb is the obligation once in the queue of its choice to queue on to the end. Any attempt to leave prematurely is sharply countered by the other members and the offender put back in his place. But once at the very foot of the ladder with between him and it only one more return to the ground the aspirant is free to rejoin the searchers of the arena or exceptionally the watchers of the intermediate zone without opposition. It is

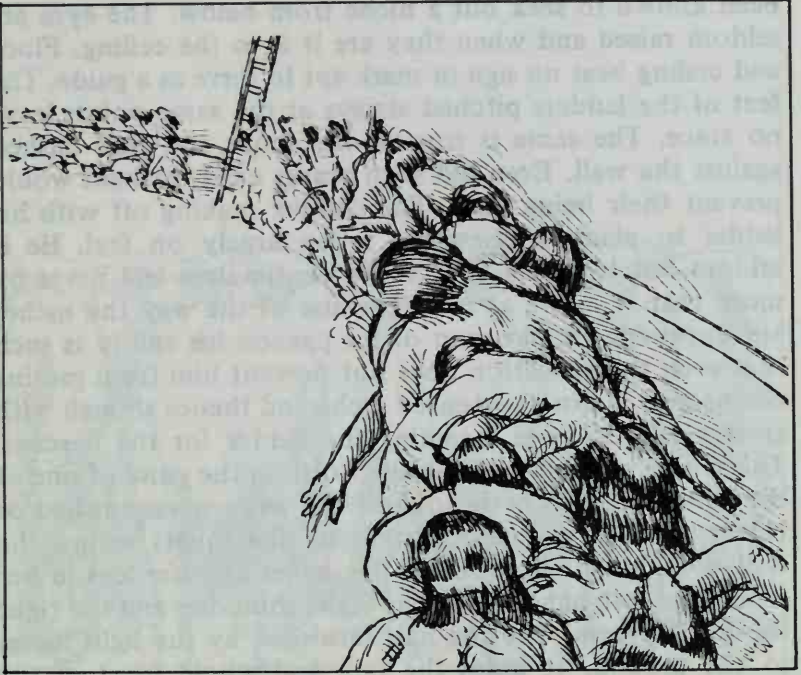
therefore on those at the head of their lines as being the most likely to create the vacancy so ardently desired that the eyes of the second-zone watchers are fixed as they burn to enter the first. The objects of this scrutiny continue so up to the moment they exercise their right to the ladder and take it over. For the climber may reach the head of the queue with the firm resolve to ascend and then feel this melt little by little and gather in its stead the urge to depart but still without the power to decide him till the very last moment when his predecessor is actually on the way down and the ladder virtually his at last. To be noted also the possibility for the climber to leave the queue once he has reached the head and yet not leave the zone. This merely requires his joining one of the other fourteen queues at his disposal or more simply still his returning to the tail of his own. But it is exceptional for a body in the first place to leave its queue and in the second having exceptionally done so not to leave the zone. No alternative then once among the climbers but to stay there at least the time it takes to advance from the last place to the first of the chosen queue. This time varies according to the length of the latter and the more or less prolonged occupation of the ladder. Some users keep it till the last moment. For others one half or any other fraction of this time is enough. The short queue is not necessarily the most rapid and such a one starting tenth may well find himself first before such another starting fifth assuming of course they start together. This being so no wonder that the choice of the queue is determined by considerations having nothing to do with its length. Not that all choose nor even the greater number. The tendency would be rather to join straightway the queue nearest to the point of penetration on condition however that this does not involve motion against the stream. For one entering this zone head-on the nearest queue is on the right and if it does not please it is only by going right that a more pleasing can be found. Some could thus revolve through thousands of degrees before settling down to wait were it not for the rule forbidding them to exceed a single circuit. Any attempt to elude it is quelled by the queue nearest to the point of full circle and the culprit compelled to join its ranks since obviously the right to turn back is denied him too. That a full round should be authorized is eloquent of the tolerant spirit which in the cylinder tempers discipline. But whether chosen or first to



hand the queue must be suffered to the end before the climber may leave the zone. First chance of departure therefore at any moment between arrival at head of queue and predecessor's return to ground. There remains to clarify in this same context the situation of the body which having accomplished its queue and let pass the first chance of departure and exercised its right to the ladder returns to the ground. It is now free again to depart without further ado but with no compulsion to do so. And to remain among the climbers it has merely to join again in the same conditions as before the queue so lately left with departure again possible from the moment the head is reached. And should it for some reason or another feel like a little change of queue and ladder it is entitled for the purpose of fixing its choice to a further full circuit in the same way as on first arrival and in the same conditions with this slight difference that having already suffered one queue to the end it is free at any moment of the new revolution to leave the zone. And so on infinitely. Whence theoretically the possibility for those already among the climbers never to leave and never to arrive for those not yet. That there exists no regulation tending to forestall such injustice shows clearly it

can never be more than temporary. As indeed it cannot. For the passion to search is such that no place may be left unsearched. To the watcher nevertheless on the qui vive for a departure the wait may seem interminable. Sometimes unable to endure it any longer and fortified by the long vacation he renounces the ladder and resumes his search in the arena. So much roughly speaking for the main ground divisions and the duties and prerogatives of the bodies in their passage from one to another. All has not been told and never shall be. What principle of priority obtains among the watchers always in force and eager to profit by the first departure from among the climbers and whose order of arrival on the scene cannot be established by the queue impracticable in their case or by any other means? Is there not reason to fear a saturation of the intermediate zone and what would be its consequences for the bodies as a whole and particularly for those of the arena thus cut off from the ladders? Is not the cylinder doomed in a more or less distant future to a state of anarchy given over to fury and violence? To these questions and many more the answers are clear and easy to give. It only remains to dare. The sedentary call for no special remark since only the ladders can wean them from their fixity. The vanquished are obviously in no way concerned.

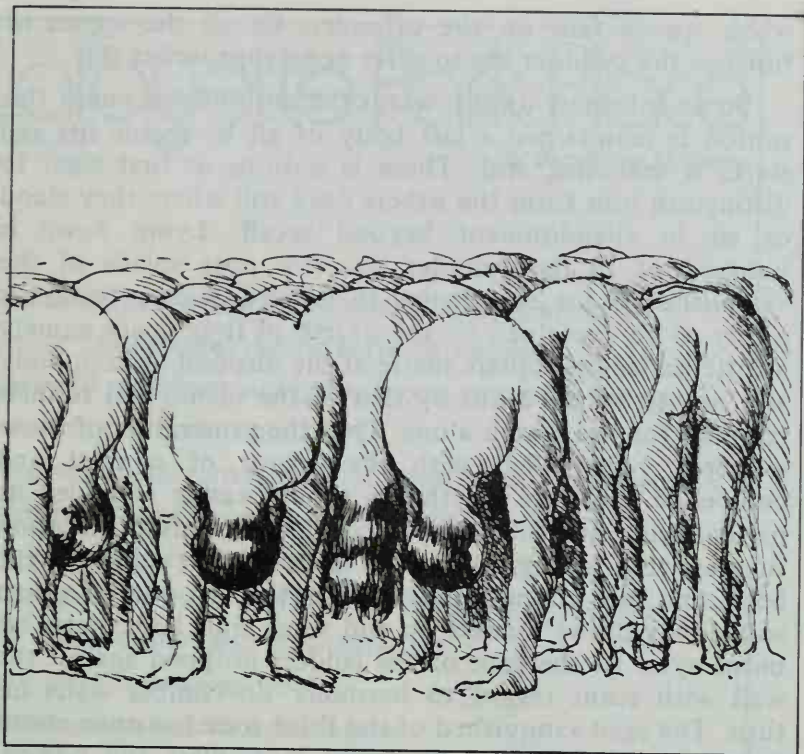
The effect of this climate on the soul is not to be underestimated. But it suffers certainly less than the skin whose entire defensive system from sweat to goose bumps is under constant stress. It continues none the less feebly to resist and indeed honourably compared to the eye which with the best will in the world it is difficult not to consign at the close of all its efforts to nothing short of blindness. For skin in its own way as it is not to mention its humours and lids it has not merely one adversary to contend with. This desiccation of the envelope robs nudity of much of its charm as pink turns grey and transforms into a rustling of nettles the natural succulence of flesh against flesh. The mucous membrane itself is affected which would not greatly matter were it not for its hampering effect on the work of love. But even from this point of view no great harm is done so rare is erection in the cylinder. It does occur none the less followed by more or less happy penetration in the nearest tube. Even man and wife may sometimes be seen in virtue of the law of probabilities to



come together again in this way without their knowledge. The spectacle then is one to be remembered of frenzies prolonged in pain and hopelessness long beyond what even the most gifted lovers can achieve in camera. For male or female all are acutely aware how rare the occasion is and how unlikely to recur. But here too the desisting and deathly still in attitudes verging at times on the obscene whenever the vibrations cease and for as long as this crisis lasts. Stranger still at such times all the questing eyes that suddenly go still and fix their stare on the void or on some old abomination as for instance other eyes and then the long looks exchanged by those fain to look away. Irregular intervals of such length separate these lulls that for forgetters the likes of these each is the first. Whence invariably the same vivacity of reaction as to the end of a world and the same brief amaze when the twofold storm resumes and they start to search again neither glad nor even sorry.

Seen from below the wall presents an unbroken surface all the way round and up to the ceiling. And yet its upper half is riddled with niches. This paradox is explained by the levelling effect of the dim omnipresent light. None has ever

been known to seek out a niche from below. The eyes are seldom raised and when they are it is to the ceiling. Floor and ceiling bear no sign or mark apt to serve as a guide. The feet of the ladders pitched always at the same points leave no trace. The same is true of the skulls and fists dashed against the wall. Even did such marks exist the light would prevent their being seen. The climber making off with his ladder to plant it elsewhere relies largely on feel. He is seldom out by more than a few centimetres and never by more than a metre at most because of the way the niches are disposed. On the spur of his passion his agility is such that even this deviation does not prevent him from gaining the nearest if not the desired niche and thence though with greater labour from regaining the ladder for the descent. There does none the less exist a north in the guise of one of the vanquished or better one of the women vanquished or better still the woman vanquished. She squats against the wall with her head between her knees and her legs in her arms. The left hand clasps the right shinbone and the right the left forearm. The red hair tarnished by the light hangs to the ground. It hides the face and whole front of the body down to the crutch. The left foot is crossed on the right. She is the north. She rather than some other among the vanquished because of her greater fixity. To one bent for once on taking his bearings she may be of help. For the climber averse to avoidable acrobatics a given niche may lie so many paces or metres to east or west of the woman vanquished without of course his naming her thus or otherwise even in his thoughts. It goes without saying that only the vanquished hide their faces though not all without exception. Standing or sitting with head erect some content themselves with opening their eyes no more. It is of course forbidden to withhold the face or other part from the searcher who demands it and may without fear of resistance remove the hand from the flesh it hides or raise the lid to examine the eye. Some searchers there are who join the climbers with no thought of climbing and simply in order to inspect at close hand one or more among the vanquished or sedentary. The hair of the woman vanquished has thus many a time been gathered up and drawn back and the head raised and the face laid bare and whole front of the body down to the crutch. The inspection once completed it is usual to put everything carefully back in place as far as possible. It is enjoined by a certain ethics not to do unto



others what coming from them might give offence. This precept is largely observed in the cylinder in so far as it does not jeopardize the quest which would clearly be a mockery if in case of doubt it were not possible to check certain details. Direct action with a view to their elucidation is generally reserved for the persons of the sedentary and vanquished. Face or back to the wall these normally offer but a single aspect and so may have to be turned the other way. But wherever there is motion as in the arena or among the watchers and the possibility of encompassing the object there is no call for such manipulations. There are times of course when a body has to be brought to a stand and disposed in a certain position to permit the inspection at close hand of a particular part or the search for a scar or birthblot for example. To be noted finally the immunity in this respect of those queuing for a ladder. Obligated for want of space to huddle together over long periods they appear to the observer a mere jumble of mingled flesh. Woe the rash searcher who carried away by his passion dare lay a finger on the least among them. Like a single body the

whole queue falls on the offender. Of all the scenes of violence the cylinder has to offer none approaches this.

So on infinitely until towards the unthinkable end if this notion is maintained a last body of all by feeble fits and starts is searching still. There is nothing at first sight to distinguish him from the others dead still where they stand or sit in abandonment beyond recall. Lying down is unheard of in the cylinder and this pose solace of the vanquished is for ever denied them here. Such privation is partly to be explained by the dearth of floor space namely a little under one square metre at the disposal of each body and not to be eked out by that of the niches and tunnels reserved for the search alone. Thus the prostration of those withered ones filled with the horror of contact and compelled to brush together without ceasing is denied its natural end. But the persistence of the twofold vibration suggests that in this old abode all is not yet quite for the best. And sure enough there he stirs this last of all if a man and slowly draws himself up and some time later opens his burnt eyes. At the foot of the ladders propped against the wall with scant regard to harmony no climber waits his turn. The aged vanquished of the third zone has none about him now but others in his image motionless and bowed. The mite still in the white-haired woman's clasp is no more than a shadow in her lap. Seen from the front the red head sunk to the uttermost exposes part of the nape. There he opens then his eyes this last of all if a man and some time later threads his way to that first among the vanquished so often taken for a guide. On his knees he parts the heavy hair and raises the unresisting head. Once devoured the face thus laid bare the eyes at a touch of the thumbs open without demur. In those calm wastes he lets his wander till they are the first to close and the head relinquished falls back into its place. He himself after a pause impossible to time finds at last his place and pose whereupon dark descends and at the same instant the temperature comes to rest not far from freezing point. Hushed in the same breath the faint stridulence mentioned above whence suddenly such silence as to drown all the faint breathings put together. So much roughly speaking for the last state of the cylinder and of this little people of searchers one first of whom if a man in some unthinkable past for the first time bowed his head if this notion is maintained. □

—Translated from the original French by the author

Lafayette Park Place

by Andrew Hoyem

I

Two athletes are exercising their throwing arms.

I am at Los Angeles during early September.

Many old mansions along this broad street are for sale
in poor condition.

They have been ransacked and stand open for inspection.

I am able to say so because I have visited them.

One who has prowled abroad under daylight conditions
speaks to you with the authority of experience,
observation and consideration.

They were found wanting.

Mansions await us in Los Angeles.

II

I have seen two boys, each with a sore arm.

They are temporarily on the lawns of Lafayette Park.

Many old men sit about on strewn benches crossing and
recrossing their legs.

Among them must reside some recipients of Honorable
Mentions.

Others of us find it difficult to make such a statement.

I maintain that anything is possible, particularly in
Los Angeles.

On White Mountain the oldest trees in the world are
still alive.

I will go away from here and find a place prepared for me
has been left behind.



GOD'S SPIES

by David Kleinbard

Sadler had seldom practiced meditation. Could he get far enough into himself so that the flames of his self-immolation couldn't reach him?

The sight of the girl in penitential black with a rope around her neck and a papier-mâché skull over her head drew him across the smoky Barnard dance hall, even before he knew it was a girl. Her bare feet, chained together, gave her away. The soft, yellow flesh, the long, curving toes, nails blood red; she'd let them grow for months. His tall rabbi's hat and the gold stars on his blue dressing gown, his plaster nose, the whole bit struck her as "square." When she said, "Not very original," her voice was so harsh he wondered again if this was a man. She gave him no chance to ask, scraping her feet across the straw-covered floor through the torchlight toward a group of limbless figures who'd formed a circle in the straw, opening their bald, featureless heads in a conversation he couldn't hear.

The bell rang for the unmasking at midnight. He was trying to decide whether to break in on the naked girl with a bag over her head and scarcely any breasts, but with an ass like a late Renoir, doing the Monkey with a gray-headed professor in a business suit and an eye mask. Or should he make for the tall girl with her face barely veiled, dressed in royal scarlet robes and cardboard crown, who was dancing

with a man in Vietcong pajamas and an Oriental mask? The man unmasked turned out to be an older girl.

Lights poured in upon him. Off came his nose.

"Sadler, you freak, you could have thought up something a little more with it." The rope hung beside him, the chained bare feet stood beside his. He had never seen Dorothea Wells's feet before.

"Nice feet you have," he said, yanking the rope around her neck.

And three hours later, she sat on the pony rug in his large blue-and-white room above Riverside Drive, her long hair like blond glass hiding small breasts. Together they watched her penitential clothes burning in the fireplace. A pile of hash joints, which he'd heaped in her blond lap, was slowly diminishing.

The landlady had just knocked on her ceiling with the head of a broomstick (she'd shown it to Sadler after a previous nighttime knocking) so hard that they had come quickly down from their very high high, and the Palisades had withdrawn back to the other side of the Hudson, and the walls solidifying around them closed out the night air where they'd been floating near orgasm, but now nowhere near orgasm.

"I guess we'd better whisper," Sadler whispered. "I haven't paid the rent for three months."

"Your ribs are ready to break through the skin, Sadler. Not a very pretty sight, you know. And I wish you didn't have so many pimples on your back." The words snuffled through the tiny nose which had made him see her blindly as a cadaver when they'd faced each other across the graduate seminar table. But in the wordsounds there were juices burbling that he'd sampled tonight on his fingers before he'd realized that there were connections between the sound of the voice and the feel of her insides.

She sat on his erection, wiggling when he started to go limp, and slowly paged through his photos and paintings of the war, making appreciative sounds.

"Sadler, whatever made you enlist?"

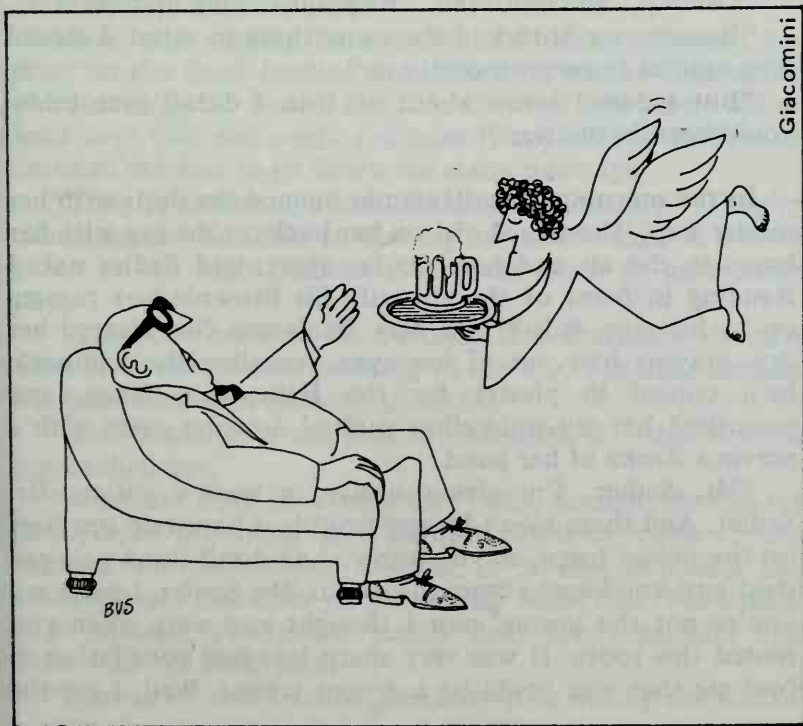
"I despised the seminary. I wanted to shake off the creeping death, see what my nerves would do in a battle, shoot a few people. . . . How do I know?"

"How many did you shoot?!" She writhed around to stare into his face so close he saw only the fuzzy shape of her horror.

He shrugged, then laced his arms tightly around her loose fleshy belly. "Never counted." She collapsed against him. "Did you see the monks go up in flames?"

"Three times: once in Hue, twice in Saigon."

The one in Hue had been a dignified old man. Sadler remembered him sitting in the street before the palace, which the Gooks hadn't yet destroyed. The old man's four friends, in their saffron robes, their shaved heads like polished bronze, had seemed so completely absorbed in their tasks of anointing his head and sprinkling his robe from gallon gasoline cans, pouring everywhere except the face. They'd wanted to make sure he would go up in one flash. Even as they lit the hem of his sleeve with long sticks, all four of them, he'd remained completely impassive, his eyes giving no hint of farewell to the monks who stood huddled across the street with the spectators, including Sadler, studying the master's death as the flames exploded twenty and thirty feet into the night sky. The monk had turned white and then blackish gray before toppling over, more like a doll than a man. In Saigon one of them had actually smiled before falling forward.



Giacominini

And then he had painted that scene for weeks, creating fiery nimbuses around their bodies, and horses of fire carrying the old men up into the cold endless night skies. But his paintings were phony. If he'd watched the student set himself ablaze in the Pentagon, he would have known whether a man like himself, who'd never practiced meditation until this past year, could get inside himself so far that the flames wouldn't reach him.

"This is the best," Dot said, drawing her finger down the nakedness of the sprawled child.

"I flung the red ink at the canvas with a house painter's brush. Then I sprinkled it with water so the verdigris and sepia would mix and make those groovy patterns on the stomach. I shot that one in the bushes near Long Binh," he said. "I thought it was a sniper."

"I don't believe you! How can you joke about such a thing?! You're not joking," she moaned to herself. She detached herself from him and crawled away, out of sight, around the corner of the high bed. Only her bottom was visible under the bed, weighing against the bare wood floor, and her shapely legs, stretched cumbersomely in front of her.

"Groovy," she muttered. "Why did I come up here?"

"Because we both had the same thing in mind. I sensed it as soon as I saw your costume."

"But I didn't know about all this. I didn't even know you'd been in the war!"

In the morning, Mrs. Benjamin opened the door with her master key. The naked girl on her back on the rug with her knees in the air and her legs far apart, and Sadler naked standing in front of the girl with his Brownie box camera up to his eyes didn't faze Mrs. Benjamin. She cleared her dry, graying hair out of her eyes, revealing the schnozzle he'd copied in plaster for the Halloween dance, and smoothed her red-and-yellow quilted dressing gown with a nervous stroke of her hand.

"Mr. Sadler, I'm giving notice, a week's notice, Mr. Sadler. And there won't be any trouble. I have two brothers on the police force, as you know. And don't think you can steal any knicknacks from this room, Mr. Sadler. I must say you're not the young man I thought you were when you rented this room. It was very sharp bringing your father to fool me that you could be a decent tenant. Well, I get the

last laugh, Mr. Sadler. One week, and don't you forget it."

She stood watching them for some time longer, as he clicked the Brownie and the girl hoisted her feet toward the ship's lantern hanging from the ceiling, then let them fall apart as far as they would go, with her legs at a ninety-degree angle from the floor, so that her exposed genitals opened wide, and it seemed to Sadler they wanted to scream.

Mrs. Benjamin locked the door again before hurrying down the stairs, as the sun edged over the house and its rays fell with a vengeance upon the obscene girl.

At noon, Mrs. Benjamin put on her wine-colored felt hat with the gay, upturned flap on the right side, a revival from 1925. She fixed it in place with a pearl-ended hatpin that had belonged to her Warsaw grandmother in the days of the family's greatest opulence. Her temples beat unpleasantly as she went into the first-floor hallway, involuntarily listening for them. She'd told herself to forget them, but her ears stretched to hear their music, that hateful rant which the other boarders had complained about. She climbed three steps, feeling the weight of flesh on her weak heart. It was four flights up. If their records bothered the tenants, let *them* mount all those stairs.

Music was coming from there. Mrs. Katzen opened her door on the third landing and looked down two flights, the oldest lady in the house, less than five feet now, her head so bent over that she could not raise it up, her bootéd foot so crooked she had to go down the stairs sideways.

"They're mourning," the old lady said bitterly. "They're chanting the Kaddish at the top of their lungs. It's been going on all night, Mimi. Please ask them to have some pity."

"Ask your husband to go up." Mrs. Benjamin thought what it would be like laboring to the top. The ache around her heart had been growing all night.

"You know how crippled my husband is," Mrs. Katzen reproached her.

"What are they mourning for?" Mrs. Kaplan, the tub-fat cook from the Horn and Hardart cafeteria, came to the banister on the second landing in a slip, exposing her massive arms and their jungle of wiry black hair. For such a large woman, you could hardly hear her. Cigarettes had destroyed her voice box.

"I'm sure I don't know. But they'll be out by the end of

the week. You can be sure of that! My brother promised me.” Mrs. Benjamin turned decisively and carried her shopping bag down to the front door. The whole place had begun to stink from the smoke seeping out from under their door. And it wasn’t tobacco! They might burn the place down. Both his father and he had been wearing yarmulkes when they’d come the first time!

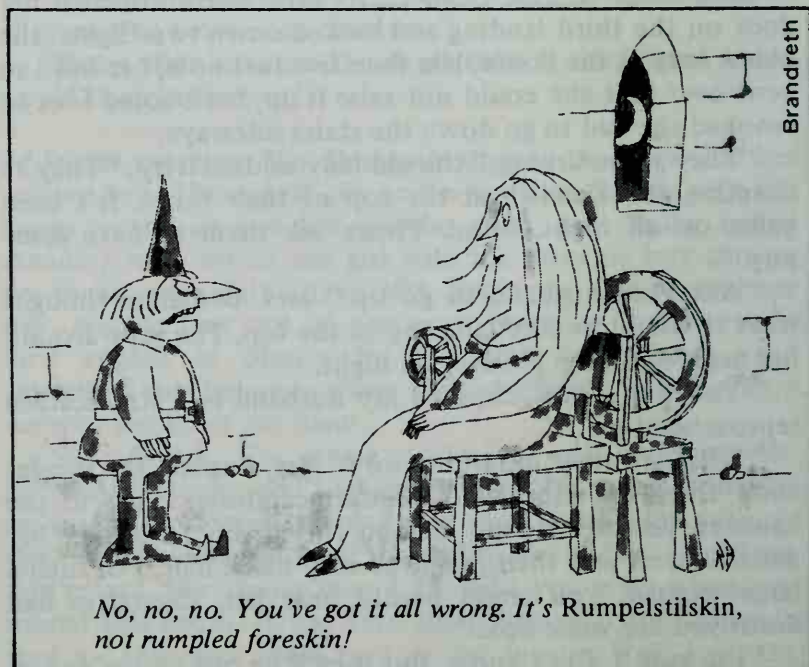
Outside along Riverside, twenty or thirty people were staring at her roof. Frightened, she looked. Something was hanging from Sadler’s window: a giant cloth.

“*Mein Gott!*” she moaned, feeling her legs go soft under her; but she caught herself and made her feet move until she was in the crowd.

“You live in that house?” The questioner was one of the workmen from across the Drive, where they had been dynamiting out a new tunnel. His face was raw and sore-ridden from too much shaving, and his jowls were creased with anger and disdain under his red metal hat.

“No,” she whimpered, “just visiting,” as she forced her head up to look at the big flag hanging from Sadler’s window.

“Vietcong,” she heard another hard, angry voice. “Where are the cops?!”



"*Mein Gott! Mein Gott,*" she moaned to herself, "what shall I do?" She was powerless to move, numb, but shivering with cold, her head dipping in all directions at once and turning. She would topple on the road! She leaned on the red car, hearing the angry workmen around her discuss the possibility of breaking down the door of the house.

"No! Call the police! Call the police!" she heard herself repeating in a voice like her younger sister's, soft and lovely, a voice that appealed to men. She thought of her bald brother. Sergeant he was. He was there. In his squad car, red light on top blinking, sirening, sirening. Short man with a short mustache and long legs, much too long for his body, running fast to catch her falling from the window.

"*Kawdosh, kawdosh, kawdosh, adonoi, tzvawos, mlo, chawl hawawretz, kvodo.*" The two voices sang joyously, and the young male voice chanted the English after: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."

He hit the door with all the weight he could put into one fist, holding his club loosely in his other hand. Immediately there was absolute silence.

"Open the door!" he shouted. "Police!"

In the doorway stood a red-bearded young man with a long, bushy mess that reached his shoulders and a face pocked and badly pimped, on his head a high old-fashioned rabbi's hat, a prayer shawl unfolded over his back; except for that, naked, his phallus erect. The sergeant stepped back; the circumcised ball was prodding the fellow's navel.

"Good *Shabbas*. May I help you, sir?"

Phony gentility! The smoke in the room obscured nearly everything. And that was not the smell of tobacco.

"Please come in; you're letting the smoke out of the room."

