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# NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY

RESEARCH & ADORATION

J. C. KNODE

THE WESTERN COW PONY

LLOYD N. JEFFREY

HERMIT OF THE MOUNTAIN

S. OMAR & ELSA BARKER

THE SQUARE PEG

VERSE PLAY BY KHWAJA SHAHID HOSAIN

FIDELITY

A STORY BY LUCILLE EISMAN

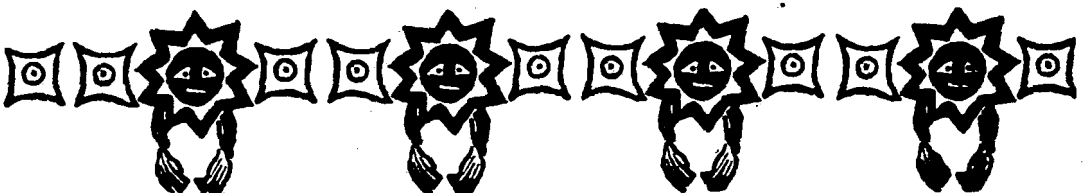
THE TEARS OF THINGS

A STORY BY JACK B. LAWSON

TWENTY CONTEMPORARY POEMS

BOOK REVIEWS

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# NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY

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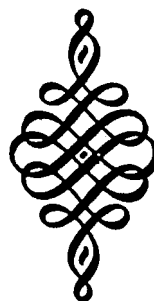
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WE ARE BEGINNING to see a general reaction in Western civilization to two culture-shaking ideas developed within the past century. The first is that man evolved from lower forms of life, and that that evolution required millions of years. The second is that the universe includes billions of suns billions of miles apart, and that among them there are, in all likelihood, many planets supporting life similar or superior to our own. The contrast with old orthodox ideas need not be stressed, but apparently the mass deflation of the human ego involved in such an intellectual revolution can lead to both bewilderment and insecurity. It may even be argued that this change of outlook has quite as much to do with the daily reiteration of the theme of doubt and uncertainty as has the presence of atom bombs in the world. After all, humanity throughout its career has lived continuously with the threat of conquest, slavery and annihilation. Its periods of peace are remembered fondly and longingly.

Now it is generally agreed that those who best express the mood of a civilization are its artists. And if this be true, the startling unanimity of expression they have now achieved should leave no doubt as to the contemporary outlook. Modern art makes a fetish of idiosyncrasy, vagary—confusion. Modern music is full of dissonance, displacement—confusion. Modern writing wallows in absurdity, perversion, frustration—confusion. This is not the way of great art. There one will find design, sanity, power, humaneness and a sense of values. Pursuit of these qualities is not absent in the modern intellectual world, but I find it appears most impressively in an unexpected place—among scientists. Science, basically, is not concerned with human values, but it is evident that scientists are becoming increasingly so.

Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, once wrote: "Leisure and space

Research and  
Adoration

JAY C. KNODE

are the most precious gifts for us; for we are creators. Our real freedom is in the world of our own creation, where our mind can work unhindered and our soul finds its throne from which to govern its dominion." Perhaps a meeting ground between poet and scientist is now dimly discernible. Perhaps in the course of scientific research during the past half-century—through the Plancks, the Einsteins, the Bohrs and the Heisenbergs, through interpreters like Jeans and Sherrington and Eddington, through philosophers like Bergson and Whitehead—in the kind of creative scientific thought where "leisure and space are the most precious gifts," there have been developments with affinity for some of man's ancient insights.

An American scientist, Loren Eiseley, has recently put together a series of lectures with a poetic title, "The Firmament of Time." The first sentence reads: "Man is at heart a romantic." (Not the usual kind of scientific beginning!) The author vividly traces aspects of the "progress" of science, "though," he admits, "it often opens vaster mysteries to our gaze." In the Middle Ages, heaven and hell were close to earth. God sat upon His throne watching over all men, and Satan strode to and fro plotting their destruction; Good and Evil strove for the possession of the human soul.

Then someone found a shell embedded in rock on a mountain top; someone saw the birth of a new star in the inviolable Empyrean heavens, someone watched a little patch of soil carried by a stream into the valley. Another saw a forest buried under ancient clays and wondered. Some heretical idler observed a fish in stone. All these things had doubtless been seen many times before, but human interests were changing. The great voyages that were to open up the physical world had begun. The first telescope was trained upon a star. The first crude microscope was turned upon a drop of ditch water. Because of these small buried events, a world would eventually die, only to be replaced by another—the world in which we now exist.

Eiseley's story of this great transition ends with a description of the author's descent of a mountain road into a desert, whence, as he envisioned it, life had gone up those slopes from lowly bush to towering pine, from venomous scorpion "to the deer nuzzling a fawn in the meadows far above."

"I too am a many-visaged thing," he concludes, "that has climbed upward out of the dark of endless leaf falls, and has slunk, furred, through the glitter of blue glacial nights. . . . It is when one sees in this manner, or a sense of strangeness halts one on a busy street to verify the appearance of one's fellows,

that one knows a terrible new sense has opened a faint crack into the Absolute." This is language that many an ancient Indian might well have comprehended.

An English scientist, Sir Julian Huxley, has written and lectured for a good many years on human values and problems under such titles as *Scientific Humanism*, *Evolutionary Ethics*, and *Religion without Revelation*. He also wrote the introduction for the English edition of that remarkable book, *The Phenomenon of Man*, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. And it was the same English scientist who could compose this summary.

From the point of view of the stellar universe, whose size and meaningless spaces baffle comprehension and belief, man may appear a mere nothing, and all his efforts destined to disappear like the web of a spider brushed down from the corner of a little room in the basement of a palace; but meanwhile he is engaged upon a task which is the most valuable of any known, the most valuable which by him can be imagined, the task of imposing mind and spirit upon matter and outer force. This he does by confronting the chaos of outer happenings with his intellect, and generating ordered knowledge; with his aesthetic sense, and generating beauty; with his purpose, and generating control of nature; with his ethical sense and his sense of humour, and generating character; with his reverence, and generating religion.

The Frenchman, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, was to the end of his life a member of a religious order. He was also a paleontologist of high rank, but one to whom synthesis was as important as research. Like most modern scientific thinkers, he is concerned in his writing with the world and all phenomena as process. He lays the groundwork for the appearance of man on earth in the physics and chemistry of the universe, and agrees with the point of view that the natural formation of protoplasm from inorganic matter on this planet has long since ceased. But evolution goes on. He thinks of life as a great spiral "thrusting up, irreversibly, in relays, following the master-line"; and in human evolution he finds *Homo sapiens* not directly descended from *Pithecanthropus* and *Sinanthropus*, but, after his own embryogenesis, "driven by climate or the restlessness of his soul, sweeping over the Neanderthaloids." Thus still "following the master-line," replacement rather than continuity seems to be nature's way among her great phyla; "the law of succession again dominates history."

Moreover, this law carries over into that new phase of evolution found in man—the psychic. Special significance, then, may be attached to the entrance of Western civilization—in which science was born—upon the world's stage,

dominating the civilizations of India and China. (The almost frantic efforts of peoples over the globe to formulate their own hopes in Western terms presently testify to that dominance.) And the author's regard for science may be inferred from one of his eloquent references to it: "Immense and prolonged as the universal groping has been since the beginning, many possible combinations have been able to slip through the fingers of chance and have had to await man's calculated measures in order to appear. . . . The dream which human research obscurely fosters is fundamentally that of mastering, beyond all atomic or molecular affinities, the ultimate energy of which all other energies are merely servants; and thus, by grasping the very mainspring of evolution, seizing the tiller of the world." Then he continues with a startling remark: "I salute those who have the courage to admit that their hopes extend that far; they are at the pinnacle of mankind; and I would say to them that there is less difference than people think between research and adoration."

Scientists, in reconstructing the past, are forced to employ extrapolation. Its use in brief forecasts is also legitimate, but in dealing with the far future this or any other method is regarded skeptically. Pierre Teilhard, however, by the use of analogy, by close reasoning, and by marshaling known facts of present and past comes forward with a grand pattern of things to come that will give respectful pause even to the scientifically minded. Key words and phrases in the approach are: Fundamental unity of cosmic stuff ("The least molecule is . . . a function of the whole sidereal process"), concrescence, emergence, consciousness, reflection, hominisation, knowledge, love. In terms of a million years of life for mankind on earth (James Jeans, I believe, regarded this as a conservative estimate), the human mind will reach capacities beyond our imagination. Teilhard conceives of such mind as a layer or film covering the earth as our present explosion of population will cover it with human life. He calls it the "noosphere." He plays with the idea of a galactic noosphere, but rejects it as too fantastic! Little did he realize that only twelve years after he had finished *The Phenomenon of Man* we should have listening posts set up trying to catch whispers from intelligent beings far across galactic space!

Teilhard's church would not permit him to publish his major works, yet he remained faithful to the end of his life. He makes a "gallant attempt," as Huxley puts it, to reconcile the supernatural elements of orthodoxy with his scientific arguments, but that attempt is not the significant part of his thesis. Much more seminal for religion is his declaration:



We are often inclined to think that we have exhausted the various natural forms of love with a man's love for his wife, his children, his friends and to a certain extent for his country. Yet precisely the most fundamental form of passion is missing from this list, the one which, under the pressure of an involuting universe, precipitates the elements one upon the other in the Whole—cosmic affinity and hence cosmic direction. A universal love is not only psychologically possible; it is the only complete and final way in which we are able to love.

In an interview granted a short time before his death, Boris Pasternak is reported to have called himself a "seeker." It seems unlikely that he was aligning himself with a sect; he probably never heard of Bartholomew Legate, last Londoner to die at the stake for heresy, and a "Seeker." And he could easily have been ignorant of Roger Williams' use of the term as marking the independent in religion. Like Williams, however, he had experience with more than one kind of orthodoxy, including Communism, and found complete satisfaction in none. Pierre Teilhard was also a seeker, and was likewise rejected by a dominant group.

What were these men seeking? Do not all good people strive for more grace, greater understanding, profounder peace? The average individual goes to his ecclesiastical mentor to find reassurance in his faith. And the answers he gets from such an "authority" are accepted as final. But some questioners—and there must be millions of them—while acknowledging the complete validity of the religious attitude, find that attitude wrapped around mental images and "doctrines" centuries old whose finality their own knowledge and sense of logic must reject. And they go on questing.

It is trite to say that a social group is stabilized by its conservers and followers; they are its framework. These conservers, however, can develop hyper-protective attitudes not only toward their own genuine beliefs, but also toward vested institutional interests that grow up around vital ideas. Thus stability in the midst of evolution can deteriorate into rigidity. Then along comes "replacement."

Contemporary seventy-year-olds delight in telling of the changes in the American scene in a single lifetime, and of adaptations to them. "Sacred" ideas change much more slowly, but they *are* modified: Today the horizons of the universe are widening so fast that this modification cannot escape acceleration. In the process we need guidance. It may well be found among present-day scholarly seekers, men of deep reverence toward life and mind and their

source in the universe, but men who are just as sensitive to “intellectual immorality”—another incisive Huxley phrase—as to social immorality. Our ultimate “salvation” may depend upon how earnestly we heed them.

Earlier we quoted one of the great poets of the East. Let us close with a bit of poetry from the West, written recently, this time by an American social scientist, Waldo Frank:

. . . I stand at dawn before a slender tree. White clouds, swift as the piping birds, run in a mauve sky. The air is cool on my skin. The tree, its branches composed in aspirance and its young leaves viridescent, hyphens sky with earth. I sense beauty. If now *God is within this self* is conscious in me, I know that this beauty I feel is the signature of union within my self or self and cosmos. I sense it through its evidence before me—partial, of course, like what I see of a bird in flight in a far sky, but sufficient for recognition. The cosmic in self now is dominant over the other dimensions.

With DAWN he raced for the ocean. He was ten or twelve again, not fifteen.

The air remained wet from night in spots and it would gush suddenly along his cheeks and neck. Palms and ironwoods and sky brushed against him one second, were back in their places the next.

The boy tried to run faster—to get to the shore ahead of day. He wouldn't, of course. Wave noises were hushed, in retreat. But the race had too much joy about it for him to think really of losing. His feet came down exactly right over the thin grass, flung him straight on. He ran at a coconut tree, dodging just as they met, so that its trunk was before him, and behind without having passed by. Then he went up the ridge, slowing with each step. Sand was loose here. When he could almost see over the top the boy closed his eyes and jumped hard.

## The Tears of Things

There was the beach.

*a story*

But not what he'd wanted. Things lay beneath a film of exhaustion, their adventure hidden inside them. Waves pushed in feebly and their roar stopped short in his ears, failing to carry him back on it. A gull swooped in a broken reflex. The grey water pointed away, toward the horizon where the sky was still indistinct, alive, not blue and stiff. Everywhere the sand had been moved about and shaped to a new past, but the work was finished. The newness discolored at sight. Black strands of driftwood and shells marked the falling of the tide. The dunes looked named, used, ordinary. Nothing for him to share in making, no surprises to touch before they put on skin.

JACK B. LAWSON

The boy sat down and waited for his breathing to even out. After a little, more certain of himself, he watched lines of foam rush for shore and sweep into easy arcs and perish as the water drew back. In their wake the sand glowed

silver-pink with long sunlight. The moisture sank, the shining contracted and vanished. Another wave ticked in. He jerked free of its return and stood up.

The sun was half into the sky now and rapidly clearing it to hard blue, if not yet shedding a distinct heat. He was impatient to be doing. On the way to the surf he kicked over a few shells, but without finding one that was perfectly itself. They all had worn spots. Although it still didn't compel his attention, the hoarse shout of the ocean became louder and more real. It was simply there, commonplace. Expected and disappointing.

Along the shore, within the range of alternating light and wetness, tiny beige crabs were charging crazily after each retreating flood. The boy waded out, facing the spray when it hit, letting the undertow carry him along. Interest had more to live on here. He stopped, riding the surface chesthigh, and watched a big roller close in. Before him the swell edged with foam, already breaking to bright reddish thunder on the left, and he leaned into the water, then kicked down until his fingers touched sand.

There the boy hung a moment between his dive and the opposed push of the depth. His legs swung slowly in toward the rest of him. Above, the wave slid by: he swayed to its passing and lost the bottom. Straightening, he put out his hand again and felt along ripples of sand. An old man, blind and thick in his other senses, trying to see a house by fumbling through the rooms. He needed air and started up.

Into a web of stabbing—lightningjabs. They split his forearm and tangled his fingers with shock: he was helpless, flimsy. Torn—smashed—burst. The sky was upside down falling under his chin. He choked, he was drowning. Stinging ripped his neck. One foot struck bottom. He was standing shakily then, bleeding water from his mouth and nose.

Wrinkled glassy blobs were all over the surface. Air gagged him and he clutched his throat with both hands, to hold it together. New jags yanked at his grip. His hands came away covered with purple thread. They felt like a bruised crazybone. A low swell glided by, almost toppling him, and carried the man-o'-war cluster in a foot or two. The stinger washed off, uncoiling lazily.

His stomach was grotesquely tight, bent on itself, and to keep it from pulling him under he had to go by hops. That lasted only until the water had dropped to his waist and couldn't help him balance any more. Then he

walked, crouching to avoid the hurt. Just as the undertow became heavy his stomach loosened a bit, so the chance remained to make shore.

The last yards took a long while. He was quivering and there was steady pressure on his ankles. The breakers hit him in the other direction at the knees. Were one to catch him with a foot lifted, he would be knocked over and drowned. Every step turned the beach white, sucking out its firmness; he could almost measure the loss of energy by the time that was needed for color to return.

Hardly out of the surf he sprawled and rolled over and over in the wet sand, crusting himself with it. The air bit and his flesh needed covering. It had gone thin with shock. Breathing seared—he was a dragon.

