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Number 11

A NEW ADVENTURE IN MODERN READING

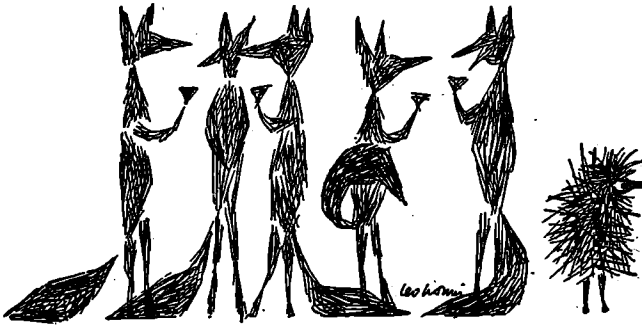
New World Writing

THIS IS THE EXCITING LITERARY VOLUME THAT OFFERS THE BEST OF WHAT IS NEW AND SIGNIFICANT IN FICTION, CRITICISM, DRAMA AND POETRY FROM THE WORK OF WRITERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

STORIES by Sadeq Chubak, Samuel Blazer, James Moffett and others; **ARTICLES** by Kenneth Rexroth, Alexander Eliot, Anthony West, Henry Hope Reed, Jr. and others; **POETRY** selected by Louis Simpson and Richard Vowles; A **PLAY** by Brock Brower; **DRAWINGS** by John Bayley and Robert C. Osborn.

A Mentor Book

To the Reader



If this is your introduction to *New World Writing*, you may find it somewhat like a literary cocktail party—brilliantly entertaining, clamorous, and, perhaps, sometimes confusing.

The confusion and diversity are in the very nature of modern life and of modern literature. For there is, now, no one prevailing theme, no one prevailing form, no one prevailing voice. There are many themes, many forms, many voices. And what they express is the adventure of experience.

In this book you will find some unusual fiction that may seem as familiar as a dream, along with some conventionally-written stories having to do with fantastic and unexpected events. You will find poems by some young Americans of the "silent" generation, whose range in subject and style is great, together with a selection of distinguished modern Swedish poems in translation. You will see a plea for further "revolt" in fiction, followed by a cogent argument against the repetition of outworn "experiments." There is a semi-documentary piece about the "new" literary rebels of the U.S. West Coast, and also an essay that argues

against the "Modern" in architecture and for a return to the "Classical."

"The fox," said Archilochus (quoted in Anthony West's essay which concludes the book), *"knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing."*

Contemporary literature is a fox.

We invite you to our literary cocktail party—to our party of foxes—in the spirit of a host who does not wish to impose his own ideas upon you, but who would have you meet some of the liveliest people writing poetry, fiction, plays, and essays, today.

We are indebted to Louis Simpson, who has served as Guest Poetry Editor of this *New World Writing.*

THE PUBLISHERS

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Table of Contents

CHICHEVACHE,* THE HUMBLE-COW

Samuel Blazer

At the University of Chicago, which he attended after Tufts College, Mr. Blazer was editor of the *Chicago Review*. He now has returned to New York City, where he was born in 1934, and is in a CBS training program. This is his first appearance in a national publication.

thumpsday:

Mr. Bigelow, overlordly shrunken Mr. Bigelow, paid for a pot cheese and pepper lunch in the Place Like All the Others. Then he put some toothpicks from the table into his pocket and walked through the door through three wilted New York city streets into the elevator of his building where he offered the operator a toothpick was refused left the elevator at the fifth floor shimmied down to the fourth (belching on the way) let himself into the Bigelow Blue Gnat Printing Company Incorporated by opening a thumbstruck metal door whose reply was a svelte callow buzz and picked his teeth as he removed his coat.

The coatrack was quite close to where Noel Lemick, the middle-aged messenger, sat at a desk and imagined airiness before him and flowerings behind. Yet all that was for him to see was the shadow of the coatrack; all for him to surely know back of him, the stand itself and Bigelow walk-lisping to it.

His employer considered Lemick warped. For one thing, his hearing was poor and he wore an aid. For another, he didn't rifle and ripple his portfolio enough for the few clients that he had. However, what most amazed Mr. Bigelow was Lemick's calm periodic announcements that it was his intention to commit suicide eventually. Whenever

*Chichevache (*lit.* "lean cow") was a fabulous cow which fed only on patient wives, and consequently had little to eat; she was sometimes contrasted with a cow named Bicorne, which lived on patient husbands, and fared better.

Mr. Bigelow imagined this bald tigerless milkstained face organizing an intention he would place a toothpick under his tongue and think of Nova Scotia salmon entering the rapids in a love position. For Noel Lemick was not stealthy. To Bigelow he was an altered man, an ingrown salve, negligible.

But to Lemick Lemick was in a process, a process he defined as an "inner elaboration and extraction of same." This boss who was so in the way of his exultation could not be expected to savor his expansion, could not even be helped to smile toward it. No.

Lemick was renovating himself to roots, to musings of joy as it flies, lovers, shakings in the heaped warm inside silently understanding parts. He had future memories of gazelles and moles. He found textures in the consciousness of a kiss, in the dull cramps of endless deathless wars. He asked for summaries in barrels, in the significance of circles, from sounds of thrown flames. He fathered silk and snow and rest for he thought them to be of the nature of preserving things. Lemick fashioned charms which he never doubted: cataclysmic fertilities; he felt onto beyonds, all of which came from woman taking man into her. Many of his motions and sensuous origins were truly a climax in their own generic development as sensuousness often is, but for Lemick's process they were all at the source.

Mr. Bigelow said: "Lemick, you will get me some more toothpicks when you deliver the package at Surrealist Engravers. And pick up those bookplates for my son. He's cultured. All that waste in the wrong direction."

"I ate a good lunch today: I can do all these things," said Lemick.

"Oh by the way Lemick how's your wife?"

"What did you say Sir?"

"I said how's your wife?"

"Oh, my wife," Lemick understood. "She is very bored. Very bored. With our neighbors. With me too I suppose. She is in the winds most of the time, sitting near the window with her head getting a draft, pulling her hair back and singing slowly to herself. I find her that way often when I come home from outside."

"Ha ha," Mr. Bigelow belched, "she'll be all right."

"I told her about all the toothpicks you use and how I have to get them. She said why don't you just put a toothpick between each tooth and keep it there and put an end to that. I told her you couldn't do it on account of you don't have all your teeth, not even enough to make it pay.

She stuck her head out the window and her hair blew back."

Bigelow turned toward his own desk and kicked a leg of it lightly. Then he went toward the press room as much against Lemick as ever. More perhaps.

And Lemick made ready to go on his errands.

frightday:

Mira Lemick watched the chunks of rain as she made breakfast. She thought of the Borgias consigning their poison in weather like this. Lemick's wife was not as smithered-looking as her husband. His stomach was below her dignity and her eyes were above his musings. She was not a part of his process—at least Lemick hoped she wasn't. Oh, she had religious pains now and then, yes, but they were nothing, developing from hallucinations as they did. She defied through her delusions. She insisted that the smell from the near-by wholesale fish market by the river was God spreading his merciful punishment. God was her personal trophy, majestic and saline. She did not feel that her husband or the neighbors should intrude.

Mrs. Lemick wished to have a muskrat farm. Her husband warned that she would have to get each muskrat to express its soul in garish reds and yellows for the farm to be successful. Mrs. Lemick didn't care if every muskrat on the place had a prenatal hernia so long as it could be persuaded to foment a dignified fervor for religious pain in its offspring. And when an animal died he was to be buried with a fish. Death would thus be a civilized ecstasy, unhampered by morbid reverence.

Her brother, Mrs. Lemick knew, hated morbidity as much as she. He published popular sheet music because of this. And the Blue Gnat Printing Company Incorporated handled some of it. Her brother, Mrs. Lemick teased in her own peculiar manner, had lost his respect for the Blue Gnat Printing Company when they hired Noel (even though Lemick's brother-in-law had sent him there for the job).

Noel had been pleased to get the job at first; he had not been working after his hearing had started to fail. Instead he would sit in his room hearing Mira encouraging fish smells and would try to believe in the breathing of his inner essences. What he worked out was not even a thought, just the crease of a wish for the breathing to be there. But once he had understood the process he could not sit in the room any longer. And he certainly could not stay in the wind with Mira.

He did not mind being little more than an errand boy.

Before his illness he had been a clerk in an import-export firm whose employees were healthy physically, mentally, linguistically. Now he walked and noticed and commented and longed to understand.

Today Mira and he were leaving the house together, she to visit her brother at the Swanee-Pestilencia Music Publishing Company and Lemick to create spirits where only roars and smudges were now.

The rain had stopped and once outside Mira smelled the breeze above the grass near their apartment building. No Gododor yet. She felt trifled with, so she said nothing.

Lemick got off the train first but it was as if Mira had left him. At least she never shouted.

Mrs. Lemick interested herself very much. She did not have the same effect on her older brother. When she entered the Swanee-Pestilencia offices she saw him reach for a pill. Lehrmann Morton was a man who had been drugged at the age of fiftyseven and now, two years later, could at least eliminate the glass of water. The pills had to subsist on mirages in his stomach. This gave him an agility of sorts, an example of which Mrs. Lemick had just witnessed. She walked over to him and pinched him on the rind of his red neck. Like a lobster, she thought.

"I hope you haven't come to tell me again about your idea for building aquariums as temples of worship," her brother anticipated.

"Oh, no," Mrs. Lemick admitted sadly, sitting down alongside his desk. "That plan was too morbid. Besides, I had the idea a few years ago when you were still supporting us. It was selfish of me to ask for those aquaria just then. But now that Noel has been working for two years and you have not had to help us I would like you to help me start a muskrat farm. I want to see the muskrats find meaning before they die for silly women."

Lehrmann Morton did not shudder. He sank lower and lower into his chair as if he were trying to kick his sister under the table.

"Why not a lizard colony why not a snakecharming school? Why don't you build an ark? Or import geishagirls!"

"Please Lehrmann—not all at once."

"What makes you think, Mira, that you and that husband of yours are no longer costing me money? Who do you suppose got Noel his job and who do you suppose is paying his salary there every week? The Blue Gnat Printing Company adds it to my bills."

"I don't believe you Lehrmann, shut up Lehrmann." Mira

left quickly and with hate. It was Noel's fault that she could not have the muskrat farm.

shatterday:

Noel had been seeing a beyond when he awoke early. Mira had not served him any food the night before, nor had she told him why. She had called him at work and had insisted that he come home immediately. Mr. Bigelow had given him a full day's pay. When he got home she hadn't even been there, and when she had at last entered the apartment she had opened the window, sighed with a suppressed scream, stared at him with disgust and turned all the faucets on throughout the three rooms, both water and heat. Lemick had closed the water, turned down the heat and gone to sleep. He had speculated that Mira would not be so colorless as to repeat her act.

However now he was sweating, here, all by himself in bed with his wife. It seemed a bluntness to him that they had ever lain together. He could not remember ever calling her to bed or her bidding him to take her. It was as if they had invariably found themselves at night in disagreeable positions after brushing their teeth and had brusquely decided to fumble at it for a spell. It was not what Lemick was used to consider natural and hardly instinctive. They had fallen into place like two fatty jaws. Mr. Lemick was sorry now for both of them. Yet he had remained gentle and grown sensitive, he knew that. Otherwise he could not have realized what they had been for each other. And otherwise he would not now suddenly be able to see what they had done to each other.

For a while he occupied himself in resting. Then Mira was awake, as if in sleep she had felt him calm and must disturb him now. She trembled. He smiled. Mira stood up on the bed, her horrid nightgown wresting her body with it. She called him names as if she were spitting at him. She almost slipped off the bed. She jumped at him up and down and over and over. She pointed at him bent over him nudged him at the edge of his bedside. Lemick avoided her with considerable stealth. He wished she would explain, could explain.

At last she collapsed straight down to her pillow, grazing the headboard. She gasped. She shook her head rapidly, unbelievingly. Lemick could not force himself to bring his wife a glass of water. She patted what she supposed to be her stomach as if she were arranging her hair. This seemed to soothe her or at least to bring her to comprehensibility. She spoke among two tones.

"Lehrmann got you your silly job Lehrmann pays your salary not the Blue Gnat Printing Company Lehrmann still sup-

ports us. Because of you I can't have my muskrat farm." She hiecoughed and heaved.

Lemick, hearing this, became confused and his first thought was to comfort her. He knew she was telling him something important but perhaps if he comforted her a bit . . . "It's all right Mira. There, there. I'll ask for a raise and perhaps you can still have . . ."

She laughed at him. And then in a moment he realized what she had been saying. He went to her and slapped her on the forehead. Then he proceeded to the kitchen for water.

shunday:

Mira opened the windows at four A.M., put on a pair of Noel's old trousers and a warm brown shirt and went walking to the fish and the river for a few prayers. Before leaving she poked Lemick hard. He told her to be careful.

After she left he lay there where she had jolted him. She had once taken him with her to the fish market. They had gotten there at about this time. There was a fire made by some of the men who seemed to back into it every once in a while when they weren't setting up the crates and pouring out fish of every variety onto scales and into other boxes. Some fish would fall to the ground and squirm a little until large vaulting hands would pick them up and throw them toward some vague disposal area. Noel and Mira had seen crabs and oysters, clams, lobsters fading as they writhed, frog eggs of a pink shell ooze. The men who unloaded them were shouting and dashing through liveness in baskets at their thighs. They were complaining about the earliness and were so old to have minded it. Young men whistled into the air around the unshaded lights as they threw small boxes under the bulbs. There was scraping and wetness and chills of molten smells. The odors were so unyielding that they had begun to drive away the darkness. The fire still jostled its flames. The sun would soon rise and halt the moving fish under the shed. Mira had made Noel pick up a lobster and he felt its sweetness pass into its claws and into him.

They had eaten breakfast at Sloppy Louie's opposite the market. The owner had looked like a man who planted healthy things in the earth and perhaps even at the bottom of the sea. They ordered fried clams and Lemick watched his wife put the shells to her nostrils and set them down again with deep satisfaction.

Remembering all this, Noel wanted urgently to see the preserving things in fish and satisfaction and water where fish have interplay and shake their bodies cleansed.

He could not understand this now.

At eleven o'clock Mira had not returned. Lemick dialed Mr. Bigelow's home telephone number and was told by a youthful and cultivated masculine voice that he was still asleep. He said thank you he didn't mind and would call back later. Mr. Bigelow was a man who did man's work and everyone could see that he did man's work; so he must rest. He left for business so early every morning so how could anyone fail to understand how purposefully his days would always hollow out.

Lemick tried again at twelve. Bigelow was up but unable to speak to him. Probably in the bathroom doing man's work there too.

Bigelow's phone rang at onethirty. He answered it himself. Lemick asked him if he was annoying him and Bigelow was almost going to say yes. What Lemick heard was a thought-better-of no.

"Well then Mr. Bigelow, my wife told me something yesterday that her brother (Lehrmann Morton of Swanee-Pestilencia Music)" (Yeahyeah at the other end of the phone) "told her. I've been trying to speak to you about it since last night." (This was not true: Noel had wanted Mira not to be present when he called Bigelow.)

Mr. Bigelow wished to know (of course) what it was exactly that he had been told.

"Well my wife said that her brother fairly screamed at her that he is supporting us that he he is paying *you* the salary you give me for my work my work in your firm."

Bigelow almost immediately bellowed "No no! He didn't know what he was saying Ridiculous Who ever heard of such a thing Well only half of your salary at any rate. Just like him to claim the whole damn thing. Now look here Lemick you *are* valuable to us You've brought us some good accounts. Look here (and a bit softly this was said) Lemick From now on we will pay your salary. Yes We were planning to do that soon anyway. Hereafter all of your salary will be paid by the Blue Gnat Printing Company and not by Swanee-Pestilencia. Of course you may have to take a slight cut for a while (we haven't been doing so well lately) but at least that brother-in-law of yours won't be able to hold anything over your head. How does that strike you Lemick? Yes that's what we'll do."

"Goodbye Mr. Bigelow."

Lemick hung up. He believed that Mr. Bigelow would someday be blessed by the world if it could only catch his conscience. Noel dressed and drank some milk. He warmed it up despite the mildness of the afternoon. Mira still did not return.

At four o'clock Lemick thought: "I will soon be in the landscape just as Mira is now in the wind."

And Noel Lemick killed himself, making use of a method which he had not yet decided upon when he died. But for the first time in his process he had shakings in the warm inside parts and he felt silk and snow and rest. There were instructions for his wife to bury him (if she happened to return) with a fish (a smacking saucy cod).

Sadeq Chubak

A citizen and native of Iran, Sadeq Chubak was born in Bushire in 1916. He was educated in Shiraz and at the American College of Tehran, from which he graduated in 1937. Considered one of the leading authors in the modern Iranian school of literature, Mr. Chubak has been writing since the age of twelve. He has published two volumes of short stories and plays, and is the author of a novel. A number of his stories have appeared in England, in the magazine *Life and Letters;* this is his first story to be published in the United States. Mr. Chubak now lives in Daroos, Tehran, with his wife and two boys, and works as a librarian for the National Iranian Oil Company. Peter Avery, the translator, is a British student of Persian literature and history, now employed by John Mowlem & Company, Ltd., in Iran.

THE BABOON WHOSE BUFFOON WAS DEAD

Translated by Peter Avery

It is certainly true to say that early morning sleep is the heaviest. This was decidedly so with the buffoon, Jahan. Oblivious to the noise of the passing lorries and the shouting charcoal burners on the plain, he lay slumped at dawn within the hollow of a withered, leafless oak tree where he and his baboon, Makhmal, had stopped for the night. Many caravans had paused there before him, and men had stripped fuel from the tree's bony, twisted branches and set fires in its hollow trunk, so that now the inner wall of the

tomblike enclosure was papered with glossy scales of charred wood.

Scattered on the ground in front of him were his opium and tobacco pipes—the *vafur* and *chapuq*—his begging bowl and sack, his tobacco pouch and the tin for the hashish, and some half-burnt, blackened sticks. His pock-marked face with its few bristles had dropped out from under his cloak; it looked like a mask wrapped up in a shawl.

The baboon, Makhmal, was chained to a stake driven into the ground near by. He was awake and restless, and tired of waiting for his master to stir. His feet and hands hurt, his soft skin was sore and torn, and yesterday's dust still clung to his skin and fur. He sat with his arms hung between his haunches, his beady eyes fixed on the tree that held Jahan. Then, his impatience growing, he sprang to his feet and twisted himself this way and that about the chain. Still the buffoon was motionless. At last, in resignation, Makhmal sat again. He waited and watched, blinking his eyes in the dim light.

The sun's glare had not yet lit the plain, but a dull glint of sunlight now oozed through a cleft in the Mareh range. It began to trickle across the earth, merging with the columns of charcoal smoke that curled up into the still morning air. The surrounding hills slept on in shadow, still untouched by the day. The plain itself was red, the color of Armenian clay, and it was split in two by a long ribbon of road over which the lorries rolled. Here and there large oaks grew, interspersed with stunted almond trees and linseed bushes.

The showman and his baboon had come over the Kutal-i-Dukhtar Pass and had reached Dasht-i-Barm by nightfall the day before. All the way the baboon had kept pace with his master, sometimes walking on his hind legs, sometimes on all fours, sometimes covering the ground in his own baboon-style leaps and bounds. At last they had left the road and made their way to the hollow oak.

Immediately Jahan had dropped Makhmal's chain and kindled a fire. He had taken the tea things, the hashish, the pipes and opium from his sack and laid them around the fire. Next he had taken out four roast sparrows wrapped in bread, and he had shared these with Makhmal. Supper scarcely over, the showman had lit his opium pipe and taken several quick draws. Makhmal had sat opposite, all agog, his nostrils quivering with the sensitivity of the antennae of an ant. But Jahan had kept the pipe to himself, absorbing all the smoke into his own lungs. He had taken not the slightest notice of Makhmal, though he knew the baboon's craving to be as great as his own.

But it was always this way. The clown's craving left him no

decency at all. When they were in the towns and their show had been catching on, with the pennies coming in nicely one after another, Jahan, wanting to trick the spectators with a fast retreat, would use Makhmal's craving for drug as an excuse. Using the addict's whining tone, he would say to Makhmal: "Makhmal, Makhmal, my sweet, are you beginning to feel you want some?" And he'd say, "Oh, you wicked old Indian, you, you have got it bad, haven't you? Do you want it now? All right, then. Cheer up, I'm taking you along this very moment. I'll give you your smoke, and then you'll be all right, won't you?" And later, seated by himself with his pipe, Jahan would take his fill of the poppy, and only send across to Makhmal at last a few short, thin whiffs, the essence of which he had first absorbed in his own lungs.

Here beside the oak tree it had been no different. When he had satisfied himself with opium, the showman had taken several rapid draws of the hashish, gulping it down deep. Makhmal had received no smoke worth mentioning at all. Then Jahan had retrieved Makhmal's chain from where it lay on the ground, and had crossed the small brook that now separated the baboon and his master. He had driven the stake deep into the earth under an almond bush. Then, dead tired, the man had fallen asleep in the tree hollow where now he lay.

Makhmal again got to his feet and gazed across the brook toward his master. The split nostrils of his long nose were quivering, and his eyebrows met in a puzzled scowl. There was something strange here. Once he thought his master had awakened, but it was not so; the skin of the buffoon's face remained perfectly still. The eyes were open, rolled upwards, showing their whites. The face was curiously stiff.

Suddenly, with all the strength of his huge frame, Makhmal shook himself and leapt twice into the air, so high that his collar wrenched his neck and choked him back. All his attention was fixed on his clown, for now he understood.

The buffoon's face was completely altered, alien. Makhmal was seeing a man as he had never before seen him. In his lifetime, he had seen men only threatening or taunting or whining —he had never seen a dead man. And now a face whose every familiar movement had revealed to him his master's essential being was rigid and unmoving. Here was a face from which there was nothing to fear.

All at once an ache of loneliness seized his vitals as he realized that in all that wide, vacant plain he was entirely alone. Time after time he leapt this way and that way around the stake. Then he stopped dead in his tracks and gazed at the men moving up and down the plain as they tended their fires. He squatted where he stood and stared at the buffoon's

face, remembering the man's threats and thrashings. Then he turned frightened eyes up toward the dry, dust-soiled leaves of the almond bush beneath which he was tied. And again, as if he were expecting an order, he looked at his master.

What was he to do? Without his buffoon, he was not complete. It was as if half of his brain were paralyzed. Jahan had been his one link with the world of men. He understood nobody's speech as he understood his master's. For a lifetime he had been performing his tricks at the showman's commands —standing on his head, waddling about, waving his stick, thrusting his backside into the air—all for the crowd's amusement and the clown's profit.

In the brothels, in the coffee shops, in the squares, in garages, cemeteries and caravansaries, wherever his master chose to perform, Makhmal had been surrounded by all kinds of men. Yet his knowledge of men was only this—that they gathered around him to tease and taunt. It was they who pelted him with stones, rotted fruit, bits of wood, old bones, old boots, scraps of iron, pomegranate rind, turds.

He had become inured to their blows, and had paid little attention, alert only to the buffoon's bell and the twitch of the chain, so that he could faithfully perform whatever was required of him. Sometimes, to encourage his most popular trick, the men would waggle their buttocks at him, and the clown would give a slight pull on the chain. "Makhmal, where do we put our enemies?" he would say in his most winning tone. The baboon would then turn his back on them and expose the shining backside which was attached to him just a little below his tuft of a tail and which looked like a huge tumor. He would clutch it with both hands, with a gesture as much as to say, "Sorry, but there's nothing else for it," while from his throat issued a rough, ominous noise, "Ooom, oom, oom."

"Enemy" was a word of known shape to his ear. Whenever it reached his hearing, he knew the moment had come to put his head to the ground and his hands to his backside. This was the mainstay of their act; this was his job; it was for this that he had been born.

Yet the experience of enmity brought only fear and submission from him. He was forever anticipating the raps of his master's cane on his head, the cruel pull of the collar around his neck, the kick in the belly. A glance from his master paralyzed him with fright, for he was more afraid of Jahan than of anyone. His life was one continual state of terror, and his terror was matched only by the loathing and disgust he felt for all mankind and for his master in particular.

But he must continually submit. He had no choice. Whatever he did, he was forced to do; whatever he witnessed, he was forced to witness; whatever he suffered, he had no alternative but to suffer it. He was attached to a chain, and its other end was gripped by a man who could drag him here or there as whim decreed. The man and the chain had replaced his will—he had none of his own.

Squatting now, gazing at the clown in the oak tree, Makhmal scratched his head. Then he took two or three turns around himself, wondering what to do. His eyes fell upon the chain then, and never before had he looked at it with such astonishment and loathing. He drew it up to his neck. It was rough, heavy, stained with rust. For a lifetime, riveted about his neck, it had held him fast to his master or to his master's stake. From it had come nothing but injury and weariness.

He put a hand to his throat, where the chain joined the collar. He shook it and clumsily fiddled about with it: yes, it had always been like that—he knew this chain like the fingers of his own hand.

Slowly, wonderingly, he groped his way down the chain, hand-over-hand, toward the stake. At last he reached the other end, the end that was not a part of himself, but another, a hostile world.

The buffoon had always driven the stake to which Makhmal's chain was attached as far into the ground as it would go, because, as he used to say, "There isn't a bigger bastard of an animal in the world than a baboon, and one of these days, you'll see. As soon as a man's back is turned for a second, they can tear him to pieces."

Yet, in reality, only Makhmal's habitual fear had kept him from pulling it free in the past. Now he fingered the crown of the stake experimentally. Now he shook it with anger. Now he grasped it with his hands. The strength with which he uprooted it was far greater than was needed. In one good tug it was loosened and out of the ground.

What a marvelous feeling! Makhmal began to leap about, overjoyed at his liberation. Then he moved away from the almond bush, and the chain followed him. As he leapt, the chain leapt. As he bounded about with joy, the chain bounded. It, too, had been freed, but each was fastened to the other. He winced at the pull and the noise of it. His spirits sank. But there was nothing to be done.

He started over toward the buffoon's dead body. After jumping the stream, he stood erect a moment, looking doubtfully at his master before going any further. When he got a little closer, he again paused in doubt, and there, some dis-

tance away, he sat down opposite the body, still afraid to go closer without a sign.

The corpse still leaned against the oak tree, wrapped in the creased, crumpled cloak. In front of it, the contents of the sack still lay about the cold circle of cinders from last night's fire. It was as if the buffoon were appraising his inheritance as he sat there looking at these things.

Makhmal got to his feet and went closer. When he stood directly in front of his clown, he sat down. But the face said nothing to him. It did not say, "Go." It did not say, "Sit." It neither commanded him to fill the pipe, nor to tie a turban around his head, nor to stand on his hands. It did not ask, "Where do we put our enemies?" It did not tell him to close his eyes, nor did it say, "Bravo, hold up the stick, hold it up!" nor, "Ride it, ride it, there's a good jockey!" It did not cry out, "Sweets, oh, sweets, sweets, sweets, hot and sweet." It said nothing to him.

Yet the pattern of a lifetime was stubborn. The memory of thrashings, curses, kicks dealt out by his master in fits of depression could not be erased by Makhmal's recognition that his master now could have no effect on him. He knew that the clown no longer had anything to do with him, yet he remembered his power to inflict punishment. There had been times when Makhmal had been obstinate, playing the fool just as the show was going well, and he'd dig in his toes and pull hard on his chain, leaving the buffoon with no alternative but to coax him with generous supplies of raisins till he yielded. Later Jahan would tether him to a tree and beat him till his agony was such that he would roll in the dust groaning, his mouth lolling open like a sack while he chewed his tongue. But there was no one to come to his rescue. They only laughed. "Hajji Firooz, the monkey had a beating!"

And when Jahan's anger was at its worst, he would leave Makhmal for long periods without food and opium, chained to the stake. This was the cruelest punishment of all. If he had been unfettered, he could have gone and found a morsel to eat among the sweepings and refuse scattered on the ground; he could have sat in the coffee shops and enjoyed the smoke of men's pipes. But he was captive.

On a sudden impulse now, Makhmal put out his hand and cautiously pulled at the cloak that enveloped his master. The nightcap beneath was so saturated with sweat and dirt that its rim gleamed. The face looked as if it were molded in quicklime, ready to crumble to pieces at the first touch. Makhmal was suddenly filled with joy. It was as if the buffoon were now a vast distance away, across a wide gulf, completely

beyond his grasp. Makhmal's blood tingled. Now, he felt, he was the victor at last, and he stared hard at the face, and let out a short, dry cackle of glee, "Ghe, ghe, ghe!"

Then he grabbed a piece of bread and two roast sparrows from the sack and gobbled them up. He wolfed all the bread he could find. He was completely at his ease and superbly contented.

It was not long before the desire for opium moved him to take the *vafur* from beside the cold ashes and hold it under his nostrils. Several times he viciously twisted the opium pipe about in his greasy, black fingers. First he smelled it, then he sucked it in his mouth, and then began to chew it until he had chewed it to pieces. While the acrid flavor of the charred center of the pipe revolted him, it wormed its way into his nose and excited his craving.

When he had spat out the bits, he smashed the pipe's porcelain end to smithereens on a stone by the dead fire. Then he excitedly pulled at Jahan's cloak, as if he wanted to wake him. Finally he rose and, turning his back on his clown, he took the road to the plain.

The plain was lighter now; the sunlight had spread itself over it and it was the color of hot copper. The noise of the lorries on the road echoed across it.

Makhmal had no idea where he was going. His clown had always walked along with him, his shadow, his inseparable companion. Now there was only the sound of his chain, sliding through the dust and clinking over the stones. It was heavier now, more bothersome, and its noise marred his solitude.

He passed some boulders. Now he was further away than ever from his master, and going along on two legs. His huge frame moved forward with a stoop, dragging the chain after it. He was encumbered, but he was on his own. He had escaped from his master, and he was off to a new world.

He reached a pasture where a flock of sheep were grazing. All their heads were down as they busily nibbled the short grass, bumping against each other, completely absorbed. The boy watching over them had stretched out his legs on the grass and was playing his pipe. Makhmal sat down under one of the big dusty oak trees on the edge of the field and looked at the shepherd and the quiet sheep.

He felt at peace. His little journey, made on his own initiative, had cheered him. He liked the flock of sheep, but he couldn't help feeling that the boy sitting there was somehow more akin to him than the sheep, and he watched him with interest. He sat idly, pleasurably, sizing things up.

At this moment, a big blue-winged horsefly took it upon

itself to be a nuisance. It flew into his face, tormentingly sitting in a corner of his eye. With the ease and patience of an expert, however, Makhmal caught it as it stung him and held it cunningly between his fingers, where he regarded it for a moment before consigning it, still alive, to his mouth.

All at once the shepherd saw Makhmal and got up and approached him, carrying his heavy stick across his shoulders. He gripped it from below with his hands in exactly the same way in which Makhmal had held his own stick for the showman's act. His master had taught him to grasp the stick when he commanded, *"Barrikallah Chupani.* Take the stick, shepherd," and Makhmal had always put it behind his neck, bringing his hands up to grip it just as the boy held his own now; then Makhmal had danced his jig.

Makhmal was pleased. He sat motionless, his hands between his haunches, watching the approach of the shepherd and his stick. As the boy drew closer, he hesitated, looking with astonishment at Makhmal. Till then, he had seen a baboon only once in the village, and at some distance. He stared at those ears, hands, feet, and face that were so like his own. Then, in an effort to make friends with this curiously kindred creature, he put his hand in his pocket and took out a piece of acorn bread. It was as dry and hard as a piece of plaster flaked from a wall. He threw it into Makhmal's lap, and stood and watched.

Makhmal doubtfully picked up and smelled the bread; then he disdainfully threw it away. He looked hard at the shepherd boy and the stick that lay across his shoulders, but he had no fear of him and anticipated no danger.

At this point, the boy lowered the knotted, boxwood stick and fingered it. Makhmal's suspicions rose. The shepherd was of the species, man. The meaning of the stick had changed.

The boy took a step forward. Makhmal remained where he was, his eyes moving with the boy's movements. Prompted by his own loneliness and self-consciousness, the boy wanted to find out what this animal was and what it would do. He suddenly raised his stick and lunged forward at Makhmal; his thrust, checked by his own apprehension, fell short of contact.

Makhmal's disenchantment was complete. He felt at once the soreness in the palms of his hands and feet, and his whole body ached so with craving that in his mind's eye he could see his master sitting before the brazier, smoking opium and giving him a puff. He twitched the split nostrils of his delicate nose and sniffed in longing. He was weary of the shepherd now and would have liked to get up and go. But the feeling that he had better not turn his back on the boy restrained him.

The boy's courage grew as the ape sat motionless before him. He raised his stick a second time and swiftly delivered a violent whack on Makhmal's head. Makhmal immediately gathered all his strength, grasped the boy's shoulders, and dug his teeth into his face. The terrified boy fell to the ground, the thick, red blood spurting from his cheek.

While the boy rolled about and bellowed, Makhmal bounded off and retraced his path at top speed, instinctively selecting the only route he knew. Except for the familiar boulders and bushes that marked his way, the vast expanse of plain was completely unknown to him. He had not the slightest inkling of what to do. He had no effective defense against the terrors of his surroundings, and he lacked the comfort of the food and opium that his body craved. Everything around him seemed an implacable and bloody adversary. As he traveled, he pricked up his ears; the sound of the smallest insect stirring in the undergrowth was enough to put him on the alert.

Weakened finally by fatigue and his ache for the drug, he slunk into the shelter of a boulder and squeezed himself into a cleft he discovered between two stones. He felt shaken and muddled, as if his senses could take no more. Peering out from his rocks, he saw the distant shapes of men who were felling trees with their axes. His loathing and terror engulfed him, and he shrank back in his hiding place.

At his feet he found a few blades of grass. He crumpled them in his fingers and sniffed at them. When he ate them, he found that their sharp, fresh taste refreshed him, so he ate some more. The thin, sleepy April sunlight gently tickled the hairs of his belly and chest, and he yawned. He leaned against the stone and gazed at the cornflowers and the fresh spring growth carpeting the ground. He stuck out his lower lip, and it twitched slightly as a gurgling, laugh-like sound came from his throat.

Then he huddled further into the gap where he squatted, pressing his back against the rock behind him to relieve his weariness. Now he was comfortable; his chain was forgotten, and his intolerable loneliness gave way to pure contentment.

He put his hand under his armpit and scratched, turning his head in an ecstasy of delight. Then he scratched his chest, and then, stretching himself voluptuously, he idly felt his belly, thighs, and crotch. He captured nits and lice, one by one, in the sharp pincers of his nails, and, putting them between his teeth, he crunched them to bits. The skin of his belly was silver, with blue veins coursing across it.

His body began to tingle as his hands moved over it, and he soon abandoned himself to its demands. The fatigue and ach-

ing were erased from his limbs as his blood heated. A delicious sense of power took possession of him. His memory and mind were completely empty. His eyes half-shut, his body quivering, he was in an oblivion of pleasure.

Suddenly a huge hawk, large enough to attack a sheep, shot out of the sky and swooped down toward him, its talons and beak ready for combat. The baboon leapt up, his diversions instantly abandoned. Taut with the sense of his danger, he dug his feet into the ground and bared his powerful teeth and claws. He held his arms above his head in a wild, defensive gesture—but the chain inhibited him, dragging at his neck, pulling him down.

The hawk in a swift wheel passed over his head and shot up into the heavens above him, leaving as quickly as it had come. Each feared the other, and the hawk flew on to less formidable prey. But Makhmal was left weary and sick and frightened, conscious again of the weight around his neck. His peace was utterly destroyed. There was nowhere he could stay. Everything was alien and menacing. To linger was out of the question; the ground he trod burned his feet; there was nothing to do but run.

He took to his heels, again taking up the route back to the hollow oak. It was as if some force were compelling him to return. The buffoon was the only familiar being in his world, and although Makhmal was dragging the chain behind him, in reality the chain was dragging him. He felt incomplete without his master, and, with an abundant sense of yearning and submission, he went on toward his oldest enemy.

The clown's body lay just as he'd left it, untouched, lolling against the tree.

In his despair, Makhmal came up slowly and squatted by his master, staring into his face in wonder and dismay. He had been driven from every refuge, and now his body ached, his hands and feet pained him; escape for him had never existed. He did not know what to do, but he had come to be near his clown, and he did not want to leave him again.

And now, advancing toward Makhmal, the withered oak, the dead clown, came two charcoal burners. Two huge axes were slung over their shoulders.

Seeing them, Makhmal was terribly afraid. His body trembled, and he looked pleadingly at the buffoon's body, making little gurgling noises in his throat. Existing as he did, somewhere halfway between the ape's world and the man's world, he knew men, and his instinct told him that these two men with axes meant his death.

He put out his hand and pulled at the cloak on the corpse. As the woodsmen came closer, his terror increased. They were

a rough, hard pair who didn't care a damn. As they came along, they were laughing together, their axes glinting in the sun.

Makhmal rose in a panic, ready for flight from these horrors—this hated place, his master's corpse, the approaching woodsmen. But there was the chain, tugging at him, sapping his strength, rooting him to the spot as effectively as if the stake had been imbedded in rock. It seemed to him that there and then his master was hammering it in, that the stake would never, never be released. However much he wrenched at his chain with his hands, with his neck, he could not get free. The end of the stake was thrust into the fibrous root of the oak tree and would not budge.

He went wild then, refusing to yield. Madly he bent down and bit into the chain, gnawing at it in his fury. Its links clanked between his teeth. He rolled his eyes in rage, blood and bits of tooth and froth spurting from his mouth. Suddenly he jumped into the air and let out a yell that subsided into a harsh, ugly, painful grating in his throat.

All over the plain, columns of smoke were ascending, the fires below them invisible. Only the men who worked at the foot of these columns could be seen.

The woodsmen came nearer to the hollow oak tree. The blades of their axes flashed in the sunlight. They were roaring with laughter.

John Logan

Since 1951 John Logan has been an Assistant Professor in the General Program of Liberal Arts at Notre Dame, in South Bend, Indiana. Born in Red Oak, Iowa, he was educated at Coe College and at the State University of Iowa. He has published one book of verse, *Cycle for Mother Cabrini,* and his poems, criticism and stories have appeared in various magazines.

THE PICTURE FOR THE PUBLISHER

I had five photographs to choose from to send for the publisher's blurb on my book. None was very good I knew, but like most poets I didn't have the price of a professional picture-taking. I thought I liked best the one taken just after I had a tooth pulled. There was a tiny fleck of blood in the corner of the mouth, but I doubted that anyone

would know it except me. It was the most sober of all the pictures. The tooth pulling had seemed a kind of rite to me, and I had felt older and tried to bring age out of my mind into my face for the picture. The hair was neatly cut and conservatively combed. I remembered that a certain line had kept running through my head as the picture was taken (it was an application photo for various jobs I didn't want). Now it seemed to me I could see the words moving behind the melancholy eyes in the picture—it was from one of Mauriac's novels. "After the age of thirty," it read, "flesh begins to thicken."

I decided against this picture, even though I liked it best, because to publish a view of myself bleeding at the mouth seemed unnecessarily hostile. I was not actually angry because my book was being published, although I did feel aggressive about it, I realized. Everybody will be shocked by it, I thought, or else will embrace it with love and feeling. Nobody will be able to ignore it. It will kill them in the bookstores, I told myself. It'll move hell out of them as they stand there leafing the pages, whether they buy it or not. The skin, I thought, will prickle on their cheeks in a positive Housman test for poetry. Or maybe it'll take the tops of their heads off the way Miss Emily wanted. I was so good, I reflected, that I almost took the top off my own head.

The second picture was made several years earlier. I didn't have my glasses on and I was holding the baby. My eyes looked very hollow, seeming to draw the skin into them off the cheeks, which as a result were sharp. There seemed to be nothing over the bone and the whole oval shape of the skull was visible because I had a short haircut: the picture was taken during one of my ascetic periods. That is why I wasn't wearing glasses. As a matter of fact I had thrown them away, though I couldn't see at all well without them. I remembered that I had dropped them in a small lake, where I used to go to stare and wonder if I could see them looking at me from the bottom through the murky water. On one of these visits I had impulsively fished them out again and found that one lens had been smashed (by the force of some water creature, I thought), and the other held as in a tiny bowl a bit of debris. I had seen furious microscopic crabs in a class at school, and I wondered whether some of them nested here in my abandoned eye. I realized that throwing away the glasses had not made much difference, actually. I wished that I could change as the gray ameba so beautifully does—with its mere posture, flowing off from the parts of it which it does not want.

I was stirred with compassion for the child in the picture—

its relaxed face and delicately textured shawl were much contrasted to the look of the monkish parent. Crew cuts always behaved oddly on me because my hair is fine and won't stand up: the effect at the top of my forehead in the picture was rather like grass sliced and withering before the merciless sun. I had chosen to have the picture taken in the sun. Though I didn't much like it, I couldn't help wanting to send this one in, because I thought it would be cathartic to people to behold what struck me, rather fearfully, as a kind of infernal madonna. I put it aside for further comparison.

I was with a visiting friend on top of the statehouse in Annapolis in the third photograph. The wind was blowing full at that height and it billowed my long, poetic hair. The picture was a profile and showed what looked to be the long nose of Keats' death mask, I thought. I saw the deep line formed by his suffering, between the retracted, sensitive nostril and the corner of the mouth. The jaw in the picture I believed would have fallen, except for the support of the linen grave cloth—its imprint faint on the side of the mask in the textured photograph. The Severn portrait of Keats I knew had been finished from sketches made at the poet's bier. Now my hand on the statehouse rail seemed to me chalked and of a weighted quality, as Keats' hand in that portrait.

I had on a suit made during the war and cut far from full. I saw now that its lapels were small and the arms of the coat and legs of the pants were tight. I thought I could remember how the suit felt, and how the wind struck my wrist over the dead hand. Suddenly the vision of myself as Keats faded, and I saw the hand of a gawky, aging adolescent bursting like the rest of him out of his younger clothes. The pain I felt at this shift I did not think was romantic.

Do I know these people, I wondered. They seem quite different, the one with the crew cut, the one with the businessman's haircut, his mouth broken on the bit, and this one with the flowing hair? To hell with the hair, I told myself, the guts are the same.

I picked up the remaining pair and glanced from one to the other. They were taken the previous spring down by the boathouse at the Christian Fathers school where I was teaching. One was a straightforward photographic record of me taken against the door of the boathouse. The other was a very unflattering piece along the line of the one I had just rejected, but fuller profile. Both the forehead and the chin in the latter picture swept back from the tip of the nose as from the focus of a parabola, and the abstract quality set up by this image gathered to itself the spare look of the beginning trees in the

background. They branched from the root of the skull in the picture in a nervous, almost noisy fashion. The lake gaped behind, and beyond it were smaller, less aggressive trees, mere twigs of things. On a hill at the top left, a tiny church brought the whole composition to focus, and lines ran from it to the naked branches and to the cords that spread in the back of my hand held up in an affected gesture. I felt that I hated that one and the person in it. I turned to the last.

There was an understated quality about this one, with a natural, rather glum look to the face and a slight sense of surprise in the eyes, I thought, as though the face had been caught in spite of itself in an honest shape. I guessed that darts were about to be thrown at the head, which was framed against a pitted wooden door, but the plain face itself betrayed no fear: on the contrary its expression was indifferent.

I looked at the eyes and found I was seeing through them and then through the door and through the empty, rambling, rotten boathouse and through its opposite end on the shore to the lake and pier. At once a scene began to repeat itself from the previous summer: it was night. There was no moon, and I was sitting on a bench dressing after a swim. My skin was taut as there was a slight chill in the air. Quietly a figure took shape from the trees and moved in front of me. I recognized the long skirts of a priest, and I heard his feet on the boards of the pier. He walked to the end and then back and again walked to the end of the pier. His stride was measured as he moved back and forth, back and forth, a shadow swaying slightly among shadows. I knew he could not see me in the deeper blackness of the boathouse, and I watched his motion fascinated, for I found myself thinking of him as a dark dancer and was very moved by the sense of the beauty of his rite. I remembered reading once the hope of a theologian that when Africa were brought into the Church there would be a return of the sacred dance to the liturgy—a finding of the Incarnation in the particular gift of rhythm of the African people, I thought he had said. Watching this graceful, black movement, I knew what he looked toward and was held inexpressibly by the holy thing I witnessed.

Suddenly the priest began to sing as he danced. I was amazed to hear that his full voice moved feelingly through a spiritual—sung as though it were his own! My god, I thought, he *is* a Negro! Some of the changing dark of him is his own dark! I felt blessed by the sound in my ears, and now I watched incredulous as the priest disrobed, balanced his great body like a naked dancer in the light that came from the moonless night and the water and from him—and dived.

The arc of his body as it broke the lake, invisible beneath the pier, broke also in me, and I came to myself cooled with the water of that sacred sea.

I knew that I had chosen the plain picture to send to the publisher of my book of poems. I thought that someone else might see in its ordinary eyes the newborn priest who moves in rites of light on light, and hear in the darks of the whorled ear the myths of breath on breath.

Kenneth Rexroth

Author of many volumes of poetry and criticism, Kenneth Rexroth lives in San Francisco, and reviews books for the radio station KPFA. His series of translations include *One Hundred Japanese Poems, Thirty Spanish Poems, One Hundred Chinese Poems,* and, in preparation, *One Hundred Poems from the Greek Anthology. A Bestiary* and *In Defense of the Earth* are collections of his own poems.

DISENGAGEMENT: THE ART OF THE BEAT GENERATION

Literature generally, but literary criticism in particular, has always been an area in which social forces assume symbolic guise, and work out—or at least exemplify—conflicts taking place in the contemporary, or rather, usually the just-past wider arena of society. Recognition of this does not imply the acceptance of any general theory of social or economic determinism. It is a simple, empirical fact. Because of the pervasiveness of consent in American society generally, that democratic leveling up or down so often bewailed since de Tocqueville, American literature, especially literary criticism, has usually been ruled by a "line." The fact that it was spontaneously evolved and enforced only by widespread consent has never detracted from its rigor—but rather the opposite. It is only human to kick against the prodding of an Erich Auerbach or an Andrey Zhdanov. An invisible, all-enveloping compulsion is not likely to be recognized, let alone protested against.

After World War I there was an official line for general consumption: "Back to Normalcy." Day by day in every way, we are getting better and better. This produced a literature which tirelessly pointed out that there was nothing whatsoever normal about us. The measure of decay in thirty

years is the degree of acceptance of the official myth today—from the most obscure hack on a provincial newspaper to the loftiest metaphysicians of the literary quarterlies. The line goes: "The generation of experimentation and revolt is over." This is an etherealized corollary of the general line: "The bull market will never end."

I do not wish to argue about the bull market, but in the arts nothing could be less true. The youngest generation is in a state of revolt so absolute that its elders cannot even recognize it. The disaffiliation, alienation, and rejection of the young has, as far as their elders are concerned, moved out of the visible spectrum altogether. Critically invisible, modern revolt, like X-rays and radioactivity, is perceived only by its effects at more materialistic social levels, where it is called delinquency.

"Disaffiliation," by the way, is the term used by the critic and poet, Lawrence Lipton, who has written several articles on this subject, the first of which, in the *Nation,* quoted as epigraph, "We disaffiliate . . ."—John L. Lewis.

Like the pillars of Hercules, like two ruined Titans guarding the entrance to one of Dante's circles, stand two great dead juvenile delinquents—the heroes of the post-war generation: the great saxophonist, Charlie Parker, and Dylan Thomas. If the word deliberate means anything, both of them certainly deliberately destroyed themselves.

Both of them were overcome by the horror of the world in which they found themselves, because at last they could no longer overcome that world with the weapon of a purely lyrical art. Both of them were my friends. Living in San Francisco I saw them seldom enough to see them with a perspective which was not distorted by exasperation or fatigue. So as the years passed, I saw them each time in the light of an accelerated personal conflagration.

The last time I saw Bird, at Jimbo's Bob City, he was so gone—so blind to the world—that he literally sat down on me before he realized I was there. "What happened, man?" I said, referring to the pretentious "Jazz Concert." "Evil, man, evil," he said, and that's all he said for the rest of the night. About dawn he got up to blow. The rowdy crowd chilled into stillness and the fluent melody spiraled through it.

The last time I saw Dylan, his self-destruction had not just passed the limits of rationality. It had assumed the terrifying inertia of inanimate matter. Being with him was like being swept away by a torrent of falling stones.

Now Dylan Thomas and Charlie Parker have a great deal more in common than the same disastrous end. As artists, they were very similar. They were both very fluent. But this fluent, enchanting utterance had, compared with important artists of

the past, relatively little content. Neither of them got very far beyond a sort of entranced rapture at his own creativity. The principal theme of Thomas's poetry was the ambivalence of birth and death—the pain of blood-stained creation. Music, of course, is not so explicit an art, but anybody who knew Charlie Parker knows that he felt much the same way about his own gift. Both of them did communicate one central theme: Against the ruin of the world, there is only one defense—the creative act. This, of course, is the theme of much art—perhaps most poetry. It is the theme of Horace, who certainly otherwise bears little resemblance to Parker or Thomas. The difference is that Horace accepted his theme with a kind of silken assurance. To Dylan and Bird it was an agony and terror. I do not believe that this is due to anything especially frightful about their relationship to their own creativity. I believe rather that it is due to the catastrophic world in which that creativity seemed to be the sole value. Horace's column of imperishable verse shines quietly enough in the lucid air of Augustan Rome. Art may have been for him the most enduring, orderly, and noble activity of man. But the other activities of his life partook of these values. They did not actively negate them. Dylan Thomas's verse had to find endurance in a world of burning cities and burning Jews. He was able to find meaning in his art as long as it was the answer to air raids and gas ovens. As the world began to take on the guise of an immense air raid or gas oven, I believe his art became meaningless to him. I think all this could apply to Parker just as well, although, because of the nature of music, it is not demonstrable—at least not conclusively.

Thomas and Parker have more in common than theme, attitude, life pattern. In the practice of their art, there is an obvious technical resemblance. Contrary to popular belief, they were not great technical innovators. Their effects are only superficially startling. Thomas is a regression from the technical originality and ingenuity of writers like Pierre Reverdy or Apollinaire. Similarly, the innovations of bop, and of Parker particularly, have been vastly overrated by people unfamiliar with music, especially by that ignoramus, the intellectual jitterbug, the jazz aficionado. The tonal novelties consist in the introduction of a few chords used in classical music for centuries. And there is less rhythmic difference between progressive jazz, no matter how progressive, and Dixieland, than there is between two movements of many conventional symphonies.

What Parker and his contemporaries—Gillespie, Davis, Monk, Roach (Tristano is an anomaly), etc.—did was to absorb the musical ornamentation of older jazz into the basic

structure, of which it then became an integral part, and with which it then developed. This is true of the melodic line which could be put together from selected passages of almost anybody—Benny Carter, Johnny Hodges. It is true of the rhythmic pattern in which the beat shifts continuously, or at least is continuously sprung, so that it becomes ambiguous enough to allow the pattern to be dominated by the long pulsations of the phrase or strophe. This is exactly what happened in the transition from baroque to rococo music. It is the difference between Bach and Mozart.

It is not a farfetched analogy to say that this is what Thomas did to poetry. The special syntactical effects of a Rimbaud or an Edith Sitwell—actually ornaments—become the main concern. The metaphysical conceits, which fascinate the Reactionary Generation still dominant in backwater American colleges, were embroideries. Thomas's ellipses and ambiguities are ends in themselves. The immediate theme, if it exists, is incidental, and his main theme—the terror of birth—is simply reiterated.

This is one difference between Bird and Dylan which should be pointed out. Again, contrary to popular belief, there is nothing crazy or frantic about Parker either musically or emotionally. His sinuous melody is a sort of naïve transcendence of all experience. Emotionally it does not resemble Berlioz or Wagner; it resembles Mozart. This is true also of a painter like Jackson Pollock. He may have been eccentric in his behavior, but his paintings are as impassive as Persian tiles. Partly this difference is due to the nature of verbal communication. The insistent talk-aboutiveness of the general environment obtrudes into even the most idyllic poetry. It is much more a personal difference. Thomas certainly wanted to tell people about the ruin and disorder of the world. Parker and Pollock wanted to substitute a work of art for the world.

Technique pure and simple, rendition, is not of major importance, but it is interesting that Parker, following Lester Young, was one of the leaders of the so-called saxophone revolution. In modern jazz, the saxophone is treated as a woodwind and played with conventional embouchure. Metrically, Thomas's verse was extremely conventional, as was, incidentally, the verse of that other tragic enragé, Hart Crane.

I want to make clear what I consider the one technical development in the first wave of significant post-war arts. Ornament is confabulation in the interstices of structure. A poem by Dylan Thomas, a saxophone solo by Charles Parker, a painting by Jackson Pollock—these are pure confabulations as ends in themselves. Confabulation has come to determine structure. Uninhibited lyricism should be distinguished from

its exact opposite—the sterile, extraneous invention of the corn-belt metaphysicals, our present blight of poetic professors.

Just as Hart Crane had little influence on anyone except very reactionary writers—like Allen Tate, for instance, to whom Valéry was the last word in modern poetry and the felicities of an Apollinaire, let alone a Paul Éluard were nonsense—so Dylan Thomas's influence has been slight indeed. In fact, his only disciple—the only person to imitate his style—was W. S. Graham, who seems to have imitated him without much understanding, and who has since moved on to other methods. Thomas's principal influence lay in the communication of an attitude—that of the now extinct British romantic school of the New Apocalypse—Henry Treece, J. F. Hendry, and others —all of whom were quite conventional poets.

Parker certainly had much more of an influence. At one time it was the ambition of every saxophone player in every high school band in America to blow like Bird. Even before his death this influence had begun to ebb. In fact, the whole generation of the founding fathers of bop—Gillespie, Monk, Davis, Blakey, and the rest—are just now at a considerable discount. The main line of development today goes back to Lester Young and by-passes them.

The point is that many of the most impressive developments in the arts nowadays are aberrant, idiosyncratic. There is no longer any sense of continuing development of the sort that can be traced from Baudelaire to Éluard, or, for that matter, from Hawthorne through Henry James to Gertrude Stein. The cubist generation before World War I, and, on a lower level, the surrealists of the period between the wars, both assumed an accepted universe of discourse, in which, to quote André Breton, it was possible to make definite advances, exactly as in the sciences. I doubt if anyone holds such ideas today. Continuity exists, but like the neo-swing music developed from Lester Young, it is a continuity sustained by popular demand.

In the plastic arts, a very similar situation exists. Surrealists like Hans Arp and Max Ernst might talk of creation by hazard —of composing pictures by walking on them with painted soles, or by tossing bits of paper up in the air. But it is obvious that they were self-deluded. Nothing looks anything like an Ernst or an Arp but another Ernst or Arp. Nothing looks less like their work than the happenings of random occasion. Many of the post-World War II abstract expressionists, apostles of the discipline of spontaneity and hazard, look alike, and do look like accidents. The aesthetic appeal of pure paint laid on at random may exist, but it is a very impoverished appeal. Once again what has happened is an all-consuming confabula-

tion of the incidentals, the accidents of painting. It is curious that at its best, the work of this school of painting—Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, Clyfford Still, Robert Motherwell, Willem deKooning, and the rest—resembles nothing so much as the passage painting of quite unimpressive painters: the mother-of-pearl shimmer in the background of a Henry McFee, itself a formula derived from Renoir; the splashes of light and black which fake drapery in the fashionable imitators of Hals and Sargent. Often work of this sort is presented as calligraphy—the pure utterance of the brush stroke seeking only absolute painteresque values. You have only to compare such painting with the work of, say, Sesshu, to realize that someone is using words and brushes carelessly.

At its best the abstract expressionists achieve a simple rococo decorative surface. Its poverty shows up immediately when compared with Tiepolo, where the rococo rises to painting of extraordinary profundity and power. A Tiepolo painting, however confabulated, is a universe of tensions in vast depths. A Pollock is an object of art—bijouterie—disguised only by its great size. In fact, once the size is big enough to cover a whole wall, it turns into nothing more than extremely expensive wallpaper. Now there is nothing wrong with complicated wallpaper. There is just more to Tiepolo. The great Ashikaga brush painters painted wallpapers, too—at least portable ones, screens.

A process of elimination which leaves the artist with nothing but the play of his materials themselves cannot sustain interest in either artist or public for very long. So, in the last couple of years, abstract expressionism has tended toward romantic suggestion—indications of landscape or living figures. This approaches the work of the Northwest school—Clayton Price, Mark Tobey, Kenneth Callahan, Morris Graves—who have of all recent painters come nearest to conquering a territory which painting could occupy with some degree of security. The Northwest school, of course, admittedly is influenced by the ink painters of the Far East, and by Tintoretto and Tiepolo. The dominant school of post-World War II American painting has really been a long detour into plastic nihilism. I should add that painters like Ernie Briggs seem to be opening up new areas of considerable scope within the main traditional abstract expressionism—but with remarkable convergence to Tobey or Tintoretto, as you prefer.

Today American painting is just beginning to emerge with a transvaluation of values. From the mid-nineteenth century on, all ruling standards in the plastic arts were subject to continual attack. They were attacked because each on-coming generation had new standards of their own to put in their

place. Unfortunately, after one hundred years of this, there grew up a generation ignorant of the reasons for the revolt of their elders, and without any standards whatever. It has been necessary to create standards anew out of chaos. This is what modern education purports to do with finger painting in nursery schools. This is why the Northwest school has enjoyed such an advantage over the abstract expressionists. Learning by doing, by trial and error, is learning by the hardest way. If you want to overthrow the cubist tradition of architectural painting, it is much easier to seek out its opposites in the history of culture and study them carefully. At least it saves a great deal of time.

One thing can be said of painting in recent years—its revolt, its rejection of the classic modernism of the first half of the century, has been more absolute than in any other art. The only ancestor of abstract expressionism is the early Kandinsky —a style rejected even by Kandinsky himself. The only painter in a hundred years who bears the slightest resemblance to Tobey or Graves is Odilon Redon (perhaps Gustave Moreau a little), whose stock was certainly not very high with painters raised in the cubist tradition.

The ready market for prose fiction—there is almost no market at all for modern painting, and very much less for poetry—has had a decisive influence on its development. Sidemen with Kenton or Herman may make a good if somewhat hectic living, but any novelist who can write home to mother, or even spell his own name, has a chance to become another Brubeck. The deliberately and painfully intellectual fiction which appears in the literary quarterlies is a by-product of certain classrooms. The only significant fiction in America is popular fiction. Nobody realizes this better than the French. To them our late-born imitators of Henry James and E. M. Forster are just *chiens qui fument*, and arithmetical horses and bicycling seals. And there is no more perishable commodity than the middle-brow novel. No one today reads Ethel L. Voynich or Joseph Hergesheimer, just as no one in the future will read the writers' workshop pupils and teachers who fill the literary quarterlies. Very few people, except themselves, read them now.

On the other hand, the connection between the genuine high-brow writer and the genuinely popular is very close. Hemingway had hardly started to write before his style had been reduced to a formula in *Black Mask*, the first hard-boiled detective magazine. In no time at all he had produced two first-class popular writers, Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. Van Vechten, their middle-brow contemporary, is forgotten. It is from Chandler and Hammett and Hemingway

that the best modern fiction derives; although most of it comes out in hard covers, it is always thought of as written for a typical pocketbook audience. Once it gets into pocketbooks it is sometimes difficult to draw the line between it and its most ephemeral imitators. Even the most *précieux* French critics, a few years ago, considered Horace McCoy America's greatest contemporary novelist. There is not only something to be said for their point of view; the only thing to be said against it is that they don't read English.