"What do you think you're doing up here? You're disturbing the whole block! The landlady has become dangerously ill because of your goings-on!" Benjamin stepped into the room, searching for the joints. He swore at himself silently for not taking the time to obtain a search warrant.

"I'd offer you some tea, but it's all gone." The fellow had been following his eyes around the room. There on the bed, nude, except for a hairnet, sat . . . what was it? Bald! Homosexuals! No, it was a woman, woman's body, he saw,

looking hard between her legs, he was sure, yes, through the smoke, a woman! Her hair lay on the bed beside her. Staring harder through the smoke, he realized that her body was smeared with ashes.

“What’s going on here?!”

“We were mourning, sir, a mourning service. But now it’s *Shabbas*.”

“You’re a fucking liar! I ought to book you both for disturbing the peace, narcotics, displaying the enemy flag. . . . What are you doing with this girl?!” He moved closer to the smiling nudist in the prayer shawl and ridiculous rabbi’s hat, raising his club.

“Sergeant, we’re mourning the death of my brother in Vietnam,” said the girl in a mature woman’s voice, half-broken with barely suppressed laughter. “Before he died he sent this flag to me as a souvenir. We were singing the service for the dead. Mr. Sadler is a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Look.” She slid off the bed, turning her fat buttocks toward him, and fumbled in a desk drawer. As she returned toward him, the sergeant noticed that every bit of hair had been removed from her body. As she came closer with the paper in hand he could smell the sweat on her body. And he was sure he detected the acrid odor of her vaginal fluids, too. His mouth filled with saliva. He felt the backward pull of gravity, shutting his eyes as the perfectly bald head and ashen body came to within a foot of him. Blue eyes, blue, not a Jewess, he thought, eyes like glass, and pink tips of tits seeming to reach out toward him to be touched. He swallowed laboriously, shutting his eyes as he took the paper, and the grim smile of her pink lips cut across the darkness behind his lids. Then he read the certificate from the seminary, certifying Sadler a Conservative rabbi. He gave it back, grimacing with revulsion. Even the rabbis were turning into beasts.

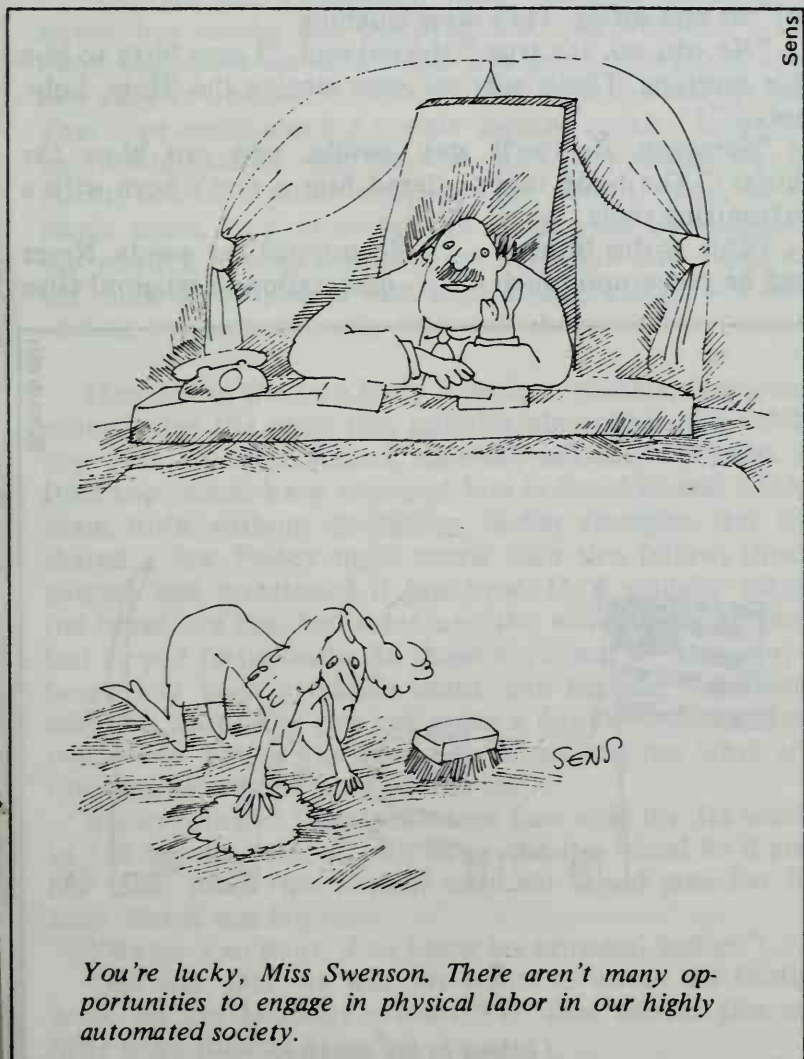
“I give you one hour,” he muttered through thick saliva. “In one hour, if you’re still here, I’ll throw you both into the clink, and believe me they’re handing out long sentences to the likes of you.” He raised his voice, balancing on his weak ankles in the doorway, pointing his club at the girl with sudden awareness of the blood-caked insides of her thighs. He backed against the door. “What’s that?!” he demanded, pointing with his club.

“I’ve just had a baby,” she said. “The rabbi.” She pointed at the naked rabbi.

“He delivered? . . . Where?” The sergeant stepped back inside, forgetting his ankles. “Where is this baby?” he shouted. “Did you kill it?!” They were putting him on, making a fool of him.

“I mean, no, oh, you think he delivered it,” she said, smiling as she came toward him again, the smile that one would smile at a child.

His own pants bulged now. She stood a few inches from him, maybe an inch away, her sharp fingers pressing into his shoulder, the smell of the dried blood thrusting into his nose, like the smell of a drunk’s oozing mouth a half-hour



You're lucky, Miss Swenson. There aren't many opportunities to engage in physical labor in our highly automated society.

after he's been punched by the arresting cop.

"No, sir, *he's* the baby. That's why he's naked. I gave birth, this morning. It was so painful I tore off all my hair. He's such a big baby. But it was worth it. Not every mother has a rabbi son, Sergeant."

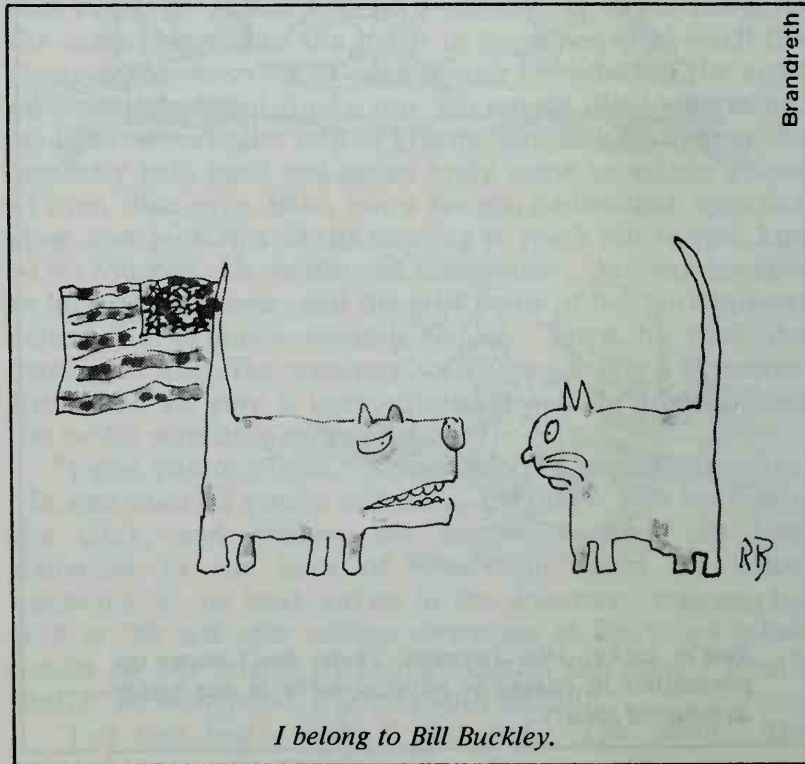
He heard madness in her laughing voice and saw it in the immobile eyes which had brightened with some joke she seemed to be sharing with herself. He pushed her away with his club. The smell of her empty stomach made him feel like puking.

"If either of you say another word, I'll smash your teeth in!" he said softly. They were laughing.

"No, sir, no, it's true," the girl said. "I gave birth to him this morning. That's why we were singing the 'Holy, holy, holy.'"

"Sergeant, if you'll stay awhile, you can blow the shofar." The nude rabbi offered him a ram's horn with a patronizing smile.

"This is the filthiest . . ." He stopped for words. Never had he come upon such a ". . . desecration of religion! Give



me that!" He snatched the ram's horn from the fellow's hand. "Where did you get this?"

"It belongs to my father, Sergeant. He blows the shofar very well on the Day of Atonement. Don't you go to *shul*, Sergeant?"

"Of course I go to *shul*. If your father . . . you're playing me for an ass!" He felt ashamed, letting them lead him on. "Put on some clothes and clear out of this house by four o'clock. And don't let me catch you in this neighborhood. I don't care who your father is."

"The girl has a beautiful face," he told Mimi, as he served her mocha and poppyseed strudel in bed. "I told them they have an hour. And I'm going to wait to make sure they're out of the place by then. If not, I call for help. That type could stand a couple months in jail." Until then he would watch the Browns and the Bears on her twenty-one-inch color screen, if she didn't mind, in the music room. And of course she ignored the question (Did she mind?), already absorbed in her drink and sweet and her endless complaints that kept going through her head, coming out automatically whenever she opened her mouth.

They sat in the two Early American rockers, facing each other across the pony rug, grinning about the *schlemihlkin* cop with his three stripes, his club, and his confusion. An Irish cop would have whacked him in the skull and booked them both without hesitating, Sadler thought. But he'd shared a few Friday night meals with this fellow, though neither had mentioned it just now. He'd actually blessed the bread the cop had eaten and the wine which Benjamin had sipped fastidiously. In those days, not so long ago, his beard had been a rabbi's beard, and his hair had been a scholar's mop. The cop had worn a double-breasted Harris tweed one Friday (he'd proudly displayed the label after finishing his sister's tasty gefillte fish).

Sadler touched Dorothea's bare foot with his. He wanted to tell her to wash off the ashes and the blood he'd given her from under his arm. If only she could glue her hair back. But it was hopeless.

"We have an hour, if he keeps his promise, Sadler."

"He will, Dot, he will. He wants to watch the football game on the landlady's color TV. That should give us a little more than an hour."

"I'd like to call my Daddy in Tennessee. Do you mind?"

"It's only an hour, Dot."

"This won't take long. I just want to introduce him to my best man."

"I'd better start thinking of something to say."

She shook her head. "Daddy never wants to hear about the groom. He's going to live forever."

He noticed how elongated her head was as she sat on his bed, dialing. He'd shaved it very clean and then polished it with a light furniture wax, buffing it like a shoe, and killing the wax odor with some cold mint tea. The top of her head formed rather like an egg, but an extra-large Easter egg, sloping upward from her shallow forehead to a rounded point at the very back, where Dotty sometimes perched her lost hair in a bun. She sat on the edge of the landlady's pink spread, which was frayed through in many places and had probably never been washed. She was huddled, her slim shoulders drawn forward, bunching her breasts so that they seemed to have grown. Might have given milk some day if she'd waited. She cradled the receiver in both hands as if it were a baby, listening for her father's voice through the head. "If he could see me now, he'd shoot me with his archery set," she'd said, looking at her hairless head in the mirror for the first time with an hysterical giggle. A champion, a Sagittarius, she'd named her Daddy, the real estate broker. Sadler blamed his bullying for her small breasts and her diffidence. And now the earthquaking reaction. Rope around the neck, ashes, blood, the bald head, and the rest. Between his thumb and forefinger he rubbed the American flag rolled up on the bed. This was to be his. Hers the other, the Vietcong, hanging from the roof at the top of the great bay window.

"Hello, Daddy." She bent forward, pressing her sharp elbows into her thighs and her toes into the floorboard, her knotty spine ridging up like hair on the back of a cat surprising another. "Yes, it's Dotty. No, I'm in New York. What? No, I don't think I'll be able to get down for Thanksgiving. Christmas? Well, oh, sure, Daddy." She gave Sadler a miserable snile, eyes bleary under the contact lenses. "Yes, no, Daddy, listen a minute, please, Daddy, puhlease, just *listen*. Okay, okay, listen, I'm getting married. Oh, stop, Daddy. No, he's not a nig. But if he . . . yes, yes, no, he's not, not Jewish. Oh, Daddy, I don't know what his . . ."

She dropped the receiver crosswise onto the base of the

phone. Sadler sat down on the bed and cradled her in his arms, rocking her like a baby, her eyes closed, a trickle of wet dribbling out the wing of her nostril. He felt the unfamiliar tightness of her body, like the schizos at Bellevue before their convulsions.

"I saw a blue hand," she groaned, as he leaned against the wall, cradling her heaviness, supporting his sore arms on his thighs raised off the bed, rocking her with his whole body. Her breasts were drawn back almost flat now.

"I believe you," he said. "I heard it speak, Dotty. I heard what it said."

"The clouds went so fast, like hundreds of birds scared. That was why the hand was caught out in the open for everyone to see. It was surprised, the clouds cleared away too fast."

"And then it turned around," he said, easing her down onto the bed between his legs.

"Yes." Her voice cracked. It was crying. "Yes, it turned completely around. It was as big as the sky. And it opened its fingers, and then some of the lines in the palm of the hand opened wide."

"They spoke."

"Yes."

"I heard, but I couldn't see, Dotty."

She sat up beside him on the bed. "I've gotten over Daddy," she said. "He's been talking like that for at least the last five years. He always uses the same phrases. I feel he must have forgotten what I look like." Her voice broke again. "Is there anyone else we can call?"

He'd been thinking of how sky and earth were supposed to open at Pentecost, as the rabbi had told him when he was four, so you could see the ranks of angels with heads of eagles and bodies of lions and wings full of eyes raining down their flaming spears upon the mangled spirits of the damned. She'd cupped her warm, moist hand over his penis. "We'll go down together," he'd suggested, turning out of that memory of his childhood, pulling her against his body, both of them on their knees on the bed.

"Come on, let's call Professor Fisher."

"Oh, great! What'll we tell him, Sadler?"

"To be at Riverside Drive and 106th Street in half an hour with his wife and kids."

"No, Sadler, not the kids."

"Why not? This was your idea, wasn't it? What's wrong

with kids? They say kids in this country can't find any heroic models anymore like in the days before the Second World War. Isn't that what Fisher told us? Don't you remember? He said his little boy couldn't get excited about anyone like we used to imagine we were Patrick Henry or Lincoln."

"Oh, Sadler, come off it. What about Dylan or the Berrigans? Fisher's little boy doesn't need us. Don't be sappy now."

She didn't seem to miss her hair, now under her knees. She was rubbing her tiny breasts against his chest as though she'd forgotten just how small they were. But Sadler stayed limp. He told himself it was because he was scared. The girl still had power over him. He'd never let any other girl fondle his cock. Didn't mind, she was so gentle. Almost like his own hand. He ran his hands softly over her soft back, let his fingers trail through the wet, hairy crevice at the bottom. It was the one place they'd forgotten to shave. His fingers smelled richly fecal. She laughed as he tasted them.

"Shall we put on our robes?" she asked.

"A half-hour before?" The question had rammed into his chest. He could hardly breathe with the pain.

"We can get used to them. And you know the cop may get tired of his football game." She jumped off the bed, landing with a room-shaking thump on Mrs. Katzen's ceiling, and ran to the window.

"Quite a crowd down there, Sadler. Two police cars. Maybe we'd better hurry."

He said nothing, but sat on the bed, his back against the dull brown-yellow wall, unpainted for so many years, unrolling the American flag she'd brought him.

"I think most of the guys who've been digging that tunnel across the Drive are standing around down below. They have shiny red helmets on. I'll bet they're thinking of blood. Won't they be surprised!"

"Well, take one last look, Sadler." She stretched her thin arms straight out from the shoulders and turned slowly a full circle at the foot of the bed, smiling as though she could scarcely restrain her delighted laughter. He studied her flapper's body moodily, then politely clapped. He must be cheerful for her sake. He watched her naked, on her knees on the floor beside the bed, pinning the two flags together along one side with numerous safety pins, head to tail, and something like fondness swelled up into his eyes.

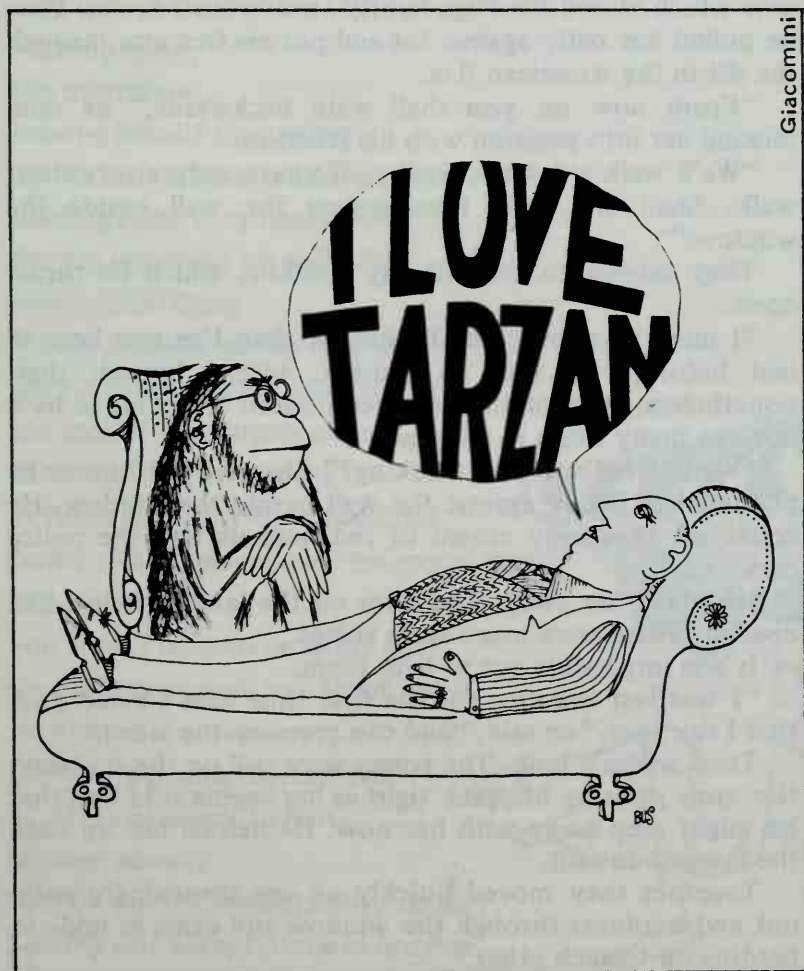
Getting off the bed, he let his foot rest gently on her back.

“Exactly!” she said. “Now you’re getting into the role. It’s easy, Sadler. I’ll bet you’ve been practicing all your life without knowing it.”

He removed his foot and gently kicked her in the ass, his head pounding as he thought he heard steps and voices on the stairs.

“Hurry,” he whispered. “Maybe they’re not going to wait, Dorothea.”

Her face was drawn and chalk-white, despite the ashes; she was biting her lips with fear as she got up and quickly drew the flags around them. But a door closed on the third floor. There were people below them.



Giacomini

"Who could be visiting the Katzens?" Sadler wondered aloud.

She pinned the flags together along their other edge, as he held them for her. They bent together as she reached farther and farther down, inserting the safety pins head to tail. Then they stood up, and she cut an armhole in each flag.

"Stand against me," she urged. He was listening to the abrasively loud voices below them.

"No one has ever visited the Katzens before," he said, his teeth chattering.

She pulled his buttock against hers, and then their ribs and thighs together. He closed her back in his right arm, pinioning her against him, freeing her hands to insert the pins which closed the flags tightly around their necks. Then he pulled her belly against his and put his free arm through the slit in the American flag.

"From now on you shall walk backwards," he said, locking her into position with his erection.

"We'll walk sideways, Sadler. We have only a very short walk. Shall we make love against the wall beside the window?"

They moved to the tall bay window, which he thrust open.

"I must be more careful with her than I've ever been in bed before," he said to himself, telling himself that, nonetheless, he wouldn't sacrifice himself this time as he'd done so many times in the past.

"Wait. What are you thinking?" She stopped him as he planted her firmly against the wall beside the window. He could see the angry crowd of red helmets and the police cars.

He edged her away. The door on the landing below had opened. There were many male voices.

It was impossible not to hear them.

"I was just thinking for the first time that I loved you, that I *can* love," he said, "and can even say the word."

They weren't long. The voices were still on the stairway. Her arms pressing his back tight as her vagina told him that he might step away with her now. He helped her up onto the low windowsill.

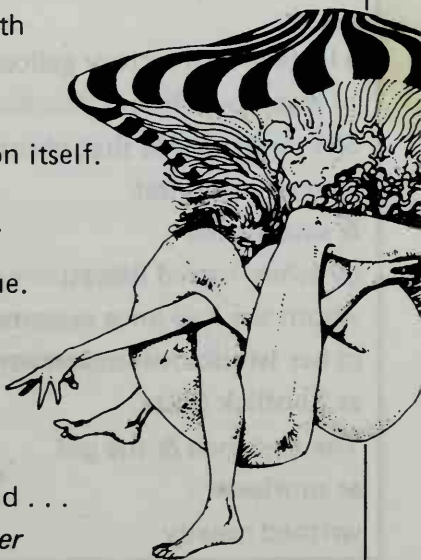
Together they moved quickly as one surprisingly without awkwardness through the window and came in mid-air, holding on to each other. □

Some Recent Fiction

by Al Young

1.

He ran his hands thru her hair
slowly
as tho he were relishing the feel
of expensive Italian corduroy.
The light of Venus did a little dance
way over in the eastern sky.
"Spring again,"
she murmured,
moving herself thru water
soft brown breasts bobbing gingerly
sending electric symbols thru him,
for the extent of his naïveté
was a pubic thing
known publicly by his mother.
Zara is running thru fields of poppies,
she scoops five fingers of cool earth
& rubs it into her cheeks
in fierce denial of her albescence,
funky cloud passing over the moon itself.
"Get it on,
you little s'pose-to-be white girl!"
shouts Superspook in a fit of pique.
He knew her other lover,
the very pig who represented
all white savagery to him,
cloaked society
that by dint of respectability could . . .
The Pig can always move in brother



with his heavy weapons

& blow us away

—his ultimate fear revisiting him,

cool young girl trembling

under his hard erotic touch.

"Hell I'll up & make me an anthem of my own!"

the black voice was heard to declare

cutting thru the narcotic haze of memory

that shimmered over the room to the very

stained glass windows

built on bitter black sweat.

A little thing drifted back from childhood,

he knew at last the meaning of meaning,

thoughts of wilderness

& the touch of what was

& what was not sexual

purely

a little dream victory galloping thru him.

"I love you, Hitler."

She remembered that phrase

spoken in earnest

& established

by white-haired literati

whom she had once esteemed

in her windblown university days

at Bootlick State.

The two men & the girl

at sunrise

writhed quietly





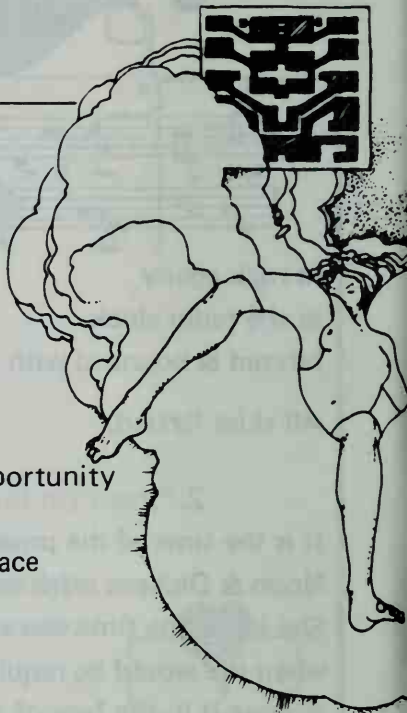
in rock agony
as the radio clock
buzzed & bounced with all the beats.
All skies fizzled.

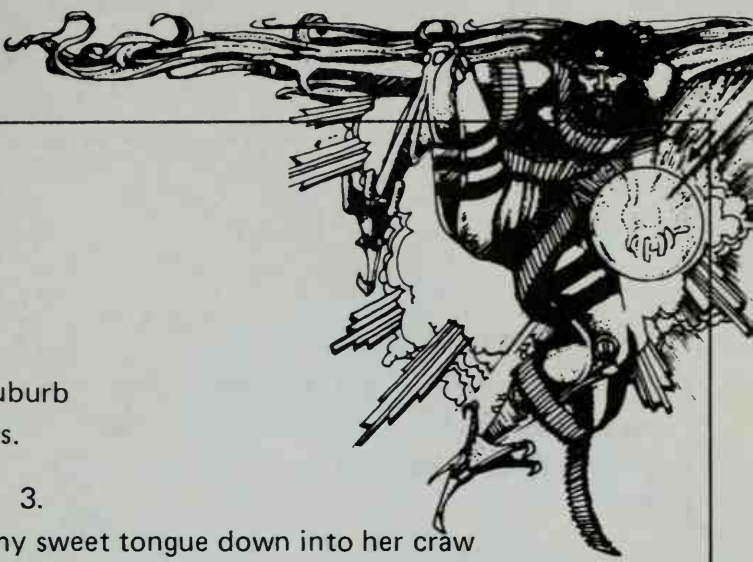


2.

It is the time of the prosaic showdown.
Noon & Dickens brighten her bones.
She knew the time was coming
when she would be required to brandish a gun
& wave it in the face of even best friends,
of poor Agnes the pathetic acid
head
in whose loins
the Afro-Anglo-Indian milieu
revolved like an IBM typewriter ball
splattering piecemeal
her spiralworm tape code genetics
more complex than thunderbird circuitry
made naked
by degrees.
"If I had my way
I would lick the very white from your eyes
I would
& jet you away up & out of this melting pot
become pressure cooker,"
he pronounced
reminding her of Thad
when they were first wed

in office worker Cleveland
the 35¢ wedding soup
& his acting their only hope
her city welfare childhood
Pa packing them all up to them opportunity
cities the smoke choking
even the sodas had soot on the surface
& over-psychoanalyzed Frederick
poor chump seeking to seduce
her irate Trinidadian stepmother
before the blue of her world
turned ashen rose
wind cutting thru
her mind
like lust
the baby so far away
the FM loneliness
scotches & marijuanas Rod would bring
Thad would wound her if he found out
cold blade of life cutting
her down & opening up her vegetable heart,
the uneaten orders
unheard ballads
undusted shelves
the tinned fruits & soups on shelves,
the jolly green giantess
trembling in the world air
that closes in
like a trap,





like a suburb
tuesdays.