The fingers of his right hand wouldn't move and he banged them experimentally against his cheek, but without the touch of shared consciousness. They didn't belong to him. The boy lay on his back, mouth gaping, and waited. This was somehow the wrong world. The quivering went on, especially in his neck and stomach, completely indifferent to his will. But the pain relaxed and he could even look at it now. He was certain of living. Beyond his feet waves boomed and the gulls called harshly. When the throbbing was over he would go up and down the beach, a mile or so in both directions, and pop each man-o'-war he found. He would do it with his heel, Island-fashion, and take all morning if necessary. At least the sun didn't burn him any more. He'd accomplished that much in the last three weeks. His throat jumped with fire again, and he imagined men-o'-war, crumpled old sacs of water like giant tears, stranded along the shore in dozens just above the reach of surf; each of their purple tentacles neatly extended and pointed to mirror the retreat of the waves.

Directly under the noonday sun he sat watching himself climb a coconut palm. Gripping the trunk firmly in his hands he pushed with his feet, balanced to the opposite side smoothly, almost walking. His stomach trembled with old sores. The intentness of his participation kept his breathing jerky. So when his aunt called, just as he was nearing the top, the boy started and was angry with her.

She came onto the patio still wearing that faded mu-mu with the acid stink in it. The boy didn't want her close and backed off the steps. To cover his

rudeness she gripped vigorously, taking on one of those comradely, masculine attitudes that accorded so oddly with her timid voice.

—How's it going, Jim? The question was all hopeful complacency, self-assuring. Probably she wanted him to do something.

—I'm fine, he said. Just fine. He closed and opened the swollen right hand at her. See?

From this distance Aunt Mabel looked pretty and delicate, in spite of her age. Even her teeth seemed right. In fact they were too big like the rest of her features. Teeth eyes eyebrows nose mouth chin: all of them. How *everything* could be out of proportion he didn't understand, and it astonished him to see her close unexpectedly, heavy-skinned and too much there.

—Are you *sure*? I mean, Jim, when your mother sees you!

There she left it and stared at him, blinking rapidly, hands on hips. Contrary to her tone, the words had been more hesitant than usual, as though she didn't quite want to be committed to them. An actress wondering if she remembered the lines wrongly.

—The marks'll be gone, he said, voice louder than he'd intended. It's three days and they'll be gone tonight.

Three days more! And she had to remind him, of course—positively wanted him to leave, while she couldn't say it. The boy dug in one heel, twisting it back and forth until he reached the level of cool sand.

—What do you want? he said after a moment, giving up in the ache to be rid of her.

—I'm out of aspirin, Jim. Could you—? She waited for him to finish it, holding the advantage now. He tossed a coconut from the cluster in the tree and split open her skull, gave her real pain. But not convincingly. This continual bothering and interrupting just meant that she was trying to fit him into her routine, to make him useful like the other objects around the house.

—Why didn't you say so? That sounded rude, and he shrugged amiably, flapping his arms, to correct it. I'll have to change first.

—I had a little too much last night, I think, his aunt pleaded. She faced the house, one hand sunk in a pocket. Her voice faded. I'll give you a dollar and you can keep the change for going if you like.

He went into the shower and stripped, hanging his bathing trunks by the supporter on the hot water knob. His skin felt gritty and stiff with salt. There was a buffo frog in the corner, under the leaves, watching as though it

didn't quite believe in him. By now the men-o'-war he'd been too sick to smash had dried up and disappeared. He sponged the red welts on his arms and chest with the cloth gently. Then he put on khakis and entered the house by way of the bathroom.

In the kitchen his aunt sat with one leg slung over the corner of the table, smoking and drinking coffee as she always did at this hour. For that matter, most of the day; she hid from the sun like a nightcrawler, a roach or a centipede, say. The world was hopelessly external to her, *Kailua* wasted. He had to go home, but she would stay here the rest of her life, stuck in habits that belonged, like his mother's, to a Chicago apartment in winter. That dead life explained the heavy curtains which made the room so dim, too.

—There's some beer cans outside, his aunt said. You wouldn't mind, would you? I mean, your hand—?

He folded the bill in a square and pushed it into his watchpocket.

—That's okay.

It was ridiculous to suppose his aunt had a true headache—she wasn't that open to feeling—but she would insist on his being considerate, on the morning-after routine, just the same. His injuries didn't count.

—Never put off till tomorrow, she called apologetically after him.

The cans lay by the step, a whole case of them. When he lifted it, liquid splashed around and the sudden weight broke his grip. The boy squeezed his ripped fingers into his armpits until the pain had smoothed off. Then he shouted, loud as his voice would go:

—Hey! These aren't empties!

His aunt stopped at the door. Standing there, behind the dusty screen, she looked only half-real; existed, as it were, in patches.

—It's all right, Jim. Hesitating. They aren't any good.

The boy wouldn't let her off so cheaply.

—What's *wrong* with them?

—They've been opened. You know—? They aren't good now.

Her voice sank palely, as though the sunlight were drawing off its substance. Probably she just didn't have room in the refrigerator.

—It's an awful lot of beer, he protested. But nevermind, I'll take it. I can manage.

Walking backwards, he dragged the case with his left hand until the sweep of path covered the house, and the tangled wildness and roar of birds

surrounded him. She needed space to crawl into the refrigerator herself and pretend she was home in Chicago. The air was moist with yellows and greens. All this would have to shrivel up when only his aunt and uncle remained. Hiding the case along here would be easy, but first he wanted to start on it, to make sure none of the cans remained when he had to go stateside.

The beer was flat, absolutely flat, and a trifle warmer than his mouth. He spat what he could out. He tried again and had to spit that out, too. The taste meant nothing, but his imagination was revolted. Watching the amber fall and wet the sand in a neat dark line, he emptied the can. There wasn't a suggestion of foam.

Sometime last night his uncle had wobbled into the kitchen to open a new round, slipped into a habit of puncturing cans, and gone on at it as long as they lasted. Or had been planning ahead; his uncle did too much of that. All the time he'd been on the patio listening to his uncle's dinosaur friends and drinking coke, his mouth sticky with it. And they hadn't made an effort, if they'd known of course, hadn't grabbed the excuse to soak in real drunk or anything! They were too lazy, they didn't care. Staggering off at the regular hour, whatever happened, letting the beer go stale and lose its possibilities for excitement.

In the noise of the birds there was a regularity, an oscillation like the beating of the heart. But soon as his attention became fixed he could no longer be sure. His breathing introduced a rhythm. Perhaps, indeed, the regularity was imagined. From a second can he poured beer in a wavy line on the sand, imitating the swells and contractions of the sound. That only made them less convincing.

He sketched his aunt's head with beer. Quick splashes matched wonderfully her brown eyes, at once lighter and darker than her skin, but otherwise she was hard to do. The nose seemed either too big or not distinct enough, and the jaw always looked bent. After botching her a few times he made his uncle on the other side of the path. *He* showed up correctly the first time. The boy smiled. But his mother, when he did her, was exactly like his uncle; she couldn't be distinguished without ruining the truth of the picture.

Next he smoothed a big rectangle with the side of his foot, hopping along on the other leg, and began to draw a seascape. The line of the horizon faded out, though, before he finished a gay filigree of surf, and its fine strokes van-



ished while he repaired the horizon. Nothing would stay put long enough, fast as he worked. The boy kept trying, however, too much engaged for this failure of his intentions to matter, until the beer cans were all empty. Then he picked up the light case, so light he wanted to dance with it, and trotted the remaining distance to the road.

By the trash platform a white small dog, hardly more than a puppy, lay eager eyed, shiny tongue out quivering. No collar. Dust spotted its coat softly. The garbage can was tilting crazily on the reach of chain.

When he threw down the case the dog rose and sniffed with short interest. The boy patted its head cautiously and a prompt rolling-over exposed a freckled tight belly. So he rubbed that, brushing off the sand which adhered in places, and the dog wiggled. It panted sympathetically, joyously.

And followed. The oilstained pavement ached with brightness, too hot for his feet. Along the side they raced in spurts and the dog chased sticks, bouncing gayly around him before it gave them back frothed with saliva. They came opposite the peeling brown old church with the Midwestern spire, just as though heaven were still up. Homesick without knowing it, like his aunt. The boy tossed over a coconut and watched the dog struggle to return it, dragging and shaking it with impatient growls. But the nut was too stubborn a weight. He went on to the corner and waited there a minute, then whistled and ran. The dog chased after him immediately.

The air lost its stiffness and streamed right through him. The earth responded, not merely a white dog. He had only to will it and he would fly. Everything he saw and touched became his, changed into gold, shimmering.

Once in the village, however, he dropped to a walk, putting off the adventure that waited behind things, that would inevitably today open to him. Nothing wonderful could happen in this place, all tidiness and graveyard crowding. The dog—his dog—charged ahead at first, then came back and matched his pace. Sidewalks and streets tangled around them like a net. The hot concrete stung the boy's feet, but avoiding it as much as possible made him trivial, interfered with himself. He wasn't represented in looking-out where he stepped.

When they reached the grocery store he decided to leave the dog in front, so no one could object if pets weren't allowed, and to buy it meat with the extra money.

—You wait here now, he said carefully, squatting and scratching at the hard flesh behind its ears. Just a little while. I'll bring you something good but you have to wait here. Understand?

The dog returned his gaze alertly. It didn't understand, of course. But maybe he'd remain fixed in its memory long enough anyway.

Aspirin was at the checkout and a tin cost only twenty cents. The boy went on back toward the meat department. A chunk of steak might even fit into his dollar. A high glass case of bakery goods distracted him—doughnuts, coffeecakes, tarts, bismarks, cream horns, upside-down cakes, turnovers, meringue pies. Perhaps, he thought, the dog would be satisfied with a thick bone. Or liver: he could buy more liver than steak, and have money left over. The meringues were spotted with little oily beads. But even liver would cost too much. He'd forgotten about Island prices on fresh meat. Lazily wondering how to manage for both of them, he stood admiring the yellow almost mirror-like gloss on a pineapple upside-down cake. Behind him a worn voice said:

—Somebody got hisself a dawg.

Out the front window, half-lost in the glare of the road, was a heap of white with red glittering at one end.

He looked other places just before understanding. The man who'd spoken was by the meat counter, wearing a stained apron. Loosemouthed, his eyes polished to glass by the sun. Wrinkles meshed his long face. Dried up—a caricature of age. His body should have quit years ago. That accent made him Southern; carrying old habits around like a shell. The boy put out his right hand and touched gently along the metal edge of the case. There was nothing behind things. His uncle had told him that after a man had lived in the Islands a long time he couldn't go away. His body wouldn't accept sudden changes of temperature any more, he'd die of exposure Stateside.

The boy almost saw out of the window.

He stared at the red stripes across his knuckles, then flexed his hand. But hiding that way failed too. He couldn't remember the feel of the man-o'-war stinger exactly; the edge of surprise refused to come back. Under the glass the pineapple upside-down cake flattened to a yellow patch, shadows vanished. A picture that didn't quite aim at reality. He was going to fall through all these surfaces. Or perhaps already had.

Dark. He'd waked shaking. Above crashed something crazily torn, a last giant reflex of thunder. No: that had to be memory. The storm was over. Rumbling uncoiled along the roof and hesitated, became a soft plop on sand. A coconut had fallen to the roof, right overhead maybe. The boy felt his neck, remembering that he was still here and the centipedes out now.

Things fitted onto him wrongly. Moonlight washed the room with a flimsy blue-yellow, and in it walls chairs coffee table dead lamps, even the corner shadows, had thinned, like reflections in an old mirror with the silver worn off in spots. All the shimmerings that had hurt his eyes today were inside-out.

The boy sat up. The noise of the ocean reached him distantly, faded. What time was it—after midnight? He listened for the usual viscid jumble of snores. But his aunt and uncle must have decided to stay in Honolulu tonight, and not to come back in the storm. Chinese New Year! The firecrackers and sparklers and sprays of colored fire from rockets looked crumpled and tired against rain, when he tried to imagine them. And his aunt had wanted him to go over for that, to pretend he was in China and to stick all evening in her company, just so he could tell his mother when he got home.

This had to be after midnight, things felt so changed. Two days left then.

Walking cautiously, flinching on each step because his foot might brush a centipede, the boy entered the kitchen and opened the refrigerator. At supertime he'd gone down to watch the sunset on the beach, but things still looked too heavy. On the bottom shelf, next to a bowl of overripe guava, six little molds of raspberry jello each with a rabbit shaped into its top gleamed in the cold light. And yesterday his aunt had been using cookie cutters to make sandwiches fancy, wasting a third of each one. He took the front mold, got a spoon from the rack by the sink and returned to the living-room, still moving warily.

Turning on the lamp exposed him to a gush of familiar horrors as the walls took a beige that exactly matched his aunt's eyes, a correspondence just too much, too intended, to remember with belief. To see the matching no longer involved her presence though, and sometimes, going to bed, he had to remind himself that darkness sucked out color, that he wouldn't really sleep in the same room.

Light, anyway, drove off the centipedes. He'd seen only that blur in the bathroom the first night and the thing his aunt had swept from under the

couch brittle and greywhite, with its legs tangled in a web of dust. Human spines able to crawl around—to go fast!—by some grotesque trick of nature, deadalive, and as much as a foot long. How did the buffo frogs swallow ones that big? He began to eat the jello, smashing the glassy purple with jabs of the spoon. And curling up in warm places: his uncle had waked with one on his neck last Christmas. The rabbit quivered in the surface, trying to escape. The boy ate around it carefully, tilting the plate after every bite to see the new slants in the light. Purple was the ideal color for terror.

Using the back of the spoon he patted the heap of jello and made it jump. His next bite would cut into the rabbit. Blood had been so *thick* at the dog's mouth. Piled up.

This time he didn't choke. After a minute he could think of the sunset, the heavy layer of thunderclouds coming in like a swell. That had engulfed him, taken him in with its inevitability. The air had been hollowed out so that each wave boomed separately, barely overlapping the next—speaking pure anticipation. The world brought to slow motion. Down the beach a man had been fishing with chunks of meat on a string, a huge crab almost covering the bottom of the bucket at his feet. The return of the image was natural and direct, like the response of a hand to the will.

Who had warned about the shark on the other side of the reef though? The boy couldn't remember that. He'd simply known and been terrified of dying. Before then things had been all sympathy. He'd caught the waves just right, riding them in twenty or thirty feet at a time, part of their rush. Even the fire in his breathing hadn't bothered; he'd needed to play dragon only afterwards.

The pile of jello had melted a little. The boy pushed the coffee table away with his feet and snapped off the light. Going to sleep always took a long time, between the fear at his throat and the opposed, slowly overbalancing pulse of the surf. He needed a hard skin, an external skeleton like a crab's to hide in and forget about centipedes. Tomorrow he'd wake up late, and there were only two days left.

Quite suddenly, he was crying. The tears gushed down his cheeks and along his nose into the corner of his mouth, lukewarm and weakly salty. One slid itching over the wound on his neck. But there was no reason for him to cry. An old man looking at his face in the mirror and not seeing himself at all,

but someone with other and even commonplace features. The boy closed his eyes but the tears swelled out anyway. They hardly belonged to him. Indifferent, outside his reach. He felt tired, flimsy, more than worn out, but otherwise entirely calm. Not weepy, certainly. So he ignored that, and lay waiting, one hand over his neck for the waves to come in and match his breathing and cover his mind. After a bit he stopped crying, and the wetness stiffened on his cheeks.



## Return Trip

*to Philip Legler*

We followed a stream from Illinois  
Uphill, as the streams divide.  
We measured its course against the grain,  
Our only compass the tilted stone.  
Falling's a river's guide.

A woman knows how the rains will join,  
Waits where the ground is warm.  
A man's knowing needs a tougher sky;  
High snow begins his geography.  
Streams fill where a slide is torn.