Much of the best popular fiction deals with the world of the utterly disaffiliated. Burlesque and carnival people, hipsters, handicappers and hop heads, wanted men on the lam, an expendable squad of soldiers being expended, anyone who by definition is divorced from society and cannot afford to believe even an iota of the social lie—these are the favorite characters of modern post-war fiction, from Norman Mailer to the latest ephemerid called *Caught,* or *Hung Up,* or *The Needle,* its bright cover winking invitingly in the drugstore. The first, and still the greatest, novelist of total disengagement is not a young man at all, but an elderly former I.W.W. of German ancestry, B. Traven, the author of *The Death Ship* and *The Treasure of Sierra Madre.*

It is impossible for an artist to remain true to himself as a man, let alone an artist, and work within the context of this society. Contemporary mimics of Jane Austen or Anthony Trollope are not only beneath contempt. They are literally unreadable. It is impossible to keep your eyes focused on the page. Writers as far apart as J. F. Powers and Nelson Algren agree in one thing—their diagnosis of an absolute corruption.

This refusal to accept the mythology of press and pulpit as a medium for artistic creation, or even enjoyable reading matter, is one explanation for the popularity of escapist literature. Westerns, detective stories and science fiction are all situated beyond the pale of normal living. The slick magazines are only too well aware of this, and in these three fields especially exert steady pressure on their authors to accentuate the up-beat. The most shocking example of this forced perversion is the homey science fiction story, usually written by a woman, in which a one-to-one correlation has been made for the commodity-ridden tale of domestic whimsey, the stand-by of magazines given away in the chain groceries. In writers like Judith Merrill the space pilot and his bride bat the badinage back and forth while the robot maid makes breakfast in the jet-propelled lucite orange squeezer and the electronic bacon rotobroiler, dropping pearls of dry assembly plant wisdom (like plantation wisdom but drier), the whilst. Still, few yield to these pressures, for the obvious reason that fiction

indistinguishable from the advertising columns on either side of the page defeats its own purpose, which is to get the reader to turn over the pages when he is told "continued on p. 47."

Simenon is still an incomparably better artist and psychologist than the psychological Jean Stafford. Ward Moore is a better artist than Eudora Welty, and Ernest Haycox than William Faulkner, just as, long ago, H. G. Wells was a better artist, as artist, than E. M. Forster, as well as being a lot more interesting. At its best, popular literature of this sort, coming up, meets high-brow literature coming down. It has been apparent novel by novel that Nelson Algren is rising qualitatively in this way. In his latest novel, thoroughly popular in its materials, *A Walk on the Wild Side*, he meets and absorbs influences coming down from the top, from the small handful of bona fide high-brow writers working today—Céline, Jean Genêt, Samuel Beckett, Henry Miller. In Algren's case this has been a slow growth, and he has carried his audience with him. Whatever the merits of his subject matter or his thesis—"It is better to be out than in. It is better to be on the lam than on the cover of *Time* Magazine"—his style started out as a distressing mixture of James Farrell and Kenneth Fearing. Only recently has he achieved an idiom of his own.

There is only one thing wrong with this picture, and that is that the high-brow stimulus still has to be imported. Algren, who is coming to write more and more like Céline, has no difficulty selling his fiction. On the other hand, an author like Jack Kerouac, who is in his small way the peer of Céline, Destouches or Beckett, is the most famous "unpublished" author in America. Every publisher's reader and adviser of any moment has read him and is enthusiastic about him.* In other words, anybody emerging from the popular field has every advantage. It is still extremely difficult to enter American fiction from the top down.

The important point about modern fiction is that it is salable, and therefore viable in our society, and therefore successful in the best sense of the word. When a novelist has something to say, he knows people will listen. Only the jazz musician, but to a much lesser degree, shares this confidence in his audience. It is of the greatest social significance that the novelists who say, "I am proud to be delinquent" are nevertheless sold in editions of hundreds of thousands.

Nobody much buys poetry. I know. I am one of the country's most successful poets. My books actually sell out—in editions of two thousand. Many a poet, the prestige ornament of a publisher's list, has more charges against his royalty account

*Harcourt did publish one book of Kerouac's, and recently news has come that Viking and Grove will each publish another.

than credits for books sold. The problem of poetry is the problem of communication itself. All art is a symbolic criticism of values, but poetry is specifically and almost exclusively that. A painting decorates the wall. A novel is a story. Music . . . soothes a savage breast. But poetry you have to take straight. In addition, the entire educational system is in a conspiracy to make poetry as unpalatable as possible. From the seventh grade teacher who rolls her eyes and chants H.D. to the seven types of ambiguity factories, grinding out little Donnes and Hopkinses with hayseeds in their hair, everybody is out to de-poetize forever the youth of the land. Again, bad and spurious painting, music, and fiction are not really well-organized, except on obvious commercial levels, where they can be avoided. But in poetry Gresham's Law is supported by the full weight of the powers that be. From about 1930 on, a conspiracy of bad poetry has been as carefully organized as the Communist Party, and today controls most channels of publication except the littlest of the little magazines. In all other departments of American culture, English influence has been at a steadily declining minimum since the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1929, this was still true of American poetry. Amy Lowell, Sandburg, H.D., Pound, Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens—all of the major poets of the first quarter of the century owed far more to Apollinaire or Francis Jammes than they did to the whole body of the English tradition. In fact, the new poetry was essentially an anti-English, pro-French movement—a provincial but clear echo of the French revolt against the symbolists. On the other hand, Jules Laforgue and his English disciples, Ernest Dowson and Arthur Symons, were the major influence on T. S. Eliot. Unfortunately Mr. Eliot's poetic practice and his thoroughly snobbish critical essays which owed their great cogency to their assumption, usually correct, that his readers had never heard of the authors he discussed—Webster, Crashaw, or Lancelot Andrewes—lent themselves all too easily to the construction of an academy and the production of an infinite number of provincial academicians—policemen entrusted with the enforcement of Gresham's Law.

Behind the façade of this literary Potemkin village, the main stream of American poetry, with its sources in Baudelaire, Lautréamont, Rimbaud, Apollinaire, Jammes, Reverdy, Salmon, and later Breton and Éluard, has flowed on unperturbed, though visible only at rare intervals between the interstices of the academic hoax. Today the class magazines and the quarterlies are filled with poets as alike as two bad pennies. It is my opinion that these people do not really exist. Most of them are androids designed by Ransom, Tate, and Co., and animated

by Randall Jarrell. They are not just counterfeit; they are not even real counterfeits, but counterfeits of counterfeits. On these blurred and clumsy coins the lineaments of Mr. Eliot and I. A. Richards dimly can be discerned, like the barbarized Greek letters which nobody could read on Scythian money.

This is the world in which over every door is written the slogan: "The generation of experiment and revolt is over. Bohemia died in the twenties. There are no more little magazines." Actually there have never been so many little magazines. In spite of the fantastic costs of printing, more people than ever are bringing out little sheets of free verse and making up the losses out of their own pockets. This world has its own major writers, its own discoveries, its own old masters, its own tradition and continuity. Its sources are practically exclusively French, and they are all post-symbolist, even anti-symbolist. It is the Reactionary Generation who are influenced by Laforgue, the symbolists, and Valéry. Nothing is more impressive than the strength, or at least the cohesion, of this underground movement. Poets whom the quarterlies pretend never existed, like Louis Zukovsky and Jack Wheelwright, are still searched out in large libraries or obscure bookshops and copied into notebooks by young writers. I myself have a complete typewritten collection of the pre-reactionary verse of Yvor Winters. And I know several similar collections of "forgotten modernists" in the libraries of my younger friends. People are always turning up who say something like, "I just discovered a second-hand copy of Parker Tyler's *The Granite Butterfly* in a Village bookshop. It's great, man." On the other hand, I seriously doubt whether *The Hudson Review* would ever consider for a moment publishing a line of Parker Tyler's verse. And he is certainly not held up as an example in the Iowa Writers' Workshop. There are others who have disappeared entirely—Charles Snider, Sherry Mangan, R. E. F. Larsson, the early Winters, the last poems of Ford Madox Ford. They get back into circulation, as far as I know, only when I read them to somebody at home or on the air, and then I am always asked for a copy. Some of the old avant garde seem to have written themselves out, for instance, Mina Loy. There are a few established old masters, outstanding of whom are, of course, Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams. I am not a passionate devotee of Pound myself. In fact, I think his influence is largely pernicious. But no one could deny its extent and power amongst young people today. As for Williams, more and more people, even some of the Reactionary Generation, have come to think of him as our greatest living poet. Even Randall Jarrell and R. P. Blackmur have good words to say for him.

Then there is a middle generation which includes Kenneth Patchen, Jean Garrigue, myself, and a few others—notably Richard Eberhart, who looks superficially as if he belonged with the Tates and Blackmurs but who is redeemed by his directness, simplicity, and honesty, and Robert Fitzgerald and Dudley Fitts. Curiously enough, in the taste of the young, Kenneth Fearing is not included in this group, possibly because his verse is too easy. It does include the major work, for example, *Ajanta,* of Muriel Rukeyser.

I should say that the most influential poets of the youngest established generation of the avant garde are Denise Levertov, Robert Creeley, Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, and Philip Lamantia. The most influential avant garde editor is perhaps Cid Corman, with his magazine *Origin.* Richard Emerson's *Golden Goose* and Robert Creeley's *Black Mountain Review* seem to have suspended publication temporarily. Jonathan Williams, himself a fine poet, publishes the Jargon Press.

All of this youngest group have a good deal in common. They are all more or less influenced by French poetry, and by Céline, Beckett, Artaud, Genêt, to varying degrees. They are also influenced by William Carlos Williams, D. H. Lawrence, Whitman, Pound. They are all interested in Far Eastern art and religion; some even call themselves Buddhists. Politically they are all strong disbelievers in the State, war, and the values of commercial civilization. Most of them would no longer call themselves anarchists, but just because adopting such a label would imply adherence to a "movement." Anything in the way of an explicit ideology is suspect. Contrary to gossip of a few years back, I have never met anybody in this circle who was a devotee of the dubious notions of the psychologist, Wilhelm Reich; in fact, few of them have ever read him, and those who have consider him a charlatan.

Although there is wide diversity—Olson is very like Pound; Creeley resembles Mallarmé; Denise Levertov in England was a leading New Romantic, in America she has come under the influence of William Carlos Williams; Robert Duncan has assimilated ancestors as unlike as Gertrude Stein and Éluard, and so on—although this diversity is very marked, there is a strong bond of aesthetic unity too. No avant garde American poet accepts the I. A. Richards-Valéry thesis that a poem is an end in itself, an anonymous machine for providing aesthetic experiences. All believe in poetry as communication, statement from one person to another. So they all avoid the studied ambiguities and metaphysical word play of the Reactionary Generation and seek clarity of image and simplicity of language.

In the years since the war, it would seem as though more

and more of what is left of the avant garde has migrated to Northern California. John Berryman once referred to the Lawrence cult of "mindless California," and Henry Miller and I have received other unfavorable publicity which has served only to attract people to this area. Mr. Karl Shapiro, for instance, once referred to San Francisco as "the last refuge of the Bohemian remnant"—a description he thought of as invidious. Nevertheless it is true that San Francisco is today the seat of an intense literary activity not unlike Chicago of the first quarter of the century. A whole school of poets has grown up—almost all of them migrated here from somewhere else. Some of them have national reputations, at least in limited circles. For example, Philip Lamantia among the surrealists; William Everson (Br. Antoninus, O.P)—perhaps the best Catholic poet. Others have come up recently, like Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen, James Harmon, Michael McClure, and still have largely local reputations. But the strength of these reputations should not be underestimated. The Poetry Center of San Francisco State College, directed by Ruth Witt-Diamant, gives a reading to a large audience at least twice a month. And there are other readings equally well attended every week in various galleries and private homes.

This means that poetry has become an actual social force—something which has always sounded hitherto like a Utopian dream of the William Morris sort. It is a very thrilling experience to hear an audience of more than three hundred people stand and cheer and clap, as they invariably do at a reading by Allen Ginsberg, certainly a poet of revolt if there ever was one.

There is no question but that the San Francisco renaissance is radically different from what is going on elsewhere. There are hand presses, poetry readings, young writers elsewhere—but nowhere else is there a whole younger generation culture pattern characterized by total rejection of the official highbrow culture—where critics like John Crowe Ransom or Lionel Trilling, magazines like the *Kenyon, Hudson* and *Partisan* reviews, are looked on as "The Enemy"—the other side of the barricades.

There is only one trouble about the renaissance in San Francisco. It is too far away from the literary market place. That, of course, is the reason why the Bohemian remnant, the avant garde have migrated here. It is possible to hear the story about what so-and-so said to someone else at a cocktail party twenty years ago just one too many times. You grab a plane or get on your thumb and hitchhike to the other side of the continent for good and all. Each generation, the great

Latin poets came from farther and farther from Rome. Eventually, they ceased to even go there except to see the sights.

Distance from New York City does, however, make it harder to get things, if not published, at least nationally circulated. I recently formed a collection for one of the foundations of avant garde poetry printed in San Francisco. There were a great many items. The poetry was all at least readable, and the hand printing and binding were in most cases very fine indeed. None of these books were available in bookstores elsewhere in the country, and only a few of them had been reviewed in newspapers or magazines with national circulation.

Anyway, as an old war horse of the revolution of the word, things have never looked better from where I sit. The avant garde has not only not ceased to exist. It's jumping all over the place. Something's happening, man.

The disengagement of the creator, who, as creator, is necessarily judge, is one thing, but the utter nihilism of the emptied-out hipster is another. What is going to come of an attitude like this? It is impossible to go on indefinitely saying: "I am proud to be a delinquent," without destroying all civilized values. Between such persons no true enduring interpersonal relationships can be built, and of course, nothing resembling a true "culture"—an at-homeness of men with each other, their work, their loves, their environment. The end result must be the desperation of shipwreck—the despair, the orgies, ultimately the cannibalism of a lost lifeboat. I believe that most of an entire generation will go to ruin—the ruin of Céline, Artaud, Rimbaud, voluntarily, even enthusiastically. What will happen afterwards I don't know, but for the next ten years or so we are going to have to cope with the youth we, my generation, put through the atom smasher. Social disengagement, artistic integrity, voluntary poverty—these are powerful virtues and may pull them through, but they are not the virtues we tried to inculcate—rather they are the exact opposite.

Brock Brower

As a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, Mr. Brower won a First in English Language and Literature. He was born in 1931, grew up in Westfield, New Jersey, and attended Dartmouth College and Harvard Law School. He and his wife now live in New York City, where he has an editorial position with the Viking Press. *The Tender Edge* is Mr. Brower's first play to be published.

THE TENDER EDGE

Dramatis Personae

THE DUKE OF GOLGOTH
SIR PERCIVAL MCBRIDE
ANDREW ADAMS
STOKES, *a forester*
DUCK, *the Duke's sheriff*
JEANANNE, *the Duke's seventh wife*

Scene: *The Duchy of Golgoth*

The dungeon in the castle of THE DUKE OF GOLGOTH. *A clean and tidy dungeon with tapestry and cushions, and an immense barred window. In the center, the chopping block and axe are covered over with a daintily flowered cloth.* THE DUKE OF GOLGOTH, *wearing riding habit and a falconer's glove, enters, followed by his sheriff,* DUCK.

THE DUKE

Are all the applicants assembled, Duck?

DUCK

They are, your Grace. All three of them await
The interview, and hope to be your choice.

THE DUKE

On merit, Duck, on merit. We'll judge them strictly
On the craftsmanship they show us here
Upon our little bench.

[*He indicates the covered chopping block.*]

But only three?
For such a lucrative position? Velvet,
Lodgings, several horses, so many bribes
He'll have to keep a ledger, wines from every land
That ever grew a grape, and access to sufficient
Chambermaids to satiate a Charles the Second.
And only three? It should be more. Perhaps
The salary. Or a bit of ermine. Or, better yet,
A circulating hint about the Lady Lapbird's
Character.

DUCK

No need, your Grace. These three
Are the last who remain of the hundred who applied.
It's still a popular post, which every butcher
Hopes his son will have. And woodchoppers dream
Of just one swing with that beautiful axe
Before they die.

THE DUKE

That's excellent. And do
They still believe it split the ghost of Golgoth
So in two, it hops around in halves on Halloween?

DUCK

They even say you swung the axe.

THE DUKE

I did,
And if I ever see a wisp of either half again,
I'll quarter what I've drawn. But those were younger days,
Before I learned to delegate authority.
Why have you picked these three?

DUCK

We picked them for
The qualities you asked. Experience,
A pair of biceps, punctuality,
And hatred (I believe these were your words)
"And hatred of the world, the kind that, coughing up
A curse with every breath, expectorates
At heaven." We had some difficulty there
With bronchial colds.

THE DUKE

I spoke a bit too strongly. Ugliness?
I specified an ugly man. Appearance
Is important here.

DUCK

Well, we tried, your Grace.
It's hard to find an applicant with everything.
There's one, the forester, who'd face Medusa
Nose to nose, and even money who'd turn whom
To stone. But the others I regret to say,
Are passable.

THE DUKE

An atheist. Did you find an atheist?
The job could use one.

DUCK

Well, the doctor chap
Thinks God's a glandular disorder, and the forester
Maintains he's scared of churches. But the soldier's
Been in two Crusades.

THE DUKE

Means nothing, Duck.
They all sound eligible. Send them in,
We'll have the last elimination while we're with the hawks.
And will you fetch Abednego? The Earl of Tendril,
Whom I'm of a mind to poison for his orchards,
Rides with us today. His hawk's a streak.
Abednego is my only competition.
A bird of rare tenacity, Abednego.
His talon closes like a stock. Let's have
The applicants.

DUCK

Just as you say, your Grace.

[*Exit* DUCK. *Enter* STOKES, *the forester,* ANDREW ADAMS, *the medical student, and* PERCIVAL MCBRIDE, *a soldier of reversed fortune.*]

THE DUKE

Welcome all. Employment waits for one of you.
The other two are special guests. Which two,
I wonder?

[*The* DUKE *walks back and forth in front of them. He finally addresses* STOKES.]

God's creatures, you're an ugly throwback.

STOKES

Afraid that's so, your Grace. When I was three
A pine tree fell my way. But I don't mind,
If others don't.

THE DUKE

And you're the doctor, eh?

ANDREW

Of sorts, your Grace.

THE DUKE

What sorts?

ANDREW

An evil sort,
They've finally concluded.

THE DUKE

Oh. In short,
A bit of a body-snatcher.

ANDREW

As you say.

THE DUKE

And you, you blackguard. You've crusaded, so I understand.
I thought the Last Crusade was several hundred years ago.

PERCIVAL

These were rather personal crusades, your Grace.
They went the historical route and had the historical motives.
Unfortunately, I found the poverty immense
And had to give it up. I stand
Sir Percival McBride,
The sole, surviving bounder of the Knights' Tipplers.

THE DUKE

Excellent. In each of you I see a certain line
About the mouth. A crease of torment, isn't it?
But which of you is best embittered for the job,
That's what we have to decide. So listen,
There's one more test before selection,
A test of skill, and this will be your workshop.
It's the castle's only dungeon. Quite humane,
I'd say, with all its comfort. It's only used
On short and rare occasions, since the only punishment
I recognize is capital. And that's where you come in.

[*He walks to the chopping block and removes the flowered cover.*]

A beautiful set of tools. This axe,
This axe has snicked the head off every title in the land,
And widowed half the rabble.

[*He picks up the axe.*]

There's a democrat,
A true egalitarian. For every citizen,
An equal right. Whack.
On one occasion, it was used to execute
A statue I discovered ogling
My second duchess in the garden. Not a nick.
The statue's now a cannon on the northern keep.
Its head became the first shot fired
Against the Earl of Whippoorwill,
God rest his fallen castle.

[*He turns to* ANDREW.]

Test your surgeon's thumb on that.

ANDREW

I've performed an appendectomy with duller blades.

THE DUKE

Right you are, my man. A perfect tool.
Unfortunately there's still the human element,
The Executioner.

[*He turns to* STOKES.]

How many trees in a single swipe?

STOKES

Don't know, your Grace.

THE DUKE

The human element.
We have the perfect axe, but where's the perfect
Executioner? Unerring eye, unfailing arm.
So often I've been disappointed.

[*He turns to* PERCIVAL.]

Chop
The Turkish cavalry in two, I'd say.

PERCIVAL

We'd take Jerusalem with this.

THE DUKE

Yes, yes
(But such a dirty town). Where was I? Oh,
The human element, our Executioner.
But what's perfection here? It's simply this:
An unimpassioned arm
Moving through a graceful arc
To intercept a perpendicular.
That's all.
A hundred and eighty degrees

Of pure detachment.
That's the theorem, gentlemen, but the application
Raises problems.
I've had a dozen Executioners
Who knew the motion perfectly.
They'd go through sixty snips without a slip.
Lords, ladies, earls, dukes, dons,
Monks, nuns, abbots, consorts, counts,
A thief or two on legal technicalities,
Having nothing to do with politics.
The heads would fall like beads from a broken rosary.
But always,
Always at the crucial moment,
They would fail.

ANDREW

Good God, what failure's left? It seems to me
You've just about decapitated back to Adam.
What possible head remains?

THE DUKE

My wives'.
My darling duchesses, whose presence
Sometimes interferes with territorial expansion.
Now take the case of Isabel, my second wife,
A charming girl with hair that loved the wind.
At the time, we had an Executioner from Wales.
He'd served me well.
I remember one occasion when he disentailed
A complicated bit of property inside an hour,
And finished with the lawyer.
But when he came to Isabel,
With her golden tresses thrown like sobs across the block,
He missed her by a head and bobbed her hair.
And Isabel in bangs
Was more than I could bear.

PERCIVAL

A sensitive.

THE DUKE

Two other executioners, the day before they faced
My wives, resigned their posts by jumping in the moat.
The one stayed down by sheer romance.
The other put the dungeon grindstone
In his pants.

STOKES

That wouldn't do the stone no harm.

THE DUKE

But, gentlemen, the most disturbing case
Is recent, very recent. Your predecessor,
"Blackheart" Daniel,
Was set to execute my seventh wife,
The fair Jeananne, last Wednesday.
Daniel hated women.
Couldn't stand their shoes, he said.
Jeananne wore red ones to the dungeon,
I insisted on it. My one mistake was this:
I sent her there alone.
Jeananne offended me in matters of the heart,
Not merely as a cloud on title.
I did not wish to see her die.
So, alone she went, and Daniel, stabbed by love,
Refused to put her on the block.
Instead, he put her on his horse
And rode the distance of the duchy.
An incident that will not bear repeating.

ANDREW

I see, I see. Then I'm your man, your Grace.
You need a scientist, unawed by diastole
Or systole. I accept the post.

PERCIVAL

Nonsense.
La guerre. The only proper schooling for the job.

THE DUKE

Excellent. I compliment you both. But

[*He pulls a bellrope.*]

I must be sure.

[*Enter* JEANANNE, *dressed becomingly in rags, and* DUCK, *carrying a falcon on his wrist.*]

Gentlemen, my wife Jeananne,
Recaptured just this morning, picking berries.

STOKES

She's as white as a birch.

THE DUKE

I'll be brief.
Jeananne is still condemned to lose her head.
It's up to one of you to take it from her.
The one who does becomes our Executioner.
You have as long as it takes
Abednego to find his prey. When I return,

One of you will greet me with a present of her head.

[*He goes to* DUCK, *who passes him the falcon.*]

Oh, another point. As added impetus,
In case there're any thoughts of turning back,
I've made this rule: the first official act
Of our newly chosen Executioner
Will be the execution of the losing applicants.
Ingenious, I'd say.
Abednego looks mean today. Good luck.

[*Exeunt* THE DUKE *and* DUCK. STOKES, ANDREW, *and* PERCIVAL *stare silently at* JEANANNE, *who sits down miserably beside the chopping block.*]

STOKES

As white as a birch.
And young as birches
When ev'ry wind o' spring will bend 'em down
So low you'd think they'd choke
Upon the rising o' their sap.
I'd not touch a twig o' her.

ANDREW

A lovely sentiment, old man, but rather pointless.
She's one for death, no matter at whose dispatch.
The question is, which two of us attend her?

PERCIVAL

Precisely. Who's to stay, and who's to go?
To choose her escorts, I suggest a bit of sport.

[*He takes a pair of dice from his pocket.*]

These little larks were sold me
By an Arab parrot-merchant near Jerusalem.
He claimed this pair was rolled for Christ's own robe.
Supposedly on Easter,
All the spots turn white.
How about it, woodsman? Roll you for your doom.

[*He rolls the dice toward* STOKES, *who pays them no heed.*]

STOKES

What brought you here, m' lass?

JEANANNE

A cobweb.

ANDREW

A what?

JEANANNE

A cobweb. Long, and silver
As a scratch on the face of a mirror.
It was caught in someone's hair.
I watched it climb into the sky
And lost it in the sun, as if that were the spiderhole.
Well, standing there, and seeing that the web
Went straight to the sun at one end,
I began to wonder where it went to at the other.

PERCIVAL

Right to the spider, I'll bet.

JEANANNE

I couldn't say.
I pulled the cobweb off his hair so gently
That a servant misconstrued it to the Duke.
He never turned around. It might have been a spider.

STOKES

You mean, that's all you've done, just lift a web?

JEANANNE

The Duke was not convinced about the charge
Until he heard my explanation. Even then,
He gave me opportunity to put the web
In evidence. Of course, I'd lost it.

PERCIVAL

For this, this spider's tale, you lose your head?

JEANANNE

Please, I know you have your problems, just as I.
I realize how it is. I won't be difficult.
I don't even think I'm going to cry. I'll try
To help. I really will. But please, for my sake
Could you mince your words a little bit?

PERCIVAL

I humbly beg your pardon, Lady Jane.

JEANANNE

"Jeananne" is all you need to call me.
I mean it, when I say I'll try to help.
You see, I've come to understand my season,
So I require no more assistance than the weather does.
Jeananne, who spent her twenty-second summer
Beaming "Duchess" on a sunless duke,
Has summertime's mortality. She lives
To serve the government of winter.

Now which of you is winter?
It is you, old man? You look like such a season.

STOKES

No, m' lass. I'm only Stokes. A forester.

JEANANNE

And why did you leave the forest, Stokes?

STOKES

I didn't want to. Truth, I didn't want to.
But I couldn't stay among the trees, the way they were.

JEANANNE

The trees?

STOKES

The trees are dying, dying where they stand.
It's oakblight. Kills the leaves before their time,
They curl up on their stems like ashes.
I couldn't stay, that's all.
I couldn't even see the thing that killed 'em.
I didn't know
What to hate.
There wasn't a fly or a beetle or anything.
Just death in ev'ry bit o' green I saw.

[*The four are silent a moment.* JEANANNE *finally touches the dice near* STOKES'S *feet.*]

JEANANNE

Do the spots turn white on Easter?

PERCIVAL

Haven't
Had them long enough to know. They pale
A bit on Sundays though. What've I rolled?

JEANANNE

Two black eyes in one cold stare.

PERCIVAL

God's bones,
The deuce again. It's practically the family crest.

JEANANNE

You're one who follows Lady Fortune then?

PERCIVAL

While Lord Misfortune follows me. It's quite a chase.
The lady runs for fear of ravishment.
The lord pursues for fear of cuckoldry.
What's a poor rake to do?

JEANANNE

Reform.

PERCIVAL

No,
I prefer to curse the stars and lengthen stride.

JEANANNE

Well, never mind. Tell me who you are and why
Pursuit has brought you here.

PERCIVAL

Sir Percival
McBride, your ladyship. I'm here because my presence,
Almost anywhere else in the world,
Excites the systems of police
Unduly.

JEANANNE

You've come to hide.

PERCIVAL

I have.
Behind the chopping block.

JEANANNE

The line of work,
It doesn't worry you?

PERCIVAL

The world is necks
And blades, Jeananne. We either bow our heads
Or raise our swords. And I'm a swordsman
With a dirty neck.

JEANANNE

So the swordsman comes
To hide from swords behind a sword.

PERCIVAL

A kindly way
Of calling me a coward, I suspect. All right.
But the Arabs have a saying:
"Stand behind the spitting camel."

JEANANNE

I've never seen a camel,
Except in tapestry,
And there they always look so *slinky*.
For years I thought of them
As members of the cat
Family.

[ANDREW *now turns away from the barred window where he has been standing. He is angry.*]

ANDREW

How can you talk about camels?
How can you sit there and gibber?
Don't you understand?
We're here to cut your silly head off.

PERCIVAL

Have a care, sir.

ANDREW

You, you mindless musketeer,
Up to your buckle in swash,
All you do is tease her on.

PERCIVAL

If I had steel, sir——

ANDREW

She sits within
The hour of her death, with life as light
Upon her as a puff on powder,
And talks to us about our characters.
Questions, questions, questions. Women gossip
In their graves, and ask the maggots how
Their families are.

JEANANNE

I only want to know——

ANDREW

My middle name, my barley tax, my tragic flaw.
Here, I'll catechize myself, and save you breath for prayer.
Name?
Andrew Adams.
Home address?
Andrew Adams.
Next-of-kin, relations, who to notify in case of death?
Andrew Adams.
Previous profession?
Student of surgery. Studies stopped by order of the court.
Why?
Because, one misty morning, white as worship,
Old Barney Crogg, who lights the ghosts their way
To gusty rest at dawn in Morton's Boneyard,
Discovered me encumbered with a corpse.
He raised his ancient lamp, and, with it, raised
The morning mist, and there was I. He coughed
A veritable fog of palsied breath,
And rattled, "Andrew, put that back." The gold

I bought his silence with, bought rum instead,
Enough to stir loquacity in seven Barney Croggs.
Was I tried?
I was tried. And whipped. And driven off.
Why do I want to be an executioner?
Because it's all the surgery the human race deserves.

JEANANNE

——which one of you to choose.

ANDREW

What did you say?

JEANANNE

I completed a sentence, that's all.
The sentence started sometime back, but paused
To hear your history. The sentence was,
Without the bulge of your parenthesis:
"I only want to know which one of you to choose."

ANDREW

Choose? What choice is left for you?

JEANANNE

The choice
Of Executioner.

PERCIVAL

Oh, no, Jeananne.

STOKES

The tree don't pick the axe, m' lass. It's truth
I'd rather fall myself than take that axe,
But it's a thing you can't come helping out.

JEANANNE

Why, can't you see, old Stokes, that I'm the only one
Who's capable of judging? Each of you
Is wrapped too tight in life. For me there's just
A last, thin gossamer to hold me down to fact,
A gauze of life so delicate a wrong
Thought will rend it.
I must choose.
I read you three as lines of love
In lost love letters
Found when love is done.
I shall choose.
And you must help.
I mustn't make a new mistake.

ANDREW

What a piece of Punch and Judy.
Four puppets in a dungeon farce.
Judy picks her Punch and whispers,
"Bop me." What's she have to choose from?

A woodman,
Deep in botanical mourning
For his dying dogwood.
A student
Of the body's resurrection
With shroud stains on his hands.
A soldier,
Bold as a blustering thunder
Followed by a drizzle.

PERCIVAL

By God, we'll see who's bold, or not.

[*He seizes the axe and moves toward* ANDREW, *who stands ready for combat.*]

ANDREW

Agreed.

[*They grapple together for the axe.* JEANANNE *throws herself between.*]

JEANANNE

Stop, stop, you brawling pups.
Mind your mistress.
Heel.

[*Surprised by the order, they stop fighting and stand frozen like a sculpture of a combat.*]

Men.
How like dogs you reach decisions.
As if contention were, in truth, a bone,
And thought, a parliament of snarls.

PERCIVAL

Stand back, Jeananne. It's none of your affair.

JEANANNE

It's all of my affair. I will not have
You puppy with my fate. It's not a slipper.
Down.

[*Confused,* PERCIVAL *lets go his hold.*]

And you, too, you spaniel.

[ANDREW *also lets go.*]

Why can't
You understand, you men? You can't escape
The world's mistakes. They're made.
And if they're made with you,

It's best you live them out,
And hope they end with you,
For all your doggy duels,
And all your doggy wars,
And all your doggy hate
Will not undo one dog's
Day of it.
If nothing else, poor Daniel's taught me that.

PERCIVAL

I really feel I ought to have a long,
Dejected tail to tuck between my legs.

JEANANNE

Poor Daniel, poor, poor Daniel.
He set himself against his fate.
Hell forged his hands to raise an axe
To minister this sacrament,

[*She touches the chopping block.*]

But all the while, a still, small voice
Kept whispering,
"I was meant to be a paramour."

PERCIVAL

And when he saw your pretty, twinkling eyes,
The still, small voice
Raised its voice?

JEANANNE

He thought to coin a Cressida
In my dull gold.
But I'm not to blame for other people's visions,
Nor for knowledge that I didn't have. You see,
I thought escape was factual, a plan
The night and horses carried out,
But I was wrong, so wrong. It's just a dream,
A dream that gallops off across the darkling mind,
Beating in the head like hoofs,
And ends with nothing gained but saddle-sores.

ANDREW

I thought this Daniel hated women.

JEANANNE

He did. (He couldn't stand our shoes, he said.)
But, like all of you, he hated what
The world denied him, and, like any man,
He tried his own correction on the world's
Mistake. And only made a worse mistake.

The world denied him women. There I was.
He didn't really want me, but he had
To prove the world was wrong, that he was right.

STOKES

Sort of chopping off his nose to spite his face.

JEANANNE

Worse, worse.
Like chopping off his face to spite his nose.
He ground his teeth like wagons over cobbles,
And such an oath.
"You wagging, witless, worthless, wine-dreamt witch,
I love you,
Blast your bloody shoes."
He flung me on his horse,
And burning with Arabian desires,
He rode like sin and Sinbad,
Through fog as thick as jinn.
At last, we jumped a stream
Down which flows
The border of the Duke's domains, and we were safe.
Daniel turned and stared at me in disbelief,
A disbelief as stark as oceans.
"My God," he said,
"What am I going to do for a living?"

PERCIVAL

A sensible thought.

JEANANNE

Of course it was. But such a stare. It had
No bottom to it. Down, down, down. I fell
Forever in it. Well, we lived for several days
On berries, berries 'til our teeth went mad
And screamed at every cracking seed. So then
Poor Daniel did the only thing he could.
He sold his only valuable.

PERCIVAL

Which was?

JEANANNE

Me.

PERCIVAL

God's disgrace, you mean he sold you back?
After all that gallantry and galloping,
He sold you back?

JEANANNE

For three pounds, ten, and six.

He simply told the thorns which berrypatch
To lie in.

ANDREW

Perfidy, pure perfidy.

JEANANNE

Now perhaps you'll understand? But no.
You blame him, don't you?

PERCIVAL

Certainly.

ANDREW

Foul, foul.

STOKES

He's black as pines in wintertime.

JEANANNE

And, if you please,
What higher thought have you three saved for me?
Or have you quite forgot that axe?
[PERCIVAL, ANDREW, *and* STOKES *look sheepish.*]
I'm sorry.
That was heedless of me. Still, you must
Be made to understand. The world's
Unwitting genius for wrong has touched
You in your hopes of heart, and so you hate.
Stokes, old Stokes, your forest dies and leaves
You all alone. No willow left to weep.
And you, dear Chivalry Unhorsed, how bitter
It must be to wear Milady's favor
Every joust, and catch her laughter as you fall.
Almost as bitter, say, as banishment
For digging up the buried urn of death.
To steal its dusty secret: life of man.
How terribly undone you are. Like Daniel.
You gather up the shambles of yourselves,
And lay them with my ruin. Three fallen pillars
Share the temple's desecration with the trapped
And wingless goddess.
All right. All right. Accept the facts of fate.
Out of this, this shattered peace, we must leave
Someone saved, someone living. Then we three,
We three who've gone, can say to God——

PERCIVAL

Then you expect a God?

JEANANNE

Oh dear. Did I
Let slip His Name? Now please, you mustn't think——

ANDREW

I knew it. All along. I knew it. Souls
Are what she's after. Three unshriven souls.

JEANANNE

Why can't I learn to keep God out of things?

ANDREW

Souls for comfort. Souls for cushions. Souls to keep
Our fannies warm on heaven's marble floor.

JEANANNE

It colors all the facts, to mention God.
He's such a losing argument. Despite
Omnipotence, rhetorically, He's weak.

PERCIVAL

You do believe in Him, Jeananne?

JEANANNE

I must
Confess I do, but in a sacrilegious way.
I'm much too much a woman not to see
His faults. I'm sure He's slack. He hasn't given half
The thought He should to man's condition.

PERCIVAL

Stop,
Stop right there. I foresee the end of this:
A tidied-up cosmology. Right now,
The Sky's askew. The stars are buttoned wrong.
The moon needs polishing. And someone's wiped
His dirty clouds across the brandnew sunshine.
A woman's touch is all God needs around
The household heavens. Pleasant fantasy,
Jeananne, but time has made a realist
Of me. My eschatology is this:
The only way to keep from going straight
To Hell, is follow down a crooked path.
It takes a little longer then. You've picked
A parable from all the rubble of our lives,
And borne your dungeon well. But don't forget.
It's not a saint you leave behind. The choice
You make assigns an axeman to this block,
An executioner to serve the Duke
In politics *per capita.*

JEANANNE

And who's
To say where saints are found? Or who's to say
A proper axeman hasn't some divinity?
The martyr owes him thanks for martyrdom.
It's all the willy-nilly will of God.
If Daniel were among you, even now
I'd choose him, knowing how he suits his place.
But now, Sir Percival, do you admit
I have the right to choose?

PERCIVAL

I've always left
The crises of my life to chance, Jeananne.
I've found more honesty in odds than in
My fellow men.

[*He picks up the dice.*]

You cannot bribe, suborn,
Seduce, corrupt, or trick a pair of dice.
If you're wise, and throw them hard against a wall,
Integrity's assured. An oracle
In spots. But what's the use of caution when
You're damn near dead? And something in your eye
Attracts the folly in me. Just this once,
I'll even trust a woman.

[*He puts the dice in his pocket.*]

But don't
Misunderstand. This momentary loss
Of principle is not a change of heart.
I wouldn't hesitate a jot to trim
Your neck. I want the job.

JEANANNE

I understand.
And you, Andrew?

ANDREW

I see no other way
Unfortunately. None of us can choose.
It's up to you. I hate to trust the lottery
Of woman's intuition, but it can't be helped.
Please consider this before you choose, however.
If you want divinity in office, don't pick me.
I hate your God. I hate His man. Because
His man undid my work to save His name.
The infamy they scratched upon my life
Grates with His curse, His curse

On me for robbing Him
Of just one grave's small coin
In all His mortal hoard.
If God's so miserly with dead men's bones,
Then let Him have them all, and send the quick
Along to swell the pile. I'll see to that.

JEANANNE

Brilliantly outspoken, Andrew. Still,
It's just a wee bit unconvincing.

ANDREW

Just so you understand my wish to be
An Executioner.

JEANANNE

Perhaps I do.
But Stokes. You haven't said a word. Am I
To choose, old Stokes?

STOKES

I'm sorry, m' lass. My ears
Aren't big enough for most o' these words.
It's like when too much wind
Gets in the tops o' trees.
The leaves go wild, and tear each other up,
And pull the tree a crooked way. I can't
Make sense o' things unless the wind is low.

JEANANNE

Well now the wind is low, old Stokes. There's just
A breeze that hides behind the whispering
Of leaf to leaf.

STOKES

This talk o' God, and being dead,
And going off to Hell. It's all a storm,
An ugly storm. I know from listening.
I didn't do the talking in the forest.
I did the listening. And when I heard
It dying, softly moaning with the wilting leaves,
I knew I had to go. It seems like years
Have passed. But just today, besides the storm,
I heard that same soft, dying song again.
It came from you, m' lass. It came from you.
And so I knew I wasn't lost, the way
I thought I was.

JEANANNE

This is more than words,
Old Stokes, much more than words.

STOKES

I thought I'd lost
All summertime forever when I left
The forest. Snow was all I felt. Dead snow.
But now I see the summertime in you,
The last, light bit o' it. M' lass, I want
To go with you. I don't care whom you pick
To hew you down, but don't pick me.
I've listened, and I know I've got to follow you.
The song. The leaves. . . .

JEANANNE

Old Stokes.

PERCIVAL

Well I'll be damned,
A late withdrawal.

JEANANNE

God can scatter stars
Along the humblest paths.

ANDREW

To trip the soul.

JEANANNE

So I must choose from only two.

PERCIVAL

And quickly.

[*He looks out at the window.*]

I can see a flake of falcon, black against the clouds.
And there. It's fallen. Down the sky like doom.
The Duke will soon return. Which one of us,
Jeananne? Choose.

JEANANNE

Cain and Abel. Which is which?
Who can bear the burning of the mark?
Who can find his brother's keeping
In the keeping of the axe?

ANDREW

Enough of this.
He or I? Choose.

JEANANNE

All right. God guide my hand.
Sir Percival——

PERCIVAL

A smile on Fortune's face.

[*He moves toward the axe.*]

JEANANNE

——You come with us. And, Andrew, take the axe.

PERCIVAL

A smile that shows her rotten teeth. God's gall
How "up" comes down. Here, doctor, take the blade,
And cure a soldier of his light, unlucky head.

[*He hands the axe toward* ANDREW, *who now hesitates.*]

ANDREW

Jeananne. Jeananne, you want my hand in blood?
No other?

JEANANNE

No. Yours, Andrew. You must live.

PERCIVAL

To office, Andrew. Necks are waiting.

[*Again he offers* ANDREW *the axe.* ANDREW *still hesitates.*]

ANDREW

No.
I can't.

PERCIVAL

What?

JEANANNE

Andrew.

STOKES

Lad, you must.

ANDREW

I can't.
Weak, weak. I'm weak.

PERCIVAL

Of all the limpid, low,
Liverless, lark-hearted louts, you take
The lilypad.

ANDREW

I know, I know.

PERCIVAL

You crowless caw,
You cowless moo. Take this axe before
I carve an epitaph in you.

ANDREW

I can't.
I've come this far, but now my coward hand
Won't clutch the necessary horror. Blood.
Another death. While all my nerves sing, "Sacrifice,"
My hand won't move.

PERCIVAL

This from a man who's robbed
A grave?

ANDREW

I didn't rob a grave.

PERCIVAL

How's that?

JEANANNE

Andrew. Andrew, tell us *all* the truth.

ANDREW

I didn't. Yes, I did. Leave me alone.
Please. Let this horse marine behead us all.

PERCIVAL

Out with it. Straight. You said the old man found
You in the graveyard, burdened with the dead.
A corpse in hand, you said.

ANDREW

Yes. Yes. He did.
But I wasn't taking it.

PERCIVAL

What were you doing then?

ANDREW

Putting it back.

PERCIVAL

Putting it back?

ANDREW

Exactly.
Putting it back. To save the lady's reputation,
To purge the scandal from her mould, and let
Her keep her epitaph unsullied,
I risked the dawn to see her to her grave,
Before her jealous headstone missed her.

JEANANNE

A lady, Andrew? Who? What necromantic
Rendezvous was this?

ANDREW

An assignation
With the chaste remains of a flower girl,
Who died among her blooms, and no one cared.
I called for her at midnight, of the day
They buried her at town expense. I meant
No good. Dissection. A crime of absolute
Dispassion. But I couldn't do it. Once
I had her body stretched before my instruments,
I . . .
God, I sat and waited hours,
Waited for the grace of guardian angels
To leave her lifelike sleep, and let her die.
It seemed as if her cold, white breast would take
A breath at every moment, till my crime
Became abduction, and the knife I held
Turned murderous in my hand. I had to take
Her back, no matter what the risk. The dawn
Dragged up old Barney Crogg, and so. So, so.

JEANANNE

And at the trial? You didn't tell the court——

ANDREW

Do you think I'd plead my cowardice
To all those prigs of prime religion?
So they could nod how pompous right they were?
Do you think I'd let my name go down
In dogma? Precedent against the next
Poor dog they catch? All because *I* was a coward?
Not on your life (short as it is).

[*Enter* DUCK.]

DUCK

There's got to be an execution right away,
Oh dear, you haven't even done Jeananne.
That will have to wait.
Who's the Executioner?

PERCIVAL

It's still in doubt.

DUCK

Oh God, it can't be. Please make up your minds.
There's got to be an execution right away.

JEANANNE

Why, Duck, what's happened? Who's displeased the Duke?

DUCK

Abednego, the falcon.

PERCIVAL

What?

[*Offstage,* THE DUKE *is heard to yell:*]

The axe,
Duck. Get the axeman up here. Zounds, the pain.

DUCK

Please hurry. Who's the Executioner?

JEANANNE

What's gone wrong, Duck?

DUCK

Abednego's
Outdone himself. First, he killed the Earl
Of Tendril's hawk because it caught the prey.
Next, the Duke knighted Abednego for killing
The hawk. Then, Sir Abednego, in loyalty,
Attached his beak to the ducal finger,
And hasn't yet let go.

[*Offstage,* THE DUKE *is heard to yell:*]

The axe, the axe.

DUCK

Unfortunately, all nobility
In Golgoth have a right of execution.
Even *Sir* Abednego.

[*Offstage* THE DUKE *is heard to yell:*]

The axe, Duck.

DUCK

Please, please make up your minds.

PERCIVAL

Duck, lead the way.
I seem to be the only one who wants
To bite with this tooth.

JEANANNE

No, Sir Percival.

PERCIVAL

Jeananne, your choice has had his chance.

JEANANNE

No, no.
He hasn't. Andrew. All my words to you
Are pebbles down a wishing well. You scorn

Their little echoes like a man who never had
A wish. But now you mustn't scorn, because
This is my last wish.
Andrew, the seeds of spirit grow in you,
But somehow in confusion. Angels try
To tempt you, but the truth of Hell prevails.
You think a lack of explanation means
A thing's infernal. So your sentiments
Are sins to you. They must be rooted out,
Purged from your sane, sound, sceptic soul.
All well and good.
Better to be confounded when you're young
Than forced to give up thinking when you're old.
But, Andrew, please. Confusion mustn't make
A coward of you. Action in the face
Of no way out is sometimes all that saves
A man. You can't retreat from evil, and
It sometimes takes the greatest courage
To do the necessary evil.
This is my wish. I wish you had that courage now.

[ANDREW *still hesitates. Offstage,* THE DUKE *is heard to yell:*]

The axe. This bird's begun to like the taste.

[ANDREW *suddenly takes the axe from* PERCIVAL.]

ANDREW

I sought this axe at first to implement
My bitterness. Now it simply seems
A duty that I'd rather not perform. Too late.
Something more than wishing in you, rules me.
Come, Duck, let's start this bloody afternoon.

[*Exeunt* ANDREW *and* DUCK.]

JEANANNE

Thank God, he's saved.

PERCIVAL

Why, yes, he's saved. And all
That's left to do, is lose our heads.
A fearful waste of crania.
I had that axe myself. I could have saved
My head by keeping it. Why didn't I?

JEANANNE

Because you knew I wouldn't stand for it.

PERCIVAL

Perhaps.
Jeananne, why did you pick that insufferable slip
Of a knot-headed boy as Executioner?

JEANANNE

It's hard to say.
Because he seemed so out-of-place
In all his silly, bitter talk.
Because his desperate, fumbling eyes
Were staring so unhappily
To find the world in front of him.
Because a fate tickled my nose.
Because my thoughts were somewhere else.
Because a lark upon a limb
Sang merrily, "Choose him. Choose him."

[*Offstage,* THE DUKE *is heard to say:*]

Excellent. The doctor. Cure this feathered wart,
And I'll give his knighthood to you.

PERCIVAL

God's sands,
We die because a fancy takes you.

JEANANNE

Die?
I suppose we must. I hope I can. I mean,
I've no great wish to die.

[*Offstage, there is a loud groan, followed by an inexplicable cheer.*]

Oh dear. What's that?
The end of Sir Abednego. His demon heart
Is free to hawk in heaven. Pray we meet him.

[*Enter* DUCK, *utterly distract. He throws himself at the feet of* JEANANNE.]

DUCK

Pray your Grace will not forget your humble servant.

[*Enter* ANDREW.]
Oh, save me from him.

JEANANNE

Save you, Duck?

[*All look at* ANDREW.]

ANDREW

I missed.
And clipped the Duke instead. He's sitting with
A most chagrined expression lying three
Feet from him.

JEANANNE

Andrew. How?

ANDREW

I didn't aim
Too carefully. You might even say
It was deliberate. The doing of
A necessary evil.

STOKES

Well done, lad.

ANDREW

The jubilation's reached the Duke's best Burgundy.
Your Grace, may I suggest you form a government
Before the servants drink the cellar dry.

JEANANNE

Why, yes. I'm Duchess, aren't I? What fun. Stokes,
You shall have the ministry of all our gardens.
Sir Percival must be our war department,
And quell the revolution in the mead hall.
Take a force. (Duck, you show him where to find one.)
And, Andrew. Oh dear. Still our Executioner,
I fear.

ANDREW

The servants threw the axe in the moat.

JEANANNE

Wonderful. That abolishes the office.

[*Exeunt* STOKES, PERCIVAL, *and* DUCK.]

Then, Andrew, you must be, must be the Duke.

ANDREW

Are you speaking nuptially, Jeananne?

JEANANNE

As best I can.

ANDREW

The answer then is: No.
I hate to disappoint your faculty
For forcing fate upon our wills, but just
This once, an irony has tripped you up.
Your fate has been to set me free of mine.
Before your sleight of hand undid my manacles,
The world was on my ankle like a ball
And chain. Now I'm a free man, free to face
Your necessary evils unafraid.

Who knows? I may outwit whatever fate
Pursues me altogether. Least I'll try.
Meanwhile you have a duchy to look after.
That's your fate. If it's mine to share it,
It will have to catch me first. I'm leaving.

JEANANNE

Andrew. Where will you go? What will you do?

ANDREW

Eventually, it's hard to say. But first,
I'm going out to find a certain chap
And buy him a drink. He needs one.

JEANANNE

Who, Andrew?

ANDREW

Daniel. Poor, poor Daniel.

[*Exit* ANDREW, *laughing.*]

ARTISTS ON HORSEBACK

Alexander Eliot

A descendant of Harvard's great president, Alexander Eliot was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He attended Black Mountain College in North Carolina, directed an art gallery in Boston, and worked on documentary films for "The March of Time" and the U.S. government. He is the author of a Novel: *Proud Youth*. Since 1945 Mr. Eliot has served as Art Editor of *Time*. He is now engaged on a special *Time, Inc.* project, writing a history of American painting, from which the following is taken.

"Whoo-oop! I'm the original iron-jawed, brass-mouthed, copper-bellied corpse-maker from the wilds of Arkansas! Look at me! I'm the man they call Sudden Death and General Desolation! Sired by a hurricane, dam'd by an earthquake, half-brother to the cholera, nearly related to the smallpox on my mother's side! Look at me! I take nineteen alligators and a bar'l of whisky for breakfast when I'm in robust health, and a bushel of rattlesnakes and a dead body when I'm ailing. I split the everlasting rocks with my glance, and I squench the thunder when I speak! Whoo-oop! Stand back and give me room according to my strength! Blood's my natural drink, and the wails of the dying is music to my ears. Cast your eye on me, gentlemen! and lay low and hold your breath, for I'm 'bout to turn myself loose!"

—Mark Twain, in Life on the Mississippi

Go west, young man.

—John B. L. Soule, in the Terre Haute, Indiana Express (1851)

Never did painters have a broader, more romantic, varied, wild and sweeping theme than the winning of the American West. Their canvas was more than a thousand miles square. At its eastern edge rolled the mighty Mississippi, which a contemporary newsman described as "the muddiest, the deepest,

the shallowest, the bar-iest, the snaggiest, the sandiest, the catfishiest, the swiftest, the steamboatiest, and the uncertainest river in all the world." South lay the sun-scorched desert and the glittering Gulf of Mexico, and to the north the cool, silent and impenetrable forests of Canada. On the west the proud, snowy battlements of the Rocky Mountains sparkled against the sky.

In this amphitheater, an appropriately vast drama was unfolding with incredible swiftness. It began with the French *voyageurs,* and the roistering flatboatmen out of Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, who opened the Mississippi to settlement and trade. With the mountain trappers it ascended the wide Missouri River to find green Edens on the slopes of the Rockies. It embraced millions of buffalo moving with the course of the sun north and south across the illimitable prairies, and also their quick finish. Whole tribes of red Indians, now vanished, galloped the land that had been their home, lassoing wild ponies or hopelessly brandishing feathered lances in the face of doom. Like ships in convoy, covered wagons snaked across the new world. The cowboy came, with his dusty, bawling cattle and ready six-shooter. Settlers moored their farms in the oceans of grass. Prospectors panned gold from the Indians' salmon streams. Railroad tracks crossed fading game trails and war-paths, inexorably. Cities shone clean and raw in the wilderness. And all in about fifty years.

The men who made it happen were—had to be—an exceedingly tough and adventurous breed. And while the artists who recorded the epic may not have been quite so "brass-mounted" as Mark Twain's river-boatman, they too needed at least as much pluck as talent. Their combined works illustrate a particularly splendid and unique passage in the ever-unfolding American dream.

George Catlin

The first and freshest pictorial record of Western Indian life was made by iron-willed George Catlin during the 1830s. A nice, neat, successful miniaturist in Philadelphia, Catlin had been called to greatness by the sight of an Indian delegation parading through town on its way back west from Washington. He resolved that "the history and customs of such a people, preserved by . . . illustrations, are themes worthy of the lifetime of one man, and nothing short of the loss of my life shall prevent me from visiting their country and becoming their historian."

Accordingly, he left his young bride and journeyed to St. Louis, where he enlisted the aid of General William Clark,

superintendent of Indian affairs. In Clark's entourage, Catlin attended treaty-making powwows with the Ioways, Missouris, Omahas, Sacs and Foxes at Prairie du Chien, and painted the Delawares, Kickapoos, Potowatomies, Weahs, Peorias and Kaskaskias at Cantonment Leavenworth.

When John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company resolved to run a steamboat up the Missouri to the Yellowstone, Catlin hopped aboard. He found himself two thousand miles from his St. Louis base, in the country of the big sky and the rich, warlike, untouched world of the Crows and Blackfeet. This was a land, he wrote, "where the buffaloes range with the elk and the fleet-bounding antelope; where wolves are white and bears grizzly; where the rivers are yellow . . . the dogs are all wolves, women are slaves, men all lords . . . where the predominant passions of the savage breast are ferocity and honor." Much to his own honor, he made the return trip by canoe, relying on the hospitality of his ferocious new friends, whom he painted at each village along the way.

Catlin's paintings of the Mandans have particular poignancy, for only five years after he visited them the Mandan tribe was utterly broken by smallpox, which took fifteen hundred out of its population of sixteen hundred. His Mandan Village seems wonderfully busy and secure, in keeping with Catlin's own opinion that the Indians' lives are "much more happy than ours." Medicine poles guard the place against spiritual ills, and a palisade against human foes. On the plain without, "the dead live" (in the Mandan phrase) mummified, on raised platforms.

Old Bear, whom Catlin painted in full medicine-man regalia, had given him some concern. Catlin wrote in his journal that while he was portraying some other braves, "Old Bear commenced howling and haranguing around my domicile, amongst the throng that was outside, proclaiming that all who were inside and being painted were fools and would soon die; and very materially affecting thereby my popularity." With instinctive tact, Catlin "called him in the next morning, when I was alone, having only the interpreter with me; telling him that I had had my eye upon him for several days, and had been so well pleased with his looks, that I had taken great pains to find out his history, which had been explained by all as one of a most extraordinary kind, and his character and standing in his tribe as worthy of my particular notice; and that I had several days since resolved that as soon as I had practiced my hand long enough upon the others, to get the stiffness out of it (after paddling my canoe so far as I had) . . . I would begin on his portrait, which I was then prepared to commence."

This speech, which might even have softened a Yankee banker, fairly melted the savage's heart. Catlin later confided to his journal that Old Bear's "vanity has been completely gratified. . . . He lies for hours together, day after day, in my room, in front of his picture, gazing intensely upon it: lights my pipe for me while I am painting—shakes hands with me a dozen times on each day . . ."

This typical episode helps explain how Catlin could roam the West alone, fearlessly, with such success. He could portray with steady hand the awesome Osage chief Clermont, chatting comfortably as he studied the whacking great war-club and the scores of human scalps adorning the chief's leggings. He could cross five hundred miles of unmapped prairie, with no other companion than a horse named Charley, confident that when he stopped at a tepee to ask directions he would be more likely to receive an invitation for the night than an arrow in the throat.

Reproduced by courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution

George Catlin's Sketch of Chief Clermont

In eight years, Catlin visited forty-eight tribes, amounting (he estimated) to half a million people. He piled up close to six hundred paintings relating to his red friends, and collected wagonloads of their pipes, weapons, utensils and finery. Most of the Indians he knew were at the climax of a golden age that began with the introduction of horses from New Mexico and California. They were elegant in their dress and elaborate in their ceremonies, happy, free, prosperous, leisured, brave. Knowing, as the Indians did not, their coming doom, Catlin painted them with a kind of clean nostalgia; his pictures are like bright dreams that precede an awakening in the dark.

Such an awakening was to come to Catlin himself. He had been inspired by the Peale Museum in Philadelphia to create a similar museum of the American Indian, filled with Indian artifacts as well as his own pictures. To this end he turned from painting to the less suitable role of entrepreneur, touring the eastern seaboard and later Europe with his collection. Hopefully, he wrote in the exhibition catalog:

> [Since] every painting has been made from nature by my own hand—and that too when I have been paddling my canoe or leading my pack horse over and through trackless wilds, at the hazard of my life—the world will surely be kind and indulgent enough to receive and estimate them . . . as true and facsimile traces of individual life and historical fact, and forgive me for their present unfinished and unstudied condition as works of art.

But the world was not so kind. It had been taught to regard the Indians either as demigods (by James Fenimore Cooper) or as demi-humans (by settlers' accounts), so Catlin's objective reporting seemed unbelievable. "An Indian is a beggar in Washington City," Catlin had written, "and a white man is almost equally so in the Mandan village. An Indian in Washington is mute, is dumb and embarrassed; and so is a white man (and for the very same reasons) in this place." Now he found himself "mute, dumb and embarrassed" before a rising tide of civilized mockery. The majority decided he must be a great old faker and story-teller. He went bankrupt. His collection passed into the hands of a Philadelphia manufacturer, who stored it in the cellar of a boiler-works.

Catlin's answer, in middle age, was to cap his earlier adventures with more of the same. He roamed the Western Hemisphere from Argentina to the Aleutian Islands, painting as he went. He repainted his early pictures from memory, badly, on cardboard, and exhibited the new set in Manhattan (where he unfortunately ran into competition with P. T. Barnum). He published books in defense of his honor as explorer and artist. Nothing availed; he died still under a cloud. But seven years after his death Catlin's original collection found the permanent home he had longed for, at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

Alfred Jacob Miller

Compared with Catlin, Miller was more of an artist and less of a man. Not in his heart did he hear the call of the wild, but from the lips of a rich patron, and his service in the Far West was far from arduous, lasting only a single summer. Yet

in the space of those few splendid, dangerous, busy months, Miller did manage to lasso immortality. The only painter ever to see a fur caravan on the Overland Trail or a rendezvous of the mountain trappers, he pictured what he saw with zest, a good deal of accuracy, and something more: a passionate sense of the strangeness, vastness, especially the fleetingness of it all. If Catlin had been an heroic roamer and recorder of the unknown, Miller was a hired, fired-up romantic in the same region.

Nearly two years' training in Europe had made Miller a swift and spirited draftsman, especially of human figures and animals in motion. It had also brought him under the spell of Delacroix, who was imbuing French painters with a romantic attachment to Morocco. The land of the Berbers had many of the same attractions as the land of the Red Indians, so Miller's mind and style were somewhat prepared for his great adventure. Yet he was not ambitious; after his return to the United States, Miller modestly set up shop as a journeyman portraitist in New Orleans.

In the spring of 1837, when Miller was twenty-seven, a rifle-straight, martial-looking stranger entered his studio, looked steadfastly about, and left again. Taking him for a Kentuckian, Miller wondered why he was not carrying a bowie knife.

The visitor was actually Captain William Drummond Stewart of the British Army, veteran of Waterloo, heir to Scotland's Murthly Castle and Birnam Wood, and sportsman extraordinary. Strictly for fun, Stewart had spent four summers and a winter adventuring in the Far West. He proposed to go once more, taking in his entourage a painter who would later record the highlights of the trip on the walls of Murthly Castle. Some days after his first visit, Stewart returned to Miller's studio and offered him the job. Only a fool or a coward could have refused, and Miller was neither.