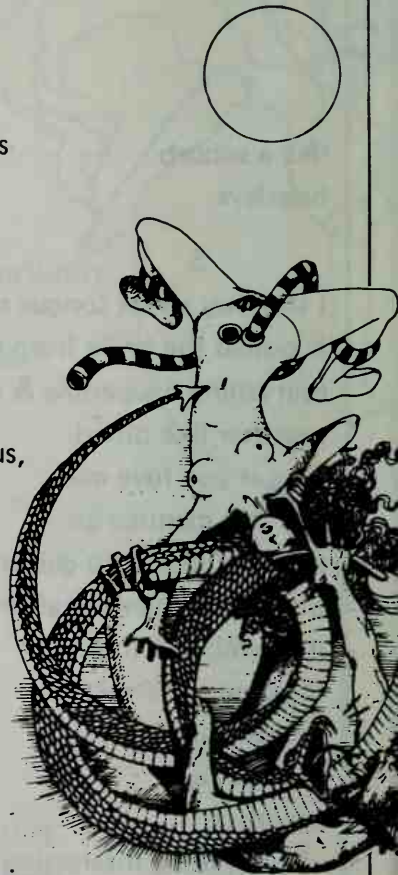
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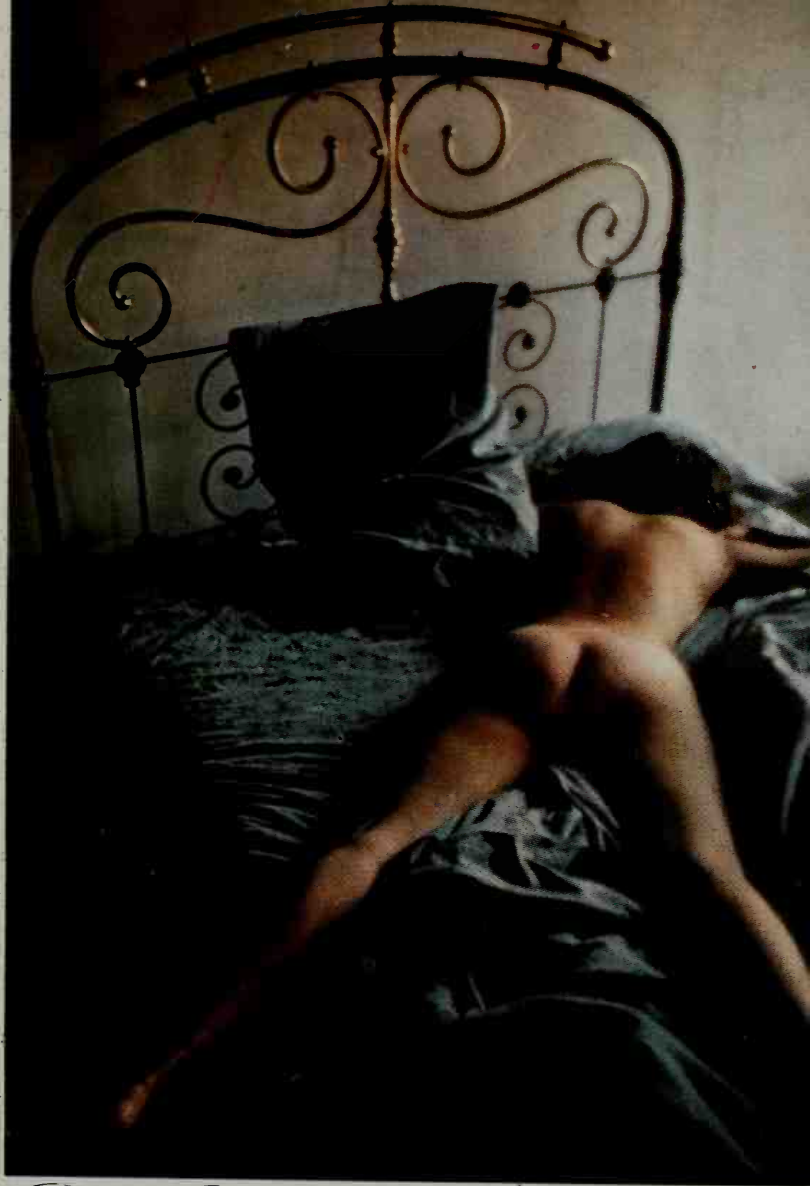
I shot my sweet tongue down into her craw
& pulled the knife from its heart of veins
everything happening & running
together like blood.
Zara if you love me
kiss this manuscript
take me back thru guillotine days
the women hanging all off me
the gambles I took
to come out straight
a bright-haired
bright-eyed
advocate
of everything interesting
interesting & healthy
the healthy films that are going to be made
the big tits
box office
the way they forced me into confederate uniforms
the perils of Atlantic
guns my ma left me in her will
to shoot down Billy
time time you thrilled me in Rome
& the ravishing beans they kept pushing on me

in New Orleans.

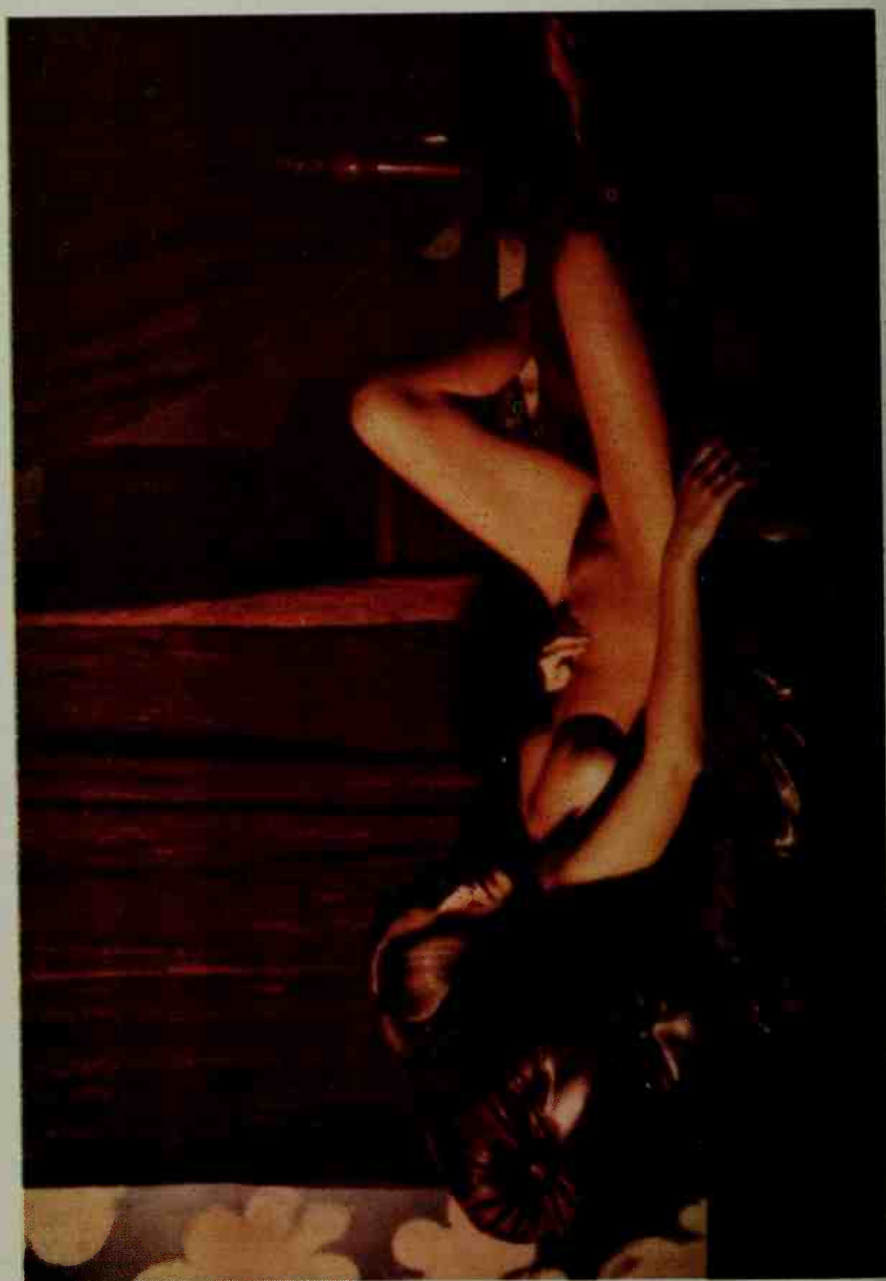
Kiss me with your Quasimodo lips
hug me Raskolnikov
press me to your bosom Che.

If you will soothe me
just a shade more
I will tell you why our president
deserves the medal more than Zeus,
I will tell you
why I love my own consciousness
more than anything
& we can set the puke-
colored flag of
all inferior countries
out to dry
on windowsills of the word
the world enemy
& map some new neo-colonialist pimp
kisses gentle reader
creep who buys my hustle.
Kiss this revolutionary on the lips,
everybody tingling,
you must esteem me perfectly
in the passes I've made toward Virtue
& if I flounder ever
it is because everyman
adores himself
in my new city skin.





PHOTOGRAPHS
by DUDLEY
GRAY















IS MAN A
CLOWN?



IS FELLINI?

AND WHAT'S
A CLOWN?

by Parker Tyler

What is happening to the comic art in films? A look at Fellini's *The Clowns* offers a critic a chance to examine the funny men of stage and screen, from the world of Chaplin's Little Tramp to Beckett's hoboos, from Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* to television's *Laugh-In*



clown? People still use the term to describe someone whose manners seem especially grotesque, out of line, or just funny. A man's a man, oh, yes, but he may be a clown for all that! Being a clown is a very old legend, embedded in the substrata of culture and ever resurfacing in new forms, new clothes, new accents, new professionalisms and amateurisms. There is a perennial sense in which a clown is a freak—artificial, extravagant, somewhat inhuman—and there is a sense, quite as perennial, in which he stands for Everyman—mankind at its most typical, most laughably vulnerable. The reason that everybody used to laugh at clowns (now, it appears, fewer and fewer laugh) is that by universal consent they simply incarnated mankind at its most ridiculous, particularly its most infantile and helpless. Well, being infantile and helpless, for an adult, has become a bit too grim, and laughing at the spectacle a bit too hysterical—example: the movie *Catch-22*.

Speaking historically, the clown's bourgeoisifying changed him from the court fool, who (however bizarre in appearance) was witty and a fount of ironic wisdom, into the freakish ruffian, the drunkard and lunatic, the eternal





child and gullible victim; the one who took the disastrous pratfall, destroying the last vestige of human dignity. Saying just this much serves to evoke all the film comics one has ever seen, but saying as much also makes these comics more distant. More *distant*? Are clowns so new? Or are they, in their oldest essence, anachronistic? It is interesting—and, more than that, curiously important—that Federico Fellini, commissioned in Italy to do a television documentary on clowns, should have troubled to be learned and imaginative on the subject, should have distinguished carefully between the two clown types that emerged in the circus ring: the White Clowns and the Augustes. Ordinarily, bypassing what history has to show us, one would take circus clowns for granted as typed vestiges.

Not so Fellini. In a statement issued in connection with press screenings of the television film in New York City, Fellini (who, after all, is one of the world's most formidable directors) makes some stimulating, rather surprising, and arresting remarks, from which I quote: "There are . . . two figures: Pierrot, or the White Clown, and Auguste. The former is elegance, grace, harmony, intelligence, lucidity, which are moralistically present as idealizations. Pierrot



thus becomes Mother, Father, Teacher, Artist, Lover, *that which ought to be*. Auguste, who would experience the fascination of these perfections were they not displayed with so much severity, is revolted. . . . Auguste rebels against such perfection, gets drunk and rolls on the ground. His spirit is a perpetual challenge. The White Clown (Pierrot) and Auguste, the teacher and the child, the mother and the mischievous son, the angel with the flaming sword and the sinner . . . these are man's two psychological attitudes: his thrust toward the lofty and his push toward the base. . . . The White Clown must be bad: that is a rule of the game. The White Clown is someone who slaps. . . . Another tendency of the White Clown is his exploitation of the Auguste, not only as the butt of a joke but as a working man. The White Clown is a bourgeois, and that is why he tends to appear dressed in a style calculated to amaze. . . . The Auguste, on the contrary, is fixed into a single character (the tramp, the child, the ragamuffin) that does not change. . . . If I imagine being a clown myself, I think of being an Auguste. But a White Clown, too. Finally, perhaps I am the director of the circus. The doctor of lunatics become a lunatic himself!"



Then, even more suggestively, Fellini goes on to classify other film directors in this way: "Pasolini is a White Clown of the graceful and pedantic variety. Antonioni is one of the sad, taciturn, mute Augustes. . . . Visconti: a White Clown of great authority, his pompous costume already giving orders." Nor does Fellini limit the range of reference to film directors: "Hitler: a White Clown. Mussolini: an Auguste. Freud: a White Clown. Jung: an Auguste." And he provocatively adds: "This game is so real that, if you have a White Clown in front of you, you are forced to act like an Auguste, and vice versa." The strange part is that these grand reverberations, these profound and pointed formulas, constitute only marginal mental notes of Fellini's; his film, *The Clowns*, states them only very obliquely, tacitly. Not surprisingly, the printed statement ends with the dominant query: "Have I succeeded?"

Yet we must not underrate the powerful faculty of these "mental notes," sometimes illustrated by the film itself, to evoke the historical development of clowns and their comedy up to our day. When Fellini calls Hitler a White Clown and Mussolini an Auguste, it is as if he had in mind the way Chaplin, in *The Great Dictator*, portrayed Hitler



and directed Jack Oakie to play Mussolini. The White Clown-Auguste opposition works out perfectly. Mussolini is the butt of the haughty clown, Hilter. Or take two recent films of blackened clowns and blackened humor: *M*A*S*H* and *Catch-22*. Are not the "men in white" roles, played by Elliot Gould and Donald Sutherland, those of cynical bourgeois White Clowns having fun at the expense of an Auguste, the army dentist who imagines, the first time he can't get a hard-on with a woman, that he's really a "fairy"? In *Catch-22*, all the army officers are pompous, more or less power-mad White Clowns, and all the privates helpless, but rebellious Augustes.

What happened to Fellini's *The Clowns* to make it less illustrative of its own true essence than these recent films? He visualized it too literally, too factually, too, in a word, documentarily. It remains a distinguished film, in any case, because Fellini is a distinguished director, a serious man. Something about the way he approached his task, nevertheless, cramped his true style so that the result, oddly, is a built-in frustration of a film. After some personal reminiscences of freakish, real-life clowns remembered from his village childhood, and some touching



sequences where he visits a few old, retired circus clowns; after some reconstructed clown acts and one brilliant episode about an old clown who escapes from his deathbed in the hospital for one more look at the circus, and dies in his seat while laughing; after this point, and perhaps before, we are aware of being in the presence of something that is mainly an elegy, weighed down by sad nostalgia for a lost world, as if this were an adult's memory of his youth as a lost paradise. Fellini is so very personally immersed in his theme, without being proportionately revealing, that the film has no large imaginative outline, no formal character of its own. What seems uppermost, what is the resonance we are left with? We have found that many famous circus clowns, whose profession crossed the century's turn, are already dead or close to death, so that they represent a virtually extinct institution, one that has to be recalled by circus historians and hobbyists, or else, as occasionally the film witnesses, revived by clowns still trained in the old tradition. Today, the regularly operating circuses in Europe plainly reveal that the tradition of the circus clown is a desiccated and insipid affair.

It is therefore no accident that the grand-climax routine



with which Fellini's film ends is an elaborate clown's funeral, with a fantastic hearse (drawn by clowning pretend-horses) and a fantastic group of clown mourners, including a male, representing the dead clown's widow, wearing enormous false breasts and buttocks. There is nothing vague about the immediate sense of this scene: the death of a clown is being made to symbolize the death of the clown tradition, which for Fellini has always meant the very heart of the circus. The film begins when he is a boy watching a circus tent being erected beyond his bedroom window. The soundtrack tells us that originally clowns inspired more terror in him than fun and hilarity: a terror of the monstrous, even, by association, a terror of violence and death. The climax seems to confirm this when, by accident, the clown's supposed corpse slides out of the hearse, and, amid pandemonium, he is "resurrected," swinging aloft amid an avalanche of many-colored, swaying streamers.

The mourners' grotesque bewilderment, the chaos of their orthodox reaction, shows a double edge: the once-jubilant rite of death and resurrection (the heart of the ancient carnival) is here put in question by its acquired

**"Fellini, a White Clown,
has given us a really
black circus...."**

nature as an archaeological reconstruction, at which no spectators laugh because the routine is an outdated stunt that has lost its comic vitality. For this reconstruction, in fact, the spectators' benches beyond the circus ring are obviously empty; it is as if this were a rehearsal. A further fact is that at the large press screening which I attended nobody at all, at least conspicuously, was laughing. Fellini lets us see himself, the camera crew, and the cameras photographing the action, and how some elderly performers, exhausted, retire to the sidelines for a breather. The gay illusion of the continuous clown act overlaps upon the sad, *discontinuous* reality behind it. Naturally. This is modern existential grimness. Fellini, the White Clown, who (as he himself says) "directs" the circus, has given us, without exactly meaning it, a really *black* circus. That is, without wanting to, but as if compelled by the facts of the case, he has become the circus's black-comedy writer, its sad, committed, conscious elegist who identifies it with death.

All this has a definite logic, both internal and external: internal in terms of Fellini's career, his use of clowns and clowning in his previous films; external in terms of man and the world we live in today. What is fine about *The Clowns*, and what brings it as a work of mind and art to an impasse, is the strong personal sentiment of nostalgia brought by Fellini to his theme. The theme is, in one sense, too internal to be handled so documentarily as it has been—so much in terms of externals, so much as statistics of the vestigial clown institution. The practical problem was the more handicapped by the fact that Fellini had been limited by the television commission to the *circus* institution of the clown. We get no evocation of the refined art of the famous contemporary mime, Marcel Marceau, or such an extraordinary instance of historic revival as Jean-Louis Barrault's performance as Baptiste Deburau in the French film masterpiece *The Children of Paradise*. Both of these are White Clown types, and in Deburau's case a type whose real-life dimension includes the Auguste, the inept



“victim,” the pantaloone whose natural state is that final, disastrous “rolling on the ground”: a fall like the one in the Garden of Eden.

As seen in *The Children of Paradise*, this is all metaphorical: Pierrot’s traditional frustration as a lover, a man as inept in bed action as he is superb in the art of mime. Fellini’s range of reference has only the merest hints of a Pierrot-Auguste such as Chaplin’s original tramp clown, naturally both elegant and inept, supreme in art and sensibility, yet fatally handicapped, often a flop as a lover. Indeed, aside from the special case in *The Great Dictator*, Chaplin’s whole genius was the creation, in Charlie, of a triumphant White Clown, who, much to his own embarrassment, lets the Auguste within him get the upper hand and throw his act into chaos, thus earning the spectator’s ambivalent laughter. Is Fellini here, somewhat unconsciously, thinking of himself as a sort of Chaplin? Aspects of *8½*—his account of a film director who fails to make a film and finally hallucinates himself as a ringmaster of actors who are palpably idealized White Clowns—make this supposition quite plausible.

I imagine that Fellini’s human wisdom, at this point in

"The film art, like other arts, becomes a kind of requiem mass...."

his career, causes him doubt about his own vital resources, so that *The Clowns*, at its deepest level, emerges as another installment in that strange, self-declared autobiography which virtually all Fellini's films embody. Essentially, *The Clowns* seems, beneath its surface, a whimsical if proud self-indictment. The mere fact that, in the previously quoted statement, Fellini has brilliant intuitions about his fellow artists, mostly film directors, implicates him as a contemporary film artist. Picasso, he says, is an Auguste, "triumphant, insolent, knowing how to do everything." Evidently, then, he has successfully revolted against his corporate "master": all the White Clowns of painting. Is Fellini a little envious of Picasso's achievement? Yet he is content, as if feeling safe about it, to call Antonioni "one of the sad, taciturn, mute Augustes." It may have been said without malice, but it was distinctly to put a rival in his place. And what of Visconti? He is "a White Clown of great authority, his pompous costume already giving orders." A sly satire, no doubt, not lacking its nicety. Surely it is all witty. But perhaps, too, it is somewhat vain and self-compromising. For Fellini puts himself beyond the sphere of such vulnerable supremacies by awarding himself (once more) the role of "director of the circus—the doctor of the lunatics become a lunatic himself." That might be thought a sort of left-handed self-flattery, an assertion of superiority, as if to say, "Look! I may be a clown, too, but at least I am wise enough to realize it, while *they* . . ."

In an artist's case we must never fail to reckon with residual egotism and automatic vanity. Fellini, beyond doubt, is wise enough to sense the ambiguity of everybody's present case, including his own. The point to be decided is: Just where is the masterful irony of some subtle comic art exhausted and where do the same art's involuntary awkwardness and mishaps, a bit blindly, take over? Perhaps the commission to do *The Clowns* was accepted half with spontaneous enthusiasm, half with resigned doubtfulness. Fellini had tried to put his own case in 8½, and to depict a film director's experience as a failure,

suggesting the contemporary human condition. *8½* seems to say that all art, even the finest today, must fail because the human project *as such* is failing; that somehow it is not enough—it may even be “bad form”—to devise a successful art, a fine and serious art, from the conditions of universal human failure. In that film, Fellini attached a brave, debonair face to the situation. In *The Clowns*, I should say, he tries to recall the way he achieved that debonair face—that wise “clown’s face”—even while performing an undertaker’s role in laying to rest the great tradition of the circus clown.

Such a film as *The Clowns*, therefore, may not even be meant to “succeed.” Its function may be an involuntary confession by the art film that its residual successes are, after all, only “documentary.” It, too, provides only some tentative, forlorn “statistics.” Thus the film art, like other arts, becomes a kind of requiem mass, a mortuary ceremony, successful in exact proportion to its realistic awareness that, in itself, it is a simple documentation of art’s inadequacy as human fulfillment, as intact human statement. With *Satyricon*, Fellini reached the heights of personal fantasy in terms of the commercial film. There he was not impeded by the self-criticism with which he had structured *8½*. In the later film, he let himself go—he became an outrageous White Clown defying the reckless Auguste within him to do his worst; defying, too, those other White Clowns, the master film critics and his colleague-critics, to go ahead and mock him, to say he was being self-indulgent, decadent, *recherché*. The *Satyricon* film is a lusty clown act in which Fellini managed to inject some serious poetry, some highly personal and significant vision. The whole episode of the worship of the sacred hermaphrodite, his kidnapping by Encolpius and Ascyltus, and his death in the desert, is a perfectly managed piece of violent seriocomic art, exquisitely fleshed and photographed. The very last scene, in which a dead man’s old friends calmly eat his flesh according to the terms of his will, to inherit his wealth, is really a sinister clown act, mirthless except for a great cynical, submerged laughter. “Submerged laughter” is not an appropriate response to the circus clown.

With Fellini’s previous attainments in mind, we can juxtapose as richly symbolic an archetypal routine as the one he reconstructs as one of the clown acts in *The Clowns*.

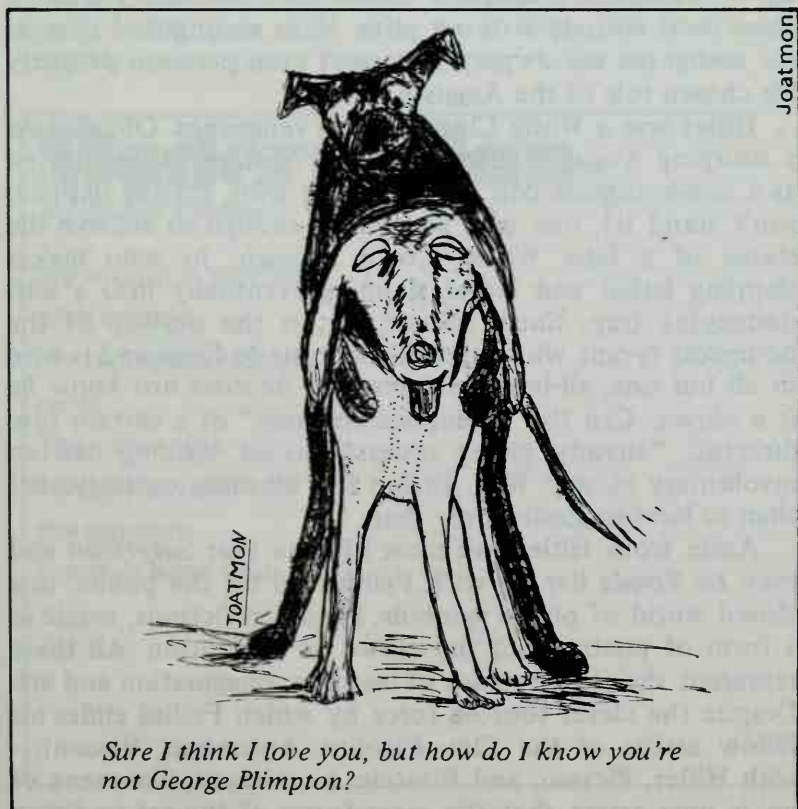
“Auguste may turn the tables on his perennial rival, the White Clown.”

A very elegant White Clown (the one always wearing a small peaked white hat, a whited face, and a standardized but stylishly inventive costume) performs a magic act with a spectator's derby, into which, with much *éclat*, he breaks some eggs to make a mythical omelette; the omelette made, the hat is returned—immaculate of course—to its owner. At this point, the envious, hobo-like Auguste (here not so impressively performed as the White Clown) insists that he can duplicate this wonderful feat. Auguste proceeds to commandeer the same spectator's derby, tries to make the omelette and, of course, muffs it—he messes up the spectator's hat and gets an egg, which has flown high in the air, splattered upon his own head. The strutting, scornful White Clown is disgusted; the humiliated Auguste has definitely lost the duel. In his marginal mental notes, Fellini defines the White Clown as a “master,” the one who slaps, not, like the Auguste, he who gets slapped, the inevitable victim of the mishap and the bladder.

In also remarking that the Auguste may turn the tables and get the upper hand on his perennial rival, the White Clown, Fellini is granting the paradoxical structure in which certain sorts of faking and botching, if sly and aggressive enough, may win out over genuine mastery and legitimate success. This judgment reverberates with an analogy that Fellini may well be applying to filmmaking itself. The commercial film is an Auguste which, using mixed and questionable methods, often wins out over the art film, with its methods ratified by taste and high craft—wins out even to the extent that (as certain eminent critics themselves maintain) the tastelessly deft popular film can be named an “art,” can supplant, in terms of popular and critical acclaim, the art film. Such, I would say, is the triumph of a director such as Alfred Hitchcock, master of kitsch melodrama, in the eyes of those “White” Augustes (shall we say?) who have created the prestige of the *Nouvelle Vague* school of opinion. Notice how far the analogy may involve even the status of the victorious pop film. Take the gifted *Gimme Shelter*. Everyone, performers and public, is supposed to be “Auguste” in a boisterous but

happily delirious mood; but then the worst, most violently “Augustean” demons arise, and the White Clowns (the Hell’s Angels on this occasion) must use their lethal authority to hit back.

At present, Fellini’s personal situation lacks neither clarity, relevance, nor wide interest. Glancing at his career’s rich perspective, we can see how progressively involved his art has been with dream fantasy and “magic acts,” both often tinged with clownishness. Recall the decisive use of the circus metaphor he made in his wife’s biography, *Juliet of the Spirits*. Even more importantly, the three leading characters of *La Strada* are fairly explicit versions of the complex Auguste. Zampano, who buys as wife and assistant the simple-minded Gelsomina, is a brute Auguste inside and out; the Fool whom the two encounter is, as it were, a White Clown degraded to an Augustean level; as Zampano’s victim, Gelsomina herself (a much more attractive clown than her husband and master) is a White Clown acting a



**"Hope and Benny started
their careers by being
dandyish juveniles...."**

pantaloon only because she is a woman and a slave.

A sublime irony of twentieth-century art is the individual clown, Ubu, invented by Alfred Jarry in his play *Ubu Roi*. Who, or rather what, is Ubu? A gross, bullying, obscene, brutal hulk of a clown? He is, in the modern sense, a *Black Clown*. He is the bourgeois beast, the gluttonous king of the middle class, who has overturned all his White Clown masters and their court fools to become master, fool, and brute-beast in one: the Man of Mud apotheosized as a victorious Auguste, a symbol of the supreme and boastful bourgeois. Like the scheming bourgeois of commerce, the Ubu-Auguste has a certain rudimentary but effective guile: he is both demonic Con Man and demonic Killer. Zampano is simply a witless Ubu, ultimately crushed since he is entirely without gifts. He is so ungifted that, as his audiences are aware, he cannot even perform properly his chosen role of the Auguste.

Hitler was a White Clown with a vengeance. Oh, yes! As a usurping Auguste, that is what he *became*. Hitler started as a low-bourgeois con man (the one who, getting slapped, can't stand it), one who was gifted enough to achieve the status of a false White Clown messiah: he who makes slapping lethal and lethal slapping eventually into a self-destroying trap. Such, in our age, is the destiny of the bourgeois tyrant who succeeds by tour de force and is wise in all but one, all-important respect: *he does not know he is a clown*. Can the "pompous costume" of a certain film director, "already giving orders," avoid looking like an involuntary clown? Well, Fellini is a bit more sophisticated than to have suggested only that.