. . .

Since then, we've found our lowland towns  
Are made of worn down mountains—  
A memory of rock that burns  
This soil beneath its gentle rains.

Here fences, phone wires, easy roads  
For weekend trips past farms  
As orderly as Christmas cards  
Deny their source in the winding storms

That come each spring. Back safe in our  
Furnished homes we've seen  
The mountains through a metaphor  
Of plains—a strike we can not claim

Except in letters or brief vacations,  
Rich with a winter's warmth,  
When our late talk in family kitchens  
Tells us what our climbing meant.

One summer showed us how to clear  
A path, yet what we both  
Map out each year still disappears  
Like thumbnail marks on a tablecloth.

. . .

We'll follow that stream from Illinois  
Again, though the oceans pull.  
This seven-year hike has taught us best  
The seasons of strength, the seasons of rest.  
Stones melt that the streams may flow.

Dear friend, our prospect needs no chart;  
Our trail's in sight where it's dry.  
Its line points an even richer vein.  
Snow gives in time: we'll keep the sun  
In mind in Illinois.

—Clifford Wood

## Broken Song

*H. D. died Sept. 27, 1961*

Venus

has no arms;

Victory

has lost her head;

H.D.

has lost her song.

Still

word and curve

strike beauty

in the eye

and ear.

Sculptors

have left us

glories in stone,

but H.D.

has left

us beauty

in words,

that will outlast

the ravisher time,

the imperishable

marble of her mind.

—*Frank Ankenbrand, Jr.*



## Robinson Jeffers

*Jan. 10, 1887—Jan. 20, 1962*

Scream, eagles! scream above the raucous  
dirges of the seagulls!

Ocean of the Pacific! break among the  
California rocks and spit your bitter foam to  
heaven!

Oracles, spew forth your dire warnings  
from age-cracked stone lips!

A prophet has fallen! time's rusty  
scissors have clipped your golden wings!

Winds, shriek his songs and drive them  
deep into granite!

All rocks, all hardness, the bowels of  
temples, and dark caves, hold forever his smouldering  
singing lines.

Angels, birds, animals, fishes of the sea,  
mountains, oceans, trees, rocks, clouds, and all beauty,  
be the chorus that chants this man's requiem.

His name is writ in fire.

—*Frank Ankenbrand, Jr.*

## after the rain

after the rain  
eyes are giving  
light to the day . . .  
people under  
sun-deck—  
closed for a moment  
to neighbors . . .  
shake away little  
cloud-shovel  
from manhattan.

—*Purcy H. Pini*

## Prison Song

Behind the long ridge  
The arms of the sun glow dim  
As flames beneath water

Beyond the ridge and over the  
Back of the pale west sky  
Guitars sing in the sun  
Waves catch the feet  
Of a laughing girl

And I pluck broken chords  
Here in the growing darkness . . .

—*James M. Jenkinson*

## A Human Cry

see  
see me  
see me again . . .

on my stone  
sits the trace  
of salt pearls.

see  
see me  
see me again . . .

how all stones  
are crying  
are crying for you.

see  
see me  
see me again . . .

the stone  
in heat  
is bending.

see  
see me  
see me again . . .

my stone  
strikes folds  
in grief.

—*Purcy H. Pini*

## Spring Song of the Clear Blue Flower

A mermaid with hair streaming will pick his brain in whispers:  
The prickly rose for rue, rosemary for remorse,  
And (of course) this clear blue flower.

When his mind is free of the casual thoughts of bystanders,  
Stripped bare of the whims of passersby,  
She will pick apart the filigree of silver,  
And take the silver star to wear over her heart.

(I have refined thee, but not with silver.)

Pick the incisive word,  
Let it cut the hollow hand,  
The curve of the lip.  
May the severance be marked;  
Let the sharp word give deliverance.

(I have refined thee, but not with silver.  
I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.)

Suppose we take up where we left off,  
Doffing the hat at four o'clock,  
Doffing the skull at five,  
Unlocking the sacred heart at six.

"You know," she said, "sometimes in the spring  
I could cry for so much beauty. I could cry."  
"Why don't you? You'd feel better," I said.  
She shook her head and turned me a dry eye.

—*Muriel West*

## The Snowman

To the Midwest out of Maine, the snows  
of Fryeburg falling like a mist  
of cool and delicate perception  
that subtly changed, confused and altered  
all he saw from its exuberant  
significance. He married  
thirty years of bitterness.

In the pond's  
blue accumulated mirror  
the brushwood, leaves and other drifting  
fragmentary things are unified,  
the sun like the eye of God  
or the bright blazing orb of doubt  
gazes downward cryptically,  
confess there is no light so  
perceptive as memory  
gazing depthward from its height.

Now an old man writes his memoirs.  
Here in the camp that with God's help  
he and old Benjamin Tupper built,  
he swings a hard hand against God's pests,  
black flies, and shields his eyes,  
green-visored, from the light.

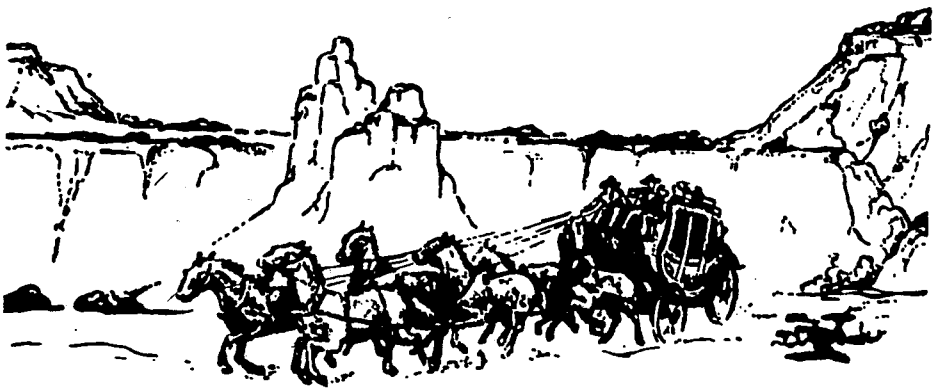
—Paul B. Newman

## Coronach for Spring

Frost curls the edge of night  
and day is a travesty of sun.  
The huckleberry stands congealed in blood  
while elder shoots, so happily begun,  
shrink stemward hard and tight  
as unshared sorrow.  
Willows abort their hopes  
(what now, what now?),  
hemlocks arch darkly over  
their seed on sterile snow  
(tomorrow—yes, surely tomorrow!)  
and we, chewing our year old cud,  
pace more darkly still; bending the bough,  
searching the gale-bared slopes.  
For we know, we know.

Nostrils hunt to the east for the scent of rain  
coursing the hills.  
Only black hunger there and fierce claws tearing  
at spectered green; den reek that spills  
to the western lairing  
of fox and carrion stench. Hunger and death and pain  
on any wind that blows;  
(hood the wide eyes, tighten the full-lipped mouth)  
Taurus still to the south  
and no spring.  
(But spring always comes!)  
Not only late, but never  
and the rising gust of fear.  
We were so sure and so clever,  
(*we knew, we knew*).  
Now muffle the drums  
of the mind, let no word sing;  
underground the green hope and above:  
"The light of the world lies here."

—*Gillean Douglas*



IN THE ABUNDANT and variegated field of cowboy lore, fact and fiction, few figures play a more important or exciting role than the old-time cow horse. Without him there could never have been a cattle industry as we know it. Indeed, the cow pony quite as much as the cowboy symbolizes the "Golden Age" of the cattle business and the way of life that characterized it. Like his human associates he was tough, spunky, and shrewd; like them he was weather- and work-scarred; like them he was contrary at times, but loyal and hard-working. He was, in short, the perfect brute counterpart of the old-time cowhand. The horse is still used in cattle work, but the real "old-time" cow pony, like the way of life he represented, belongs mainly to the past.

Material on the cow horse is plentiful in the literature of the West and Southwest but is widely dispersed, falling into four main groups: 1) personal reminiscences; 2) historical or "technical" works, based on research and dealing with the origins, characteristics, and skills of the cow horse; 3) legendary accounts—not necessarily apocryphal, but unauthenticated—of "super" cow ponies; and 4) pure fiction, of which some (like Ross Santee's) is excellent, but much of which is romanticized or sentimentalized *ad nauseam*.

## The Western Cow Pony

LLOYD N. JEFFREY

It is generally agreed that the cow horse is descended from wild offspring of the horses brought over by the Conquistadores in the sixteenth century, hence the name "Spanish horse" or "Mexican horse."<sup>1</sup> These animals were mainly of Arabian stock, the strain usually preferred by the Spaniards. Graham points out that the Arabian horses introduced into the New World

1. In this discussion I am indebted to L. F. Sheffy, *The Spanish Horse on the Great Plains* [n.p., n.d.]; James K. Greer, *From Bois d'arc to Barbed Wire* (Dallas, 1936), 335 ff.; and the following monographs in *Mustangs and Cow Horses* (Austin, 1940), hereafter referred to as *Mustangs*, edited by J. F. Dobie, M. C. Boatright, and H. H. Ransom: Frank Collinson, "Fifty Thousand Mustangs," Thomas O. Dwyer, "From Mustangs to Mules," R. B. C. Graham, "The Horse of the Pampas," and G. C. Robinson, "Mustangs and Mustanging in Southwest Texas."

probably came from Córdoba, a place long noted for its fine Arabian mounts. Possibly the blood of these horses ultimately can be traced back to a Barbary strain. In any case, there can be little doubt that these newcomers—"first comers" rather—were of Arabian stock; and their wild progeny, the "mustangs," revealed the strain in their "small heads, full, bold, and lustrous eyes, wide nostrils, small ears, delicate withers, well-set shoulders, and flat bones from the knees and hocks down."<sup>2</sup> They were rather small, usually standing fourteen or fifteen hands high and weighing eight or nine hundred pounds. The original stock had surely degenerated to some extent through excessive inbreeding, but this tendency might have been checked somewhat by the instinctive propensity of herd leaders to drive away yearling fillies each year.

These wild descendants of the mounts ridden by Cortés and his cohorts ordinarily ran in herds of thirty to fifty, but often small herds of wild horses combined to form very large ones running commonly into the hundreds and not infrequently into the thousands, according to well-authenticated reports. These herds roamed widely, drifting with the seasons, and by an early date had spread over all the southern plains country. The stallion that "bossed" a herd established his position by conquest.

These horses were generically called "mustangs," but there is some disagreement as to the origin of this word. Robinson asserts that "the word *mustang* comes from the Spanish *mesteño*, which comes from *mesta*—a group of stockraisers. Horses that escaped from a range controlled by a *mesta* and ran wild were called *mesteños*, the suffix *eño* meaning 'pertaining to' or 'belonging to.'"<sup>3</sup> Greer, on the other hand, maintains that the word derives from a "confusion of two Spanish words, *mestengo* and *mostrenco*, meaning wild or without a master."<sup>4</sup> The word "mustang" is indisputably of Spanish or more properly of Mexican origin, and this points to a fact which, though perhaps obvious, deserves emphasis: the Mexican *rancheros* had caught and used the mustang long before stock raising was undertaken in Texas. Consequently, early ranchers in Texas learned about the capture, breaking, and training of mustangs entirely from the Mexicans.

Although "mustanging" was going on in Texas at least as early as the late 1840's and early 50's, it made little progress until after the Civil War. Most

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2. Dwyer, in *Mustangs*, 53.

3. Robinson, in *Mustangs*, 3.

4. Greer, *op. cit.*, 335.



early settlers in Texas regarded the mustangs as nuisances: they attacked the homesteaders' horses, or mixed with them and "spoiled" them, or, worst of all, drove away their blooded mares. To these first settlers in Texas, who were used to fine "American" horses, the battle-scarred, brush-scratched, weather-beaten mustang seemed a sorry, scrubby "critter," and the settlers were strongly opposed to any mixing of this wretched-looking stuff with their blooded stock. For this reason mustangs often were shot as pests in the early days.<sup>5</sup>

Gradually early ranchers in Texas became aware of the potential usefulness of the mustang. They began to take note of his good points: though certainly not beautiful, he was alert and self-reliant, he was sure-footed and well-gaited, he could go longer without food or water than most horses, and he had unusual recuperative powers in his short and rather stocky body. The realization of these facts, the need for good cow horses, and the example set by Mexican ranchers combined to make "mustanging" very popular in Texas during the late 1860's and 70's.

The capture of wild horses was ordinarily undertaken in the spring, when they were in a weakened state after the rigors of a plains winter. The mode of capture varied with such factors as the size of the herd, the number of men taking part in the hunt, the terrain and weather. Three basic stratagems were employed: driving the horses into a concealed or camouflaged corral, often near a waterhole; driving them into a dead-end ravine or into one that had been blocked off artificially at one end; and "walking them down."<sup>6</sup> Individual animals were taken by roping, a dangerous and difficult process, or by "creasing" or "nicking"—less dangerous but more difficult. In creasing, the idea was to send a rifle bullet through the upper vertebrae of the animal's neck near the spinal cord, thus stunning the mustang for a moment and enabling the hunter to tie him down before he "came to." Virtually every man who has talked or written about mustanging has mentioned creasing,<sup>7</sup> but, so far as I was able to ascertain, not one ever witnessed a specific instance in which the

5. See in *Mustangs* the chapters by Collinson, Dwyer, and Robinson referred to previously and also George Catlin, "Comanche Horses" (II), Ruth Dodson, "Texas-Mexican Horse-Breaking," Florence Fenley, "The Mustanger Who Turned Mustang," Homer Hoyt, "Mustanging on the Staked Plains," Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance, "The Ghost Horse," and J. W. Moses, "A Mustanger of 1850." See also Greer, *op. cit.*, 69, 77, 336.

6. For a full account of this method of catching mustangs, see Robinson in *Mustangs*.

7. See in *Mustangs*: Catlin, 145-46, 150; Collinson, 75-76; Dobie, "The Deathless Pacing White Stallion," 179-80; Frank Lockard, "Black Kettle," 110; and O. W. Nolen, "Nicking the Mustang," 44-46.

practice was successful, and many doubted that it was practicable at all. Probably creasing was never used with anything like consistent success by even the most phenomenal marksman. By its very nature the act would seem to demand an unreasonable degree of cooperation from fate.

After a herd of mustangs had been "localized," the problem of how to move them to the ranch was usually solved in one of three ways: by "necking" the mustangs to gentle horses, by "clogging" (fastening heavy wooden blocks or forked limbs just above the front hoofs), or by "sidelining" (tying together a front and hind leg on the same side, leaving the animal just enough freedom to make normal walking possible). Occasionally a proud stallion would tolerate no form of restriction on his liberty and would, if he could not escape, kill himself fighting the hated ropes. If he was immobilized despite all his furious strength, he still might refuse to eat and drink, making it necessary either to destroy or to release him. Of such stuff was the mustang made, and the cow pony has retained, throughout successive generations, much of his pride and fire and love of freedom.

In the early days of Texas ranching, the breaking and training of horses was ordinarily done by Mexican horse-handlers, who through long experience had become experts, often true artists. The actual breaking was done by the *domador*, the training (teaching the horse to respond to the rein, etc.) by the *arrendador*. The latter was naturally the more skilled of the two and was therefore more highly regarded. The *arrendador* was usually an older Mexican who had been a *domador* in his youth. The punishing nature of the *domador's* work tended to make his career in that job rather short; few men could spend day after day being smashed against a saddle, or against the ground, without becoming "stove up" at any early age. Sometimes, to be sure, a *domador* would continue as such into old age, but would leave the actual leather-pounding to younger men, who, "full of beans" and eager to prove their skill as *jinetes* (bronc riders), asked for the privilege of risking their bones on one wild-eyed *potro* after another.