Soon afterward Stewart's party, of about ten, headed west from Independence, Missouri. They accompanied a caravan of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company—loaded with blankets, liquor, calico, sugar and salt, tobacco, trinkets, coffee and ammunition—which was headed for the Wind River country, some thousand miles distant. The caravan's course, along the winding Platte, was later to become the first leg of the Overland Trail followed by covered wagons to the Pacific. It led over rolling, treeless wilderness to one of the most beautiful mountain regions on earth. There the beaver trappers and proud Red Men would forgather for their midsummer saturnalia and time of trading—a barbaric fair and mingling of civilization with the stone age at the rim of the unknown.

In the course of this adventure, Miller got to know many of the heroes of the American wilderness. There was Etienne Provost, fifty-five, who had a "corpus round as a porpoise," according to Miller's notes, and the glory of being an original Old Man of the Rocky Mountains. There were Black Harris, Tom Fitzpatrick, Kit Carson, Bourgeois Walker, discoverer of Yosemite, and the legendary Jim Bridger, to whom Stewart was bringing a suit of medieval armor as a gift. Among the Indians there were the mighty Oglala Sioux cutthroat, Bull Bear, and the high-minded Flathead, Rabbit-Skin Leggings. Among the half-breeds was Antoine Clement, hardiest of hunters, who used to sing *"Dans mon pays je serais content"* as he attacked a buffalo, and who was to become Stewart's valet in Scotland.

But these were just a few individuals in a rout of larger impressions. Miller saw and painted Fort Laramie—the portal to the Rockies—as it originally was. At the rendezvous, he watched two thousand Snake Indians stage a wild procession in Stewart's honor. He knew "Squaw doin's," saw wild horses cavorting in herds, and sat by a campfire drinking wine and eating cheese in country "as fresh and beautiful as if just from the hands of the Creator."

To his everlasting credit, Miller caught the spirit of all this remarkably, in water-color sketches. The work required a civilized sort of concentration, and thus put him in some danger. Miller wrote in his journal that one day, when he was sketching at Independence Rock, "being completely absorbed, about half an hour transpired when suddenly I found my head violently forced down and held in such a manner that it was impossible to turn right or left. An impression ran immediately through my mind that this was an Indian and that I was lost. In five minutes, however, the hands were removed. It was our Commander. He said: 'Let this be a warning to you or else on some fine day you will be among the missing.' "

In another note, Miller describes sketching a buffalo with the help of hunter Clement, who "would wound the animal in the flank, bringing him to a standstill . . . Going as near him as was prudent, holding the sketchbook in one hand and the pencil in the other, it often happened that while absorbed in drawing a ludicrous scene would ensue. The brute would make a charge. Of course, sketch and pencil would be thrown down, the bridle seized, and a retreat made at double-quick time. This would convulse our Indian . . . with merriment, in which state he could not have aided us if he had wished."

By way of taking vacations from vacation, Stewart's party would leave the caravan for side trips into still deeper wilder-

ness. They hunted the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. They fished for trout "that were unsophisticated and bit immediately we placed the bait near their mouths in clear water." They found a bed of wild mint, and got riotously drunk on juleps.

In October the fun was over. Three years later Miller went to Murthly Castle and adorned it with a series of large, brown, dull oils from the small, luminous and spirited sketches on which his fame still rests. Thereafter he settled in Baltimore and began a long, undistinguished career painting portraits, an occasional landscape, and copies of his Far West pictures. (Baltimore's Walters Gallery has a fine set of such copies, numbering two hundred.) In the hard but just verdict of historian Bernard DeVoto, it was really Stewart who shaped Miller's career. The mature Miller "did the odd-job painting any provincial artist had to do, but mostly he was Mr. Miller who had been West and had a feeling, an increasingly sentimental one, for Indians."

Frederic Remington

A heavy, hard-riding man was Frederic Remington, and his life a short charge uphill to glory. He died in 1909, when only forty-eight, leaving to the world 2,739 pictures (including illustrations for 142 books, of which 8 were his own) and 25 sculptures in bronze. This huge body of work captured the Wild West of cattle wars and Indian uprisings that persists in the minds of small boys (who have never heard of Remington). Hollywood's horse-operas derive principally from what Remington actually saw and painted.

His people were moderately wealthy upstate New Yorkers, conservative, and doubtless somewhat perturbed by Remington's rough, open, self-indulgent character. When he was just fifteen, they packed him off to a military academy. That same year Remington wrote a letter to a fellow schoolboy which shows his nature already formed:

> I don't amount to anything in particular. I can spoil an immense amount of good grub at any time in the day . . . I go a good man on muscle. My hair is short and stiff, and I am about 5 ft. 8 in. and weigh 180 lbs. There is nothing poetical about me . . . I don't swear much, although it is my weak point, and I have to look my letters over carefully to see if there is any cussing in them. I never smoke—only when I can get treated . . .

At sixteen Remington entered Yale, enrolling as one of the University's two art students. He liked sketching, but football was his forte. Most of all, he yearned for adventure. When

his father died, leaving him a modest inheritance, Remington quit school to follow his star west. He was nineteen, a happy wanderer on the Great Plains, with money in his pocket. He worked for fun as a cowboy and ranch cook, and learned to ride like a Comanche. Sometimes, by a campfire under the stars, his fellows would speak of the railroads that were creeping across the prairie. Their coming meant just one thing to Remington. "I knew the wild riders and the vacant land were about to vanish forever," he later wrote, "and the more I considered the subject, the bigger the *forever* loomed . . . I began to try to record some facts around me, and the more I looked, the more the panorama unfolded."

After some years, Remington returned East, with sheaves of drawings. The illustrated magazines gratefully bought what he had, and Remington settled in New York to make more from memory. He had a charming eastern bride, a studio crammed with cowboy and Indian paraphernalia, and such jovial companions as Theodore Roosevelt, Rudyard Kipling, Owen Wister (author of *The Virginian*), and Editor Poultney Bigelow of *Outing* magazine. Summers he would spend in the West, or in Canada or Mexico, collecting new impressions in what would be called "the hard way" were it not the way he liked best.

One Lieutenant Alvin H. Sydenham, a cavalry officer, has left a vivid account of the mature Remington on the trail. While maneuvering against Cheyennes on the Tongue River, Sydenham's outfit was joined by the painter. The officer wrote:

> We first became aware of his existence in camp by the unusual spectacle of a fat citizen dismounting from a tall troop horse at the head of a column of cavalry. The horse was glad to get rid of him, for he could not have trained down to two hundred pounds in less than a month of cross-country riding on a hot trail. Smoothed down over his closely shaven head was a little soft hat rolled up a trifle at the edges . . . Tending still more to impress the observer with the idea of rotundity and specific gravity was a brown canvas hunting coat whose generous proportions and many swelling pockets extended laterally, with a gentle downward slope to the front and rear, like the protecting expanse of a brown cotton umbrella. And below, in strange contrast with the above, he wore closely fitting black riding breeches of Bedford cord, reinforced with dressed kid, and shapely riding boots of the Prussian pattern, set off by a pair of long-shanked English spurs.
>
> As he ambled toward camp, there was ample opportunity to study his figure and physiognomy. His gait was an easy graceful waddle that conveyed a general idea of comfortable

indifference to appearancs and abundant leisure. But his face, although hidden for the time behind the smoking remainder of an ample cigar, was his most reassuring and fetching feature. Fair complexion, blue eyes, light hair, smooth face . . . a big, good-natured overgrown boy . . . Mr. Remington shook my hand vigorously: "Sorry to meet you, Mr. Sydenham. I don't like second lieutenants—never did. Captains are my style of people—they lend me horses."

The two became friends, and Sydenham observed Remington closely to see how he worked. But, the officer confessed, "my stock of artistic information was as great when he went away as it was before he arrived. There was no technique, no 'shop,' about anything he did. No pencils, no notebooks, no 'kodak'—nothing, indeed, but his big blue eyes rolling around at everything and into all sorts of queer places. Now and then an orderly would ride by, or a scout dash up in front of the commanding officer's tent. Then I would see him look intently for a moment with his eyes half-closed—only a moment, and it gave me the impression that perhaps he was a trifle near-sighted."

Reproduced by courtesy of Harold McCracken

Frederic Remington's View of Himself

Remington's drawings from memory of the Tongue River Expedition appeared soon afterward in *Harper's Weekly*. As usual, they were amazingly accurate.

One succeeding summer, Editor Bigelow managed to persuade Remington to keep him company on a trip abroad. Rem-

ington enjoyed the Arabian horses in North Africa, and Emperor William II's stud farm in Germany. Arrived in London, he hurried to Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. He loathed art galleries, yet biographer Harold McCracken relates that once he did let himself be dragged to an Impressionist exhibition. "Say," he exploded as he left, "I've got two maiden aunts upstate who can *knit* better pictures than those."

Five years after that trip, Remington wrote Bigelow:

> No, honey, I should not try Europe again. I am not built right—I hate parks—collars—cuffs—foreign languages—cut and dried stuff. Europe is all right for most everybody but me—I am going to do *America*—it's new, it's to my taste . . . Have been catching trout and killing deer—feel bully—absolutely on the water wagon, but it don't agree with me. I am at 240 pounds and nothing can stop me but an incurable disease.

He never did curb either his feasting or his drinking habits, which involved such barbaric breakfasts as fistfuls of pigs' knuckles, and mid-morning jolts at his easel. Another typical letter to Bigelow showed Remington well ahead of his time in his admiration for Madison Avenue's favorite beverage:

> The latest news is that I haven't had a drink in three weeks and ain't going to have any more till I am about to die, when, after consultation of physicians, I am going to take one more martini before I go up the Golden Stairs.

Psychoanalysts would probably be rough on Remington. He was scared stiff of women (except, curiously enough, his wife). Once when he was sitting in a first-class compartment of a train in North Africa, contentedly sipping bourbon with Bigelow, a charming French couple climbed aboard. "Oh hell," Remington cried out, "here comes a damned woman!" And he bolted off to a second-class car crowded with Moors and Kabyles.

The major theme of his art, as of Ernest Hemingway's writings, might also strike the analyst as suspicious: tense struggle against overwhelming odds. But Remington seems not to have had a persecution complex any more than Hemingway; he just liked fights. "The march of the derby hat around the world is answerable for more crimes against art," he insisted, "than a hundred wars."

In 1898, publisher William Randolph Hearst sent Remington to Cuba to cover the Spanish-American War as an artist-

correspondent. When Remington complained that there didn't seem to be any war, Hearst ripped off an answering cable that the publisher's less friendly biographers love to quote: "You furnish the pictures, I'll furnish the war." Eventually Remington got to paint his justly famous *Charge of the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill*—with his old friend, Teddy Roosevelt, in command.

Perhaps the saddest day of Remington's life came when, at about three hundred pounds, he found that horses could no longer carry him. Remington had ridden every day he could, for all his adult life. He used the Western style, contending that "an Indian or a cowboy would take the average park rider off his horse, scalp him, hang him on a bush and never break a gallop." His studio in the country was built with barn doors, so that he could paint horses inside it. To him, every horse was a unique individual, and he pictured each one as such. His quick eye saw that galloping horses can have all four hooves off the ground at once, and he painted them that way. Most horsemen scoffed, though high-speed photography proved Remington right. He asked that his epitaph read: HE KNEW THE HORSE.

Instead, when he died following an appendectomy, he was laid under a stone at Canton, N.Y., that reads only: REMINGTON. The name may not be greatly honored by critics of American art; to them it stands merely for illustrations of a certain type, done with dash and apparent skill. But to sharers in the American dream, Remington's name is a glorious one. For the dream belongs partly to him, and through him comes part of its definition.

CHARLES RUSSELL

Along with Remington and after him, less gifted painters also mourned and celebrated the setting of the Wild West's sun. Among them was Charles Marion Russell, who forsook St. Louis for Montana at sixteen and stayed there. He spent two years as a trapper with an old mountain man, then learned to be a cowboy (he was known, naturally enough, as "Kid"). Russell "sang to the horses and cattle"—as he put it—for eleven years. He also lived for six months with the Blood Indians, whom he came to love, in Canada. Purely for amusement in idle hours, the burly, bowlegged young man used to draw and paint a little. His sketches became the wonder of Russell's fellows, who dug into their jeans to pay as much as five silver dollars for them. And his paintings were better yet, full of the bright dry light of the land.

Once a stranger from Boston commissioned Russell to paint two pictures. Russell later recalled:

> I thought I'd hit him good and hard because none of the boys had any money. Grass hadn't even started on the ranges, and our saddles were in soak, so I said, "fifty dollars," and I'm a common liar if the fellow didn't dig out a hundred dollars and hand 'em over. He thought I meant fifty dollars apiece, you see. I got crooked as a coyote's hind leg right away . . . I just bought the fellow a drink and kept the rest. He don't know to this day how bad he beat himself.

In 1896 Russell married a shrewd girl who persuaded him to settle down to art. "Mame's the business end," he would explain to customers, "an' I jes' paint . . . She could convince anybody that I was the greatest artist in the world . . . an' y'u jes' can't disappoint a person like that." Russell built a log studio in Great Falls, Montana, where a sizable museum stands to his honor today. His pictures brought as much as $10,000 each: "Dead man's prices!" he would exclaim.

Montana adopted him as he had adopted her, and in 1911 the state commissioned him to paint a 26-ft. mural for its House of Representatives. Russell chose for his subject the fateful first meeting of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with the Flathead Indians. The solidity and grandeur of the result, almost inconceivable in a self-taught artist, show once more that "self-taught" need not mean "primitive." In truth, Russell was a minor sort of genius; his gift came from above. "To have talent is no credit to its owner," he once wrote, "for what man

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Charles Russell's Study: Cow Pony

can't help he should get neither credit nor blame—it's not his fault. I am an illustrator. There are lots better ones, but some worse. Any man that can make a living doing what he likes is lucky, and I'm that. Any time I cash in now, I won."

In age Russell developed a new talent—for written reminiscence:

> Life has never been too serious with me—I lived to play and I'm playing yet. Laughs and good judgment have saved me many a black eye, but I don't laugh at other people's tears. I was a wild young man but age has made me gentle. I drank, but never alone, and when I drank it was no secret.

Asked to address a Montana booster meeting shortly before his death in 1926, he was horrified to hear himself introduced as a "pioneer." Misty-eyed, the old man roared:

> In my book, a pioneer is a man who comes to a virgin country, traps off all the fur, kills off all the wild meat, cuts down all the trees, grazes off all the grass, plows the roots up, and strings ten million miles of bob wire. A pioneer destroys things and calls it civilization. I wish to God that this country was just like it was when I first saw it and that none of you folks were here at all!

David Goldknopf

Born in Pennsylvania, educated in Connecticut schools and at New York University, David Goldknopf pursues twin writing careers: fiction, and the preparation of instruction manuals for electronic equipment. His work has appeared in *Harper's Bazaar* and *The Antioch Review*.

THE CASE OF HENRY SWASEY

When Henry Swasey was acquitted, by reason of insanity, of the murder of his wife, the consensus was that justice had been done. For who but a madman would have insisted on his own sanity when, by so doing, he committed himself (had he been successful) to a lifetime of brutal imprisonment? No, justice was done, brilliantly done; and that is why I revive the case, years after it was so commendably closed—to show *how* justice was done, and against what quixotic and perplexing odds. Here, mind you, was a

case where the law defied, as it often must, the most stubborn obstructionism of the defendant, but defied it to restore to the defendant—his innocence! For this remarkable juridical triumph, great credit must surely go to counsel, and it pleases me to extend the laurel to my esteemed colleagues, Dennison and Kuhn, remarking, *en passant,* how successful a conservative—though spirited—and meticulously prepared defense can be, even in these feverish and bombastic times.

Henry Swasey's story begins, as in a sense all stories must, with his birth, on February 8, 1912. He was joyfully received by his parents, and, the only surviving child of three, wanted for nothing during his formative years. From his mother he received a more than ample allowance of affection, and close supervision in all phases of his work and play. From his father he took the greatest gift of all: example. No blame can attach to Swasey's parents, long mercifully departed, for the tragic end of Swasey's life. (He lives now in body only, his mind irreparably shattered.)

Swasey's father owned a modest but prosperous gourmet shop on the upper boundary of the fashionable section of the East Side. It was a charmingly anachronistic establishment, of which so few remain, full of tradition and character. The business had been founded by Henry Swasey's great-grandfather in 1851, and many of its accounts went back almost to that time; and though it had moved twice since, following the city's growth, those who recalled the first shop gratefully acknowledged, until the auctioning of the last, that "nothing had really changed." It was that kind of establishment.

Swasey associated himself early and naturally with his father's calling. Many of his after-school hours were spent in the shop's musty and exotic storerooms, which gave full play to his rather tranquil imagination, or in performing necessary but untaxing chores. Later he assisted in deliveries. And at the age of seventeen, when he very creditably completed high school, he became a full-time associate in the business. Had he desired to continue his schooling, or even to leave his father's business—though a crueler blow he could not have struck—his wishes would most surely have been gratified. But he did not. He looked forward to carrying on the honorable mercantile traditions of three generations of Swaseys. And his work was such as to ensure full satisfaction to a rather exacting—in his business at any rate—employer.

So the years passed; Swasey acquainted himself with every aspect of the family enterprise against the inevitable day when he must pilot it alone. That day came all too soon: a stroke carried off his father in the prime of life. And within three

months, as if struck by the same cruel blast, his mother too found her final resting place beneath the common stone. Is it not reasonable to assume, in retrospect, that these unexpected tandem blows began the transformation of Swasey's mind, which was to reach the appalling climax, already adumbrated? This much at any rate is sure: at the age of thirty-four, Swasey was alone in the world.

But he was not to be alone for long. Within a year, he had married the firm's bookkeeper. In view of his retiring ways, it might be more accurate to say that she married him! But make no mistake: the marriage was to his heart's desire. He had continued to live in his parents' eight-room apartment—the two upper stories of the family-owned building—and you can imagine how scarifying those lonely months must have been, as he wandered from room to room, reminded without cease of his beloved ones. In this awful time, the bookkeeper, Gloria Roebel, who had been with the firm eighteen years, was a familiar figure and, no doubt, a comfort to him. What more natural impulse than to say "Be my bride"? From his marriage to this woman, to his murder of her, we shall now proceed, carefully and painfully.

She was five years his senior, large of figure and forward in manner, at least after her marriage. Of her character we cannot, unhappily, speak as well as we should like to of the dead; for there is evidence in her behavior when Swasey's star declined that she had not married "for better or for worse" at all. No indeed, there was little room for "worse" in the calculations of this creature who, with few of the allurements of her sex, had, of an instant, become mistress of a valuable property and enterprise.

Unfortunately for those calculations, that enterprise had for many years been in slow decline. Lest blame attach to Swasey for this condition we must involve ourselves—though only to the extent that our story obliges—in the nature of Swasey's business. Swasey's trade fell into two rather distinct categories. First there were the steady accounts, some going back, as we have seen, for three generations. (To the very end there were fortnightly deliveries to Tarrytown and Sands Point.) True, custom had changed, and to Swasey's disadvantage, in that old families today often set a table which, by the standards of the last century, is indeed Spartan. On the other hand, *arrivistes* tend, as always, to live grandly, so there was a rough balance there.

A welcome addition to this, the rock foundation of his business, was the local patronage. Many families who did not maintain accounts with Swasey made frequent purchases for special occasions: anniversaries, housewarmings, thank-you

gifts, sailings, packages to children at school, and so forth. And since, you may be sure, no local matron ever bought a canned Westphalian ham without making known its destination, Swasey was privy to all the joyous occasions of the neighborhood. He was, in short, a member of the *community*. Into his shop came its glad tidings, and out of it flowed bounty and innocent delights. And in the happiness of these, his friendly neighbors, Swasey found his happiness too.

But all this was to change. The old accounts—they seemed to dwindle and disappear. A lengthy obituary would appear, which Swasey would read in both the morning and afternoon papers, with respect and sorrow; and soon after, another account was closed out. Or the families traveled, or settled in the West, or simply retired into a small, shuttered wing of their former elegance like guttering candles fearful of the slightest wind, gave no dinners, saw no one, dismissed with an exception or two their staffs—here I can support Swasey's observations with my own, but discretion, of course, intervenes.

More distressing still were the changes close at hand: old neighborhood customers he had known through school days, marriage, parenthood—simply evanesced, vanished overnight, as it were, into the suburbs, to be replaced by odd, mercurial youngsters in Shetland jackets and Tyrolean hats, dashing about in foreign sports cars. Swasey was at a loss with these people.

"Rattlesnake *pâté?*"

"Just for kicks, old man. Just for kicks. We're fixing up an un*usual* canapé plate. Just for kicks."

They gormandized the way they drove cars: for thrills . . . "kicks." . . . Whale meat, they asked for, and frozen birds'-nest soup, and all too often nothing at all. For a week-end visitor these days would bring—a brace of partridge? A selection of delicious cheeses? Of course not! It was a bottle of Scotch! Often merely because the Scotch was easier to pick up (or to assure an ample supply for his own needs!). The graces, the thoughtfulness and benevolence . . . all the soft colors of life are fading, to be replaced by harsh, screaming dyes. No, shops like Henry Swasey's are not for our time. Nor, I sometimes feel in my more tired moments, am I.

And now to confound matters entirely, a new gourmet shop opened on the adjoining block, called Bon Appetit (Swasey's shop was still called Swasey and Son). It had a plate-glass and stainless-steel exterior angling away from the sidewalk, a frozen-food locker extending the length of the store, a health-food department, rattlesnake *pâté*, whale meat, frozen birds'-nest soup, and soon, alas, many of Swasey's customers.

And so, because of events beyond Swasey's control, his trade

steadily diminished. And most keenly aware of this diminution was the former and present bookkeeper of the firm, now Swasey's wife. Did she, in these perplexing times, lend him the wifely support which was his need and due? She did not. She tormented him with imputations of complacency and absurd suggestions for "modernizing" his business. Pressed so far as to consider the renovation of his shop, he looked at folios of illustrations, presented by contractors. Stainless steel, synthetic granite, plastics, adobe. . . . But the man wasn't an ox! He knew that such a turnabout would not only insult the spirit of his ancestors, but would unquestionably alienate his remaining customers. He sent the renovators away.

The decision to liquidate his business unquestionably originated with his wife. Apparently a sudden conviction sprang into her mind that Swasey, through some inner, irremediable flaw, was incapable of repairing his fortunes, and that the whirlpool created by his sinking enterprise would soon swallow their remaining resources. What basis was there for this morbid expectation? Very little, I judge. The business could have continued on a small but sufficient scale, drawing moderately, if needs be, on capital, as long as the Swaseys lived. Then, there being no issue, it would have come to a natural end.

But such was not Mrs. Swasey's intention. And so, beset by his own doubts and her gloomy prophecies, he capitulated. On a dismal March morning, the auctioneer's gavel descended, the shelves were cleared—their contents to reappear shortly on the shelves of the Bon Appetit—and the dark, oaken doors of Swasey and Son closed forever.

And so this blow was added to the others. But say this to Swasey's credit: he spurned the cold comforts of indolence and despondency and was at work, within a month, in the gourmet department of a large department store, where he soon attracted many of his old customers, so firm was their loyalty to him. The manager of the department, aware of the improvement this brought to his own showing, made clear to Swasey that when the assistant buyer's position became open, a word would be spoken into the proper ear.

Now, it is extremely important to note at this time that, despite the abridgment of Swasey's income, he was still a man of means. He had his father's insurance and the money realized through the liquidation of his business. His spacious apartment cost him nothing, since the charges on the building were carried by other rentals. Add to this his modest salary, and it is clear the Swaseys could have seen out their days in secure and philosophical happiness.

But this, again, did not accord with Mrs. Swasey's ambitions.

No, she must first make her own mark in the world. Significantly, she chose as an employer a wealthy octogenarian, with a wife almost as old, and one disaffected child. Did she, with her scheming bent, see a legacy on the horizon? If so, fate has served her poorly, for her employer died soon after she did, leaving the bulk of his fortune to several esoteric charities. In any event, she made herself indispensable to him, and was rewarded accordingly—with the result that her salary quickly exceeded that of her husband. The comparison was not lost on Swasey. Mrs. Swasey saw to that.

To chronicle in detail the painful career of this marriage would serve only a morbid purpose, and so we confine ourselves to the most germane episodes. An assistant buyer's position did become open in Swasey's department—and went to a man fifteen years his junior, a graduate of a university school of business administration. This turn so embarrassed the department manager that he invited Swasey to have a drink with him, in the bar around the corner, where he was all the more embarrassed to discover that Swasey did not drink. Swasey, honest fellow that he was, brought the disappointing news to his wife, and received for his pains an increase of contempt.

Soon after, there occurred perhaps the most disagreeable of all incidents to relate. When Swasey's business was liquidated, one of his largest accounts remained outstanding, because of some vexing difficulty in the probating of a will. Finally the account was settled, with accrued interest and a liberal allowance for legal and commercial expenses. The sum excited Swasey, not only by its size, which was considerable, but because it recalled the quiet glory of his former days, and so suggested to him the possibility of re-establishing himself in business. Upon his communicating the thought to his wife there ensued what can only be described as an hysterical seizure—we have the testimony of other tenants on this point. Astounded and confused by the outburst, Swasey persisted in his explanation. Suddenly there was a flash of white, and he felt a stinging sensation across his cheek and mouth. It was some time before Swasey, who had never been struck before, realized what had happened.

Our story now becomes ever more ugly and disheartening. Apparently, Mrs. Swasey had set up as a deliberate purpose the degradation of her husband, and in this purpose unquestionably succeeded: she made his life a living hell. For example, she left unspeakably coarse notes amid his toilet articles. In fact, this was their only means of communication, since they no longer spoke to each other, and, taking their meals separately, hardly saw each other, except at night. (It was,

perhaps, Mrs. Swasey's most refined cruelty that, with four bedrooms in their eight-room apartment, she insisted on sharing one with her husband.)

Now the question arises, of course: Why didn't Swasey simply take up separate residence? One answer suggests itself at once: that the course of his aberration already prevented rational action on his own behalf. A less speculative reason is that, early in their marriage, Mrs. Swasey had most ingeniously assumed joint control of their estate and now, indeed, occupied a commanding position in this respect. (Prosecution made much of this, inferring, though to no avail, that Swasey had slain his wife to recover control of his affairs.) But a little insight into this unusual man suggests still another, and a finer, explanation. Swasey's parents had set up for him an ideal of marriage, which, in taking up separate residence, he must irrevocably renounce. No, Swasey was by nature a bitter-ender. He had made his bed, so to speak; now he must lie in it.

Week ends brought his only relief from this detestable situation. Then he would take the sun or read his paper in the little neighborhood park, or watch with empty-minded interest the affection lavished by doting parents on their children. Here he found what peace he could, unspoken to, unnoticed. And so his surprise when, one day, he was spoken to, was quite understandable, and it was some time before he was able to assign the voice to its owner: a lady on an adjoining bench who had asked him for a match.

Swasey removed his hat. "I'm sorry," he said, "I don't smoke."

"Oh, that takes a lot of will power," said the lady. "To give it up—"

Swasey thought a moment. "But I never smoked," he said.

"Well, that takes a lot of will power too, with all the temptation about."

She was a plump and pleasant sort, about his wife's age, with a bit of an inflection, cockney perhaps, and an agreeable smile. In a moment she had moved, quite unaffectedly, from her bench to his—"so that I won't have to shout"—and there they were, two utter strangers chatting along as merrily as you please! They talked about the weather and about a royal celebrity visiting the country, and, oh, anything that came into their heads. Swasey, you see, was famished for sociability.

At last the lady remarked, regretfully, that she must be getting on, and Swasey courteously offered to escort her to her destination. So they set out, still chatting away, and after a while his new acquaintance remarked that the talking and the warmth had brought on a thirst, and would he think it forward if she were to suggest . . . "Why, no," said Swasey, and

as luck would have it there was a bar, and in they went, Swasey to consume his first alcoholic beverage.

Now in a more decorous age, a veil would have been drawn over our story at this point, with one of those charming phrases we recall from our youth, such as, "A strange madness came over Swasey," or "Swasey no longer knew what he was about," or, most decorously of all, the chapter would simply have ended. But as a faithful recorder of events we must report that Swasey knew quite well what he was about, that he had full recollection of leaving the bar with this woman and accompanying her to her apartment, and of what ensued there. Of the last, suffice it to say that the Henry Swasey who left that woman's apartment was a different man from the one who had entered it.

But now the deed was done, there remained the consequences. An attorney, as you know, like a physician or priest, is privy to the most shabby secrets of mankind; and I am aware that there are men who turn from the embraces of a strange woman to those of their wives without a murmur of conscience. Swasey, you must surely realize by now, was of a different breed. No, he had called the tune and now he must pay the piper. Though it would surely mean his pauperism and utter disgrace—in short the completion of his ruin—he must tell his wife. He would not live a lie.

But this sort of confession, difficult under the most favorable of circumstances, was made all the more so by the fact that Swasey and his wife did not talk to each other. Swasey decided that the circumstances warranted an exception to their taciturnity. He returned home for his simple, solitary dinner, tidied up, disposed of the garbage, and removed his apron.

It was his wife's custom to spend her evenings in the living room, a handsomely wainscoted room of old-fashioned dimensions and quality. There she would sometimes make a small fire and read romantic novels by its light, simultaneously smoking cigarettes to keep her weight down and eating sweets.

Into this room Swasey advanced, without eliciting from his wife the slightest recognition of his presence. Picture, if you will, the scene: Swasey erect and soldierly before his oblivious wife, hands clasped behind his back, the firelight playing upon his pale, drawn features.

"Gloria," he said in a low but firm voice, "I have been unfaithful to you."

Mrs. Swasey popped a chocolate into her mouth and continued to read.

Assuming, of course, that he had not been heard, Swasey advanced directly to his wife and repeated, "Gloria, I have been unfaithful to you!"

His wife turned the page—which, let us suppose, she was about to do anyhow; but imagine the effect this gesture had upon the poor man's feelings! For perhaps the first time in his life, his voice rose to a shout.

"Listen to me!" he cried. "I met a strange woman! I accompanied her to her apartment! And there . . . we . . . knew . . . each . . . other . . . carnally! Do you understand?"

Mrs. Swasey closed the book upon her finger, the book she was never to get on with, and placed the cigarette she was never to smoke again upon the ledge of the ash tray. She looked at her husband for what must have seemed, in his distracted state, an eternity. Then she said:

"You, unfaithful? *You?*" And burst into laughter!

She was larger and stronger than Swasey; but he had, on his side, the element of surprise, the andiron he instantly caught up, and his wife's incapacitating hilarity—for we have Swasey's word for it that his wife died laughing.

Swasey picked up the scattered contents of the ash tray, and rearranged the dishevelled candy box, even to the empty candy cups. (A sane man indeed!) Then he called the police.

Notice, if you will please, that several elements in Swasey's conduct do him no credit. He was by his own confession an adulterer, and he slew his wife; and neither of these acts does a man credit. The law is often hard with transgressors of this kind. That it was not so with Swasey, he must thank his able and assiduous attorneys. But thanks he is incapable of giving, by very reason of his infirmity: an infirmity which counsel made so pellucidly apparent that my barber, an unlettered fellow, was able to sum up, and rather neatly I think, the case for Henry Swasey. I cannot hope to recapture fully the color and pungency of his speech, but I shall try my best.

"Okay," he said, "a guy is playin' around. His wife finds out. She gets excited. He gets excited. And he hits her in da head wid an iron. [He meant an andiron, of course.] Dat I understand. But Swasey's wife don't find out. He *tells* her. She don't get excited. She *laughs*. For dat you kill a wife? Da guy is off his rocker."

I did not nod, because he was shaving me, but blinked my eyes a number of times to indicate complete accord.

Yes, Swasey was insane. And if there remained the merest, lingering hesitation on that point in any mind, it must surely have been dispelled when the verdict was brought in. For no sooner had it been announced than, to the consternation of his attorneys—and what a burden Swasey was to them throughout the trial you can imagine—Swasey shouted at the top of his lungs:

"But I *am* guilty! I *knew* what I was doing! You *can't* take this away from me too!"

But they did. They took his guilt away, and poor Swasey as well, two amazingly gentle attendants, one under each arm, leading him off, shrieking, sobbing, apparently affirming, as long as he was heard, his right to be doomed.

We hear, unhappily, that he is a difficult patient. But then they always are—the ones who insist that they are sane.

Peter H. Matson

"The Funeral of Summer" is Mr. Matson's second published story; the first appeared in *Cosmopolitan* when he was ten years old. Now twenty-two, Mr. Matson studies at Columbia University. He was born in New York City, attended Harvard University, and studied abroad before returning to New York, where he now lives.

THE FUNERAL OF SUMMER

They were in the last endless blue days of August. Sky-blue days that ran on and on right into next year. Great hot silent days, days filled with green, the heavy smell of pine and the beach, sand, the drying salt on your face. Already when the sun went down you could feel the slight coolness of September just around the corner—next week. September nights are cool, and they have a sharpness about them that brings a slight tingling touch to the cheek; things left undone, the fall migration. But that wasn't yet. The last summer days had still to be lived out, quiet, giving way to a warning breeze that made the woman on the beach build wind-shelters to let the sun through. But last days of summer are shabby. The grass was bare and used up from too many five o'clock standings-around (yesterday David had found a highball glass under the lilac bush, left over from July when people hadn't yet gotten tired of each other, and the lilacs made a fine nest). In the pond the water seemed like it had been used before, used bathtub water; and long ago the beach driftwood had been gathered and had disappeared in the yearning, restless night, offered up to youth with the ends of a song that just couldn't be sung again, not till next summer.

Yes, summer was getting shabby. David understood it all.

He had seen it go by himself. The summer went shooting by before you got a chance to think of the things you were going to do with it, before you'd even looked around. And then there was Adrienne, the girl Adrienne; time was running out there, too. But he knew what he was going to do about that; he had it planned, he'd had it planned forever. He'd had it planned with the bright girls in pigtails, with the tall ones whose dress fronts first showed the shadow of adolescence, with the silk-stockinged ones who made a funny sound when they walked. He had to try it; if he didn't at least try he would feel cheated by the whole summer, and he couldn't go back to school with the dissatisfaction of not trying. But he had had the plan so long (with different details), he had thought about it so often in the dark corners of his mind, that it was incredible that there was any reality to it. David found it had to believe himself.

David walked home through the August afternoon and the pines, passing two already emptied houses, dead for the winter. By the pond he looked around to see the line of the dunes that stood up from the trees' edge. They looked like a woman lying down. A great golden woman lying on her side. Down the quiet road of summer David hoped to remember it all for next year and the years after that, the giant woman on her side. Barn swallows that nested in the garage swooped down in the slanting sun, playing, making voluptuous swinging circles against the blue sky. Half-circles like breasts, her wonderful smooth round breasts. David wanted to lay his cheek against them, just once, softly.

Down the hill and up the driveway, David was home. He went up the back stairs so he wouldn't have to talk to anybody, but his stepmother heard him.

"You're late. *Late,* David. What have you been *doing* all this time? Hurry up! I've got to go and we'll not wait for you."

What was I doing? (Swallows in the sky.) If she only knew. And what I'm going to do, that would surprise her. David took off his bathing suit and emptied its sand out the window. He stood in front of a mirror in a blue frame. One body, one long brown body from head to toe, a little awkward but strong. His legs were too thin. David wondered if *she* stood in front of the mirror like this too—naked. He wondered what she looked like naked, her alone, just her skin between their heart beats. "We're going" came from downstairs and David put on a clean pair of pants, a white shirt, and grabbed a jacket from the closet. The hanger fell off the rack.

"I'm ready."

David's father drove to the harbor abstractedly, probably

thinking of somewhere else, mad because he didn't want to go out at all. David in the back felt like a little boy being taken out for a treat. He didn't like it. It wasn't a part of the plan at all, but this *was* the plan so he had to go along with it. The car was still hot from baking in the day's sun, but outside, swishing by the trees to the highway, the white fence, the Methodist Church, the antique shop, everything was turning pink, a hazy, diluted pink; pink for a girl, he thought. Pink for the funeral of summer and the beginnings, the beginnings of something.

They weren't the first ones there. David sat in retreat on a barrel top in the corner, leaning against a tarred pile. He watched the people arrive and fill up the wharf-terrace. It was an older people's party mostly, and when one of David's friends came over hopeful of conversation and asked David when he was going back, David scared him off by saying he hoped never. He was waiting for Adrienne, waiting patiently in the corner, watching the night come on, settling down on everything like soot, stealing the scene from him. The tide came in slowly, washing up around the foundations of the old fish house, carrying out the discarded cigarette butts, making the salt decay a stronger smell than the liquor. His stepmother and the hostess were talking about him. David could see it out of the corner of his eye—their heads together looking in his direction. Pretty soon I'll be a problem child, he thought. They brought out some lanterns and David had to help them put the damned things up, a fire menace. The hostess asked him if he was having a good time and if he wanted a coke or something. David said, "No, and I'm having a wonderful time," but regretted it right away because that's when Adrienne and her mother came in and he would have liked to have been caught in a finer piece of conversation.

"I'm so sorry we're late, life's just been so hectic. Is there anything left to drink at all? I thought everything would be gone by this time. Hello, David. My dear, you have no *idea* how hot it's been in the city . . ." Adrienne's mother (she was divorced) talked on and on.

Adrienne was tall (almost as tall as David), straight and thin, so that her womanly figure looked misplaced. She wore a print dress borrowed from the peasants, artistic, with a low round neck and a front that scooped down and held her breasts firmly, tied with a little black velvet bow. Adrienne was half-listening to her mother, but her consciousness reached out over the guests, acknowledging the mute compliments: how nice she looked, how quickly she had grown up, how attractive her hair was piled up on the top of her head. But David wondered

if they thought as he did: about the possibilities without the dress, the hair sweetly disarranged. She turned to him in boredom and said that she was hot.

"It's been a hot day."

"What did you do all day?"

"I was on the beach."

"You lucky. I had to spend all day trying to put eight suitcases of things in three suitcases."

"When are you leaving?"

"I have to leave tomorrow so I can get back to school on time so my roommate won't get the best bed."

David mumbled that if he was her roommate he wouldn't care, but she didn't want to hear him, and they went to the rail and leaned over the water talking against the background of other talk, of serious talk and an occasional harsh laugh, the clink of glasses, the tone getting livelier, louder, as the community blood stream soaked up alcohol. Beneath them the water was streaked with bits of shiny red from the lanterns; it looked oily. David moved as close to Adrienne as he dared, touching her now and then as he talked calculatedly about nothing, realizing that the time was slipping by, that tomorrow evening he would be alone again, with little prospect, to plan a new campaign.

A friend came over to them, "Everybody's going for a swim, you want to come?" It was Tony Becker, he was older and knew all about it.

"Ya, sure. You wanna go for a swim, Adrienne?" David was making his voice sound casual.

"I'll have to ask my mother."

"Your mother's gone already. Everybody's going over to the pond."

Damsel in distress, deserted; set upon by a pack of straining wolves. David was caught in the fever of summer evenings, happy to be moving with the crowd, leaving one scene of debauchery exhausted, heading gloriously for the next. The woods, the pond, perhaps the beach even. David and Adrienne were packed in, four in the front seat. Adrienne half sat on his lap, warm and comfortable; her arm on the back of the seat touched his shoulder. He had no place to put his hand except on her lap where it felt out of place, detached, not his hand at all. Together, they whisked through the dark, making a tunnel of headlights to the pond in the woods. They arrived in time to hear the splash-plop as bodies submerged in ecstasy beneath the used-up water, calling to the moon about how fine it was, divinely fine; wet. In the cottage by the pond-edge they saw right in the picture window, a misarrangement of figures, people afraid of the dark and going home. David had

his own ideas; he wanted no part of pond-side cottages, the condescending eyes of grownups.

"Let's walk to the beach." They took their shoes off and put them on the doorstep for calling cards and disengaged themselves from the stolid, staring adults.

You can't carry on a conversation against the silence of walking through the woods at night. They didn't try. David walked on, leading the way by instinct and remembering faintly that this was part of the plan. Remembering, he looked at her walking beside him, but it didn't help because she was someone apart then, walking with her head down, traveling incognito. They came out of the trees and walked across the top of a dune (this was the woman giantess lying on her side) and down the other side where the clear sand reflected the moon, made everything a silver one-dimension, open and light. They ran down the face of the sand dune, running in great leaping strides, David first; and when he turned around he saw her skirt flying up over her flashing, rounded knees as she ran, her breasts in contradiction straining at the velvet bow. Under her dress she wore a white petticoat with a piece of lace around the bottom.

David took her hand and led her up the beach, slightly out of breath. Level with the ocean it was cold and damp, salty. The high-tide waves came halfway across the narrow width of sand, rattling the stones on the bottom edge, sounding a collection of snare drums played out in the distance. Out on the endless ocean a lightship blinked in rhythm, one red blink of intelligence, and her mate answered in the other quarter, blink for blink.

Adrienne pointed them out to him and they sat down to watch the movement of the ocean and the calling lightships. They sat with their backs against a log too big for burning. He was on the beach, in the land of his elaborately embroidered dreams of waking and sleeping, as alone as if they were the only two people on earth. But he felt nothing. He didn't know what he could do with her, so he leaned back and said that he was in paradise.

"*I'm* cold." Adrienne unpiled her hair.

"Here, take my jacket. Cover yourself with sand." David sprayed her, not unkindly, with a handful of the cold, dew-wet sand. He trickled it about her neck and it fell twinkling in the moonlight, into the forbidden, dark holes of her dress.

"David! Stop it. You've got sand all down my bosom. You're horrid."

She stood up and turned her back to him, reaching in her front to let the sand fall through and out underneath the petticoat, shaking herself gently like a delicate dog coming out

of the water. David got up and stood behind her. He put his hands lightly on her waist and stepped close to her, kissing her shoulder, bare in the moonlight—moving his hands up her body.

"I'm not really horrid, am I?"

Adrienne stepped away from him and turned around, surprised; but he caught her hand and drew her to him, kissing her face in awkwardness. Her face, then her lips, still surprised but willing, her shoulder, her neck smooth and sensuous in innocence. David kissed her as he had so often dreamed he would, and thought to himself that this was reality. He held her to him wondering how it could be that this was reality, and to prove that it was he held her closer, using all his strength, feeling her body pressing more and more against his, till Adrienne was out of breath. She wanted to get away, to breathe, but before she had time to say it David was overcome with his emotions, with reality and the moment's delight, with his own nonpreparation, and he fell through the endless summer and the dreams and the long waiting, the giant golden woman, the swallows; he fell, pulling her down with him, and they landed rudely, tangled on the beach sand.

"My dress is ripped. You've ripped my dress."

It was torn from the shoulder and flapped open like the oversize lapel of an overcoat, showing her white brassière.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to. I'll fix it, I'll buy you a new one."

"How can you fix it, silly? I'll sew it tomorrow. Don't worry about it. Let me wear your jacket."

"We'd better go."

Back in the woods, she held up her dress with one hand, the coat over her shoulders, walking toward the pond. Then they saw a sudden beam of light show up the underneath of the pine branches, and slowly swing down toward them, seeking them out, plying stealthily through the trees. It was Mrs. Crane in a big new station wagon.

"Well, there you are. We've had a regular search party out looking for you. Didn't you hear us? What have you been doing all this time?"

"Oh, just walking."

"We couldn't figure where in the world you'd gone, we've been looking and looking. Thank God we found your shoes. Really, Adrienne, you should have told me. You might have been drowning for all I'd know. Jump in. David, don't you want a ride? What in heaven's name did you do to your dress?"

"No thanks, I'll walk. It's not far."

"Well, if you really *want* to . . ."

Adrienne said, "Come see me off on the bus tomorrow."

"All right."

"Good night."

"Good-by."

God, what a woman, as if she'd care if Adrienne drowned herself. David thought that all the time she was probably hoping Adrienne was lost for good. He wondered what she'd think about the dress, what Adrienne would say.

Upstairs in his familiar room, with the same smell, and the same feel to the sheets, he was ashamed and embarrassed by what he had done—about ripping her dress. It was impure, secret, dirty. He didn't see how she could let him touch her—for now she *knew*. She knew about all his secret plans and hidden cravings; she knew about the things he never told anybody, not even his school friends. She has a hold of me, he thought, she has something on me so that she'll always be snickering at me, laughing behind my back. She'll always be able to snoot at me and know what I'm thinking about when I look at girls. She knows the dark corners of me. I wish I could die. . . .

In the hot afternoon, as blue and cloudless as the day, the week, before, David went in to town to see Adrienne off for the winter. He was late, he was late on purpose; he didn't like good-by's.

When he got there people were already in the bus. Adrienne was sitting in the back and her mother was hovering beneath the window coughing at the diesel fumes. The window was open, and he raised his voice and lied that he was sorry that he was late, that he had mistaken the time.

Mrs. Crane said: "Have you got everything, dear? Don't forget to write me from New York. Have a good time."

"Yes, have a good time, Adrienne."

"Write me, won't you?"

"Sure, if you write back. . . . Maybe you can come for a week end some time." Still no sly little looks, no glances of conspiracy.

"That'd be fun."

"Darling, do you have that little present for Miss Thomas?"

"Yes, Mother, I told you, I put it in the green bag."

"Well, good-by. If you need anything just write."

"I will. 'Bye."

"Good-by, Adrienne." (*God,* won't that bus ever leave?)

"Give my love . . ." Mrs. Crane wanted to say "Give my love to your father" because she believed in friendship, but she didn't have the strength to overcome the adversity of time and distance. The bus was already out in the main line of traffic, gathering speed to the train connection for New York.

David turned away, avoiding the busy Mrs. Crane at all costs, feeling the emptiness of being left behind. All over the world he was the one that was being left behind. He disliked Adrienne for leaving him behind, for knowing all about him. Maybe, he thought, the bus will have an accident; things will take care of themselves. Maybe tomorrow I will read the headlines: BUS CRASH KILLS 20; All Passengers Killed in Highway Disaster.

David bumped his way up the still busy, sunlit street, to help his stepmother carry the groceries.

H. G. WELLS:

A Wreath for the Liberal Tradition

Horace Gregory

This is Mr. Gregory's third critical essay to appear in *New World Writing;* the previous two were studies of Robinson Jeffers and James T. Farrell. Mr. Gregory's five volumes of poetry include *Selected Poems* and a translation, *The Poems of Catullus,* now in its fifth printing. With his wife (Marya Zaturenska) Mr. Gregory wrote *A History of American Poetry, 1900-1940* and edited *The Mentor Book of Religious Verse.* He teaches classical literature and contemporary poetry at Sarah Lawrence College.

Several years ago I invited a British poet out to lunch. I chose an Armenian restaurant in the upper twenties on Lexington Avenue, that section of New York where behind half-curtained windows one can almost fancy a return to the Soho in London of twenty-five years ago. Certainly the atmosphere was of other times, other places than the moment and place where we found our seats, and of a slightly foreign air. The setting was contagious; we were in a stage-set of somewhere else. The poet's Bloomsbury accent—and he was among the best talkers in London—became more pronounced as the conversation lost its bearings; he was always more persuasive than ultimately convincing, and with a half-glitter from his fine blue eyes—the conversation must be saved—he broke out suddenly with: "Why doesn't someone write something about H. G. Wells?" The question came out of the air and was unanswered by either of us.

I might have said, but didn't, that it is difficult to place Wells anywhere; he can't be put in a corner; he doesn't stay in the nineteenth century where he belongs; he was never a poet or an artist, yet he haunts our feelings and certain sections of our minds. If today he happens to be a ghost in London, he is strangely more alive than the papers where so much of his journalism appeared. Though in his last years his journalism wore his mind thin, he had dearly loved it; after writing "outlines" of history, he continued to write from week to week, "outlines" of world affairs, "outlines" of the universe, and his conclusions, even in the thinnest of his prose, were always more often right than wrong. His friends reported that shortly before his death during the midsummer of 1946 he had grown weary, but he had spoken of fatigue twelve years earlier, and wrote his *Experiment in Autobiography* in anticipation of death; the book gave him, as he wrote it, "freedom of mind"; that was what he wanted before death, and he could afford to take it, in a house whose windows looked out over Regent's Park.

Wells was born in 1866. The time and place was Dickens' England and Wells was born into the same social strata where Dickens, fifty-four years earlier, first saw wind-swept or fog-clouded skies above his head. But the particular Wells who haunts us today was born a generation later than his birthdate. It is the idealistic young tutor of biology who "collapsed into literary journalism," who wrote *The Time Machine* and *The First Men on the Moon,* whose step is light and brisk. The ghost had earned godfatherly privileges at one of the rebirths of "science-fiction." Imaginary voyages into space, aided by enthusiastic use of the telescope, were notorious and fashionable adventures as early as the seventeenth century. The eighteenth century was not unaware of them; yet the more famous journeys, Defoe's *A New Voyage round the World,* and *Robinson Crusoe* and notably Swift's *Travels by Lemuel Gulliver* chose water as their element. The romances of Jules Verne came earlier than Wells's ventures, but Wells, more brilliantly versed in latter-day popular science than Verne, returned to models provided by Swift and Defoe. Wells's romances, like Defoe's, had the air of being documentary reports, and like Swift's they were parables of life on earth, or rather of life, as far as Wells could discern it, within the complicated, minutely class-divided structure of English society. Wells's inspiration for *The Time Machine* began with a paper he wrote to demonstrate the existence of the fourth dimension, the "Universe Rigid," a stiff, self-conscious essay in popular science which was rejected by Frank Harris, the deep-voiced, black-

haired editor of the *Fortnightly Review*. The fourth dimension was "news" in the 1890s; any mention of it awakened the same curiosity that talk about "relativity" had thirty years ago. It was necessary for Wells to give that topic "life," to give it human relevance, to make his theory felt as well as understood. He solved his problem by converting it into a parable of what might happen if British society were divided into two races: those who ran machines, lived underground, and were scarcely human; and those who lived on the surface of the earth, beautiful, indulged, nearly witless creatures whose voices slurred into musical phrases, all dependent on the labors of their underground slaves, helpless in the presence of machines, and all living, not without fear, in a sunset glow of civilization.

The actual force of Wells's parable developed in terms of social meaning rather than of scientific revelation. Was this social satire? Perhaps; one could read it that way. Was it Swiftian in speculation of human destiny? No; it lacked Swift's nearly tragic vision of human savagery—and lacked Swift's whiplash, his passionate hatred of human folly. Wells's vision was one of warning, because Wells believed that human beings would listen to warnings—if their minds were freed. This belief is at the center of Wells's famous liberalism; it also defines the character of his no less famous optimism. "Freedom of mind" with the security of peace around it, the peace of Plato's idealism, the middle world of ideas in which mankind realized concepts of divine origin defined the Utopia Wells held in view. The parable of *The First Men on the Moon* contains the same hope. At the end of the book, Cavor—the scientist from earth held captive by the creatures of the moon—who establishes communication with the earth from his prison on the moon, is killed by his captors. Unwisely he allowed moon's creatures to learn earth's ambitions toward empire building, to conquer the universe itself by force, by war. Moon's creatures then found no other alternative but to destroy him, to cut themselves off from barbarous earth. Wells's effort was to warn his readers that wars were held in disrepute by all possible forms of living intelligence except mankind's. *The First Men on the Moon* was published in 1901, the moment when peoples of the Western civilization held greatest hope for the promises of a new world opening up to them in the progress of a "scientific" twentieth century.

Readers of "science-fiction" today may find *The Time Machine* and Wells's voyage to the moon tame, less highly seasoned than recent romances of the same genre. "Science-fiction," as we know it now, is the popular, dubiously legiti-

mate, sub-subconscious offspring of violence in current fiction. Its greatest revival came during and after World War II. Its narrative patterns followed earlier designs of the gangster and western romance—its hidden forces, its dehumanized human elements are those of sadistic encounters and destruction. Readers who might be ashamed of (or afraid of) being too strongly attracted by scenes of violence in other forms of literature could accept "science-fiction" as instructive of future life on the far shores of an "expanding universe." How deliberately the writers of "science-fiction" follow wild west-gangster formulas I do not know; the greatest possibility is that the "science-fiction" writer is not the cynical monster he so often appears to be, but that he has the same hidden enjoyment of thrills and terror which delights the "science-fiction" reader. This is the secret which is shared between them. Beneath the surfaces of recent "science-fiction," totalitarian and atomic warfare mount the skies in technicolor profusion: fear of the future is among the dominant emotions awaked by nuclear fission —and if one looks for parables within "science-fiction," one finds that they point toward victories of a "one-world," totalitarian drive to power.

The distance between Wellsian "science-fiction" and its present revivals can be measured by recognizing two extremes of fear: in Wells's books the fear is that mankind will carry into the future his past mistakes, and Wells's warning implies a rejection of the past. The more thoughtful "science-fiction" writers of the 1950s face a more explosive, more lethal, darker future than Wells had in mind, nor do they seem as confident as he did that their warnings can clear, if not purify, the air. This distinction is, I think, important. A dark aura encircles the fantasies of Arthur C. Clarke who is perhaps the youngest, and certainly the best of writers in a genre that even today has renewed inspiration from *The Time Machine.* Like the writings of the early Wells, Clarke's short stories and romances are less easy to dismiss as merely "science-fiction" than the work of his fellow craftsmen. Like Wells of *The First Men on the Moon,* the weight of his prose is light, the structure of his stories neat and polished; he is obviously the latest "master" in his chosen genre. His book of stories, *Reach for Tomorrow,* has a variety which extends from the psychological sharpness of "The Parasite" to the topical wit of "Jupiter Five"; it is the first time in many years that John Collier of *Fancies and Goodnights* has had a rival. Under any name or title Clarke's fiction is a delight to read. But the paradox produced by reading too many of Clarke's interstellar space

romances is intellectual claustrophobia. One's mind is locked in a future of totalitarian doom. Human loyalties to place and to other human creatures vanish—these are the dark auras of Clarke's wit and inventiveness. Clarke's mad, power-driven scientists are successful; while Wells's devotees of science, equally mad, pay the price for their logical deductions with their lives.

The distinction that Wells's "science-fiction" has, and why *The Time Machine* is still unique with a timelessness of its own, is that Wells held at the center of his writings a protest against darkness—intellectual darkness—and in his "science-fiction," however out of fashion it may fall, the protest has a resounding note. To clear away the darkness of the past was Wells's effort; to the young H. G. Wells scientific knowledge and inventiveness were the means of leaving Victorian darkness—or any other darkness—in the shadows behind him. If his best writings have an air of "cleanliness" it is because his mind fought the claustrophobia of Victorian lower (very low) middle-class poverty, of group-thinking (within a short time he found himself at odds with the Fabians), and, when he had become famous enough to be invited out to dinner, of London literary circles.

2

His *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934) is not the book that it might have been—the fully annotated document of a Victorian-Edwardian literary career, a "success story" of one of the highest paid literary journalists in England, the man who came from nowhere and who for thirty years influenced, and often guided, the liberal thinking of the twentieth century. The first two hundred pages of Wells's *Experiment* are as remarkable as the author himself; yet a warning of the thinness, like that of skimmed-milk prose, which diluted the latter four hundred-odd pages to round-table discussions wearily circulating at two in the morning, is in the book's sub-title, "Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain." This was not modesty, nor irony; it was part of Wells's liberal belief that a "very ordinary brain" was one to be valued and respected; yet the phrase has a deeper meaning. Wells grew easily bored at writing about himself, or rather that side of himself which did not preside at a public meeting. And the truth was that the memorable scenes of the first two hundred pages, which included the portraits of his mother and father—his mother, educated as a Victorian lady's maid, his father as a country gentleman's gardener—had been written before, but disguised as fiction, in his novel, *Tono-Bungay*. The best of the

autobiographical Wells is in that novel, his masterpiece of social comedy.[1] If one may speak of "light prose" with something of the same meaning that we speak of "light verse," *Tono-Bungay* has a place of its own in British fiction. But one must distinguish it from the comedy of Dickens' half-Gothic, poetic prose, the hilarity of comic scenes in his major novels. One must also remove it from the vicinity of Evelyn Waugh's wit—that is of another vintage. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* is of no nearer kinship; it has taken nearly fifty years to recognize *Tono-Bungay's* Edwardian-Wellsian high spirits as another approach to the vanities of Western civilization, nor has the advertising genius of Ponderevo, Wells's chemist who invented "Tono-Bungay," declined; it has grown to much larger proportions in the United States. It is the genius that makes presidential campaigns "the greatest shows on earth" flickering and roaring from TV screens. The new word for it is "publicity."

None of Wells's fiction withstands the test of rereading as admirably as *Tono-Bungay;* it is not merely Wells's best book, it is an Edwardian masterpiece; it has the abundance of the Victorian "three-decker" and yet it is "streamlined" within scarcely four hundred pages. In its own day (1909) it bridged the distance between "the problem novel" and the novel of ideas. Like the novels of E. M. Forster, its argumentative brilliance prepared the way for the intellectual content of D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* and the early novels of Aldous Huxley. Beyond its own *Zeitgeist, Tono-Bungay* still opens the door to the largest booth of the twentieth century's "Vanity Fair" where advertising—the faked poetry of successful careers, industry, and politics ("the poetry of commerce" Wells called it)—is bound and sold. It is significant that Ponderevo, the mock hero-villain of the book, rises from the lower middle classes only to burst in mid-air; he does not escape his doom. The civilization that made his rise possible also had the power to destroy him, to leave him on his deathbed, the victim of an ability to make "quick money." The point is that Ponderevo is trapped by the values he tried to manipulate; he is the inflated "little man," who a generation later was to become Germany's Hitler and France's Laval. Was Wells too mild in making him a comic figure? I think not. He is a figure of Anglo-American derivation; it is better to keep him true to his origins, and to remember that though an analogy to his failure can be drawn from his European heirs, he is seen in the perspective of his own environment. The distinctive features

[1] References for superior numbers appear on page 109.

of democracy, with its heritage of parliamentary government, keep our Ponderevos, no matter how large they grow, within range of comic reference.

Ponderevo's nephew and biographer is the thinly disguised, autobiographical Wells, the Wells who sought for "freedom and trackless ways," who very nearly, but not quite, confused definitions of "truth" with those of "science," and felt that beyond art or literature, his duty was to reach toward truth into "the heart of life," to "disentangle" it and to make it "clear."

But as Wells reached toward his "reality," the search was beyond himself, and with loyalty to his Platonic liberalism (though his relationships with women were more ardent, irritable, and paradoxically lonely than Platonic) the view was often beyond visible horizons. During his boyhood his claustrophobia had a hint of agoraphobia in it. Like Trollope's* at Harrow, Wells's boyhood humiliations, his poverty, were strongly associated with a world of country houses where he had small rights, if any, to exist. That world was governed (through grace of his mother) by a Low Church Victorian God. Though the prospect was as delightful as landscapes that Jane Austen knew, Wells was consciously blind to it—and for good reasons. His place was so "low" that the loveliest, broadest landscape turned to desert; yet it would be wrong to say that Wells forgot it; it returns in a vision of the future in *The Time Machine;* it is a "condemned playground" of flowers, grasses, and Liberal gentry country houses fallen into charming ruins, peopled by creatures "on the intellectual level of . . . five-year-old children" and condemned because of outmoded childish fancies and fears. Was Wells deliberate in this reconstruction—in ruins—of Kentish Up Park where his mother served as housekeeper? He may have been; but it would have been unlike him to turn that deliberation inward to brood upon it; meanwhile the boy, and later the "bright young man," spent his waking hours looking for an escape from a world he knew too well.