Aside from Hitler, we must observe that *Satyricon* and even *La Strada* live on with Fellini and us, the public, in a closed world of poetic symbols, historical fictions, magic as a form of poetry, and the clown as a tradition. All these represent the classic values of learning: imagination and art. Despite the clever tour de force by which Fellini elides his fellow artists of the film—Pasolini, Antonioni, Visconti—with Hitler, Picasso, and Einstein, he, himself, like many of us, is now aware that the great forms of the art tradition

may well be perishing in the midst of a twin process: on one side, a vast public apathy, a kind of atrophy of the esthetic sensibility; on the other, the ceaseless, grinding elimination of public belief in all varieties of myth, whether religious, philosophic, or artistic.

Considering such a purview, one is in a position to trace (should one like) the historic evolution of the clown from his most primitive forms: from the tribal scapegoat and the medicine man, to the figures of the *commedia dell'arte*, through the baleful brute, Ubu, and the hobo clown of modern burlesque, through Chaplin and the elegant versions of Pierrot as a lover, to the glorified comic ornaments of our present day, the gag masters—those whitewashed Augustes of stage, film, and television such as Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and their less familiar, because retired or demised, peers. It may be valuable to remind the reader that the Messrs. Hope and Benny started their careers by being dandyish juveniles, joking but intent Don Juans. Yet the promiscuity that once applied equally to girls and gags gradually narrowed down to promiscuity, exclusively, with gags; the girls, as it were, evolved imperceptibly into gags. This summary helps to place our

Modern Man

by Walter Griffin

My mouth is stuffed
with cotton.

My hands are electric
wires.

The room tilts.

I empty myself into
the condom.

I wish it were you.

**"One doesn't laugh
at freaks...one
wonders at them."**

theme in terms of time and tradition and suggests the *terminal quality* inherent in the popular quantity of the whole clown tradition.

Beckett's hobo clowns in *Waiting for Godot* are, of course, waiting for God; if they weren't, the play would seem a dreary existentialist blank. Regardless of its comic qualities, *Waiting for Godot* signifies a terminal phase of religion. We are reminded by the annals of myth that an important comic hero has been the Divine Fool, or Blessed Innocent, the unfortunate who corresponds humanly to the equally legendary Village Idiot. Many a film comedian has incarnated the Divine Fool, notably Harry Langdon and Harpo Marx. As a fairy-tale hero, he always became wise and ended in glory, miraculously, through precocious valor and, of course, with the aid of magic. While infantile in personality, perhaps bizarre, this hero was never a physical freak. As a fairy-tale character, his nature as a mental defective or handicapped person was always deceptive: a transient illusion.

As one deformed, the religious clown also exists in tradition, and one of his familiar archetypes is the fictional Hunchback of Notre Dame, conceived by Victor Hugo. Being most unpleasing in physical appearance, the hunchback had to win Our Lady's grace and special blessings by beguiling her with his tumbling, which was simply his own form of worship. Christian theology had carried forward certain laws of primitive tribes not only by making room for the physical freak, including the transvestite, but also by sometimes attaching to him a superstitious awe. Modern lay society, of course, tends to associate freaks with the circus, where they are mere spectacles for the curious. One doesn't laugh at freaks, and yet one gawks and sighs; one wonders at them. This reaction parallels the boy Fellini's first response to clowns as awesome, rather terrifying, monsters.

In *The Clowns*, Fellini demonstrates that personal maturity may overcome this same nightmarish response and make the freakishness of clowns (who are, indeed, sometimes dwarfs) into a medium of poetry and high comedy.

He suggests how, through an awareness of myth, an individual's growth can reproduce the historic processes of religion. Clowns, even monstrous-looking clowns, can be beautifully funny, spiritually funny. Still, for them to function in the broadest sense of the human comedy, they must be upheld by the total consciousness of mythic tradition as dually visible in religion and art. I say that Fellini *suggests* this in *The Clowns* without precisely showing it.

Fellini, in the past, has proven a remarkably consistent and fertile artist of the comic, with clowns as a conspicuously specific medium. What is Anita Ekberg in *La Dolce Vita*, for instance, except the White Goddess turned into a White Clownness—even into a female Auguste who gets slapped by her Tarzan of a husband? Once Miss Ekberg, during that film's production, broke out at Fellini and accused him of trying to make her look ridiculous. It was true and nobody knew it better than Fellini himself. But, in result as well as intention, it was tenderly, understandingly true. Women of Miss Ekberg's beauty and big build do sometimes have babyish personalities and (like the Divine Fool on the male side) even function as more or less charming simpletons. The Dumb Blonde is a classic movie myth, and for many actresses has been a career role. Take Carol Channing or two of her well-known predecessors, Joan Blondell and Judy Holliday: all of them blond, absurdly feminine, tacitly lovable. Of course the Dumb Blonde, like the Beauty Queen, is a surviving archetype which today draws the fire of Women's Lib marksmen—or perhaps I should say, more accurately, *markswomen*. Fellini again was inspired to lovingly abuse Miss Ekberg, who appeared in *Boccaccio '70* as a most original conception of the Great White Cow. For me, that episode succeeded in being a pure and charming comic metaphor.

When Charles Chaplin announced, "The Tramp is dead," and started making, even as Fellini did, transparently autobiographic films, he was (again like Fellini) saying something about the clown's tradition as a whole. In *Limelight*, Chaplin had a famous music-hall comedian ending up with obsolescence, failure, and death. Before that, his own comic personality had been turned into a sinister double. Monsieur Verdoux, as a modern Bluebeard based on Landru, showed the black comedy that had

“For Garbo, it was her own glamor reflex that collapsed....”

always lurked in the comical tramp, who, as an underdog, was constantly engaged in viciously fighting back. In the Verdoux film, murder became, shockingly enough, part of a clown routine. In *The Great Dictator*, too, Chaplin split his clown into good and evil characters: Hitler the White Clown and Charlie the Auguste.

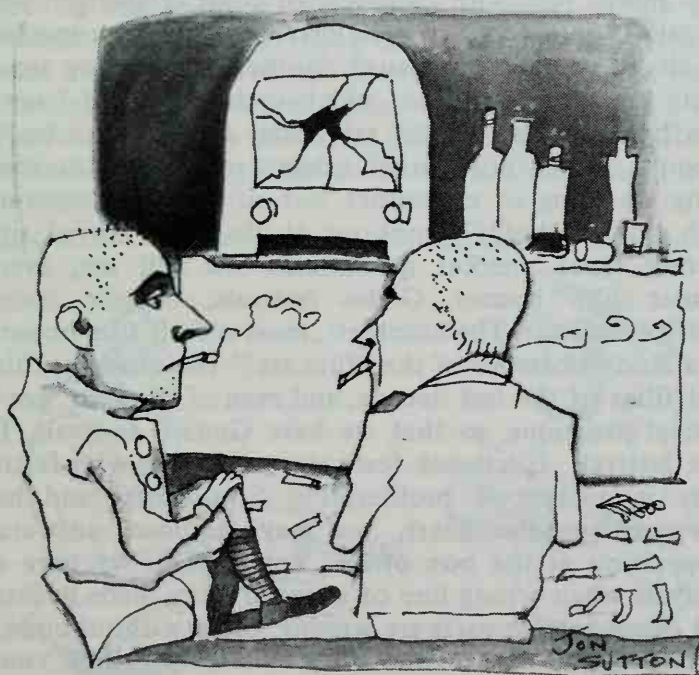
The White Clown (a mass murderer) had gone too far in masterful arrogance, and the little Auguste (not an ambiguous hobo now, but an honest tradesman) became his old rival's nemesis. Thus, in laymanizing and reforming Charlie the Tramp, Chaplin finally altered his clown image into his natural image as a human being: the little man out of character and out of costume, the retired kingpin professional as happy husband and father—a status, one can't help noting, that had always been the Tramp's visionary goal. After all, the great little Tramp had not existed for art's sake but for life's sake. Chaplin had one more film to make about himself, *The King in New York*, which he used as an instrument to exploit his “royal” disdain for the United States, which he had once left, in disgrace and a subjective mood of rancor, as an “anti-American.”

One should not venture here to argue the merits of Chaplin's standing grievance against the United States or the merits of his political ideas, which were always superficial and commonplace, and today seem pathetically outmoded. His career as a professional clown is what seems relevant here. To this career he brought a brilliant illumination of what has happened, and is happening, to the clown's generic art. The White Clown-Auguste tradition fits his case not only internally but also externally: in the circus clown tradition as a whole, and in the relation of that tradition to life, to contemporary culture, and its destiny. A moral and political rebellion too serious, too literally radical, for the medium of his art had led Chaplin, first, to alter the sights of his clown and finally, by this path, to abandon his old and masterful profession.

Like Garbo today, Chaplin today is really too old to resume a professional career. But neither of them was “too old” at the time he quit. It was not that oppor-

tunity and prestige essentially failed them, but that, in any case, their personal inspiration, their main drive, failed for them. For Garbo, it was her own glamor reflex that collapsed; for Chaplin, his own comedy reflex. The efficacy of a pure comic art in his case, that of a pure romantic art in Garbo's case, could be felt no longer. I imagine that Garbo, a slave of the Hollywood system, started to be disillusioned long before she actually gave up; like all the big stars who wished to be serious, she had faced a perpetual struggle with her studio. Chaplin, however, had long been his own boss when he began to be disillusioned;

Sutton



"AND WHATEVER IS LEFT OF THE BOURGEOISIE. HAR COMRADE, WILL BE AS A BLEAK-DAWN. A DAWN OF DECADENT DESOLATION... A POET'S DREAM OF FLOOD AND FIRE, AND DOOM. A VIOLENT FINAL DAWN... AND ALL WILL BE GREY AND GREY AND BLEAK AND GREY AND THE GREAT FOURTH REICH WILL HAVE BEGUN."

"The laugh business is showing signs of panic bred by confusion...."

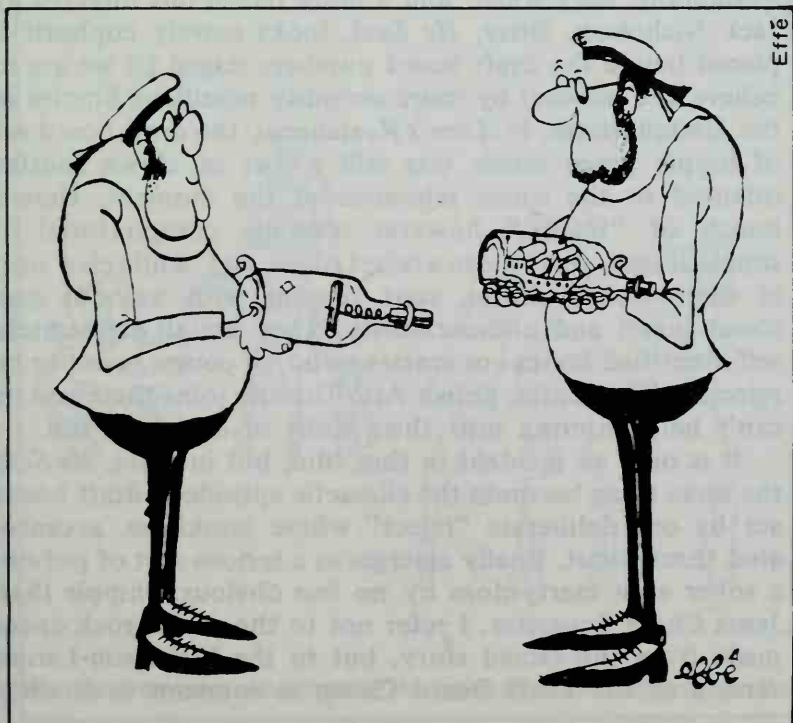
and what *he* became disillusioned about was not an industrial bureaucracy but the validity of his own, personally intact art: the art of the clown. And when eventually he pronounced the Tramp's death, he was also thinking, perhaps unconsciously, of the death of the comic tradition that the Tramp represented.

Yes, yes! We still have, at least among the masses, the laugh-in art and the laugh-in reflex to suit that "art." But, really, a laugh-in should be more of a laugh-out than the very mixed bag, with its gaggle of guest celebrities, we see on television for part of each year. Like other businesses, of which art is one, the laugh business is showing signs of panic bred by confusion, which in turn is bred from the dearth of profits. All the arts today have the tendency to become reruns, not out of solemn reverence (the sort of thing we bring to museums), but out of wild desperation, with our "esthetic" emotions at the level stirred up by veering stock market quotations. We still see, even in regular film houses, Garbo festivals, Chaplin festivals, Griffith festivals. The humblest, most off-off film house can be a study chamber of the "film art." The ominous thing is that films of the last decade, and even of last year, get into festival programs, so that we have Godard festivals, Truffaut festivals, Hitchcock festivals, god-knows-who festivals. Ours is a day of proliferating film buffs, and hence reverence in the heart, we may suppose, answers to desperation at the box office. Yet why do we have such festivals when a long line of superior films made in Europe and other foreign parts are waiting, often without hope, for routine distribution in the United States? (Fellini, *you* are the one to answer that. Give us a White Clown's answer.)

It is easy to say that sex and revolution, together and apart, are replacing the art forms, including comedy. It may also be *true* to say it! It is not that the Rowan and Martin "Laugh-Ins," resurrected while their cast and producers are having vacations, are beautifully funny, but that they are beautifully scandalous, beautifully impudent, beautifully inept: the put-on versions of things that insist on being unattractively real. The "Laugh-Ins" have an overbearing,

monotonous topicality. Pitilessly psittacistic, they are expanded political cartoons done live. They supplement the suppressed terror of the day's sinister newscasts with the "funny side" of it all; that is, with excuses to *laugh hysterically* rather than *cry hysterically*. This is not the comic tradition; it is a comic emergency. It is bomb-shelter humor.

Federico Fellini, a sophisticated European, is something of a film genius. He can still do things with the viable emotions, with comic traditions and archetypes, with poetry. Nevertheless there is a school of opinion ready to complain that Fellini is too subjective, too dependent on the past, too old-hat sentimental, too personal. Where is the true *social relevance* of his work? That is, where is 1973, where is the Vietnam War? What, besides, of the world student revolution, of drug addiction in the American armed forces, and so on and so on? To each, I would remark democratically, his own. Those relevancies are not being totally neglected by the arts; nor are they, in their filmic manifestations, altogether outside the comic tradition in



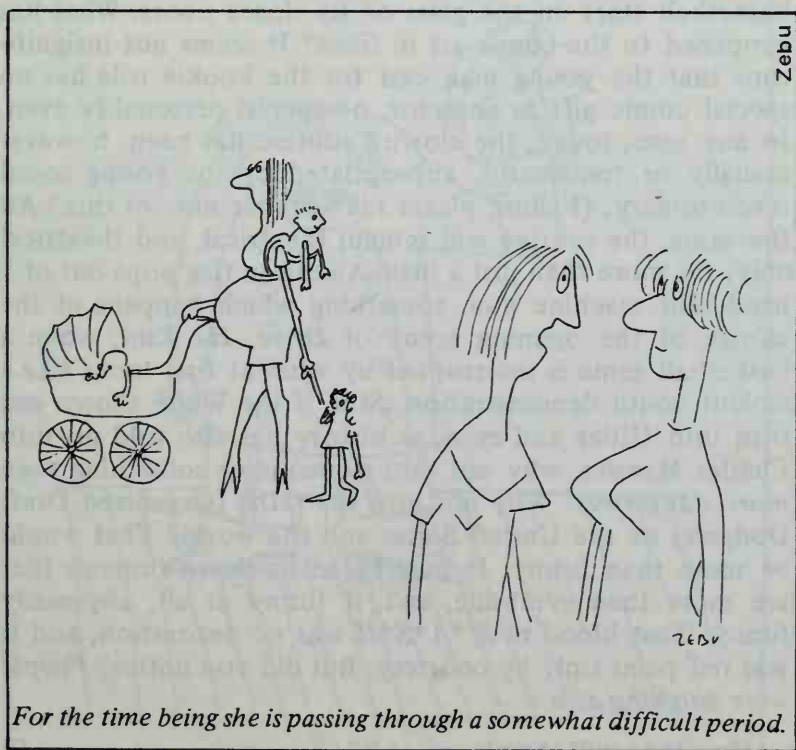
**“Even Altamont may seem
a disaster of sorts to
the happy-hippie cult.”**

general or the clown tradition in particular. Current hot example of this truth: the Draft Board Clown which the Conscientious Objector has become via the movies. Danny Kaye and others did the draft board act as a professional-sissy, little-big-boy routine. But Kaye and such, to the Pepsi Generation, are just funny antiques. Their young inheritors are sinister Augustes with the wily arrogance of socially updated White Clowns.

Chaplin's politics may be as antiquated as one pleases. As for Fellini, he just doesn't belong to the generations that count. He's nearer sixty than thirty, isn't he? Even Altamont may seem a disaster of sorts to the happy-hippie cult, the isolated rock generation. For this reason the film made from it, *Gimme Shelter*, documentarily introduces sour notes, chiefly Mick Jagger's retrospective glum bewilderment at the violence he could arouse but *not* control. Yet the rock orgy itself, in view of films such as *Alice's Restaurant*, *Easy Rider*, and a more recent one directed by Jack Nicholson, *Drive, He Said*, looks naively euphoric if placed beside the draft board numbers staged (if we are to believe the movies) by more seriously rebellious hippies in the United States. In *Alice's Restaurant*, the draft board act of hippie peace rebels was still a sort of clown routine oriented to the social relevance of the moment. Here a bunch of "freaks," however severally conspiratorial or sophisticated, gets sent to a reject room, and, while clad only in their jockey shorts, start rapping with way-out gags about incest and homosexuality. They are all deliberately self-identified kooks—or crazies—who, of course, *want* to be rejected. The gentle, girlish Arlo Guthrie joins them and he can't help entering into their spirit of desperate fun.

It is only an incident in that film, but in *Drive, He Said* the same thing becomes the climactic episode: a draft board act by one deliberate "reject" whose kookiness, accentuated throughout, finally emerges as a serious sort of put-on, a sober elite martyrdom by no less obvious a hippie than Jesus Christ Superstar. I refer not to the recent rock opera made from the sacred story, but to the Nicholson-Lerner version of the Draft Board Clown as someone as intently

revolutionary (and, when necessary, as violent) in his peace-mindedness as Jesus was. The youth in question is the *alternate* hero of *Drive, He Said*, the roomie of the lead hero, a tall young college basketball star, for whom the love problem and the sport problem, we have learned, take blind precedence over the peace problem. This youth loves and lays a young woman, and, so doing, commits adultery since she is married to his professor, a nice guy. Everybody in this film is a sort of nice guy—even the handsome, rugged basketball coach—except the kookie young clown. *He* smokes pot, argues with his roomie, and gets so far-out as to frighten his own girlfriend out of their home. What's wrong? Nothing. He is merely coaching himself for a climb-the-walls number through which he hopes to effect his noninduction into the army. Meanwhile, to help things along, he gets himself into costume as a real crazy and attempts a real (or is it presumably faked?) rape of his pal's girlfriend, the young adulteress who has become pregnant. The scene is violent and screechy, like most of the film, but anticlimactically (the girl is rescued) it leads to the



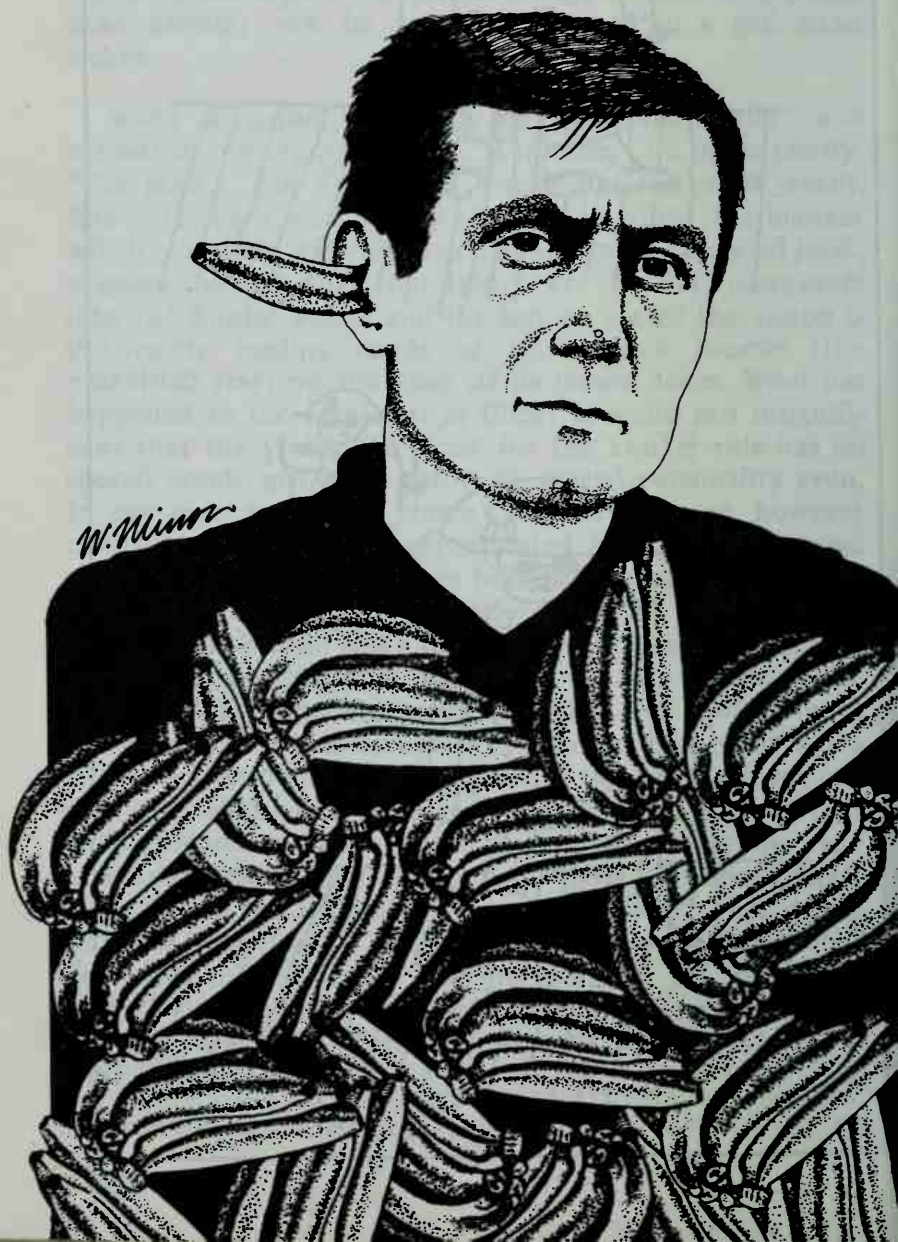
“The clown’s routine has been appropriated by the social revolutionary.”

denouement of the kookie youth’s final effort to get classified as “unfit” he strips nature-naked, lopes across the campus, and liberates, at leisure, all the snakes, toads, mice, and other animals from a room where scientific experiments are being conducted. It seems he just got tossed out of draft headquarters; now he can look forward to a real strait jacket.

When it comes, however, he goes real “quiet” and majestically motions it away. “I’m sane,” he states gently, “I’m sane . . . but I’m right.” Instead of the strait jacket, therefore, he is wrapped by the men in white in a blanket which, together with his long hair and mild, martyred look, suggests the last cloak that Jesus wore. He duly disappears into the booby wagon and the last we see of the action is the vainly beating hands of his agitated roomie (the basketball star) on the glass of its closed doors. What has happened to the comic art in films? It seems not insignificant that the young man cast for the kookie role has no special comic gift as an actor, no special personality even. In any case, today, the clown’s routine has been, however casually or transiently, appropriated by the young social revolutionary. (Fellini, please take proper note of this.) All the same, the routine will remain theatrical, and theatrical only, till more than just a little American flag pops out of a hand-held machine gun, something which happens at the climax of the opening scene of *Drive, He Said*, when a basketball game is interrupted by what at first looks like a violent youth demonstration. Still, if the White Clown can turn into Hitler and even, as history has also told us, into Charles Manson, why not into someone or something *even more dangerous*? Why not into the ODD (Organized Draft Dodgers) of the United States and the world? That would be more than funny. It might lead to clown funerals that are more than symbolic, and, if funny at all, abysmally funny. That blood in *M*A*S*H* was no decoration, and it was red paint only by courtesy. But did you notice? *People were laughing at it.*

How long will they laugh at it? □





**YEVGENY
YEVTUSHENKO:
THE
COLD
WARRIOR
AS POET**

by Dotson Rader

Is he really the knight in shining armor of Soviet liberalism, or does he have the heart of a commissar?

One is always making excuses for Yevgeny Yevtushenko. During his recent American tour we were continually giving the man the goddamn benefit of the doubt. By "we" I mean those of us who met him privately: the press, the intellectual establishment in New York. We kissed ass. It is shameful that I and others who had the opportunity did not confront him more aggressively with his complicity—although who knows what quiet bargaining, what political buying and selling goes on in the Soviet Union between the official writers and the commissars who police them—his complicity in the persecution of the Jews and the suppression of intellectual freedom in the Soviet Fatherland. It is becoming fashionable to be anti-Zionist and to indulge in a tolerance of anti-Semitism. We rationalize it among blacks. We understate it among Russians, appealing to the long history of pogrom and racial murder in Russia, to the more recent political complications and suspicions arising from Israeli military policy. We are wrong to rationalize evil.

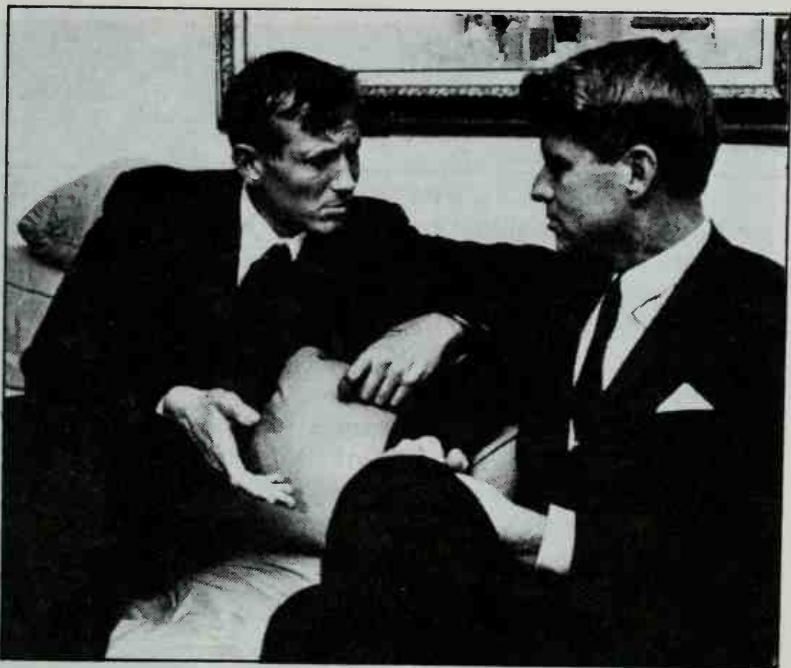
Perhaps, as Yevtushenko has said, we Westerners (particularly Americans) are decadent. Perhaps the West is, as

**"The gangsters have taken
over the Revolution and
sent us their poets."**

Leonid Brezhnev said, "but a sea of perverted feelings and mutilated souls." Maybe decadence makes us oversensitive to the "social disciplining" of Soviet writers guilty of the sin of "formalism." ("Formalism" is one of the charges which Yevtushenko made against Solzhenitsyn.) I think he would say we have a misplaced sympathy for writers who violate the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy of Social Realism in the arts. Maybe they are counterrevolutionary, closet bourgeois, acting through their art in ways objectively contrary to the building of communism and the correct line of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Maybe not.

I am a socialist. I am a believer in human freedom. It is, in point of fact, the commitment to human freedom which leads one inevitably to socialism. However, there is a difference between socialism and Soviet social-fascism. Regrettably, it is not the soul of socialism which Yevtushenko hears singing. It is the spirit of social-fascism. His poetry reeks of false values and cheap romanticism, the same qualities characteristic of the falsely heroic paintings, the Great Patriotic War canvases, the toiling proletariat propaganda posters which Soviet organs commissioned under Stalin, and continue to commission today. Yevtushenko has the heart of a Soviet functionary, and the degree to which it commands him is the precise degree to which he is an enemy of socialism and human freedom. The gangsters have taken over the Revolution and sent us their poets.