Before the mustang was ridden he had to be "softened down" a bit. First a horse would be caught and blindfolded, and the *jáquima* ("hackamore") put on his head. A rope attached to the *jáquima* was then passed around the horse's nose. It was this trick that made it possible for one man to hold the wild and powerful mustang after he was released; there are few horses that cannot be subdued by a "twitch," or loop of rope around the nose. Finally the

*tapoyo*, or blindfold, would be jerked away and the *potro* would be allowed to run—in fact, he would be frightened and even whipped to *make* him run until exhausted, so as to take some of the wildness out of him. After a day or two of this treatment the mustang was usually ready for a “go” with the saddle. He was again blindfolded, and if he was bad about kicking, his right hind foot was tied in a loop that could be easily released. Now the *domador* would mount the animal, whip off the blindfold, and slacken the loop. Then, of course, anything might happen. In the end, though, the *potro* would be tamed. Having been ridden once, he was a *quebrantado* (partly broken horse) and would be ridden twice daily thereafter until completely saddle-broken.

If the mustang was a promising animal, he was now turned over to the expert hands of the *arrendador*, whose job was to train the horse to the bridle. To quote from Ruth Dodson’s excellent account:

The initial training was with a *bozalillo*—a noose, often finely plaited of hair or rawhide and decorated—held in place by a light head-stall. When the horse could be whirled first to the right and then to the left, with only the slightest pull on the reins of the *bozalillo*; when he could be put into a run and then stopped in his tracks, with only a slight tightening of the reins, then he was ready for the bridle. The *bozalillo* was used in conjunction with the bridle, each with a separate pair of reins, until the horse was rein perfect; then it was discarded and the bridle used alone. By this time the horse was so well trained that the bridle was brought into only the slightest use. . . .

To accomplish this training, much patience and much, much practice was required. But there was always plenty of time, for the *arrendador* required something like eighteen months in which to give a finished rein to any horse that he considered worthy of his time and efforts.<sup>8</sup>

This painstaking and elaborate course in equine education was reserved for animals that looked to be worth the trouble. It would be a mistake to believe that the Mexicans (or later, the Texans) spent so much time and effort on “run of the mill” mustangs. Usually the cow horse learned the hard way—through experience.

Though most of the early ranchers in Texas knew how to break and train domestic horses, they knew nothing of working with mustangs. They caught on quickly, however, under the tutelage of the *domadores* and *arrendadores*. Like their Mexican preceptors they treated their charges roughly, but the

8. *Mustangs*, 284.

mustangs could take rough treatment and in fact required it, although of course consistently brutal treatment would ruin a good mustang. Dwyer condemns the Mexican style of horse-breaking as unnecessarily severe, insisting that the "American method" better preserved the spirit as well as the strength of the horse. But the spirit of the mustang was durable, and there is little evidence that the cow ponies trained by American cowhands using Mexican techniques were lacking in either strength or mettle.

Occasionally, of course, a particularly promising animal would be broken more gently than his fellows. For instance, the "sacking method" might be used. A folded sack or blanket was passed over the mustang's body until he lost his fear of it; next the blanket would be placed on his back; finally if all went well, the saddle would be applied with comparatively little trouble.

Since many early cattlemen in Texas were accustomed to "blooded" horses, it was natural that they should try to "breed up" the mustang.<sup>9</sup> Recognizing the superiority of the "Spanish horse" when it came to handling cattle, ranchers believed that by crossing his blood with that of registered stock a "super" cow horse could be produced, one that would combine the toughness and "cow sense" of the mustang with the docility and other propitious qualities of more "aristocratic" animals. "Practically no producer of cow horses," says Hastings, "appears to have been satisfied to stay with the Spanish blood in its purity. The difficulty of getting satisfactory Spanish sires may largely explain this fact, but probably meanness had much to do with the popular desire to breed the strain up without losing the cow instinct."<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, there was little "scientific" breeding until the second decade of the twentieth century. On the whole, cow-pony breeding was, in Hastings's picturesque phrase, "a pure case of scrambled eggs." Although most ranchers attempted little or nothing in the way of "scientific breeding," this is not to say that they were careless in their selection of sires. Hastings is "convinced that the whole problem of breeding cow horses has been saved by the 'law of selection of sires'—not registered or purebred stallions, the early-day sires being selected by men who knew a good horse, and used him because he was a good horse."<sup>11</sup> To illustrate his point, Hastings sketches the history of the horse string on the famous SMS Ranch, where he was manager for many years. In 1882, fifty

9. My chief source here is Frank S. Hastings' *A Ranchman's Recollections* (Chicago, 1921).

10. *Ibid.*, 162.

11. *Ibid.*, 160.

Spanish mares were bought from a transient horse dealer whose stock looked good. For a sire, a fine white stallion purported to be an Arabian—at any rate, an animal possessed of “nerve, endurance, style and action, a horse all over”—was obtained. As a result of this intelligent selection of brood mares and of sire the SMS had a superior *remuda* (string of cow horses) for many years afterwards.

Greer confirms Hastings' remarks on the breeding of cow horses: “One might think that in a land where good cow ponies were so easily recognized and so much appreciated that those who raised their own horses would have carefully produced them. But such was not the case. Fortunately the men who purchased sires for their herds of mares were usually men who had good horse sense. Such men cared little about registered stallions, but they knew a good horse when they saw one and so bought and used him.”<sup>12</sup> Haphazard though these breeding methods might have been from the viewpoint of the “expert,” the fact remains that “they worked.”

After 1900 and especially after 1910, many ranchers began to try scientific breeding, using registered sires.<sup>13</sup> Opinions differ as to whether this trend led to the production of a better cow horse. Dwyer asserts that the “breeding up” of Spanish horses by the introduction of fine-blooded “American” horses was highly successful, since the best qualities of both strains were preserved.<sup>14</sup> Sheffy, on the opposite side, says that the rancher lost much more than he gained by crossing the cow pony with more “reputable” types; that in fact the Spanish horse was virtually ruined by the infusion of too much “good blood” into the hardy old strain. According to Sheffy, who is probably nearer right than Dwyer, the horses produced by crossing Spanish mares with thoroughbred stallions were usually larger, better-looking, and gentler than the old-time cow horse, but were also too high-strung, short on stamina, and—worst of all—often lacking in the “cow instinct.” As a result of mixing of breeds the true Spanish horse began to disappear. Today he is, like the long-horn, little more than a memory.

A really good cow horse was a highly prized animal. Any mount could “tag a steer down the trail,” but not every ranch horse had the makings of a “top” cow pony. Hastings estimates that of the horses selected for cow work,

12. Greer, *op. cit.*, 355.

13. *Ibid.*, 355-56; Hastings, *op. cit.*, 160.

14. See in *Mustangs*, 59.

sixty percent made “fair” cow ponies, but only twenty percent made “really good ones” and only ten percent “crackerjacks.”<sup>15</sup> The best cow horse was a product of nature, instinct, and training: “His first qualifications are speed and endurance. Nevertheless, one may have these and still not have much of a cow horse. He may be all right for ordinary rounding or line work, but he is not a cow horse unless he has ‘cow sense’ as a dominant characteristic. Training has much to do with it, but he must have the instinct for holding a roped animal, ‘turning on a half-dollar,’ and countering every move of an animal that is being cut out.”<sup>16</sup> Hence the necessary qualifications of a first-rate cow pony were both physical and mental, or rather temperamental.

However bright and amenable to instruction a pony might be, he was not worth much to the cattleman unless he was also “tough as a boot.” All day, every day, during the work season he had to run, turn, stop, and run again till every muscle was wrung dry; he had to stop and hold wild, powerful range cattle often weighing more than he did; he had to endure heat, dust, rain, and hail. Often, too, he had to put up with very rough treatment from his rider.

Despite the punishing nature of the cow pony’s work and the hard treatment he often received, the average pony gave about twelve years’ service. In fact, many stayed on the job eighteen or even twenty years, though as a rule these animals were specialists—usually expert cutting horses that did only part-time service.

The cow pony’s most important work was of course “cutting,” or separating from a large herd of cattle stock of a particular brand or of a particular type—fat steers, calves, stock cows. Any horse worthy of the name could be used for cutting, but a really good “cutting horse”<sup>17</sup> was in a class by himself: he was the true aristocrat of the *remuda*.

The process of cutting cattle from a herd, though simple enough in theory, is in practice quite difficult and intricate; it is, as Dobie says, “the supreme point at which cow work passes into art.” The basic factor making

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15. Hastings, *op. cit.*, 162.

16. *Ibid.*

17. For material on the “cutting horse” see: J. F. Dobie, “As Smart as a Cutting Horse,” in *Mustangs*, 403-13; Siringo, *op. cit.*, 230-32; Sheffy, *op. cit.* (pages not numbered); Frank Reeves, “Cutting Horses Must Be Good,” in *The Cattleman*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4 (Sept., 1941), 121 ff.; and Dobie, “The Spanish Cow Pony,” in *The Cattleman*, Vol. XXX, No. 4 (Sept., 1943), 100 ff. This last-named work is in my opinion the best short treatment of the subject to be found.

the job difficult is the natural gregariousness of cattle. A bunch of livestock being handled nearly always wants to stick together. This trait is a helpful one in many of the operations of cow-handling, but the propensity of cattle to be "sociable" is one of the most exasperating things that the cattlemen has to contend with. The herd instinct of cows was especially troublesome in the old days of stock-raising, when fenced pastures and the slow, tractable beef cattle of today were unknown.

The cutting horse not only had to be tough; he had to be faster and more agile than the "cow brutes" he worked with, which, in the days of half-wild range cattle, meant that he had to be very fast and agile indeed. But nearly all cow ponies were sufficiently endowed with these purely physical qualities. The really good cutting horse had to have something more: that mysterious quality known variously as "cow sense," "the cow instinct," or "cow savvy." That is, he had to be able to anticipate and counter each move of the animal being cut out; he had to be able to "turn on a dime" and double back after a steer, without conscious thought and without any signal from his rider. The good cutting horse knew his business. He was an artist and took pride in his work. He needed little direction from his cowboy master and, indeed, often resented being told what to do. As a rule the cowboy would do well to let the horse "have his head" and do things his own way.

In addition to "cow sense," the real cutting horse had to possess mental balance. Cutting cattle was no job for a brilliant but high-strung animal. Such a one would excite the cattle, making them "jumpy" and causing them to lose weight through unnecessary running and to bruise one another with their horns. The good cutting horse never got "all lathered up" about his job, and like any "old hand" he never wasted effort. He took his time in moving through the cattle. But he could "move into high gear" with amazing alacrity when speed was demanded: when, for example, a steer had been separated from the main herd and had to be rushed to the "cut" (the group of cattle already parted from the main herd) before it had a chance to double back. Siringo gives a fine picture of the smart and experienced cutting horse at work: "A 'cutting' pony to be considered a 'Joe-dandy' has to be awful quick as well as limber. An old experienced one can be guided with the little finger—that is, by holding the bridle reins on the end of the little finger. While performing the 'cutting' act he will move along as though half asleep, until the animal [being cut out] is near the outer edge [of the herd], when

all at once he will make a spring toward and take the steer out at a break-neck gait. No matter how the animal dodges in its mad effort to get back he will be right at its heels or side."<sup>18</sup>

It is no wonder that the cutting horse came to occupy a unique position of esteem in the cattle country. He was often held up as the archetype of shrewdness, skill, and practical wisdom: "In the language of the range, to say that somebody is 'as smart as a cutting horse' is to say that he is smarter than a Philadelphia lawyer, smarter than a steel trap, smarter than a coyote, smarter than a Harvard graduate—all combined. There just can't be anything smarter than a smart cutting horse."<sup>19</sup> Many are the stories of cutting horses that were almost humanly intelligent.<sup>20</sup> There are accounts of horses that could cut from a herd all stock of a particular age, size, sex, or color once the type to be cut out had been shown them; there are even tales of cow ponies that could "read" brands and ear marks. Some, as Dobie says, could even do this without a rider: "Any time Doc Burris, a character from Karnes County, got a chance he'd talk about his dun cutting horse. 'All I had to do,' said Doc, 'was to show Dun Man what brands I wanted cut out of a herd. Then I'd pull off saddle, bridle [sic], everything and dismount myself, and that dun horse would start in and cut out every critter wanted.'"<sup>21</sup> This sort of thing was not part of regular cow work, being done for "show" purposes. Sometimes a cowboy had a favorite cutting horse, often an older one no longer used for routine work, that he used on special occasions when he wanted to "shine." The pitting of one such virtuoso against another was a popular form of entertainment when circumstances permitted it. When they did not, the opponents were men instead of horses, and the "competition" was verbal—hence some of the tall tales about cutting horses that were told around the chuck wagon or at the stockyards. It is axiomatic that "the first one to talk hasn't a chance," and any cowboy hated to see his pet cutting horse bested.

Cutting horses are not used so much as they once were, and they need not be so highly trained as formerly. There are obvious reasons for this: the

18. Charles A. Siringo, *A Texas Cow Boy, or, Fifteen Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony* (New York, 1886), 232 ff.

19. Dobie, "As Smart as a Cutting Horse," in *Mustangs*, 403.

20. See *ibid.*, 406-07, 412-13; Dobie, "The Spanish Cow Pony" (*The Cattleman*, XXX, 4); Sheffy, *op. cit.*; and Siringo, *op. cit.*, 230.

21. "As Smart as a Cutting Horse," in *Mustangs*, 407.



comparatively docile nature of modern cattle, the replacement of open range by fenced pastures, and the use of chutes and trucks. But despite these and other major changes in the cattle industry, the cutting horse has not yet outlived his usefulness, and a good one is still highly prized by cattlemen.<sup>22</sup>

Another specialist among cow horses was the "night horse,"<sup>23</sup> who stood just below the cutting horse in cow-pony nobility. Nearly any good cow pony could be used for night work, but really good night horses were relatively scarce and much sought after. Usually they were reserved for nothing but night work. The main duty of the night horse was to guard the herd and keep it under control, though he was also used for night driving and for emergency jobs that came up during hours of darkness.

The "top" night horse, like the expert cutting horse, had to possess certain qualifications. He had to have good "night eyes"; horses, like men, vary in their ability to see in the dark. His hearing also had to be acute. The very best night horses could "herd by ear," detecting the positions and motions of cattle when visibility was so bad that even their keen eyes were almost useless, as during a heavy rain or dust storm. The night horse had to be alert. No less than the cutting horse he had to have "cow sense"; he had to know about what the "brutes" would do in any particular situation and to react accordingly. He had to have a good sense of direction. He had to be exceptionally surefooted; night stampedes were fairly common in the old days of cattle raising, and many a cowboy's life was saved because he rode a first-rate night horse with "plenty of savvy."<sup>24</sup> The night horse, like the cutting horse, had to have mental balance; for obvious reasons a high-strung, excitable animal could never be satisfactory for night work. And, he had to be able to adapt his sleeping habits to the requirements of his job.

Many night horses gave little to the cutting horse in shrewdness. Dobie tells of Old Sid, a veteran night horse that could only with the greatest difficulty be persuaded to stay on duty after the hour for his relief had arrived.<sup>25</sup>

22. See *ibid.*, 403-04, and Frank Reeves, "Cowboys and Their Horses," in *The Cattleman*, Vol. XXX, No. 4 (Sept., 1943), 13.

23. See both articles by Dobie, and Sheffy, *op. cit.* (pages not numbered). Sheffy's account of the night horse is the best that I have been able to find.

24. See J. F. Dobie, *The Longhorns* (Boston, 1947), 87 ff., and Ross Santee, *Cowboy* (New York, 1928), 228.

25. "As Smart as a Cutting Horse," in *Mustangs*, 408.