Whatever may be said about the culture of late Victorian England it opened several doors at the top of a stairway to an H. G. Wells. The largest was labeled "Trade"; the others were "Politics," "Tutoring," "Popular Science," and "Journalism." Art, literature, law, and higher branches of the teaching as well as scientific professions and the Church were jealously reserved (as everyone knew) for those who had attended Public School and the two universities, Oxford

**See* Trollope's *Autobiography.*

and Cambridge. And British culture, with its romantic acceptance of world empire as well as a popular notion of evolution, was decidedly eclectic. The failure of his father's shopkeeping closed the door of trade to Wells; for this "bright young man" business was a trap, or rather, the risk of failure in it was too obvious, too clear. The other four doors were less hazardous, more attractive; he retained his interest in politics, and combined the usefulness of the latter three: first as apprentice, in a chemist's shop, then as a teaching-scholarship boy, then as tutoring student at the Imperial College of Science and Technology at the University of London, and last as journalist for scientific publications. Wells had no illusions concerning the merits of any class or the need of class distinctions. In England he knew that class hierocracies of the Victorian-Edwardian order were rapidly slipping into the past and he noted that decline in his many novels. Unlike George Orwell of a later generation, his liberalism contained no illusions guided by the promises of Marx; therefore he did not share the disillusionment of the latter-day liberal journalists who had followed him.

Wells's independence was that of the aboriginal British islander, overlaid with the hatred of the Anglo-Saxon for Norman rule. He was a rare British republican with no respect for the Crown. This kind of independence made Wells distrust the promises made by the elite, whether they came from the lips of Fabians, Beatrice and Sidney Webb (he saw Sidney Webb as a good civil servant, but no more), or the lips of Lenin. In spite of his vision of a world-state, his spirit was the same as the island English who manned boats and ships at the evacuation of Dunkirk and Dieppe in World War II. The evacuation of British troops across the Channel was the work of thousands who had "ordinary" brains, and their accomplishment converted a military disaster into a civilian and island victory.

And last, what of Wells's literary position? Journalism engulfed it and that he knew as well as any of his critics. In his famous quarrel with Henry James (since he could not eat his cake and reserve the crumbs for art) he took the side of journalism versus art, a position held by his predecessor, the arch-Conservative Kipling as well as his contemporary, the pro-Roman-Church journalist, G. K. Chesterton.[2] The position had no taint of compromise as far as art was mentioned. If James was a snob, Wells stood committed as a Philistine: that was the score. Yet his position

had more candor, more sturdiness, and was of tougher moral fiber than those held by Hugh Walpole and Arnold Bennett, the two writers of popular fiction who in their day seemed to rival Wells. Both flirted with art. Both had the journalist's ear and eye for what the public of Edwardian taste would care to read; they were happy victims of a *Zeitgeist* that gave them immediate rewards. Their flirtations with art could not extend their fame, nor could the skills of craftsmanship endure beyond the moment of their deaths. Bennett's *The Old Wives' Tale* remains a somber trophy of "what a writer he might have been!" And Henry James's favored novelist of a large group, Hugh Walpole, leaves behind him only an extraordinary biography that deserves to be cherished by more readers than have discovered it: *Hugh Walpole* by Rupert Hart-Davies. Of Wells's contemporaries among the Fabians, only Bernard Shaw ("a raw, aggressive Dubliner" Wells called him) survives above the wreckage of an era—but then Shaw had too much wit to flirt with art. When the necessity came for him to use art, he embraced it as though he held a willing actress in his arms in the glare of footlights on the stage. Shaw being Anglo-Irish, and of no place at all either high or low in the British hierocracy of classes, could afford, though poor enough at the beginning of his career in London, a recklessly shabby, genteel, aristocratic air, the prerogative of a foreigner who wrote with a purity of diction that few of his London, or Oxford, contemporaries could command.

As far as his writings can carry us, the living Wells is preserved for us in three books, the first published in 1895, the last in 1909, *The Time Machine, The First Men on the Moon,* and *Tono-Bungay*. The voluminous other writings are likely to collect dust rather than cause a resurrection of the spirit. His Platonic idea that men could be better than they were still haunts the middle streams of British culture, where, incidentally, the sharp distinctions of Britain's upper middle classes have been swept away. Since World War II Britain's internal social revolutions have followed a Wellsian model rather than the Marxian pattern of open class warfare, and the household servant class which his mother represented has disappeared. In America, the spread of Wellsian liberal idealism has taken a less political, but no less characteristic, form. It hangs like a rosy mist whenever and wherever heads of large corporations meet to create new foundations for the giving of grants "for culture." On its material side it retains Ponderevo's faith in the "poetry of commerce"—now called "publicity"—and relief from income taxes. But Wells's restless campaign for enlightenment

could never be represented by a firebrand held high against the night. Wells's torch is a rod of neon light, unaesthetic as you please, a common fixture, diffusing rays upward against passing clouds in a hopeful sky.

Notes

[1] Wells wrote other comic novels: *Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul; The History of Mr. Polly, Bealby,* all autobiographical in their origins. In these Wells's humor does not survive beyond middle-class Edwardian taste in light fiction. Wells's light style too often ran its pace in shop-worn dialect. The vernacular that Wells used so fluently is as outmoded as Thackeray's conversations in his "Yellowplush Papers." These comedies properly belong to a field of research in a social history of the Edwardian period in England. Wells's more serious novels, extending from *Ann Veronica* (a Feminist document) through *The World of William Clissold* (1926) record with the same ease the passing scene. Sinclair Lewis felt their influence, and D. H. Lawrence converted their transient meanings into works of art. Wells's impatience to "get things done" reduced much of his writing, even when his intellectual interests ran at their highest level, to journalistic commentary; his impatience limited his perceptions into human character.

[2] In *The Times Literary Supplement,* March 19th and April 2nd, 1914, under the title, "The Younger Generation," James opened an attack on Wells. He spoke of his novels having "blinding, bluffing vivacity," and of a recent novel of Wells, *Marriage,* . . . "we wince at a certain quite peculiarly gratuitous sacrifice to the casual in *Marriage* very much as at seeing some fine and indispensable little part of a mechanism slip through profane fingers and lose itself." "Profane fingers" showed how insulting, how personal James could be. Wells could not take the insult lying down. His reply, a year later, came in a crude attack on James in a book called *Boon.* James wrote to Wells and Wells replied with:

> To you literature, like painting, is an end, to us literature is a means, it has a use . . . I had rather be called a journalist than an artist, that is the essence of it. . . .

Wells showed how far removed he was from the concerns of "the serious artist," and in a philosophic sense, showed how closely he ran to the standards of utilitarianism, which

are anti-poetic; he had been trapped by way of "social-science" thinking into the position of a Liberal-Philistine.

James answered by saying:

> It is art that *makes* life, makes interest, makes importance, . . . and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process.

This was supremely said, but James in these years was anything but a popular novelist; Wells was not only popular, but was extremely well paid for his writings, whatever they were. In his short stories Wells seldom failed to ridicule the poet, the artist; he saw the artist as a drone, a creature from Oxford or Cambridge, living on an income. Throughout his life, he seldom found time to read poetry.

Read as an essay that had something to say beyond the individual writers he had in mind, James's "The Younger Generation" was a well-directed attack on neo-realism, which carried with it the flaws of Zola's writings—the dullness, the inability of the author to lift his writings and himself above deliberately chosen subject matter. James pointed out the younger generation's fears of "sentimentality" and how those fears misled them. In this he was right, for as good a realistic novel as Bennett's *The Old Wives' Tale* failed to purge itself. At the time of writing the essay, James was in an exalted, yet bewildering position of having his own magnificent social novel, *The Princess Casamassima* (published in 1886) still neglected, and of course, forgotten. That novel was his evidence to prove how a realistic novel should be written.

The weakness of James's essay was in his treatment of individual writers; he snubbed D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* to praise (faintly, it is true) Walpole's *The Duchess of Wrexe,* but Walpole was an extremely engaging young man in the presence of elderly gentlemen like James. Here James's error was in not seeing how Lawrence's prose lifted itself above the subject. James could not read the poetry in Lawrence's prose; and since, like Wells, he did little reading of poetry, he was as inept as Wells in making profound judgments of it.

Louis Simpson

The author of two books of poems, *The Arrivistes* and *Good News of Death and Other Poems*, Louis Simpson is currently teaching at Columbia University. He was born in Jamaica and was educated at Columbia University and at the University of Paris. His work—both poems and criticism—has appeared frequently in literary magazines. Mr. Simpson is married, the father of two children, and lives in New York.

POETS OF THE "SILENT" GENERATION

The poets whose work is beginning to be seen—they are, most of them, under forty—have been called a silent generation. One critic finds them "tame and fleecy"—that is, not wild and woolly. *Time* remarks that too many of the younger poets are "wrapped in the cocoon of teaching." Another critic complains of the "elegance" of contemporary verse; it is a poetry of suburbia; the use of strict forms is interpreted to mean that the new poets want to conform, to make themselves tidy careers.

Poetic behavior has certainly gone out of fashion. But then, it's no great loss. What matters, surely, is not the life of the poet, but the life in the poem. Those who take poetry as they do an evening of charades, hope that all poets will roar like Thomas; but poets, understandably enough, may prefer not to lend themselves to that kind of exploitation. Some of the younger poets are, indeed, educated. Some are even civilized. But this, in *spite* of *Time*, is not yet a disadvantage. The university cannot unmake a poet, any more than it can make one. As for form—if some of the younger poets seem concerned with technique, it would be hard to discover a good poet who has not been.

Today, not only do individual talents stand high, but also the general level of ability in writing verse is immeasurably higher than it was, say, thirty years ago. What may, at a casual glance, make the present time seem a recession in poetry, is really a virtue: the reluctance of poets to advertise their personalities at the expense of their work, and their concentration upon

writing the short lyric poem. There are good reasons for this concentration. Confidence in social and intellectual order must support any writing on a large scale; such confidence scarcely exists today, and the poet must attempt to re-order the world in a brief space. In this the poets are mirrors of the age. If there are no Byrons among poets, there are no Burkes among statesmen, either. The age demands something else.

As the selections in this issue of *New World Writing* indicate, a great range of subject matter and style is possible within the contemporary lyric. The narrative and dramatic are found there, as well as "strains of unpremeditated art." The lyric may render action and character, as in Roger Hecht's "Aaron Burr" and Ellen Kay's "Charity Clinic," or it may deal with complex ideas, as in the poems of Vassar Miller and Donald Hall. The language may be strong and direct, or delicate, or fantastic. In deciding among the manuscripts submitted for this issue, I have applied one test in particular: I have asked of each poem, *Does it move?* By movement I do not mean emotion—though where there is real emotion, there is likely to be movement. Rather, I have demanded that the poem evolve a definite action of narrative, idea or metaphor. A great deal of fine writing is not, in my opinion, poetry, and a great deal of sloppy feeling and thinking is even less so.

I have chosen mainly from among the manuscripts of poets who are not well known. Some of these poets, and others whose work I could not include for want of space, are, I believe, better than many poets who now have a considerable reputation.

Vassar Miller

A life-long resident of Houston, Texas, graduate (B.S. and M.A.) from the University of Houston, Vassar Miller has published poetry in *Accent*, *Hopkins Review*, and many other literary magazines.

THE COMMON CORE

Each man's sorrow is an absolute
Each man's pain is a norm
No one can prove and no one refute.
Which is the blacker, coal or soot?
Which blows fiercer, gale or storm?
Each man's sorrow is an absolute.

No man's sickness has a synonym,
No man's disease has a double.
You weep for your love, I for my limbs—
Who mourns with reason? who over whims?
For, self-defined as a pebble,
No man's sickness has a synonym.

Gangrene is fire and cancer is burning.
Which one's deadlier? Toss
A coin to decide; past your discerning
Touch the heart's center, still and unturning,
That common core of the Cross:
You die of fire and I die of burning.

Ellen Kay

A graduate of Mills College (Oakland, California), Ellen Kay has an M.A. degree from Stanford University where she held a Fellowship in Poetry in 1955 and where she is now employed as an instructor in the English Department. She is at work on two poetic dramas which she expects to complete shortly. Miss Kay was born in New York City in 1930 and spent her early school years in New Orleans, Louisiana.

CHARITY CLINIC

No one can escape that summer rain
Which, driven with the weight of shattered heat,
Welts the blind windows in a lashing sheet
And wastes itself down surfeited terrain.

On the white wall, the white clock angled four;
One hour of minutes pendulumed in rain,
Of men with nothing left but time and pain
Resigned to patience past the white half-door.

The door swung slowly in; I turned to see
Familiar fingers closed around three flowers—
Once gaudy zinnias, drenched and dead for hours.
She sidled in, and handed them to me.

Helpless, homeless, dumb to spite or scorn,
She laughed when the internes laughed at "Mad Marie,"
Cried when their chief dismissed her angrily
Each year her fatherless idiots were born.

But she forgot all—doctor, child, and mate;
The rumor spread that when the next time came
An instrument would slip, ending the shame
And the expense her bastards caused the state.

There on the sterile wall her shadow cast
Grotesque distortions of fecundity.
I took the flowers as she left heavily,
Big with the child that was to be her last.

Within the week, before the flowers had shed
Their remnant color to the warping sill,
Two internes led me, curious, until
We came to the amphitheater of the dead.

There on the slab, prepared for autopsy,
Two maculate towels over the face and crotch,
Lay a female corpse. Should I turn back or watch?
They bared her face; I saw it was Marie.

Mass charity cannot afford to love
Those lives in bondage to its endless loan,
But claims at death their bodies for its own.
The scalpel gleamed against the interne's glove.

He deftly made the first long gash, exposed
The inmost sanctum of inchoate life,
Winked at the plundered womb, probed with his knife
The severed tube no suture ever closed.

When I left work, the rain cold in my hair,
That hour, the wink at accidental death,
Incised my brain, quickened my visible breath,
Though I had heard them confidently swear

That no one would remember, no one care.

Robert Bly

Now on a Fulbright grant in Norway, Robert Bly is currently translating some of the new Norwegian poetry into English. Mr. Bly comes from Minnesota, and he is a 1950 graduate of Harvard.

WHAT BURNS AND IS CONSUMED

You wonder why we take so many trips.
I laugh, taking your hands, and turn away—
I speak of vegetation and the tide—
But when December snaps the mountain trees
And breaks the seas past any strength of ships,
Now I remember Christ the crucified
Who hurt his Mary, could not help but say
At feast, "What have I to do with thee?"
Leaving for Jerusalem. This crossroads
A Baptist said was set in every knee
By that damned ghost behind the aspen tree
When Christ bent down, and made the wild ribs blaze.

There are peeling ferns inside Skid Row
Gospel missions in New Orleans
Where, after twenty years, a woman weeps
Finding a man whose hands were sealed with rings.
"Do you still love me?" He said, "I do! Forget it."
He left and walked to where he sleeps,
Where he eats his pork and beans from cans
And keeps a whore who has no teeth. These things
I heard. Learn them. They make some belief.
Some day we both will die. That is another grief
That cannot be atoned in Copley Square
With half-crazed kisses in the Christmas air.

Melvin Walker La Follette

Currently the James Phelan Scholar in Literature at the University of California, Berkeley, Melvin Walker La Follette was born in Evansville, Indiana, and was educated at Purdue, the University of Iowa and the University of Washington. His verse has appeared in *Botteghe Oscure, Poetry,* and elsewhere.

ANGULUS RIDET

Now has that beldame broken me at last;
Now has the lady won me to her side;
Now has my heart for its last time denied
The proper child it has so long harassed;
Break out the lark, for spring is coming fast
Ransacking caves for bursting bulbs, and wide
Are the fields of fragile bloodroot where I ride,
Roughshod and pregnant, past.
And higher than light beneath the mottled bounds
Of cloudy heaven after rain has come
Is the song your heart sings to my elder wounds,
Which sweeter than blood, has sung my bleeding dumb.
Fallen in earth, round earth whirled:
"Behold! I am the rainbow of the world."

Henri Coulette

Born in Los Angeles thirty years ago, Mr. Coulette has been employed as a book binder, publicity man and high-school teacher. He is now a member of the Writers' Workshop at the State University of Iowa, and has had poetry published by the literary magazines.

CATULLUS: 5

Let's live and love, my Lesbia,
Giving neither hang nor straw
For all the gossip of old men.
The dancing sun will dance again,
But the time comes when we shall be
Wallflowers for eternity,
So *da mi basia,* and then,
A hundred thousand times again,
Until no envious bastard knows
What limit envy may impose.

Robert Pack

In 1955 Robert Pack published his first volume of verse, *The Irony of Joy*. His poems and essays have also appeared in numerous magazines. Born in New York, he was educated at Dartmouth College and at Columbia University. He served as poetry editor of *discovery*, and has taught at the New School for Social Research in New York. In 1956 he was in Florence on a Fulbright Fellowship.

IN THE WAKING OF MY EYES

In the waking of my eyes
The winter world rings running wet,
And frames the chick-a-dee's delight
To sing us love beyond surmise,
Shaping the snow to greet our sight.

For I can't love myself alone
Or tell you and the brook apart
While imagery that stirs my heart
Holds you, the forest, field and stone,
Sun's beginning, our planet's start.

I summon metaphor to sing,
To find in sense all ecstasy,
A winter evening murmury
With worlds to come, with everything,
In which your touch is part of me.

Then you are whom I single out
To wake the dark mind's inward dance,
And make a choice where all is chance,
And see through gleamings of delight
One turning endless joy advance.

Jane Cooper

Jacksonville and Princeton were way-stations for Miss Cooper before she settled in New York City. Vassar and the University of Wisconsin led to an M.A. from the State University of Iowa, where she was a member of the Writers' Workshop. Miss Cooper is working on a book of poems, and teaches at Sarah Lawrence College

THE FAITHFUL

Once you said joking slyly, "If I'm killed
I'll come to haunt your solemn bed,
I'll stand and glower at the head
And see if my place is empty still, or filled."

What was it woke me in the early darkness
Before the first bird's twittering?
A shape dissolving and flittering
Unsteady as a flame in a drafty house.

It seemed a concentration of the dark burning
By the bedpost at my right hand,
While to my left that no man's land
Of sheet stretched palely as a false morning. . . .

All day I have been sick and restless. This evening,
Curtained, with all the lights on,
I start up—only to sit down.
Why should I grieve after ten years of grieving?

What if last night I was the one who lay dead
While the dead burned beside me,
Trembling with passionate pity
At my blameless life and shaking its flamelike head?

Dachine Rainer

The author of poetry and prose published in the literary magazines and elsewhere, Dachine Rainer lives near the village of Bearsville, New York, and is the mother of a five-year-old daughter. She was born in New York and was educated at Hunter College.

BROODING IN SUMMER'S HOUSE

Suddenly transported from summer's suburban lawn,
And its marginal rows of orange brocaded martial marigolds,
From dense clandestine ivy that fawns
On massive walls and doors and small cool windows with a bold

Lack of precision, and kneeling on the pine-needled ground,
My head damp with anguish in my arms, my frantic heart
Assaulting the white hickory on which I lean,
Pounding like an absurd hummingbird the unconquerable pane,

All stone—tree and glass and ruby-hearted bird—
And I, fleeing my fragrant rural pillory,
Before this statue, too, turns stone and wire and steel,
Transported am to you and love's apartment in the city.

Robert Layzer

Now in his fourth year at Harvard Medical School, Robert Layzer was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He has contributed to *The Paris Review*, *New World Writing #9*, and, in 1953, was winner of the Garrison prize.

THE LAWN ROLLER

Too many summers out of the way of a trowel
Has given the clover and dandelion a feast,
And now it's as easy to temper the whim of the soil
As argue the sun into crouching from west to east.

Down at the end of the street a sun-glazed man
Has three hundred pounds of water inside a drum
Rolling and pressing a naked torso of lawn
Into flat perfection, ripe for the gardener's thumb.

The bare and close is where I began, but somehow
Only wild things grew out of my ministries,
Or extravagant tame. Astonished, I watched them swallow
The plot like Africans eating their enemies

Not out of malice but a respect for kinship.
What could succeed? The peony changed a bed
Of oil and ease for a fierce alien worship,
The rose lay down beside the ragweed's head

And everything the lascivious earth raised up
From a cold slumber, threw off sheets of clay
To fold the sunlight in an amorous grip.
It was too late to prune the jungle away,

Or too injurious for the eye stained green
To crop an inch of greenness. The twentieth spring
Found me in this delirium eyeing the scene
With a lawn roller's contempt for rioting

Abundance, and a sunstruck tenderness.
I watched and waited. Later it seemed the moon,
Cold as the face of Helen in her distress,
Was looking through the branches, hard and alone.

Donald Hall

As an undergraduate at Harvard University, Mr. Hall edited the Harvard *Advocate* and received the Lloyd McKim Garrison Prize for poetry in 1951. He has since studied at Stanford and Oxford Universities, and is now in his final year as a Junior Fellow at Harvard. His poems have appeared widely in the literary magazines and were collected in *Exiles and Marriages,* which was the Lamont Poetry Selection for 1955. Mr. Hall, poetry editor of *The Paris Review,* is married and lives in Lexington, Massachusetts.

LIKE A MAN, SHINING

It is not in the books
that he is looking, nor for
a new book nor
documents of any kind, nor
does he expect it to be like the wind,
that, when you touch it, tears
without a sound of tearing, nor
like the rain
water
that becomes
grass in the sun. He
expects that when he finds it,
it will be
like a man, shining, well
come to his place, knowing what
has happened and what
will happen, with
firmness in its face, seeing
exactly what is, without
measure of change, since change
is of course ephemeral
like documents
like rain in the grass.

But what, he says,
what if it is not
for the finding, not

what you most expect, nor even
what you dread, nothing
at all
but the books, the endless
documents, the banked
volumes that repeat
mile after mile
their names,
their information?
Perhaps there is nothing
except the rain
water
becoming the grass, the
wild flowers, the
sustenance. What
a man should do is
accumulate
information
until he has gathered, like a
farmer, as much
as his resources can contain.

Yet perhaps, he thinks,
perhaps I speak
with knowledge, but perhaps
forgetting the movement
that intrigues
all thinking. It is
the movement which works through,
which discovers itself
in alleys, in
sleep, on the streets
of towns, not
expected and not
in the laws nor in
the books of words and phrases,
nor the various paints and edges
of scenery.
It is, he says,
familiar when come upon,
glimpsed
as in a mirror
unpredicted,
and it appears
to understand. It is
like himself, only shining.

Joseph Langland

Author of one book of verse, *The Green Town*, Joseph Langland won the Amy Lowell Award in poetry for 1955-56, and spent the year in Europe. Mr. Langland grew up on an Iowa farm near the Mississippi River, and was educated at Iowa University. He has taught at the University of Wyoming in Laramie since 1948. His poems have appeared frequently in the literary magazines.

THE AMALFI GROTTO

Water is light. It blooms from dipping oars
In huge lilies with golden tongues
Echoing in green caves,
A lost home.
Even stalactites sing of sudden jewels
Dropping from bright eyes.

Just for a moment, let us dispel this charm.
The sun plunged down far undersea
Enters this cave, reflects,
Surprising us
Upon these emerald waters. Filtered light
Illuminates this world.

We cup our hands among the waves of light.
We drip a quick florescence from
Our watery fingers. Bells
Ring from our arms.
The fleeting ghost of daylight everywhere
Taps on the bone of night.

Forget these explanations that I give;
I would not have you think that I
Did not know how it was,
Or thought it was.
We have to know the things we have to know,
Then, if we can, forget.

I walked on water in a field of light
And heard the dark tides of the world
Tell, with a bell of tongues,
The inland sea.
I do not tell you all, but who can be
Complete with miracles?

Roger Hecht

Poetry of Roger Hecht has appeared in *The Saturday Review*, *Poetry*, and *The Paris Review*. He was born in New York City in 1926 and was educated at Bard and Kenyon Colleges. Mr. Hecht lives in New York.

AARON BURR: (1756-1836)

To Ben Belitt

Jonquil dead; and when no aster stalk
Reminded you of dahlia or late rows
Of harvesting,
You hid yourself in priestly cloak
To get a message past St. Lawrence floes,
To Montgomery, dead already in attack.
A man in passion rides a savage horse;
Still, grey the wing, or brown the wing:
birdthroat,
Against the maple or the evergreen.
With Arnold full of drink and wind,
Shot in the leg, wrathbound,
With storm of season, eating nut and root,
One army cut in two,
What could the pock-faced Washington anticipate
If not a wreck?
More than the wounded died in the snow
At Montreal, and at Quebec.
Birdthroat
Swells to its ordinary offer and small sound
Against the evergreen.
Rebuke:
Your passage to obscurity.
Buff and white the throat, keening clarity
Late or soon,
In the night.

2

You followed darkness like a dream:
T. Paine at the drumhead in place of table,
Yourself commander at the "Gulf": a scene of ice,
And the stars frozen to tearblaze overhead.
The men were scurvy-thin and scratching lice.
Steuben, with an aide, inducing men
To exercise:
To form, reform, and, once more, form a line.
Washington clamped wooden teeth, untalkable.
Hamilton felt sure Spring would arrive.
Which got a laugh.
Dark on the ice: across the Delaware
Some German troops made noisy jubilee.
The chance.
While Germans drank and formed themselves for dance,
The ragged chaff
Took Durhams oared by men from Marblehead,
Left boards with blood; and, in the Winter air,
Walked into Trenton to join the play
The morning after Christmas Day:
"The world turned upside down."
Hamilton sent a cannonball
Into your father's hall
At Princeton in a scene of ice.
When men wrapped cloth about their feet
To slow the ooze of blood, when scurvyscourge
Made Hell a tent at Valley Forge,
When Spring did come, shad tasted sweet.

3

You followed darkness down into the night
Where grey, where brown,
Where black, cream-white,
And slight for less than one foot long,
Drums, late or soon,
In the night, before the day,
The whippoorwill with strident song.

A bullet or a ball for Hamilton;
He had, in the concern of corporate finance,
Offered an old man a crown.
In the dance
Of Democratic manners still the tune:
"Give us more money; God bless us all."

And you, the almost founder of Tammany Hall,
Turned, turned at last,
South, southwest:
Acquitted twice of a conspiracy
To overthrow
America, from plain to plain,
Where souls are sales, with brawn for brain,
And burying the yellow grain
In old vacuity.

When will the whippoorwill call
With majesty
From bough of oak or evergreen
In grey, in brown, in black, in white,
Clear, clear, clear,
In the foliage of night,
To lovers as they pass?
When will the whippoorwill call
From a bough where Spanish moss
Tightens in the starsprayed air
As lovers issue down the passages of light
That still remain?
When will the whippoorwill call?
After the day and in the night.

Samuel J. Hazo

Director of Freshman English at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Mr. Hazo is a graduate of Notre Dame and has an M.A. from Duquesne. His poetry has appeared in *Four Quarters* and *University of Kansas City Review*. This sequence of poems grew out of three years as a Marine Corps officer. *The poem* Battle Burial *is for Elmore Smith.*

LULL

Owls swoop low over flagless poles.
Battalions bivouacked on a maneuver
sleep platooned in a Quonset town.

Dungarees rinse dry under the moon,
billowing with a suavity of banners
as buglers barrack the last patrols.

PARACHUTIST

After jump, drop and somersault
with cords unraveling in skein,
chute rising in a puff more taut
than sail until it domes a cone
of cords hooked to a harnessed dot
twirling and suspended like a toy
wind-swung and puppeted in space,
he pendulums sideways down the sky.

BATTLE BURIAL

All drums muted,
banners saluted,
taps bugled low,
soldier in poncho
shrouded with flags—
honoring riflers
aim sunward and fire
out of the valley
his ultimate volley.

Neil Weiss

Changes of Garments, Mr. Weiss's first collection of poems, was published in 1956 (Indiana University Press). He was born in New York City, educated in New England, and has been a seaman, machinist, film synopsist, and publicity writer. His poems have appeared in literary magazines since 1949.

LATE IN THE GAME

The referee is poised:
not much more of time.
Fuzz clings to the huddles,
the game is ending fast,
directly underneath us
where they gather delicately
to violet crash, as in Dufy
whose mind cannot be passed
at twilight. Lights on
in neighboring hills glow
within glass, frostfall
for our Pompeii, but still
the ragged shadows bleed
in center field. Velvet now
completely lines our Bowl.
We rise and leave with Please.

David Ignatow

An editor of the *Beloit Poetry Journal,* David Ignatow was born in Brooklyn, New York. He has published two volumes of poetry, *Poems* and *The Gentle Weight Lifter,* and has contributed frequently to literary magazines.

EACH NIGHT

I see a flat hat upon the river,
beneath it I imagine my cousin,
face rigid with thought, eyes closed
the better to see it; and still, still
as a monument for the sound.

He was an artist, faces caught
within a frame by shadow;
desiring light only, they gazed fixedly out.

In your tenement, soiled window shades
of the poor, your brush lies idle;
while from the rain-blotched wall hangs
the burlesque of a millionaire.
I could not believe in it, Al.
Each stroke deliberately crude
but caricatured your sadness:
your mother's breasts bleary and drawn:
her voice instructing you in the sounds
of the world—full of complaint;
your father's reply rough and dead
in its decisiveness. He could not
be budged, curt as the limits he had set.
All this was your legitimate complaint.

Float away from me, my kin; my grief
and sinking sigh the wave and trough
carrying you, touching and withdrawing
and touching once more to find you dead.

But each night, crossing the bridge from work,
I look for you, light refractions dot and dash
signals upon the waves, "Come out." See,
each morning I ride willingly and at night
compose poems to tiredness and disillusion
and to hope pinnacled upon receding towers.
I too emerged from a hardening womb:
choked traffic arteries, stalled vehicles
belching frustration, where bums lie sprawled,
toxic with fumes—and children
white with wanting upon the narrow causeways.
My parents were the city and its complaint
of brakes and horns. For food I sucked
at exhaust pipes and heard rumbling motor
of argument overhead, lying in my mother's lap,
the gutter. Now grown, drunk and staggering
with my repast, I travel between home and hell,
holding a pencil, ready to punch holes
when breath comes hard.

Each night crossing the bridge,
train lights appeal to you. Then take back
your brush. Oh reach for it from the river.

W. D. Snodgrass

Born in 1927, W. D. Snodgrass has three degrees from the State University of Iowa. He is now an instructor at Cornell and his poems, translations, and essays have appeared in a number of literary magazines. In hospital slang, Mr. Snodgrass writes, "a flat one" is a corpse.

A FLAT ONE

Old Fritz, shrunken, gray,
Changed like a child and fed,
Strapped flat on this revolving bed,
You have outspun the world.
We turned its black iron frame three times each day
While you hung and were whirled

Upright. We covered you,
Cut every bite you ate,
And watched your lean jaws masticate
Viciously your food
As laboring criminals in their chains chew
Or insects in the wood.

Such sacrifice to give
Only a month's more pain:
Here is a haddock's body, slain
For you; this is the blood
Of a tomato shed that you might live;
Take of the costly food.

Now you are finished, so
We've plugged your wilful anus
And tied up your disabled penis
In a great bow of gauze;
We'll wrap you up and roll you down below,
Below, below, because

Your credit has run out.
On that steel table, carved,
You'll find the world's hard-working, starved
Teeth in your bedsore skin
And bone. Our earth that turns by turn about
Opens to gulp you in.

For six months you have lain
Determined, not to live,
But to not die; no one would give
You one chance to return
From your first night's attack, to outlive pain,
Much less go home and earn

Your living, ever find
Your place in all creation.
But pain, your single occupation,
That should content and will
A man to give it up, nerved you to grind
Your clenched teeth, breathing, till

These last weeks when your breath,
Stopping, by fits and starts
Puffed out your sections like parts
Of an enormous bug;
You waited, not for life, not for your death,
But just the murderous drug

That made life bearable
Deadening life. Yet I
Heard you, choking, whimper and cry
Like a whipped child while rage
And terror shook tears on your gun-metal
Blue cheek stiff in old age

Till I turned and left, stood
Outside your room and wept.
You killed for us and so we kept
You. So I earned my pay.
But you could waste us still for none. What should
We kill for you today?

Wesley Trimpi

A graduate student at Harvard, Wesley Trimpi has had poems published in *The Hudson Review*, *Poetry* and the *New Mexico Quarterly*. His first collection, *The Glass of Perseus*, appeared in 1954.

LETTER TO EDGAR BOWERS, November 1954

I listened here to Mozart all last night,
Considering again what made you write
The "heart is moved too quickly and too much."
Feeling escapes even awareness such
As in his music contemplates control,
Even this line you wrote once to console
Costanza's grief. With six months spent now, one
Returns your poems because they are not done
In the day's style. Since you write what was true,
And still is, in few lines, your poems are new.
Who reads them well will find one can remove
The long desire for what he does not love,
Or, if he seek it and avoid pretence,
Not call this candidness his innocence.
Yet motives are not simple; when I turn
In sloth, none comforts me, till in concern
For action, self-indulgence grows discreet
With "know your own desire," and self-deceit
Shines the coin which occasion, vanity,
And leisure stamp with my identity—
The face I look for I discover there,
Intimate counterfeit which pays my fare.
The heart is random still, and what is moved
And who is moving has not yet been proved.
From the window, hesitant, uninvolved,
I read the season for what is resolved.
The garden rests beneath the quiet leaves.
The trellis, white as bone, delights nor grieves
The eye which sees the gray vine grip the staff;
This simple order, like an epitaph,
Marks on the pathworn ground no present way
And, as the reader there, waits out the day.

Donald Justice

Currently teaching at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota, Donald Justice has published poetry in *The New Yorker, Poetry, The Hudson Review* and other magazines. He was born in Miami, Florida, and educated at Stanford University and the State University of Iowa.

A WINTER ODE to the Old Men of Lummus Park, Miami, Florida

Risen from rented rooms, old ghosts
Come back to haunt our parks by day,
You creep up Fifth Street through the crowd,
Unseeing and almost unseen,
Stopping before the shops for breath,
Still proud, pretending to admire
The fat hens dressed and hung for flies
There, or perhaps the lone, dead fern
Dressing the window of a small
Hotel. Winter has blown you south—
How many? Twelve in Lummus Park
I counted, shivering as you stood,
A little thicket of thin trees,
And more on benches, turning with
The sun, wan heliotropes, all day.
Oh you who wear against the breast
The torturous flannel undervest
Winter and summer, yet are cold,
Poor cracked thermometers stuck now
At zero everlastingly,
Old men, bent like your walking sticks
As with the pressure of some hand,
Surely they must have thought you strong
To lean on you so hard, so long!

THE MODERN IS DEAD— LONG LIVE THE MODERN

Illustrated with Drawings by John Barrington Bayley

Henry Hope Reed, Jr.

Co-author with Christopher Tunnard of the Mentor book, *American Skyline*, Henry Hope Reed, Jr., has also contributed to a number of publications, including *The New York Times Magazine, Liturgical Arts, Thought*, and *The Architectural Review*. Born in New York, Mr. Reed was educated at Harvard. He now lives in New York. The present essay forms part of a book-in-progress entitled *The Golden City*. John Barrington Bayley is an architect, working in New York. A graduate of the Harvard Architectural School, he was stationed in Paris during the war, and has studied in Rome where he was for a time architect to the American Embassy.

No fad in the history of our architecture and city planning has ever blasted the American townscape as has the so-called "Modern." Even the nineteenth century at its worst did not contrive such ugliness. If certain recently-built structures seem shocking in their brutality, they shine in comparison with a monstrosity now under construction; the Guggenheim Museum on New York's Fifth Avenue designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Happily there are signs that the "Modern" has had its day. Apparent success only conceals its approaching death. When the time arrives we will look back on this generation of architectural blight to wonder, asking ourselves how and why we accepted the brutal. This is not our concern; our interest is the future, even if it too will be called "Modern," a term always associated with a new fashion.

What will be the shape of the modern of the future? Dare we boast of it now? On one count we may be sure: it will bear no relation to present work for the simple reason that the future will be rooted in a glorious past, something the present "Modern" denies. Like all styles worthy of the name, it will have standards, and standards are found by referring to

the past. Inevitably it will be guided by the classical which has, until lately, been the main current of our architectural heritage.

By the classical we mean the Greco-Roman tradition of the Mediterranean world. "All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages has come from the Mediterranean" was Dr. Johnson's famous comment on English culture, and it applies with no less truth to ours, especially in architecture. Our ancestors, and our grandfathers, never questioned the resources of classical architecture when building Independence Hall, New York's City Hall, the National Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial or other shrines of equal importance. Nor will the future which will have its start in ancient Rome. (In this connection it is worth noting that, despite contemporary efforts to blur its aim, there is still an American Academy in Rome. It will, of course, have a commanding position in the future.) The classical consists of the following elements:

Composition. It is the ability to join the parts of a building in order to produce a harmonious whole. It means that the work of art, in this instance a building, must have a beginning, middle and end. It has definite limitations as a picture does with its frame. In an architectural composition there are to be found scale, proportion, movement, balance and unity as well as ornament.

Scale. It is the relation of the parts of a building to the human figure. Ornaments which offer recognizable elements (eagles, acanthus leaves, moldings, dentils, rustication) underscore scale, and a wealth of ornamental detail gives the eye the security of constant reference.

Proportion. It is the search for harmony in the interplay of the principal and the subordinate parts of any visual composition.

Movement. It is the repetition of parts of the structure, particularly visual detail, to lead up to an effect where the repetition is broken. It is a system of reinforcing the accentuation of mass, space and line.

Balance. It takes the form of symmetry or asymmetry wherever visual detail comes into play. It is essential to convey a sense of repose and to give a building or a group of buildings its proper visual accent.

Unity. Unity, the joining of the parts and the subordination of the parts to the whole, brings order to a composition and leads to beauty. "The unity which recognizes the distinction [degree of importance] of the parts makes for order," wrote

Saint Francis de Sales, "and order creates harmony and scale, and harmony, in finished whole objects, makes for beauty."

Ornament. Ornament is any form of decoration from a molding to a representation of the human form. Classical ornament stands above all others because it runs the gamut from the representation of man, flora and fauna to pure geometry. From classical ornament stems that of the Byzantine, the Romanesque, the Gothic, the Arabic and others. Ornament is the flower of architecture and city planning; it is the driving force, as well as the seal, of style.

Façade. Its construction is the recognition that the front of a building has a duty to the beholder in addition to the practical one of insulation and protection. The doorway of a façade is a triumphal arch, that of a "Modern" front is a hole.

Interior Decoration. Every room in a building has a quality of its own, no matter how modest the structure may be. A room is not an unornamented space, nor is a series of rooms "space-flow." Each has its entrance, its four walls with wainscot (base and dado), frieze and cornice, its ceiling with moldings and its floor with a pattern. Its walls go beyond the mechanical-functional to receive pictures, or whatever embellishment is desired. Like the door, the window is not a hole with glass but consists of a frame and a certain depth, both of which combine to give it quality. Rooms must have, wherever possible, high ceilings because they are restful and offer space for decoration.

The Classical Orders. There are five Orders: Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Composite and Tuscan. Only by studying them can the artist-architect gain a perception of proportion and relation of adjustment and scale. They are the heart of the Greco-Roman tradition.

Monumentality. It is the attempt to achieve an impression of power—one of the highest aims of the artist. Although not essential for private dwellings or commercial buildings, it is required by the important buildings in a community, such as those of a patriotic or religious nature. The classical is the style which has most successfully brought visual power to architecture because of the Orders and ornament. A 100-foot cylinder, say a smokestack, is in no way monumental; a 100-foot Corinthian column is because of the judicious use of ornament to convey a sense of power.

Hierarchy. Certain buildings are naturally more important than others because they serve more people or because they serve a higher purpose. The living room and dining room of

a house are important because they serve to welcome guests. The front door is more important than the one at the back, the present "Modern" notwithstanding. There is also a hierarchy between similar types of buildings; the building which invites all the arts to adorn it will rank higher than its plain neighbor because it represents a greater challenge to the architect and his fellow artists. Monumental architecture will rank the highest because it has the highest aim, that is, to convey a sense of grandeur and nobility as well as beauty.

The Grand Design. The "Modern" of today begins the design with some small structural detail or binds the design to a trick of construction. "Modern" city planning is conceived either as a narrow, limited, "practical" scheme, or as one based solely on social and economic measures. The new classical works in terms of visual ensembles with a variety of monuments, such as triumphal arches, statues, theaters, formal squares, etc. To turn to a comparison in painting, the "Modernist" in architecture is like the abstract painter with his few blobs of paint; the man who works in terms of the new classical is like the traditional painter, as Paul Valéry saw him, who could fill his canvas with a group of figures or a crowd, living, moving and breathing in a natural or invented setting. There is something of the operatic in the architecture of the future; for that reason some are already calling it the Grand Design.

Standards. The classical admits that buildings which have pleased more than one generation will please again. The classical looks to the great buildings of the past for instruction and inspiration, knowing that they offer a canon of forms which approaches the absolute. Having no standards, today's "Modern" has led to visual chaos or nihilism.

The Arts Together. In the classical all the arts join to create the effect. There is a place for every artist and artisan; each one makes his own contribution. It is natural for the stonecutter to want to carve stone and the plasterer to give ornament to plaster. The present-day "Modern" denies the artist and artisan both opportunity and freedom in expression. A corollary to the marriage of the arts in building is the use of the best materials. Gold, silver, marble, rare woods, silk and other precious stuffs will return to the place of honor; in using them the artist attains greater effect.

Visual Pleasure. To strive to please is part of nature. The bush of the rose may be thorny but it carries a flower to delight bees and men. The thrush sings to find a mate. Man puts on his finery for the Sunday parade. *"Il charme en toutes manière-*

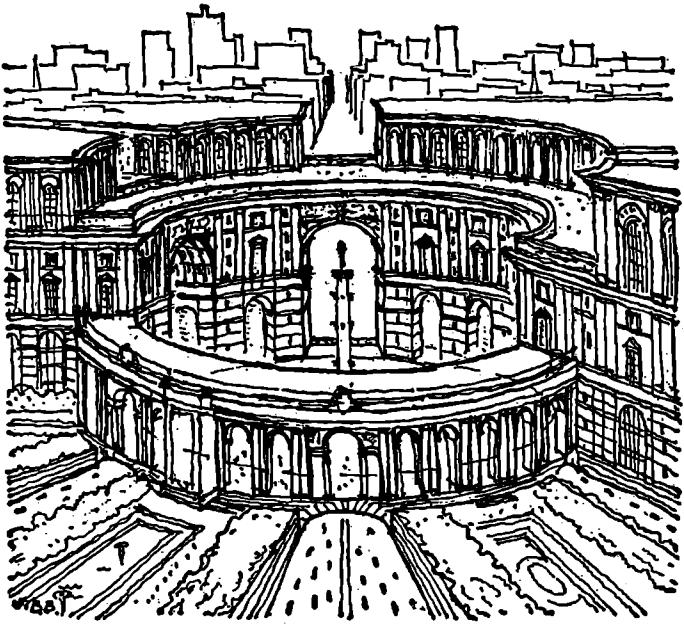
res," wrote Molière of a great palace. *"Tout y rit dehors et dedans, l'or et le marbre y disputent de beauté et d'éclat."*

Landscape Architecture. It is a current fad to shroud buildings with shrubbery and trees. In Washington the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials are lost in a salad of greenery. The classical insists that nature must be restrained and handled in such a way as to set off buildings. In our national capital formal planting, clipped trees and other classical devices will serve to give our shrines new life.

The Human Body. The center of classical architecture is the human body, observed Geoffrey Scott in *The Architecture of Humanism* (1914), "its method, to transcribe in stone the body's favourable states; and the moods of the spirit [take] visible shape along its borders, power and laughter, strength and terror and calm. To have chosen these nobly, and defined them clearly, are the two marks of classic style. Ancient architecture excels in perfect definition; Renaissance architecture in the width and courage of choice." And we can add that it allows freedom, an element now denied.

Government Patronage of the Arts. No community worthy of the name can neglect the arts, be it opera, tapestry, mosaic or china. No great government, past or present, has failed to offer help to the artist and the artisan, save the United States today. We will remain a provincial people so long as we refuse to subsidize the arts generously. The American government once encouraged the arts; it will support the new classical, or the modern of the future, because it will have a style worthy of support. Only the classical can convey the importance of the state in the community and, with the arts working together, reward local and national patriotism.

The following designs embody many of these elements of the classical. (The text continues on page 144.)



A World War II and Korean War Memorial for Columbus Circle in New York

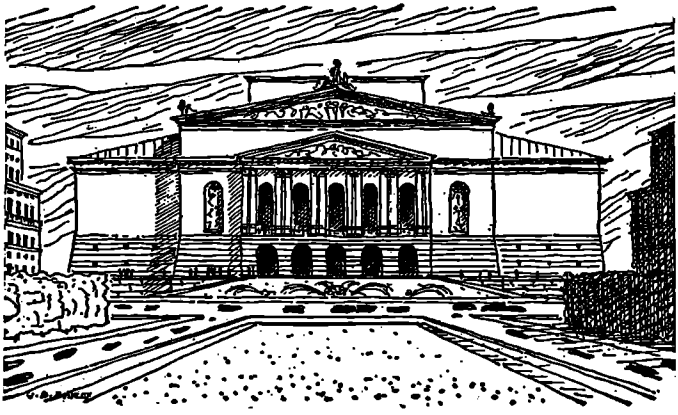
Looking down Eighth Avenue from Central Park West, a colossal portico surrounds Columbus Circle. On the Central Park side it is free standing; on the other it is incorporated in monumental façades which conceal, among other structures, the ugly New York Coliseum. To give the conception unity the architect has joined his façades by high triumphal arches. Giant stone shields, trophies and statues abound. The whole conveys *terribilità,* that sense of awe and power beloved by Michelangelo.

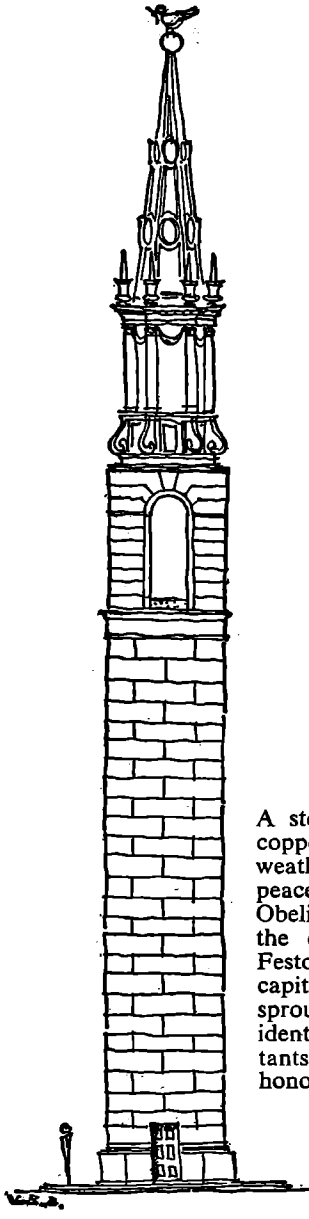
The Maine Monument is joined to the design as is the rostral column with its Columbus statue in the center. Note how the traffic has been cleverly gorged beneath the raised piazza which becomes the property of the stroller or eager sight-seer. The space in the right foreground between Central Park West and Broadway has been cleared of buildings to set off the portico.

The National Theater in Washington, D. C.

A monumental theater in the new classical for the nation's capital to be built when the federal government begins to support the arts. A formal approach leads to fountains and a high porticoed entrance. Sculpture fills the niches and pediments and it crowns the roof. A high battered base of rusticated limestone in rough ashlar carries the principal story of pink Tennessee marble. Inside, many colored marbles, gold, silver, velvets and other materials are rivals for honor. The roof tile, as the sculpture, is gilt.

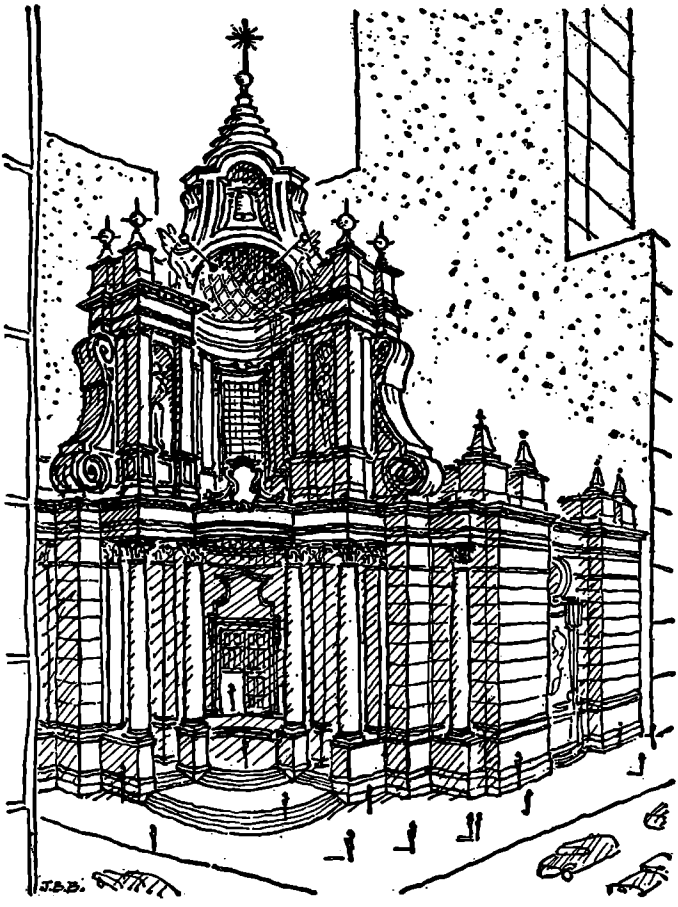
The principal fountain is the great basin of Apollo. The sun-god, driving his chariot, is welcomed by the muses.





Memorial Bell Tower for a Suburb

A stone-faced shaft bears a cage of copper parcel gilt, topped with a weather vane in the form of a dove of peace with an olive spray in its beak. Obelisks, columns and volutes decorate the open gallery beneath the roof. Festoons of laurel are strung from the capitals of columns while, above, vases sprout obelisks. The tower serves to identify the community for the inhabitants and the passing motorist, and to honor its heroes.



A Church for a Park Avenue Corner

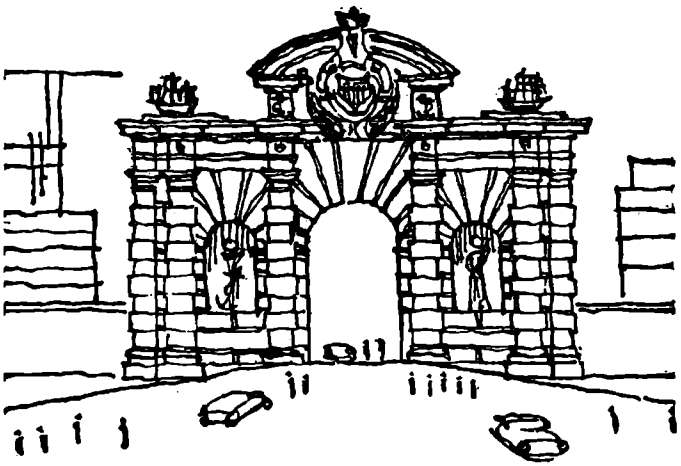
A semicircular entrance on the corner is made more imposing by Corinthian columns and pilasters. The cornice over the entrance carries a stemma or coat of arms supported by symbols. Above rises an exedra roofed with a coffered quarter sphere and flanked by niches filled with statues of saints. The whole is surmounted by a cross with a burst of golden rays while on the parapet beneath are impaled orbs.

A Monumental Entrance for the Brooklyn Navy Yard

The Navy Yard Arch has a pedimented attic topped by an eagle with spread wings. Beneath, within the pediment, is a cut, rolled leather cartouche bearing the national arms, flanked by hanging garlands strung from a cornice of sea beasts and sea plants. Anchors ornament the piers to either side.

The frieze has scallop shells at certain points. Within the niches on either side are armed figures of a sailor and a marine. The whole is carried out in heroic rustication.

The *Constitution* and *Constellation* in stone ride under full sail in stony seas on the side piers.



These and other monuments will rise in the Regional City that is already about us. No corner will stand neglected from the diamond of the central city to the suburban baguettes placed about it. The great urban complexes of the world are classical because, of all the styles, it is best adapted to ensembles. This is the high art of civic design, the civic design which is to the city what clothes are to man—an adornment.

In this, today's "Modern" has known its worst failures, because its mistakes have been, thanks to the size of the projects, gigantic. Look at Penn Center in Philadelphia, the Golden Triangle in Pittsburgh, the General Motors Research Center outside Detroit, or Brooklyn's Civic Center, and you will see nothing but the mean and the bare. (We Americans have not been alone in this; postwar reconstruction in Europe offers any number of equally bleak examples.) New York architects, having wrecked lower Park Avenue, are about to extend the "Modern" blight to the Wall Street area where the Chase Manhattan Bank, one of the nation's largest financial institutions, is going to blot out the sculptured towers with a forbidding glass slab. And a national arts center is being planned for Manhattan's West Side (the Lincoln Square project) which, as outlined, will win the desperate race of ugliness.

As the national arts center is still in the paper stage, we can offer an alternative which will provide a setting worthy of the aim. An opera house, theaters, a university and other buildings are being planned, yet we do not find, even in an advisory capacity, the men who are the only ones capable of executing them. They are: *Welles Bosworth,* designer of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology campus, one of our larger monumental ensembles; *Arthur Brown, Jr.,* designer of the nation's handsomest civic center and opera house, both in San Francisco; *William Adams Delano,* whose Post Office Building in Washington forms the center of the two most beautiful squares in the country; *Jacques Gréber,* who laid out the nation's handsomest boulevard, the Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia; *Robert Helmer,* architect of monumental banks in Manhattan and Brooklyn; *Angelo Magnanti,* the only man in America capable of designing the decorative detail of an opera house. They have been pushed aside because they are classical artists.

This lack of imagination among the planners who disdain our leading artists is confirmed by the choice of the site for the arts center. It is a place already burdened with a large ugly building, the New York Coliseum, and it suffers from inadequate transportation facilities. More than that, the project is not part of an arts plan for the Greater New York Region with its 16,000,000 population. Such a scheme would have

an opera house to every 1,000,000 population, a ballet or opéra comique theater for every 500,000 and a repertory theater for every 250,000; they would be so placed that no part of Greater New York would be without its opera, drama or ballet. It would call for government subsidies, and as the government subsidizes everything from the oil business to newspaper distribution, it is time the arts had their share. The modern of the future, unlike today's timid efforts, knows that the community must have the glory which the arts alone can give.

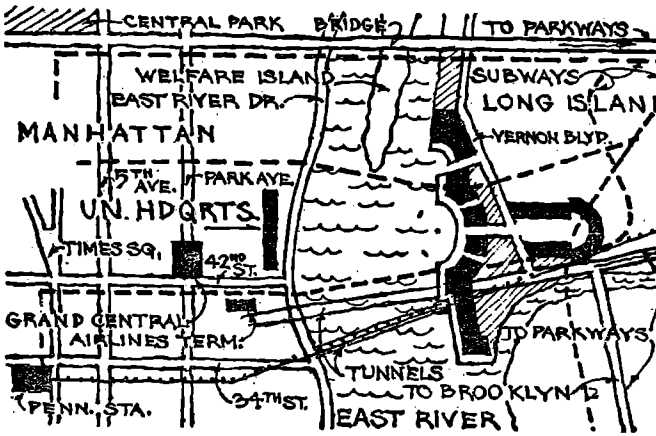
Let us accept the classical aim as men like Bosworth, Brown, Delano or Gréber would approach it, and see how it would meet the needs of an arts center. The present opera house would be left untouched, for it must serve Manhattan. Secondly, other more practical sites would be sought for so ambitious a project. The most important complex in New York today is that of the United Nations; there is an ample site opposite (suggested to the author by Mr. Clark McLain), on the other side of the East River. Its name is Hunter's Point, a part of Long Island City, only eight minutes from Times Square by subway.

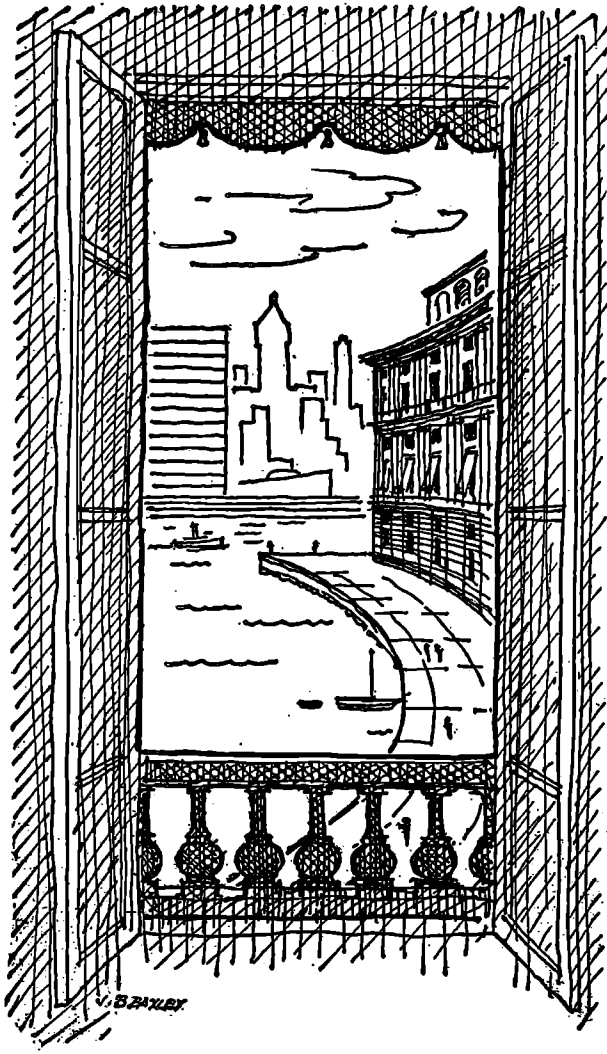
Here are the factors in its favor. From Newtown Creek north to the Queensboro Bridge the river frontage is held in a few parcels. It is at present given over to light industry with few residences and multiple dwellings. The last point is important because the relocation of its inhabitants would present less of a problem than those on the site chosen by today's "Modernists." It is close to the fast-growing population of Long Island. It would serve the Borough of Queens which at present has no facilities for the arts. It is accessible to Brooklyn and the Bronx, in addition to Manhattan. The transportation facilities are unequaled whether by car, rail, subway and even water. Beyond all this, it commands one of the great views of the Manhattan skyline and it has the river front unburdened by a "bullying" highway. Last, there is the presence of the United Nations, announcing that the arts are for all.

The map and designs which follow are a visualization of the "modern of the future" at Hunter's Point. (The text continues on page 150.)

Plan of the National Arts Center at Hunter's Point, Long Island City, New York

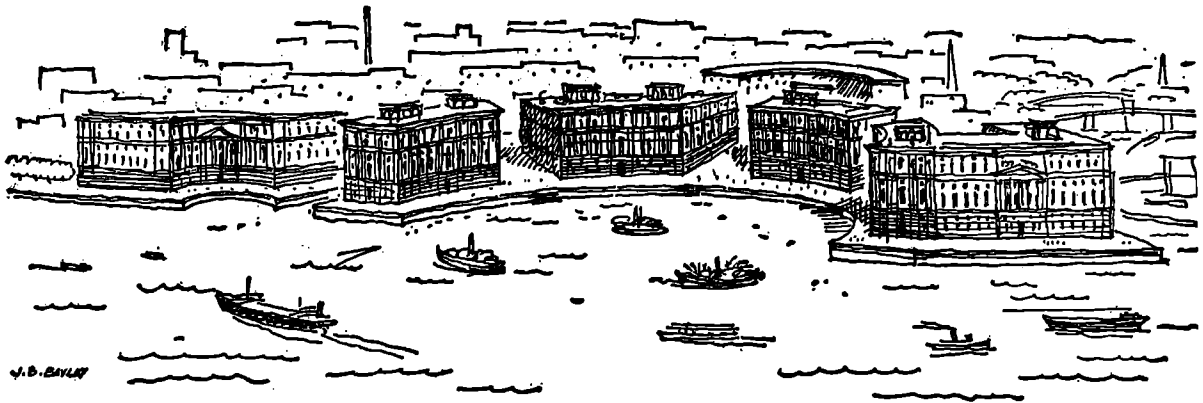
This is one of several possible solutions in the classical manner by John Barrington Bayley. The giant exedra, radiating avenues and adjoining square are set on an axis facing the United Nations Headquarters. The Hunter's Point freight yards of the Long Island Railroad have been moved from their present site to a point further south.