If that is true, then how is one to explain his seemingly authentic moments of courage: the criticism of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, and "Babiy Yar," his poem on the massacre of the Jews in Russia? I think they are explained by the same motivation which explains his appointment to the governing board of the Soviet Union of Writers, which acts as a disciplining bureau for Russian writers, his silence on the jailing of fellow poets, and the persecution of the Jews. It is careerist opportunism which motivates his occasions of apparent heroism. His first commitment is to himself, to his career; his massive conceit and egotism are evidence of the strength of that commit-



ment. Secondly, and this is only a guess, I suspect he maintains a commitment to the party bureaucracy, or at least that part which is favorable to his own advancement. Yet even that I think he betrays.

When an American bourgeois writer criticizes American aggression in Vietnam, and racism and repression at home, he does not betray his values. Rather his criticism springs from what remains of humanism and libertarianism in bourgeois thought. But when a Soviet writer, an official "socialist," a communist, when he remains silent on the suppression of human freedom in his own country, fifty years *after* the Revolution, he betrays not only the future of his country but socialism and the Revolution as well.

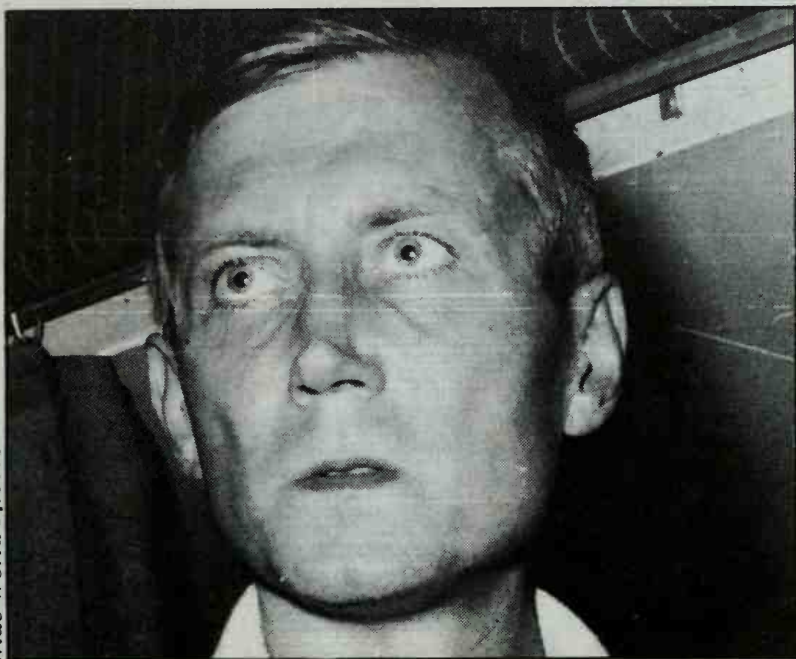
I came away from Yevtushenko's American visit sick at heart. He stayed too long, long enough for our suspicions to be confirmed, for the myth of his intellectual independence and moral integrity to be dissipated, for us to see him no longer as the brave young poet speaking out against social-fascist tyranny but rather as a Cold Warrior not yet come in from the cold; to see him as a loser, a man of bad faith, a poseur, a stalking horse for Soviet imperialism. He is not a friend of freedom, nor a true socialist. Allen Ginsberg, in trying to justify the obvious moral ambivalence of the man,

**"Yevtushenko's tragedy
is that he had not the
courage to resist."**

said, "He is trying his best to unify the Russian-American Soul under the banner of poesy; in heaven great golden thrones of credit are given for good intentions." Well, Ginsberg is wrong. And Sartre is correct. Intentions count for nothing; they are not worth a bucket of piss. And, ironically, it is precisely Yevtushenko's intentions which are most wrong.

Yevtushenko writes of being a man shuttling between the city of "Yes" and the city of "No," by which he means Moscow and New York. He has referred to his being a courier crossing the ice to deliver messages from one side to the other. In a love poem he writes: "I sped back and forth in a sick panic / with a hard-hit mask of a face / with a mind split two ways / both ways false." *Both ways false*. I do not think it simplistic to say that Yevtushenko's ability to act the courier, the mail boat, between two sides is due to his extraordinary capacity to be many things to many men. In a word, to be unprincipled.

After Yevtushenko had spent time at a party with and for Henry Kissinger (this was on the eve of the preliminary jury selection for the Berrigan trial in Harrisburg, a trial, if you recall, in which antiwar radicals were facing prison for "plotting" the kidnapping of the man the great socialist poet was dining with), I asked Allen Ginsberg how anyone could have respect for a man who would sit with and lend his reputation to someone the socialist camp considers a war criminal. I asked Ginsberg this, knowing Ginsberg's very public admiration for the Russian. Ginsberg mumbled something about "sentient beings" and how poets must reach everyone, even war criminals. That answer strikes me as nonsense. One of the few resources poets have is their command of special integrity. At their best, they are moral teachers. Thus when Robert Lowell refuses dinner at the White House he is making an important moral statement. In part, the poet's—indeed the writer's—function is to withdraw moral support from people who commit criminal acts while holding political office. It is precisely because of the unique position poets hold, rightly or wrongly, as arbiters



of the common good, that they have special responsibility in their public acts. To *seek*, as Yevtushenko did, a meeting with Kissinger and through him to beg a conference with the President, a man then waging vast and criminal war on a small people, to do that is to cross the line, to go beyond moral limits. For it is to give, even tacitly, the stamp of reputability to murder.

And that is sad, when one considers what Yevtushenko was for us. Yet it is not unexpected, for he was given to us by the Cold War, employed early by American imperialism to embarrass the Soviet, and then by Russian imperialism to attack American policy. Poets have their uses. Yevtushenko's tragedy is that he had not the courage to resist. His egomania betrayed him. History has passed him. He is of the fifties—his poetry, his politics; he belongs in a room exchanging polite banter with Dick Nixon.

He has begun to blunder, Yevtushenko, to believe his clippings. The pity is that so many American writers abet his career—Updike, Kunitz, Dickey, Ginsberg—that it will be some time before the mediocrity of his poetry and the opportunism and bad faith riddling his life like a fever are publicly acknowledged. But it will come.

“The biggest literary fraud to roll down the pike since Capote.”

I met Yevtushenko at a party given in his honor by Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Heinz. Their duplex overlooks the East River. Attending the event was a representative sample of New York social and literary worlds: Mr. and Mrs. George Plimpton, Jerzy Kosinski, Countess Suni Rattazzi (nee Agnelli), Ruth Ford, Peter Glenville, Andy Warhol, Mrs. Jacob Javits, Thomas Hoving, Warren Beatty, among others. The connection between the Soviet poet and the Heinz family, certainly a premier dynasty among economic royalists, is both literary and professional. Mrs. Heinz is an editor of the literary review *Antaeus*, and the Heinz family gave the city of Pittsburgh the concert hall where “Yevtushenko and Friends,” the title of his road show, was to be staged.

Yevtushenko arrived at the party with his “translator.” Warren Beatty, Ruth Ford—who tagged him as a fraud—and I rode the elevator together with them. Yevtushenko was to find an important use for Beatty. As for the “translator”—he had a number of different ones—I took him to be a KGB (the Soviet Secret Police) or CIA operative. I may be wrong. Yevtushenko was never seen without one beside him. And that seems peculiar, his need for a translator, when Yevtushenko speaks perfect, almost accentless English. In fact, it is only when the occasion suits him, usually public readings and television interviews, that he falls into a thick, guttural, nearly unintelligible Russian-accented English. But that too is part of the act.

Yevtushenko was dressed in his standard poet’s costume: sweater and baggy trousers. A tall man, lanky, rather All American farmboy in appearance, with short, light hair and pale skin. Melodramatic, loquacious, overbearing, intense, conceited, possessing enormous stamina and acute cleverness. It is said with amazement—how goddamn naive we are—that he survives on very little sleep, can drink heavily all night and rise early for a long day of television appearances, poetry readings, interviews, walking tours, and end the evening with more heavy drinking. A truly Siberian



endurance. Around him I felt like a *Pravda* caricature of the dissipated, effete Western intellectual.

It is understandable how he is able to manipulate both Western and Soviet media. He possesses great intelligence and strength and a single-minded attachment to his own advancement. All that might be excusable if he were a passably decent poet, but he is the biggest literary fraud to roll down the pike since Truman Capote. He is brother in feeling and media-manipulation to Erich Segal and Rod McKuen—the latter being the “poet” he most resembles—beyond their shared capacity for lousy writing. Both he and McKuen celebrate mawkish dime-store sensibilities, sensibilities common to fourteen-year-old groupies gushing hot-pantsed over television rock stars. There is a distinction: Yevtushenko runs more to melodrama and bathos than McKuen, giving a purple tint to his popular banalities. And he has added one modern refinement to the bag of emotional clichés: he plays the role of poet-as-political-bad-boy, naughtily although safely provocative. And that is why I am discussing him here, because many serious people have taken his publicity stunts for politics and his ladies’ verse for poetry.

"It is a difficult thing for the Government to put me in jail...."

I asked Yevtushenko how it was that he was free to travel and speak out when so many of his fellow Soviet intellectuals suffered in labor camps and "psychiatric" wards and were barred from travel and publication. He was asked this many times after in New York until he reached the point where he refused to answer, accusing the questioner instead of having been produced in the same "anti-Soviet factory" as the other critics. "You Americans," he said to me, "it is so simple for you. You do not understand us. You know little about survival. I am the greatest poet in Russia. It is a difficult thing for the Government to put me in jail. I am too cunning." He tapped his head with his finger. In Moscow, he said, he was stopped by a policeman for drunken driving. Instead of arresting him, the policemen implored him to drive home carefully, for the little poet was too precious to the Russian people to risk his life.

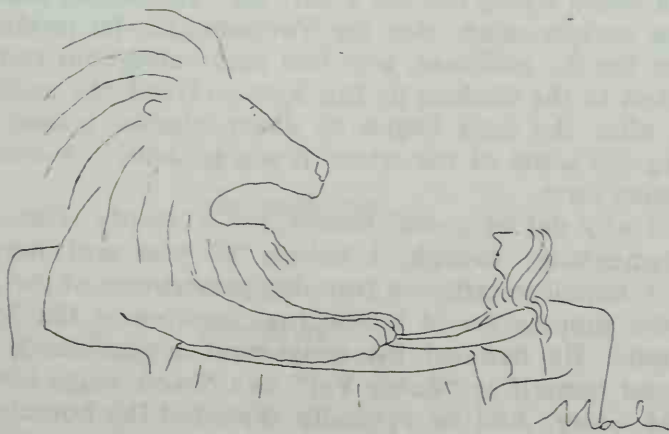
Later that night at the Heinzes' someone said to him, "You are the greatest poet in Russia!" Yevtushenko looked up, irritated, and said, "*Non, dans le monde!*" Modesty is not his forte. "I am also the greatest living Russian actor. They wanted to give me a prize as the greatest actor. But the Government said, 'No, please, Yevtushenko, you cannot have that also. That is too much for us to give you. A prize for the greatest poet, yes. But as an actor, too? That would give you too much power. The people love you already too much!'"

One more note about the Heinz party, and I will leave it. A trivial incident occurred which illustrates, I think, something of the nature of Yevtushenko. When he came in, Mrs. Heinz told him they had Russian vodka in the house if he cared to have some. "Vodka!" he said, shocked. "Champagne! French! Brut! *Très* brut!" He is accustomed to giving orders. There is the commissar in him.

I attended the first performance of "Yevtushenko and Friends" at Madison Square Garden's Felt Forum. It was one of the most appalling evenings of theater I have experienced, and I have been to a hell of a lot of bombs.

First, the "Friends" were not his friends, not at least as that word is commonly understood. Rather they were well-intentioned writers—Dickey, Kunitz, and others—and hack actors and musicians who were gathered together to give dramatic (actually melodramatic; indeed, histrionic) form to his verse. James Dickey was rightly embarrassed by the background music: a chorus of squeaky clean, overly enthusiastic Lord & Taylor "hippies" whose idea of musical background was to shout in singsong the most banal lines in Yevtushenko's banal verse. Dickey laughed when he read a love poem because the piano player began tinkling on the keys notes that sounded like nothing so much as Walt Disney birds chirping. Well, it probably goes over big in Minsk.

Eugene McCarthy, another "Friend," appeared uncomfortable. He refused to read the Yevtushenko poem assigned him by one of the "translators," dismissing the verse as "shit." Instead he read a poem of his own. It was quite lovely. He walked onto the stage alone, and quickly exited, but not before the athletic Yevtushenko trapped him in mid-exit in an awkward embrace for the photographers. McCarthy seemed astonished.



Mal

My tamer doesn't understand me.

“The audience started booing and leaving the scene of the crime.”

Most of the reading of the Russian’s work—and it droned on and on—was done either by Yevtushenko himself in his best Hollywood Russian accent, with his arms flailing the air, his voice rising and falling like a wolf pack in heat, his eyes rolling heavenward, or by an English actor named, improbably enough, Barry Boys. I am sure Mr. Boys was chosen because he was the only one available who could out-wail, out-rumble, out-weep Yevtushenko in the histrionics competition. He was dressed appropriately in a dramatic Hamlet costume, a flowing black blouse with puffy Elizabethan sleeves, tight black trousers, shiny boots, and the most outrageous, campy, Greenwich Avenue belt with, don’t you know?, a Hollywood Boulevard rhinestone buckle all aglitter in the blue and pink Las Vegas lights. And there he stood, moments after some breathy youth ran out to the mike and shouted, “The poet. *The poet! The POET!*” Moments after Yevtushenko wandered out to receive applause because he was alive and well, Mr. Boys leaped to the stage and, placing one hand on his waist, his legs spread, his back swayed, his head tilted toward the heavens, there he stood emoting poetry like a high school drama major trying out for a part on “The Secret Storm.” It was embarrassing. Not for Yevtushenko—he reveled in it—but for the audience, who had paid outrageous sums to be taken to the cleaners by this Russian fraud; the audience who, after the light began to dawn, started booing and leaving the scene of the crime. It was a travesty. A disaster. A banana farm.

But why did he come? Money, yes. Publicity. That, too. Fundamentally, though, I believe he was sent here to deflect American criticism from the persecution of the Jews and the suppression of intellectual freedom in the Soviet Republic. He handled his assignment magnificently. He wrapped himself in “Babiy Yar” like Nixon wraps himself in Old Glory. And he cynically exploited the bombing of Sol Hurok’s Manhattan offices to misdirect Jewish-American concern. The bombing, allegedly committed by the Jewish Defense League, was employed by Yevtushenko

to deflect criticism of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union into outrage over the tactics of those who oppose Soviet anti-Semitism. It was as if an American in Russia attacked anti-Vietnam war demonstrators in the Soviet Union for their tactics, for being anti-American, rather than dealing with the question of American aggression. It is an old ploy. Now, I have no sympathy for the JDL, but I think Yevtushenko's comparison of them with the Nazis is absurd. And I do not accept his charge that those who criticize Soviet anti-Semitism are being anti-Semitic! Well, to a large degree he was able to sell that patent nonsense. "Babiy Yar" again.

Yevtushenko was dying to meet President Nixon, no easy task. How was he to arrange it? By chance he learned that Senator and Mrs. Jacob Javits were giving a party for Presidential adviser Henry Kissinger. Warren Beatty had been invited. Beatty was already on Yevtushenko's program as one of his "Friends," although Beatty had the sense not to appear at the Felt Forum. Instead he drove Julie Christie to Houston by car. He certainly had a better time. Yevtushenko contacted Beatty, and Beatty called Mrs. Javits and got the Russian invited to the Kissinger party.

There are several cruel ironies in this incident, beyond

by Ellen Cooney

as
you enter me
one
thousand
welcomes

**“No one, being polite
Americans, called him
on his racist remark.”**

the obvious one of the Soviet poet supping with an architect of American war policy on the eve of the Berrigan trial. Two things occurred at the Javits affair which I think are most telling of the character of Yevtushenko. First, when Yevtushenko entered the Senator's Park Avenue apartment, he paused and looked around, and then announced in a loud voice, "There are too goddamn many Jews in here!" His remark was heard by at least six witnesses. No one, being polite Americans, called him on his racist remark. He knew what he was doing. He knew that the Javitses were Jewish. Perhaps he thought it would endear him to the German professor who advises the President. Secondly, he sat himself beside Kissinger—who was delighted to have him there—and importuned him for an invitation to the White House. Mr. Kissinger was eager to accommodate him, but not before the great Russian communist removed his wristwatch and handed it to Kissinger, saying, "I give it with my deepest respect and love!" How very Russian. And Kissinger accepted it willingly, giving him in return seventy minutes alone with the President.

"He is a clever man." I am in Nassau two weeks after the Yevtushenko visit and several of us are talking about him. One of the women who was closely involved in his American tour is speaking. "He is tough and clever. And he despises us. He knew he could make an anti-Semitic remark at the Javitses' and get away with it. He knew he could go around the country attacking American policy and refuse to accept criticism of Russian oppression and the rest. His own stinking role in Russia. I guess it's because he senses that we're weak. Good old American masochists. Oh, Christ, I bet the bastard's having a bloody good laugh on all of us. He'll go back to Russia and tell his cronies what bloody fools the Americans are, what saps. He comes over here and everyone lines up to kiss his Russian ass. It's too disgusting!" Disgusting isn't the word. □

KRAFFT-EBING VISITS DEALEY PLAZA: --- THE RECENT FICTION OF J.G. BALLARD

by Jerome Tarshis

The author of *Love & Napalm: Export U.S.A.* reveals his vision of "violence as a spectator pastime."

We have had a succession of apocalyptic outrages: the physical universe goes on, but we interpret these events to mean that the moral universe as we thought we knew it has come to an end. The extermination camps of World War II; the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and, before that, of Guernica, Ethiopia, Rotterdam, Dresden, Tokyo; the murders of John and Robert Kennedy, of Martin Luther King, Jr., of Malcolm X; the My Lai massacre, the Vietnam war in general; Ulster, the Congo, Biafra, Bangladesh. At a less exalted level, the suicide of Marilyn Monroe and the untimely and ambiguous deaths of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin.

Our mental lives are filled with images of sexuality and violent death presented by the mass media. We may well ask what function these images perform, and whether that function can be separated from the terrible events they describe. Between 1965 and 1969, the British author J. G. Ballard wrote a series of short fictions that explore the meaning of violent images in Western society. Published in various magazines, including *Transatlantic Review*, *Encounter*, and *Fiction*, they have been collected in a book,

**"...the book is
about violence...as
a spectator pastime."**

Love & Napalm: Export U.S.A., released by Grove Press in 1972.

Love & Napalm is not a masterpiece in the way that, say, *The Great Gatsby* and *Miss Lonelyhearts* are masterpieces, but it is a brilliant and useful book. Like the fictions of Jorge Luis Borges, which it resembles in some of its concerns and in the mock erudition and dryness of its prose, it might well be considered a long poem on metaphysical themes. That is the difficult part; the horrifying part is that this philosophic investigation is conducted in terms of violent death and perverse sexuality.

"In a sense the whole book is about violence," Ballard told me in an interview at his home, near London. "I mean, about violence as a spectator pastime. I see that people's lives these days are saturated with images of violence of every conceivable kind. The strange thing is that although in the past we perceived violence at our nerve endings, in terms of pain and pumping adrenalin, now we perceive violence purely intellectually, purely as an imaginative pastime.

"In Northern Europe, anyway in this country, life is safer than it's ever been before. I think that's probably still true of the United States, notwithstanding the Vietnam war and what is generally described as a very violent society. Compared with South America as a whole, I would say that the United States is a very peaceful country; by and large, the rule of law prevails."

I reminded Ballard that his stories are about the affluent, jaded people one meets in extreme form in Antonioni films, but that those people, and he and I, are part of a very small minority. "Sure," he said. "I write about the landscape in which I live. I can't write about Southeast Asia or South America. But for these people, for this minority, violence is to a great extent an ingredient of their imaginations, a kind of spice which they may need, which may serve some sort of role, and I try to look at the nature of violence.

"Most of us would take the view that violence is wholly bad in all its forms—I would myself—but it may be that certain kinds of violence, particularly those transmitted

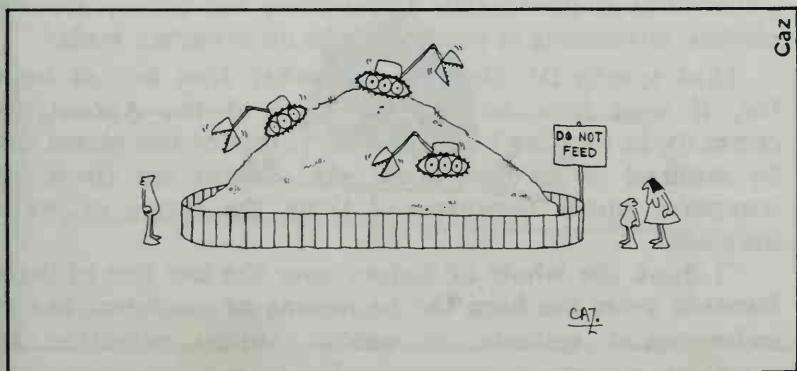
through the communications media, through television and the news magazines, and so on, have a beneficial role. This is the terrifying irony of an appalling experience like Vietnam—that it may have certain beneficial roles to play. What they are I don't know. I try to offer certain suggestions in the book.”

Love & Napalm: Export U.S.A. is made up of fifteen short pieces. In the first nine we find a narrative of sorts about a psychiatrist who is having a nervous breakdown. He is variously named Travers, Travis, Traven, or Tallis—I'll call him Travers—and, although he has a personal history somewhat similar to Ballard's, it is clear that he stands for educated, affluent Western man at this point in time.

Dr. Travers is obsessed by images of death and sex. He cannot accept the aspect of reality that separates us from other persons and things, and our time from other times. Understanding that we now perceive many events solely in the form of sets of images presented to us by some external agency, he begins constructing alternate events.

At the beginning of the narrative he is on the staff of “the Institute,” a mental hospital near London, and he gives his students the assignment of creating a scenario for World War III, using newsreels, atrocity photographs, and other images. Using the means of conceptual and intermedia art, he tries to re-assassinate John F. Kennedy “in a way that makes sense,” to rescue the three astronauts who died in the Apollo capsule, to copulate with Elizabeth Taylor.

Ballard's narrative, reflecting the diversity of the images that make up contemporary consciousness, takes a non-linear form. There is no obvious continuity between one



"...the future of this planet can be summed up in one word: sex."

paragraph and the next: some are relatively straightforward descriptions of a physical action; others are listings of objects or images; still others are quotations in which some auxiliary character, speaking for the author, explains the actions of poor, mad Dr. Travers.

We are told of experiments using pictures of sexual acts, war atrocities, genital mutilation. We witness simulated automobile accidents and the violent death, repeated in various forms, of a beautiful young woman. There are vast billboards of Elizabeth Taylor and Jacqueline Kennedy. The distinction between sanity and insanity, real and imagined events, is not insisted upon; *Love & Napalm* is about violence and sex, but it is also a poetic inquiry into the difference between fictions and realities.

Ballard's mad psychiatrist attempts to build bridges between his unbearably isolated consciousness and the flux of time and events around him. His bridges are made of reproduced images, and for Ballard this points the way toward a future consciousness about which one can feel hope, a consciousness in which anything at all can take on erotic meaning.

Dr. Nathan, one of Ballard's explainers, tells us: "Travers . . . has composed a series of new sexual perversions, of a wholly conceptual character, in an attempt to surmount the death of affect. In many ways he is the first of the new naïves. A Douanier Rousseau of the sexual perversions. . . . At the logic of fashion, such once-popular perversions as paedophilia and sodomy will become derided clichés, as amusing as pottery ducks on suburban walls."

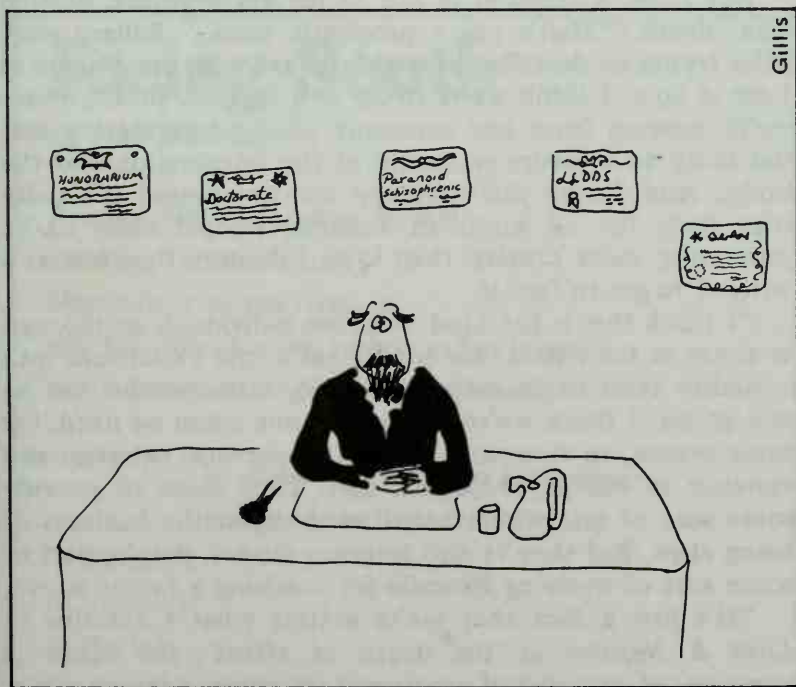
Thus speaks Dr. Nathan. And what does Ballard hope for, if man lives to read the end of the Apocalypse currently in progress? "I think the future of this planet can be summed up in one word: sex. I think sex times the computer equals tomorrow. I think the future of sex is limitless.

"I think the whole of history over the last two or three hundred years has been the harnessing of machines, and of technological systems, to various human activities: to

transport, to agriculture, to industry, and so forth. We are getting around to the harnessing of the machine, of computer systems and recording devices, to the sexual impulse. And I think this is absolutely going to transform sex in the way that, say, the jet engine has transformed travel.

“I think the notion of there being any kind of normal sex, that is, heterosexual sex of a genital character, oriented around the reproductive principle, I think that is over and done with now. It might be a phase through which people pass in their early twenties, say, when they get married and have children. But I think it will just be a transient phase in their lives, and they will then move on to their real puberty, a sort of secondary puberty.

“I think largely genital sex will go, too; it will become cerebral sex, where genital sex will play a role—just as dance plays a role in the theater—but will only be a part of the whole. I can see no limits to it whatever. I can see no reason why parents shouldn't have intercourse with their own children, done in terms of love, and in terms of anything else.



**"Sex might take place
between you and an idea,
or you and a machine."**

"The old fantasies—drinking someone's urine, being beaten by a beautiful woman in black leather—are dead. A new Krafft-Ebing is being written by car crashes, televised violence, modern architecture and design. What we see through the window of the TV set is just as important, sexually, as what the old-fashioned voyeur could see through the window of a bedroom.

"In the future of sex, men and women may not be necessary to one another. Sex might take place between you and an idea, or you and a machine. An incredible range of new unions, new perversions if you will, could be realized by using computer data banks, videotape cassettes, or instant-playback closed-circuit TV. I can see a sexual experience of extraordinary complexity, beauty, tenderness, and love. I can see the magic of sex on a planetary scale, revivifying everything it touches."

But *Love & Napalm* is full of joyless coupling, mutilation, death. "That's not a prophetic book," Ballard said. "I'm trying to describe, as faithfully as I can, the climate as I see it now. I think we're living at a transfer point, where we're moving from one economy of the imagination and the body to a future economy of the imagination and the body. And during this unhappy transfer period it's sadly true that, for all kinds of reasons, people seem to be generating more cruelty than love. I deplore this, but as a writer I've got to face it.

"I think this is the kind of phase individuals go through at times in their lives. An adolescent's first excursions into sexuality tend to be rather fumbled, rather crude, but he will go on. I think we're living at a time when we need, for some reason, an enormous amount of perverse behavior and violence in our psychological diet. They seem to provide some sort of grit which helps us to digest the business of being alive. But they're also stepping stones; they're part of some sort of evolving formula for reaching a better world.