Superior roping horses were also much in demand in the cattle country.<sup>26</sup> The roping horse did not have to possess the exceptional qualities of mind and temperament of the expert cutting horse; any cow pony that was "worth his feed" could usually be shaped into a good roping mount. But a "top" roping horse had to be fast enough to catch up with the most swift-footed steer. He had to be very alert, and he had to have "cow sense," so that the cowboy could concentrate on handling the rope. He had to be unusually agile—able to turn sharply, to double back quickly, and to stop almost in his tracks. He had to be husky enough to check and hold the biggest and wildest steer. It goes without saying that he had to have a great deal of courage. Finally, he had to be level-headed and dependable when an emergency arose. If, as not infrequently happened, a roped animal "got on the prod" and charged the horse and cowboy, an excitable mount could cause serious injury or even death to both himself and rider.

The main things that the roping horse had to learn were to "sit down hard" when a steer was caught, to face the roped animal (since most of a horse's strength is in his forequarters), and to keep the rope taut.<sup>27</sup>

Another special horse was the "distance horse,"<sup>28</sup> of which little need be said except that his gifts were mainly physical: good wind, sturdy feet, ability to go a long way on comparatively little food and water, and general hardiness. Still other mounts that were more or less special are mentioned by some writers; for instance, Dobie speaks of the "brush horse."<sup>29</sup> For that matter, almost every cow horse was a "specialist" in the sense that he was better qualified for one kind of work than for any other.

Much sentimental nonsense has been written on the bond of affection between the cowboy and his horse. But fiction of this sort errs in degree only: there was a strong feeling of kinship between man and horse on the range.<sup>30</sup> The cow horse was inseparable from the cowboy's way of life. He was not only the most essential tool of the cowhand's job, but was also his chief com-

26. See Sheffy, *op. cit.*

27. See Paul Coze, "Calf Roping in Pictures," in *Hoofs and Horns*, Vol. IX, No. 6 (Dec., 1939). This tableau illustrates the roping of calves, not mature animals, but it give a good idea of the general method of roping from horseback.

28. See Sheffy, *op. cit.*

29. See *The Longhorns*, 320 ff.

30. Among others, Hastings, Santee, Sheffy, and Siringo do a good job of depicting the relationship between cowboy and cow pony.

panion and quite often his only one. It was quite natural that there was usually a real feeling of attachment between horse and rider. In most cases this rapport was not quite the idyllic thing so dear to the hearts of western-fiction writers and movie producers. Both cowboy and cow horse were tough, shrewd, and game, and each knew and respected the other for what he was. Cruel cowboys and vicious cow ponies were not the rule, but few cowboys were too good to curse their mounts or even to bestow an occasional slap or kick on their leathery hides; few cow horses were too good to pitch and kick when they had a tight cinch or a sore back, or when they were simply so "full of the devil" that they couldn't hold it. But each was too tough and resilient to be bothered by a little rough treatment; both expected and perhaps even liked a certain amount of it. The cowboy might "cuss" his own mount freely, but he would resent any criticism of his horse from another cowboy and would be ready to "whip" the man who laid a heavy hand on the animal. There was a good deal of rough give-and-take between the cowboy and the cow horse, yet each felt a real, if seldom demonstrated, affection for the other.

Doubtless there were some cowboys who, true to Western-story convention, never spoke a harsh word to their horses. This was especially apt to be true when a cowboy owned his mount, though sometimes a man would become very much attached to a pony assigned to his "string" from the ranch *remuda*. As Siringo observes, any ranch foreman or "trail boss" who took a favorite mount out of a man's string would have a "cowboy on the war-path" on his hands. If the cowboy had trained the horse himself, he naturally valued him all the more highly. If the cowhand owned the horse, he would be extremely reluctant to sell him. If pressed to set a price on his animal he would often quote an exorbitant one to discourage the prospective buyer. Sometimes, however, the latter would accept the terms anyway (or pretend to), and the embarrassed cowboy would be forced to admit that he wouldn't sell his "top horse" for any amount of money.

Nearly every old cowboy reminiscing about the past recalls a favorite cow horse—one that was not just another good pony nor even just a highly valued helper, but a cherished companion.<sup>31</sup> Charles Siringo owned many horses—among them Bony-part, Ranger, Satan, Gotch, Yankee-Doodle, Dam-

31. For further information on cow-horse names, see Dobie, "Cow-Horse Names, Colors, and Cures," in *Mustangs*, 234-49, and Florence Fenley, "Cow-Horse Sense," in *The Cattleman*, Vol. XXX, No. 4 (Sept., 1943), 15 ff.

fino, Croppy, and Creeping Moses—but far and away his favorite was Whiskey-peet (also spelled Whiskey-peat).<sup>32</sup> Nowhere does Siringo launch into a sentimental encomium of Whiskey-peet, but there is no doubt about his feeling for the tough little horse. In describing his various travels about the Southwest, Siringo mentions in a matter-of-fact way that at the end of a day's journey he always gave Whiskey-peet a good feed—of corn, when possible—and bedded him down comfortably. Clearly his horse's comfort was as important to him as his own. Reasonably good care of one's mount on a long horseback journey is of course just common sense, but Siringo's concern over Whiskey-peet's well-being was more than pragmatic. More than once Siringo says that he was always careful to leave his "top horse" in good hands when he had to leave him for a time, but he never left the pony behind if he could help it. When he began his long journey home from "up north," he chose to make the long, hard trek on horseback rather than to ride comfortably by train because he "couldn't even bear the *thought* of parting with Whiskey-peet, and to hire a car to take him around by rail would be too costly." While the two were on the way home, Whiskey-peet went lame near Denton and Siringo chose to wait over until his horse was fully recovered rather than to ride him lame or to sell him. When, later, Siringo left home once more to go back to the range country, he didn't take Whiskey-peet because he wanted to return by rail the next year, even though "leaving Whiskey-peet behind was almost as severe as having sixteen jaw-teeth pulled." But Siringo was never to see his "top horse" again: "I failed to come back that fall as I expected, therefore never saw the faithful animal again: he died the following spring."

Like most cowboys and cattlemen, Siringo shows little talent for heart-rending panegyric, but only the most insensitive reader will be unmoved by his laconic account. That cowboys often felt genuine affection for their mounts cannot be doubted; and there is abundant evidence that in the simple yet inscrutable way of animals the horse returned his owner's devotion. Although fiction has anthropomorphized and sentimentalized this feeling in a way tolerable to neither our rational nor our aesthetic sense, the tradition of affection between cowboy and cow pony seems to have an undeniable foundation in fact.

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32. Siringo, *op. cit.*, 129-36.

## *THE SQUARE PEG, a dramatic exercise in verse*

KHWAJA SHAHID HOSAIN

### PROLOGUE

*(The curtain rises on a darkened stage. Through the darkness the voice of the Narrator speaks.)*

NARRATOR:

When nature and society combine  
To spawn a misfit, then the Fates achieve  
A microscopic malevolence. The atom  
Of the individual splits and cataclysmic  
Agony is born.  
If, then, from the corrosive flow of time,  
One agony is wrenched, one torment rescued  
And fixed in brave perspective, man achieves  
A momentary martyrdom, a flickering deification  
That shouts defiance to the heavens.  
Pause, then, and mourn awhile  
The never-ending strife of little men  
Pursuing petty lives to sordid ends.

*(Silence, broken by the sound of an infant crying. A spotlight comes on Left, revealing a cradle with three women grouped around it. They speak in an anti-phonal semi-chorus.)*

FIRST WOMAN:

He breathes . . .

SECOND WOMAN:

He moves . . .

THIRD WOMAN:

So sweet and plump . . .

FIRST WOMAN:

Divine . . .

SECOND WOMAN:

Pure . . .

THIRD WOMAN:

A joy to see . . . .

ALL (*speaking together*):

Mother's darling . . .

Father's pride . . .

The Lord be praised . . .

THIRD WOMAN:

Call for the happy father; let him rejoice,  
New purpose fills his life, for new life blesses  
And sanctifies the home with pride and love.

*(As she speaks, a spotlight comes on Right and grows slowly to full intensity, revealing the Father sitting at a table with an empty bottle before him. When she finishes speaking, there is silence: suddenly, as though a string had been cut, his head falls forward on his hands. Both spotlights vanish and through the darkness the Narrator speaks again.)*

NARRATOR:

The idle whisperings of three crones  
This painful miracle adorn,  
In grief and rage the father moans,—  
And unto him a child is born.

## PLOT

*(Light begins to grow upon the stage. The scene is the living room of a house which suggests respectability fighting a pathetic battle with poverty. The Narrator continues speaking through this.)*

NARRATOR:

Nurtured in sorrow and in pain,  
The infant grows to man's estate,  
The time is near when he will gain  
His legacy of woe and hate.

*(The Father has entered and seated himself Left; the Mother is laying the table, her back towards her husband.)*

FATHER:

Is he home yet?

MOTHER (*without turning*):

No. Eight hours now. (Pause)

I hope—

FATHER (*interrupting her*):

Never hope. Accept despair,  
Clasp fear to you with hoops of misery,  
But cast out hope. Its eager canker spreads  
The most potent of all poisons—disillusion.  
Hope died when he was born,  
A certain victim to the ceaseless will.

MOTHER (*turning on him*):

He was never son to you—never more  
Than a convenient peg on which to hang  
The sickly fancies of your prisoned mind.  
If you were able to, you would project  
Your wretched failure into his young life.

FATHER:

In the slow winter of our dying years,  
Must anger be the only flame which warms us?

MOTHER (*drawing closer*):

Oh, my love—

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FATHER: Love is for poets and other charlatans;  
But we were closer once,  
When the hot, gusty winds of passion  
Fanned life into a blaze of ecstasy.  
Let us remember, and be silent.

*(A long, memory-laden silence is shattered by the slam of a door. The son enters—young, restless, resentful.)*

MOTHER (*adoring*):

My son . . .

FATHER (*eager, his cynicism forgotten*):

What news, my boy? (*His question dies away into silence.*)

THE MAN:

They meet you,  
They smile their honeyed, calculating smiles  
And calibrate you with ingenious eyes.  
And then, with exquisite grace,  
They crucify your hopes and bow you out.

MOTHER:

Patience is all we need. A boy like you  
Will not go unemployed for ever.

THE MAN (*savagely*):

Patience is dead, mother,  
Butchered on the doorstep of your timidities.  
*(He sees he has hurt her; gently.)*  
I have myself to blame;  
Their sanctimonious probings  
Tempt me to anger—and to truth.

FATHER:

You young idiot!  
Did you tell them—

THE MAN:

All, father. All about the bodies  
Parceled with murderous precision  
In dripping locker-rooms throughout the town.  
All about the women  
Ravished for all eternity and a day



Pale and silent in lime-lined tubs.  
All about the factories  
Gutted by my incendiary breath  
One sultry summer evening.  
And they all stood up and cheered,  
And shook my hand, and pointed—  
To the door.

FATHER:

And so,  
In the grip of this self-posturing madness,  
You told them the truth?

THE MAN:

Yes, father, and in their electronic minds  
\* This flimsy little truth grew hugely, and overpowered  
All other truths.

FATHER:

Will you never learn  
The ordinary, fallible, erring ways  
Of all us little men? Accept the shackles  
Of mediocrity, or you will come  
To a sad end, my son.

THE MAN (*quietly*):

No, father, I prefer to be  
Victorious in defeat.

FATHER:

Poor fool.  
The dancing shadows of his own defiance  
Have made him mad.

(*To the mother*)

Pray, my dear, that he will learn  
The healing liturgy of life.  
The sacramental verities  
Of the neat collar and the careful smile  
May yet be revealed to him.

(*The mother is crying. The light on the stage begins to dim as the voice of the  
Narrator starts, continuing as the stage relapses into total darkness.*)

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NARRATOR:

What guilty secret shadows his youthful life?  
What truth besieges him  
With failure and frustration? Details are unimportant,  
The fact remains, and axes at the strength  
Of his pride and rebellion. Rival attractions  
Drag his identity to dissolution.

## COUNTERPLOT

*(Towards the end of this speech, music is heard, swelling to a frenetic cacophony. It is harsh, insistent, its monotonous beat pallidly aping the vitality of primitive chants. A spotlight knifes through the gloom, picking out a woman whose attempt at looking seductive is a tawdry failure.)*

THE WOMAN (*singing*):

The night was dark,  
The moon above,  
Lit up the park,  
With silvery love.

VOICES:

One more won't harm you . . .  
Give us another, then . . .  
Silly, they never put the lights on here . . .

THE WOMAN (*singing*):

The spring is sweet,  
My lips are near,  
Come to my street,  
And taste them dear.

*(She moves into a crowd of dimly-lit figures as she sings, the spotlight moving with her. She catches someone and pulls him into the pool of light. It is the Man, and his shamefaced resistance weakens as she sways close to him, still singing her banal little ditty.)*

THE WOMAN (*singing*):

Though moons may fade  
From skies above,  
Be not afraid,  
I'm near, my love.

*(The stage slowly darkens, and her voice fades away.)*

NARRATOR: Desire grows from this compulsive meeting  
And cataracts them into furtive passion.  
The transitory glow of stolen lust  
Casts its brief spell, unsanctified  
And unchained by covenant.  
Then the swift death, pronounced by all  
The Fates that wait on domesticity.

## EPILOGUE

*(A room which evidently constitutes the entire house for its occupants. The woman enters, followed by the Man.)*

THE MAN:

A small man with a strange, suspicious mind.

THE WOMAN:

Your boss.

THE MAN:

My colleague . . .

THE WOMAN (*wearily*):

Your boss.

THE MAN:

A horrid, vacant word. No man can tell me  
To order my life in his manner, to move  
In ruts worn weary by the chariot—wheels  
Of blind observance.  
Your love strengthens me, and demands—

THE WOMAN:

That you apologize, and pay the bills,  
And bring the groceries, and buy the dress  
You promised me six months ago.

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THE MAN:

My love clothes you in peerless panoply.

THE WOMAN:

Your love does not pay debts. Go spout your dreams  
To your drunk cronies, and they will nod their heads,  
And slap your back, and crown you emperor  
Of dreaming nitwits.

THE MAN:

All right, I will. Stay, then, and drench your thoughts  
With misery and foreboding. Dream your dark dreams,  
But cast no shadow on my happiness. (*He goes.*)

THE WOMAN:

Happiness . . .

(*Silence. She loiters over to the radio, switches it on, and music blares into the room.*)

VOICE (*singing*):

The Spring is sweet,  
My lips are near,  
Come to my street,  
And taste them dear.

(*The woman stands still, gazing stupidly at the radio. The lights fade—so, a little later, does the music.*)

NARRATOR:

The wheel has come full cycle. Pause, and ponder  
On the remorseless flux of circumstance.  
No epic passions here, no Grecian grief,  
No obvious woe to captivate the mind.  
And wrench the heart. But agony is there—  
Immortal, illimitable, insatiable torment,  
Ordained and executed with dispatch  
And a wry humor, by the smiling Fates. (*Pause.*)  
Thus endeth the First Lesson.

CURTAIN

*Is genius conscious of its powers?* Hazlitt did not think so, but Mary Austin did. Whenever she touches on the idea of genius, the mention of herself is not far off. In her Autobiography she speaks again and again of George Sterling and Jack London, whom all their friends regarded as geniuses, or very close to geniuses. They certainly were highly gifted men. With them and others she talked "of the liability of men of genius to find their subjective activities on their way to fruition so largely at the mercy of the effect on them of women." In other, and simpler words, as a mere mortal would put it, women stimulated the creative processes of men of genius. In the same breath she informs us, "I never needed a love affair to release the subconscious in me." The inference is inevitable. Mary Austin saw herself as a woman of genius.

Now, Hazlitt knew a good deal about such matters. Not only was he widely acquainted with men of genius, but he is himself reckoned one of the finest essayists in the English language. His friends, more or less intimate, included Keats, Words-

worth, Coleridge, Lamb, and virtually all the makers of English literature in the early part of the nineteenth century were his acquaintances. And what has he to say on this subject? "The definition of genius is that it acts unconsciously." The greatest power, he declares, operates unseen, "and executes its appointed task with as little ostentation as difficulty." The works of such painters as Correggio, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, he points out, came from their hands without premeditation or effort, "as a natural birth."