View from a Window at Hunter's Point

A classic frame—in proportion—for a classic view. In the foreground the esplanade and water, with a façade articulated with the Orders. The prospect of the United Nations Secretariat, the New York Central Building and other Manhattan towers fills the background.



A Panoramic View of Hunter's Point

An elliptical basin is bordered on one side by palatial buildings and a promenade with steps going down to the water. On the river's center stone boats mark the off-shore limits of the ellipse. Crowded with watery personages—naiads, mermen, etc—the boats toss up panaches of white spray. The whole forms a public place in which to wander and enjoy the view. Ample transportation facilities keep traffic at a minimum and away from the water's edge.

Another View of Hunter's Point

A vista of the central part of the ellipse. In the distance, a triumphal arch-water gate set in a building bestrides the main axis joining the ellipse to the crescent on Vernon Boulevard. In the foreground, *La Barca,* a stone boat, marks the off-shore limits of the ellipse. Neptune and his court of nymphs, mermen, mermaids and naiads ride the royal yacht, carrying off an obelisk stolen from Thebes.

A square or a series of squares would be strung along the river bank, either semicircular in shape or three-sided, with the open end on the river. They would be arranged as if they were auditoriums of a theater with the river and the skyline forming the stage and backdrop. The opera house, theaters, apartment houses, public housing, loft buildings, universities or whatever structures are needed could be fitted into the scheme. People of all income groups could find homes here; special provision would be made for the present inhabitants of Hunter's Point, and there would be no segregation on income basis as is now practiced. Towers balanced by low buildings would create a new water front and skyline to be viewed from Manhattan, and an area would be transformed, as was Park Avenue in the 1920s, by the device of covering over the railroad tracks on the site.

The square or squares would serve as an open-air theater on national holidays to observe fireworks or to offer an official reception for some high dignitary on a state visit to the United Nations, a triumphal water route to show off the city.

There would be sites for arches, rostral columns, plain columns and obelisks, and the buildings would be decorated both inside and out with painting and sculpture. Unlike today's "Modern," which exiles the fine arts from projects of this kind, the sculptor and painter should be on the board of design—men like Allyn Cox, Edward Laning, Paul Manship and Ralph Menconi. (No painter or sculptor has been consulted in the Lincoln Square project.)

It has the pretension of being a vision in the Grand Design, where the arts come forward to feed local and national patriotism, the *pietas* of the ancients, with statues of heroes and pictures of heroic allegories. Here the nation could boast of its arts, the *visual* along with the musical and the dramatic. Here the American people could bid a superb welcome to the United Nations, offer an artistic expression of their faith in world government and confirm, as if to say "This is our mark," their longing for world peace.

On Chicago's South Side, in Boston's Back Bay, on the New Orleans water front, in Washington, D.C. along Pennsylvania Avenue, in every city where there are redevelopment plans, and even in suburban shopping centers—on all sides—the opportunity is there to build in the grand manner. Whenever a new project is outlined, classical designs must be offered along with the "Modern." Given the chance, the classical will capture the public imagination, something no recent effort has done, and that includes the design of the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs.

First of all, let the federal government support the arts

and continue its own classical tradition of building, lost since the war. Unfortunately all American embassies and consulates built today are in the so-called "Modern"—a costly blunder on the part of the nation, for they will have to be rebuilt when the federal government looks once again to its heritage. There need be no worry about finding the architect, the painter, the stonecutter, the decorator, the marble carver, the wrought-iron worker, and all the other artists and artisans needed; they will come forward when called. The new classical will have all the advantages of the latest materials and construction techniques. Steel and concrete now cover spaces unapproached fifty years ago. Air conditioning permits interiors of untold luxury where precious materials will keep their quality without being cursed by dust. Bulldozers, special dump trucks, scrapers, all the machinery which makes construction so much easier is at hand, and new inventions add to the equipment every day. Instead of restricting the bold construction of our time to the bare functional, the new classical will clothe it with all the splendor in its power, and architecture will once more become an art. Too many chances have already been lost. Let us hustle the contemporary "Modern" to its grave and pass on to the modern of the future.

A circular window frame in full relief stucco.

THE END OF STORY IN THE NOVEL

Arlene Zekowski and Stanley Berne

Formerly a lecturer in French at Queens College, Arlene Zekowski has a graduate degree from Duke University and has traveled widely on the Continent. Stanley Berne is a graduate of Rutgers University and the University of Illinois, with a graduate degree in psychology from New York University. They both live near New York. A novel by each author appeared in 1954 in the joint volume, *A First Book of the Neo-Narrative*. Mr. Berne and Miss Zekowski have lectured and read from their works at the Museum of Modern Art and to university groups throughout the country.

Note: *The following condensed section from* Cardinals and Saints—*a volume of essays dealing with the aims and purposes of the arts in our time, on which Miss Zekowski and Mr. Berne are now at work—serves to introduce excerpts from their novels:* Phenomena, *by Stanley Berne, and* Decorations as for Prayers, *by Arlene Zekowski.*

from CARDINALS AND SAINTS

. . . Literature is made with words. If the old arrangement has grown stale, if it takes too long to read a book because the author is all *air* and *toufju* before he puts down and concludes what you already know, then it is time that new forms be created out of words. It is time to kill a narrative that you know everything about, and create new stories (which are only forms of sensory experience and not the novel, as such) out of new forms, and new forms out of the sensory experience of the modern world.

When we look at a painting we do not see visual experience from one angle, we see it from many sides. The form is an

exercise where the imagination is allowed to stretch its muscles.

Words too must be rearranged so that the imagination is allowed to go up and down, down and around, inside out, and outside in, stretching and contracting, dilating physically and mentally, bathing our skins and perspiration senses so that the pores of excitement fill our literary vistas, uniting outdoors with the indoors, allowing the indoors of unknown secret yearnings of right made mighty and glowing and full, pushing out the unsatisfied stresses and concerns of the multitudinous inner secret existences and songs and possibilities and all the multitudinous ugliness of beauty and the beauty of ugliness, the negations, the affirmations pushing and stressing, and forming and gelling new discoveries through the exercise of rearrangement in language, so that language becomes meaningful, meaningful because functional, functional because satisfying and fulfilling us in the way of discovering for ourselves discoveries of new truths in ourselves, in a song and form appropriate to tell us of our exploits to be, and which *are*, and not exploiting forms and purposes that have no meaning for us today.

Our homes describe us and place us in new spatial arrangements where we take pride in being no longer enclosed, but feeling part of a different more expansive universe than the victorian one. Our literature must revivify its forms and allow the tools: the adjectives, the verbs, the nouns, to intermingle and rearrange in a new plastic sense so that words, as the material of language, become meaningful, so that the page becomes alive with a million strange beauties and difficulties: strange because true and difficult because strange.

Let us get away from the horizontal novel which lays out its plot on a frame that leaves us nothing but the skeleton of an experience that once had flesh but that is now dead and in its coffin. We must lift ourselves from the pedestrian wastage of following a straight line, page by page, numerically, to the end of our book. Because sensory experience has no end! It is *in continuum*. It has no vacuum: and because every line that you *think* is straight, eventually curves in and over . . .

Every page of the new narrative must be alive with narrative, where the tools of language once more join in the sexual union of their proper marriage and allow the genes of discovery to allow for new arrangements; so that the product is a continuum of beauties on each page; so that you can stop and linger and not hurry, and observe the view of the contours, and not object to the fact that the new form is not the mummified Latin phraseology that squeezes your brain cells like a coffin, but allows, instead, that freedom for indi-

vidual discovery on the part of the individual reader; so that what we *obtain* from the new kind of novel will be what the reader *brings* to it, what the author throws away as so much waste—: so that the page, the word, the line sings essentially its valuable weight and essence, its precious essence, of phrase by weight of phrase . . .

from PHENOMENA

CHAPTER 30

To lie in the neck for perhaps six hours.
To be alive.
In some. The fur on the outside keeps it living longer.
The co-habitation may last for three-quarters of an hour.
Open the windows and do not sweat.
—The object *is* to sweat.

To lose O eagle O thankless O giant O wing-spread and far-eyed O stars that have no warmth O sky cold and gray O city hard and swaying trolleys and trolleys that do not sway and are painted green. O people having no faces and bodies that do not shake and revelers trying to forget their faces and having furs to keep them warm and cold and clear their blood and their holes hard and caked and steamed out and therefore thirsty and have a home and no heat and cats gray are not children and warm to the bosom an organ of a man that can climb the places of the urn are wet and need the creepers feelers and young it is not too late and open book and be read and give away and not plan and O eagle lead and bold and flight and who are saved for flight and who are free and fetters of the eagle wing and hand that cruel are claw and break and preserve and crouch and carry off as quarry as food of bird and beast and blood and the virgins that sad indoor their barrels empty as the beauty fats the glob the glory of the fats knob and purple hanging open like a bounty as a prayer that Christ or any child to receive in his mouth the earth mined and made under-skin that grows even to the proportion of the eagle who has remarkable and yellow talons that easily seize a roe or a kid or eagle mountain sweeps the sky and soars and was a child once and glory as the soul of a giant and an eagle is young and the head like an egg easily cracked and not to be sucked and eaten and not born to waste or to lose

what the air and sun have made for him as slow and glory to be held as fat she leaks full and the baby cleanses and siphons off her fat her food her perspire that calls out more beneath her as she fat and glory to her person full and used and center and *Woman* glory as the eagle full as tree root and firm and sky warming and feeding and soaring like a woman full bosom and fat full wing covered and feathered and spread for kill and flight.

CHAPTER 31

To speak quiet and round the earth is the sweet the tongue that know of sand and salt-lick that must invade that derrick that oil in his sand down the long lines the steel girders made of earth are false ugly men lose their limbs burn their hands that dry hole after digging and slow to age are the youth and try and persevere and try and dig down.

No love soft cherish no shake no child no birth no warm cough or bundle to care for. No work that live soul near are hard and ask that the wets give and dry off, get wet again.

Glory and sad that paper, this pad to tell the song of a dull week of work of a dull song to match the eye starved for a swamp of green of pink of corseted flesh.

Where to dig that costs, where to root down.

The live things are made for the sky and standing still, tho they wear furs of feathers lapped one on the other and soft white and gray down near the breast and parts like a turkey the power of soaring is gone the cold in the chest and nose and breathing is to lurch the chest up at each breath and wheeze as a king with ruffled feathers is sick, is standing still, not understanding sickness.

Smooth sweet root of paper. Sweet flight of air. Soft velvet love to lie the head collect mad with envy and energy.

The pour every day barrel of energy seeks to fly the hair, each hair straight and clean back to the head having primped.

Where the fat glory feed to feed those of whose spirits are the eagle, the children of the eagle are caged, wheeze for breath, cough, are treated like prisoners.

CHAPTER 32

Each far gone field want with no delay to lie the sun green the leaf rot and smell the air turn as cool the lie the carpet

wet and rot beneath to prepare and shadow death comes with a broken back.

The machine breaks and she drives. The little ones are safe.

Where were they made? Were they wanted?

What black crippled mad race round in dull fear that the dogs like wolves sense a victim in a hated cat and pursue and smell death running round fear gone stomach gone only the sight of death is a black writhing shape.

What each day pain the graces gone the lines on his face.

Voice. Noise. Speak. Soft. Sound. Hollow. They dance. Cheap. To buy sound. They do not speak or sing, they observe and are the audience.

CHAPTER 33

Drama gone.

Sex to go.

Not to go where the younger eye was prayer to follow and hungry traveler dates and palms in the desert was to see a full breast covered with covert cloth.

Shake there.

No longer young.

No subject to be molded. Nor followed. Nor lumped in a ball.

Hunger pursues in a sister's shape that full are strap.

Remembered. He falls tired with her, not her face or form, but like an instrument, plays a tune, and another sings.

Drama.

Color.

Flowers are to go.

Sun.

Gray desired.

No rhythm. Sound is to be sad.

Gray. Chorus.

The actors have no voices.

They are to stand still.

They speak but no authority nor rings of ownership nor name but only shadow souls move as they moved before to fall and be bought and those who buy and those who sell perish.

Family falls ties.

No ties hold.

No places are seen.

They move small peasant ordered to do what they are capable and so are fed and close mouthed are never rewarded but small rooms the eagle sick of claw golden the eagle fat and turkey and fevered and desiring thinks that the stone is cold and his cave where the eggs of the season fall and long the fallopian way and red walls the shades of green or red are to cover the walls like tapestries as the egg the journey *in season* and fall to the stone floor and in this season are the eagles brought back to learn again.

Fast eye of flight cruel that suck are pierce are to eat are soft heads to crack and the blood raw and meat to cut with a nose hooked and desirous to eat and stick and color red as the beak takes on the burnished hue of many victims.

CHAPTER 34

Having their place.
Walk.
Small share of the sun.
The earth's breast full but where to lie the head. She has faith. Faith is the love shines like agate cat's eyes.

Death black the pain of shadow dogs scent it and feeling it, is the food recently eaten to turn in a lump for re-entry into the throat.

So, voice.
Seldom heard.
Circle of people small.
Possessions almost nil.
Sky gray.
Earth hard once more.
Trees are owned, once seen.
They operate aspirate the smell of the beets of sugar are white and fat.
And green thick rug leaves use the air.
Shining are the lumps crystals of sugar.

CHAPTER 35

Narrow as the cages, are the eyes far, are pierce are to see only gloom when the gloom and gray and hard as the rain the outdoors of sky low are to see far and hear little and eyes like ropes see far as every shape is neat and warm as lions the eagles crowd and wings and legs covered with leather golden skins and fur are to walk lope dance the air is weight and owned to them the trees are born out on

the bosom deep and glades of green and wet and mystic scene of air is gray and wet and fear that mouth blind and a place to sleep and hide and the wings break try and fly the bounds and sniff and live together.

Chapter 36

Why have subjects escaped, and thought to grasp and flights hard are the wings broken? Do the feathers fold and hand and difficult to manage and jump the heavy body to the usual heights of others who do not care for these kings and bring them after capture?

What vitamin lack what sights owned, so small that food for the teeth to chew and alone are to feed and fear that leaving this position will mean to fall.

Haunt of death is black the shape dance its last that brain agitates the last waves sound and long the broken paths that black shape of fear gone dead at the rear that a moment before death was ready to battle loyally and arch its back and fight the domesticated dogs who sniff and warily approach and smell death and fear that platform is shallow that slaves are dressed soft flesh she wears that neck and the back of the arms hang and shake and soft of white hair and a white body and lose they walk in the door to have a good time and honor the writer of cheap words for the ears are capable and hear sad songs and gross pictures and hard sculpture that looks like the real thing and hard to earn are the dragged out pictures of the arm tired and working, desperate and smelling of the black fearsome sickly shape of black death that broken back connections gone that hang and jumps for the last dance of shaking death and fear and pain and small black shadow that the dogs smell and jump move close and walk away sheepish, nose to the ground in shame as the body limps as water hot and flesh yet, but cooling fast, lies with the head finally the last to lie small skull and black shadow on the ground, not even knowing it is cold and without sound, dead voice already, no pain, to be lifted limp and die on the hearth of a warm tree that lives and water deeps and penetrates and takes and sucks and absorbs all the water coming its way that aspirates the tree at the leaves to purify the air and keep (those alive) who are, for the moment of death that bloodless (that is, there is no break in the skin) so that clean death is black and slick as a shadow danced its last,—one moment alive unthinking,—the next, its head sink slowly broken and given up, the limp water sway-

ing broken and awash against its broken bones, the fur sheen and intact, so there is no splashing outside.

CHAPTER 45

Small the hand.
Employs itself with very little.
The eye fills. But the same sight.
A bed is the night.
Routine is the flesh.
To fit. The new-brain is a fresh color.
The blood for the food.
Chews, but soft teeth.

The swallow. Heat has invaded the throat. The tissue dried. Do not easily recover the inventions and machines are shared and powerful to destroy what heat is needed to surround the body.

Warm. The imagination plays the sheik and falls as warm the thoughts of the house the parlor the labia the swell the fetish and magic that words are not said but *felt* between they walked outstretched as a carpet and worn to find the skin gone the covering was broken and invaded and deeper was the room inhabited once and walls curetted a great lesson in sex makes it fear that dry loss are the rings of the flesh like a tree that grows on the face round the eyes and sweetens the air as glance bold and eye the open share that flesh wants and gives as night the sheik the pirate attacks and ships and water as they derrick and routine and invade and share the lands that even now are being made and walk masked and say nothing but roots are hard and water fills them they are white the starch and sun and air is sugar and made and sun dry and warm fills and below the ground they are pale on the outside and neglect makes their hungers stricter and share mouth are lips warm and tongue that she invades are message warm snake curl are boa and eat and walk as the rings on the body and face with age and years are wet, denied the snake that bed, walks and seizes as a muzzle longs to dip and claws of the lion and the eagle are at rest, then they expand and flex and seize and stand in blood and muzzle down are warm desirous and evil and swell as easily rage and unconnected brains are two that line the skull the cranial parts slow to grow together weave as bone.

Wet. Filth. Flesh-hair. Filth. Wallow. The pig-snout is deep to smell pink and cut open bleed or snot to wet even what it eats and walks and sits and shits in what it lives

and loves and peck and open invade and makes suck and wallow and fat and greases and pouts and pig the snout the snake of evil that *makes* and hollow wet as on the bed the mammon of the flesh filth and desire are mixed as blood and mucous and blend shall white the connections new that spark are clean and pink and easily cut are made as love the blend the foul of desire slow to creep and buy and invade and open as only smell of the pits the arms the bung the leg the wet the glisten the want the fall of desire that eye soft is bent over and reveal swell and fall and soft to share that birth is made wet the naked pink or black that smell fat the nostril of genius that snake is, that calls, warn, victim, waits, sits on a limb resting, a king, the eye of victim out to spot the bit of fur the flesh is warm and steaming (cooked) beneath that muzzle or dainty as a hooked beak as break snap the back the center of feeling as support of chest the cell the denizens of the cavity (of organs) that tick hot and bake and warm the joints so they work and make a reservoir of blood each month that young the other desire young and maw and feed and fat that leaks gives power and want and desire to take and snuggle and use and delight and eat and stand to defend the victim, eaten, steaming, muzzle dipped in blood, whiskers suspending a red drop at each end of its cat face.

Chapter 46

Voice. The breath. The face muscles, the body turn to say that speak of one thought. How the words are made.

—How hard to say.

—*What* conversation says what is felt?

—How do you say it?

—How hard now as growing older.

—What, was youth easier?

—Then. It was free. To walk and sing and have what Hope, purchase, as if defeat was a dream, the others worked, their legs sweated, old, they did their labor as gray flesh, soft of face as he raised his back.

—Did you feel sorry?

—Yes.

—What did you do?

—Wrote about it.

—Did you help?

—What are the helps that are young, when they walk we hear the steps the faces of hair disheveled, the eyes quiet, learning hard, by the body retains the pain sharp and crack the little world around him as they go consuming air, asking

for admittance, having organs that quaff that need to drink, having the growth, the roots, the suck, the want (as thirst).

—What did you do?

—What does one do when one is young?

—Did you see him growing old?

—As others.

—Did he die?

—Did he rise?

—Yes, he rose as the morning, and with no complaint even the soft parts wear as the bones are hard the frame walks and wears away the parts that eat call and circulate and use up and grow older and leave the skin near the surface a gray circulate and vein that clogs.

—What do they do?

—They are expected to do very little. Slowly the eye sinks and takes all that passes and memory passes and collects one thought then another the skin whatever color has deep needs—soft to see, shall be thirst, to dip, the gray skin elephantine and thirsty yet confined as cloth the vegetable fibers enhance the lines and the actions of the body are the eyes that glance as see the shift and pass and collect and slow (even old) the seed begins to collect like a deep fort to observe by the eye out and bending to the sight that spigots of flesh are hot and knead as the hand to touch the instinctive hard muscles of the arms to encircle lecher and the pop of the eye that out as the tongue is still alive shall fasten and deny and walk to church and pray that soul like cards that bear a prayer written and easily sung but deep as she pass the roots of her (even young) are seen.

So that dream of entry when the swan was new, when her neck meant two, when the flock was leg the tall thin feeding flamingos that hoot clarion and call as far the rushes are excited and sifted for food that young born of excitement are fed by filling slowly with eggs pass the fallopian way and flow here from the pink cloud descending that tall thin preening flock of swaying and dipping small skulls, each bearing a long sifting bill.

CHAPTER 47

What earnest swung over to be near and having far the gates walked are pass and bear witness in the words left that feet passed in water are dry the scales of the skin flake in the cold and white heat are the desires for the fields and tilling of the soil that old organs fly are the gold made and eaten as work they shall punch and go by hours as feeding, as the mother limits her food that her breasts sag and heavy are not wanted,

are not glory, are not saved nor the new life shall feed smoothly and partake as the almond, the trees with pecans have a black hull, and soft tho pressed down hard are dry hard to discern are the languages they speak and hearing few words for they are hard to form only one thing, the certainty of the eyes and hair, the arrangements of taste made once in love now animus, hate, fear and dread that hard flake of flesh dry that cake soil that grows barren but rich in pocket, seasonal and crop that ferrets out of beds and thin, or blue (as babies are) to send them here wanted and glory to their souls that now are fear and rubbers put over the weapon before insertion takes great knowledge to prevent what vacuum and nature hates a vacuum and desires are to fill and eat leaves and rich abundance and grow fat and greasy at the nose and soft skin with water and soft to use and easy to inflate and not dry, or alone, not used, as glory deny by dark to exercise what years of caution have prevented them from knowing, each to concentrate on the other like snakes or eagles claws out that deep (by knowing) each other, are the vulnerable spots around the neck, the sides, the haunches, the legs, the knees, and set with eyes to see, want to go and see, like the old man, the eyes out, the tooth-someness of youth that passes perfume and fat and spirit and plunge the old hips again by going home and falling (instead of exhausted) carefully (as an old man) on his wife, not soft, but not hard enough to break his old bones either.

CHAPTER 48

—Did you strike it?
—It is hard now.
—What part was used?
—The parts made before.
—By discipline?
—By search.
—So shall you see the world.
—So glance. It shall be unredeemed, shall pass energy as the eyes see as tough the skin is the organs work and break down fats and spread and pass shadow and hours of years the eyes out that have worked now set to cheat, to pass physical waste that the crops brought to feed, are for the mouth to harvest.

Consume slow. Separate.
Slow. To see small.
The leaves are brown. Their veins dry.
The dry sap the gray trees.
The land hard. The clay bake.
The rain hard.

The air cold in the morning. The pass with full sack energy to work to dream less to cost to read, to pass, to sit shock and beauty pass powdered and on the hour and dress and soft of the green, the sun, the soft roll, the hills formerly that were easy, that the wind, even tho winter, revealed a face, a soft eye, a land of color, owned and fenced, it fell on the eye and was repossessed, born without it, learning to fall walk and eye and paint create as love to amoeba out to envelop the eye the fat collect and digest of sweets and sugars made out of sun and air.

To have gazed at last (a number of years) upon the body and size altitude shock and alert and close to size and black and white and sepia and hot photos and breast and clothed and unclothed and seas hot and suck down young mothers to their middle age, one breast hollow (and active) that the young are given of this earth, the hollows riches drawn and *yearn* to draw more: a soft face. A powder. A smell. Nose. Paint lip. Shadow. Pass as the wake. Walk. Swift. Yet seeing. Pass. O divine want. Pass work. Walk hungry. Purchase. Go where the custom is and yearn for green for soft, of the eye alert and full and electric and breathe the air and carry the head as a sentence, the days pass very painfully and slowly and yet the weeks are quick and the year is in the offing.

from DECORATIONS AS FOR PRAYERS

CHAPTER 12

For weary wearing. As for cast. The prime. And pride of hue. The grown. Frown. Carrying. As care. The call. And ask for. Aching. Inch of. In the burst. Which thru. As thoroughly. Rides over. Immanent. Manures. The seed.

I would. If weedling. Just for other. Of a time. Bridge. Bridges. As the lines. For fish. And ask for more. As bait. The will. The entering. Where prongs lie. Hidden. Or the open. Of the sky. That grates in wings. The eagles cape. Their prey upon. So open. Flurry is a cast. The rainbow masking. Bridge. And fly. Awhile. The down. As near between. One end of. Hovering. The blood-red. Hurry. In the flesh. The talons crawl. And buckle over.

Keel. As eye. The see. That far. Betokens. As a token. Cruel. The lovely. Of the sharp. For squeezes. As the never. Ever seeking. Otherwise. For must of. Musters. To survival.

All that must. The ache of. In the glory. And the flesh. And fetch. As the hurry. Scurrying. To seed. The ant-hill. Breeding. Mole. And mackerel in the sun. In cages. For the beast. To pride. And prie. His noon. His mid. Between the hour of. The hungry. Hunter hunted.

Where you flash. And watch. The notice. Of a tail. Or limb. The jaw. And flashing. Prong. The tongue lipped. For the seed. Depositing. To flag within. The female of the hole. So. Waiting. Is. Long. Ridden. Rid of season. In the esters. That the heat of is. As necessary. To be rid of. As the multiply. Fills tables. In the animal. And larder is. As larder. In the all. The everywhere. The flesh new. Eating. Realms itself. The answer. To the sudden. Thrusts itself. The question bought. And marked. Where appetites. The herd. And eagles. Is a flash. For seasoning. The targets' ring.

Where notice. And the word of flash. And furrowly. As hole. The fur. That must awhile. To murmur. Burrow. Hidden. Is a smell. And beagle. Eyed. As let-up. Match struck. Waiting. Fumbles on the limb. The scurry over. Gripping.

Where the wail. I ask for. For the parting. Disappearance. Is a story. And a season. And a seed.

The even egg. The long between of. In the fill. And sudden breaking. Cones. And prides. And licks. As liquid. Liquidations gather. Muster. In the cluster. Ferments. In the milk. The heady. Over wine.

I would. To reason. As to break. No other seeing. Vision is awaiting. As it must. No other ether. Vaporizes. Asks for. As the tumble. In the spheres of. Convolutes. To reason. In the asking. Particled. To chain.

To breed. As all. The wherewithal. The hope. And primate. Ants between. One end of. As the other. The idiot. The laughing end of sorrow. As the joy-bent. Breaking brain. The other stream. Of portion. In the rare of artistry. The man. The woman. And the rest of. In between. The two extremes.

So flowering. Is wait for. For a time. As all of bent for. Wondering. As ask. A shudder. Thrilling. And the all-gall. Terribles. As crowd. The push of life. The fester. In. The death. The never. Rattling. As the stench. This hell of. In the breaking. Is. The paradise. The we must fill it. As we can. And pull out stones. To find. As roots. That crushed. Lie waiting. For the green. You can to pour. And juice. The hearty. Of the beating brain. And laughing. Water. As the

idiot. The blood. The rich. And molecule. And corpuscle. And bone. And pilaster. To cell. The seed. And house. And window. Where a poem pores. Long. And large. And beaming. As a thorough. In the flesh. The crude of sculpture. Kilns. To prove. The form.

Why lovely. Must the barren. Break. Why horror. Is a jell. That seeds. The verbals. And the nouns. Integument. To cone. And form. The rubberizing. Macadam. That hardens. Furnitures. As egg. And ant. And wasps. Societies. To grasp.

Why lovely. Must it be. Manures. As smell. The full. And fill of. Stench cigars. As paper. To the wind. The leaves. The autumn breaks. And figures. From the canvas wind.

Why must. Why will of. Why the law. The rule. And parallelogram. And hectosphere. And line. The curvicle. And bend. And time. That spaces off its own wind. Dies its birth. And berths itself. To sleep. The live again. To fester. Into flesh.

Why love. The need to be. As now. The glory. In the two formed. Man of woman. Breed. And cycle. In the fly. And walk. The gracefully. To kneel. As knead. As dough. The flesh. The feeling. Aching. Struggle. In the crumple. Rising.

This. The yeast. The glory over. Feel. Believes itself. To rise. And is. As soul. The taste. And muster. To the swallow. And to more. The portion. Of it. Segregates. For asking. As desire. Is. As fill. And still fulfills.

I wonder. As I prowl. And ache for. Crying. In the laugh. That fills. And knows myself. Its soul. And wonders why the pain. Is beauty asking. For the form we know not. Ugly is. As beauty does. The new. The dull thud. Beating. For surprise.

This shake-to. Shake-a-long. The dull thud. Cassidy. That knows. Stills. Thicks his tongue. The patience. Breaking. Laughs its own slow breath. And fills. And knows. As Lazarus. To rise. And shine the world again. When shivers. In the bore. And meaningless. It wails for. Not to know. But nonetheless. Accepting. For it must. The flash. The radiation gathers. As the cast. And magnet. For the life. To live again. Awhile.

The brick. And mortar then. Is pause. As space tells. Seasons. Every clause is where. The bend. That time takes. Reasons in its sway. And curve.

The curvature. To spine. That bend. And hollowly. To bear. Is straightener. For rule. And cognizance. The new.

That forms. And gathers. Bearing. As the forms. That fall. To riddle. Wise again. Desires.

What if. One. And two. Desires. Still. Their more of flash. As suction. In the flesh. They bear. So know. As call. And wary. Of the seed. They prove of.

I have to be. To tell. The full of fire. In the dim. That launches. As the dragonbreed. That swims. Or flies. The sky is over. Under. As the earth is. Sphered.

The convex. Like a cankerball. So smells. And wears its welt inside. And waits. To fester. In the carbuncle. That tells another race. And story. In its storying. Of more.

Why all beside of. In the ask. And scurry. Over tells. As tales flash. Wag. Their wills. And whiskers. In the scratch. Perplexity. So gathers.

So gathers. Gathers. As its seed. The wait. The whittle. As the berry. Seed. The red. It must. For winter. Prickles. As it tells. Its flash for. More. And more.

Chapter 13

For glory. As I seed. The weeds that. Weeding after. Try. And rise. To crawl again. The ground. Stream. Running over. Ground.

If arroyos. In the bed they were. And dry. To shale again. The flask. And buttress. Cupping into. Mouths. And urns to fill. Where silver gathers silver. Waters speed. And winnows. Where the flash is. Hurriedly. To miss. As splice. The water wheel. That juices after. Churns. The air. Moves. Doughs. The vapor. In the rise. Of ground.

This land. These tributaries. To the offshoot. Cloud. And clasp. For needle. Thins. The eye. The all revolving. Planetary. Iris. And its satellites. For long. Reflections gather. Round the moon. The visionary. In the far. And sharp. The lovely. Biting. As the eagle. Preys upon. Its quarry after.

As the float. The on upon. For keel. And rudder. As the shelf lies. Bottomwise. The gas. That under. Flies. To flood. The sinking. In the rise again. To islands. As to dreams.

Where castles. Where they were. No longer are. As fall is opposite. To sky the mound. The Jack and Jill. And pail. They filled. With stones. To Tantalus. Is fruit. For thirst again. The same one. Old. Or young. Or never. Ends. Begins again. The round. As any other chain. Explosions.

Where the quake. And the strata. And the silt. The swamp. And all erosions. To the moss. And flying. Is the ether. In

the seed. The seeking. Where the thin. By fanning. In the tail. Of birds of paradise. Or earth. The slant to mud. And scum. The loveliness. The slippery. Of eel. And sting again. That sharp. In spreading fans. The ground palmetto. And the old. The silvery. Of mask. And still. The same bayou. And smoky. As a turn is. Quarry for the birds. And rice. To feed. And drip. In lymph. And soak. And sugar. After cane.

The burnt crisp. Rising of the land. And sugar softness damp. And utterly. To flats. And lovely. Fluted. As a bugle. Silently. To form. The shape. And dream of. As a murmur. In the swamp. Spread. Mossed. And mussed. For wet. And wanting. As the holes lie. Inward. To the mud. The prickle bearing cone. And spread. The where banana fruits. And spreads. And drips. As sticky. As the sap lies. Green. And vegetal. And dead-alive again. Where winter summarizes. In the sermon. In the quiet. And the lush. And soft. And all bed. Mistress. Open. To the lover. Of his land.

Where the bugle. Bent for. Suddenly. As quietly. The dog that after bird. Preys down upon. The owl eagle. Both delays. For waiting. Is their perched experience. To pause upon.

The even after sleep. The lull. And softly. As the cloud dry. Skies. The east wind. And tornado. Grasps. The clasp. Embracing. In the grip. And kidnap. Blow. That ransoms after silence. Which it cannot stand.

If love is. As it fills this spreading. And the green dank. Musk. For which is spread. As oil. Upon. The waters that you share. And know not. While it drives you. Bitten. By mosquitoes. Shudder. In the shiver. Of your pride. And wonder lazily. In some hot afternoon. That grips. And hardens to the breath. Wrung. Dry. No moisture breaking. But your eye. The wet. Upon the iris. Flooded. Hard to see it otherwise. For feel it. Strongly. As you must. And choke upon. While even as the hand. For anger. Slaps the hard mosquito. That it kills.

Where no such water gathers. Is a desert. But the colors that it draws. Draws glare. The mirage. Foolishness. Which must. You must believe. For all is. As the absence. Which it lacks. But does not ask. Imagination breathes it. Just the same.

The silt. And sand bed. And the clay. That hard or sticky. Broils itself. And shambles into. Fragments. As the leaves. That read the pages. Or the bones.

What talus. Can it point to. Or the mesa. Spread. And ample. As the sun bakes. Loafs. And loaves crack into fis-

sures. That they are. To tell of where. Once. Thanks was given. To the wind. By mountains. As they ate. The yeast. That glaciers rose. And fell. And stayed. To be descended. By the rain.

As the ladle. Squared. And ate away. Its pot. The land froze solid. Lapped. The lava. And the suction section. That it left. It bedded.

All the earth. As after. Of before. The moon. That. With its craters. Is the same. As old. The hairy. Of the neck. In bumps. And Adam's apple cored. As young. The *boscs*. Of antlers. In the pre—. Before they came. The deer. They butted into. Blooded. Into trees. That peeled the cells. The dry skin bleeding. So. The land. Bled. Red. The rockiness. From fatted moss. To dry. As bone. As childless. As the seed. It kneaded. For the pillows. To the buttocks. To the shafts. Its elevated marble. To the sides.

The dolomite. The river beds to. Is still more. The same tall finger. Bare. And waiting. Questions. For the long line. Asking. To be told. The reasons why. Alone. Must be alone. The fragments after.

As before. Then. Which it once was. As a day. To hours. And to shores. The place where hours left. To space. The curvature. The incline. That we cannot yet believe. Points atoms. To the sun. Where from. They once were. As the same. As always. As after. As before. The length. Breadth. Width. Of moment. Area. And question breaking. In the long shot. Upper. Conscience. Of the thought. Created. Universe. To feel. As reach its speed. That never moves. Unless you move it to yourself. As sky is always where you see. Whatever of the ether. You believe. Is just a way. Of holding what you own. Is held. As anyway. The thought runs. There. Is fixed. By what itself is. Utterly. The essence. What you utter it. To be.

Chapter 14

As of roaring. And the motion. Stirs. The off. Which. Suddenness. To feel. The on upon. For time for. Never flourishes.

I. While my going is. As try. For answering. A little. But awhile now. Never seeks. For answering. Withholds. As times. To fly in.

Where. With the way spent. Narrowed. In the little bit of inch of. Ruling. Where the file. That ledgers off the numbers. Redevises. And imagines. As the picture stands. To change. And add. Subtract. Or debit. Where the credit lies. Too soon.

Too often going. Is a time for. Spending. Where the same miscarries. Shuffles. And a fall is stopped. As banisters. To slide. And sidle down. The polish of the apple of the egg. The blush. The kerneling. Is spared.

Why dare. Why even vaunt. Or wonder why. Or if so. If it is. Discloses. That. By thought. And pause. A murder stops. For love. Caresses. Where the pinch. Too sudden. Starved. Finds bone a hard nut. Refuses. If to crack. Beneath. The teeth. Are spare.

That other motion. Pause. And well the worth. The answer in. As ring. And fair arousal. To espouse. Where selfish is alone. No couple. But a single of the wrench. Lies pain. And silently. As is.

The caring for. That by a wish for. Subdivises. Adds as fractions. Where the memory must pride. And willingly. As tongue. As nervously. As must. The all. The loud. As verbal is a way. To say the sentence. Pay the thought. As prove. That greenbacks. End the pause.

Why grant. Why. Surely. As a while is. For the crowd. The stare. Monotonous. To know. To say. The fame. And rudder. Rudiment. To fly. Alone. The which is. In the midst of. Clouds. Foreshortens. As the beam. That radios. Surprise is. Of the truth. Prepared. And taken. For the fame. The knowing. Long before. Before becomes. The after. Now. And then. To later. While. To by and by.

This then. You smile. And sweep the crowd. There. Little bit of. Great. They are. And seemly. To be cast for. Of their roles. As sure. As blind is. Of the question. That they dare not answer. But by proud. As ignorance. To know is. Of the gossamer. Of web. The colors. That a rainbow prides. To tell the hidden. Where the cup of gold is. That you know is there.

If. Lovingly. They cast aside. Devour. With the surge. The beating of their blood. Is. As the radiance. The radiation. Of their sure. The furthering. Their need of. Shoulders. For the passage in. Electrifies. The need.

Why pause. Why doubt. They wait awhile. For sure. As you. Or I. Or he. Looks. Over. Angels. By the shoulder. Hold you. When is passed. The present. In the weary. Of the rise. You leave. As fall. As failure. Maybe. Even. As it seems. Most. Often. To the few. Who know. Who end reverberations. With a hammering. Theirs ever. Everlasting. As the pine is wooden. So they are. But it is you. Who wear as green.

As green. Who is. For never. As the colors. Blind. To see them. Any other shade. That hues. Hews utterance. To black. To whiten. In the name. And proverb. That believes. And points to periods. As ends. Devised by ends. To meet. As means. No other way. But theirs.

Why understand. Why try. Unsay. Their joy. That joy is not. An ordinary dying. Is their way to laugh. The sourball. They suck. Their dim decay. And sweetball. For their weary of their why they must. Because. Is reasons for their fall. That constantly. In Sundays. Hits their pride. The preacher. Soaps. An opera. On their dial of. That's my dream.

Oh. That. All. As merry. Mounts. And spirits. In their rise. And love of. In the dark. And dim of. Mysteries. And ages after. As the if. And when. And on upon. For more. They. Much as merry. Is the sorrow. And the sigh. That meets for. To retell. Another dream.

Why rhythms pause. Why sure. Why going. Greater. As they fled. The floodedness. That tells. That songs them. Birded. In the wing. And horn. The talons. In their prick. And perch. For worms tell. Drooling. Baited. By their belly. All of rings. For pride. For wanting. As a suction. Powers. In the hole.

The tee-off. Is the way. The where the eye. The move. And motion. Calling. And the flesh. As limb. And limber for it scurries. Washes. Dishes. For the end of time. As moon flies over fiddle. In the sleep. That night cannot disturb. Because it does. Disturbs the cow from milking. As it teats instead. And treats us. Dancing. To the fiddle. In the rye.

In the muddle. In the thick. The mud. And stickiness. The wet. As rain. And nasty. As it stays. The days and days. The same pile. Dishing high. The noon. And after noon. Of Sunday. And the sight. And wondering. How when. The all the days. The laboring. It takes. To keep alive. And why. As night. By hour. And by star. And forms. That shape themselves away. To never. As the answer is. As ever. As before, As why. The beauty after following. Which muddies. In the gutters. After rain. The still. The still. The pause. The rhythm breaking. Signals in between. The always as the follow. In the still. As silence. So is sound. The thought that. Silly. Must go down. As rise. The hour after. Where the stars have said. And sat. Their way. Moves. Halves the way. To dawn.

Cecil Hemley

A native New Yorker, Cecil Hemley was educated at Amherst College and the University of Chicago. He was one of the founders of the Noonday Press (1951) and is now co-director. Mr. Hemley has published two volumes of poetry, *Porphyry's Journey* and *Twenty Poems;* he also writes criticism and is finishing a novel. He and his wife, the novelist and short-story writer Elaine Gottlieb, live in New York City.

THE NEW AND EXPERIMENTAL

What we need now in literature and in the arts is a revolt against revolt. The immediate past is brilliant, the revolutionary innovators of the last fifty years did their work well, and revolt succeeded. But can their revolution be further extended? Ought we to march under the same banner they did? Can our slogan also be "the new and experimental"?

For a revolution to make sense it must have a purpose beyond revolution itself; it must seek some clearly defined ends. Permanent revolt is no healthier for the arts than for a state. But half a century of revolution has brought us to the limits of art, by which I mean the radical, ultimate, technical limits, not those that a particular style sets for itself. If one goes beyond Kandinsky, there is no picture; emotion becomes pure and inexpressible. If one goes beyond Mondrian, there is nothing to form; there is only the *idea* of form, and this too is incommunicable. These then are true limits. Along these lines no further experiments can be managed.

But if the antithesis of "the new and experimental" is "the old and weary," we cannot go the way of mere reaction. Who will flock to such a cause? Have we then reached the end of all art? It would seem unlikely. There is always, in each generation, more than enough to do. The mid-twentieth century will not differ in this respect from all ages that have preceded it. We are not the "too late born"; we have been born to accomplish our own specific tasks.

But what are these tasks? If we can go neither forward nor backward, we are lost. Yet it may be that our dilemma arises because we consider the problem not from our own point of view but from that of the older generation that we are super-

seding. Not only have we been dazzled and won over by the achievements of the recent past, but we have accepted its polemic as having for us, here and now, absolute philosophic validity, as though the vision of 1912 and 1957 could possibly be the same. The question we must ask ourselves now is, "Need we experiment? Indeed, what does the term 'experiment' mean when applied to the arts?"

It is, of course, obvious that the word comes over from science. Experiment is a part of the scientific method; it is a way of verification. One wishes to discover whether there is ether drag and so one contrives the Michelson-Morley experiment. The experiment shows that there is no ether drag, and hence probably no ether, and that is the end of the matter. Anyone who wishes to verify the results can do so. Art, however, does not concern itself with this kind of fact.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" proves nothing. It was "experimental" in quite another way. From the viewpoint of the Georgians, its prosody was eccentric, and so was the elimination of transitions, and even its subject matter. Out of the Michelson-Morley experiment came knowledge. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is nothing but itself. This does not mean that the poem has not influenced other poets. It *has* influenced them. But its influence can be rejected in a way that the Michelson-Morley experiment cannot. If the question of ether drag is ever taken up again, the earlier experiment will have to be dealt with, but a poet can write as if "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" never existed.

In other words, science is an advancing corpus of knowledge which seeks consistency within its domain. Art is not scientific knowledge, and its particulars can be in violent opposition to each other. Art may also turn upon itself in a manner which is impossible for science. For though there is change in art, there is no progress. Who will dare say that the poets of the present are superior to Homer?

"Experimentation," then, used in conjunction with the arts, is an analogical term. As in the case of most analogies, it is open to gross misinterpretation. We err if we think of the world of art as an enormous laboratory in which crucial experiments are constantly being performed. It is, of course, no such thing. Nor is there anything uniquely excellent in "experimental" art per se. Some periods are traditional and some are revolutionary, but aesthetic merit is not the necessary concomitant of either. Unfortunately, the history of the last fifty years has obscured this simple and basic truth. "The experimental" has been thought of as the new, the new as the good, and everything else has been sloughed off as worthless or inconsequential.

I should like to make it clear that this is no attack upon modern art. It was perfectly legitimate for the young men who came to maturity in the early part of the century to ask themselves the question, "Where do we go from here?" and it was perfectly proper for them to give the answer that they did. Nor do I object to the fact that their slogan was "the new and experimental," although I suspect that they would not have got very far if that had been their only passport to the future.

As Georges Lemaître has pointed out in his excellent book, *From Cubism to Surrealism in French Literature:* "During the last decade of the nineteenth century and the opening of the twentieth a series of correlated discoveries in the field of pure science revolutionized the conception of the structure of the universe that had generally prevailed since about the time of the Renaissance." Suddenly the artists of the twentieth century found themselves in a new universe. The world was not what they had supposed it to be, and in fact the art upon which they had been nurtured turned out to be an expression not of "reality" as they had thought, but only of "appearance." The giants who had preceded them, Zola, Monet, Flaubert, Manet, Degas, etc., etc., had pictured a "false" world. Now the horizons were wider. Art was not at a dead end, as they had feared, but a new beginning. The question, "Where shall we go?" was answered. Equipped with Bergson and the New Physics, modern artists set off.

No wonder they thought of themselves as "experimenters," since the voyage was new and the lands that they sought were strange. Nor were there any formal prescriptions about how their discoveries were to be expressed. One thing, however, was clear: the techniques that had been developed to express the cosmos of the nineteenth century would not do. Invention became necessary. And in the process of invention the masterpieces of the early twentieth century were created.

It was not then mere anti-traditionalism that caused the revolt of such artists as Picasso and Schönberg. Both, as a matter of fact, had proved themselves extremely competent in more conventional forms. Nor was it merely a desire to see where new experiments would lead. Rather, new subject matter required new formal solutions, for, as always, form and content went hand in hand. However, it should be noted that the old subject matter remained, and important traditional art was created at the same time that a revolutionary new art was flourishing.

It is remarkable how quickly the modern movement flowered! In a period of thirty years it passed through fauvism, cubism, imagism, expressionism, verticalism, vorticism, dada-

ism, atonalism, surrealism, etc., etc. By 1930, it appeared to have lost its ability to proliferate any further. The new subject matter had been explored, the old cosmos had been destroyed, and in the process the limits of art had been reached.

Although the "experimentalists" were anti-traditional, although they explored the country of the irrational and the suprarational, they were not entirely disconnected from the art that preceded them. In some respects, they represented its extreme expression. Formalism gave birth to modern classicism. Surrealism and expressionism reformulated the tenets of romanticism. The outermost points of these movements reached into the realm of non-art. It was not possible to go further. On the one hand there was form forming nothing; on the other hand subject matter breaking beyond form into incoherence. This, then, is the predicament of modern art: there is no place to go, but backward.

The questions for us at mid-century are, "Can we, too, experiment as the great innovators did? Need we duplicate their efforts?"

But to go backward is reactionary. It is not experimental; it is not new. The avant garde has never learned the complete drill manual. The command, "To the rear—march," is incomprehensible to it. And so, at last, we have that most ludicrous of phenomena, the new which is not at all new, the experimental mechanically repeated a thousand times.

In this volume of *New World Writing* there appears a piece entitled, "The End of Story in the Novel." The very name makes one think of the experimental magazines of the 1920s. In particular there comes to mind the famous manifesto which appeared in *Transition 16-17:*

> TIRED OF THE SPECTACLE OF SHORT STORIES, NOVELS, POEMS AND PLAYS, STILL UNDER THE HEGEMONY OF THE BANAL WORD, MONOTONOUS SYNTAX, STATIC PSYCHOLOGY, DESCRIPTIVE NATURALISM AND DESIROUS OF CRYSTALIZING A VIEWPOINT. . . .
>
> WE HEREBY DECLARE THAT:
>
> 1. THE REVOLUTION IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT.

That was nearly thirty years ago. *Finnegans Wake* and the writings of Gertrude Stein remain the monuments of that revolution. Nothing that has appeared since comes close to equaling them. Surely not "The End of Story in the Novel." To me, this seems rather like the pieces in *Transition* that

one does not remember, for example Hugo Ball's "Clouds," which appeared in *Transition 21:*

elomen elomen lefitalominai
wolminuscaio
bambula hunga
acyam glastala feirofim flinsi

This is not merely the end of story in the poem. It is the end of the poem. One can, perhaps, get through it once but to read it twice is almost impossible.

Hugo Ball's poem, in a sense, proves nothing. It was a bad poem of its type, and every period and every movement have produced its equivalents. Nor could any conclusions be drawn from "The End of Story in the Novel," if it were an isolated case. But, as I have said, the modern movement no longer appears capable of producing significant work. Instead of experimentation, we get stereotypes. We no longer have to fear the "literary" painting. It is the abstraction that pursues us. Fifty years ago, there were fifty thousand landscape painters. Now they have turned into fifty thousand non-objective "innovators." It is perhaps a little better with literature. Unlike their artistic brethren, the poets can read, and they have seen the handwriting on the wall. The lower case letters have been capitalized, and the verse is not as skinny as it once was. But the epigraphs still haunt us. The historical surveys and references made so popular by Pound persist. And, if you search hard enough, you can still find the intransigents in the mimeograph magazines disproving Croce's assertion that a poet without form is a contradiction in terms. The 1920s live on. But they have grown older.

If art at its limits must be repetitive, then surely we must retreat. Another age may one day return and find new ways to skirt the fringes, but we cannot skirt them. Joyce and Kandinsky and Mondrian have little to offer us. We admire them at our peril. For they have the same relationship to us that Zola and Monet and Degas had to them. They have been too successful in their sphere for us to compete with them. If we come under their influence, we become their imitators. Not that we need be without influences, but for us the more remote influences may turn out to be the more useful. We do not need to know more about the world of the violent and the irrational. Our way is not beyond the limits of reason. We have gone that way already; we know it almost too well. It is the rational and the coherent that now require exploration. If our path is away from the limits, figures more central to the tradition may have important things to teach us. The *vers*

librists will not teach metrics to poets who have forgotten how to scan. Collages will not instruct artists who have never learned to draw.

It is time to say farewell to "the new and experimental." The way back is a way of rediscovery. But it is more than that. Since the realm of form is infinite, no one need worry that there will not be important things to do. All that is required is the genius to do them.

Miroslav Krleza

The author of short stories, plays, novels, criticism, and polemics, Miroslav Krleza is the most distinguished writer in Yugoslavia, though he is not well known outside his own country. Nearly all of his tremendous creative output was done before World War II. Now vice-president of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences, and president of the Lexicological Institute, he is in charge of an ambitious program of encyclopedia-making. "Hut Five B," a short story from his book, *The God Mars of Croatia,* is presented here in a slightly abridged form, for reasons of space. Dorian Cooke, the English poet who translated the story from the original Croat, served for two years with the Yugoslav partisans during World War II.

HUT FIVE B

Translated by Dorian Cooke

In his fortieth year Count Maximillian Axelrode, Comte of the Grand Order of Malta, had been made a *Chevalier de Justice* of St. John, and thus became entitled to wear the silver cross and all the other trappings.

All his life Count Maximillian Axelrode had been possessed of one single idea—to draw his naked sword in the service of the motto of the Grand Order of Malta, *"Pro fide,"* to wrap himself up in the heavy hanging folds of his black cloak, and to hasten to his death with serene and bold countenance. But no! He had been dropped into this world in a cowardly and ridiculous age. Poof! This idiotic age of steam engines, where everything is tied up with railway lines and so-called democracy, and the noble Knights of Malta have to meet in hotels,

wearing those blasted bowler hats, and duels are forbidden by law. Such were the barren lamentations of Count Maximillian Axelrode for sixty-three years; and then one morning he woke up, like a man from a dream. His manservant handed him a telegram from the Council of the Grand Order, informing him that mobilization had been ordered, and that the Grand Order of Malta, true to its grand tradition, was to proceed to some Imperial base, set up its standard with the motto *"Pro fide,"* put up tents, and organize a hospital service. And so Count Maximillian Axelrode became the chief of a large Maltese Order hospital comprising forty-two large wooden huts, its own electric power station, and a whole army of Red Cross nurses, and so on and so forth. The armed forces were continually on the move, now sixty miles to the east, now a hundred and twenty miles to the west, from one phase of the war to the next; and so Count Axelrode and his Maltese circus moved between east and west, from Stanislavov to Cracow and back, for three whole years; and now it was August, the temperature was 120° Fahrenheit in the sun, and the situation was tense and critical.

The hospital was packed to capacity with twelve hundred patients, and everything pointed to the probability that the Russians would cut the railway line right and left, and that the Count, Grand Master of the Order of Malta, would be in Moscow in two weeks. At noon a telegram arrived with the news that the Russians had cut the line in the north between two stations; the hospital was instructed to remain where it was, as a counterattack was in progress. The cutting of the line in the north meant that all the traffic on that line was beginning to move south, and so naturally there was a wholesale skittling-down (seventy-two killed and umpteen wounded), and all the railway transports were left without rations, and the wounded had been shrieking for water for five days, and the only food they got (don't laugh, it's true!) was a ration of worm pills, and all the railway stations along the line had gone raving mad, and so Count Axelrode had to admit into his already crowded hospital another five hundred patients. That particular day was the hottest day of summer, and the flaming vapors of the sun literally pounded the earth, and it seemed as if someone had chucked a burning millstone onto the white wooden huts and everything were on fire. Boards warped and cracked with the arid heat, and distemper from the walls was peeling off like the skin of old men, and the green weeds and tulips in the flower beds had all faded. Everything was rotten, putrefied, crushed.

In the new group of five hundred wounded which Count Axelrode had to admit into his already crowded hospital there

was a student named Vidovitch who was bleeding from bullet wounds in the lungs. In the concrete wash basins stinking yellow water seethed with a lather of green-gray soap, and bloody bandages and cotton wool were swimming about. Cotton wool, pus-sodden and revolting! The steaming water stank of mud and clay, the steam showers hissed, and in the thick steam black figures ran hither and thither, just visible in the fog, and all these human faces were swollen and bloody, and somewhere there was the hum of a power engine; it was midday in the month of August. On a glass table under one of the showers a young man was dying, and over there someone was screaming, the ventilators were buzzing like invisible insects, and Russians wearing khaki shirts were carrying in batches of wounded like so many sacks, and the nurses and the wounded and the doctors had all lost their heads and were shouting and running round in circles.

And so Vidovitch was given his bath in this bloody and muddy hell and taken to Hut Five B, which from the inside looked like the belly of a great barge. With cruel, puritanical pedantry, sixty beds, precisely arranged, stood there, a body on each bed, a ticket on each body so that its condition might be known. The barge interior was divided into three groups. The first group—fractures. (Bones sticking out like splinters. People lying speechless during the day. Only at night were the wounded heard—loud voices from Golgotha!) The second group—amputations. (Arms or legs, or both. Wounds were not bandaged but were left to dry under gauze like cured meat.) The third group, by the entrance on the left—the "extras" group. (This "extras" group was only in transit through Hut Five B, traveling from the bathroom to the mortuary. And when anyone was put into Group Three, everyone knew what that meant.)

When the wounded Vidovitch was brought into the hut and laid on bed Number 8, a Hungarian, a giant of a man in Group One (fractures), spat contemptuously and crossed his fingers.

"No hat, Istenem," he said in Hungarian. "They might as well have taken this chap straight to the mortuary."

"Listen, fellows, a new Number 8 has arrived."

"Number 8. Number 8."

The voice rang through the hut, and many heads were raised to look at the new Number 8. It was true! Life had treated all of them roughly, battered them about. But the important thing was this: even if one had no legs, one wasn't Number 8. One was Number 21 or Number 15.

A Mongolian was lying on Number 7, on Vidovitch's left—a Siberian with a bullet in his head who had been screaming

for three days in agony. He was shouting something or other, hard-sounding vowels, but no one understood him, and everyone thought he was finished, when suddenly he started turning and tossing, and there on the bandage round his head was a bright ribbon of blood which had seeped through.

On the right, on Number 9, a young Slovak was dying with a bullet wound in his throat. His windpipe had been pierced, and he breathed through a glass pipe, and frothy mucous, pus, and clotted blood could be plainly heard gurgling in the little tube.

The whole of Hut Five B began to bet among themselves on the chances of Vidovitch's lasting out till the morning.

"Well, what shall it be? A bottle of brown ale? Till tomorrow morning?"

"It's a deal. A bottle of brown ale!"

The August night fell.

Great stars were kindled, huge and bright, and the mighty blue firmament, like a crystal bowl, enveloped the whole valley—with Axelrode's Maltese Hospital, and thousands upon thousands of tons of burning gases were massed over Hut Five B, and nowhere a breath of wind stirring even for a moment. The flies had gone to sleep in the hut and were no longer buzzing, and somewhere in the center of that perverse barge a green lantern was burning, and everything was swimming around in the half-light. Darkness, darkness, semi-darkness, indescribable pain which, hidden during the hours of daylight, was now breathing at every pore and throbbing with every heartbeat. Now every tiny splinter of even the tiniest fracture could be felt, now there were earthquakes in the nerves which cast up their voices from the depths, like lava from a volcano. Now are teeth clenched, gasping in a sweat, foaming at the lips and biting lip and tongue, when suddenly someone's lower jaw stretches, a voice shrieks from the very depths of the bowels, sounding as though it had come out of a deep well.

"Mamma mia, mamma mia," cried someone in Italian.

"Lord, Lord," sobbed the Russian with a bullet in his entrails. Then all was quiet again, green quiet, half-darkness!

Exhausted by loss of blood, Vidovitch had slept the whole afternoon, and now he awoke, not knowing what had happened nor how he had come to be here. Just when the boiling pain in his wounds had quieted down somewhat, and the terrible burning had eased off a little, Vidovitch heard sobbing human voices, and, in his agony, he had difficulty in finding a single cool spot on his pillow. His burning eyelids again began to glue together, and a deaf and heavy silence poured over them, and there was a drying up of thirst, and the hut was beginning to melt and evaporate in the darkness, when again a bestial shriek of bodily pain rang through the hut, and

that voice smashed suddenly the whole structure of the sleep which he had so painfully erected on a cool corner of his pillow—everything was shattered in a single moment.

And so it went on, over and over again, the whole night.

"Oh, just five minutes! Just one minute's sleep!"

The night must have been far gone, because a clear light was percolating through the green netting, outside the sentries were shouting, the creeper on the string hanging down the side of the hut sounded as though it were rustling in the early morning breeze. Moths were circling round the night lamps, beating their wings.

"What's the time?"

There is no time. There's nothing. Only pain.

"Mamma mia. Mamma mia. Lord. Lord."

"If only I could get to sleep just for one minute! For one second!"

"Lord."

The following morning the situation began to change radically. In the small hours the Russians had broken through in the south, cutting off the last Royal and Imperial railway line, so that the trains were beginning to come back, and an order was issued to engine drivers, and engines were blown sky high like toys. Everything was jettisoned. Artillery, wounded, stores, great divisional HQ stoves with sooty chimneys, pontoon bridges—a deluge of stuff; and the detonation of engines being blown up rumbled like hoarse thunder. And the whole morning troops were on the march, and the patients of the Maltese Hospital from A, C, and D huts (walking-wounded) looked cheerfully through the barbed wire at the horror outside, at the scene of the retreat where many today would fall down on the road with sunstroke; but as for them, well, things were pretty good. They would stay there under the Red Cross, and no one would drive them away, and if the Russians should come, then they would be taken away somewhere or other, a long way away, to Russian hospitals and camps, and there would be no war there, and so in all probability the war for them would be over that very morning.

Count Maximillian Axelrode, Chief of the Maltese Hospital, had dispatched by car the distinguished members of his female staff (two or three baronesses and a general's wife), but himself was determined to remain in the danger zone with his Maltese flag flying to the last. The mortuary bell rang, and Count Axelrode, wearing his black dress-uniform and Maltese Cross, went on his routine tour of the huts, and he watched the Russians bringing in naked yellow corpses in coffins; they carried in their dead and saluted the Count, doffing their caps and sweeping the ground with them.

"It is beyond words how things have slackened off in this hospital in the past twelve hours."

Yes, it's true. Yesterday was an exceptionally nerve-racking day. And today, with the troops going by outside, moving like figures on a chessboard, with figures falling here and there, today everything seems more conspicuous and menacing. How else would that medical corporal have dared to stand in front of His Excellency yesterday swigging brandy from a large bottle! And seeing the Count coming along, he calmly went on drinking as though he didn't care a damn about anything. And why do nearly all the patients grin so scornfully?