"It's just a fact that we're getting what I describe in *Love & Napalm* as 'the death of affect'; the death of emotion, of any sort of emotional response, is taking place. Let's hope that it gives birth in the future to a new kind of

affect; but I think it will be one that will be in partnership with the machine.”

After the nine stories that chronicle Dr. Travers’ despairing search for new kinds of union, there are six pieces less closely related to one another also concerned with sexuality and violent death. Several of these read like abstracts of the results of market research intended to design a nightmare. Ballard’s fiction has always been described as gloomy, and he regrets that nobody seems to notice the irony that runs through the book: he uses the language of behavioral science for ironic effect as Borges uses the language of literary erudition.

In various interviews Ballard has said he is not much of a reader, at least in the sense of keeping up with contemporary writing, and he told me he feels closer to the visual arts than to most modern literature. There is little dialogue in *Love & Napalm*, and the nine sections concerned with Dr. Travers are heavily weighted toward visual description.

The events of the story include exhibitions of paintings and sculpture, conceptual art, and intermedia works. At

Facing South

by Paul Blackburn

Assville, North Carolina, or AN
ashville, Tennessee, but
Memphis is on the river, as
any Egyptian knows, where and as it goes
south (who’s asking? maybe it’s north)

is where my mouth, o Cleopatra,
goeth where thou cometh,

in the bend
of that river
to the left.

**"The car crash is the
most dramatic experience
in peoples' lives."**

one point Ed Kienholz's construction "Dodge '38" appears on a road near London. Max Ernst's name is mentioned continually. Dali, Bellmer, and Tanguy also pop up. Dali is quoted as having said that mind is a state of landscape, and this idea is one of the keys to understanding Ballard.

"I've always been very interested in the Surrealists," he said, "I think primarily because they're one of the few schools of painting that embrace the imagination without any restraints whatever, but also embrace the imagination within the terms of the scientific language. The Surrealists were interested in optics and all sorts of scientific advances. This climaxed, of course, in psychoanalysis, which was the perfect scientific mythology, if you like, for the investigation of the imagination. And this marriage of science and imagination seemed very close to what I wanted to do as a writer, what I was doing as a writer."

In 1970 Ballard held an exhibition at the New Arts Laboratory, in London, consisting entirely of three crashed cars. "I had an opening party to which I invited a large number of art critics and members of the demimonde. We had closed-circuit television and a topless girl who interviewed everybody in front of the crashed cars so they could see themselves on the TV set. It was a genuine opening, and also an experiment to test one or two of the hypotheses in the book.

"In fact the party was an illustrated episode from the book. What happened was that everybody got extremely drunk incredibly quickly. I've never seen people get drunk so fast. I was certainly within half an hour the only sober person at that gathering. People were breaking the bottles of red wine over the cars, smashing the glasses, grabbing the topless girl and dragging her into the back of one of the cars. Brawls broke out.

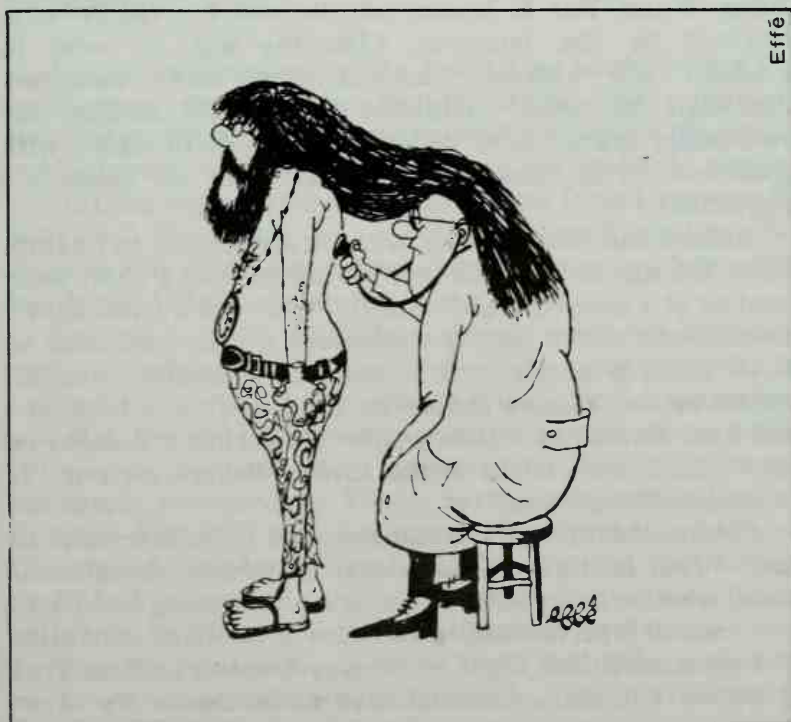
"There was something about those crashed cars that tripped off all kinds of latent hostility. Plus people's crazy sexuality was beginning to come out. In a way, it was exactly what I had anticipated in the book without realizing it.

"The show was on for a month. During that time, the

cars were regularly attacked by people coming to the gallery. Windows that weren't already broken were smashed in, doors were pulled off, one of the cars was overturned, another car was splashed with white paint. When the exhibition was over, the cars were well and truly wrecked, which I thought was an interesting example of people's real responses to the whole subject of crashed cars."

The relationship between sex and the automobile is the subject of Ballard's most recent book, *Crash!*, scheduled to be published by Jonathan Cape in London. For Ballard, the experience of driving an automobile, continually in danger of pain, mutilation, and death, which can be averted only by a series of correct decisions, is a central metaphor, or analogue, of sexuality and of modern life itself.

"As I've said, life is very peaceable, certainly in this country," Ballard told me. "The car crash is the most dramatic experience in most people's lives, apart from their own deaths, and in many cases the two coincide. I think there's something about the automobile crash that taps all kinds of barely recognized impulses in people's minds and imaginations. It's a mistake to adopt a purely rational



Effé

**"...in our time, science
is the largest producer
of fiction...."**

attitude towards events like the car crash; one can't simply say that this is a meaningless and horrific tragedy. It is that, but it's other things as well, and in *Crash!* I've tried to find out what exactly it is."

Ballard considers himself a science fiction writer, but not in the spirit of Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, or Robert A. Heinlein. "I think the call signal of Sputnik I in 1957 was the death knell of that kind of science fiction," he said. "To a large extent, the future described by the science fiction writers of the forties and fifties has already become our past."

He believes that the most fruitful area for a mature science fiction—which he considers to be coextensive with a mature fiction—is the intersection between the outer world of physical and technological reality and the inner world of thought and fantasy.

James Graham Ballard was born in Shanghai in 1930. When World War II broke out, he and his family were interned by the Japanese. After the war, he went to England and entered Cambridge to study medicine. Although he never completed his medical studies, the vocabulary stuck: *Love & Napalm* is richly brocaded with anatomic terms, and many characters in his books are physicians.

Ballard had been writing, without attempting to publish, since the age of ten. But in 1951 he entered a short story contest at Cambridge and won it. "That was a green light," he told me. After leaving Cambridge he was variously an RAF pilot, a porter, and a writer of scientific films. He began writing science fiction in 1956 and soon became a full-time free-lance writer. After publishing a number of stories and novels laid in the future, Ballard set out "to rediscover the present."

"More and more, everything around us is fictional," he said. "That is, it's invented to serve somebody's imaginative ends, whether it's a politician's, or an advertising agent's, or our own. It's particularly prominent in the field of politics, but even an airline flight from, say, London to New York is almost entirely a fictional experience created by adver-

tisers, designers, market researchers. In our time, science, especially so-called behavioral science, is the largest producer of fiction.”

We educated readers don't watch the boob tube all day and all night; we don't loiter at the scene of an automobile accident hoping for a glimpse of the victims; we don't wonder how well Ari satisfies Jackie in bed. But we may have been titillated by Konrad Lorenz telling us that competition and aggression are built into the animal, or by Marx telling us they aren't. We buy the visions of new Blakes, with advanced degrees, who find new heavens and hells in studies of Gestalt psychotherapy, extreme experience, the clitoral orgasm, the population explosion, the impending race war.

“The fiction writer's whole role has changed,” Ballard said. “The fiction is already there; I feel the writer's job is to put the reality in.” Created for the age of Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Dealey Plaza, My Lai, Bangladesh, all brought to us by news magazines or television, J. G. Ballard's surreal landscapes do not show us reality in the form of answers; if we work hard, we can find some brilliantly formulated perplexities.

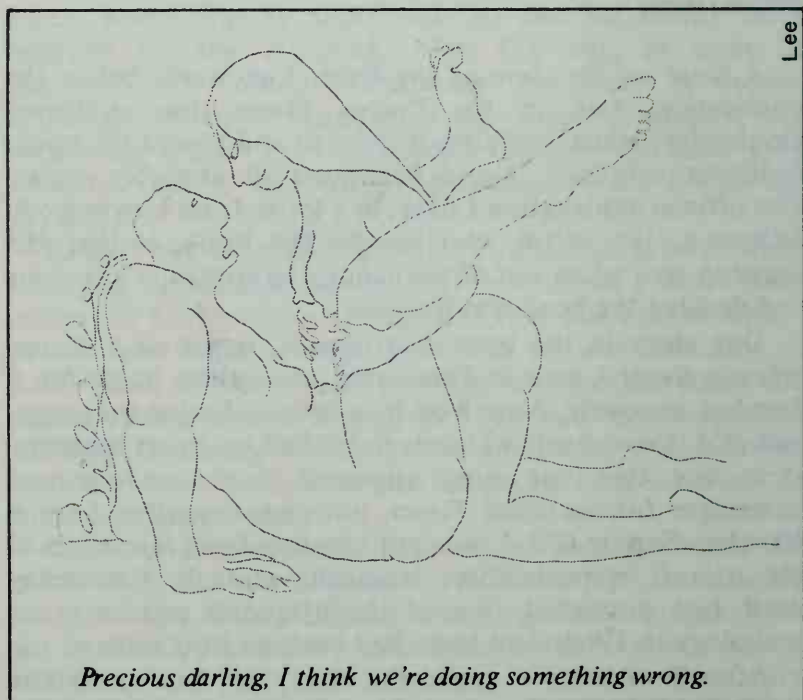
A Note on Freedom of the Press: Two weeks before the publication date in the United States, the publisher, Doubleday, which had already printed and bound the book, suddenly withdrew it and destroyed all available copies. The official explanation I have, in a letter from Lawrence P. Ashmead, the editor who bought the book, is that the decision was taken out of his hands; the company's lawyers had decided the book was libelous.

One story in the book had already appeared in *Transatlantic Review*, two in *Encounter*, and others in *Ambit*, a London quarterly, *New Worlds*, a science fiction magazine, and *ICA Eventsheet*, which is published by an art museum. It is true that one story appeared in the underground newspaper *International Times*, but aside from that *Love & Napalm: Export U.S.A.* was put together from tearsheets of the utmost respectability. Ironically enough, Doubleday itself had published two of the offending stories in an anthology in 1968. And there had been no libel suits.

After Doubleday dropped the book, E.P. Dutton took it on. It was scheduled to be published in April, 1971. “They

were enthusiastic,” Ballard told me. “In fact they first thought of retitling the book *Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan*. They were very keen indeed. And there were going to be no problems. But in April—when they were due to publish—my agent got a letter from Dutton with a huge lawyers’ report saying they would be very happy to publish the book if I would agree to all the changes. The changes went on for page after page.” Dutton’s lawyers wanted Ballard to delete three pieces entirely, and all references in the remainder of the book to Ralph Nader, Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson, and several other celebrities. “They said if I did that they would publish the book. The only problem was there wouldn’t be much of a book left. The whole essence of the book is contained in these sexual fantasies about public figures. They are the key to the book, in a sense. I felt I couldn’t go along with that, so I said, ‘Sorry,’ and there we are now. And I’m looking for someone else.”

After Dutton finally declined to publish the book, Grove Press contracted for its publication and brought it out without any deletions or changes in November, 1972. □



**THE
ASSASSINATION
OF
JOHN
FITZGERALD
KENNEDY
CONSIDERED
AS A
DOWNHILL
MOTOR RACE**

From *Love & Napalm: Export U.S.A.* by J. G. Ballard, published by Grove Press, copyright 1969 by J. G. Ballard. Reprinted by permission.



by J.G. Ballard

Author's Note. The assassination of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963, raised many questions, not all of which were answered by the Report of the Warren Commission. It is suggested that a less conventional view of the events of that grim day may provide a more satisfactory explanation. In particular, Alfred Jarry's "The Crucifixion Considered as an Uphill Bicycle Race" gives us a useful lead.

Oswald was the starter.

From his window above the track he opened the race by firing the starting gun. It is believed that the first shot was not properly heard by all the drivers. In the following confusion Oswald fired the gun two more times, but the race was already underway.

Kennedy got off to a bad start.

There was a governor in his car and its speed remained constant at about fifteen miles an hour. However, shortly afterwards, when the governor had been put out of action, the car accelerated rapidly, and continued at high speed along the remainder of the course.

The visiting teams. As befitting the inauguration of the first production car race through the streets of Dallas, both the President and the Vice-President participated. The Vice-President, Johnson, took up his position behind Kennedy on the starting line. The concealed rivalry between the two men was of keen interest to the crowd. Most of them supported the home driver, Johnson.

The starting point was the Texas Book Depository, where all bets were placed on the Presidential race. Kennedy was an unpopular contestant with the Dallas crowd, many of whom showed outright hostility. The deplorable incident familiar to us all is one example.

The course ran downhill from the Book Depository, below an overpass, then on to the Parkland Hospital and from there to Love Air Field. It is one of the most hazardous courses in downhill motor racing, second only to the Sarajevo track discontinued in 1914.

Kennedy went downhill rapidly. After the damage to the governor the car shot forward at high speed. An alarmed

track official attempted to mount the car, which continued on its way cornering on two wheels.

Turns. Kennedy was disqualified at the hospital, after taking a turn for the worse. Johnson now continued the race in the lead, which he maintained to the finish.

The flag. To signify the participation of the President in the race Old Glory was used in place of the usual checkered square. Photographs of Johnson receiving his prize after winning the race reveal that he had decided to make the flag a memento of his victory.

Previously, Johnson had been forced to take a back seat, as his position on the starting line behind the President indicates. Indeed, his attempts to gain a quick lead on Kennedy during the false start were forestalled by a track steward, who pushed Johnson to the floor of his car.

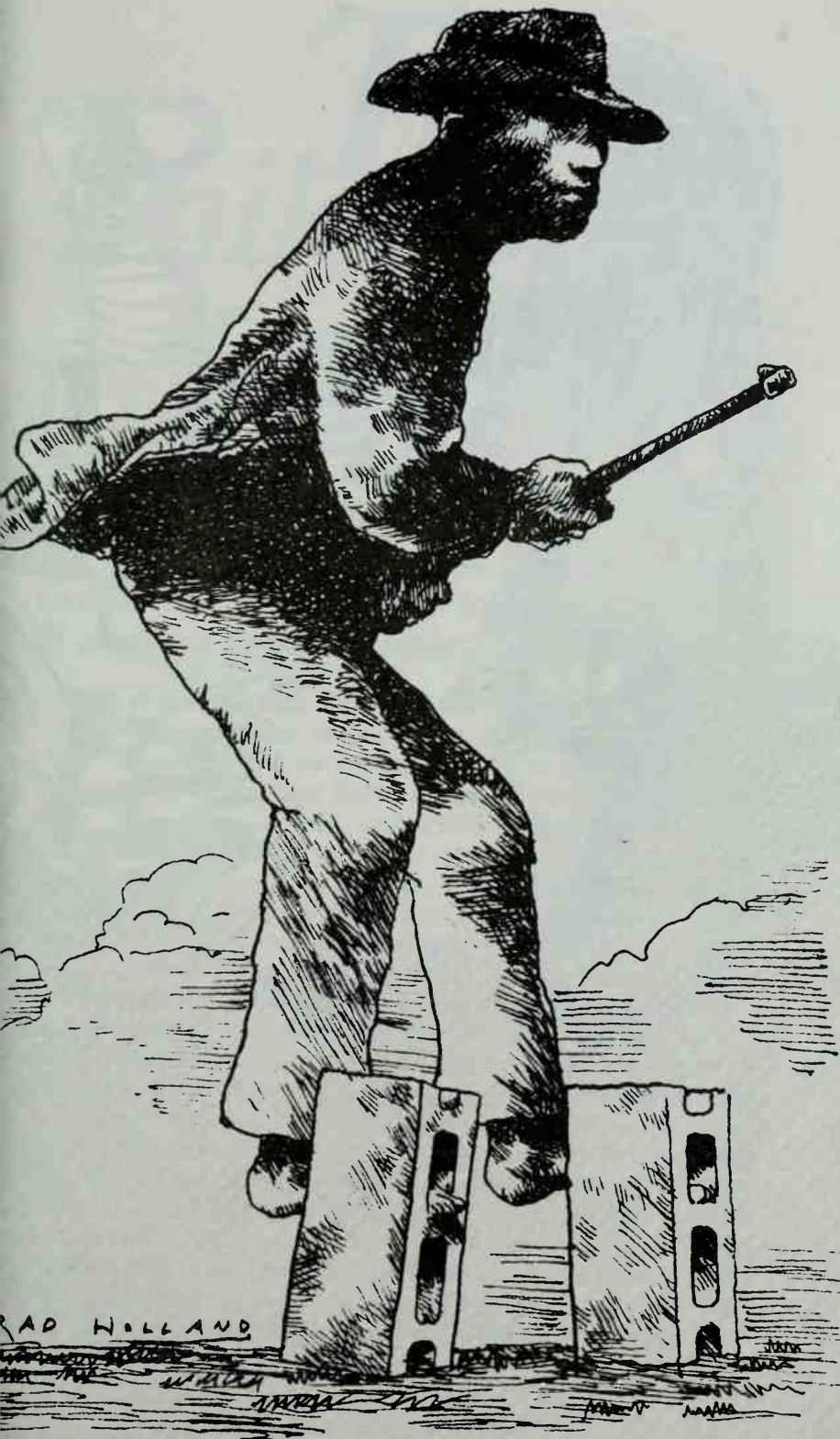
In view of the confusion at the start of the race, which resulted in Kennedy, clearly expected to be the winner on past form, being forced to drop out at the hospital turn, it has been suggested that the hostile local crowd, eager to see a win by the home driver Johnson, deliberately set out to stop him completing the race. Another theory maintains that the police guarding the track were in collusion with the starter, Oswald. After he finally managed to give the send-off Oswald immediately left the race, and was subsequently apprehended by track officials.

Johnson had certainly not expected to win the race in this way. There were no pit stops.

Several puzzling aspects of the race remain. One is the presence of the President's wife in the car, an unusual practice for racing drivers. Kennedy, however, may have maintained that as he was in control of the ship of state he was therefore entitled to captain's privileges.

The Warren Commission. The rake-off on the book of the race. In their report, prompted by widespread complaints of foul play and other irregularities, the syndicate lay full blame on the starter, Oswald.

Without doubt Oswald badly misfired. But one question still remains unanswered: Who loaded the starting gun? □



AD HOLLAND



The Philosophy of Jive

by Cecil Brown

Jive is ultimate consciousness. It's the literary form of rap. A black writer looks for the essence of blackness in art as he talks to Aretha Franklin.

I'd seen Aretha Franklin that previous night at the Fillmore, and decided that . . . yeah . . . I'm gonna interview the sister. But how do you go about doing that? There was Billy Graham—sinister little bastard that likes to herd people like cattle into a big arena; like Ishmael Reed said to me, he treated people the way the Jewish landlords did in Harlem. I could call Billy Graham and ask him if he could tell me where I could find Aretha. I would tell him I was a black writer, etc. Wish to God I could tell him I was Norman Mailer or Nat Hentoff! I was in the bathtub at the time, thinking about all this. If I were Nat Hentoff, I could interview Aretha for *Playboy*, or if I were Norman Mailer I could sit with her in the pages of *Harper's*. Fuck it, there was no way of getting around the fact that I was a black writer sitting in a tub full of water that was gradually getting cold. Also, there was no getting around the fact that I was mad as a motherfucker because of what I had admitted to myself when I had conjured up the names of those two white Jewish writers. White critics (writers) were authorities on black people, even in Art. Authorities on Art—Art, the land of mirrors where the man sees himself reflected in his work. Even in *that* country we

“...when Styron passed
off his racist views of
blackness as Art...”

let white people get away with being authorities on blackness, when in reality they are the authority on nothing but their own racism, which they have extended to include Art. (Look at the crazy nigger! Using Jewish writers interchangeably with white writers!) Even when there was a question of blackness, we accepted the white man's view over our own: Norman Mailer on *Black Power*, Norman Mailer on *The Fight*, Norman Mailer on *The Black Writer!* Can't you see it now, the cover of *Harper's? Mailer: The Black American Writer!* The absolute arrogance of those sonsabitches!!!! Uh, the black writer is, uh, is, like, uh, mediocre, because he has no sense of humor, which he, uh, lost when he tried to learn the white man's English, which he *did* learn, and learned quite well, I might add.

The, uh, black writer is (we see a heavy, fat old Irishman, his brow wrinkled as his eyes dart across the reverent heads of the barroom—which is another way of describing the New York literati—dart wildly, searching desperately for the weird similes which, pure bullshit, would hang up the listeners for days to come. The first thing that comes to mind is Hustler. Hustler with a Harvard Education: Malcolm. NO. Amos 'n' Andy. NO.) a guy who was once angry, but who, as he progressed with The Man's English, became as stuffy and hence as ineffectual as The Man, hence mediocre; he is a kind of would-be country preacher, NO NO NO, not a preacher, more like the hustler in the street, a bundle of ego seeking publication, vanity of the black shuffling Amos 'n' Andy, the defensive culture of a Muhammad Ali, the political jive of Adam Clayton Power; the black writer was the guy on the corner who turned his crying out of the corner, while buildings burn in the b.g., doing an assignment for some mag like *Black World* (formerly *Negro Digest*), *Jet*, *Ebony*, etc.; or the better ones can hope to fester their ego in some dandy like the *Village Voice*, or maybe some can aspire to the pages of *Playboy* or *Esquire*. The street hustler, then, yes, the image becomes clear to us, more like the Jewish landlord, uh, the imperial hustler. Imperial, except black.

The bk. writer was too, uh, serious; he was, uh,

hypnotized by The Man's literacy; he sounds like our pilgrim fathers, moral, uh, puritanical. He has lost the capacity to laugh at himself. For example, who made us laugh at the ridiculousness of some of the elements in Black Power? Tom Wolfe, in *Mau-Mauing the Flak-Catchers*. Wolfe courageously takes on the voice of a young black rapper just as He (Norman Mailer) likes to do in *everything* he writes now. Speaking, uh, of courage, Styron was the real soldier. And, of course, he took the Pulitzer Prize for his courage. Black writing. Now it comes clear: bk. writing (the young scholar of the future might conclude) was a period of American Literature when the mainstream connected with a stray trickling; when white writers took on black writing style; when Styron passed off his racist views of blackness as Art; and, what is more indicative, how the critics refused to even notice this strong transfusion.

The black writer didn't know literature as such, had not read Spenser, never relished the imagery in *Macbeth*; nor could he appreciate a line like "Sad sorry soaks up our blood"; nor was he aware of the turn in imagery with William Blake. The black writer didn't have a literary education or sophistication. Ralph Ellison did, but when we



Lee

**“...that little fire is
what’s warming their
asses, right now....”**

say black writer we don’t mean Ralph Ellison. We understand Ellison. We understand him too well. Mr. Ellison is like us. He appreciates fine music. Mr. Ellison is the best of us; he is better than us. He is an artist. But the *black* writer is a horse with another story.

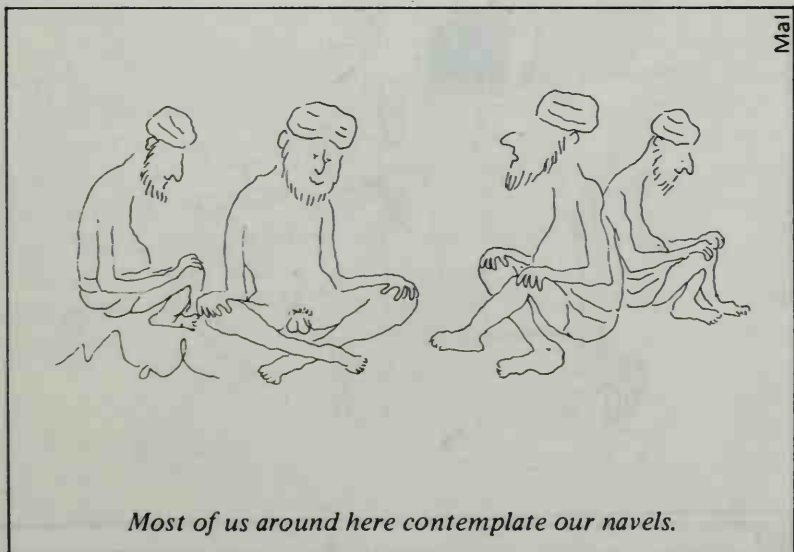
A side effect of the black revolution, the black writer got his validity from being an interpreter of the revolution; he was just another cat screaming on the corner. Despite the fact that he screamed in literature, and the fact that the screaming became a metaphor for his own image of himself, and, by extension, an image of us, of America, still no one wants to be screamed at. Least of all the white writer, who, if he is worth his salt, is a sensitive, reflective, sexless, erudite gentleman, an innocuous, ego-centered man who simply gets what he knows about life out of books. His world is words. Not words that fight, but the words used to describe words!

Now, the white writer was the, uh, authentic American writer, his inspirations coming from S. Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, uh, Ellison, uh, Baldwin. This was going to be literature. Mark Twain, Poe, Cooper. This is literature. This is the serious stuff. Uh, now let’s take the black writer, whose heritage is linked up some way with the rhetoric of Malcolm X, Fanon, sociological, political clichés, and what he felt was happening right now. The black writer was always describing what was happening—no no no no, he *was* what was happening right now. The only problem with that is that what is happening right now is not literature; what is happening NOW is not great art, cannot be great literary art, because you don’t have the kind of objectivity, the artistic distance, the “correlative objective” that, uh, Eliot spoke of. The black writer was too close to the thing itself to render the thing as it was; and, when it really came down to it, it was alas! the white writer who produced all the lasting pieces from Now. William Styron gave us *Nat Turner*; Mailer, *The Negro*. In theater, the correlative objective is so good that while black people are in the movies, few new young blacks are directing, producing, or actually controlling anything.

The black writer, then, is a happening, and a happening is something that's happening right *now*, and because it is happening right now it's like a fad, and fads are here today and gone tomorrow. What's here today and gone tomorrow can't very well be literature, can it (all right, I'm talking to those of us who have appreciated Spenser and Cervantes)? Black writing was the Uncle Tom to the Black Power rhetoric. The black writer was really a fire burning, a blaze going in the dead of winter with an eighty-mile wind blowing. The white writer was a huge marble rock. That eighty-mile wind is American Culture. It is obvious that the rock will be here when the wind is gone, but what they don't realize is that that little fire is what's warming their asses, right now, which as far as their asses are concerned is *forever!* Dig it?

Having thus analyzed my situation, I pulled myself out of the tub. Yes, I was a Black Writer! The water in the tub had been turning my ass to ice.