Mary Austin has done some excellent writing—in such books for instance, as *The Flock*, or *The Land of Little Rain*. But not much of her writing would seem to come as a natural birth. For a person so filled with the mystique of writing, so studious of method and so knowledgeable, her writing

On a Letter  
from Mary Austin

HENRY JAMES FORMAN

is not always easy reading. Nevertheless, method was her constant preoccupation. In a letter to me dated September 1918, she wrote:

"The beginning of an intelligent method for my work was a long talk I had with William James, in which he said, and afterwards said in one of his books, I think, the secret of creative thinking lay in that vast area of the mind which, for want of a better word, we call the subconsciousness. From that time I began to treat my mind as part of the whole Mind, and try to reach those attributes of Mind which deal with the sort of thing I want to do."

The idea of enlisting what she refers to as the "subconsciousness," what is now better known as the unconscious, is certainly no longer new. Modern psychology has quite familiarized us with it. But perhaps a little more of her letter should be quoted:

"Mr. James," she goes on, "convinced me, he naturally would be more convincing in private talk than he dared be in print, that there is no such thing as fatigue of Mind, there is only fatigue of the instrument that Mind uses, and that there are various planes of Mind which seem to be able to function at the same time in different keys. From this suggestion I went on to formulate a method of work, for which the best figures I can find are those that have to do with electrical appliances. The principle which enables me to keep doing three or four kinds of work at once is the same that enables us to send several messages over the same wire. Or you might say that when I connect up my own mind for work I connect it with a different 'central.' That I am on the right track is proved, I think, by the fact that I can do two such widely different works as *The Man Jesus* and *The Land of Little Rain*, and have the first not any the less worthy as biography than the second is as a description of the American Desert."

Very few writers could approach so concretely a description of their creative method. Not only had she herself speculated and thought on the psychology of creative writing, but she pursued the subject to the extent of questioning William James upon it. Anyone would have regarded the opportunity of conversing with William James as priceless. The fact that she chose the subject of writing for her queries shows her deep preoccupation with her art.

Her idea of connecting with a different "central" is not a new thing to an experienced writer. But no writer, certainly, has ever used so stark and

concrete a figure to describe it. How good the result will be would naturally depend on the quality and training of the mind using the method. But the principle would remain the same.

"If I wished," she adds, "to write an epic, I would try to reach the department, or the ganglia—the figures are mine, Mr. James never used anything so concrete—of Mind that produces epics. I would make a careful study of that mind as already exhibited in human history, and then endeavor to reach it. I would then put all the material I had out of which I thought an epic could be made into the mind I happened to be using—always realizing that you really do not know how much mind you have or half of what it is doing. I would then see that as little as possible happened to disturb the process going on below the plane of consciousness until I felt the epic ready to shape."

Now, how does one study the quality of Mind that produces epics? I can think of no way except by reading existent epics. Then, as Mary Austin puts it, "to collect the best material possible out of which the work is to be constructed:" in other words, to muster your facts and line up your story. To revise and edit is a terminal chore. "All the other processes," she concludes, "are to be done for you, and the less you know about them the better."

No one will dispute that the portion of our psyche known as the unconscious plays an important part in any creative process. Stevenson spoke of it as "the little people," who do the work while you sleep. Coleridge never put a name upon the process that built the pleasure-dome at Xanadu out of various desultory memories and readings, plus a peculiar inspiration. Every creative writer, whether he knows it or not, experiences in some degree the seemingly unconscious work of the psyche, which is always somehow startling. With Mary Austin, however, it went much further. She knew herself to be clairvoyant. She experienced the San Francisco earthquake before it happened. She felt not only close to nature, but close to God.

"It must be understood," she declares, "that to me God is the experienceable quality in the universe." Just what this means she explains by an example.

"I must have been five or six when this experience happened to me. It was a summer morning and the child that I was had walked down through the orchard alone and come out on the brow of a sloping hill where there was grass, and a wind blowing and one tall tree reaching into infinite immensities of blueness. Quite suddenly, after a moment of quietness there, earth and

sky and wind-blown grass and the child in the midst of them came alive together with a pulsing light of consciousness. There was a wild foxglove at the child's feet and a bee dozing about it, and to this day I can recall the swift, inclusive awareness of each for the whole—I in them and they in me, and all of us enclosed in a warm lucent bubble of livingness. I remember the child looking everywhere for the source of this happy wonder, and at last she questioned—'God?'—because it was the only awesome word she knew. Deep inside, like the murmurous swinging of a bell she heard the answer 'God, God . . .'

That, obviously, was a genuine experience, the sort of illumination we read about among the *Varieties of Religious Experience* and in accounts of the Saints. Her life thereafter, she says, was never quite the same. But even as a baby she was described as the "noticingest" baby. As an adult she must have given much thought to her mental processes. "The business of establishing a regular habit of creative work," she wrote me, "is as simple as waking yourself up at a certain hour in the morning, just as simple as that, though not so easy."

More surprising than any other part of her letter was this:

"I have found," she wrote, "the Fifteenth Century saints helped me most, especially a little book by Father Faber on Prayer." I have seen at least one little book by Father Faber, but that failed to throw any light of the kind Mary Austin speaks of. Possibly there is some other book by Father Faber which I have not yet found. "I am too positive a temperament," she adds, "to get much out of Oriental methods"—which sounds as though her method was some form of meditation. Her last sentence on this subject is outside my experience and not wholly comprehensible. "I find," she says, "dancing the best exercise I can take while writing, as it keeps the body responsive to emotional impulses as no other exercise does."

This matter of dancing as a stimulus to literary composition is the most original thing contained in her letter. For the various means of concentration and self-hypnosis practiced by writers are virtually legion. We have all heard of such things as Schiller's need for rotten apples in his desk drawer as a stimulus to writing. Mary Austin had many such quirks. "Some day when I am in New York," she wrote, "if you will come to tea with me I will show you a little note book in which I have set down the devices which have helped me



in overcoming particular difficulties. One to use in overcoming the interference of bodily fatigue, and another to counteract the retarding effect of unhappiness."

It is a source of regret to me that when next I met her it was not in her own rooms, and it was therefore inconvenient to bring forth little note books. But I should dearly have liked to take note of her "little devices." For Mary Austin was not only gifted with a degree of ESP, but she practiced some kinds of homely "magic" she had doubtless learned from her Indian friends. Again and again she recurs to her intimacy with the Paiutes. From them, she tells us, she learned how to write. Her sketches of Indians and the Desert generally in *The Land of Little Rain*, are perhaps her best work. "People used to fret at me," she records, "because I would not do another 'Land of Little Rain.'" In that, one cannot but sympathize with her. One cannot repeat a masterpiece by sheer volition, and that book of hers is at least a little masterpiece. In any case, it seems to me to be the most spontaneous of her books, though *The Flock*, a book about shepherding and the shepherders, that caught the admiration of Theodore Roosevelt, runs a close second. Both are almost classic works on their subjects. The influence of Stevenson is perceptible to a Stevenson devotee, but for all that they are generally original contributions to American literature and particularly to the literature of the Southwest.

One other point in her lengthy typewritten letter I cannot omit to mention, not because it is particularly explicit, but because it throws further light on Mary Austin's mystique of writing.

"The other problem," she adds, almost as a postscript, "of getting a story to write, touches on a still greater subject, the art of experiencing a story before you write it. And that I simply cannot deal with in a letter. I can only say that I know a method by which if there arose an urgent necessity in my life for a story, the scene of which should alternate between Peterborough and Zenagambia, the characters to be a one-armed tight rope walker and a graduate of Bryn Mawr, then such a story would infallibly appear. It would be my idea of what constitutes a story and what, in the lives of tight rope walkers, is most worth while to record, for in the world of Mind you get only what you know how to ask for."

That last sentence is pure Mary Austin. To my deep regret I missed the opportunity to hear her expound her secret at length. But possibly I have

caught a glimmer of it by reading some of her imaginative work. Take, for an instance her novel, *A Woman of Genius*. The chief protagonist of that fiction is an actress named Olive, who presumably bodies forth not only Mary Austin's philosophy, but also the creative method referred to in the sentence about the tight rope walker and the girl-graduate from Bryn Mawr College.

In the novel Mrs. Austin had no need to strain credulity quite so far. Her heroine is a woman of no overwhelming beauty, nor of any exciting background. She is simply a middle-class young matron, wife of a clothing-store keeper in a small town. She shows an aptitude for amateur theatricals. Somehow she drifts into the theater and in due course becomes a notable tragedienne. Her march to stardom is inevitable—inevitable, that is, to Mary Austin. Someone once spoke of Olivia as a “woman of genius.”

This major effort in fiction, surely, if anything can illustrate her method of creation, should be a clear-cut example. Unfortunately, it is not. For not only does the “genius” fail to convince the reader, but the very stardom itself appears dubious. The novel seems to falter and waver. Its best characters are the lesser persons, who are only attendant circumstances. The “woman of genius” herself emerges no more than the one-armed tight rope walker and the Bryn Mawr graduate. She is indeed a well-defined woman character. But her genius is, in the Scotch legal phrase, not proven. So far as learning how that provincial small-time actress had turned into the genius of reverberant fame, we are no nearer than we should be if Mrs. Austin had never written her somewhat ponderous novel. Genius remains a mystery.

The CAT ARCHED his back under the woman's stroking fingers. He turned and brushed his whiskers against the edge of her hand, first one cheek and then the other, deliberately, rhythmically. Holding his stiff legged stance, he lifted his head high and offered to her the privilege of gently caressing his delicate throat. As her fingers knowingly probed the sensitive areas around the ears and at the base of the skull, his eyelids drooped and his red tongue protruded ever so slightly, lending a touch of the ridiculous to his splendid sensuality. As if to mock his own display of affection he suddenly collapsed, rolling over on his back, front paws kneading the air.

"Rufus, you clown!" the woman laughed. Leaning over she ran one finger lightly over the tawny chest and belly. There it was again—the crazily swirling lights, blinking, glowing, mercifully cut off at last as by the closing of a camera shutter. Her hands, reaching frantically for something stable, clutched the edges of the low hassock upon which she sat. She gasped and held her breath, eyes closed tightly. Cautiously she lifted her head and held it erect on the rigid column of her neck. She exhaled with a sigh and opened her eyes. The room had settled back in place. "Postural vertigo" Dr. Jim had called it. Sheer hell and damnation was more descriptive. And the momentary abject helplessness it induced was terrifying. She sat motionless except for her eyes moving slowly from object to object in the room, seeking reassurance in their immobility.

The cat, unnerved by the woman's sudden distress, had jumped to the windowsill. His composure quickly regained, he was placidly washing, his nimble tongue and paws combining to polish each hair until it was a tiny gleaming shaft. At last, his grooming finished, he sat quietly, tail neatly curled

Fidelity

*a story*

LUCILLE EISMAN

around paws, eyes closed, somnolent. The sun slanting through the glass made a nimbus about his form, blurring his outline and blending within his red gold coat.

The woman stirred and rose slowly from the low seat. She held her head carefully erect as she crossed the room and went through the doorway into the hall. Still holding her head as motionless as possible she sat down to dial the telephone. She leaned back slightly, away from the instrument, so that her downcast eyes could find the numbers.

"Miss Parish? Marcia Hudson. Is Dr. Jim there?"

"Would he have a few minutes to talk to me?"

"Thank you, dear.

"Jim? It happened again!"

"Yes. Just a few minutes ago.

"No, no, I didn't fall. But I never know when it will happen. I've had no trouble for almost two weeks—and now this.

"I was just sitting on the hassock petting Rufus. I couldn't even have fallen very far. But it's so sickening and frightening.

"Well, I didn't expect it to last this long. Six weeks! For six weeks it seems that all I've done is to concentrate on keeping my head level!"

"It does? That long? Oh, heavens! I'd better stop complaining, hadn't I?"

"No. Dan won't be home until the end of the week. I don't mind being here alone. Besides, I have Rufus to keep me from being lonely.

"No, Jim, I'd rather stay here. Jane asked me yesterday to go over there for a few days. Frankly, the boys are too noisy, even if they are my nephews. I'm more comfortable at home. If I weren't here, who would look after Rufus?"

"Oh, hush. I know how you feel about him, but I won't take your office time to talk about cats. He just doesn't eat if Dan or I aren't here, no matter who else may give him his food.

"Well, then I'm silly. Really, Jim, I am all right now. I just panicked a little. But if you say this takes more time to clear up, I'll try to be more patient. I'm sorry to be such a child.

"Thank you, Jim. You're a dear."

The woman returned to the living room. She chose a high-backed chair to support her head in a comfortable position and swung her feet up on the hassock. Her face was pale with fatigue and strain. She closed her eyes and

slept, head upright to avoid any repetition of the swirling giddiness so recently experienced.

The cat stood up and stretched, no longer warmed by the sun which had retreated from the windowsill. He placed both front feet on the wall below the sill and let himself down quietly upon the carpeted floor. A few dainty steps took him to the chair where the woman dozed. He bounded lightly into her lap and stood looking into her face. Her eyes opened. She stroked the soft fur between his eyes. He purred and settled down in her lap. Both slept.

Uncomfortable with her long held burden, the woman changed her position. To show his disapproval the cat jumped heavily to the floor.

"Oh, come on. I didn't mean to disturb you. Come, come." She patted her thigh invitingly. The cat turned his head, looked at her meaningfully and stalked toward the kitchen.

"Time to eat?" She raised her arms overhead, lifted her hips slightly from the cushioned seat, tightened the leg muscles, and yawned luxuriously. Suddenly she relaxed. Now fully awake, she turned her head tentatively from side to side. She tilted it experimentally, left, then right, forward, then backward to look up at the ceiling. Nothing! Nothing! Thank God. It was hard to reconcile those fleeting moments of imbalance with her customary well being.

The cat sat watching her from the doorway. At last, when she rose to her feet, he turned and took up his station at the refrigerator. While she measured food into his dish, waiting for the milk on the burner to warm, he paced back and forth beside her. He leaned against her legs, his tail teasing the hem of her skirt. When the dish was placed on the floor he sauntered over to it, sniffed and lightly tasted. He moved to the outside door and tossed a glance over his shoulder.

"Out, so soon?" the woman asked. "Eat your supper first."

There was a great nervous twitching of the tail.

"Well, all right, if you must!" She opened the door. "Tyrant!"

The cat stepped forward quickly then stopped at the threshold. The woman touched him lightly with her pointed shoe.

"In or out, in or out. Make up your mind."

The air was crisp in spite of the bright sunshine. She leaned over, touching his rump lightly to push him over the sill. A galaxy of lights veered wildly and she pitched head first through the doorway, striking the stone step. The blackness descended mercifully, conclusively.

A woman sat on a low stone wall bordering a terrace. The vigor of the bright October day was enhanced by the sun's unexpected warmth. She turned her head at a slight sound and saw a great red-gold cat sitting on the wall nearby.

"Welcome! Back again? I haven't seen you for a while." Her low voice offered companionship.

She extended her hand, palm upward, and waited for the cat to make his decision. He went toward her, reached his nose to her fingers and let her touch him. The cat arched his back under the woman's stroking fingers. He turned and brushed his whiskers against the edge of her hand, first one cheek and then the other, deliberately, rhythmically.

*All passes. Art alone  
Enduring, stays with us.  
The bust outlasts the throne,  
The coin, Tiberius.*

—GOETHE.