The Count was standing alone, like a shadow; he was badly shaken, and he hadn't the energy to put things into perspective, and he didn't know what to do. He could not make contact with GHQ, he did not know the dispositions, and the Divisional HQ had rushed past in motor cars without stopping just a few minutes ago. The Count summoned a meeting of departmental chiefs to decide what ought to be done.

The debate went on and on, until finally a decision was postponed "until further notice."

This "further notice," however, turned up about five o'clock in the afternoon, when it became clear beyond any shadow of doubt that in all probability the hospital would be that very night somewhere between the two front lines. And if the scheduled counteroffensive which had been organized in a big way forty-eight hours before should not succeed (and that was highly probable), then, at this time tomorrow in all probability a medical officer of some Russian division would be giving the orders in the Maltese Hospital.

So it was eventually decided that Count Axelrode, the surgeons and the most valuable equipment, and 50 per cent of the staff should withdraw that night to a farm some ten miles to the west, and link up there with some larger formation. The last sizable infantry formation had passed through, and the noise of near gunfire was heard. Then the patients tore down the barbed wire fence, and sat in the ditches by the side of the road, talking to the men coming from the battle.

The troops were tired and thirsty, everyone told a different story, and no one knew anything.

The dusk came on, and searchlights began to move across the sky, and far off there was a rumble of guns, and the last formation passed through. In front of the hospital, nearly two miles away, a muddy stream flowed between willow trees, and there the bridges were burning, as could be seen quite clearly, and across on the other bank everything was peaceful as though there were no one there. At that mysterious time, when nothing was known, the entire Maltese Hospital felt

that they were hanging in the air between Vienna and Moscow—most probably nearer Moscow than Vienna; and someone with a sense of humor stole a bottle of brandy from the stores, for who knows what tomorrow may bring?

In the stores there was brandy and red Burgundy and Hungarian white wine and champagne, and half an hour later the entire Maltese Hospital was roaring drunk, and the huts were running with wine and littered with broken beer bottles, which they just smashed, because no one wanted to drink beer, who would? The Russian prisoners, dazzled by the bright illusion that now, tomorrow even, they'd be back in their villages in the Urals on the Volga, began dancing through all the huts, and when a Hungarian doctor started shooting off his revolver, trying to vanquish alcohol with gunpowder, a regular skirmish and shooting match ensued, and the Hungarian doctor, beaten by sheer brute force, withdrew and disappeared in the darkness with some of the hospital nurses. Two of the nurses were German, Frieda and Marian, and they were trapped in their room and raped, and after that there was a real riot, and the mob began drinking their freedom fast and furiously, till they became mad drunk with delusions, then everything turned into an alcoholic nightmare.

They carried wine in tubs to the poor wounded devils in Hut Five B, and the fracture cases and the amputatees, with their stumps drying under gauze like cured meat, all got roaring drunk, and some of the Hungarians started to play pontoon on Vidovitch's bed.

"Pontoon, pontoon," there was a shrill shrieking of voices, and the sound of cards being shuffled, and as they drank their faces looked like masks of Chinese pirates, disfigured and grimacing, adorned with hollow teeth, and they grinned: "Buy one." An accordion, an ocarina, and a one-stringed fiddle could be heard from Hut C—they were Serbs from the Srem—and the air resounded with the song "And Mammy and Daddy," and the powerful vibrations of the gay, unruly scherzo were heard over in Five B where the wretched, bullet-riddled Vidovitch was lying, and one single thought whirled in his brain: "Will they operate on me? If only they had taken all that stuff out of me today, I shouldn't be bleeding now. Where are they? Why don't they operate? What is happening?"

"Pass. One. Pass. Pontoon."

"Mert arrol en nem tehetek, hogy nagyon szeretlek, tarala lalala." * One of the amputation cases was singing this Budapest cabaret song, and he took the gauze from his stump and put it on his head like a hat, and bobbed his head coquettishly to right and left. An Italian was singing an Irredenta, a strong,

*Hungarian: "Because I can't help loving you so much."

resonant tenor singing *"Amor, amor."* They sang and drank, and the brandy flowed, and the scabies cases began chasing each other with brooms through the hut shouting loudly, and with all this caterwauling the place was like a menagerie, and it looked as though people from all the huts would get together, like a lot of filthy one-eyed hens, and that they would all begin jumping around on the bandaged stump of one leg this way and that, keeping time to the rhythm of the gun music which was rumbling louder and more fiercely from the railway station.

Hande waschen vor den Essen,
Nach dem Stuhlgang nicht vergessen.

The Tyrolese started to yodel in chorus the words of the notice which is hung up in all hospitals in the three so-called official languages. The Hungarians weren't to be outdone, and they sang a line from their Hungarian version:

Egyél, igyál de mindig ellöbb mosdjál

And the third version:

Wash your hands before you eat.
Wash them after you excrete.

But none of the Croat army chaps sang the version in their own language; they only laughed at it as though it were some mumbo-jumbo.

And a shortsighted Styrian, a member of the "Kaiserjaeger," the Imperial mountain troops, whose eyes, magnified by the lenses of his glasses, were green and staring like glass marbles, this chap was splitting his sides with laughter. And his cough bubbled and rattled, and his face turned purple as though he were about to choke, twisting his tongue as he tried to read that famous Croat poem: "Wash your hands before you eat, wash them after you excrete."

And they drank and they grinned, yelling and singing and screaming—a terrific babel. Some had learned in the Italian prisoner of war camp *"Porca Madonna, io parlo Italiano,"* so they shrieked that phrase to the Italians, waving their hands at them. *"Porca Madonna, porca, porca, porca."*

"Listen chaps. Please be quiet. I'm in pain. I'm in terrible pain," shouted Vidovitch. Then he lost his voice, and his throat began to rattle, and the blood rushed to his lips.

"Te me as. Pain? *Mindig ez a Pain?* What's pain?"

"It means," explained someone to the Hungarian, "when you're in pain, old chap. You know, when you are wounded, then you have pain. It hurts."

"Micoda? Dario? Ha! Ha! Pain!"

"And Mammy and Daddy . . . "

The gunfire was now louder, as though someone were chopping wood inside the hut.

The great counterattack announced forty-eight hours before had actually succeeded, and the Russians were outflanked on both wings and driven back in one great wave. Fifteen infantry battalions and several batteries were captured; and about 9:30 Count Maximillian Axelrode, escorting the Baroness Lichtstein, arrived by car at the hospital.

First of all, there was a thorough investigation into the raping of the German women, and about 12:30 seven Russians were shot, and before this they had to dig their own graves, and about three hundred and fifty malingerers (trachoma cases, scabies cases, skin abrasion cases, and all the inmates of Huts A 2, 3, 4 and 5, with the exception of those whose temperature was above 101° Fahrenheit) were packed off to the front and by 10:30 a sobriety, worthy of the Maltese Order of St. John, was restored to the hospital.

In order to re-establish discipline and the authority of the Imperial flag, which seemed to have been somewhat in question last night, Count Axelrode issued an order that last night's great victory was to be celebrated with a torchlight procession and a march-past.

All patients (without exception) were to march in file in front of the black-yellow standard, and bed patients were to be carried by the Russians on stretchers, but everyone had to parade. And so it was.

There were several hundred in the procession, dressed in bloodstained gray shirts, and everyone held in his hand a green or a red lantern, and it all looked like a phantasmagorical vision.

The procession was on the march.

The grandsons of by-gone dead who fell behind the Vienna barricades in 1848, the children of Garibaldine standard bearers, Hussites, the Warriors of God, frontier guards of Jelacić, all the lame and crippled and disfigured and bandaged, all the amputation cases, and those on crutches and in wheel chairs and on stretchers, were carried or pushed along; and there stood the great black-yellow flag and under it Count Axelrode dressed in black and wearing his Maltese Cross, and behind him were the hospital nurses and the doctors, and they were all singing in chorus: *GOTT ERHALTE.*

The men marched in silence, with their heads bowed as though in shame, and they were still dizzy from the previous night. When Vidovitch was carried back from that disgraceful march-past, he was in a raging fever.

Even last night things had begun to take a turn for the

worse, and the entire hut, suffering from the after-effects of alcohol, now began to be most painfully aware of their wounds again. The Siberian on bed Number 7 had got roaring drunk the previous night, and by the morning he was dead, and in the afternoon he was carried out of the hut. The Slovak with the tube on Number 9 was still in agony, and his breathing could still be heard. And a Russian over with the Hungarians was screaming. The previous night he had wanted to dance, but now he was screaming like a lunatic.

"Az atya ur istennet, ennek a Rszinnak. Ruzzki."

"Kush. You Russians. What are you yelling about?"

"And I'm in pain, but even so I keep quiet."

"Ssssh! Sssss! Shut up."

Vidovitch lay still, listening to the hut quarreling, and he realized that the end was near.

"Why was I born? What was the sense of it? To be born into this 'Gassenhauer civilization' where there is not even such a thing as grief, where everything is light opera. What a degrading way to die! The depth of degradation! And I wanted to live my life. And what has happened? Hospitals, only hospitals! How on earth could anyone ever find words to describe this hospital, the meaning of it? Only hospitals! For years now I have been in transit through hospitals. Showy town hospitals with their refined whores! Monasteries for those dying of T.B. They squirt serum into them, but it's a serum that no one believes in. The huts! These filthy, stinking, lice-ridden wooden huts! How revolting! Poof!"

Feeling a compulsion to do something, to be violent, to jump about, to attack something, to shout at the top of his voice, Vidovitch tried to sit up, but he couldn't. He was fastened to the spot. Pain had quelled the revolt of his nerves, and, lost in a fog, he began to groan loudly.

"Ssssh! Sssss!" The hut hissed its annoyance in the darkness.

And pain, ever increasing, began to screw its way through the numberless bloody and torn limbs scattered all over Hut Five B. Pain began to take an interest in the supernatural, and people began calling on God. But the Lord God was called upon only as a last resort, in the same way that petitions are sent to the Royal Chancellery when all else has failed.

The Hungarian was calling on his God, his Hungarian *Isten* to help him. If only *Isten* would come in his great herdsman's trousers, and he could drink a couple of bottles of red bull's-blood wine, with some chap near playing the fiddle, so that he could die once and for all or be resurrected. Things can't go on like this any longer. "God! God! God!" screamed one of the Russians, and he was as pale and transparent as a Byzantine icon, and he began praying to his Russian God,

a God in a great plutocratic cloak who was sitting on a golden throne in the Kremlin, and the Russian began screaming so loudly that his voice might well have been heard in Mother Moscow, and he screamed and clapped his hands and cried like a new-born babe: "Lord, Lord!"

And Vidovitch woke up suddenly, and it seemed to him that *Isten* had come to the Hungarian and was sitting on his bed, giving him a drink from a flagon, and the Hungarian was taking deeper and deeper draughts, and someone was plucking the strings of a fiddle, and ah! how good it is to drink from someone's hand to the twanging of violin strings! It's good! It sends one to sleep. And the Russian Imperial Lord God, he was walking about the hut with his opulent escort, and the icons were shining and the bells of the Holy Mother were ringing, and that old gentleman with his white beard, dressed in a silk cloak, he was digging about inside the entrails of the Russian, and now he was pulling out a bloody bullet—ah! that's better, thank you, Lord, thank you!

"See, they've all got their own gods. Every single one has his own god."

And the man from Fiume *(Mamma mia! Mamma mia!)*, he has his cardinals and Pope and Roman flags, and the Russian and the Hungarian, they have their Lord Gods; but whom have I got? And I'm suffering, too! I'm just as bullet-riddled as they are. But I've got no one.

Vidovitch was in such an agony that he raised his hands and stretched them out toward someone, and he felt a terrible emptiness, and his throat contracted, and he burst loudly into tears.

"Oh, yes, I've seen Christ hanging up outside our village pubs. A real Croat Christ, he was; and all his thirty-three ribs were smashed, his breasts were pierced with holes, and he bled from numberless wounds. But I never believed in him. That wooden Christ on a muddy road running with dung water, and no one would ever pass him without cursing him; that wooden Croat God, naked, wretched, with one leg missing, a god with a soldier's cap—I pray to him to help me . . ."

Lieb' Vaterland, magst ruhig sein,
Wir wollen all Mutter sein,
Treu steht und fest Wacht am Rhein.

"What's that? Have I gone crazy? Whom am I praying to? Me in pain praying? And what's that singing?"

The yellow light outside was stealing through the green muslin above Vidovitch's head, and female voices could be heard singing in a minor key, quietly intoning the verses. And the tinkling of crystal glasses could be heard. Soft ringing

sounds, and the voices soft but clear: *"lieb' Vaterland, magst ruhig sein . . . "*

Very near to Hut Five B there was a shady arbor where the doctors and Dames Templar of the Red Cross frequently dined. Tonight, as an exception, Count Axelrode himself was present at the banquet in honor of the day's victory.

Flushed by the magnificent victory and lulled by the patriotic singing of ladies ready for any act of devotion in the interests of the cause and of the war, Count Maximillian, Comte of the Grand Order of Malta, rose and raised his glass in a toast to victory. In an elated voice he spoke of the victories of His Majesty, victories shared by the Maltese flag flying undefeated and glorious.

"Ladies! Luogotenente Fra Giovanni Battista a Santa Croce, who with his own eyes witnessed the Jacobin assault upon our holy Maltese Cross, which I here have the honor to represent, this noble knight wrote in his diary, ladies, that when Our Lord shall divide the sheep from the goats under an eclipsed sun on that day the black cloak of the Maltese Order shall guard in the divine shadow . . . "

Vidovitch heard the tinkling of glasses in the arbor, and recognized the Count's voice, and he remembered the various faces the man wore at this evening's torchlight procession and march-past.

"I've gone crazy. I actually wanted to pray. And outside they're singing. That's a fact. They're celebrating a victory. And the Maltese Knight is talking about . . . "

"What's wrong with Number 9? He's taken the tube out of his throat. And he's bleeding. Hi! Nurse!"

"Sssh! Sssssh!"

"But Number 9 is bleeding. Nurse!"

"There's no one about anywhere. Where's the nurse? Number 9 . . . "

Outside, on the other side of the whitewashed board, in the arbor, there was a tinkling of glasses, and here Number 9 in his agony had torn the glass tube from his throat, and blood was running out. Number 9 was breathing heavily, and his throat was rattling like a slaughtered pig's, and then everything got quieter and quieter.

Vidovitch wanted to scream, but no voice came. (It was clear to him that the time had come to light a candle for Number 9.)

"Someone ought to light a candle. For the repose of his soul." He kept on repeating this, and his eyes were fixed on the pool of dark blood that welled out of Number 9, and he tried to shout at the top of his voice, but all that came was a hissing sound like water running through a sieve.

"Number 9 is dead! Number 9 is dead! And these cavaliers outside are singing and clinking their glasses. Fra Giovanni Battista a Santa Croce, just let me get my eyes on him! Just let me get my eyes on him! Just let me see that Cavalier of Malta!"

And, making a last frenzied effort which was really a death convulsion, Vidovitch sat up, like a ghost, and he tore down the muslin above his head. Outside there was a square of light, and in the light green illumination among the leaves of the arbor white ladies wearing red crosses could be seen—half-drunk, giggling, loud future mothers of future shedders of blood.

"Poof," Vidovitch tried to shout, and it came to him in a flash that his porcelain bedpan with all its filth should be flung on to the white tablecloth out there, bespattering everything—bespattering, and on the white tablecloth there would be a huge horrible smear, and everyone would scream—and everything bespattered and smeared.

In realization of these last anguished thoughts, Vidovitch bent down for his bedpan, and, as he fell forward, he felt his hand slithering in the frightful substance; then everything was drowned in the blood which gushed out of him in a torrent.

SIX MODERN SWEDISH POETS

Richard Vowles

Of Swedish descent, Richard Vowles has taught English at the University of Florida since 1950. His articles on Swedish writers have appeared in *The Saturday Review*, *The Norseman*, *New Mexico Quarterly* and *The Western Humanities Review*. Mr. Vowles is the editor and translator of the poems which follow.

What is most startling about Swedish poetry is its high degree of sophistication. The best of it is not a simple distillation of soil and toil, a regurgitation of Nordic nature, but a frequently intellectual pursuit. This is true even of Artur Lundkvist and Harry Martinson, both of peasant origin and proud of it. The two began writing in the late 30s, as so-called "vitalists," in a joint hymn to earth, the phallus, and tempestuous blood. But they emerged from this stage, in which the influences of Whitman and D. H. Lawrence are manifest, each to his own kind of poetry. Lundkvist deals in fevered catalogues of imagery, chain reactions of

metaphor, not so musical as dramatically visual. Martinson, the most idiosyncratic of Swedish poets, is a master of the vignette. His poems are exotic miniatures, not unlike Oriental water colors, in which fresh coinages and verbal collocations make him almost impossible to translate. Lately he has turned to a more philosophic, sometimes gnomic verse.

Almost all of Sweden's best poets are also practicing literary critics (of these six only Martinson is not), but the result is only infrequently a sacrifice of lyricism to the analytic mode. Even when he is most dryly cerebral, Karl Vennberg's capacity for irony and self-deprecation, his quiet allusive rituals, are saving and vital graces. His poetry has the sinew of dialectic.

It is not surprising, in a country where the bardic tradition survives and folk songs have an existence outside of phony folk festivals, that the melodic line is so compelling in most poetry. The titles bear witness: Lindegren's *Suites,* Ekelöf's *Ferry Song* and *Buy the Blindman's Song.* Gunnar Ekelöf, well-schooled in music, is the most lyrical of them all. He enjoys putting words together in what he conceives to be contrapuntal patterns and, however much the analogy may be questioned, the quality of lyricism is unmistakable.

Sweden has its literary affinities with many countries, but the chief orientation is perhaps toward France. It is indicative that the most important volume of Swedish poetry of the last twenty years, Erik Lindegren's *Man without a Way,* has recently been translated into French in its entirety, in spite of its hard involutions of metaphor. Lindegren, an imposing figure in literary Sweden today, is the originator of the "exploded sonnet," a form which should not be looked on as a cheap exploitation of the atomic age. It keeps to its fourteen lines of free verse couplets and disciplines itself most frequently by the rhetorical figure of *anaphora.*

It is a tragedy that Stig Dagerman, the youngest and richest talent of them all, is dead. He wrote novels like the strange and subtle *Burnt Child,* which has appeared in the United States (Morrow, 1950), and a powerful dream play, *The Condemned* (*Scandinavian Plays, Third Series,* 1951), in addition to poetry. He was an artist of great dimension and possibility. We can take more than comfort in what survives.

Gunnar Ekelöf once remarked to me that "Swedish folklore is surrealistic." In a sense all folklore is surrealistic, to the extent that it gives free play to fantasy with a submerged core of psychological realism. But the observation is significant. Swedish poetry does not have to be *recherché;* in its own folk imagination it can find the lyricism, the comedy, the brooding introspection, the mingling of the lovely and the grotesque, the irony, and the phantasmagoria of imagery that distinguish it.

And Swedish poetry has a public. Even a volume of difficult poetry may sell in the neighborhood of five to six thousand copies, and editions of twenty thousand have been known to sell out in a single autumn, in the case of well-known poets. This in a country of seven million inhabitants!

For poetry in Sweden is a way of life.

Harry Martinson

Born in the southern province of Blekinge, in 1904, Martinson was for many years a seaman. In 1949 he was elected to the Swedish Academy (one of eighteen members). His novel, *Vägen till Klockrike* (1948), appeared in the United States as *The Road.*

HORSE AND RIDER

The Arabian horse was
for hundreds of generations highly bred
by a string of princes who themselves degenerated.
Sometimes the tails that waved before these despots
finally waved them into the abyss,
while the Arabian steed that carried the despot
tensed his hooves into the ground and remained
at the edge of the catastrophe.

So it is with horses and other thoroughbreds.

Thus in their rider portraits
Goya and other great artists
have attended more to the horse
than to the comparatively accidental rider.

Either he was crude or refined,
a new arrival in the saddle
or an old survivor there.

The dream of surely uniting the rider and the horse
became the centaur,
the rider who is his own horse.

It is the rider's dream
never to be thrown.

Artur Lundkvist

Like his contemporary Harry Martinson, Lundkvist had no formal education, but he is a sensitive literary critic and well-read in the literatures of many languages. He has published criticism, several travel books, and twelve volumes of poetry.

CARYATID

He is the Caryatid
arrested in his wandering
an oak has grown within his body
and the wolf is dead in his belly, curled up and dead
with a torn newspaper between his teeth.
Garlands of doves bind his arms
with the horizon's thorns and the park's youth.
His hollow glance sees the dogs stiffen
and the swallows describe their snow crosses against the sky.
The house quivers like a constellation
when a tear is shattered between the eyelashes,
the doors are flung in by the wind and the carpets unfurl
carpets woven of side glances and secret caresses,
of life-long female hair and daily steps.
Now one sees the naked foot:
the beginning of statue or man.
Before the glass panes is an avalanche of gold,
and a talking crow lives in the breast of a skeleton.
But the house crashes in a tinkle of mirrors,
in a whirl of pictures diminished like history's.
How shall I find myself in this desolation!
The curtains' landscape hangs in tatters
but the sparks are dry, powerless, without the smell of fire,
the siren of the stairs rusties in her stiffened fish skin,
all happens faster, as when one approaches
a waterfall:
red bees crawl on the thistles of the façade
magpies peck about the garbage after legends
but the meaning escapes the scissors of their beaks
these beaks where a green leaf has fastened
like a bit of human flesh in a cogwheel.
Now I understand:
it is the Caryatid who has torn himself loose and continues
his wandering.

Karl Vennberg

A critic and leading figure of the 1940's, modern Swedish literature's most vital and controversial decade, Karl Vennberg was educated at Lund and Stockholm universities. He has published eight volumes of poetry as well as translations of Kafka and Eliot.

CHRONOMETRY

Some people have got the idea
that I, in pure defiance
and out of youthful desire to rebel,
would deny the usual chronometries

but I have the greatest respect for chronometries:
Julian, Jewish, Gregorian, Mohammedan
and never embark on any of my important enterprises
without establishing their place in time
their position in relation to the world's creation
the founding of Rome
the flight to Medina and so forth

Those who charge
that I have blasphemously
violated the chronological sense
presumably suffer from personal ill-will
Who could seriously wish to do away with
these threadbare calendars
with all their domesticated swindle
who would dare meet
without time's masks and concatenations
all the silent stipulations of history
in the dark's hollowed stairs

There really isn't much
that in itself is worth loving
and contrary traits
can as a rule shake hands with each other
Even truth
can be bisexual
and beget monstrous children with itself
And how moreover can the hunter's truth
be reconciled with the quarry's
Conscience and sense of justice
can dupe us with the simplest fits of ague

Altogether it seems as if
the bones which
the world's history throws us
are right thin and gnawed on

But I haven't yet heard
that it had succeeded in tossing
truths, consciences, or meatbones
outside of time

Even if I perhaps ordinarily need wool rags
and warming wraps
to keep life in my small weaknesses and articles of belief
I must unmistakably deny
that I have coldbloodedly set myself against
anything so beneficent and all embracing
as chronometry

Gunnar Ekelof

Educated at Uppsala, and in London and Paris, Mr. Ekelöf has edited two "little magazines" and is credited with introducing modern forms of poetry into Sweden. His eight volumes of poetry include *Non Serviam* (1949), from which this poem is taken.

BAL DES PETITS LITS BLANCS

A small boy stands
before the aquarium's darkness
Full fathoms five thy father—
(But the Prince of Monaco departs

with a band of gunmen
pistols in their belts
and twisted moustaches
to the little mermaids)

It is in hot August
when the peppercorns redden
on the trees in the Oceanographic
Museum. He dreams:

Give me the cuttlefishes' eyes
the gently introspective
that heard the music
behind fallen curtains

corner over the pupil
by half-dimmed lamps
on fringed tables
with doilies of algae

As if they weren't deaf
who blindly listened
to the piano's jangle in the apartment
upstairs and downstairs

Then the doctor asked
the small girl who drowned herself
but was revived by artificial respiration:
What did you hear? What did you see?

"It was all so red and lovely!"
And you heard nothing?
"Yes, what they played
they played so sweetly!"

—The sirens' coast
far back of memory's windowpane
of drowned years
in glass-clear water!

Give me the cuttlefishes' eyes
the gently introspective
that heard the secret clock chime
exploding through the deep

Give me the cuttlefishes' eyes
and give me their bodies
their eight small limbs
and little monkey mouth

Give me the cuttlefishes' skin
its shifting tone
as if they conversed
with underwater light

Since I never took any special pleasure
in the world, but
roll up in the corner of my mantle
the pearl that conceals me

May the Prince of Wales dance
tonight in an oyster bed
behind fallen
champagne curtains

the Prince of Emghionn
depart for Atlantis
with a band of giant sea spiders
after deeper pleasures.

Erik Lindegren

A native of Lulea, in Sweden's far north, Mr. Lindegren now lives in Stockholm, where he has edited literary reviews and translated from French and English. The poem which follows is from *Mannen Utan Väg* (1942), a sequence of sonnets which has had an important influence on modern Swedish poetry.

SONNET XXVII

you watch the doves' last flight into the landscape of the sun
and the cygnet's mad dance in death's ear

here in this solitude where the soul's trapdoors open
and you sink down into the hard harmony of the irrevocable

to wander in the frost's azure-blue city where spring's woman
now shivers with cold and desire on top the magnetic mountain

how hastily the dress is thrown over the balustrade
in the soft light from autumn's dying hoofbeat

how the state of the world stains the seas
and the remains of conscience rage in the asylum of the belfry

the birds of the empty crypt oxidize within you
how sadly your questions triumph over the answers

how the words rebound in the wind on the sidewalk of memory
harder than heels and your prayers to yourself

Stig Dagerman

An established literary figure at the age of twenty-five, poet and author of prose volumes and full-length plays, Stig Dagerman suddenly stopped writing. In 1954, at the age of thirty-one, he took his life.

UNPARDONABLE

Vesuvius is extinguished
and it was I who did it
it happened yesterday
and I beg your humble pardon

you who buried Pompeii
in the lava of your heart
and strewed my Herculaneum
with the ashes of your dead
will never pardon me

but today I looked one of the dogs of Naples
right in the eye

Krishna Baldev Vaid

At present a lecturer in English literature at Delhi University, Krishna Baldev Vaid was born in Punjab (now part of Pakistan) and educated at Lahore and Delhi, where he took his master's degree in 1949. His early work was written in Urdu, but for the past three years Mr. Vaid has been writing in the more widely-used Hindi language, as well as in English. He has recently finished a novel (in Hindi) and a book of criticism (in English). "Door in the Wall" is his first work to be published outside his own country.

DOOR IN THE WALL

Babu Ram Dass Khanna and I have shared this flat now for the last ten months. He occupies a room and a kitchen and I have a room to myself. My room is slightly smaller than his. There is another room which the landlord has locked up as a lumber-room. The landlord or his wife pays us a visit on every second day of the month. And, as Mrs. Ram Dass puts it, a burden is removed from our shoulders.

A door connects my room with that of my neighbors. I keep it bolted from my side while on their side it is blocked by a tier of boxes on which their youngest son, Munno, often drums. Whenever he gets lost in his game, he falls sometimes on the floor and sometimes on a *charpoi* lying near by. His fall on the *charpoi* is followed by a burst of laughter and Mrs. Ram Dass—my private name for her is Pale Pigeon—comes running to him. She picks him up, kisses him madly, and chokes him with numerous hugs. The child redoubles his laughter and she says through gnashing teeth, "My little Babu! My officer! My police inspector!" But whenever that little Babu—of all his designations "police inspector" somehow appeals to me most—falls on the floor, he shrieks piteously. Mrs. Ram Dass makes a dash for him from the kitchen and clasps him to her bosom, muttering profuse endearments all the while. Babu Ram Dass and the rest of their four children also rush to the spot.

Then for a considerable time there is perfect chaos in their

room. A feverish debate takes place as to how those boxes should be rearranged so that the little Munno—such occasions are disastrous to all his official dignity—will always fall on the *charpoi.* This is followed by a great deal of pushing about of those boxes; the room is fundamentally upset and ultimately the boxes are once again dragged back to, and piled up in, their old place. Their room is doubtless a little larger than mine but so is their number; I live all alone. Besides, it is so cluttered up with odds and ends that it is practically impossible to find a better place for the boxes.

Such occasions often provoke Babu Ram Dass into a proposal that is greeted with an absolute rejection by the Pale Pigeon. He suggests that since all the boxes except two are empty, they could be sold off to a *Kabari.* But one day I offered to cut the Gordian knot by buying all the boxes at his own price and he quietly smiled. Normally he smiles so rarely that, I suppose, in his cooler moments the idea of parting with the old boxes looks quite ridiculous even to himself.

Another proposal, emanating from Mrs. Ram Dass, is such that I never think it is made seriously. With the "police inspector" sobbing in her arms, she begins to demand, "Why not take a flat with at least two rooms?" I always feel as if she were saying, "Why not pluck two stars from the heavens?" Whatever you may say, a flat with two rooms is far beyond the reach of people of our means.

I also put forward a suggestion once but it was rejected by Babu Ram Dass after he had discussed it with his wife. I had proposed that those empty boxes might as well be placed in my room. There being plenty of unused space, they could be placed side by side instead of one on top of the other. The door could be left open so that Munno would be free to toddle into my room whenever he liked to beat his drums. That would have reduced the possibilities and the dangers of a fall.

I made this offer in all good faith in view of our friendship —we work in the same office and I address Mrs. Ram Dass as "aunt." But I lost sight of one consideration. Two of my neighbors' daughters are rather grown-up and I am a bachelor and, after all, a stranger. If the door is kept open and we meet one another more freely, a new problem may arise. Lest it should be thought that I have concocted this apprehension, my ears are there to bear witness to its authenticity. In fact not a word is uttered in the next room without being audible in mine. But I appreciated this precaution of my neighbors as necessary, for who can predict the delinquencies of youth?

There is another alternative which should have held their attention first of all: Why not buy the child a little drum if it is a drum alone that he wants to beat. Perhaps Babu Ram Dass

would regard it as a bad precedent for the other two children, Munni and Deshi. Moreover, those little drums from the shops would not long survive Munno's vigorous blows. It may be argued that the best thing would be to wean the little one away from that habit so that the favorite proverb of Babu Ram Dass, "No Bambo, no flute," would come true.

The simplicity of this argument notwithstanding, it would not work. For the question arises, if Munno is not allowed to perch on the boxes, where should he sit and play? At noon both the *charpois* in the room are occupied by Mrs. Ram Dass and the two elder girls, Rani and Sheela. The two square feet of space left is used by Munni and Deshi who spread a rag and sit, doing their home tasks or telling stories of the sparrow and the parrot to each other. Now, if the "police inspector" is asleep he can be laid anywhere, for he sleeps like a top. But when he is awake, he cannot sit on the floor with Munni and Deshi, who resent his proximity thanks to his fascination for their ink and papers.

The best course would have been a timely check on his fancy for the drums, but now that it has developed into a craze it would be unfair to ignore this factor altogether. For, in spite of all the injuries and bruises sustained by our "police inspector," the joy his perch on the boxes gives him has no substitute.

So, that tier of boxes continues in its old place. And when, on Sundays, I hear the top ones being removed with a thumping noise, I quietly guess that the Pale Pigeon is getting ready for her visit to the Civil Hospital. I am told that her pallor, which partly explains the queer name I have given her, is due to a serious lack of calcium. She also suffers from perpetual headaches and she is having her teeth extracted at the rate of one a week. Thus her weekly visit to the hospital has become a regular fe[illegible]ure.

Generally this program falls on Sundays. On weekdays Babu Ram Dass is away at his office, the two little girls are at school, and Mrs. Ram Dass does not consider it safe to leave the two elder girls at home, alone. When Mrs. Ram Dass goes to the hospital Babu Ram Dass, with Munno sitting astride on his right shoulder, comes and sits with me for a chat. Or that, at least, used to be the case till a few days back. Recently there has been a sort of estrangement between us.

It happened like this. I had been feeling for a few days past that Babu Ram Dass had been harping on one string day in and day out, on our way to the office, in the office, on reaching home, at night, on Sundays—it was obvious that he would never talk of anything else in future. I am not temperamentally impatient. In fact I have often listened in perfect

silence to the endless outpours of Babu Ram Dass during this brief period of good-neighborliness—both those that are addressed directly to me and those that are talked of in his own room. I have had many long and sympathetic sittings with him over many of his problems. I feel for him. When he relates his problems in a low, whimpering tone he reminds me of my father who has a similar downcast look.

Even otherwise I have a great respect for my neighbors. They have never fallen out among themselves, at least never within my hearing. Never have I heard him kicking away his food in anger or her threatening to go back to her parents. I admire all this because there is no such peace and concord in my own family. There, everyone is an eyesore to the rest. My mother often reminds me of my grandmother to whom we owe her.

And yet I can't bridge the wide gap between his and my own age. I mean, I occasionally feel bored with his talk. The subject that caused the recent rupture had really got on my nerves.

"Mr. Narendra, Rani is past twenty-two now. Oh! It has taken away our sleep. If only we could get hold of a boy! But how can the likes of us get hold of one? Simply impossible! The boys of today! They have high ambitions, haven't they, Mr. Narendra? They look for girls with rich dowries even when they are penniless themselves. What do you say, Mr. Narendra?" I said that he shouldn't worry, that everything would be all right soon.

His prompt answer was: "You don't know what it is to be a father in this callous world. You see, when a girl is born the walls of the house shiver. And we have four, just think of it!"

I said that Munni and Deshi were so small, that Sheela had just done her matriculation, and that he should, if at all, concentrate all his paternal anxiety on Rani.

His reply was: "You are, if you will excuse me, a simpleton. Do girls take long to grow? You can hardly recognize tomorrow the one you saw the day before."

One day I said, "Khanna Sahib, let the girl do her B.A. first. Marriage can wait." He rejoined, "No, brother, for how long? What use is B.A. without money? Mr. Narendra, don't tell me that we should squander the few coppers we have on B.A. and M.A.? What about the actual marriage? You can't marry off a girl without money. But what do you know of these things?"

I sought a diversion by asking for "any other news." "You and your news! Who can think of news! Mr. Narendra, each day that passes hangs like a mountain on our minds. Your

aunt is dissolving like ice in summer. You don't understand our position or you wouldn't talk of news."

In short, I had to put up with all this and much more for over a month, and it was a severe test of my nerves. The constant murmur on the other side of the wall also singed my ears. At last, one day, I could hold no longer.

It was Sunday and Mrs. Ram Dass had gone to the hospital, perhaps to have her last tooth extracted. Rani had gone with her. The "police inspector" was drumming on the boxes as usual. And Babu Ram Dass was murmuring to me, "I leave it to you, Mr. Narendra, to say if Rani is lacking in anything. Doesn't she have all the qualifications of a good wife? She can ply the needle expertly, her skill in cooking is not unknown to you, you must have enjoyed her delightful renderings of Mira's hymns, her physical graces are not inconsiderable. Maybe, she is an inch or so shorter than a good height but . . . "

I disagreed with this last remark of his. I have never asked Rani directly even for a glass of water nor have I ever looked straight at her, at least never within anyone's sight. But I know she has a proper height. She may not be tall but she is certainly not short,

"But, Mr. Narendra, who cares for these qualifications? And those vile relations of ours! There is no knowing what they will say next. If they kept their tongues to themselves I would not mind; but recently they have started paying us visits to show us their crocodile sympathy. One fellow comes and says, 'You know the son of so-and-so; his wife died only seven years ago; you may as well sound him for Rani.' Another swine comes and says: 'There is a boy I know but his eyes are slightly defective, he is one-eyed.' One villain was the limit. He came when I wasn't at home and said to Rani's mother: 'If you say yes I can persuade that Anant Ram.' And, Mr. Narendra, do you know this devil Anant Ram? A hunchback of our caste!"

I don't know what possessed me for I thoughtlessly blurted out, "Why not marry Rani to me?"

Babu Ram Dass Khanna was at once a horrifying picture of utter astonishment. His eyes opened so wide that I thought they would never close again, his lips vibrated like harp strings, and his trembling hands put one in mind of epilepsy. I was in a fright. Before I could say more Babu Ram Dass had left my room. His curses on the other side of the wall were fairly audible to me.

A fortnight has passed since this incident. Babu Ram Dass has not so much as looked into my room in this interval. He

avoids me in the office, too. Two Sundays have gone by without the usual invitation to lunch. I can, of course, listen to the "police inspector," Munno, drumming on the boxes. The other day he had another fall and wept bitterly but I didn't go round to placate him.

I can't precisely predict the end of this tension. At first, for two or three days, I felt I had committed a mistake for which there was no excuse. Whenever I was in my room I would hear, rather overhear, sentences like these:

"However did it occur to him?"

"How did he dare?"

"But who would listen to my suspicions of his character?"

"What else can you expect of a young man of today?"

"And I always thought of him as my own son!"

"Neither our caste—nor do we know his parents."

"Unthinkable!"

This was followed by a phase of silence from which I guessed my neighbors had, after all, forgotten—and forgiven me.

Of late, however, I hear whispers of another sort: "The boy is good."

"A B.A., employed, preparing for his M.A., what more do you want?"

"And he knows us inside out. I hope you understand what I mean."

"But for the caste complication it . . . "

This turn seems to be favorable for both the parties.

Patricia Hutchins

Born in County Cork, Ireland, Patricia Hutchins was educated in England and in France, and now lives in London. She has written stories and criticism and is the author of two books, *James Joyce's Dublin* and *James Joyce's World*. She is now at work on a book about Ezra Pound and his contemporaries, 1910-20, based, as the following shows, upon their London background.

EZRA POUND IN KENSINGTON

Late in 1908 Ezra Pound arrived in London from the Continent, at the age of twenty-two, bringing with him a book of poems, *A Lume Spento*, published in Venice, and two other volumes ready for the world, *Personae* and *Exultations*. Pound tried several less satisfactory lodgings before he found Number 10 Church Walk, behind the high, dark-stoned church of St. Mary Abbot's. The bombing of the nineteen-forties destroyed one side, but until then Church Walk was a narrow lane, lined with little shops and terminated by two rows of small, red chrysanthemum-colored dwellings made of bricks fired before the Napoleonic Wars. An elderly lady who still lives there remembers "the Americans at Number 10, but not anyone in particular," adding in explanation, "The children were all growing up and I was busy." *

The little house on the corner retains the cast-iron knocker and the letterbox through which so many literary communications were thrust—a note from Henry James or H. L. Mencken, poems from America to be published in English journals, contributions from the Continent. Inside, it now has the curious home-made jam and old mahogany smell of a parsonage. When Pound lived there, according to the Direc-

* The author is grateful to T. S. Eliot, the late Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, and Miss Welfare for permission to use quoted material and for other assistance in the preparation of this essay.

tory, the occupant of the house was Henry John Langley; to Pound he sure was Sam. There was also Mrs. Langley, "my treasured and unique landlady," as he wrote of her to a friend. She seems to have regarded this handsome young American's exuberance with maternal tolerance, so that on occasion he often turned to her for advice on practical matters, such as looking for rooms for a friend.

In *The Pisan Cantos* Pound's memory swings back to his years in England. Between 1908 and 1921 he found the instruments for creating "a new style, a new man," as Yeats put it. During that period, there was the definition of his views for the Imagist writers, the influence of the Irish poet, friendship with T. S. Eliot and Wyndham Lewis, the discovery of oriental literature, forays into the classics, all resulting in much poetry and prose. Long afterward, during World War II, he thought of that background,

> *and the Serpentine will look just the same*
> *and the gulls be as neat on the pond*
> *and the sunken garden unchanged*
> *and God knows what else is left of our London*
> *my London, your London . . .*

Kensington itself, richly respectable in those days when one or two Americans stayed there as part of the invasion in search of culture, is even now prosperous and dull enough. The rising ground, its trees and quiet streets, has slowly evolved from the farmlands which William Cobbett, author of *Rural Rides,* had known a century earlier. Just above the turn of Church Street Isaac Newton is supposed to have died, and Lord Macaulay wrote part of his *History of England* at Holly Lodge. Kensington Palace, where Victoria lived as a girl, is inhabited by relatives or retainers of the royal family. On his way to Kensington Gardens, Pound crossed "Millionaires' Row"—mansions now used as embassies or legations—or passed Thackeray's last home among the London plane trees. Farther down the High Street were the tall iron gates of Holland House, where literary and political figures since the time of Robert Boyle had been entertained.

Although the huge elms of the Broad Walk were cut down a few years ago, the park, with its Dutch garden, the Round Pond and dainty Victorian bandstand, continues to draw in and through itself the children, parents, lovers, old gentlemen, and spinsters of the neighborhood. There Pound used to see Gilbert Cannan exercising James Barrie's dog; at times he may have met the artist Edmund Dulac or Florence Farr, who

acted in Yeats's plays. Farther eastward, in Hyde Park, Cunninghame Graham often rode in the Row for exercise.

G. K. Chesterton, "a large fat man you'd often see about," as one elderly lady said, had been born at Campden Hill but soon after Pound's arrival moved out to Beaconsfield so that he saw him on only one occasion, from which evidently came the comparison in a poem, of Chesterton's complexion to a cake of shiny soap. At South Lodge, in the same neighborhood, lived Violet Hunt, the novelist, among whose guests was W. H. Hudson, "who always looked so sad you couldn't approach him" as one of them said. In the garden for many years was a head of Ezra Pound by Gaudier Brzeska, which was taken to Rapallo in 1936, "the worse only for a few lawnmover scratches" as he put it in the *Letters* 1907-41, published in 1950. Although Pound and his friends visited South Lodge, it was May Sinclair who brought together the younger people opposed to the established literary order.

Pound, who must often have been up late with his poet friends, could not bear the persistent ringing of the bells of St. Mary Abbot's. A visitor to Church Walk in those days recalls how he would cross the room with that peculiarly light step of his, and shut the windows as soon as they began. He interviewed the rector and wrote several strong letters on the subject. Someone said that the Reverend Mr. Pennefeather had one of them framed, it was so unusual, but the tradition has not been confirmed. Forty years later Pound wrote in *Guide to Kulchur* (a footnote headed "Campanolatry"):

> In order that the serious reader (one in every nine hundred) can calculate the personal distortion in my writing. I was brought up in American school and sunday school. Took the stuff for granted, and at one time with great seriousness. Questionings aroused by the truly filthy racket imposed on denizens of Kensington, W. 8 by a particular parson. It appeared to me impossible that any clean form of teaching cd. lead a man, or group, to cause that damnable and hideous noise and inflict it on helpless humanity in the vicinage. Followed this through Trollope and in the porcine physiognomy of other parsons. Vigorous anti-clerical phase ensued.
>
> Not based on noise itself but on the states of mind necessary to induce that gross and piglike tolerance of infamous sound . . . But for the noise I shd. not have been started investigating. What I *found* was disgusting. Idea that there could be clean and beneficent Christianity restarted in Tempio Malatestino . . . Still further sign of enlightenment from old nun in hospital: E.P. not Catholic. No, thank heaven! NOT Protestant, not Jew, but accepted Greek deities. 'Ze tutta un religione;' Oh well it's all a religion.

Sam Langley was manager of Barham and Marriage, a grocer's in Church Street, near the Civet Cat public house, whose curious wrought-iron sign survives over a later building. Later they moved their premises across the road but took the fittings with them—rich Victorian carving, deep brown shelves, signs painted on black glass and, high in a corner, a series of Chinese tea tins. In these Sam used to hide the cash at nighttime against burglars more likely to try the safe; this annoyed one of the directors of the firm, who did not believe in such homely methods. Once Sam turned up his collar and, to Mrs. Langley's consternation, went collecting for some street singers at the door of a respectable customer, who did not recognize him. He often amused Pound by imitating various local accents, including that of the "reefined" shopwalker.

Pound was delighted to teach or use for literary purposes anyone who came his way. When he sent Harriet Monroe a Japanese play found among the manuscripts of Fenollosa, to be published in *Poetry* (Chicago), he remarked: This *Nishikigi* is too beautiful to be encumbered with notes and long explanation. Besides I think it is now quite lucid—my landlady and grocer both say the story is clear *anyhow*.

On one occasion Pound showed Sam Gaudier Brzeska's *Embracers,* and Sam said, "Dew wot you like with me, think of a man cuttin' that in stone."

Rounding off the corner of Church Street is the old graveyard which William Carlos Williams remembers in his *Autobiography*. When Dr. Williams visited his college friend, they strolled along there one evening, Pound in "his heavy, all-purpose fur-lined overcoat and broad-brimmed hat; as we passed a bunch of faded violets lying on the pavement he looked down. We both noticed the flowers. He stopped, hesitated a moment, then lifted them from their low position and—at a loss for a moment what to do with them—looked up and, noting the high, wrought-iron church-yard fence, placed the flowers on the bar connecting the pickets near the top—all with a swagger not to be overlooked."

On the other side of the road was De Maria's restaurant decorated with mermaids supporting the ceiling, but Pound and his friends, who had modest incomes or kept going on odd jobs, could seldom afford to go there. The demands made on legs and larynx by the cocktail party were unknown in those days and most of them had little to spend on drink. Their usual meeting place was a restaurant at Number 6 Holland Street, run by Miss Ella Annette Abbot, who probably came from Missouri or the Middle West, a lady who objected to feeding anyone not connected with art and letters, though

some might have got a one and sixpenny lunch on slim pretensions. It has a window filled with cakes made in the kitchen below, and a high skylight over the little tables where coffee and set meals are served. What was probably the brown paintwork and patterned wallpaper of those days has become maroon and cream, but on closer view the walls retain numerous hooks from which pictures had hung at one period, but only Whistler's Mother and a watery landscape or two have survived.

Although T. S. Eliot's lines in "Prufrock"

> *In the room the women come and go*
> *Talking of Michelangelo*

were written about a very different atmosphere before he reached London, the fog came to seem to him a London one. Outside Miss Abbot's windows an occasional horse carriage would pass, a car would hoot carefully. Pushed back in his chair, Pound talked of the rotten state of English letters, American indifference and the struggle of poets to make themselves heard, or discussed the more hopeful tendencies in France and elsewhere. As Richard Aldington remarked in *Life for Life's Sake*, "The Imagist movem*ong* was born in a tea-shop in Kensington."

Long afterwards Wyndham Lewis used Pound's expression "Rotting Hill" as the title of a book which depicts some of the characters of that neighborhood. In his studio high above the traffic, blind, hooded like a tennis player, when Lewis is asked if Pound posed for the portrait now in the Tate Gallery, he gestures toward a corner: Ezra was sitting in the chair, there, lying back as if half asleep, and I made some drawings of him. His eyes? I only saw them once. Some young man was talking about Chinese poetry. Pound listened for a time and then at some point he didn't agree with he suddenly sat up and opened his eyes—not very large, gray eyes they were.

Another restaurant was Leber's in Holland Park Road, near the *English Review*, edited by Ford Madox Hueffer, who with the war changed his last name to Ford. D. H. Lawrence was also to be seen about in those days; although he disagreed with him personally, Pound recognized the quality of his work. In 1938, looking back on that period, Pound declared, "After all there *were*, in London, dining circles or a *weekly* meeting of us and periphery. There was circulation from room to room in at least going concerns which wrote and published. It was a sort of society or social order or dis-order."

Thus once a week on press day, Pound was to be found having a cup of tea and a bun for fourpence in a grimy A.B.C.

café in Chancery Lane, off Fleet Street, where he was joined by Orage, the editor of *The New Age,* to which he contributed many articles.

Harold Monro wrote of "the light hearted penury of Ezra Pound" and in 1934 Pound declared:

> . . . while he [Orage] is stubborn as a mule, a little persistence usually makes him see the *best* of what he don't follow, though he won't give way on the almost.
>
> At any rate, he did more to feed me than anyone else in England. . . . My gate receipts Nov. 1, 1914-15 were 42 quid 10 s. and Orage's 4 guineas a month thereafter wuz the *sinews,* by gob the sinooz.

Quite frequently Pound brought together his friends and possible contributors to *The Egoist* for dinner at Belotti's in Old Compton Street, Soho, reputed to be the cheapest restaurant of its kind in London. Miss Harriet Weaver, who in her quiet way assisted Dora Marsden to produce the magazine by subsidy and practical help, remembers going there occasionally. From a Quaker background she had come to take an interest in literature and in women's freedom. Dora Marsden had been associated with Mrs. Pankhurst and edited *The Freewoman,* but as the movement became more political she changed it to *The New Freewoman,* which emphasized the need for the development and education of the individual.

While Dora Marsden wrote philosophical editorials and supervised the lively correspondence section, Ezra Pound undertook the literary side of his "half magazinette." Henry James, when asked for a contribution, warned Pound that he had better watch out or he'd end up as bondsman! This encouraged the revolt for a new title, and by January, 1914, the periodical had become *The Egoist,* which for six years published the best writers of a generation. Richard Aldington was assistant editor until he left for the front; T. S. Eliot took over later. Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr* was serialized in 1916. Harold Monro, Sacheverell Sitwell and Herbert Read contributed, and Pound drew in many continental and American writers, among them William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, and Robert Frost.

Wyndham Lewis has maintained that in society Pound was like a drop of oil in a glass of water. It would seem that the houses where Pound was entertained were mostly owned by those interested in literature or the arts. Pound's contempt for the prosperous, self-involved world of money without culture is shown in a number of poems written at that time. It was with a hospitable family in Brunswick Gardens, just above Church Street, that he found a congenial atmosphere. Here

Mrs. Shakespear lived—to whom W. B. Yeats wrote about her novels, his own work, and friends over many years. Her daughter Dorothy was also interested in the arts.

In the United States, when Pound was eighteen or so, Yeats had appeared to know more about poetry than anyone else. In writing to Harriet Monroe in 1913 Pound declared that Ford Madox Ford and Yeats were the two most important men in London. "And Yeats is already a sort of great dim figure with its associations set in the past." As they came to know each other better it was suggested that Pound should act as Yeats's secretary for a time in Sussex, near where another friend of Yeats's, Mrs. Hyde-Lees, had rented a house called The Prelude. Pound would have preferred to remain in London and he wrote his mother, who was inclined to worry about his health, "My stay in Stone Cottage will not be in the least profitable. I detest the country. Yeats will amuse me part of the time and bore me to death with psychical research the rest. I regard the visit as a duty to posterity." Yet it was not long before he told William Carlos Williams, "Yeats is much finer *intime* than seen spasmodically in the midst of the whirl. We are both, I think, very contented in Sussex."

Yeats and Pound, returning from London, used to be met at Forest Row station by a pony and trap. The drive to Coleman's Hatch would take an hour, through farmland gradually giving place to the forest, wild slopes of heath with groups of trees here and there or a plantation cropped short like a poodle. At length, down a sandy road leading to hidden groups of houses, they came to a two-story building of the local sandstone, gray, with patches of iron stain the color of a Siamese kitten. A wall enclosing the garden is entered by an old wooden gate, like the ancient pear tree, covered by a yellow lichen.

Miss Welfare is still at Stone Cottage, the survivor of two sisters who shared a particularly apt name for those who took occasional lodgers. When one goes there nowadays it seems as if a small cell of recollection had been sealed over, like scrolls in a cave, so that one can return, though only in a fragmentary way, to a phase which even the participants have almost forgotten. The little rooms inside are inhabited, neat, perhaps unchanged for half a century. Family miniatures in wide black frames, brown landscapes, and storm-lashed seas hang on the walls. There are some wicker armchairs, a desk under the window, and in the bookcase a number of time-withered volumes, Byron and Arnold Bennett among them.

Miss Welfare shakes hands. With her long, fair-skinned face, and blue eyes enlarged by strong glasses, at eighty-seven she seems like a white moth.

"I can see Mr. Yeats standing there at the door the day he

called with Mrs. Shakespear," she said. "They were staying with friends who rented The Prelude from a clergyman. He'd been to see another place but no, he wanted to be on the forest. It was the year the church was consecrated, I remember.

"After dinner the first evening," Miss Welfare's gently humorous voice went on, "Mr. Pound said, 'I haven't had a meal like that for a long time,' and he told me how one time his things were put out on the pavement. 'Why?' I asked. 'Oh, because I couldn't pay the rent.'

"When breakfast was over they would get to work as if life depended on it. 'Don't disturb him,' Mr. Pound used to say, if I wanted to go in and dust, and Mr. Yeats would be humming over his poetry to himself in the little room. A later visitor remarked that she was sitting at the table where W. B. Yeats wrote but that wasn't right; he didn't use the central table, but the one over there."

Yeats's sight was poor, and in the evening, Pound read aloud. They made their way through Landor's work or discussed manuscripts of the Oriental scholar Fenollosa, which Pound was arranging for publication. When Pound was editing the *Des Imagistes* anthology he asked Yeats if there was anything in Ireland which could be included, and after a little reflection Yeats suggested he should get in touch with James Joyce, who was then in Trieste. Eventually this led to Pound seeing part of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* which had been refused by many publishers, and it was agreed that it should appear serially in *The Egoist* from February, 1914.

"When we heard Mr. Yeats was coming down a second winter," Miss Welfare continued, "I said to Mrs. Shakespear, 'I do hope we're going to have fine weather while they are here,' for he used to go out in the evening for long walks and get wet through. 'Oh, don't worry,' she told me; 'if he can stand the Irish weather in the bogs, he can bear anything you get here.' By the things he said, Yeats was Irish to the core."

Miss Welfare spoke slowly, the images floating up, her long, bamboo-knuckled hands touching. "Very dreamy he was." We waited. "One morning, when Mr. Pound was away visiting friends, I think, he came back from the post office and said, 'Why, there's nothing doing; all shut up.' 'But Mr. Yeats,' I said, 'didn't you know, it's Christmas Day!'

"I don't think Mr. Pound was a very religious man." Perhaps Miss Welfare had heard Pound declare that Christianity had become a kind of Prussianism. "He knew a lot of languages. I don't remember his clothes, but he had the most extraordinary hair, standing right up. I have never seen anything like it." With a laugh, "It's quite possible he did wear a velvet coat; he wasn't very conventional in other ways."

With the idea that Yeats, who was nearing fifty, should settle down, Lady Gregory visited Stone Cottage with several marriageable young ladies; but they did not disturb the bachelor program. On Mondays Pound went up to London, having presumably made some arrangement to retain his room at Number 10 Church Walk, and at one point declared, "I'm deaved to death with multifarious affairs." During those years he was not only concerned with the Imagists, contributions to *Blast,* editing the poems of Lionel Johnson, bringing out the *Catholic Anthology* and his own book *Cathay,* but, as he said, "conducting a literary kindergarten for the aspiring, etc., etc." Yet on the whole this was one of the best phases of those years in London, when he wrote, "I am very placid and happy and busy. Dorothy is learning Chinese." In April, 1914, they were married at St. Mary Abbot's and after a reception at Brunswick Gardens, left for a honeymoon at Stone Cottage.

Opposite a narrow entry to the park in Church Street is a small cul-de-sac called Holland Place, where the Pounds rented a flat. In one corner stands The Dolls' House of white weatherboard, one of the few wooden shops still in use. By tradition built in the time of William and Mary, it was there when Queen Anne lived at Kensington Palace. For many years an antique shop, in Pound's time it was owned by a gentleman named Henry Byron. Nowadays the proprietors specialize in early Chinese tomb figures from the Han Wei and T'ang dynasties. In the window, among other beautiful things, is a group of five musicians, in the soft blacks and pinks of unglazed pottery. Above the entrance, in the old grain hoist, for many years the high wooden figure of Kwan Yin, the goddess of mercy, has looked down upon the restless coming and going of Church Street.

Holland Place Chambers, at an angle to The Dolls' House and four storeys higher, represents a very different world. Built late in the last century, it may well have been designed by a Scot. A little ramp and steps, edged with worn blue slate the color of mussel shell, lead to the entry. The hall is narrow, with an Egyptian tomb atmosphere, and the trimmings *art nouveau;* the stairs, of heavy, no-nonsense wood, have clean bare treads of unpolished timber through which the year-lines of the trees curve and spread out like hair in a Leonardo drawing.

It was here, in apartment Number 5, that T. S. Eliot first met Pound. At Church Walk, some time previously, Conrad Aiken had tried to interest Pound in Edwin Arlington Robinson and when asked if there wasn't something different being written in America, admitted there was a poet called Eliot whose work he had seen. At that time T. S. Eliot was study-

ing at Oxford and during the Christmas vacation of 1913-14 he sent "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to Pound. After receiving a friendly note, he called at Holland Place and later became a frequent visitor there. As he wrote of Pound,

> In the largest room he cooked by artificial light and in the lightest but smallest room, which was inconveniently triangular, he received his visitors. There he lived until he moved, in 1922 I think, to Paris but he always seemed to be only a temporary squatter. This appearance was due, not only to his restless energy, in which it was difficult to distinguish the energy from the restlessness and the fidgets, so that every room, even a big one, seemed too small for him—but to a kind of resistance to growing into any environment.

Wyndham Lewis noticed that there were always manuscripts lying about and that Eliot, whom he met there for the first time, listened silently to all the talk. Pound would deal with the latest idiocy—as it seemed to him—of the literary critics, or the shortcomings of various periodicals. Then he might mention some new poet with enthusiasm. A remark from Ford Madox Ford could turn conversation in another direction; the talent of D. H. Lawrence, then being recognized, or a reading by Yeats. Many years later there are still people eager to talk of Pound's influence and personality. "We always wanted to find out the name of his tailor," someone laughs. A successful journalist insists on his generosity. "I had a job offered to me in Paris but hadn't the fare. Ezra raised the money for me and I got it." Pound himself had forgotten the matter. To those with whom he worked, as Miss Weaver said in conversation, "He was always awfully nice." In 1917 Pound told his friends that parts of *Ulysses* had come from Joyce in Switzerland. As he wrote in *Guide to Kulchur:*

> . . . The Katharsis of "Ulysses," the joyous satisfaction as the first chapters rolled into Holland Place, was to feel that here was the JOB DONE and finished, the diagnosis and cure was here. The sticky, molasses-covered filth of current print, all the fuggs, all the foetors, the whole boil of the European mind, had been lanced.

In 1920 Pound went to Sirmione in Italy to meet Joyce, who traveled from Trieste with his son. Later Joyce accepted his advice and came to Paris where the American poet and his friends did much to help him. Soon Pound decided to live there himself and by the following year the Kensington phase was over.

"Heaven knows," he admitted later, "*The Egoist* wasn't a model publishing house but it did at least print the *Portrait of the Artist, Prufrock, Tarr,* and *Quia Pauper Amavi* and wd. have published *Ulysses* but all the printers refused." During those years in London, Pound had done his best "to keep alive a certain group of advancing poets, to set the arts in their rightful place as the acknowledged guide and lamp of civilization."

Marvin Schiller

A COUNTRY WEEKEND

During graduate studies at Stanford University, Marvin Schiller received a Creative Writing Fellowship and appeared in Wallace Stegner's *Stanford Short Stories.* Mr. Schiller was born in 1929 in New York City, where he and his Dutch-born wife now live, and where he has a public relations position.

Constance, the doctor's daughter, literally watched her father's every move. Late on a Friday night, in the dark cocktail lounge of International Airport, she was sitting on a leather bench across the table from him. Spencer Theim, the man who loved her, was sitting at her side. A strain had settled over them, and for several minutes no one spoke.

The doctor had just given a lecture against his will, as a favor to a friend, in the Town Hall series "Marriage: A Dynamic Approach," in which he had stated a psychiatrist's raw view. Spencer imagined that the irritation caused by that earlier part of the evening and the present late hour were the causes of the doctor's obvious disquietude. The doctor pinched his fingers over his eyes. He drank from his glass of beer but it did not seem to give him any pleasure. Each time the loud-speaker clicked on to announce the arrival of a plane the doctor stiffened, listened, and when he was certain it was the wrong plane he sighed. Whether he was grateful or simply tense, it was not clear. He stood up suddenly.

"Pardon me. I'm going to check at the counter again."

"Daddy, you've checked twice!" Connie half rose to accompany him.

"I know, and I'm going to check one more time." He glanced at his watch and frowned. "You both sit where you

are." He walked away quickly and swung through the leather-lined door of the lounge.