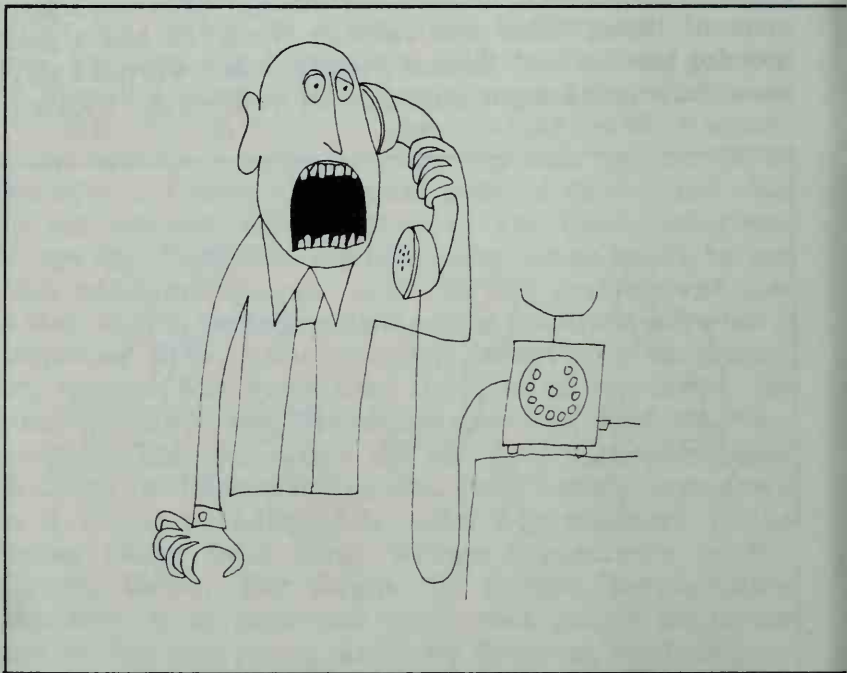
But then every black person is a black writer, right? I started thinking of all the guys I was raised with that were probably black writers somewhere. One was called Naked. We called him Naked because he wrote such a raw style ("Dumb white bitch, where is my money?"); he was a great lover of Henry Miller and Herman Wouk; he had a great love for baseball and Satchel Paige, and had written a story about how he once got turned down from being a rookie in



***"their story as blacks
in America is as good
as the next black's."***

a professional ball club when he was eighteen. He was very emotional about the story (Dig it, no correlative objective!), and promised himself that when he became a famous Black Writer (Richard Wright was probably what he had in mind) he was going to publish that story if it was the last thing he did. And it's funny, but sometimes when I pick up a magazine (*Black World, Redbook*) I find myself looking at stories to see if any are about a young nigger trying to get into some major league. The last I heard of him, he was in Vietnam.

Then there was another friend who had a very aristocratic-sounding name, who once, in one of his most Young, Gifted, and Black moods, wrote Jacques Barzun a letter, arguing some small matter of intellectual scholium; Barzun responded, and he showed me the letter. He once showed me a story he wrote about a girl who was a governor's daughter. I asked him what he knew about white people (I

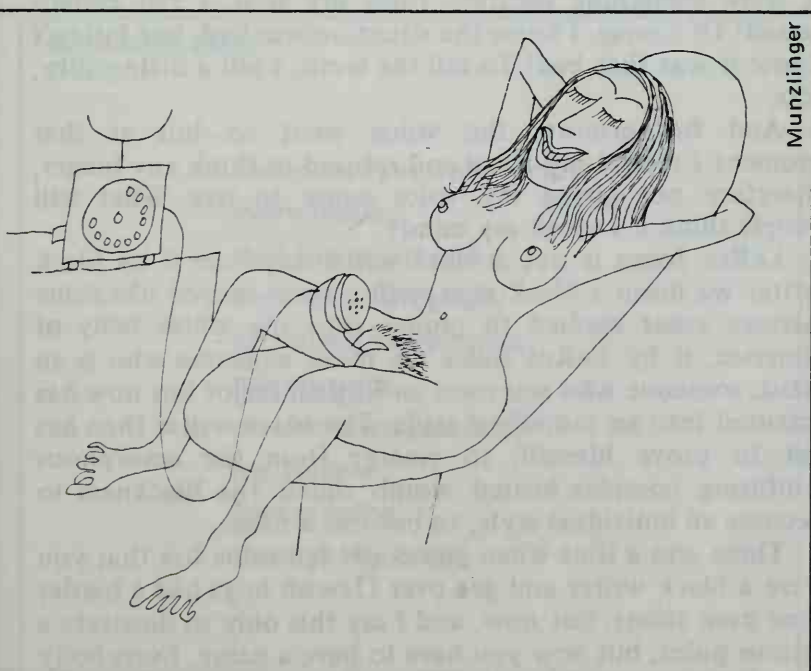


never hears of no colored governor recently, have you?), and he said he sort of figured it out, and when he said this he gave me a surprised look which was supposed to convey to my thick skull that I was stupid to ask such a question when to a bona fide writer it should be obvious that human nature transcended race. Why shouldn't he write about the governor's daughter if he wanted to?

I had another friend who used to write incredibly beautiful poems in the form of birds; he called them "escape poems." When we were young, I saw him at the end of a summer and I asked him what he had done all summer, and he said he had read *The Naked and the Dead* and *A Farewell to Arms*. I had worked all summer in the fields, and could only wonder what those books were about. When I finally read them years later, I thought, Fuck, I'm glad I was working in the fields!

These are a few people who wanted to be black writers, but think of the millions of blacks who have a story to tell and who feel that *their* story as blacks in America is as good as the next black's.

Black writing is nothing more than somebody black telling you how it was. Think of all the black prisoners *Soul*



**“...like some African spear
plunging into the white
belly of America...”**

on Ice must have frustrated. Think about cats who actually did rape white women for “revolutionary” purposes.

Furthermore, the black writer settles in our minds as a kind of self-exploiter; he exploits the pattern of his life, his race, he exposes himself, he confesses, he gives. And besides all this, it is easy for him to get published. No sooner had I said this than some small voice in the back of my head spoke out, and spoke out in such a manner that I might effectively liken it to someone suddenly opening the door and shouting to me in rage: How can you say that? When you know good and well that it’s easier for a white writer writing about black people than it is for a black writer writing about writing! Even Jewish writers have written more books, produced more Broadway plays, directed more movies (if you don’t believe it, start watching the credits) than all the black writers put together!

The voice in the back of my mind went on like this as if it were something separate from my soul. I felt embarrassed! Of course, I knew the situation was bad, but I didn’t know it was that bad! To tell the truth, I felt a little guilty, too.

And furthermore, the voice went on—but at that moment I closed my mind and refused to think any longer, therefore not giving my voice cause to rise. What will people think if I speak my mind?

LeRoi Jones is not a black writer anymore if by black writer we mean a black man with a story shaped like some African spear readied to plunge into the white belly of America; if by LeRoi Jones we mean someone who is an artist, someone who was once an English major but now has matured into an individual style. The black writer then has yet to prove himself, to emerge from the amorphous confusing complex heated womb called His Blackness to become an individual style, to become a name.

There was a time when you could tell some fox that you were a black writer and get over (Jewish boys had a harder time even then); but now, and I say this only to illustrate a serious point, but now you have to have a name. Everybody is a black writer.

Having thought the above thoughts, I quickly bounced out of the tub and dried myself in a black towel, stood militarily in front of my mirror and nursed my afro with some of capitalistic publisher Johnson's Afro Sheen.

The black writer was indeed black and dull, had never succeeded in capturing the great satiric humor of the lower class from which he springs. Driven is more like it. The black writer at best was a tragedian, never a Molière, pointing out the folly of the whites. The black writer was more the problem than he was the solution. Only a few black comedians had made use of comedy as social commentary and as a way of changing society, but nothing consistent; the comedians were only entertainment. White entertainment, to be exact.

But I was procrastinating, wasn't I? I was procrastinating for my laziness! Both Nat and Norman (Dig that, calling the cats by their first names!), apart from being Jewish, were go-getters. They would go out there and get that interview, or that oblique opinionated pot shot. But here I was, laying up on my brown ass in the tub, procrastinating, thinking about what kind of things I'd like to ask the sister if I got a chance to, but knowing that I would never get the

by Michail Buse

bedroom eyes, follow closely,
every move
that she might make.
a glance of prophecy
on muted movements;
casting odds
on unknown pleasure,
my tongue
goes groping
through my brain.

**"I started to say, If I
were Norman Mailer or
Nat Hentoff..."**

chance to because I wasn't a Jewish go-getter, or even a black go-getter. And then—I must confess it—I was afraid of Aretha—not of the woman, not of the woman as symbolized by her music; but I was intimidated by so famous a person. My fucking voice would tremble if I talked to her in private. I'm sure of that. Aretha Franklin! Yeah, my fucking voice would tremble. And why? I don't know why, but standing in the bathroom fluffing out my afro I kept wishing I was a go-getter.

I got out of the bathroom and picked up the phone. My idea was to call the three biggest hotels in San Francisco and see if they had a listing for a Franklin, Aretha. Or maybe she was listed under her manager's name, whatever that was. The first two (Mark Hopkins, Sir Francis Drake) didn't have a Franklin and wanted to connect me with the desk; I hung up before they did. Next I called the Fairmont, and before I knew it the thin female voice was saying, I'm ringing, sir. And sure enough, there was that throbbing on the end, like some kid clicking his tongue against the roof of his mouth. *It was ringing!* And then, before I knew it, there was the voice! It wasn't Aretha's, but it was a sister, a soft sister, maybe one of the three girls that backed her up.

"Hello," the voice said, sweet and lovely and annoyed slightly because it had to sound businesslike and professional.

"Hello," I said, "my name is"—and I told her my name, trying to make it sound as big as Norman Mailer from *Harper's*, so I kind of let it sound casual and like me and Aretha were old friends, sparring partners, uh ahem, so to speak—"and I would like to speak to Aretha—for a few minutes—"

"Who?"

Black women have jive down pat. They make you expand your s---t. *Who?* And the way she said it, she meant, Okay, baby, give me your spiel and, if I go for it, fine; but, if you don't get it together, later for you. So I had to rap; and so I started rapping. I told her I'd written a

book, that I wanted to interview Miss Franklin for *Essence* magazine.

“Have you read *Essence* magazine?” I asked.

“Uh huh.”

I told her I wouldn’t take but five minutes, that I had already done an interview with Eldridge Cleaver, Nina Simone, and was going to lie and say Ella Fitzgerald, but she cut me off with:

“There is going to be a press conference today at six for Miss Franklin. You can ask your questions then.”

Press conference?

“Where?”

“At the Fillmore.”

So all the hippies from the underground papers would be there asking dumb-ass questions that they could have asked any of the freaks like the Doors, James Taylor, etc. What I wanted to talk to Aretha about was black women, the evolution of her self in her music. The origin of “Dr. Feelgood” (was she thinking about a specific person when she composed it, etc.). I really didn’t want to go to a press conference with all those hippies who wanted a piece of gossip for their newspaper. “Listen, sister,” I said, getting nation, “I don’t want to be up there with all those white folks, with them asking simple dizzy questions. All those journalists are interested in is getting something newsy, something for their papers—”

“Well, isn’t that what you want?”

“No, that’s *not* what I want. Oh, I want something much more personal. I’m not interested in propaganda. I want poetry. I want a personal response—”

“Well, you’ll have your chance at the press conference.”

“But—”

“The press conference will be very intimate. You’ll have time to ask her *all* the questions you want.”

“But can I come by before the conference and just ask her a *few* questions? I promise I won’t take up much time.”

“I’m afraid Miss Franklin won’t have that kind of time.”

“Listen—” I started to say, I bet you if I were Norman Mailer or Nat Hentoff . . . and decided against it. I wasn’t gonna bet. I hung up the phone. The morning breeze was like ice on my naked ass.

As I slipped into my Cardin, I remembered what Cleaver had intimated about Huey: “You could be taking that

“My interest in Aretha was primarily confined to her lyrics.”

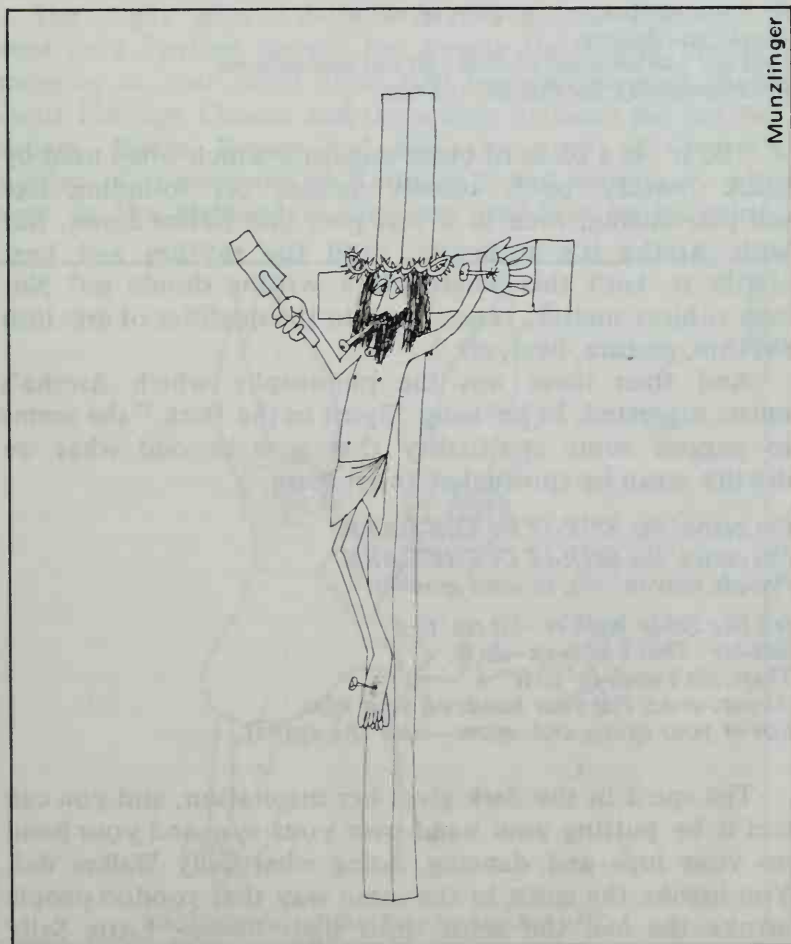
money. . . .” Just yesterday I’d spent six hundred dollars. Well, fuck you, Eldridge, you living high on the hog! You may come out wearing black on the TV, but you are living like a king! Aretha Franklin wasn’t wearing a whole lot of fancy clothes! And she was so pure! I spend two hundred on shoes alone! And as I was coming out of I. Magnin, I saw a scarf for forty! Now, dig this. My father doesn’t make that much money in a week, right? Six hundred dollars in two hours! And people are starving in my own hometown! I tried to fight the guilt by thinking about how fly Miles Davis always dressed. Then it occurred to me that, if Cardin and them other French faggots are taking me off, they taking off Miles Davis too! And Flip and Bill Cosby too! *Somebody* is taking them off! With success we may assume that somebody has taken somebody off! . . . except . . . if you are jive, it’s a different show! But what’s the alternative to wearing Pierre Cardin and looking good, and feeling a little guilt? Wearing overpriced purple pants with some Florsheim wing tips and always feeling down because you know The Man done got you but you haven’t had the time to figure out exactly how, or maybe if you had the time you might not be equipped to know, because where he got you was in the schooling?

My interest in Aretha was primarily confined to her lyrics. I was impressed with the poetry, in how she came to write a line like “It was pride on my lips, but not in my heart,” in how a musician such as herself could compose such lyrical poetry while black poets seem to stumble on concepts and ideas. Was it that her music suggested the lyrics, in the same way that a stroke of an artist’s pen suggests the lines in a drawing? Black poets seem to organize the poetic process around concepts and ideas on race, economics, etc., but wasn’t it rhythm, tempo, cadence that should suggest the diction? Baldwin had once said that it was only in music that the story of the Negro had been told, implying that it was possible that the story could have been told otherwise; that is, in the traditional literary form, *as a story*, as a narration which utilized the elements of “good writing.” And later than Baldwin, LeRoi Jones had

suggested that we develop a form of writing comparable to the blues, again implying the form of literacy usually referred to as “good writing.” But in her lyrics, had not Aretha utilized rhythm, beat, and gesture to convey the nuances of black life more effectively than any literary poet?

*I don't want nobody
Always sittin' around
Me and my man
I don't want nobody
Always sittin' right there
Looking at me and that man.*

Courting in the black community consisted of going over



Munzinger

**“What really was her
incredible source of
happiness and faith?”**

to the girl's house and sitting in the “front room” with the girl, and usually the whole family would crowd in to antagonize the hell out of you; it is the way Aretha expresses it (i.e., the vernacular rhythm of “Always sittin’ right there/Looking at me and *that* man.” Note: it’s *that* man which suggests a particular reference.) that evokes in the mind of black people the entire socio-economic situation without invoking those heavy, plodding terms that sociologists and sociological poets have to use.

*Be it my mother, my brother, or my sister,
Would you believe.
I get up, put on some clothes—go out and help me
Find somebody for this self if I can.*

“Be it” is a piece of black linguistic which when used by black literary poets usually comes off sounding like self-patronizing, even in a real poet like LeRoi Jones. But with Aretha it’s authentic; until the rhythm and beat clarify it. Isn’t this where black writing should go? Not into subject matter, verse, but into the qualities of art: into rhythm, gesture, beat, etc.?

And then there was the philosophy which Aretha’s music suggested. In her song “Spirit in the Dark,” she seems to suggest some spirituality that goes beyond what we usually mean by spiritual as an art form.

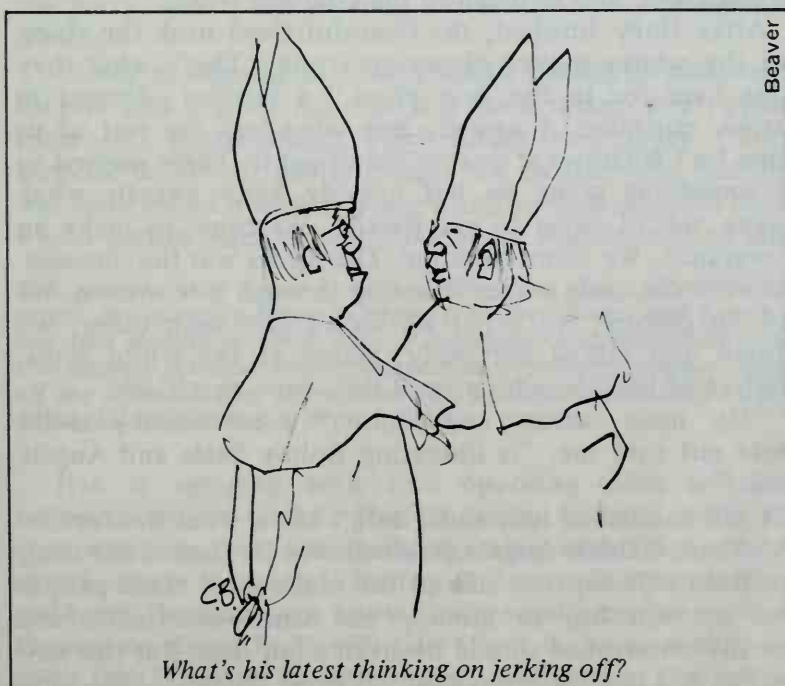
*I’m gettin’ the SPIR-IT IN THE DARK
I’m gettin’ the SPIR-IT IN THE DARK
Peo-ple mov-in’—ah, in-ward groov-in’*

*It’s like Sal-ly Walk-er—Sit-tin’ in a
Sau-cer—That’s how ya—do it,
There ain’t noth-in’ to it
Ah, saz-er-ac; Put your hands on your hips,
Cov-er your eyes,—and—move—with the spir-it.*

The spirit in the dark gives her inspiration, and you can feel it by putting your hand over your eyes and your hand on your hips and dancing, doing what Sally Walker did. You invoke the spirit in the same way that voodoo people invoke the *loa*, the spirit, into their bodies. Little Sally

Walker refers to a children's game which black people played in the South. How did Aretha incorporate that folklore reference into the song? Was it personal? And then the idea of blind faith: was this a philosophy? There seems to be a pattern here, because in another song she sings there is a parallel. In "Don't Worry Until Worry Gets Here" and "Dr. Feelgood," in "Love the One You're With," she seems to be accounting for her immense happiness and positive outlook. What really was her incredible source of happiness and faith? What was it based on? Who was Dr. Feelgood? What was the Spirit in the Dark? Why shouldn't we worry about the bridge (even before we get to it)? Was it the fact that she had a great talent that made her happy, or was it her happiness which enabled her to develop such a great talent?

The night after I'd seen Aretha at the Fillmore, I went to a Panther benefit for Angela Davis; and the day previous to *that* event there had been widespread gossip about Eldridge Cleaver and the schism between the Panther leaders. Elaine Brown had told the story of Cleaver's murder of some lover of Kathleen's, and everybody who went to the Oakland Auditorium had that on his mind.



**“...Aretha...made us
love music, and wasn’t
that a political force?”**

Gossip was the new black form now, and it had been the inevitable outcome of black people experimenting with the media; it was a natural process: the white man had programmed blacks into playing the roles they were playing, and the only way out was to parody The Man’s Methods. As I walked into the auditorium I got frisked by the brothers so expertly and with such belligerence, I could only think how well these brothers had learned their lesson from the pigs. *Spread-eagle, brother?* they were shouting. Inside, Huey was speaking in a rapid flow of garbled words, and no one understood anything. I was told Elaine Brown had spoken, but no one knew exactly what she said. The loudspeakers were very bad. Nothing was clear. Brothers ran around, appearing to be going somewhere but not seeming to be able to get there. Interspersed among them were hippie white people, here to carry on the total liberation of black people, specifically Bobby Seale and Angela Davis, and to listen to the Grateful Dead.

After Huey finished, the Grateful Dead took the stage, and the whites moved closer up front. “That’s what they came here for in the first place,” a brother, dressed in purple, muttered. I agreed. But what had the rest of us come for? Whatever it was we didn’t get it. There seemed to be something going on but nobody knew exactly what. Maybe we all came to get frisked. We came to make an appearance. We came to come. The media was the message. We were electrode waves shooting through a television. We had no culture, no hero; we didn’t love each other. We saluted and talked nervously, glared at the white folks, children of liberals, who proved they were also black.

“My main concern right now,” a seventeen-year-old white girl told me, “is liberating Bobby Seale and Angela Davis.”

I just looked at her, and I didn’t know what the fuck to say. Yeah, I think Angela Davis should be given a fair trial, and Bobby Seale, too; and all the millions of black people who are not hip to literacy but who nevertheless are unjustly imprisoned should be given a fair trial. But the way she put it, I just had to look at her: long “nappy” hair, long

wrinkled silk Salvation Army dress. Damn, these white people are a bitch—she looks more like a part of the problem than part of the solution!

The evening was depressing. So *this* was Black Panther politics? Was I fantasizing when I thought that maybe Aretha was offering an alternative to this? Did she not liberate me that night at the Fillmore with her voodoo version of “Spirit in the Dark”? Did not the people feel something (“Feel the Spirit”) that night at the Fillmore when she came out in the audience shouting and causing others to shout? Was not her philosophy a political force? The Panther benefit left nothing but a bitter, negative aftertaste. But Aretha was a healing force. She made us love music, and wasn’t that a political force?

The Panthers apparently don’t like music; the Grateful Dead sound exactly like they named themselves: dead. But Aretha! I just had to talk to Aretha! I had to interview her! Then, again, was I the only person who felt this way? Was I intellectualizing too much? Was I the only black intellectual courageous enough to say that the Panthers didn’t love music? That compared to Aretha they were negative? Maybe it wasn’t individual Panthers who were so negative as the party, which had become a tool of white communism. *No Lie!*

Gossip as a result of “black media flexing its muscles”—Cleaver had a good rap. He is a good talker, poet, priest, force—i.e., media image. Which forces Huey to say, “Don’t measure us by our media image.” In an interview, Eldridge was once asked if he was jiving when he dedicated his book, which praises black women, to a white woman, and he said:

This was the way I was in prison. There are times when to take people in, to really listen to them, is to love them. And I used to love that Beverly Axelrod. Man, if somebody said something about that Beverly Axelrod when I was in Folsom Prison, I’d throw his ass off the fifteenth tier. There were a lot of Muslims who didn’t like it either. I’d tell them, Kiss my ass, blackass niggers!

Jive is agreeing with two opposing sides and still believing you’re right. Jive is being friendly with the contradictions but not really agreeing with them. Jive is eating your cake and having it too and not giving a goddamn, because you know that’s what’s happening even though no damn body will talk about it, because they are jive! Jive is saying it with sound, with image and sound,

**“Jive is not just style.
It is *the* style. Style
for the sake of Style.”**

with music, saying everything with music. Jive is what oral people call art, which is “where it’s at.”

Jive is when you are able to check yourself just in time, and you say, I’m a pretty dude! Eldridge was jive, temporizing, slick.

But Huey was not jive and that was his problem; he was like the first Negro preachers who took it serious when the master said, If you don’t learn how to read, you will never get free. He believed in the difference between the literal and the figurative; that is to say, he has the makings of a good lawyer. The world is not one thing to him, it is two parts: the external, the public; and the internal, where you have your god, your private life. If you say you are going to do something, you do it because there is the difference between your internal world and the outside world, and they must match. But jive is seeing the whole thing as one. There is no discrepancy between the internal and the external worlds. One can be made to form the other one. A passionate mind can make the world passionate for all of us. *Forces!* A strong mind will make the outside world into whatever that strong mind is! Jive surrounds you with the symbols of meanings which can only be explained in the way one explains music. Jive is black people making music when they talk. Jive is a term describing a state of reality which black people have which cannot be described. Described, that is, in the same way Norman Mailer would describe, say, his experiences with black people. In literate expression, we listen to writers write and we expect them to go from one point to the next, logically. Not so with jive, which is the literary form of rap. Jive is digression, except you never leave the point. Jive is ultimate consciousness. Jive is not just style. It is *the* style. Style for the sake of Style, which, to tell the truth, is the only style.

Aretha was not there. So I called up Ishmael Reed and told him I was going to interview Aretha.

We drove from Berkeley into the City (San Francisco), found a parking space a block from the Fairmont, went in, and got somebody in Aretha’s room on the phone once again. This time Ish had it. “We are looking for the press

conference,” he said. The voice puts him off. I had forgotten to tell Ish to ask for the room number, because my plan was just to barge (bogart) right on into the room, and once inside we could act our beautiful selves, and once Aretha saw that we were fellow artists everything would be fine. All we had to do was get by her functionaries. Ish handed the phone to me; he seemed slightly disgusted.

“Hello.”

“Didn’t I talk with you before?”

“Yes,” I answered, “but I absolutely have to speak to Aretha”—and then I added—“sister.”

Nothing worked.

“She’s not in now, I’m sorry. There will be a press conference this—” As we walked out of the Fairmont, Ish assured me that she was there, that that’s the way they do it, by getting one of their mellows to put you off. So I had no

A Poem for Dope Fiends

By Barry Eagle

Our bodies bound together
in this fix of silence.

Let our faces show this want
that we must carry with us
into the deepest regions of despair.

Oh it is not enough
our bodies empty of blood
& where once there was hope

my soul rushed out of life
spike plunged deep in my vein
dropping my head

down my own throat.

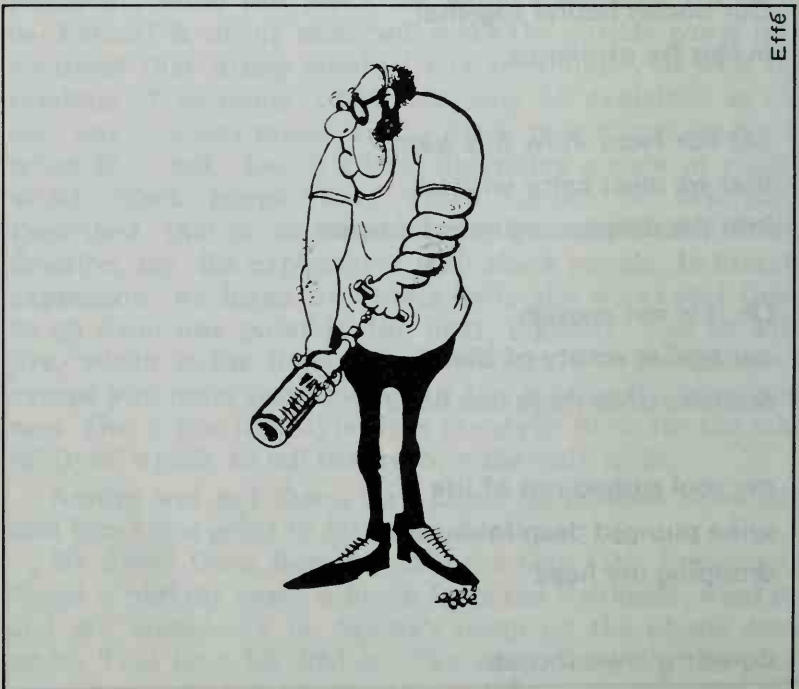
**“Blackness is a force in
white writers like Dante
and Milton and Blake....”**

other choice but to try and get to her at the press conference.