IN TELLING HOW a 10,500-foot mountain in frontier New Mexico came to be named in remembrance of a nobleman from far off Italy, we are indebted to the late Rodney B. Schoonmaker of Las Vegas, New Mexico. Our friend "Schoony," at 93, was a frail but alert little old gentleman whose mind was a gold mine of reminiscences gathered during sixty-odd years in the frontier Meadow City and its neighboring mountains. Though Schoony arrived in New Mexico too late to know Juan María de Agostini himself, he was a friend of many oldtimers who had known him. It is largely from their recollections that this tale of the strange, gentle Italian and his namesake mountain is pieced together.

At the rising of grass in May 1863, Don Eugenio Romero of Las Vegas camped at Council Grove, Kansas, with the wagon train, bound for Santa Fe, of which he was captain. Into his camp, on foot, came a slender, long haired, bearded, hatless stranger with a high forehead, large, dark, intelligent eyes, and a deep soft voice. From his shoulders hung a long dark cape. In his hand he carried a crooked staff.

## Hermit of the Mountain

OMAR & ELSA BARKER

"Señor Capitán," he said in oddly accented Spanish, "will you permit a lone wanderer to accompany your caravan on the long journey to the mountains of the west? Here is a paper—if you will read it—"

On the paper Don Eugenio read:

"To Whom It May Concern: This is to certify that the bearer, Juan María Agustín Anna, is a person of good character, a missionary to the Indians, who has lived 40 days in a cave in this vicinity, and has lived in caves elsewhere for 35 years, subsisting wholly upon vegetable foods, occupying himself in religious meditation and befriending the poor."

This odd "certificate" was signed by several substantial citizens of Kan-

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[EDITOR'S NOTE: "Hermit of the Mountain" is scheduled to be published in 1962 by Doubleday in the book *Legends and Tales of the Old West*.]

sas, but the wagon train captain needed no more than his own eyes to assure him that this man was not one of those renegades from the law who sometimes tried to make their getaway by joining wagon caravans westward bound. Himself a well-bred Spanish-American gentleman, Don Eugenio could recognize cultured gentility in the stranger's speech and manner, despite his rough, well-weathered clothes.

"You will be most welcome, Señor," Don Eugenio assured him, "to ride in any one of my wagons."

"For your kindness may God bless you, hermano!" The stranger's smile was gently firm. "Your protection I accept, but for the journey—it is my custom to walk."

Walk he did, every foot of the 550 miles to Las Vegas, New Mexico, despite the urging of friendly trail men that he ride. On the journey the stranger and Don Eugenio became fast friends. Though Juan María Agostini was not a talkative companion, from him, beside campfires at night, Don Eugenio gleaned a few facts of the lone wanderer's history.

Giovanni Maria Augustini was born in Novara, Italy in 1801, son of a Lombardy nobleman, descendant of Justinian the Great. Educated in the best Italian colleges, young Giovanni showed little inclination either toward a profession, the priesthood, or the leisured life of a landed nobleman. Instead, selling religious pictures and tokens to pay his few expenses, he set out on foot on a long succession of pilgrimages that were to leave his footprints throughout much of the western hemisphere, last of all in the Rocky Mountains of New Mexico.

After he landed at Caracas, Venezuela, in 1838, his name soon took the Spanish form: Juan María de Agostini. A list of the remote spots all over Central and South America near which this lone foot traveler "holed up" for a time in some cave or other reads like the wandering waybill of a dauntless adventurer: Bucaramanga, Papayán, Guayaquil, Lambayeque, Moyabamba, Mañón, Tabatinga, Bahia, Pernambuco, Boca del Monte. . . .

It was not adventure that he sought, however, but solitude. Yet wherever he stopped, his ministrations to the poor and the sick soon gave him the name of "holy man" and brought the native Indians flocking to his cave so that he must move on to escape what he considered their undue worship.

After 21 years in South America he headed northward and found a cave to his liking amid the timber-line snow of Mexico's loftiest peak, Mt. Orizaba.



But even here worshipful hundreds flocked to his retreat, laden with gifts. Finally, apparently out of jealousy over his popularity, Mexican officials arrested and deported him to Cuba. From there he took ship for Canada, and finally, trudging on foot, came to Council Grove on the old Santa Fe Trail.

As Don Eugenio Romero's wagon train slanted southwestward across the grassy, hill-knotted plains between Ratón Pass and Wagon Mound, New Mexico, Agostini caught his first glimpse of El Cerro del Tecolote (Owl Peak) bulging out eastward from the dark main range of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The sight fascinated him, and no wonder, for then, as now, the peak was an impressive landmark visible for well over a hundred miles.

It is no conventional peak rising conical or knife-edged into the sky. Rather it is a huge double hump in the ridge that forms the divide between the Mississippi and Río Grande watersheds. On the several hundred acres of fairly flat top grow fir, spruce and foxtail pine. Wild columbines bloom in small grass parks where mule deer browse and blue grouse nest.

To the east it breaks off abruptly in reddish granite cliffs, some of them dropping a sheer two thousand feet. From here mountain lions prowling its crags at night can see the lights of Las Vegas, eighteen miles away down the Río de las Gallinas de la Tierra (Wild Turkey Creek), where piney foothills meet the wide open mesa.

When the wagon train rolled into old Las Vegas Plaza where General Kearney had first raised the Stars and Stripes over New Mexico in 1846, Don Eugenio generously offered his strange guest the hospitality of his big ranch house five miles out on the Santa Fe road. But Juan María de Agostini shook his head.

"I have promised God to live out my life as a hermit, my friend," he said. "You know, perhaps, of a cave, a lonely cave in the wilderness?"

Don Eugenio did. Along the cliff-boxed Romero Canyon on his own ranch there were plenty of caves, occupied only by pack rats, rattlesnakes and an occasional bobcat. In one of these El Hermitaño took up his solitary abode. His bed was a single blanket on the hard stone floor, yet with only the eerie howling of coyotes to disturb his solitary meditations, Juan María de Agostini was content.

Then one day he went to a nearby *placita* to trade small wooden crucifixes for corn. There a village woman asked him to look at her sick child.

Perhaps the ailing *niño* had nothing more than an ordinary stomach ache and would have been well in a day or two anyhow; but the child's mother credited the cure partly to medicine El Hermitaño brewed from herbs and partly to the prayers he said.

That Sunday the Hermit stayed to assist the visiting Padre at Mass. That afternoon he visited an aged *paisano* stricken with a painfully stiff back—probably lumbago. Whatever it was, there seemed to be some curative magic in the rubbing El Hermitaño administered with his long, slender hands.

Thereafter the Hermit enjoyed little solitude. Believing him to be a holy man, the people flocked to his cave. Some even began to build new houses near the Canyon's rim in order to live closer to him. Torn between a natural charity in his heart and his almost fanatic desire for solitary meditation, Juan María de Agostini looked northwestward to the mountains.

Yonder, high in the timbered wilderness, loomed the lofty walls of El Cerro del Tecolote, huge and somber even in sunlight, mystical and unearthly in the cloud mists that sometimes clung to its ramparts. Surely there he would find solitude.

The cave he found some 250 feet below the rugged rim of the Peak of the Owl was little more than a pack rat's shelter under an overhanging lip of granite, a narrow shelf with the dizzy height of sheer cliffs above and below. It was too small to permit the Hermit to lie down at full length. Its roof, from which seeped a slow drip of water, was too low to allow him to stand erect. But the site afforded a wide and wondrous view of mountain, canyon, mesa and faraway plains that must have been satisfying to his soul.

Below, on one side of the Peak, nestled the little hillside *placitas* of San Ignacio, on the other Las Gallinas. Into them came the dreaded scourge of smallpox. Somehow the Hermit heard of it and came down the mountain to help. His tireless gentleness in helping to nurse the sick, bury the dead and console the bereaved is still an oft-told story among the native mountain folk.

Once more Juan María de Agostini found himself almost worshiped as a holy man. Devout *paisanos* began calling him Juan Bautista (John the Baptist). Los Hermanos Penitentes (The Penitent Brothers) who each year on Good Friday re-enact the Crucifixion on cross-topped Calvaries near their villages, practically adopted him as their own particular saint. Himself a

devout Catholic, the Hermit tried to discourage such veneration, but without much success.

Thereafter, for about five years, the Hermit of the Mountain seems to have given up his hope for complete solitude. Though he still lived on the Peak, his black cloaked, gray haired, gray bearded figure with its crooked staff of knotty *encino*, became a familiar sight in the country roundabout as he went about, ministering to the sick, helping the poor, and consoling the bereaved.

In Las Vegas and Watrous he also sometimes visited in the well-to-do homes of the Romero, Peña, C. de Baca, Morrison and Watrous families. At such times he was offered the finest of food and the best bed in the house. But though he was both a cultured and courteous guest, the Hermit would eat nothing but his usual fare of *atole*, a simple mush made with cornmeal and water. And after his departure his distressed hostess would find the fine bed untouched. Whether it was the hardpacked earthen floor of a poor *paisano's* adobe or the hardwood of a home of wealth, the Hermit always slept on the floor.

That he slept at all seems a wonder, for according to Sam Watrous and others who were his friends, his leather shirt with tacks driven through it, was never removed, day or night, except for bathing.

Juan María de Agostini did not join the Penitente Brotherhood, but he could understand their devout desire to attain spiritual peace through self-inflicted physical pain. They, in turn, made of his lofty mountain a Calvary and a shrine.

Some winters as much as twelve feet of snow, all told, falls on Hermit's Peak. Sometimes the mercury stands at zero or below. Even though many winter days here are sunny and moderate, a half open cave is no fit shelter for a human—even a hermit. Distressed that their revered friend should live like a wild animal in a mere cleft of rocks, the kindly Spanish-American people got together one summer and built for him a snug cabin in a timber-sheltered grass park on top of the Peak.

So much is fact. The legend is that to quench the thirst of the two dozen swarthy workmen building his cabin, the Hermit scratched the earth with his knotty staff and a spring of pure water gushed forth. It is also solemnly told by wrinkled old *abuelos* to their grandchildren that for three days he

fed every workman his fill of *atole* from a small copper kettle whose contents were never thereby diminished. Miraculous or not, a living spring still flows not far from the top of Hermit's Peak, though the cabin has long since rotted away.

The Hermit's amigos built the log cabin according to his own strange specifications. The only door was a single log sawed out to make an opening barely large enough for a human body to squeeze through. This opening had short nails driven into its inner facings so that the Hermit could neither leave nor enter without some painful gouging.

With the cabin's log walls in place, its roof of poles and sod laid on, there remained two more tasks for the Hermit's devout axemen. One was to fell a tall tree so that it formed a dizzy bridge from one crag to another over a chasm 1,000 feet in depth. Thereafter, to keep himself reminded of the uncertainty of mortal life, the Hermit almost daily paced the length of this precarious bridge where a single misstep would have landed him in eternity.

The other task was to set up three huge crosses at the northeast cliff's brink. These, as time rotted them away, have been faithfully replaced from time to time by the Penitente Brothers who still make devout pilgrimages to the Hermit's mountain every year during Holy Week.

Hermit of the mountain though he was, Juan María de Agostini made a host of friends. Among them was a rancher named Sam Watrous, who lived some twenty miles eastward from the Peak where the village of Watrous now stands at the confluence of the Mora and Sapello creeks near old Fort Union. Sam Watrous prevailed upon the Hermit to make an agreement with him to build a signal fire at the brink of the Peak at first dark at least every fourth night. If, for more than four nights in succession, Watrous should fail to see the distant signal fire, he might know that some disaster had befallen his Hermit friend, and his friends might come to rescue or bury him.

At the good gray age of 67, the Hermit came to Sam Watrous and told him that he need look for the signal fires no more.

"There is a call, amigo," he said, with some sadness in his large dark eyes. "I am going to Mexico. It is God's will."

There were many sad hearts in Las Vegas and in the foothill villages when the good gray Hermit set out, afoot as always, for his long, lonely *jornada* southward to Mexico.

Far down the Río Grande at Mesilla, New Mexico, the towering Organ Mountains in the mystic lavender of reflected sunset so enthralled the lone traveler that he gave up all thought of Mexico. Somewhere in those beautifully craggy mountains he would find a cave in which to pass the rest of his days in peace and solitude.

For a few days he rested in the home of Don Mariano Barela, then sheriff of Doña Ana County. Padre José de Jesús Cabeza de Baca, the parish priest, invited him to assist at Mass and to preach to the people who gathered from all over the valley to hear him.

"The bells of Mesilla," he told the Padre, "are sweet in my old ears, but the mountains call me."

One day he set out, accompanied for some distance by a procession of men, women and children, many of them carrying crosses, others his books and a supply of cornmeal.

Somewhere in the craggy, cactus-patched Organ Mountains the Hermit found another cave sufficiently cramped and uncomfortable to suit his ascetic needs. For some time he came down to Mesilla once in a while after corn for his atole and to attend Mass. Always the sweet bells of Mesilla rang in his honor.

With Don Mariano Barela the Hermit made the same sort of signal fire agreement he had had with Sam Watrous. But marauding Apaches were still at large in those days. A time came when for four nights in succession no signal fire appeared in the craggy Organs. Searchers found the body of Juan María de Agostini lying face down in an arroyo, an Indian lance through his heart, a crucifix in his hand. Because the scalp had not been taken, there were some who believed that the holy man had been put out of the way by persons jealous of his fame, but this seems unlikely. The truth is still an unsolved mystery of the desert.

Nowdays hikers climb a steep trail to the summit of Hermit's Peak, present site of a Forest Service fire lookout. The Hermit's cave and spring are still there. Penitente Brothers replace the three crosses whenever they decay. They also keep the trail to the Hermit's cave lined with crosses—a *Via Crucis* in the wilderness. In the many musically named little Spanish-American *placitas*, such as San Ignacio, Las Dispensas, Los Aguajes, Las Gallinas, San Gerónimo, Rociada, Las Tusas, Sapello, there still lives a devout reverence for the memory of El Hermitaño, the Hermit of the Mountain.

## Pilgrim of the Future

It was dawn in the heart of China, the first day  
Of the new year. Father Teilhard knelt  
In the little chapel for a minute praying,  
Then turned back to his unbelieving colleagues.  
The men looked up at him impassively.  
“My dear friends.” How his heart rushed out to them!  
It was no stone, despite his name, he gave them,  
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin—rather, bread.  
“We here begin the year God gives us.  
He has a different face for each of us.  
Yet, we are men. None can escape His hand  
That stretches over all. May He unite us,  
Both with each other, and those far away  
Whose love has followed us across the water.  
May God perfect our common dedication  
And bless our work.”

The Holy Mass began.  
They felt, watching their Jesuit that morning,  
The whole earth was his altar: that he lifted  
All flesh to Heaven when he raised the Host,  
All deaths to Heaven when he raised the Blood.

Their priest traveled before them over Asia,  
Into the future where no foot had trod.  
They followed in his steps, his pilgrim-brothers,  
Knowing his heart held dialogue with God.

—*Sister M. Bernetta Quinn, O.S.F.*

## The Setting Is withal Appropriate

The setting is withal appropriate  
the time with it wholly commensurate  
(twelve archaic chimes from the ornate clock  
on the east wall, facing the locked  
door, twirl into my trichromatic ears).

My beloved spouse timelessly slumbers near  
among the roses in the dainty room,  
and Anna, gorgeous Anna, dances  
perennially with the ballet dancers  
at the edge of her summer afternoon.

Once again I walk, four hours before noon,  
the long walk, hatless and speechless, harpooned  
by the slanting sun fixed on my eyes.  
Desirous of relief from the sea of skies,  
I hasten to reach the learned hall.

From the grandiose height my mind walls  
in the bloom of the multicolored flowers;  
perfumed, the apperception slowly ascends  
momentarily the lonely and immense  
marble stairway in the ivied tower.

And what of this at some distant time  
when the clock on the east wall, facing  
the door, will ring out the usual chime?  
Both time and guests will quietly walk in  
to respect and comfort me in my age  
which perennially recalls the image  
of scarlet roses in the dainty room  
at the edge of one summer afternoon.