Spencer poured a glassful of Pabst's for himself—making it foam, then sipping it quickly. He asked Connie after a while if she wanted another beer but she shook her head.

She was a pretty girl. She lived alone in the city and was taking a Master's Degree at the Bank Street School. She would be a teacher in an experimental nursery. She had a narrow face and wavy, brown hair that was a bit longer than the current mode, tied loosely with a ribbon just behind her neck. To Spencer she looked untouched and beautiful. When he stopped to realize that she loved him, he could hardly believe his luck.

"Poor Daddy."

Spencer did not wish to appear too interested in her father. He did not enjoy analyzing people. He was highly principled. It seemed more appropriate to him to evaluate the present morality of a situation than to ponder the old dark seeds of its psychological beginnings. He poured the last of the beer into his glass and offered it to Connie. She shook her head.

"It's just a stupid arrangement."

"Driving these people back to the country?"

"The Stissings, yes. Daddy had a thing with Matt Stissing before the Stissings went to Florida, and Stissing wrote him a long letter saying to forget it, and now Daddy's going overboard the other way. The Stissings could have stayed in the city tonight. It wouldn't have killed them."

Connie took the glass from Spencer's hand and gulped down half his beer. She set the glass down with a bang on the table.

Spencer thought it would be more decent to change the subject. "Did you hear from your mother today?"

"What made you ask that?"

Spencer continued innocently. "How is her work coming?"

Mrs. Browning was a cultural anthropologist. She had been married to the doctor for twenty-five years. For the last month she had been in Peru studying marriage rites among Andean Indians. Spencer had met her only once, but he had been struck by the placid, enduring love she seemed to feel for her family. The two had hit it off very well.

"She'll be home around Easter."

"Did you get a chance to write to her about us?"

"Well, you know I wrote to her! I told you I would."

The doctor came swinging back into the lounge. "Let's go. Their plane is on the way in." He took Connie by the arm.

The two went off toward the door, leaving Spencer to fol-

low on his own. Briefly Connie turned to see if he were with them, and he stood up, smiling to reassure her.

Outside, the crowded arcade that led to the landing field was a ghastly tunnel of blue neon light. Spencer saw the doctor walking very quickly with Connie, holding her around the waist. He tried to catch up to them but people crowded in from the terminal building and came between them. At the end of the arcade a gate swung open and the first of the tanned, encumbered passengers from Miami stepped out.

Near Spencer a skinny chauffeur in a black visor cap, a funereal sadness in his eyes, carried a shetland topcoat on his arm and looked the noisy crowd over for the coat's master. The chauffeur gazed at Spencer and murmured, awed, "It's the wrong airport. I came to the wrong airport." He stood on tiptoe and shook his head, looking over the tops of the people. Spencer lost sight of the doctor and Connie.

He noticed a darkly tanned, black-haired woman swing through the passengers' gate. She stepped toward the center of the arcade to see who had come to meet her. She wore a fawn-colored knitted dress that left her shoulders bare; a wide green belt was buckled around her slim waist. She was a beautiful woman, sensuous, almost voluptuous, and Spencer, in his fleeting isolation, seeing a look of uncertainty in her eyes, felt attracted to her. A tall, half-bald man, whose face and scalp were tanned the color of lightly charred paper, stepped smartly through the passengers' gate and walked up to her and touched her back and whispered to her. She seemed to go stone still, and Spencer imagined that the man was a rude fellow traveler propositioning her. Spencer was not a man to stand on street corners to hand out tracts and little Bibles, yet he found himself edging toward them to see if she needed help.

Connie appeared suddenly, making her way between two airline porters, her coat opened and flying behind her. Dr. Browning was at her side, lifting his hat impishly in welcome. They stepped up to the beautiful woman and the man beside her and embraced them, crying, "Matt!" and "Adele!" and immediately Spencer realized they were the Stissings. He was stunned, for the look in Mrs. Stissing's eyes when her husband had stepped up to her was, if nothing else, certainly a look of contempt.

After introducing Spencer the doctor exuberantly led the way to the airport parking lot. There, among the lifeless maze of cars, the chauffeur appeared suddenly, like a ghoul. The topcoat was still on his arm, and Spencer saw that he was lost. If he had stepped out of an agonizing engraving from Dante's *Inferno* the chauffeur could not have been a

better representation of a lost, uncertain soul. He groped his way between the narrow spaces, hopelessly looking over the car tops for his parking space. Then he disappeared in the shadows. Spencer pitied the chauffeur, and pitied the poor master arriving at another airport, chauffeurless, coatless on the cold spring night. He drew Connie closer to him as they stepped over a curb. Behind them the lights of the airport made an artificial haze in the sky, a layer of electric atmosphere. Above the hangars in red neon letters seemingly suspended in a vacuum, a sign spelled out "Fly United," "Fly United."

A little more than an hour later, snug within the doctor's Chrysler station wagon, they were driving northward on the Taconic State Parkway, fifty miles out of the city. In the front Adele was sitting between her husband and Dr. Browning, while in the back, Connie was resting drowsily against Spencer's shoulder. At first Dr. Browning had spoken almost ceaselessly, out of nervous energy. He had recounted the course of the winter, the hurricanes and storms the Stissings had missed, and he reported the damage that had been done to their country neighborhood. It was evident the doctor had a deep affection for the Putnam County house to which he escaped to spend occasional weekends and infrequent vacations. He asked Stissing what Florida had been like, as if he longed to visit there himself; and though Stissing tried to cover up, to relate only the pleasant, restful circumstances of their extended vacation, Spencer gathered indirectly from Stissing's tone, from his insistence on the salubrious effects of simply lying in the sun, that in actuality it had been an ordeal for the Stissings. Matt Stissing owned a company that ostensibly manufactured locks. But ever since the end of the war his plant had been at least partly engaged in the development of rocket devices. Part of the factory's experiments were carried on in underground tunnels. It resulted in the area near the factory being rocked by frightening explosions and concussions. The nearby town, in whose suburbs both Stissing and Browning lived, an old, upstate town where a battle of the French and Indian War had been fought, was bringing pressure to bear on the company to cease its experiments. Stissing had come home to attend meetings with the town fathers.

"Some people are coming over on Sunday," he said. "Why don't you drop by?"

Spencer saw Adele indignantly turn toward her husband. At the same time, Dr. Browning turned his gaze from the

road to nod and accept Stissing's invitation that had sounded more like a plea.

Stissing cocked his head toward the back of the car. "Connie, come with your friend."

She was asleep, but Spencer said they would come.

The doctor turned nearly fully around to look at Spencer. It was as though he were realizing for the first time that Spencer was present. His look made Spencer feel almost as though he had intruded upon a family gathering to which he had not properly been invited.

Behind, a car flashed its bright lights on and off, the doctor attended to the road again, slowed down, and the other car shot ahead. The doctor seemed pleased with himself. "Connie's young man is going to do some wood-chopping for me this weekend—right, Spencer?"

Stissing looked back.

"Have you ever swung an ax in your city-bred life, Spencer?" The doctor still did not keep his eye fully on the road. He was driving at 70, and there was an air of apprehension in the car.

Quietly, Spencer replied that he had actually been brought up in the country.

This amused the doctor. "Didn't you once say you were born in New Jersey?"

"I've been living in the city only since I finished school."

"How long ago was that?"

"A few years ago."

"Where did you go again? N.Y.U.?"

"I went to Rutgers."

The doctor again looked away from the road. "I thought New Jersey boys went to Princeton—" He gestured with one hand, and Adele, frightened, cried out.

"Be careful, Byron!"

The doctor apologized and returned both hands to the wheel. Adele leaned back, tense. In front of them a car approached over a rise in the road, blinding them for an instant, then dimming its lights. As it raced by, the dark, heavily wooded countryside on the opposite border of the road was lit up, then plunged into blackness. The car disappeared almost mystically behind them.

Connie sat up straight and rubbed her eyes and asked where they were.

"Almost home, Conrad," said her father, using an affectionate name he had for Constance.

They turned off the highway and onto a dirt road. Outside it had grown colder. The car's windows clouded over. Stissing, his chin bent forward on his chest, leaned against

his door. Adele looked at him and perhaps saw that he was asleep. She took a cigarette from her purse and lit it, using the car's electric lighter. Its coils glowed redly in the dark car. Soon her cigarette's smoke hung in a depressing cloud near the roof. For moments at a time she gazed at Dr. Browning as if she were afraid he would lose control of the car. They jounced and bumped along a country road, and the doctor slowed down. Bothered by the silence that had taken hold of everyone, he had begun to sing to himself.

When they arrived at the Stissings' the doctor got out to help Matt carry his suitcases up the slate path to the door. Spencer took out the last suitcase, handing it to Stissing who had started down the path for it. Stissing bid Spencer good-night, shook hands with him and reminded him that they would meet Sunday afternoon. Spencer started back for the car, but seeing Adele get out he stopped. In that instant when she was placing her legs on the ground she looked up and their eyes met. There was an unsettling darkness in her face that did not come from simple weariness. It emanated from her partly opened mouth and her glazed eyes that seemed to wish to deny the fact of her being home. Her look as she approached Spencer on the path impressed him as one crying out for help. She stopped in front of him to speak, and Spencer experienced that moment when you come upon death unexpectedly in the street. He felt a pang of realization, as full of portent as anything in his life. He saw her cheeks were wet. Before she could speak, the doctor came down the path behind them, crying good-night to her, then shaking hands with her as he went by. He put an arm around Spencer's shoulder and led him to the car. She did not say good-night to them, and Spencer heard her footsteps diminish behind him. Then they were lost in the sounds of her husband's voice. He was glorying over their return, as though their house represented some suburban Corregidor.

The doctor held the door of the car for Spencer. "Let's sit up front."

Spencer nodded. He saw Connie comfortably sleeping again in the back.

"And tell me about yourself. Anything you like, Spencer. And look, I was only teasing before about your school." The doctor shut Spencer's door and got in behind the wheel.

The Stissings' door slammed and with that Spencer tried to shut from his consciousness the image of Adele. Perhaps he had seen nothing at all in her eyes. Perhaps she had been crying from happiness.

"Conrad said you were an engineer. What it is you en-

gineer, exactly?" Dr. Browning was more relaxed now than he had been at the airport. He gunned the engine and they started down the bumpy road again.

In the five or six months Spencer had known her, Connie had provided him with an imposing catalog of her father's more or less famous accomplishments. He was a neuropsychiatrist, listed in the *International Who's Who*, a professor of neurology at Bellevue Medical College, an officer in two influential medical fraternities. He was known as a man who did not favor extended courses of treatment for his psychiatric cases. He actually eschewed the high revenues of psychiatry. Independently wealthy, he preferred to devote the majority of his time to the neurological research that had been his original medical interest. During her Christmas vacation Connie had met Spencer for lunch one day to show him an advance proof of a magazine article in which her father's photograph appeared together with a story reporting his search for a cure for multiple sclerosis. Spencer, generally suspicious of psychoanalysis, had been interested to learn from Connie that her father was not especially vigorous or enthusiastic about his practice. He just had several little-known, unhappy persons whom he helped; and it was conscience not conviction or pleasure in the work that drew him to the false but therapeutic quietude of his Park Avenue office.

The doctor and Spencer were smoking. Spencer was explaining that he worked for a consumers' research company. "I'm given products—retail products—to judge. We separate the pure from the not-so-pure."

The doctor smiled, satisfied. He derived significance from Spencer's description of his work.

They drove into a gravel driveway that was arched over by thick pine branches. It was like driving into a cave. When the doctor parked, his house was on Spencer's side, lit by a high single lamp secured to a tree near the entrance. The house was sturdy, simple in its design: a three-storied saltbox with old weathered clapboards and many leaded casement windows, with the entrance smack in the center, undecorated.

Inside, the heat had been left on by a caretaker, so that even the small entrance hall was pleasant to be in. The doctor picked up his briefcase and Connie's weekend bag and went to the stairs. Connie, awakened by the walk from the car, had again taken to following her father's moves.

"If there's anything I can do," said Spencer.

"We'll find something for you. Conrad, have you decided which bedroom you want to sleep in?"

"Anything upstairs will do."

The doctor went up the steps and kicked open the door at its head. "You'd best come up and make up a bed then. Spencer, I think I'll put you downstairs." His voice trailed off. They heard him walking on the plank floors above.

Spencer looked at Connie and realized this was the first time during the long evening since leaving her apartment that they had been alone. He spoke tenderly to her. "Are you all right?"

She did not answer and he said again, softly, "You've been a very quiet girl. Are you worried about telling him?"

She shook her head, and reached up to touch his sides.

"How he'll take it?"

"No."

"Then—?"

Dr. Browning walked onto the landing and clattered down the steps in his loosened shoes. Instantly, Connie withdrew her hands from Spencer.

"Nightcap?" Dr. Browning spoke flatly, and moved off through the intimate quiet of the hall. He took no notice of Spencer, stepped into the kitchen and snapped on a light.

Connie went for the steps. "I'll make up the beds."

"Fine!" cried Dr. Browning. He was rattling crockery on a kitchen shelf.

When she climbed the stairs and did not show her face to Spencer, the quiet love, the affectionate lust he had felt just a moment ago died with a dull disappointment in his body.

"What'll it be, Mr. Rutgers? A little grog? What do they teach you boys to drink in New Jersey?"

And Spencer's disappointment turned into an admission of the vague dislike he felt toward the doctor. He walked into the kitchen and saw the doctor, his back toward him, at a large, black, cast-iron stove on which he was heating coffee.

"Did you once say your father was an engineer, too? New Jersey man?"

There was unavoidable irony in Spencer's voice. "My father is a New Jersey man, yes."

The doctor mused. "An engineer from New Jersey. A practical, perhaps a mild man. Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*—do you know the book?"

"No."

"Too bad. You ought to read it. He wrote at the end of the eighteenth century. He speaks of the orderly and civil aspect of the New Jersey man."

"My father is in the ministry."

"What's that?" The doctor whirled around, amazed.

Spencer saw that the stove was a wood-burning one, and beneath the pot of coffee a thin rim of flame licked up around the circular lid, charring the bottom of the pot. Spencer repeated that his father was in the ministry and continued to gaze at the doctor who looked away now, then began to chuckle to himself.

"An engineer of the soul," he mumbled.

The coffee boiled over. It hissed on the stove. The doctor picked up the pot and brought it to the trestle table in the center of the kitchen. He grinned at Spencer and nodded at the bottle of rum that had been left out on the table.

Later, when they had finished their nightcaps, the doctor pushed his way from the table and got up to go to bed. "Don't stay up half the night, children." He walked to the hallway and went up the stairs, raising his voice to make sure he was heard. But he seemed almost to be admonishing himself. "There's lots of work to be done around here tomorrow and I'm going to need some live hands."

They heard him close the door of his room. Then Connie stood, took up the mugs, and brought them to the sink to wash. She turned them upside down on the drainboard and yawned and said she was going to sleep too. She asked Spencer if he were tired and he stood and said he guessed he was. He watched her turn off the light. She walked slowly into the hall. While upstairs she had put on pajamas and a cashmere robe and now Spencer saw the pajama bottoms billowing out around her bare feet. The robe was one he had seen in the past and it revived in him memories of other tender evenings they had spent together. Dully, he felt the lust blend into his veins. But he knew it would be unreasonable at this time to act on his feeling. He touched the soft cloth of her robe where it covered her back. She turned to face him, and he saw a look of pleading in her eyes that begged him not to ask her to yield to him now. He shook his head, looking down to signify subtly that he had not intended to ask her that. Then she threw her arms around him and kissed his mouth.

In his bedroom, the doctor had begun to typewrite, preparing notes for a chapter of a new book. The keys' tapping was like a heartbeat steadily above Spencer and Connie. As it persisted Spencer felt her gently push herself free of his embrace. The typing stopped, then started again. And Spencer stood, still touching her.

"When are we going to tell him about the wedding?"

"Sunday."

"Good." He nodded, pleased. She kissed him. Then he

asked where his room was, and she told him. They parted and went to sleep.

In the early hours of the morning Spencer was awakened by a rumbling that sounded like distant thunder, the beginning of a spring storm. The rumbling came again. He turned on the lamp next to his bed and got up to open a window in the stuffy room. He listened for the crisp sound of rain on the leaves but none came. There was no lightning in the sky. The night was still. Then he saw Adele Stissing stepping out of the shadowed driveway. He was startled; but he realized she had been standing there for several minutes, dressed in a suède jacket with a scarf around her throat. He hurriedly swung into a robe and went to the front door, unlatched it, and walked out into the damp, chilly night, scanning the driveway for her. As he stepped, barefooted, onto the gravel path he heard a car start off on the road. A second later its headlights flashed on, running ghostlike behind the darkly entwined pine trees, until finally the countryside was dark again. He stood stone still, full of disbelief, then, bewildered, he returned to the house. His room, with its soft lamp on, had a friendly atmosphere and he took comfort in its warmth and the sight of the familiar objects he had brought with him—his clothes laid out on a chair, his suitcase. Returning to the window, he gazed once more onto the lawn, illuminated now by a flattened moon that had reached its apex. The stillness made him feel strange, as though time had been suspended or would be repeated and he had but to remain vigilant to see Mrs. Stissing appear again. But he returned to a restless, dreamful sleep without further sight of her.

In the morning he retained a clear memory of Mrs. Stissing's bizarre, watchful appearance; he was disturbed. He washed and shaved and dressed in clean workclothes and went into the kitchen. He was surprised to see breakfast dishes stacked in the sink. And the room smelled of fried sausages. He heard footsteps in a room behind the kitchen. A door slammed. Then through the kitchen window he saw Delfim—the doctor's hired man whom Connie had described—an old man, wind-burned and scrawny, who got into an old jeep now, swung it around and headed it toward the road. Spencer ran out of the house and called after him. The jeep screeched to a stop. Delfim greeted him.

"Ho! Come on and hop in."

"Where is everybody?" Spencer trotted down to the jeep and stopped at its side.

The old man wore a checkered shirt whose sleeves were rolled up to reveal his bony arms. Though it was buttoned

at the neck, the collar was too large so that when he turned to speak Delfim looked turtle-like. "They left about an hour ago. Doc said if you woke up you could come with me." He cleared the seat next to him of a hammer, and Spencer climbed on. He was disappointed that they had not wakened him. And as they started off down the bumpy, curving macadam road he asked where they were going.

"Well, I'm going over to open the windows at the Stissings' place. They're stuck on account of the winter. Doc said you could give me a hand."

Even against the slipstream Spencer felt the blood rush to his face. He did not wish to see the Stissings alone. "Where did the doctor and Connie go?"

"The factory. Mr. Stissing came over at breakfast and they all three of them went."

"Wasn't Mrs. Stissing with them?"

"No. She wasn't feelin' good this morning."

Spencer tried to control his voice. "Can't you drive me to the factory?"

"All the way the hell over there?"

"How far is it, Delfim?"

"It's not that. The thing is, I'm supposed to be working in Doc's barn this morning."

"Oh." Spencer fell backward, clutching the side of the jeep. He felt a pang in his stomach, and he wondered if it came only from lack of nourishment. They drove now through flat farmland, the bright sun on his bare head adding to his discomfort. He was tempted to ask Delfim to stop that he might walk back to the farm, but he could not imagine doing so without appearing foolish in his own eyes. Delfim had begun to speak about the weather, enjoying the sound of his own voice. Spencer remained silent.

The Stissings' colonial house was in a clearing. It shone whitely against the clear spring sky. But because the shades were drawn there was an air of desertion about the property. They went to the front door and rang the bell and when there was no answer Delfim said, "She must've gone out. I have the key for the back."

Spencer sighed, deeply unhappy, but followed the self-confident old man. On the right side of the house was a flagstone terrace poorly shaded by paper birch. On a wrought-iron table lay a silver coffee service and a cup half filled with mudded coffee. A closed box of stationery lay next to it, and it was not difficult for Spencer to imagine Mrs. Stissing having spent part of the morning here, filling letters with what sadnesses he could only guess at, unburdening

herself—but to whom? A girl she had known at school? An aunt?

Delfim had gathered the box and the coffee service and said he would take them all inside. Dutifully, Spencer followed the old man. In the house Delfim rinsed a cup while he whistled to himself in a manner that he had. Then Delfim sat on a high kitchen stool and poured himself the last of the coffee. He asked, as an afterthought, if Spencer cared for a cup of coffee, but Spencer shook his head.

"I'll start on the windows upstairs."

Delfim nodded. He swished the coffee, in no rush to leave his perch. With the cup he gestured to where Spencer would find the stairs, and Spencer pushed open a swinging door into a house that was dusty, with air that had not stirred for many weeks. It was like breaking into a house when he had been a child, and he was assailed by a similar sense of guilt. He wished to leave quickly.

On the wall that rose next to the stairs was hung a diploma in a frame and arranged around it symmetrically were several lesser frames. The diploma was Adele's. She had been graduated magna cum laude from Bryn Mawr. And as Spencer walked up the stairs he saw one small frame contained a medal she had won for proficiency in classical languages, while the others held reproductions of poems she had translated from Latin and Greek that had, years ago, been printed in two or three different, civilized magazines. Then his eye glancing upward saw into an open doorway where Adele was lying across a bed, sobbing quietly. For a moment Spencer was startled and could not move.

Below, Delfim came into the living room. "Get that bathroom one. It's the one upstairs Mr. Stissin' couldn't get."

Adele, hearing the voice, looked up to see Spencer mounting the stairs. Confused, seeing an enemy or God knows what, she threw herself toward the door and slammed it. Spencer winced.

For a moment he was beset by a profound awareness of how awkward he could be. But he would expose himself no further. Unconsciously, perhaps, his willingness to accompany Delfim had not been so innocent. Perhaps he had been curious about Mrs. Stissing. But he would intrude no further. Unlike the moments of their first meeting, he felt that her sadness was not his concern. Composing himself, detached, he returned to the kitchen, deciding that Delfim could complete the windows.

On the counter near the sink lay the box of stationery, opened, where, evidently, Delfim had browsed into it. And

with his new coolness and feeling of detachment, Spencer too glanced into the box. There was a letter torn to shreds and beneath it a new one started, "To my darling." A bottle half filled with pills lay in a corner of the box, and Spencer, fearing for a moment she had drugged herself, picked out the bottle and was relieved to see it was labeled "Dexemil" which he knew as an antidote to anxiety. Replacing the small bottle he saw that it had hidden the small magazine photograph of Dr. Browning. Mrs. Stissing had preserved it beautifully, coating it with several aligned strips of Scotch tape, then inserting it into a celluloid holder. Spencer was stunned. The feeling of detachment left him. A chill passed through his body, and then he grew warm. He left the house and walked onto the terrace. The glare from the sun was terrible. He felt as if he had walked out of a newsreel theater in the daytime, with the brightness making him dizzy. A few moments later Delfim came out of the house. They got into the jeep and returned to the Brownings'.

Behind the compact Browning house was an asparagus bed, and beyond that a field that had been recently ploughed but not yet planted. The entire estate lay in a clearing in an old first-growth forest. The driveway that circled the house was like a moat, and as soon as Delfim drove to the back of the house Spencer caught sight of Connie working over the asparagus shoots. Delfim parked and Spencer got out, squinting in the sun, and walked over toward Connie.

She was wearing jeans and a white, short-sleeved shirt that had once been his. There was a straw basket partially filled with dusty asparagus spears on the earth near her feet. She waved at him.

"Hi!" She brushed off her hands. Her eyes were brightly on him, as though she waited to be kissed.

Spencer was subdued. He wondered how much she knew about Adele. He felt humiliated for having guessed what he had. He did not know if he was obligated to tell her. He tried to sound pleasant but his words hung grayly in his throat.

"How was the factory?"

"I tried to get you but everyone was in such a hurry." She leaned forward and kissed him lightly, as though to ask forgiveness.

Spencer could only try not to sound grim. "Is he going to have to stop the rocket business?"

"I don't think he can. He has this government contract. I think he's going to hold the explosion part during the day

or muffle them or something. I don't see what else he can do."

Spencer nodded. Then no longer able to restrain himself he said, "I spent the morning at Adele Stissing's."

Connie looked up suddenly, fearful, and her look confirmed all Spencer had suspected. He looked away. She had known all along, he thought. Indirectly she had begun to divulge it at the airport. Her father and Matt Stissing had had a "thing" but it was over and forgiven now. But if over, how explain Adele's sad night-picketing of the Browning farm?

At the side of the house a door opened. Mr. Stissing emerged with his arm on the doctor's shoulder. They each held a highball. Their glasses glistened in the sun. It was a mockery, a cartoon of a decent life. The doctor should have been the one to have taken flight to Florida. Stissing should have ordered him away.

The doctor called back to the house for Delfim. When he appeared Dr. Browning asked him to bring out extra garden chairs. Then he and Stissing walked to a table with an umbrella in its center, and they sat down in its shade. It was in a lovely oak grove.

Connie explained that Stissing was staying for lunch.

An image of Mrs. Stissing formed in Spencer's mind. He saw her lying across her bed, emptying herself of her grief. And as the sound of laughter rose from the garden table, Spencer grew furious. It was monstrous for the doctor to entertain Stissing this way! Monstrous to have elected himself their chauffeur for the night before!

Connie had cut the last of the asparagus. She lifted the basket and started for the house. Spencer stopped her.

He tried to speak in a low voice. "Connie, why didn't you tell me about your father?"

"It's not what a daughter tells."

"Well, you just don't condone it. And Stissing—what kind of a fool is he?"

Before she could reply the doctor called out. "How's the asparagus coming, Conrad?"

She broke away from Spencer and hurried to the kitchen door. Her voice, when she spoke, was humorous. "Ready for the pot, I think."

Spencer went after her. But her father and Stissing had started toward him from the table and he saw he would have to stop. Connie had entered the house, and the screen door slammed behind her.

Stissing had his hand extended, a gold university ring shining on his tanned finger. Loosely, he shook hands with

Spencer. There were deep lines and gray bags under his eyes, and his voice when he spoke was lusterless, dead. It occurred to Spencer that the man was obviously suffering. He might have awakened his wife during the night, distraught, seeking assurance where none deeply existed. Spencer pitied him.

"Well, young man," the doctor was saying, "you have your choice now. If you can tell the rhubarb from the roses you can pick us some rhubarb for lunch. Otherwise have Delfim bring out another garden chair and fix yourself a drink."

Spencer was surprised by the soft voice he was able to produce: "I'll have the drink later on, thanks."

"Fine, fine. Get yourself a pot from the kitchen and have Constance show you where the rhubarb is planted."

As he walked toward the kitchen Spencer made out Connie's face behind the window. She was at the sink, not looking up. In her domesticity she seemed innocent and unconcerned, and the thought occurred to him that he was obligated to take her away from this degrading life.

He entered the dark, cool kitchen and let the door close quietly behind him. He stopped to look at her, and she cocked her head and brushed the hair out of her eyes with the back of her wet hands. He sat at the trestle table, staring at the stove in front of him. She was on his left. She ran water in the sink, washing the asparagus, and for a while neither spoke. He put his elbows on the table and gazed at the palms of his hands as though he could read his fortune there.

"Did you know I was once engaged, Spencer?"

"No." His heart quaked against his lungs. In an instant it seemed the whole past of their relationship had become insincere. All along there had been this one link missing. As though there had been something inadmissibly wrong all the time, and now that it was proclaimed it had but to be discussed to bring an end to their love. "You never told me you were actually engaged, Connie."

"It was a boy I knew while I was at college."

He stood and went to the door, not wanting her to continue, but he was not able to find the strength to stop her. "Were you in love with him?"

"You know how it is when you're very young and you think you're breaking away from everything you detest and you find someone making your same break—"

Immediately his mind provided him with images of her earlier rebellious love. Their own plans seemed formally sedate by comparison. He felt suddenly aged.

Outside, the doctor and Stissing had returned to the umbrella table. Stissing now was talking, the doctor listening intently.

"I suppose I could have guessed it," said Spencer, almost to himself.

"We used to come here. You know how my mother is hardly ever at home. She goes away on studies or grants or one thing and another. And they have their place in the city they stay at most of the time, near school. My friend and I came here secretly. One weekend—it was during the winter—my father came up when we didn't expect him, and he found us here."

She turned off the water faucet and placed the last of the asparagus on the drainboard. She took a dishcloth from a cabinet under the sink and lifted all the spears onto it and wrapped them up.

He watched her shake out the asparagus. "What did your father do?"

"Oh—he took it calmly then. And we became engaged. We began to spend almost all our weekends with my father, or with mother and father. But Daddy was terribly hurt. So—so then he began to make my fiancé feel very stupid and weak. He kept showing off—my father did—paraded his famous friends through the house; and each discussion we ever had seemed pointed to show my fiancé just how dumb he was. I stayed by him, but he was such a frightened boy! He went into the army and wrote me from Japan to say he felt it would be better if we did not get married. Daddy comforted me. 'He's the loser, not you, Constance,' he said; and I actually believed him."

She paused, out of breath. She leaned against the sink, and looked at Spencer for almost the first time.

"A lot of kids used to come up here, summers or vacations, or after school—weekends—and each time my father sensed I might be falling in love he would start to show off again; and I simply did not understand what was happening to me. I distrusted everybody. But it's not so any more, Spencer. I don't know why, whether it's because I found out about Daddy and Adele or what, but I see my own way clearly now, and I will not permit it again. I love you very much, Spencer."

"And you've brought me up here to prove to yourself that you can defy your father."

"No. There is no defiance in me. What I am doing I am doing quietly. I'm showing him how much I love you." She lined the dried asparagus spears quickly on a platter, then took the platter and walked swiftly past Spencer, opening

the screen door with her foot. He watched her as she went to the table to display the dish to her father and Stissing. He saw Stissing look up, surprised.

"The fruits of my garden," he heard Dr. Browning say. The doctor put his arm around Connie's waist but she edged away, out of his reach.

Spencer had never loved her so much.

Delfim appeared from the front of the house with another garden chair. Evidently lunch was to be eaten out-of-doors. As Spencer opened the door and walked into the blinding noon sunshine a white Jaguar swerved into the driveway and came to a stop just past him. Mrs. Stissing stepped out. She did not see Spencer. From the table the others watched her arrival. Her black hair was combed tightly to her head, brilliantined, shining in the sun. An orange kerchief was gaily tied at her throat. She wore an argyle sweater and a pretty skirt, and looking at her now Spencer never would have guessed she was the same woman who had been lying, almost death-like, in the dimness of her bedroom. Her voice melted in the noonday heat.

"Am I early?"

"Right on the dot!" And Dr. Browning asked Delfim to bring out a tray of soda, glasses, and whisky. Delfim smiled innocently at Spencer as he passed him on the way to the kitchen.

Stissing stood, and now he was kissing his wife—as if by prescription it seemed to Spencer. He pulled a chair out for her and they sat down. The doctor was showing off his spears of asparagus, and as Spencer walked up to the table he heard them all agree it was going to be a beautiful year for asparagus.

Adele craned back in her chair and delightedly waved at Spencer. Her face was radiant, beautiful—classically so—and Spencer wondered what had become of that part of her that had translated Sappho. Was that the part that had to be drugged with Dexemil? Spencer greeted her, and only her eyes showed she had not forgotten their encounter earlier that morning.

He stood at a side of the table away from Connie, and he did not observe the look of fright on her face. He was surprised when he heard her say unclearly:

"Daddy, Matt, and Adele. I want to make an announcement."

The doctor looked up, bemused and unsuspecting. The Stissings leaned away from one another. They evolved back into different worlds. The doctor twirled an asparagus spear

before his eyes. He was about to interrupt, perhaps to say something generally enlightening about asparagus.

"Spencer and I are going to be married."

Spencer was stunned, yet he made no attempt to contradict her, stunned only by the suddenness and public nature of the announcement. He watched as the faces fell on all sides. The doctor's mouth hung agape. He was full of remorse. The asparagus hung like a foolish, unusable instrument in his hands. And it did not seem inappropriate that he should be thus affected by his daughter's announcement, shattered by the sheer simplicity and unaffected grace of Connie's words. He was a useful, capable man but somewhere he had lost his sight. A healer of the sick, a guide to the misdirected and disoriented, he had himself fumbled and blundered with the lives of the people he valued. It was not a surprise that he might forget or be blind to the fact that his daughter one day might wish to be married. Spencer eyed the people at the table and he blamed them for making a heroic act out of his girl's announcement. And Mrs. Browning off in Peru—how many huts and igloos had she poked her head into while her own home burned in her shadow? Even the poor chauffeurs with topcoats on their arms were arriving at wrong airports, none of them any longer able to make sense out of what their masters did.

Connie came to Spencer's side, and he found himself kissing her, caressing her, too pleased with her to speak. And she too was smiling now, confident and proud, her arm swung lovingly behind his back. He would take her out of this crazy country life and seek somewhere a place of permanence—though where it was other than in his mind he did not know.

Far away, underground, the thunder sounded. The post of the umbrella rattled against the tabletop. The rumbling came again. It could be felt underfoot. The screen door flew open and Delfim ran out, frightened. They noticed him, but no one spoke. Each knew it was merely a concussion from the factory.

Mr. Stissing stood up, holding his highball glass. He reached across the table to shake hands with Spencer. He was the first to wish them luck.

Gerald Weales

A graduate of Columbia University, Gerald Weales was born in Connersville, Indiana, in 1925. He has taught English at Georgia Tech, Newark College of Engineering and Wayne University. Mr. Weales now lives in New York City, where he is free lancing and completing a study of religion in the modern English drama. *Miss Grimsbee Is a Witch,* a children's book by Mr. Weales, was published by Atlantic-Little, Brown. He has published poetry and articles in *Atlantic Monthly, Commonweal, The American Scholar, The Hudson Review,* and other literary magazines.

THE POET AS PLAYER

Until I became a subscriber to the Poetry Center, that father of the poetry series that John Malcolm Brinnin presented at Manhattan's most famous "Y," the YMHA at Lexington Avenue and Ninety-second Street, I had seen performing poets only occasionally, almost accidentally. A few favorites—Dylan Thomas and Edith Sitwell, for instance—I had sought out; others I had seen because the poet and I happened to be in the same town or the same neighborhood at a time when nothing pressing kept me away from the recitation—*concert* I believe they call it in the trade. Once I even saw a poet read his poems without hearing him, a refinement that has not yet caught on, but admittedly that was an accident of acoustics and not a planned flowering of aesthetic decadence. It was in Philosophy Hall at Columbia University, in the Graduate Women's Lounge, which is by day a large, square, neat, cold room that befits graduate women, at least in the abstract; in the evening, when it is occasionally given over to meetings, it becomes hot, crowded, stuffy, and the drawing card, whoever he may be, is generally inaudible to all except those who, drawn by adoration or the need to get out of a dormitory room, come early and move in close. Allen Tate, for he is the unheard poet in this case, stood in the center of a rapt circle, his pencil-thin body waving like a cattail, his lips moving along the lines of his poetry, pausing now

and again for emphasis or effect. The performance was momentarily interesting, as a television show is when the sound suddenly goes dead, but I was through before he was; in fact, I was through with poetry readings in general, at least for a few years.

Now, having once again committed myself, I would like to report on the poets in action, for I have managed to see (and hear) most of the leading walkers of the poetic boards. I am not concerned here with the quality of the poetry, but with the poet as player. In general, a poet fits into one of three classes: he is a performer, a personality, or a public speaker. These categories are conventions that make simpler the description of the poets, but the divisions go soft at the edges, for the "personality" label reaches out in both directions and encompasses the lot. A performer is, for my purposes, one who has adopted a stage figure, which, for all I know, he may also use off-stage as well; he must know how to manipulate his audience with his voice, his appearance, and his movements. The public speaker, unlike the performer, depends more on his material; he stands before the audience and speaks as clearly, neatly, and logically as possible, whether he is trying to explain the importance of a proposed sewage system or his poetic journey through the last thirty years. If the performer delights the eye and ear and the public speaker the mind, the personality must depend for his appeal to the heart. He does not *mean*, as Archibald MacLeish once said about a poem, he simply *is*. He appears before the public, performs whatever duty has brought him there, in this case the reading of his poems, and is loved or not, often despite his performance, for some quality which he manifests: his strength or weakness, his solidity or eccentricity.

The three types are perhaps more easily recognizable on the college campus where every student knows and every alumnus remembers the academic actor, the man who teaches out of himself and the professor whose lectures have the form and logic of a well-prepared book. Once in the naïveté of my undergraduate days, I complimented a popular sociology professor at Columbia on his showmanship, only to be politely but firmly rebuked. I am old enough now to realize the error of my expressed admiration, but I am also old enough to suspect that he exulted in his office after I had left. Any of the three types may be good teachers, like the performing sociological seal; or Mark Van Doren, whose wisest remarks come as surely from his personality as they do from his subject and come despite an uneven delivery; or Alfred Harbage, whose lectures are so carefully planned that a diligent note-taker, which I am not, ends the year with a publishable handbook on

the Elizabethan drama. The poet, like the teacher, may be successful regardless of the category in which he finds himself, but if success is measured by the size of the crowds that flock to hear him, the performer is the matinee idol of the poetic circuit.

The most popular of the performers, the best box-office draw, was, of course, Dylan Thomas. There have been so many stories—funny, touching, vicious—about his behavior on the platforms that a simple statement about his technique is certain to get lost in the mass of myth that fills the pages of reminiscence about him or passes by word of mouth ("Did you know that out at the University of California he . . .") from one literary gossip to another. His own description of the academic circuit that welcomes "fat poets with slim volumes" is delightful in a harrowing sort of way, just as those English charges that the United States lecture tours killed him, when in fact they helped to feed him, are disgusting in a funny sort of way. Yet, this cloud of witnesses obscures the picture of the poet facing an audience. Thomas depended largely on three things—his beautiful voice, a face like a cherubic sponge, and an understanding of the uses of shock. The round, puffy, babyish, curl-framed face, even when it grew soft and red toward the end of his life, was a trap to catch the audience, just as any child actor is, and its mobility was the door that sprang shut after the initial attraction. It was the face, as much as the voice, that caused the inevitable comparisons with Charles Laughton. Thomas was no Laughton, though, for his voice was less at home on the stage than it was in the recording booth. The beauty and subtlety of his recording of "A Child's Christmas in Wales" or the soft exuberance of "Fern Hill" were never touched in any of the public performances that I ever saw. On stage his voice had less maneuverability; it could intone and it could bellow and it could play lightly around a poem like John Betjeman's "The Arrest of Oscar Wilde at the Cadogan Hotel," where the demands were not great. If the range was limited, it was still the particular range, like the brass and tympani in a symphony orchestra, that an audience—excepting the lovers of string quartets—found most appealing.

Then, there is this business of shock. The first time I heard Thomas read at a student sponsored appearance at Harkness Theatre at Columbia, he offended the impatient, of which I am one, by being some forty-five minutes late, and he offended the fastidious by the reason for his lateness, his having had a few at dinner. He even offended the kiss-and-tell lovers of the very latest thing in poetry, those young men and women whose badges are the books they clutch in their hands, by insisting

on reading Thomas Hardy and James Stephens. The impatient were won over simply by his appearance in the room, for he was fascinating from the moment that he started toward the stage, his entrance at the back being as much a part of the performance as the actual reading. The fastidious were brought around in the first few minutes because he gathered them in, like Danny Kaye on his UNICEF tour, by being completely charming; the charm was that of the little boy who recognizes the error of his ways without regretting it, and the audience responded by deciding not to punish him this time. Even the restless poetic types, those who would have been avant garde twenty years ago, relaxed when he passed from Stephens to his own poems, for there was no quarrel at that point. The shock worked on a smaller scale simply by his mixing lyrics with wisecracks, teetering on the edge of slapstick and then sliding lazily into the exquisite.

The individuality of Thomas's performance is the more startling when one stops to consider that he was also an accomplished ensemble player. I saw the last performance of *Under Milk Wood* before Thomas died, and, although there was the familiar resonant boom as he opened the play as First Voice and a moderated, almost commonplace version of the same when he played the Reverend Eli Jenkins, he had reduced himself to just one of a group of actors who understood and responded to the demands of his language. When the poetry reading business gets big enough to need its Oscars and Emmies, they will probably—with justice—be called Dylans. Thomas was, after all, the performer who caught the imagination of the widest audience.

For all my admiration of Thomas, however, I would have awarded the Dylan, even in the days when he was a contender, to Edith Sitwell; no, Dr. Edith Sitwell; no, Dame Edith Sitwell. Dame Edith's success as a performer is as apparent in the way she plays with her titles as it is in her most quotable off-hand comments. There is authority in even her most casual remarks, like those she tossed with such muddying accuracy into the London *Observer* controversy over whether in an early poem she had written "Emily-coloured hands" or "Emily-coloured primulas." It is Miss Sitwell's authority that makes all of her stage effects, even the silliest, wonderfully effective. But, then, she has had the experience. She has built the stage Sitwell slowly, but firmly, since that day, long before I was conscious of poetry, when she first read in public, when she appeared simply as a megaphone sticking through closed curtains intoning her *Façade*. She has long since come from behind the curtains and, like Rudy Vallee, she has put away the megaphone. She is the most accomplished of the poetic performers.

Miss Sitwell was best in those days before she began to do a double with her brother Osbert. As often as not, when she appears now she seems to be preoccupied with Osbert, whose physical condition makes his entrances and exits difficult, and although there is something touching in her worry, it mars the finish of her performance. She, herself, has been suffering from New York City weather in her last few appearances at the "Y" and the voice that blared and fluted and howled has been moderated by atmospheric conditions. It would have been moderated anyway, probably, because Miss Sitwell has concentrated lately on her recent, more serious poems and those early ones which begged for the blaring, fluting, and howling have been left off the program. Since Sir Osbert, except when he gets carried away with "The Ballad of Sister Anne," plainly belongs with the personalities, it is Dame Edith, the performer (probably the stage manager, as well), who always opens the program.

Her entrance is a masterpiece. She comes on slowly, almost reluctantly, but it is not the majesty of the movement, rather the majesty of the person, that commands. She is a big woman, tall, rawboned, with the face of a sensitive horse or a less tortured Virginia Woolf. She always wears an exotic robe—the one I remember best was red, cut through with thread of gold—and at least one ring the size of a child's hand. She carries a massive, brocaded knitting bag and, inevitably, a white flower. When she reaches the lectern she abruptly changes personality; she puts aside exoticism, as a quick-change artist discards a hat or mustache, and becomes tweedily English, with just a touch of absent-mindedness. She rummages through the bag, discovering first her horned-rimmed glasses which she sets crazily askew on her magnificent nose, and then the books and loose sheets of paper that carry the poems she intends to read. These last must be sorted and stacked before the reading can begin, but finally, after a few pleasant words that smack of the English country house, the tweeds suddenly vanish into the red-and-gold robe and Dame Edith begins to read. The two-way metamorphosis between Chinese empress and Margaret Rutherford goes on all evening.

She does not actually read, of course; she sings, she chants, she intones. The huge sonority of her voice rises and falls along the course of her poems with the deliberation of a roller coaster filmed in slow motion. When she reads her newest poems, there is a hint of exhortation, like a prophet caught in a vision, where once she played with rhythm and sound to amuse herself and us. She is not always careful about the sense, but since her voice hypnotizes an audience, as it apparently hypnotizes its owner, it is not until she finishes a particular

poem, particularly one that I do not know, that I realize I long since ceased to follow the meaning and rode out the poem wrapped in sound.

When I first saw Miss Sitwell, she appeared alone. After a long stretch of reading, she put aside her oracular self, and, donning sensible shoes, spiritually at least, she consented to answer questions. The questions were as silly as they always are at public meetings, but one of them provoked an answer so glorious in its delivery that the occasion should be remembered. A voice in the audience, a timid but determined young lady, asked, "But, Miss Sitwell, how can we understand your poems?" The poet was standing toward the back of the stage and to one side; she stopped, her head in the air, like an animal catching a scent on the wind, while a look passed across her face that barely suggested the impact of a wet dishrag. She strode down stage with a cross that any sane comedian would give a year's run for and, leaning from the hips, her legs slightly apart, her whole body saying no-nonsense, as if a new gardener had to be set straight about the perennials, she said in the sweetest of voices, "Read them, my dear, read them." Dame Edith knows what a stage is for.

Truman Capote is not a poet, of course, but since he reads his stories on the poetry circuit he can command a place here. Although he affects me the way Winnie-the-Pooh first affected Dorothy Parker, I must admit that his skill in handling himself on stage makes him a contender for Dame Edith's place of pre-eminence. He is a tiny man with a very round face, made even more circular by his horn-rimmed glasses; he looks like a slightly macabre small boy, one of the children from his own stories, or a very exquisite koala bear. For his initial entrance on the night that I saw him, he sidled in at a near-mince, moving slowly enough for the audience to absorb his costume. He wore black velvet trousers, a long-sleeved black sweater, and a giant black bow tie that nearly obscured the whiteness of his collar. This confection was topped with a sleeveless red velvet affair—a pull-over waistcoat. He clambered to his seat on a high stool, one foot fetchingly dangling lower than the other, and began to speak to the audience in a lisping, little-boy voice.

Having scored the effect that he intended, he spent the evening playing variations on it. When he came on after the intermission, he entered at a dead run, stopped at center stage and held up his hand to cut off applause before it could begin. Having again settled himself on his stool, he raised one finger confidingly and then trotted off stage again this time to return triumphantly with the right book; he got his applause after all. At the end of the reading, he thanked the enthusiastic audience,

which apparently found the performance genuinely entertaining, by throwing a two-handed kiss with the facility of a prima ballerina.

Capote's performance is more than its frou-frou setting, however; all the nonsense aside, he reads extremely well. Sometimes he puts too heavy an emphasis on funny or bizarre lines, but since that is a fault he shares with most actors working today and since he gets the laughs he reaches for, he can be forgiven. Sometimes, too, in the narrative sections he becomes again the little boy that he consistently is between numbers. Still, the general effect is impressive and his handling of dialogue, particularly in the mouths of children or gossipy, acid women, is excellent. Come to think of it, he does not read stories in which men figure; he may not even write them.

W. H. Auden's presence among the performers, instead of the personalities, is almost an accident. He looks the way poets are supposed to look, and his appearance is as much the reason for his consideration here as is his professionalism. Still, his appearances with the New York Pro Musica Antiqua, reading Tudor and Elizabethan poetry while the ensemble plays the music of the period, stamps him as more than a man who just reads his own poems. On stage he looks big and shaggy; even in a tuxedo, he seems rumpled and his straw hair keeps dipping down over one eye. On someone else, all this might be simply sloppiness, but on Auden it still looks poetic. If Auden looks right for the part, he certainly does not sound it. He leans on the podium without moving and reads in a near monotone that is not even lulling because there is an unrestful rasp in his voice. His accent is amazing; it should be English, I suppose, but it keeps sounding Midwestern to me. When he begins one of his long poems, he disassociates himself from the audience and goes doggedly through to the end unaware perhaps that he has lost a number of hearers on the journey.

There is a silly convention at the "Y" which demands that the speaker stop at the end of the first fifteen minutes to allow the late-comers to take their seats and to give the standees and the holders of inexpensive tickets a chance to move down if the house is not full. When I first heard Auden, an evening in which his delivery was further complicated by laryngitis, he forgot this rule. He was in the middle of one of his longer pieces when the restless standees gave up and began to move down the aisle. A pained look settled over his face, but he did not hesitate; the poem rolled on endlessly from his mouth, reaching out to no one, except perhaps its author. I am not suggesting that the heavy-footed interrupters deserve anything less than shooting, for they do not, but Auden's helplessness before them is indicative of his stage technique. Thomas might

have abused them; Sitwell might have frozen them with a bright Medusa stare; Capote might have helped them find seats; Auden could only pretend that they were not there. Even under ordinary circumstances, he displays an awkwardness. When he finishes a poem, his head bobs strangely like a punctuation mark and he gulps water almost furtively, as if in a hurry to get on to the next poem before the audience dissolves. At intermission, he slips his hand into his pocket, affecting casualness, but he races off stage as though he were running for cover. His delivery cannot touch that of his fellow performers, but he does make his initial appeal without using trick costumes.

Ogden Nash also avoids the flamboyant gesture, but that is probably the result of his training on television panel shows. On such shows it is the casual, almost accidental remark, thrust in where it has no business, that gets the laughs, and Nash knows that. He surrounds his reading with a narrative about himself and his work, filled with throw-away lines like, "I didn't come here to talk about poets; I came to talk about me." Some of the material is genuinely funny; some of it, as happens in the poems, shows signs of strain. The delight that the audience takes in even the most sophomoric remarks indicates that the poetry-reading audiences are as gullible as any other; Nash is not the only one to realize that fact, of course, because performers as different as Truman Capote and T. S. Eliot have got laughs with lines of which they should be ashamed. Nash's unprepossessing appearance is admirably suited to his performance. He is an oval-faced man with glasses that he keeps moving, lifting, touching, talking about apologetically; he has an air of preoccupation which might make one think that he does not know what he intends to say from sentence to sentence if that particular comic technique had not become so familiar through the younger television comics such as George Gobel. He has a heavily nasal voice, like a more precise, less natural Fred Allen. On the night that I heard Nash, the microphone went dead. He persisted despite the handicap, a triumph that indicated that he is, for all the air of innocence, a professional.

e. e. cummings, the last of the performers, is a very special case. He is an actor. He uses no gimmicks, no fanfares, no toy balloons. He simply comes on stage, sits at a table, and reads everything carefully, intelligently, correctly. On the night that I saw cummings, the house was not nearly full, an indication that even at this distance George Bernard Shaw is right. When he was a dramatic critic, Shaw used to preface each good acting notice with the prediction that the public, preferring shimmer to substance, would completely ignore the

actor in question. Although cummings is a handsome man, with a face like a sensitive truck driver, his performance is aimed at the mind, and he cannot expect to compete with velvet and gold. The care with which he works is apparent in the fact that he reads all the casual introductory material which has been prepared with the precision that marks his poetry. On the night that I heard him, he read some of his lyrics and some of the satirical poems, making clear the beauty of the first and not losing a good line in the second; he read an hilarious chapter of an unfinished novel; and he read a long scene from *Him* with such skill that any producer who is thinking of doing the play—which would make more sense than half the new season's offerings—had better sign cummings now for the part of the Personage, John Rutter, the President pro tem of the Society for the Contraception of Vice.

My favorite among the personalities is Marianne Moore. I would not go again to hear her read, unless I were tied and carried to the hall, but once was enough to make me love her. She is not at all austere, as her publicity pictures certainly are, and she is not cold, brittle, and brilliant like her poetry. She is almost folksy. On the night that I saw her she wore a black suit with a large white corsage, conventional dress that proved nothing at all. The giveaway was a silver cloth cape that she wore around her shoulders; it kept turning itself into a shawl. With her steel-rimmed spectacles and her gray hair, fashioned into two thick circles, one on top the other, she might have been a very special grandmother—one who kept her cookie jar filled with clippings from obscure scientific magazines. Only occasionally, in her exits, for instance, did she seem to transcend the rocking chair; then she drew herself up with a flourish that suggested Martita Hunt in *The Madwoman of Chaillot*.

She read terribly. She looked at each line carefully and then looked out toward the audience to say it, a practice which kept her head bobbing like a cork on a fishing line and ended by making every poem incoherent. She interrupted herself in the middle of a poem to read one of her inevitable footnotes and then, likely as not, she got carried away in a digression. She eventually got the poem finished, of course, but by the time the end came in sight, everyone had forgotten what she was reading. Once she stopped forlornly and announced that there was a rhyme in the poem, but that she could not seem to make it obvious. Her magpie curiosity which stores her mind and her poems with oddments of information was working overtime. She quoted endlessly from everyone, spelled out names so that no mistakes would be made, got carried away

with her introductory remarks and ended by kidding them and the material—particularly the scientific bits—with which they were concerned. She shifted her weight from one foot to another as she talked, a necessity to anyone who must stand very long, but inevitably she leaned to the right to announce her title and then shifted to the left, which took her out of range of the microphone, for the reading. She ended her program with a few poems that she particularly liked; the chaotic high point of the evening came when she did one of Tom Scott's poems in her familiar style, augmented into hilarity by a preposterous Scotch accent. She is a lovely woman.

Wallace Stevens was a monument; he even resembled one. He was a big man with a dark suit, center-buttoned across a polite bay window, looking in his solidity, if not in his aspect, like the statue of John Wanamaker in Philadelphia. His appearances were infrequent, but he carried them off with a precise, businesslike efficiency. I do not simply imagine the efficiency, a conjuration out of my knowledge that Stevens was a successful insurance man; I report it. He always sat when he read his poetry; he read firmly, if a little soporifically, never pausing, except to give the title or the number of the next selection. The last time I saw him, shortly after his seventy-fifth birthday, he read steadily for an hour and a half, leaving his listeners, most of them fifty years younger, limp with exhaustion; he then got up and walked off stage with a measured, unfatigued step, not even stopping to refresh himself with a drink of water. He was always conscious of time while reading, sometimes throwing his watch with a clatter on the table before him. When I first heard Stevens, a time when the watch was not on the table, I sat at the top of the balcony at the "Y," a vantage point which let me see the poet clearly. In the middle of one of his lovely early poems, with the audience holding eagerly to each word, he withdrew his watch, holding it below the edge of the table so that no one could see, and then, satisfied with his certainty of the hour, he snapped it shut and returned it to its pocket; all this without breaking the rhythm of the poem. The lyricist with the train to catch.

T. S. Eliot is a disappointment and a revelation. That arrogant, eagle-beaked Anglican whose picture graces the backs of his volumes just does not exist. The face is there, certainly, but the coldness has gone out of it; he is as brambly a possum as anyone this side of Walt Kelly's swamp. He puts on the sepulchral tone, of course, when he reads the poems—that familiar voice that an Eliot fan I know insists is redolent with pain and suffering, although it simply makes me want to go to sleep. Occasionally, in the conversational poems, he catches

exactly the right tone, but in the Quartets I am lulled. On the night that I saw him, however, it was not the poetry reader who interested me; it was the wry little gentleman in the double-breasted brown suit who chattered familiarly about his work, laughed at over-interpretation, and discovered, with resignation, two typographical errors in the last collection. If the manner was a little unexpected, the basic attitude was not; he was obviously concerned with the poetry he had produced, as his conscientious survey of his work showed. It was T. S. Eliot, I guess, except that I found myself liking him and that, for all that I admire much of his poetry, I never really expected.

Among the poets who take to the platform, Robert Frost holds a special position as a kind of grand-old-man of letters. He is one of that tiny group of men, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Bertrand Russell, and Bernard Baruch, who, by age and achievement, have attained oracular status. Their opinions are solicited on all subjects and the public gives the same respectful inattention to the answers, whether they are wise or foolish. Since Frost, like Wright and Russell, as often as not buries his philosophy in a wit that edges toward the wisecrack, his listeners are able to be amused by him and endeared toward him without ever having to be influenced by him. Frost appears on stage, then, as an intelligent but lovable old Teddy bear, and in some ways—in his hulking, heavy warmth—he fits the part. Yet, his face is still too rugged, his movements too decisive, his comments too sharp for him to be quite a nursery toy, but age and the inclination of the audience have softened all the lines. His program, a random discourse on art, life, and faith, with political asides, seems to be the musings of an experienced but forgetful old man. This appearance is the work of art, not accident, however, because Frost has been at it long enough to know precisely what he is saying. Although some of his colleagues accompany their readings with explanatory material, Frost is the only one who uses such an olio of a lecture and the only one who could conceivably get away with it. Besides, when he does get to the reading of his poems, he can still sometimes make them sing in an oblique and distant New England way that no one else can equal. He is one of the personalities among the performing poets, certainly, but in his case the description extends beyond his performance or himself; he is one of those men, as George Bernard Shaw was, whose individuality turns to myth within his lifetime.

There is an appearance of primness about William Carlos Williams which comes as a surprise after the robustness of his writing, the prose even more than the poetry. He sits on stage, a tiny, thin-faced man, with knees neatly together be-

neath the table, the legs an inverted V below. His face in repose is a little stern, almost irascible, in a way that gives substance to a description I once heard of him from a student of mine who neither knew nor wanted to know Williams' poems. The student told me that he worked in a supermarket where Dr. Williams shopped and when I asked what the poet was like, the answer was, "Oh, he's kind of grumpy." The grumpiness, which may have been in the eye of the beholder, disappears as Williams reads; little, sudden smiles of very real pleasure cross his face as the audience reacts to particular poems, and the primness is lost in warmth. He does not read well, but he does read with determination. On the night that I saw him, he stumbled over a poem, hit the table before him and swore to read it if it killed him; he started over and managed to get through with a flourish. Sometimes, as in "The Sea-Elephant," he goes beyond simple reading and tries a little acting, some characterization which is broad and funny. Williams' personal charm is rather like that of Marianne Moore; he is perhaps a little more sensitive to the reactions of his listeners, wanting very much to please them, and is obviously delighted by the applause which sends his fingers hurriedly, apologetically through his books in search of encore reading.

Among the public speakers on the poetry circuit, Louis MacNeice is the university lecturer; Archibald MacLeish, the star on the Town Hall series; and Stephen Spender, the man who wishes he had not been asked to speak. So they seem, anyway. In MacNeice's case, since he is indeed a university lecturer, there is no particular reason why he should not behave like one. His program is neatly divided according to the time that the poems were written; each selection is prefaced with an explanation of its general ideas, a description of what occasioned the composition, and a definition of any unusual words. His delivery is precise and clear, whether he is reading a poem or leading into it. He is a tall, thin man with one persistent nervous gesture—the passing of a hand alongside his head as though to push the hair from his eyes, although, neatly combed, it has no need of straightening. Between selections he sits down, waiting like an impatient sparrow for the applause to die down so that he can go on with the program. Even in his mannerisms he is professional.

Archibald MacLeish also gives extensive background for each of the poems that he reads, but in his case the material is not delivered so that the listener feels as though he should be taking notes. There is none of MacNeice's precision, although MacLeish's remarks are just as detailed and informative. The manner is more relaxed, the humor less strained, the

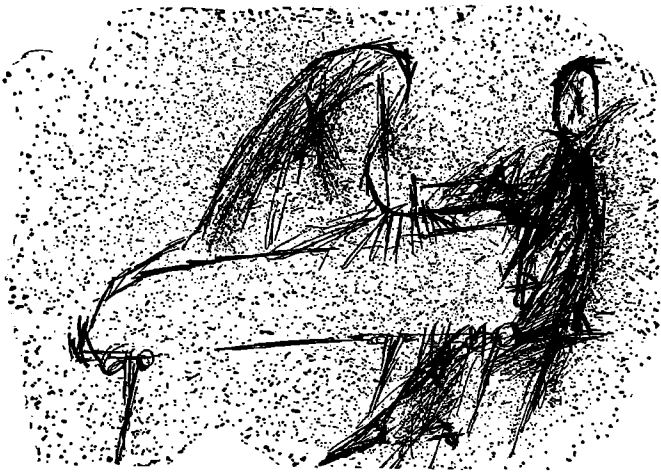
occasion one of pleasure rather than education. MacLeish wears a tuxedo in a way that makes sports jackets on most of us seem like strait jackets, in the casual manner that Louis Calhern affected before Hollywood decided that he was more suited to the role of retired Indian fighter. The grace of the poet's bearing and delivery is such that only occasionally is the listener aware that he is not really paying attention to the poem.

Stephen Spender also wears a tuxedo, but it is too small for him. No, he is too big for it. Tall, sturdy, blond, he seems to be coming out of the hall, as well as the suit. He reads his poetry as though he has been trapped on stage and thought, under the circumstances, that he might as well get on with it as best he knows how. He is a little more relaxed in the commentary that accompanies the poetry, but even there a blunt, jagged impatience, which must certainly not be stage fright after all these years, gives his performance just a hint of panic.