“Let’s go over to Claude Brown’s,” Ish suggested, “and get him to go with us to the press conference.”

Claude Brown’s

I told myself that I wouldn’t write anything about what happened at Claude’s house between me and him and Ish, because these cats might get mad with me, or might even sue me. They are my friends, but you never know. But then there were a few things I just couldn’t suppress. We drank a lot of gin, and then we started talking about *writing*. We started talking about white writers! We talked about the mothers like a big dog! If my memory serves me correctly, we got into the discussion in an oblique manner. Claude got up and showed us how the wife of a famous white writer was moving her ass when she drunkenly asked a party full



of uptight whites had they read Ishmael Reed's latest novel. I had to laugh. Claude Brown surprised me. I had met him a couple times and I expected him to be stuffier than he was. Right now he was fantastic. I asked him who was the famous writer again and he told me and I almost died laughing. Every time I thought of the writer's earnest books, I thought of his wife. Yes, Claude was like me and Ish—he was crazy. It surprised me with a nice comfortable feeling, how we all were so much alike. We were black men writing in America, and although we were different people, individuals, really, still we were so much alike! Once a white girl hugged me and laughed and said, "You really are brothers! You really *are* brothers! You come on the same way! It's amazing!"

I got up and got a second gin, sat back down, and looked over the bay. I was a little worried about the press conference, but we had a good hour. Ish was egging Claude on about Harlem, and then Claude did a bit about how he'd meet cats coming around the corner who'd seen him on television and knew he'd written a book, and wanted him to give them some wine money. Yeah, baby, I saw you on da TV and I said to my man, That's my boy. Yeah, baby, I saw you on television with the white man, and the Man was trying to outargue you and you argued that motherfucker right on down to *the point of death!* You were mean! Mean! You . . . Dig, brother, I just got to have fifty cents at least. . . . Man, I'm under the doctor's care. . . .

So we were talking about white writers. Not writers. But *white* writers. People like Saul Bellow. Mailer. Nat Hentoff. Geismar. Damn, Jewish writers! *New York Review of Books*. *N.Y. Times*, etc. But I was thinking about something else. I was thinking about white writers like Shakespeare and Genet and Melville who thought of blacks as something positive, something positive in all of us. Black was deep in *The Heart of Darkness*. Whether these geniuses loved black people or not was a question that never prevented them from attributing to blacks tremendous human psychic energy. Blackness is a force in white writers like Dante and Milton and Blake, and not because they were religious poets, because all poets are religious. The European image of the black man is a beautiful lover playing a trumpet, or he is the silhouetted figure bent over the blues *behind* a couple of lovers. Which is an image of the symbol of music, a symbol of the philosophy of jive.

“...I can't see a black writer sitting at the table all day....”

But contemporary white writers! First there is the attitude toward black people as exemplified by their characters; but then there's their attitude toward *black writing*. They see black writing as a fad. Dig that, a fad! Many white writers exploit black themes for purely money reasons, and the serious ones attempt to show the world that what looks like a fad is not really a fad. The white critics encourage young black writers to write protest by giving good reviews to old communist writers like Richard Wright; and then, when a protest novel appears to be reviewed for Art, the reviewer reminds the reader that social protest is not Art. Why do white people do that? Why do they tell you to go start a fight then judge you because you didn't mention Dante? Personally, I always mention Dante, or somebody like that, when I'm writing for Americans, who can see culture in a mere word. Do they do this because they don't want black writers to write the way they dance or play music? White people seem always wanting to encourage black people to be anything but themselves, because if they are not themselves then they are an image-robot like the white critic-manager. The Ellison mystique went over big with the literary critics because they could recognize the method of writing; it was the same method that all the great white writers used. The *good* white writers, ha! But the story is too slow, and it's not the way black writers organize the world at all.

True black writing is when you can feel the man come through the story, through the actual page, and the effect of seeing that human being is that of meeting any real black person in real life. Anybody you know who is black. Knowing that person is a real experience because he touches the deepest part in you. He touches and brings to your attention the heaviest part in anybody. He shows you the contradictions and how to comprehend them; he is sad and happy at once. He is young and really wild, impulsive. He is not embarrassed at anything he sees on the face of the earth, except people who are foolishly embarrassed at almost everything they see. The picture that white people have of writers like Ellison is a talented black man

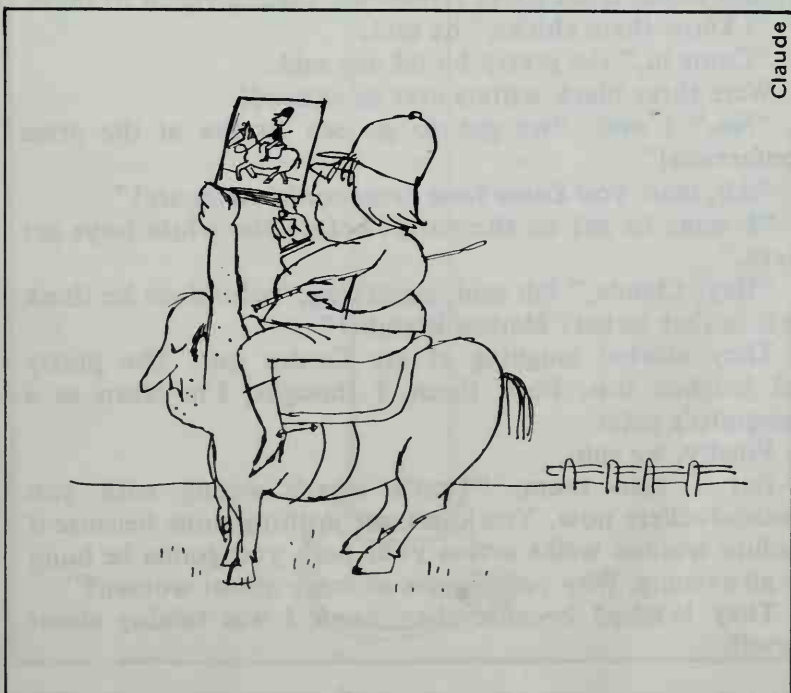
mastering the craft of a Western form. Now to see that this talented man has a vision means only that he has mastered his form, because having a vision is part of the particular form. But the picture I have is of an artist who is a musician and poet by birth, takes up the form of literacy, and plays it like a saxophone, employing all the things he knows about The Music of Life into writing, and thereby evolving a new form of literature, which is jive.

I can't see a black writer sitting at a table all day, as Henry James would. I see him doing something. I see him weaving all kinds of unnatural forms together into a musical tapestry. I see him being as simple and pretty and open as Thelonius Monk. Or as bitchy as Miles. I see us listening too.

I had sat there and gotten myself angry. Ish had not changed the conversation; now he had Claude talking about Harlem. I looked over at the clock and it was five minutes to six; I wanted to go see Aretha.

"To survive Harlem it was," Ish said, ". . . it was like the strongest survive."

"It was like guilt survived," said I, thinking that that is the way it is with me. Sometimes people survive because



**“At the Filmore there
was a long line of black
people without tickets.”**

they push hard enough.

“That’s right,” Claude said. “Auschwitz complex.”

Me and Ish laughed.

“Why does it have to be Jewish, Claude?” Ish laughed.

“Why not the *Amistade complex*?”

“Hey, let’s go! I want to see Aretha!”

“Come on, Claude!”

Claude said he didn’t want to go. So I started begging because it looked like if I didn’t get them to go I would never get there. We started drinking gin again. Then, finally, with a lot of yelling, I got them up, and as we went out of the house I thought, Are all black writers this hard to get out of the goddamn house to see Aretha? They would be very eager if they were Jewish.

I told myself that I wouldn’t write about this, but the irony is too great to omit it: just as we came down the stairs we saw in the window three white girls just lounging around in the front room afternoon. Claude yelled to them.

“I know them chicks,” he said.

“Come in,” the pretty blond one said.

Were three black writers ever so enticed!

“No,” I said, “we got to go see Aretha at the press conference!”

“Ah, man, you know how press conferences are!”

“I want to get to the sisters before the white boys get there.”

“Hey, Claude,” Ish said, signifying, “who does he think he is in that jacket? Marlon Brando?”

They started laughing at my Cardin suit. The pretty girl laughed too. Fuck them, I thought, I’m clean as a mosquito’s peter.

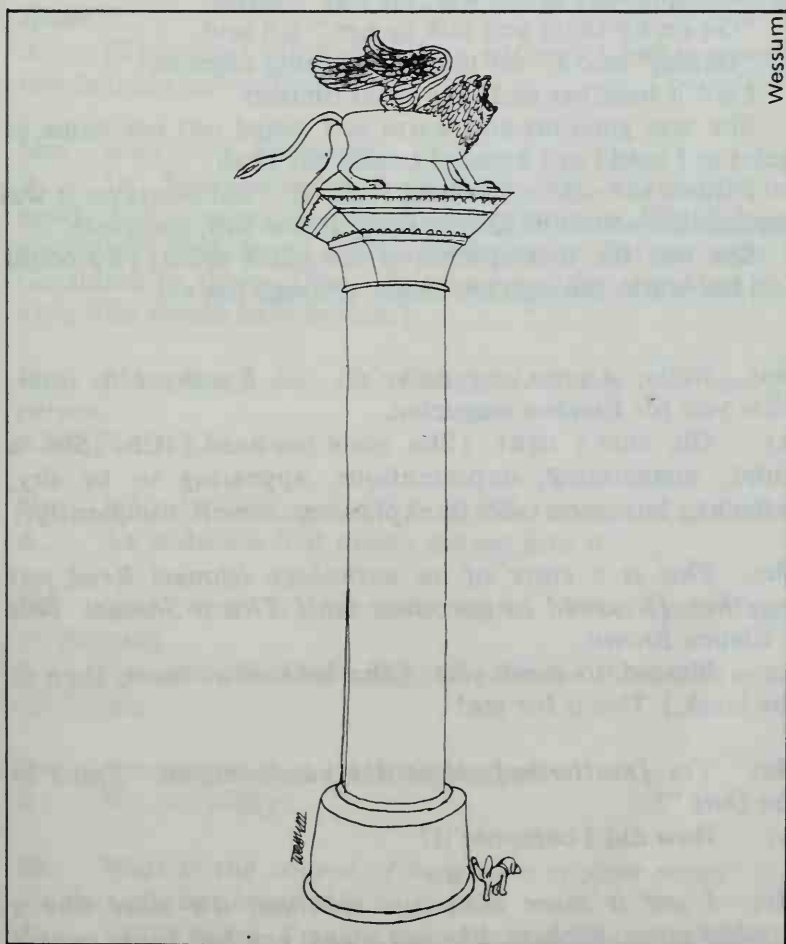
Finally, we split.

But I told them, “That’s what’s wrong with you motherfuckers now. You can’t get nothing done because if a white woman walks across your path you gonna be hung up all evening. Why you niggers so crazy about women?”

They laughed because they knew I was talking about myself.

At the Fillmore there was a long line of black people without tickets. We went to the door and the black policemen let us talk to the white manager, who wouldn't let us in until I told him up front that we were black writers. He thanked me and said he was very glad I told him that because he just didn't know. We went inside and got lost behind the stage looking for the press conference. As we were coming out of the room, Claude spied a man stacking crates of beer. Ish laughed, explaining to me that Claude was still living in his book, that is, in Harlem. He laughed and laughed as Claude came toward us, drinking from the hot can. *Nigger had to have a beer!*

The press conference was indeed intimate. There were



“Dr. Feelgood is just anybody that makes you feel good....”

around a hundred people, and they were serving ribs, black-eyed peas. I looked for Aretha, but couldn't find her. There were a good many black faces there, but no Aretha. Then finally I turned to Ishmael. Claude was over at them ribs and potato salad. Oh, there she was! So simple and unassuming! She was so simply dressed, so unnoticeable! She looked like one of the freshmen girls sitting in the cafeteria chatting with friends after dinner. And there, just as inconspicuous as she was, sat Ray Charles.

“Go on up there and talk to her,” Ish said.

“Damn,” said I, “let me get my thing together!”

I got it together and then went on over.

She was gracious and warm as I called out her name as quiet as I could as I kneeled beside her chair.

I think she said something like, “Hi,” but whatever it was she made it sound like she'd sung. It was full, complete.

She was the new symbol of the black spirit; you could feel her warm through her mask, through her act.

Me: Hello, Aretha, my name is---. I wanted to interview you for Essence magazine.

A: Oh, that's right. [She nods her head.] Uh. [She is quiet, unassuming, unpretentious, appearing to be shy, reticent, but soon she is explaining herself eloquently.]

Me: This is a copy of an anthology Ishmael Reed put together. [I turned to introduce Ish.] This is Shmael. This is Claude Brown.

A: Pleased to meet you. [She looked at them, then at the book.] This is for me!

Me: Yes [muttering]. How did you compose “Spirit in the Dark”?

A: How did I compose it?

Me: I see it more than just spiritual; it's more like a voodoo piece, because, like last night, you had those people literally possessed—

A: [Laughing at my theory] I didn't quite see it that way.

Me: *How did you see it?*

A: It was just a song. First, it was supposed to be a dance piece, but we started working with it and doing whatever *felt* good.

Me: *What about "Little Sally Walker"? We used to dance to that as children.*

Ken: Yeah, that's right. [Now I become aware of Ken.]

A: Yeah, it was gonna be a dance, you know, with Little Sally.

Me: *Did you write "Pride on My Lips, But Not in My Heart"?*

A: [Thinking] Uh huh. [Then adding] I had somebody else helping me on that.

Me: *Who is Dr. Feelgood?*

A: Dr. Feelgood is just anybody that makes you feel good. Just a song, you know. Do you know Flip Wilson's Geraldine? Well, that's what I be trying to do: get some of Geraldine in there. [She did a sway of the shoulders that even Flip would have envied.]

Me: *[Laughing] So, Dr. Feelgood is not one specific person?*

A&K: No, it's for everybody.

Me: *Who do you sing best for? What is a good audience?*

A: An audience that makes me get into it.

Me: *You were serious last night. You weren't just performing.*

A: No, you can't fake that! That's one thing you really can't fake.

Me: *Your lyrics then are not personal?*

A: No, not really.

Me: *What is the source of happiness in your songs? Is it the fact of your being able to sing or—*

A: That's right. I'm happy because I like to sing and I can.

**“White man has materials.
We have the spirit, art,
the gesture, the walk.”**

Me: *Did you ever go to Mexico?*

A&K: We're going in September. We are trying to get a mixed audience. Right now they only want us to perform to an all-white audience, but we said no, so we trying to get a fifty-fifty audience.

Me: *This is in South Africa?*

A: Uh hun. Where Hugh Masekela is exiled from.

K: Half of what you feel is true.

Notes

White man has materials. We own nothing. All we have is our attitude that “the rise of Jack J. to world heavy-weight, etc. Dig that.” Miles Davis. Dig that. We have the spirit, art, the gesture, the walk, rhythm. What would happen if there was an organization of Miles, Cosby, etc. Art power. Culture revolution. Emotions. Feeling. The evil white man had tricked brothers into the argument of material production for revolution, and knowing all along that all power is toward the spiritual. He knows that no matter how many times J. Frazier knocks Muhammad down, he can't be champion. The power is in the spiritual, the music, the art.

The Man had tricked blacks into Marxism, so that he may judge blacks by a white man's terms. This is a good way of eliminating black men. No, he isn't black, he's Marxist. Just as the whites encourage blacks from writing like blacks.

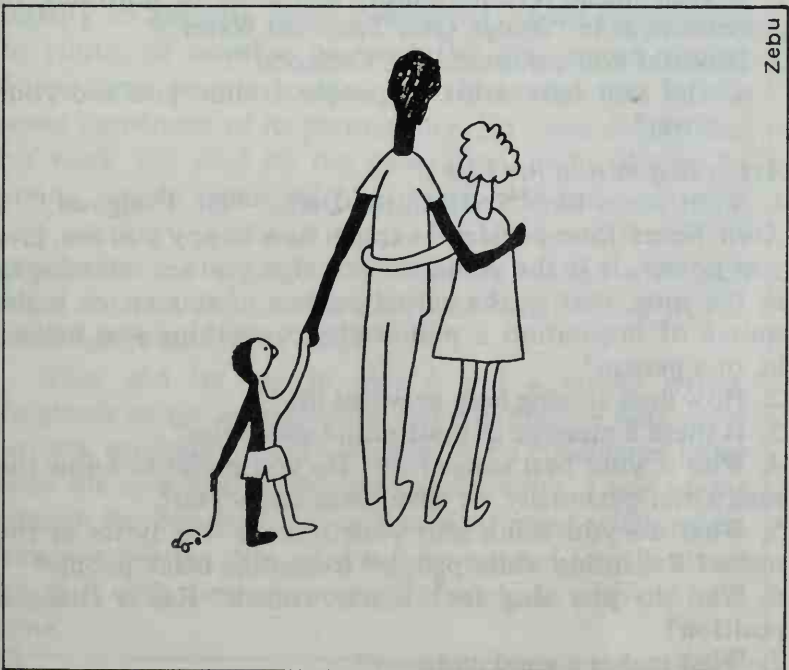
The Man tricked blacks into separating their sexuality from their work, so that many black works read like early slave narratives—obviously censored by the white abolitionist edifice.

Americans are accustomed to using thwarted sexuality to motivate social image (as in *Native Son*, *M*A*S*H*). We hate movies like *Zabriskie Point* because they unite the private emotional-sexual world against the public, political world of literature, and prefer the world of emotionalism, which is a nigger thing. *Zabriskie Point* viewed all the silly

politico-emotions like “revolutionary,” nigger-killing cops as silly, and moved to a higher land of emotionalism, which destroys the world every second, which is a nigger thing. Sorrow is what the girls feel at the end. That sweet mixture of both sadness and happiness which gives you a positive force, which is a nigger thing. This is the essence of black art. Not the thing itself, but the quality of it, by any man’s necessity. The white man’s argument, then, that it is really an argument of production and motives, as exemplified by the Panther Party and Joe Frazier, was finished. Joe Frazier, who looked like the real nigger, and the Panther, who sounded like the real thing, were the end of something. Joe won the white man’s fight, but Ali was still a champ, and mostly because Joe didn’t look like a champ. He didn’t have the spirit. Ali is jive, Ali is a line. The Panthers had not had a big following that was white.

The variety of blackness the white man wants is the spirit *less*. The *material and production* blackness. That way the white man has a chance.

Zabriskie Point describes that apparent discrepancy between the real world and the world we imagine, preferring the imaginary one.



Zebu

“How does singing help personal life? Is there a message in your music?”

It exposed itself in images and symbols, not pictures and signs, and only by being an uninvolved spectator could Antonioni hear the rhythm, beat (the qualities of the revolution), and only then could he render those elements until further imagery.

What was new was a new range of blackness. Young black would be critic, would disagree with the white liberal's definition of art.

Music and Art

1. How did you compose “Spirit in the Dark”?
 - a) What about “Little Sally Walker” putting her hands over her eyes?
 - b) “I’m getting the Spirit in the dark.” What does this refer to? Could you have written this lyric three years ago? When you sang “Respect”?
 - c) Is it similar to the new song “Worrying about Worry”?
2. Is your music returning more and more to spirituals, to possession, as in “Bridge Over Troubled Water”?
3. How did you compose “Dr. Feelgood”?
 - a) Did you have a lot of people around you and your lover?

Art as Inspiration for Life

1. Your songs like “Spirit in the Dark,” “Dr. Feelgood,” “I Ain’t Never Loved a Man” explain how happy you are, give you power. Is it the actual singing that you are referring to in the song, that is, the actual process of singing, or is the source of inspiration a philosophy, something you believe in, or a person?
2. How does singing help personal life?
3. Is there a message in your music and lyrics?
4. Who is your best songwriter? Do you prefer to know the songwriter personally, or have them know you?
5. What do you think sells your records—the lyrics or the music? Regarding white people? Regarding black people?
6. Who do you sing for? Black women? Has it changed position?
7. What makes a good audience? □

Notes From The Underground

continued from page 27

squeezed my hand and kissed me. I obliged him, for he asked with such gentleness.

We went outside and walked to the subway. On the way we passed a blond kid on the street and Goodman said he looked like a boy he knew in Chelsea. "He was on drugs for a while. Irish boy. Now he's off them." He paused. "Strong kid. I think he could break wine bottles between his thighs." He grinned, amused at the image.

The reason I tell you here of that first meeting and his gentleness toward me and why, earlier, I spoke of his reading his poems about his son, is that I am convinced that he was broken irreparably by his son's death, that it cost him more than he could pay. I think that because it serves to explain, in a kind way, his relationship to me. I can remember lunches in his apartment where he would cook me eggs and dump a tin of tuna fish on my plate and tell me to eat and then dive into speaking of what was on his mind. And it was usually an analysis, never completed, of his relationship to youth, of whether his work (his life) would survive. Fame came so late to him, so reluctantly, that he was never convinced of its permanence. He cared deeply that his work was read by my generation, and criticism by young people disturbed him greatly. He had been poor and relatively unknown for a long time, and if we—my generation and younger—to whom he looked with such hope did not regard him well, then what was it worth, what future was there in it?

What did he see in me? I was a young writer, emphasis on the adjective. He felt competitive with older writers, especially those whose work he considered lesser than his own but whose fame was greater. I was young enough for him to sustain a teacher-student relationship, however briefly, free of envy. He needed to talk about his craft with someone young. He made do with me for a time.

What finished our relationship, or rather put it in suspension, was his shy yet insistent physical demands. I do not mean that we ever had sex, but there was always sexual tension there as there was between Paul and every young man to whom he was attracted.

One afternoon he took me into his consultation room, a small bedroom where he had a desk and a day bed. I lay down on the bed. He asked me to remove my shirt. He spoke to me so softly about my relationship with my parents (hostile) and my sisters (latently incestuous), about latent and unacknowledged homosexuality (a drum he never ceased beating), about the tension and aggression he believed I kept bound inside me, knotted there.

"You don't know how to breathe correctly. Now breathe deep, no, no, with your *stomach*, *deep* . . . that's right, yes, let it out, let it out. No, no, not all at once. Slowly, like this . . . *whoosh* . . . *chooossh* . . . slowly, between the teeth, make a noise. Do it again, that's right, no, here," hitting my belly with his hands, kneading it like dough. "Fill it *up*! All the way! Fill it up, the chest, the lungs, now you've got it. . . ." Hands on my chest, pressing in.

We had two sessions like that. Then he told me I needed therapy. I told him I couldn't afford it. He laughed. "Go into therapy with me." He was a Gestalt lay analyst. "I won't charge you. Well, not at first." Then, catching my skepticism, "Yes, later I will, something modest, something you can afford. It's part of the *treatment*." He laughed.

It ended in my refusal to go into therapy with him. Partially because his presence was so intimidating and his need of what? affection? a son? so great that I feared I would lose what independence and manly competence I had won if I underwent analysis with him. He was enormously captivating, Goodman. He made you lonesome.

The last time I saw Paul was in the Village. He had read my novel, *Government Inspected Meat*, which had been published several months before. "Did you buy it?" I asked.

"Buy it? I stood in the aisle at the Eighth Street [bookstore] for two hours and read it there. You don't need the royalties!"

He was disappointed by the book, and spoke to me bitterly about it. "It's too antihomosexual for me, even antisexual. And you show too little respect for words. You throw them at the reader. You commit assault with them. You're too young to be so angry." We argued. Seeing him—this was shortly before he left for Hawaii (the fifty-second state!) to teach at the university there—I realized how much I would miss him.

"Don't leave New York, Paul. It's a stupid move to make. There's nothing in Hawaii but beach boys and those goddamn rich scions of the missionaries—you know, the guys with the pineapple plantations and the defense contracts? The life is here in the city."

He scratched his head. "You're wrong, Dotson. The life's where you make it. This city's dying—"

"No—"

"Yeah. Yeah, it is. Don't make fun of beach boys. They have a direct relationship with the elemental. They are modest because of it." It occurred to me that it was that relationship which he loved in his son and which he could not find in me. He had written of his son: "... probably the worst that can befall/is past me now, Matty being dead./If he were here he would have hoed/this field where my shoulders fail. . . ."

In New Orleans I felt emptied by the news of his death; drained, somewhat abandoned and resentful because of it, as if my errant father had died cheaply for no purpose, like Arkansas' old man cut up in some pointless bar fight. But it was not cheaply. It was in working the earth with his hands, in hoeing the field, in that "direct relationship with the elemental" that death

came for Paul Goodman, Greenwich Village-born, so completely urban in character that even his walk and carriage spoke litanies of the street. He ended on a farm. Hell, he was gone and I had moved up one place closer to the front of the line. And I had no son.

It was worse for Goodman, for he had had a son and lost him. I think part of what made his homosexuality at the end so infinitely piteous is that it was charged not by lust (that we can understand and satisfy) but by the memory of a son who died one day absurdly. There is no help for that.

Why have I written all this? I sit at a table in the courtyard of Pat O'Brien's Bar in New Orleans. It is very hot. Fans blow, shuffling the paper on the table.

I see birds in the huge, ornate cage across the courtyard, a brown lizard surreptitiously slinking up the side of the cage drawn by the flies drawn by the bird droppings—as we are drawn by what to this city? Sitting in the heat, slightly stoned on vodka . . . not leaving New Orleans I have left it already, as surely as Paul has left us. Already, too late, God knows, I have left Arkansas, who sits beside me here playing eager recipient to my young but not too generous role of Sugar Daddy. Paul, I do not play it well.

Arkansas sits beside me in a pair of blue trousers I bought him this afternoon, trousers that Paul would appreciate for they provide the kid with a basket which settles there between his thighs—thighs which will never crack wine bottles between their sinews, neither wine bottles nor this New Yorker's affections. They are too naive for that.

He sits beside me as he sat days ago on Bourbon Street, when Paul was still alive, at two in the morning, as I staggered out of Lafitte in Exile, drink in hand. He sat there on Bourbon hustling with a style Goodman appreciated but one which went out in the thirties or before, went out whenever it was Hart Crane last stumbled down similar streets, literally bleeding and in

search of other Arkansas boys to deliver him up into pain or whatever relieves, expiates, frees the homosexual from a life from which there is no relief, not even in the absurd rigidity of the penis of all the Arkansas boys in the world.

What Arkansas represents is, I think, what Goodman saw residing in similar youths which touched his concern and made him see them as adopted sons: America done over and lost. One hears it in their accents, in their languid, untrained speech, in the tough swagger which disguises a pathetic vulnerability. They are trained for nothing. They have no place.

I, too, like Goodman, am an involuntary Romantic, ashamed of sentiment. But it is America at bay there just the same. For that is what I met—and what Goodman forever sought to meet—that morning at two on Bourbon Street: the relic of an American murdered before my birth, in Goodman's early years, in the cells of the brains of his generation, most of whom (him excepted) grew old and comfortable in their complicity in corporate and state crime . . . the men of rank and the terrace who spent from my generation's number its best in foolish wars.

"Matty," Goodman said, "if he were alive, would be in jail." That is crime enough.

I am moved here by the knowledge of leaving New Orleans and by the future memory of Arkansas, like the memory of Goodman's son, asleep in the bed in the morning, his body prone like the remains of some son lost. And I know he has no future and no past, no one like Paul to instruct him (I am not equipped for it), and that he is relegated within a handful of years to death by violence or drugs. There is no help for it. I look at him, and I see what Goodman saw and loved: sons never come home, all the youths who have no place in post-industrial America.

And who is to worry about them now that Paul is gone?

—Dotson Rader

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Writing about black artists and entertainers has become big business--for white writers, that is. But they all miss the point, says Cecil Brown, in an interview with Aretha Franklin.

"Dear Hef: That's a pretty spastic operation you got going at Bunny Heaven in Great Gorge, where you pay guys to water the plastic bushes and a Playmate might even let you buy her a chocolate milk." An eyewitness report from admirer Peter Tauber of Hefner's newest Playboy Club Hotel in New Jersey.

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