This is only a preliminary report, a prolegomenon; I cannot pretend to have more than scratched the surface of the poetry readers, in describing some of the headliners. I have not, for instance, ever heard Carl Sandburg read his poetry, but now that he has taken to the guitar and recorded "Sam Hall" with a skill that makes the ballad singers nervous, he may no longer deserve consideration on this narrow stage. A host of established poets—John Crowe Ransom, Karl Shapiro, Robert Lowell—and some of the younger ones have taken to the boards. They are displaying their wares on college campuses, in lecture halls and, for all I know, in night clubs. The business has not yet grown great enough to achieve its own section in *Variety*. So far Louise Bogan has not had to Indian-wrestle Wolcott Gibbs, or John Ciardi toss a coin with Henry Hewes for that journalistic right *primae noctis*, the opening night pass, but even that day may be approaching. In any case, the poets are taking to the road in increasing numbers and it is time for the discriminating critics to begin an examination of stage techniques.

Two drawings by Osborn

Robert C. Osborn was born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He graduated from Yale and later studied in both Rome and Paris. For a time he taught painting, Greek philosophy, and coached football and trapshooting at Hotchkiss School. During World War II he served in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Osborn is married, the father of two boys, and lives in Salisbury, Connecticut. He has published three books of drawings, *War Is No Damn Good, Low and Inside,* and *Leisure,* and has illustrated many other books.



Osborn on the controls

the Refined man

Dennis Lynds

At the age of thirty-three Dennis Lynds has lived in the United States, Canada and England, and has been employed as a chemist, stock clerk, and farm worker, as well as a reporter and editor of business magazines. He was educated at Cooper Union, Texas A.&M., Hofstra and Syracuse. His prose and poetry have appeared in a number of quarterlies, including *New Voices #2* and *Epoch*. Mr. Lynds, who was born in St. Louis and now lives in New York, has recently completed a novel.

YELLOW GAL

That night a warm rain fell on the city. Charlie Johnson limped slowly toward the café. It blinked red and yellow through a wet haze like the distant lights of signals on the tracks guiding to a town with a bar where you could sing for supper and a bed. Forty years is a long time, but the café was the same. A little brighter perhaps, with its neon signs, but the same café. The girl would be waiting inside. He walked slowly from the concert hall to make sure she would be there first, telling himself all the way that he was crazy.

Charlie, you're crazy! The moment he stepped from the train that morning, the moment his feet touched the platform, he told himself he was crazy. Charlie, he said, Charlie you're a damned old fool. But maybe it was just the feel of the platform under his feet, hard, respectable, not shifting like the loose gravel of the roadbed the first time he came to this city, sliding down the embankment and holding his guitar over his head. Maybe it was the people meeting him—the polite, respectful people carrying his bag and guitar to the long, black automobile.

He limped down the dark, wet street toward the café. The people passed on the street, bent against the rain, some of them smiling at him, but he did not recognize anyone. That was

what being old meant when you were famous. They knew him but he didn't know them. He wondered if it was better to be old and famous, or old and unknown. You did not know anyone either way.

In the old days it was different. Into a bar, unsling the guitar, and sing as long as anyone would buy a drink and listen. He didn't know anyone then either, starting to play alone, but always ending with harmonicas, banjos, and squeeze-boxes all around just like it was his home town. It didn't matter in the old days, but now, in New York, they came and sat where he could not touch them and listened to his music that was just music to them.

"Charlie Johnson," he said aloud, "you are plumb damn swamp-water crazy."

Hundreds of letters like hers. Kids who wanted to see what a real-live-jailbird-singing-legend was like. Goddamned kids who never had no idea what he was singing about. But her letter was different. He told himself her letter was different. This one he had to go and answer. This one he had to tell to meet him in the old café where he met Jenny forty years ago.

"You ain't crazy, Charlie, you is soft in the head."

Maybe he done it because she wrote she liked "Yellow Gal" the best of all his songs. That song came with him out of the swamp the first time, right across Mississippi, through Tennessee, and way up North. Up North and right into the penitentiary. The husband had come with his knife low the way he should, low and fast, too fast, creasing his side and past when he brought the bottle down on the husband's skull. The knife was under the body when they took it away. That was all that saved him that time. Five years for manslaughter and he sang his way in and out with "Yellow Gal." It was his song. The others, the ones they shouted for from the two-dollar seats in the big halls, they were other men's songs. "Jenny" was his song, too. He always ended with "Jenny."

He stood on the stage, tall and white-haired with a thin body in a black suit, and sang for anyone who knew what he was singing about. He sang the deep hopelessness of thin black men meeting in unpainted temples under the thin rain of scrub pine forests.

We shall walk through the valley in the shadows of death,
We shall walk through the valley in peace;
If Jesus himself shall be our leader—oh,
We shall walk through the valley in peace.

He sang the songs of lean, dusty men in pits and quarries and turpentine forests; the songs of sweat in the sun of rail-

road roadbeds; the songs of men chained together and swinging hammers to make ballast for roads they would never use.

Take this hammer—Whah!
Carry it to the Captain—Whah!
Take this hammer—Whah!
And carry it to the Captain—Whah!
If he asks you—Whah!
Was I laughin'—Whah!
Tell him I was cryin'—Whah!
Tell him I was cryin'—Whah!

He sang the sun on his back, the rain in his eyes, the heat of raw whisky running inside. He sang the smell of sweat, the smell of the swamp where he was born, the smell of a hard woman on a hard mattress late at night; and he sang the wail of a freight train slowing for a curve.

He liked to sing, and tonight had been a good concert, but he was tired and should be home in bed in the hotel, not walking through the rain in the narrow streets of a city of his youth. A lot of years and a lot of distance. Forty years. Jenny had been a field woman with big hands and a long razor scar on her face. That was all he remembered except the long nights and Jenny laughing, smelling of sweat like a woman should at night. He sat in the big chair her grandmother left her and listened to her sing as she cooked his supper. She taught him the song "Jenny." That was why he called her Jenny. He did not remember her right name. He sat in the big chair and watched her feed the kid he hadn't seen since they sent him up again after she died.

Limping on his bad leg, he crossed the sour smelling street, smelling sour from the odor of wet garbage in the back alleys, crossed through the falling rain to the red-and-yellow café. Rain made his leg ache but he never minded too much because it was the rain that saved him the time he got the bullet in that leg. He never did know if the man he left on the ground was dead or not. Just ran through the wet woods on the hillside. In West Virginia it was, like old John Hardy. Only he wasn't caught like poor John. The rain had hidden him and covered his scent and a day later he was three states away.

She was the only white person in the café. After twenty years or so in New York he was used to white girls, and yellow girls, and brown girls, and he couldn't say why he jumped inside when he saw her. Maybe it was just that he had not expected her to be small and round, with black hair that hung below her shoulders and was shiny even in the dim light of the café, and a small, straight nose, and soft red lips that said every night was Saturday night with her. Small breasts moved

high under the tight silk of her white blouse. Her straight gray skirt clung close over her belly showing its curve when she breathed. There was a time, he thought, when she would not have left the section alive.

"Hello," she smiled, "I'm June, June Padgett, Mr. Johnson."

"Like you wrote," he said. "Glad to meet you."

"It was a wonderful concert, Mr. Johnson."

"Call me Yellow," he said, "they always called me Yellow in here. They knowed it didn't mean nothing like it sounds. Yellow Johnson, on account of I'm so black," he laughed, shaking his big, thin frame.

"I thought it might be because of the song," she said.

"Guess maybe that, too," he laughed. "Always wore a yellow shirt in them days, too."

His trademark, that yellow shirt. It was Pete's shirt. Jenny gave it to him when he came to her after they killed Pete. He carried that shirt through prison the second time and put it on the first day he came out. Wore it all the time, even on the rods where the railroad bulls could spot him a mile off in it. Wore it all the way to Frisco where he got "discovered" like he'd just been born or something.

"Always liked yellow," he said. "What you drinkin', honey?"

"Gin and ginger ale," she said.

"You can bring me a little rye, son," he said to the waiter. The hell with the doctors. When you're sixty-nine you ain't got time for worrying about dying young. Like Pete when he asked him if he was scared. *"Sure I'm scared, kid, but I wasn't fixin' I should live forever."* Old Pete.

"Tell me about yourself, honey," he said. "You sing?"

"Oh yes, Mr. Johnson, I sing ballads mostly . . ."

He could not decide where he and Jenny had been sitting that first night, or any other night. He thought it was in the corner near the bar where the juke box was now. But he wasn't sure. Forty years makes a lot of changes.

". . . I can't sing like you—more like Susan Reed. Do you like Susan Reed, Mr. Johnson, she's not as . . ."

Somehow, the girl looked a lot like Jenny. The only trouble was that he did not remember what Jenny looked like. Forty years he'd been singing about a girl named Jenny, who wasn't named Jenny, and who he could not really remember. He tried to remember Jenny, but he was tired and the whisky was hot in him, and his head ached when he tried. He remembered a lot of faces, but which one was Jenny? Maybe all of them were Jenny.

"This is my friend Eddie," the girl said, holding the sleeve of a small man who stood beside her. The man was really only a boy. "He plays guitar. I asked him to come down and meet you."

"That's okay," he said, shaking the boy's hand. "That's fine."

"Can I get you a drink?" the boy asked. He had a guitar case and leaned it against the wall behind. Charlie wondered if it was a good guitar.

"Never turned down a drink in my life," he said. "Make it rye."

"Eddie plays good guitar," the girl said, "like Sam Madison a little."

"Sam's great," the boy said, returning with the drinks. "I heard him last year and . . ."

The whisky by now was very hot inside him, and smooth, easing the pain in his leg, loosening the old muscles until he felt ready to run over a mountain again. Sam Madison was old Red Madison's boy, at least Red figured he was but had to admit that Sam's mother was mighty popular and Red wasn't sure where she was while he was blowing his trumpet nights. Sam was a good singer, except maybe he sang a little too much like the cover-charge customers wanted. They were talking about Josh and about Sonny who was one of the best maybe because he was blind and didn't have much cause to play except like he wanted to play. They talked about Bessie who just sang the way things are and who was dead now.

". . . yeh, Sam's great, but he can't sing things like 'Jenny' the way you can, Mr. Johnson," the boy was saying. "I can tell . . ."

Jenny was Pete's woman. Pete killed Jenny's old man to get her and they got Pete for that. Pete liked him. He was only a kid then, in for that first killing over the yellow gal.

You was lucky this time, kid, but they'll get you just like they got me, Pete said.

Not me, Pete. I aim to live a while, he said.

Pete laughed at that, an easy laugh that made deputies look around for help when they had to take Pete in.

Hell, boy, a good man ain't gonna live no long time, specially if he's poor and black and got the gals in his eye. You got the good liquor and the no-damn-backtalk look in your eye. If them don't get you, the gals will sooner'r later. You just like me, kid. You better live while you got time.

What you wanta live for if you gotta slack up to make it, Pete said. If he got the feel to get livin' ain't much man if he worry about livin' old.

He laughed out loud, thinking of what Pete would say if he could see him now. Yellow Johnson, old, white-haired, with money in the bank and talking to a white girl in the same town where Pete killed his man to get Jenny. Pete would have one hell of a laugh on himself.

"Did I say something funny?" the girl said, smiling at him.

He waved his hand to the waiter. "Hell no, honey, just thinkin' of something. What's yours, son?" he said to the boy.

"Just beer, Mr. Johnson."

"Play somethin' for me, son," he said.

The waiter came and he ordered gin and ginger ale, beer, and more rye for himself. The boy got his guitar out. It was a shiny new guitar but the boy handled it well.

"What'll I play?" the boy asked.

"Anythin' son. How 'bout 'Rock Island Line'?" he said.

The boy began to play and he swung back to the table and listened. As he listened he knew that Pete would not be laughing. Pete would not know him.

You ain't Yaller Johnson, mister. Shuffle off. Yaller Johnson's dead. Killed a long time ago like I said he would. I know Yaller Johnson.

He could hear Pete real plain, standing right there behind the white girl, sneering at him.

I am too Johnson, Pete. Listen, I'll play you a little tune like I done before they come for you. That'll show you. Listen, Pete. It's Yellow Johnson, Pete.

I don't hear you, mister.

Listen, Pete, I'm singing for you like I always done. Please, Pete, I'm singing.

"What did you say, Mr. Johnson?" the girl asked.

The whisky made her seem to float very near, very close, smelling of perfume and sweat.

"I thought you said you'd sing," she said. "I'd like that."

"Me, too," the boy said, laying his guitar down.

He blinked. He opened his guitar case and took out his old guitar. It wasn't the same one as forty years ago, but it was old enough. The bartender turned off the juke box to listen.

"Yellow Gal," the girl said, touching his arm.

He ripped into the fast, happy drive of the old song he had brought from the swamps where there wasn't much to do but work and sing and drink your own liquor and find a woman, and where it was worth staying alive just to spit at the swamp sitting like a giant cottonmouth waiting for you to crack.

I went home with a yellow gal,
I went home with a yellow gal,
Didn't say a thing to the yellow gal,
Didn't say a thing to the yellow gal.

He took the song through the dry hills of Texas and up into that Memphis factory where he got a steady job because he had to go and marry Susy Washington who had four kids of his in three years and hated his guts until he made money in

New York and the whole passel tracked him down with their cotton-picking hands itching in his pockets.

She was pretty and fine, oh me yellow gal,
She was pretty and fine, oh me yellow gal,
She wasn't none of mine, oh the yellow gal,
She wasn't none of mine, oh the yellow gal.

Singing the song for pennies on the streets of the old South Side, and in all-night speakeasies when Louis and the King were riding high and stood a touch when his luck got real low. The King was dead now, dead and gone, leaving the blues in the royal garden, the blues in the alleys where he sat watching the yellow gals pass by.

She was long and tall, the yellow gal,
She was long and tall, the yellow gal.
She was my downfall, it's the yellow gal,
She was my downfall, it's the yellow gal.

Singing on a slow freight stretching from coast to coast and twice back. Singing behind the bars of big jails and little jails. The jails he knew and the jails he didn't know. The other men's jails.

Got thirty years for the yellow gal,
Got thirty years for the yellow gal.
Yellow, oh me yellow, oh me yellow gal,
Yellow, oh me yellow, oh me yellow gal.

Ending on the long descending note like a faint foghorn out in the delta.

"Beautiful," the girl said. "Now 'Jenny.'"

Jenny was Pete's woman. They killed Pete because of Jenny. Pete didn't think about that. The only thing worried Pete was what was going to happen to Jenny.

I killed her old man and they gonna kill me. Ain't left that gal no man 'tall, Pete said.

Yaller, you go get Jenny when you gets out. Tell her I said for you and her to stick together. I'm givin' her to you. You tell her, Pete said.

I ain't wanting your woman, he said.

I ain't about to need no woman, Pete said. You do like I say.

Jenny taught him the song. She sang it like no one ever sang it. He always figured he never would have run out on Jenny. He wasn't ever tired with Jenny. Heaving sacks all day at the mill, but he wasn't ever tired. Never too tired for bed, never too tired to play and sing at night. Not with Jenny. He nearly killed the cop who shot her in the mill riot. They sent

him up the second time for that. Only what did Jenny look like?

"That's wonderful, Mr. Johnson," the girl said.

"I like it," he said. "Call me Yellow, honey."

"Who was Jenny, Yellow?" she asked, smiling at him.

"She was a gal kinda like you," he said.

She smiled again and picked up his scarred right hand. Her hand was so small she could hold only three of his thick, bent fingers. He felt her thigh against his under the table. His hands were wet on the guitar strings.

"We all ready for another round?" the boy asked.

He nodded and the boy got up and walked to the bar. He slid into the hard sadness of "Empty Bed Blues." Full beds and empty beds. The girl sat listening with her chin propped on one hand, eyes closed, lips parted. There ain't nothing so empty as an empty bed. The girl sang along with him under her breath, her lips moving with the music. So many empty beds, the ones he was in and the ones he had left the women in, and all of them fading into that empty bed the night Jenny was killed. Jenny had a scar. But what did Jenny look like? He leaned across the table and kissed the girl's mouth.

Her eyes opened wide—leaping open. With a soft gasp she jerked back. He held her arm, the muscles strained on his back. He dropped his guitar, pulling her to him, pulling her closer as she fought.

She screamed.

The boy at the bar whirled around, a glass in each hand. The glasses fell and smashed on the floor. The girl tore loose, stumbling across the room to the boy at the bar.

"You goddamn old bastard!" the boy cried, stepping closer, trying to shake the clinging girl away.

"Don't, Eddie, please, he's drunk," the girl said.

"I'll kill him," the boy said, pulling free.

"Please, Eddie, let's just go."

Roaring with laughter, he leaped. His fist caught the boy full on his red, angry face. The boy went down dragging the girl with him, blood running over his chin onto his white shirt. The girl struggled to get up, her skirt up to her waist. He watched the boy but his eyes saw the girl's long white thighs. He saw her blue silk pants, blue silk, tight to her smooth body and dark at the crotch. The boy stumbled to his feet. The girl wore bright blue pants. It was worth fighting for a girl who wore bright blue pants.

As the boy swung the bottle he felt his knife spring open in his hand. Sidestepping, he swung the knife low and close across the boy's arm. Just a little cut. Just a small one. The bottle fell to the floor, rolling across the room into a corner.

The bottle was bloody. The boy held his arm. Outside in the street the girl was screaming.

"Get him out of here," someone shouted.

Hands pushed him toward the rear of the café. Hands gripping his arm, pushing. The girl out in the street, screaming, and the boy leaning on the bar holding his arm.

Then he was outside and running. The rain splashed on his face. His guitar bounced against his back as he ran. No shiny black case now. Over a fence he was in an alley. The rain was cool on his face. His leg did not ache any more. Turning, twisting, he limped through the alleys until the noise from the café was gone. As he ran he laughed. He laughed until he could no longer run from the pain in his sides.

Leaning against a wall, he laughed so much the tears washed down his face, rippling across the deep wrinkles like shallow water over rocks, faster and wetter than the rain. He slid down the wall into a sitting position, his back against the wall, his legs stretched before him in the inch-deep alley water. He unslung his guitar. Man, he could use that girl in the blue pants. Oh man, but he could use a woman. A low-down yellow woman who raped him with her eyes, who wore blue pants and squeezed with her long, brown, field-muscled legs. In the falling rain of the alley he began to sing.

Oh, big fat woman with the meat shakin' on her bones.
I love my woman and I tell the world I do,
I love my woman and I tell the world I do,
Oh Lord, I love my woman, tell the world I do,
She was good to me, just like I to you.

His fingers were wet and slippery on the strings; the music would not come right. Dropping the guitar, he lay flat on the ground, staring into the low, dark sky. Mouth open, he let the rain wash through him. He started to laugh again.

"Pete," he shouted, "Pete man! What do you think of this one?"

The noise of the car hummed into his mind. It grew louder slowly, very slowly, as if the car were creeping along the street and stopping at each corner. The car was looking for something.

"Charlie," he said, "that means cops."

Struggling to his feet, he picked up his guitar and ran away down the alley. At the first corner he turned into a street. Running fast, he was in the middle of the street before he could stop. A police car sat parked under the nearest street lamp. Two policemen stood beside it.

"There he is!" one policeman shouted, and then ran toward him calling out, "Hold it now, hold it!"

He shook his head and looked wildly up and down the street. The policeman reached to hold him. Laughing, he swung his guitar, felt it smash against the policeman's face. The other policeman ran from the car. He dropped his broken guitar into the gutter. One of them shouted to him again. He ran on, limping over the broken concrete. He whooped aloud as he ran. He felt good, good. He ran and laughed.

When he heard the shots behind him he began to weave and dodge, running more slowly, running in irregular spurts to confuse the shooters. At the corner he turned to see where they were.

It felt as if he had run full into a brick wall. He was still running but his legs would not move. The wall lay on top of him, pressing him down into the wet street. He heard voices. Jenny was looking down at him, the long scar standing out white on her black face. She grinned at him. He wondered if her pants were blue. The voices kept talking, talking. Talking so loud he could not hear Jenny. She raised her skirt so he could see the color of her pants. They were blue. He laughed happily when he saw them.

"He's trying to talk," a voice said.

"I didn't mean to hit him," a voice said, "Jesus! He just turned and stopped. Jesus!"

"Shut your fat yap, he's trying to talk!"

"I just wanted to scare . . ."

"Always the gun! You gotta go for the gun."

"The poor bastard's laughing."

"Wait till the papers get this."

"Shut up! All of you! Where's the friggin' ambulance?"

Jenny was trying to say something. He wished they would stop shouting. If he kept running maybe he could get away from the voices. Pete was way ahead, running fast with that easy run that could drive a hound into the ground. He ran fast to catch up. Like a turkey through the corn, boy, like a turkey through the corn.

We're long gone, Pete man, we're long gone, he laughed.

Pete laughed, too, running alongside. *Come on, Pete, run, man, run!*

The rain washed all over him. He could feel it wet inside. Wet and warm, like Jenny in the dark on the old iron bed. Wet and warm and dark. He ran faster. The more he ran the more he laughed. He could hardly hear the voices at all now.

"All he does is laugh!"

"Goddamn that ambulance!"

Then he did not hear the voices any more. Jenny and Pete stopped running. They were grinning at him now.

James Moffett

The first published story of James Moffett, "The Suicides of Private Greaves," appeared in *New World Writing #10.* Born in Cleveland in 1929, Mr. Moffett has lived in Mississippi, Ohio, and California. He holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from Harvard University. At present Mr. Moffet is teaching French at a New Hampshire boys' school.

THE MAN BEHIND

When Rad Wilson went into the Army he went unwillingly, but with a great faith in the art of adjustment. Most of his twenty-two years he had spent learning to handle just such uncongenial impedimenta as the Army. Experience was his God, perhaps because his parents had provided him with more of that than of anything else. In the course of the nomadic life they led, people and places became no more than a moving decor. But he had adjusted to that: he had a nice grin and made new friends at the next school. He always stayed; it was other people who passed on.

At the age of six he had decided that if anything was to be done right he would have to do it himself. Since his parents did not know how to manage either their lives or his, it became evident to him that if he himself did not worry about affairs, chaos would come. But he failed again and again; chaos came and they moved to another city. Nevertheless, as he grew up, he came to believe that only the tight force of his concentration kept the universe from flying apart. He was the center of gravitational pull, and if he lost control for a moment the planets would zoom out of their orbits and stars would collide crazily.

In high school he began consolidating his forces to insure an ordered life of his own. There were only two things he could count on: his mind and his strength. In summer he worked all over the country at high-paying labor jobs; in winter he collected A's and played football. His values were determined by what it took to keep the planets from jumping their orbits. Parental deficiencies supplied his concept of evil. He knew what he did not want to be: unaware, immature, and vulnerable to chance. He wrote crusading editorials in the school paper on Emersonian self-reliance.

When his family moved again, before his senior year, he stayed where he was and supported himself, determined that they should not drag him down and relieved that he no longer had to worry about them. Thus his new order remained un-

disturbed. Colleges found irresistible the scholar-athlete combination backed by such hell-bent organization, and he won a scholarship.

Harvard had been a formidable proving ground, but he had mastered that threat in stages of being frightened, fatuous, and familiar. He constructed himself a character based on his multifarious experience and on the rather fragile pride that the self-made man extracts from each new victory. Before he graduated, being intelligent and understanding, and being considerably buoyed by many academic successes, he granted amnesty to his family. For one thing they had given him many interesting difficulties to overcome. Besides, he said, "A boy is not a man until he has forgiven his father." Not only wise, but artistic. This kind of rhetoric suggested to him a concept of how to live. Ugly situations were merely the stuff he had to make beautiful; a life could be a work of art. Adjustment became a matter of molding one's own human clay—patting down a rise here, twisting the heel of the hand here, slashing a thumbnail across there. Maturity was his major.

By the time he had received his master's in government, with many digressions in the arts, he saw clearly his career. The Foreign Service needed intelligent men who had a richly diverse but integrated background. He was ripe and well-rounded. At this point the Army called him.

As usual, however, he had thoroughly prepared himself. To be cynical about Army blunders and discipline, to feel bitter about the deprivation, to fail to assimilate the evil were the clichés he knew he must avoid if he were to keep himself whole. But self-made men have a way of undoing themselves.

2

He soldiered; in fact so well that at the end of the first week of training the captain made him a trainee platoon leader. Whenever the platoon sergeant was away, he took his place, commanding in the field and taking charge in the barracks. Later he was also given the honored position of company guidon and carried what he came to call the Jolly Roger, the infantry flag of solid blue with white crossed rifles. The glory of his experience was that he could play any man's game by the other's rules on the other's course. It was like arguing the other side of a debate to prove one had the scope and flexibility of mind.

After a brief interview in the second week of training, the captain assigned him to talk for several minutes, at an orientation meeting for his fellow trainees, on "Why I Am in the Army." Smiling to himself, he prepared a colloquial explana-

tion of the social contract that demonstrated irrefutably that they were all delighted to be inducted because they had agreed to such obligations a long time before they were born. The captain was pleased and considered Rad his positive agent in the ranks, although Rad did nothing beyond play the other fellow's game, according to his doctrine.

But pride was not effective with weather and tedium. He had to rely on other techniques of adjustment. With his alchemical imagination he learned to transform the base matter of external circumstances into something he could accept. Once the company spent fourteen hours on a machine gun range trying to fire on a day so cold that oil froze in the gun breeches, and the bolts, fouled with snow, slid forward with comic slowness, deriding detonation. After moving from point to point along the firing line, waiting hours at each point to fire for two minutes, after taking a turn sitting knotted in a snow-filled target pit somewhere out in the tundra, he found himself in a tiny shack at sundown, left behind to load surplus ammunition on a late truck. He sat on an unopened case and watched the last rays of sun ignite a nail head not quite flush with the plank-work counter where, hours before, he had broken down belts into lengths of twenty rounds. The other men on the detail were outside trying to build a fire that would hold them until the truck came. He warmed himself visually at the nail head and the golden granules of dust near it, glowing with eternity, like the breadcrumbs in Vermeer, each standing out on the plank, a fiery boulder with its own shadow. The moment swelled until it crowded out the whole day.

But of course contacts with the training cadre posed the most difficult problems. To cope with them Rad had to draw on all his reserves. During a heat wave when the temperature stayed near one hundred for a week, the Field First Sergeant snarled irritably at him for having lined the company up wrong in front of a bleacher. Being at the head of the column, Rad was responsible for leading properly each columnar movement; but the sergeant's command had been barely audible, easy to misunderstand, because, as Rad knew well, the sergeant had not felt like exerting his chest and throat muscles. So he had given in to the heat when Rad had with great difficulty been staying alert for commands. After they had halted, the sergeant's hand roughly grasped his shoulder and Rad found himself clearly the vent for this man's personal discomfort. When the sergeant saw, however, the very unmilitary glare in Rad's eyes, his own anger waned, as he perhaps remembered that beyond a certain frontier—demarcated by the stinging drops on the eyelashes when a man is at attention—military discipline no longer deters even a trainee. Still

smouldering, Rad led the file into the bleachers, which were enclosed on three sides by heavy, rubberized blimp cloth and formed a splendid receptacle for dust, odors, body steam, and insects.

Then came ordeal by stifling, as Rad thought of it. The words of the instructor facing them on a little podium in the open expressed nothing but his own impatience to finish. To the trainees he was not a speaker but an object of envy: he could scratch or sigh without drawing an immediate, wrathful reaction from another body jammed against him. And he breathed pristine air. Rad felt that surely one could not get through forty minutes more without leaping up, arms flailing, and diving berserkly through the blimp cloth. Each second was measured out in the mind by obsession with physical sensations. Then Rad saw off in the meadow behind the instructor a small glossy dog chasing a butterfly through flowers that switched at his ears. The dog leaped and, twisting his body to the right with all four feet off the ground, snapped over his shoulder at the butterfly. *Bullock sterteth, bucke verteth.* Rad seemed to hear the click of the teeth as they grazed the elusive wing. The image held in check his inner rash.

The last technique of assimilating the Army was making friends among the other trainees. Although Rad had long since developed a skill in establishing casual fellowship, he tended to be very selective in choosing friends. His choice in this case was a curious one, someone very different from himself. Only one of the soldiers he had met had the rare capacity to entertain others in the very midst of all the misery; even the best of men often became petty and selfish during the four months of personal frustration. Strangely enough, he had more cause than anyone else to be bitter. Having served six years in the Merchant Marine, he was exempt from the two-year draft, but they had got him on one of those mysterious legal technicalities.

"They said, 'Take your choice—jail or the Army,' " he explained to Rad once. " 'Well,' I said, 'since you fellows are nice enough to give me a choice—I'd rather look at bars on a window than on some gorilla's sleeve.' " He waved his shoe brush. "That all happened the day before I was inducted." Always, after he finished telling a yarn, his bland face would break into a well-contrived simpleton's grin. "But hell, I don't care. If I was on the outside I'd just be enjoying myself, so it's just as well. In fact they saved me a fortune; I was just about to buy a house in Frisco." He spat on the toe of the boot he was holding in his left hand and cocked his right elbow in preparation for a vigorous spit-and-polish job. Instead, he threw the boot just as it was into his metal wall locker.

"I shouldn't oughta do that," he said, using his best bad English. His face stayed as matter-of-fact as if he had no audience at all. "With what I've been eating lately that spit's liable to stay in there and curdle that toe up like an elf's shoe." He grinned in idiot simplicity.

"Did I ever tell you how they pole pigs in Spain?" He was Sinbad, the eternal yarn-spinner. "Well, you take the little porker like this." Sitting on the foot locker, he supported the belly of the little porker in the palm of his left hand. "Then you take a pole—say fourteen feet long—and you screw it in aft here, where this little plug is." Apparently the porker wriggled, for he clamped it between his knees. With both hands now free to grasp the pole, he screwed it in. "Now you get on the other end of the pole"—he backed some distance away from the wall and bracing himself with his rear leg began to lever it up like a fishing pole—"and lift the little porker up so he can eat the persimmons. That's how pigs in Spain get their persimmons. Well, I better get on in here and get my shower while the hot water's still cold."

Sinbad helped, and alchemy, and pride. Although, unlike his other means of adjustment, Sinbad's yarns were not of Rad's own creation, Sinbad vaguely represented for him some important counter-spirit to the evils he was trying to avoid and furnished him one of those foci about which he composed his Army life, the trick being to edit existence, to burn out the contamination.

3

There was a freak thaw in mid-December, five days before the end of his training cycle. Five more days and the trial would be over. Tender wet earth was seen again where snow had been; the trainees' tolerance was at its peak now that so little more remained to be borne. At three o'clock that afternoon they began one of their last firing courses, an exercise consisting of walking slowly down a lane marked with white tape and firing at sporadic pop-up targets hidden along either side. Twelve lanes lay parallel, each supervised by a cadreman who kept his trainee abreast of the others by reining in and out on the canteen that hung over his left hip. If a trainee advanced too fast, he came within the line of fire of a neighbor swinging on a target.

Sitting in the dirt in the center of a circle of trainees who were waiting to fire, Sinbad was saying, "Then this lieutenant asks me if I've ever been mistreated during the period of my basic training, and I said, 'Does a billygoat smell? Does a bear like honey?' " Talking and laughing with him, Rad had become

filled with such a mellowness that he had failed to notice that the cadreman in charge of their lane was Carlton, a disorderly fellow who had been demoted three times before finally regaining the rank of sergeant. He had always impressed Rad as a snarling cur without any real authoritative force. Off duty he giggled and shouted and bragged until even his peers got annoyed with him.

As he walked from the ready line to the assault line to take his turn, still smiling, he watched Carlton returning with his charge from the other end of the lane. The previous firing order, having run its course, slowly made its way back, policing its own expended cartridges, reaping homeward the harvest of husks it had sown on the way out, the dynamics of it all expended now also and Army husbandry replacing the adventure of chambered round and level-muzzled stalking. Whereas the other cadremen ambled wearily back, one pointing out scattered cartridges to his trainee, another glancing at his watch, Carlton was poised like an evil god at the ear of his man, his neck thrust forward, his pocked face straining at him. The trainee was trying to walk away from him, and he bent forward eagerly whenever he saw a cartridge, but Carlton leaned too, arching to stay at his ear, and never letting loose his elbow, which he pinched with shaking rage, clinging like the hateful hag accosting the passerby from behind and thrusting her handful of worthless merchandise around in front of him, outrageously importuning. He spoke in a low voice befitting the strangely intimate harangue that was like the hag's plea that demanded irascibly a turned head, a slowed pace, a hand reached into the pocket, but not so much as if to sell as to convey some secret hidden in the merchandise, the secret being the point of the selling, a life-long utterance agonizing if never divulged.

By the time Carlton and his trainee reached him, Rad was beginning to feel a pressure in the temples and a tightening of the throat. Dismissing the one passerby, Carlton accosted the next without abating the hag's harangue. The moment he turned his red eyes to Rad, a crackling was transmitted as though between two electrodes of the same order. The mellowness was seared away in a flash.

"Where the hell's your ammo, pick up them clips, hurry up, gonna screw up the whole line, huh? make 'em wait for you, who the hell do you think you are? listen I've had enough of you bastards today, if you don't do this right I'll break every bone in your goddam body, you listen to me, I don't give a damn if you *are* mad, hurry up and load that weapon or I'll take this fist and—put that safety on—if you point that weapon near me I'll kill you, you son of a bitch." Carlton was

facing him squared, both fists clenched and the wrists curling upward. Instead of seeing Rad, the red eyes seemed to be reflecting a sulphurous fire he was always staring into. An alternate narrowing and rounding of the eyes that could have been comic was like a focusing and refocusing before a continuous blaze.

Something in Rad was starting to flog its way to the fore, bludgeoning his judgment; he tried to remind himself that Carlton was an obvious psycho and not to be taken seriously. But suddenly he could no longer forgive the Army for subjecting him to madmen like this, and he was the gun-toting, ground-pounding, pot-scrubbing yardbird, resenting all that he knew he should forget or bear out or adjust to or some goddam thing.

"Watch yourself," he said to Carlton. But Carlton looked away at the other cadremen readying their men in the adjacent lanes, and he answered distractedly, with a curious neglect, "I'll show you how tough you are." Only the words were there; his concentration had been abruptly dispersed, as if his heart were no longer in it.

A lieutenant hailed up and down the line, preparatory steps were synchronized ritualistically, safeties were unlocked, and the slow stalking began. They walked at first with their rifles at their hips, as instructed; each man waited for his first target to pop up.

"Pull your man up there!" Carlton snarled to a cadreman two lanes to the right. "What are you trying to do, get my man killed off?" Then he jerked back violently on Rad's canteen, at the same time fastening to his ear. "*Get* back here, damn it all! I don't care if you get your ass shot off but you ain't dragging mine up there." Rad felt speckles of saliva when this was growled quickly into his ear.

The other man yelled something back irritably, Carlton answered with a threat, and the two kept cursing each other until the lieutenant told them both to shut up.

Finally Rad's first target popped up. He fired two shots into it and was on the point of swinging over toward the second target, which had just appeared, when Carlton jerked him around to it with a nasty whisper. "You blind son of a bitch, there it is, fire at it. You take all day and *we'll* drop behind." The unexpected tug was indistinguishable from the outburst of fury it released in Rad. Encumbered with the rifle and forced to keep his attention ahead, he had no way to express hatred but by deliberately pushing backward in a manner that was actually a stiffening, a clogging, with anger. Carlton countered with a strong constant pressure that made it impos-

sible for him to keep good balance and that hurried him sometimes just at the moment when he was firing.

Carlton rode his ear and his hip like some demon leeching to his soul, discharging a kind of mad force that was conducted through the canteen and in the ceaseless vicious snarling that was no longer to Rad a series of oaths and threats and insults; it became an unreal incantation issuing not from this man he could not see but simply from somewhere behind him, not even physically behind him—back, back, in time, in mind. He felt two forces struggling, one pressing unmanageably and undeniably forward, the other backing against it in desperate restraint, and heard over it all, as though generated by the struggle, the hate song singing on.

In a split-second pause, while he was squeezing the trigger, the cap of the canteen pressed so hard against him that he could feel the circular lip cut into his back. The rifle discharged. Some hammer long cocked inside him struck a hidden primed charge. His right hand slid to the balance of the rifle, he raised it over his head with one hand, then putting his whole body, his being, behind the movement, terrifically he slammed the rifle into the ground. With the same impetus he swung around to Carlton and drove his fist into his mouth, all the way out to arm's length. The thawed earth squished slightly as his body slapped against it. Immediately Carlton curled into a ball of hurt. As soon as the first contortion of shock left his face he looked incredulous and uncomprehending, betrayed. Finally his eyes reached Rad, speaking nothing but injury. Rad stood blind and mindless, the inner chamber still filled with swirling gases not yet returned to normal pressure.

The firing stopped and people began running over to them. Then small worries started to impinge faintly on the periphery of his largely blank consciousness: court-martial, stockade time, his self-created life shattered in a moment—the frightened buzzings of his old monitor trying to regain dominion. Finally he saw before him Carlton cringing in the mud: "Now he will be too disgraced ever to get anyone to drink beer with him in the evening." But this was not what he had hit—this scared child. A betrayed and broken child. Flooding suddenly like the tide of a spilling life, bigger than court-martials and chaos, the hot blood-flux of forgiveness washed him outward and drowned the sounds of worry. He began to kneel, stretching his hands toward the figure he had so much misunderstood, so long misunderstood, when arms grabbed him and pulled him roughly backward. But as they led him back out of the lane, jostling and stumbling, he thought, *It's all right now, it'll be all right.*

Anthony West

THE HEDGEHOG AND THE FOX:

An Essay on Isaiah Berlin's Analysis of Tolstoy's View of History

Born and educated in England, Anthony West came to the United States in 1950 and is now an American citizen. His criticisms and reviews have appeared in *The New Statesman and Nation* in England, and in *The New Yorker* in the United States. Mr. West is the author of a critical biography of D. H. Lawrence and of three novels, *The Vintage, Another Kind,* and *Heritage.* He is the son of H. G. Wells. The following essay was sparked by recent contemplation of Isaiah Berlin's book, *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History.*

Mr. Isaiah Berlin is one of the greater living masters of the indoor sports of conversation and philosophy, but I suspect that he has not spent as much time as I have sitting out of doors in woods and hedgebottoms, waiting with a shot gun for something edible in the shape of pheasant, wood pidgeon, or rabbit to turn up. Because I have done so I am, unfortunately, not able to take the line about the fox and the hedgehog, written by the Greek poet Archilochus, as seriously as he does, even as the starting point of what an Elizabethan would have called a conceit. Archilochus wrote the line, "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing," and on the basis of this Mr. Berlin has suggested that there are two main types of thinkers and writers, and indeed of human beings in general. There are the hedgehogs who relate everything to a single central vision which rules their thought and action, and the foxes, who pursue unrelated and even contradictory ends—ends unrelated in particular by any moral or aesthetic principle. Dante, according to him, is a hedgehog; Shakespeare a fox. Plato, Lucretius, Pascal, Hegel, Dostoevski, Nietzsche, Ibsen, and Proust are hedgehogs; Aristotle, Erasmus, Herodotus, Montaigne, Molière, Goethe, Pushkin, Balzac, and Joyce are foxes.

This is an amusing idea, but I am in a difficulty with it because the hedgehogs and foxes I have seen going about their own affairs intrude insistently between me and Archilochus' figurative monstrosities, and between my mind and Mr. Berlin's. I find myself thinking that good as many of the aspects of the Greek mind are, there is something deadly about one of them: the inveterate habit of taking experience and

squeezing the juice of life out of it until there is nothing but the dry bone of an abstraction left. Mr. Berlin assumes courteously that everybody knows as much as he does, and he never explains in his brilliant essay—which goes on to say why he thinks that Tolstoy was a fox trying hard to pretend to be a hedgehog out of a sense of principle—just precisely what a hedgehog is. That many people, and most Americans, are unclear on the point was impressed on me when Mr. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., talked of "the hedgehog rooting up the seed" in his review of Mr. Berlin's essay which appeared in *Encounter* when it was first published in England a year or two ago. This suggests to me associations of the "root hog or die" variety with some sort of wild pig. But the hedgehog is anything but a fiery particle; it is an English, and altogether undynamic, version of the porcupine. It is a little, plump animal, nine inches or so long with short, stubby legs on which it shuffles and potters about. It is a nocturnal animal with highly developed night vision so that it looks about it in an elderly, shortsighted way in daylight when most people see it. It is covered with spines—about which I will say more in a minute—except on its smooth legs, belly, and face, and the extremely sharp "hairline" around its appealing face gives it very much the air of a little old woman in a poke bonnet, a resemblance which Beatrix Potter made the most of when she made a hedgehog into a laundress in one of her pleasantest children's books. It differs, importantly, from the porcupine in that its spines are set rather more firmly into its skin than feathers are set into the skins of birds. (English gypsies used to eat hedgehogs, and got over the difficulty of plucking them by baking them whole in a thick coat of clay. The spines and the outer skin came off together with the brick-hard clay. They are said to make good eating.) Another interesting thing about the spines is that, though they are quite hard, they are not very sharp. Ordinarily, when the hedgehog is untroubled and unafraid, its spines are not fully erect, but lie backward toward its tail forming a stiff outer pelt which can be stroked in the head to tail direction. But when it is alarmed it tucks its head and legs in underneath itself and arches its back so that the spines stand up stiffly; in effect, it becomes a ball covered with pins radiating from the center. In this rolled-up state the hedgehog will submit to the most prolonged investigation absolutely passively. The interesting thing here is the bluntness of the spines. The investigator nuzzling the ball with a soft nose, or with soft pads, doesn't pay any penalty of an aggravating or annoying kind, such as the investigator of a porcupine has to pay. A very mild deterrent is the absolute limit of the hedgehog's offensive and

defensive action. The hedgehog's "policy," though that is not the right word for it, is live and let live; all it asks of its enemies is that they let it alone. The tragic thing about its single trick, the one thing it knows, is that it is not effective against its worst enemies. Cats and other volatile hunters will get bored with the motionless ball and leave it, but most country dogs and all foxes can make it unroll and then kill it with little difficulty. One of the many things the fox knows is the secret of the hedgehog's "big thing."

The hedgehog's secret is one which modern psychology has done a great deal to illuminate. During World War I the English psychologist Rivers studied a large number of cases of shell shock produced by the prolonged strain of front line service. In doing so he produced a system of categories of automatic response to fear, which took over when rational control broke down. These were classifiable under four main heads as "Fear and Flight," "Rage and Fight," "Manipulative Action," and "Paralysis." Studies of these automatic responses in men were suggestive to a number of naturalists who were becoming dissatisfied with the prevailingly anthropomorphic trend in animal psychology. One of the consequences of the post-Darwinian realization that man is a highly developed animal was that much animal behavior was interpreted in terms of primitive forms of rational thought. Roughly, the wild animal was supposed to live a "normal" life, adjusted to its environment, given up to its main instinctive aims of feeding, mating, and raising its young. This normal life was occasionally interrupted by abnormal situations of threat and risk which the animal recognized as such. It was supposed to consider them, assess the risk, and to take appropriate action of flight or defense. The hedgehog, for instance, was supposed to look about, sniffing, to add smell to sight, and interpret the signals received in the form "Ha, my enemy, a fox" or something of the kind, to consider if there was time to get away or not, and if not to go into its defensive routine. This is all very well, but it has one logical hole in it which centers on the behavior of very young animals. They take evasive action and simulate defensive action long before they can have acquired experience of what is or is not dangerous. This can be explained by assuming that the parent animals have some way of telling their young what dangers life has in store for them, or that the young inherit the experience of previous generations through some such mechanism as Jung's collective unconscious. But such elaborate explanations affront scientific method by the complexities they involve and create more difficulties than they remove. The kind of experience, for instance, which teaches any particular animal that another

animal constitutes a specific danger to it generally culminates in its death. And very few animals can either have narrow escapes from anything like the full roster of the actual and potential enemies they appear to recognize as menaces, or witness the destruction of other animals by them. The field workers who went out to study animal behavior after World War I, armed with Rivers' clinical observations of human automatic responses to fear, found that a flood of new light had been thrown on their problem. Fear, and automatic responses to it, played a much larger part in animal life than had been supposed, and fear, so far from being a departure from the normal, was the normal state. The field workers discovered two main factors dictating animal behavior in risk situations. The first was the Flight Distance. Any animal in a wild state takes flight from anything which it does not know by experience to be safe, and which appears in movement within a certain distance from it. Dr. Hediger, working in Africa, has measured the Flight Distances which govern the reactions of a number of animals and birds, and has proved beyond question that the pattern of response is entirely automatic. Basically, there is no assessment of risk, and no thought; any intrusion into the danger zone within the Flight Distance produces the reaction. This accounts satisfactorily for the behavior of young and inexperienced animals. They are not inexplicably recognizing specific threats but offering a standard response to the general class of unfamiliar things.

Inside the Flight Distance there is a second boundary, the Critical Distance, within which the flight reaction will be replaced by the last three of Rivers' standard responses: Rage and Fight, Manipulative Action, and Paralysis. The first two are active, and the third passive, but they have the same mechanical basis. Fear produces a glandular surge which knocks out the normal response patterns and substitutes an emergency set. The rage and fight animals go berserk and fight regardless of pain and prudence, the manipulators inflate themselves, bristle, dig madly, roll themselves up, and so forth, while the paralytics go through the apparently highly skilled mimetic performances that used to be described as shamming dead, lying on their backs, sticking out their tongues, and rolling up their eyes so that only the whites are visible. The usual difficulty with accounting for animal behavior is absent in this case because men experience similar reactions and can describe them. When Dr. Livingstone, for instance, was being savaged by a lion, he fell into a state of deep narcosis in which he felt no pain and was incapable of movement, although he remained fully conscious. A watcher might have assumed that he was shamming dead, but in fact his glands had completely

taken over his motor responses from his conscious mind. No question of knowledge or of thought was involved in his behavior. This, like shell shock and combat fatigue, is a case of reversion to a very primitive pattern. That one is justified in calling it primitive and making the implied value judgment, is indicated by the cases in which emergency automatic activity incorporates complex material acquired by the conscious mind. In the very fascinating reconstruction of the details of outpost and patrol actions in Korea in his book, *Pork Chop Hill*, S. L. A. Marshall describes a number of cases of purely automatic "rage and fight" reactions to situations of extreme danger. In them the men who went berserk made skilled use of weapons, selected appropriate weapons, and took appropriate action in a variety of situations. Their automatic responses included a great deal of their training instruction.

In all this I may seem to have come a long way from the question of hedgehogs and foxes. But the point of the detour has been this. The hedgehog is a low-grade animal which responds intelligently to a very limited sector of its experience and reacts to everything outside that with a standard reaction composed of limited manipulative action—its rolling—and paralysis. The area of automatic response is large, and the pattern of its existence as a whole is one of evasion. The fox belongs to the experience-acquiring and complex-minded class of animals—of which man is one—which have built an elaborate structure of knowledge and experience over and above the basic pattern of automatism. A fox has a very flexible Flight Distance which expands and contracts according to its assessment of risk in relation to its experience. It acquires experience rapidly and retains it as knowledge. It has a wide variety of response to what it consciously knows at some level approaching human consciousness, and like man its automatic responses are in the nature of a last resort when its other apparatus fails. It comes then to this: that the essence of hedgehogism is the evasion of the greater part of reality, and that foxism is a matter of making full use of the senses to deal with its multiplicity.

The human hedgehog—and Mr. Berlin seems to me entirely right in naming Plato, Lucretius, Pascal, Hegel, and Nietzsche, as hedgehogs—recoils from reality, either because some single aspect of it, or the very fact of its multiplicity and apparent disorder, seems repulsive, and rolls himself up inside some intellectual system which serves as a substitute. Snugly entrenched inside its construction, the hedgehog announces its possession of a valid single central vision of the universe and all the relationships it embraces, and dogmatizes about its own necessities as if it were discussing reality. The hedgehogism

of Lucretius, Pascal, and Hegel would take lengthy papers to discuss, but Plato and Nietzsche are delightfully transparent examples. Plato's attachment to the Greek city-state of Athens, at a time when political events were showing that such a state was no longer either economically or politically viable, led him to construct a beautiful edifice housing incontrovertible proof that the only possible end of the pursuit of the highest good, in the forms of truth, beauty, and so forth, was the construction of a city-state like Athens governed by men like himself. Nietzsche, as a man with syphilis headed for a squalid collapse of his central nervous system, proclaimed—with more psychological discernment than he knew—"out of my will to Health and Life I made my philosophy." This is the pure essence of artistic hedgehogism, with the speaker drugged by his own secretions, trapped in the net of necessity, and announcing his transcendental command of life and reality.

So far so good. But what is Dante doing in that *galère?* In his work there is a detectable idea that seems characteristically fox and not hedgehog. It is a master idea and so might be taken to be a hedgehog one, but I feel that it is not. Dante wrote, in spite of religious censorship, about religious ideas, and although the matter is debatable because he had to exercise extreme caution, his master idea ultimately emerges with some clarity. The idea turns on that of the millennium as an important date. The millennium started with Christ's ministry, which inaugurated a period in which man's relation with God was through the church and its saints. At its end man was educated to an awareness of God which made the intermediary unnecessary. In the period of the second millennium man's relationship with God was to be direct. I take this to mean that every man's relationship with God is unique and therefore incapable of the kind of formalization on which churches and religious organizations insist. You cannot have dogma that will cover an infinite number of unique relationships. I think it is this characteristically foxlike recognition of multiplicity which gives Dante his strength and lends his work the immediacy which it still possesses in spite of its archaic externals. He heralds a widening of the human spirit. The same thing seems to me to be true also of Ibsen and of Proust. Both have a master idea about the desirable ethical basis of human relationships in candor and honesty, but both make the essentially foxlike recognition that all individuals are unique and that every relationship is a special case that cannot be formalized. Proust has a doctrine about the shaping of responses by experience, but it seems clear to me from the tremendous novel that what he is saying is that the fine shades of response and the shaping experiences are infinitely variable

even when their main outlines fall into patterns that can be classified. But the main point, for me at any rate, with Dante, with Ibsen, and with Proust, is that when confronted with their work I do not feel that I am faced with minds englobed in a system of prejudices about reality (often referred to as moral and aesthetic principles) and I do feel that I am taking part in an exploration. In the whole body of a writer's or philosopher's work, areas of recoil not obvious in single works are likely to become manifest, but the greater the man the smaller they are, and the less automatic the response to them is. In the case of a king fox like Shakespeare there are hardly any areas of recoil at all. They are the subject matter of *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens,* but the response to them is entirely in his control. When the control breaks down, and one gets a piece of gabble and fear like his picture of Joan of Arc, the effect is startling and horrible. The real thing about hedgehogism is that it is surrender to fear, and self-betrayal, and so disgusting.

Mr. Berlin goes on to talk fascinatingly about Tolstoy, whom he considers to be a fox by nature who believed in being a hedgehog, considering the matter mainly in the light of the view of history which Tolstoy, as he shows, derived from Comte Joseph de Maistre. The critical point from which this view of history is visible is in his account, in *War and Peace,* of the battle of Borodino, in which as Mr. Berlin puts it "he obstinately tries to prove that Napoleon knew as little of what actually went on . . . as the lowliest of his soldiers." The argument widens from that to a general attack on historians, who are supposed to know nothing about what really happens because the number of causes upon which events turn is too great for human knowledge or calculation. The argument widens out again from that. There are natural laws determining the lives of human beings, but men are too cowardly to face the fact. They therefore construct the myth of great men whose lives are a succession of free choices and whose will imposes itself upon the course of history. Napoleon, in reality an impotent puppet in the hands of great forces beyond his control, is one of these mythical figures created by men's desire to evade the truth. I do not believe that Tolstoy wished to believe this. I believe that this theory is an automatic response to his own deep inner need to evade responsibility. It is part of the pattern which led him to transfer his property rights to his wife, and to give away his copyrights in his work. These were the late forms of the self-destructive automatism which led him to bring himself to the edge of ruin by gambling when he was young. These gambling bouts followed a compulsive pattern, and usually ended with epi-

sodes with prostitutes which sometimes scared him. After one such episode he committed himself to a revealing reflection: "Yesterday, at the thought that my nose might fall in, I imagined what an immense and beneficial impulse this would give me in the direction of moral development." One can only say that this is a hedgehog's view, both of what moral development is, and of how to achieve it.

It seems possible to say that Tolstoy was part hedgehog and part fox, and king fox at that. But guilt about virility, and about the masculine role generally, gave him a tremendous area of recoil in which his responses to reality were entirely automatic. In *War and Peace* the hedgehog's activities are sublimated and canalized along the channel provided by the theorizing about history, so that the fox can write magnificently about people. *Anna Karenina*, by virtue of its subject, itself comes into the recoil area and the hedgehog and fox write alternately, the hedgehog finally pushing the poor girl in front of the train. The hedgehog ultimately downs the fox, and writes *What is Art?* and concocts the famous Tolstoyan theory of the correct sexual relationships between men and women without any reference to reality at all. Putting it in a more compact way I would say that in his middle life Tolstoy managed to rise above the compulsions that shaped his youthful conduct, and that after his great creative years of satisfactory sublimation they reassumed control. Mr. Berlin makes Tolstoy conscious of the nature of the conflict, and thus invests it with the dignity of tragedy, finally comparing him in his last years to Oedipus blind at Colonus. But I feel that the essence of hedgehogism is the automatism, and that the real horror of Tolstoy's story was the destruction of his magnificent apparatus for perception by forces in him over which he had no control. He knew what infinite possibility and diversity life held, gave magnificent expression to his knowledge, and then turned back in on his own fears of it, attempting to divest himself of everything that made him a man and a genius.

In the end Archilochus is perhaps not so far from the mark. The many things the fox knows collectively constitute life, and the one big thing the hedgehog knows is fear, which can negate and destroy every gift, above all that of delighting in life itself.

INDEX TO *NEW WORLD WRITING* NUMBERS I–XI

Legend: (d) = drama, (e) = essay, (f) = fiction, (p) = poetry

A Listing of Our Contributors by Category of Contribution

Drawings and Paintings: *See* John Barrington Bayley, Wilson Bigaud, Al Blaustein, George Catlin, Dieudonné Cédor, Gene Derwood, Nikos Hadji-Kyriakos Ghika, Eugenio Fernandez Granell, Morris Graves, Sabro Hasegawa, Pauline Inman, Tom Keogh, Willem de Kooning, Rico Lebrun, Pietro Lazzari, Bobo Leydenfrost, Robert Motherwell, Robert C. Osborn, Jackson Pollock, Candido Portinari, Réné Portocarrero, Abraham Rattner, Frederic Remington, Sir Francis Rose, Charles Russell, Jawad Salim, Ben Shahn, Saul Steinberg, Rufino Tamayo

Essays: *See* Gay Wilson Allen, Walter Allen, Corrado Alvaro, Louis Armstrong, W. H. Auden, Hamdi Bey, John Malcolm Brinnin, Robert Cantwell, Malcolm Cowley, Angel del Rio, Sidney A. Diamond, Alexander Eliot, Oliver Evans, James T. Farrell, Charles A. Fenton, André Gide, Horace Gregory, Albert J. Guerard, Donald Hall, Cecil Hemley, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Rolfe Humphries, Sam Hunter, Patricia Hutchins, Philip C. Johnson, Howard Mumford Jones, Susanne K. Langer, Alwyn Lee, John Lehmann, Rosamond Lehmann, Jay Leyda, Alain Locke, Margaret Mead, Nermin Menemencioglu, Niall Montgomery, Geoffrey Moore, Roger Nimier, Sean O'Faolain, Winthrop Palmer, P. M. Pasinetti, Aileen Pippett, Henry Hope Reed, Jr., Kenneth Rexroth, Selden Rodman, Charles J. Rolo, Mark Schorer, Christopher Tunnard, Gore Vidal, Gerald Weales, Herbert Weinstock, Anthony West, Joshua Whatmough, Vernon Young

Fiction: *See* Ilse Aichinger, Nelson Algren, Sivar Arnér, Louis Auchincloss, James Baldwin, Everett Ball, Gene Baro, Samuel Beckett, Peggy Bennett, Thomas Berger, Stanley Berne, Gina Berriault, Giuseppe Berto, Leonard Bishop, Samuel Blazer, Robert Bloom, Heinrich Böll, Jorge Luís Borges, H. C. Branner, Anatole Broyard, Paula Budlong, Clare McGrath Butler, Alejo Carpentier, José

Kinnell, Kitagawa Fuyuhiko, Kitasono Katue, Kizu Toyotaro, Henry Knobil, Stanley Kunitz, Kim Kurt, Kusano Shinpei, Gabrielle Ladd, Melvin Walker La Follette, Joseph Langland, Philip Larkin, James Laughlin, Lynne Lawner, Robert Layzer, Lee In-su, Lee Kwang-su, Lee Yuk-sa, Rosalind Levine, Jorge de Lima, Erik Lindegren, Hans Lodeizen, John Logan, Manuel van Loggem, Lucebert, Artur Lundkvist, Donagh MacDonagh, Patrick MacDonogh, Mairi MacInnes, Raimundo Magalhaes, Jr., Michel Manoll, Harry Martinson, William H. Matchett, Jane Mayhall, Roy McFadden, James Merrill, Thomas Merton, W. S. Merwin, James Michie, Vassar Miller, Eugenio Montale, Nicholas Moore, Rosalie Moore, Adriaan Morrien, Herbert Morris, Julia Maria Morrison, Howard Moss, Murano Shiro, Howard Nemerov, Martinus Nijhoff, John Frederick Nims, Philip Oakes, Frank O'Hara, Robert Pack, Takis Papatzonis, Hyam Plutzik, Jacques Prévert, Muhammad Qassim, Dachine Rainer, B. Rajan, Kenneth Rexroth, Theodore Roethke, Jean-Baptiste Rossi, Jean Rousselot, Claude Roy, Robert Sabatier, Augusto Frederico Schmidt, James Schuyler, Tom Scott, Winfield Townley Scott, E. J. Scovell, George Seferis, Pierre Seghers, Louis Simpson, Edith Sitwell, Sacheverell Sitwell, Sydney Goodsir Smith, Vivian Smith, William Jay Smith, W. D. Snodgrass, Marvin Solomon, Wallace Stevens, Robert C. Stewart, John L. Sweeney, May Swenson, Tamura Riuichi, R. S. Thomas, Terence Tiller, Ibrahim Touqan, Ralph Treitel, Wesley Trimpi, Alexander Trocchi, Guillaume van der Graft, Vasalis, Byron Vazakas, Karl Vennberg, Peter Viereck, Hendrik de Vries, David Wagoner, Derek Walcott, Neil Weiss, T. Weiss, Casimir Wierzynski, Richard Wilbur, Eithne Wilkins, William Carlos Williams, James Wright, Robert John Wysong, Sirajuddin Zafar

A Listing of Our Foreign Contributors by Country of Birth or Residence.

Argentina: *See* Jorge Luís Borges
Australia: *See* Vivian Smith
Austria: *See* Ilse Aichinger
Brazil: *See* Carlos Drummond di Andrade, Manuel Bandeira, Alfonso Arinos de Melo Franco, Jorge de Lima, Raimundo Magalhaes, Jr., Candido Portinari, Augusto Frederico Schmidt
British West Indies: *See* George Lamming, Samuel Selvon, Derek Walcott
Canada: *See* Patrick Anderson, Fred Cogswell, Malcolm Lowry
Cuba: *See* Réné Portocarrero
Denmark: *See* H. C. Branner, Martin A. Hansen
France: *See* Samuel Beckett, Alain Bosquet, Paul Chaulot, Guy Dumur, Jean Genet, André Gide, Eugène Ionesco, Michel Manoll, Roger Nimier, Pablo Picasso, Robert Pinget, Jacques Prévert, Jean-Baptiste Rossi, Jean Rousselot, Claude Roy, Robert Sabatier, Pierre Seghers
Germany: *See* Heinrich Böll
Great Britain: *See* Dannie Abse, Walter Allen, A. Alvarez, Charles Causley, Dorian Cooke, Hilary Corke, Roy Fuller, Brian Glanville, Thom Gunn, J. C. Hall, Anthony Hartley, Patricia Hutchins, Robin Jenkins, Elizabeth Jennings, Philip Larkin, John Lehmann, Rosa-

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New WORLD WRITING 11 *Table of Contents*

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