—D. J. Lepore

## To the Old Woman

Come mother—

    Your rebozo trails a black web  
    And your hem catches on your heels  
You lean the burden of your years  
On shaky cane and palsied hand pushes  
    sweat-grimed pennies on the counter.  
Can you still see, old woman,  
The darting color-trailed needle of your trade?  
    The flowers you embroider  
    With three for a dime threads  
Cannot fade as quickly as the leaves of time.  
    What things do you remember?  
Your mouth seems to be forever tasting  
The residue of nectar-hearted years.  
Where are the sons you bore?  
    Do they speak only English now  
    And pass for Spaniards?  
Did California lure them  
To forget the name of “madre”?  
    One day I know you will not come  
    And ask for me to pick  
    The colors you can no longer see.  
I know I’ll wait in vain  
    For your toothless benediction.  
I’ll look into the dusty street  
Made cool by pigeons’ wings  
Until a dirty child will nudge me and say:  
    “Señor, how much ees thees?”

—*Rafael Jesús González*



## Of a Maid and Eyes Autumnal

the  
thirsty  
sun  
sucks  
at ripening meadows colorstruck—  
now chrysanthemums fleck the azure of  
a maiden's eyes  
with  
mirrored  
autumn.  
in this  
bright  
flux  
hearts cling  
where gardens are rainbowed  
songed  
in silence  
and earth transfigured multiplies like stars a  
millionfold our immortality  
intangible  
but  
sparkling.

—*Antoni Gronowicz*

## 1 The Hippopotamus Can Also Sing

The hippopotamus can also sing,  
His hot blood sings beyond the human ear;  
Would say, if worded, mercy builds forever:  
Under the armored hide the caroling.  
This is no formidable beast, for all  
His fortress, and he will not exercise  
Himself in things too wonderful. He lies  
Light as unthought, like thistle on a wall,  
Cooling himself in concrete summer tanks.  
For all his mass, there's no solemnity:  
Under his ribs lies what the children see—  
A comfortable grace, a simple strength  
That feeds on hay and swims a river's length:  
His eyelids rise and fall in lazy winks.

—Allen Kanfer

## To a Father Stewing about His Sons

Old man, old man, you cannot taste  
the soup in all the kettles,  
Nor serve nor ladle each.  
Do not despair that they are out of reach,  
Nor yet presume to preach.  
Their tongues will tell them;  
Trust in their taste.  
Born of you  
Thorn to you  
Thrown from you  
The seasoning not done in haste,  
The finished feast is theirs to waste  
Or savor. Stir yourself.

—Ann Darr

## Solid-Abstract

Decay chews on ripeness and swallows all traces,  
Seeds rot into plants whose seed will devour them;  
But what is this essence that's never a substance,  
The young-old that's neither, more formless than process?

I flee from the stage and view all the players,  
Floods of bright colors illumine their make ups;  
But nowhere one pure spark, igniting, will focus  
An untinted light that dissolves every costume.

How spaceward soever the oak may adventure,  
It fails to create its own-birth-giving acorn;  
And life dwells in frames of a short motion picture  
Whose effect is but sequence and cause the projector.

Thus rhythm of scenes defines logic and meaning;  
Awareness, a gap between a.m. and p.m.;  
Daydream, lament for the child that was fondled;  
Security, grinning that something stays always.

—Norman Nathan

## Sorrento

This is Sorrento, this the distant sea  
of illusion and mythology;  
sea of emeralds and gold that revels  
in blue blue and crystal of Murano.

All the blue and gold of twilight,  
Flowering mother of pearl, and distant jade  
all the blue, all the blue of day,  
all the gold lies within reach of the hand.

Blue oars in golden boats . . .  
This is Sorrento and this the singing sea.  
Give me this full day to look on you.

These transmutations and these ultramarines . . .  
O to live here among the orange blossoms,  
To love, my love, and think of nothing else.

—*Rafael Heliodoro Valle*  
translated by D. M. Pettinella

## Capitulation to the South

One must reach purgatory from the north;  
There the heat of hell hollows the heart  
And there, gods go forth.

I too, damned, slid to that soft southern part  
Quickly to burn out, more quick to repent.  
Who would understand that sin is substance:  
Salvation is not chosen, but is sent  
And evil is preferred to impotence.  
Thus heaven's treachery is not the sin,  
But that it creates gods from better men.

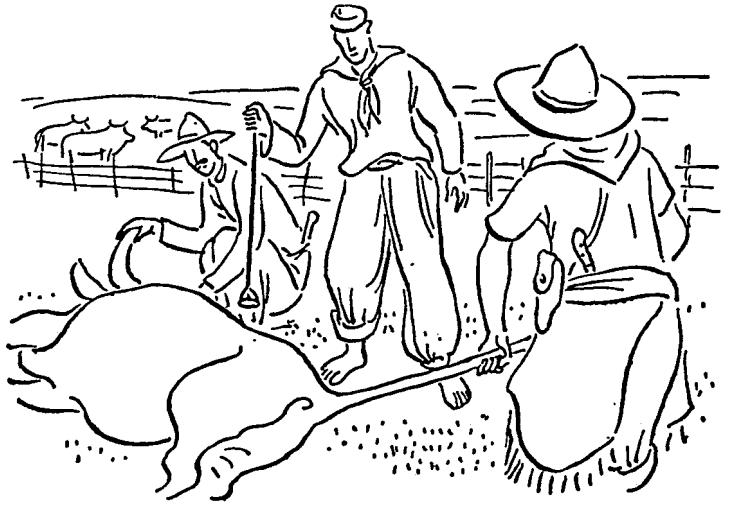
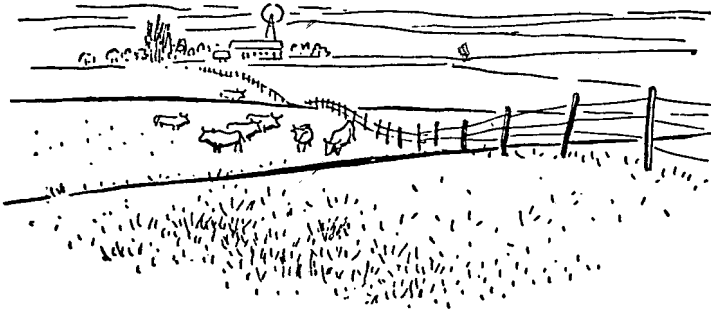
—*Marshall Keith*

## Penelope: 1962

Waiting is waiting  
Though my lord be home  
And bedded sound  
With one arm flung across my pillowed hair.  
His dreams, his busy dreams, are fair  
For one who found the homeward voyage torturous.  
The foam  
Of shores he never names by day  
Washes his slumber and a golden air  
Is tender on his eyelids

And so for me  
Whose mind moved always out from Ithaca,  
Whose gaze read every sail at sea,  
Whose life turned round an hour to come,  
Old habits hold.  
The weaving never finishes.  
The hopes, the separate lovely hopes,  
still blossom;  
And often in companioned sleep  
Accustomed eyes forget their role and weep.

—*Frances Hall*



Illustrations by Percy Lau  
from *Types et Aspects du Brésil*,  
Conselho Nacional de Geografia, Rio de Janeiro, 1957.





## HEADNOTES

A poet-turned-painter, FRANK ANKEN-BRAND, JR., reports that the plastic arts are far more lucrative than verse. His eighteen one-man shows in the last two years have eclipsed in returns his lengthy verse production which includes three slim volumes, this year's *Plum Blossom Scrolls*, and dozens of pieces for little magazines here and abroad. He teaches English in Haddonfield, New Jersey.

S. OMAR BARKER, old *NMQ* hand, also has been published in most of the magazines that pay money. He is past president of Western Writers of America and way back in 1925, was a member of the New Mexico legislature. He holds an honorary Litt.D. from the University of New Mexico, resides in Las Vegas. ELSA BARKER, who collaborates with her husband, teaches junior high school English but has been finding time to write Western stories and serials since 1927. She takes more pride, however, in being one of the few women ever to have shot a mountain lion.

The checkered career of ANN DARR, present poet and former WASP, has been reported fully here before. What is new is that she too has become a writer-politician, on the election board of the village of Somerset, Chevy Chase, Maryland, and a

lady farmer on the Shenandoah with ten acres and a built-in view of the Blue Ridge. She would gladly trade all this for a gondola (or at least a "stinkin' pink palazzo") in Venice where she spent last summer.

From Whaletown, British Columbia, comes the farmer-poet, GILEAN DOUGLAS (sounds every bit as poetic to us as Venice). He is almost as well known under several other nommes de plume and has won forty or fifty prizes and awards.

LUCILLE EISMAN is a Cincinnati housewife who began writing recently because of a dare from her husband. Until now she has been in a gardening and camping publication rut.

This retired managing editor of *Colliers*, HENRY JAMES FORMAN, has worked for some of the leading magazines in the country, published in many of the rest. As a staff correspondent of the old *New York Sun*, only two years after graduation (*cum laude* from Harvard), he had the unforgettable experience of covering President Theodore Roosevelt's travels.

RAFAEL JESUS GONZÁLEZ is the student president of the Texas Western literary society in his native El Paso.

Arriving with a bang on the bigtime literary scene this year is *Quarterly* poet



ANTONI GRONOWICZ. His play *The Price of Love* has been optioned to Broadway; his second book and first novel *The Closed Circle* (Morrow) will run to extra editions.

In private life, FRANCES HALL is Mrs. Ercil Adams, wife of an English instructor at Glendale College, California. Although she has published widely in big and little magazines this is her first appearance in the *Quarterly*.

It embarrasses Pakistani poet KHWAJA SHAHID HOSAIN, pillar of fire in his undergraduate days at the Muslim university in Aligarh, to be so successful *commercially*. Now he is a key executive for Lever Brothers there in Pakistan and spends his time "attempting to reconcile a cruel dichotomy—the dictates of my creative impulse and the role imposed upon me as an organization man." His verse drama, *The Square Peg*, appeared originally in *Pakistan Quarterly*.

LYLOYD N. JEFFREY is an English professor at North Texas State University in Denton who is presently peddling a book he wrote called *Shelley's Use of Natural History* (if you don't like the title he will change it). He is a specialist not only in romantic English poetry but in Southwestern folklore, as his growing list of publications attests.

JAMES M. JENKINSON, whose colorful adventures with his classmate Karl Kernberger filled more than two columns of "Headnotes" last issue, received his M.A. in English from University of New Mexico in 1961. He resides in Albuquerque.

ALLEN KANFER, who lives in Forest Hills, Long Island, is an English teacher in the New York public school system. His verse has been published in *Harpers*, *Yale*

*Review*, *Poetry*, *Perspective*, *Western Review* and *Commentary*.

Holding a B.S. from the University of Alabama, MARSHALL KEITH is a technical writer for the Army's Redstone Arsenal and a leading light of the Huntsville Little Theater.

The *Quarterly* is fortunate to publish an article by JAY C. KNODE, dean emeritus of the College of Arts & Sciences of the University of New Mexico. Dr. Knode, who was on the campus seventeen years, is now living the good rural life of cool Colorado in Drake. Most of his books have been in the field of education.

In a completely different genre, story writer JACK B. LAWSON lists among his previous publications his co-authorship of *Terms in Their Propositional Contexts in Wittgenstein's Tractatus*. Shades of the late Lewis Carroll! Mr. Lawson is an English instructor in Thornton Township High School and Junior College, Harvey, Illinois.

New Englander D. J. LEPORE is English teacher at the junior high school in Enfield, Connecticut, and writes book reviews for the *Hartford Courant*. His verse, published widely in periodicals, was collected under the title *The Praise and the Praised* (Boston: Humphries, 1955).

NORMAN NATHAN, professor of English at Utica College, University of Syracuse, skillfully combines creative and scholarly writing. His most recent book, *Judging Poetry* (New York: Putnam's, 1961), he calls a textbook. Nathan's stories and verse are well known and his articles appear frequently in scholarly journals.

Returning to the pages of the *Quarterly* after an absence of fifteen years is poet PAUL B. NEWMAN, assistant professor of

English at Kansas State University. Dr. Billings as an Air Force captain during World War II served in the European theater. In 1955, he won first prize in the University of Chicago Fiske awards for poetry.

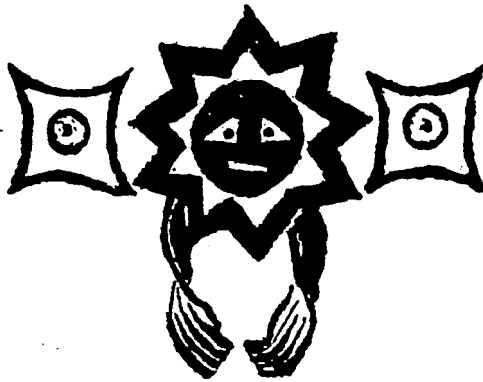
DORA M. PETTINELLA, is a widely traveled translator who lives in New York.

Another New York translator, formerly a native of Bremen, PURCY HENNING PINI is even better known as a painter, having had one-man shows in Bonn, Frankfurt, Ulm, Berlin and Paris.

SISTER M. BERNETTA QUINN, O.S.F., holds the Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin and is a well-known poet and biographer. She participated in the reading of younger modern poets at Boston College this year.

There is nothing run-of-mill about poet MURIEL WEST, presently employed in teaching and research at Southern Illinois University where her esoteric specialty is the history of alchemy. She has strong ties to New Mexico. It was in Santa Fe while doing sound effects for a marionette show she met and married novelist Don West. There, she was commissioned by the late Frieda Lawrence to make the candlesticks at the D. H. Lawrence shrine in Taos.

The *Quarterly* is glad to welcome back verse by former poetry editor (1956-58) CLIFFORD WOOD whose verse has appeared not only in *NMQ* but in other literary magazines. Mr. Wood is presently assistant professor of English at College of Emporia in Kansas.



## BOOKS

SEVENTH STREET: AN ANTHOLOGY OF POEMS FROM LES DEUX MEGOTS, ed. by Don Katzman. New York: Hesperidian Press, 1961. 68 pp. \$ .75.

What do young poets of our 1960's write about?

Are they preoccupied with sex or politics or war? Are talented young artists—the conscience of our age—harrowed by the Bomb, disturbed by racial and religious bigotry, obsessed with religion, oppressed by corrosive materialism, grieved by conformity? Are they the voice of the New Conservatism or of the Old Radicalism? Is it a politically stirred generation like the Auden spirit of the 1930's, a bedevilled generation like the 1940's, or a formalistic generation like the 1950's? Are young poets today stricken by human poverty and injustice or cool, detached, skeptical? Are they all fire or all gas?

Yes, it's an interesting and important question. *What* is in the heart and mind of the sensitive and articulate young?

This anthology can help us to know. Here are forty-seven poems by seventeen poets. Their ages apparently range from twenty-one to forty-two; five are women, twelve are men. They read their poems at two coffee houses in New York City. The foreword to this volume reports that the readings, held every Wednesday evening, were democratic and non-selective: "all poets, irrespective of genre, content, point of view or degree of competence, are free to read from their work." Surely, then, this collection can be considered representative of the mood and concern of our time.

And yet one is surprised to find that, after all, there is one major theme, there is one specific matter, which appears and reappears throughout these poems. Not in all, of course, but astonishingly frequent. Somehow one might think that a disparate set of writers would record a disparate set of sentiments, that the only consistent element would be inconsistency. Not/so. Over and over again these poems sound a similar note. In Chekhov's play "The Cherry Orchard" he assembles a group of men and women. They sit plunged in thought. "Suddenly there is a sound in the distance, as it were from the sky—the sound of a breaking harp-string, mournfully dying away." That sound, so strange, so sad, so haunting. As one reads the poems of this collection, in the beginning, the middle, the end of them, there is a haunting note too, its sound echoing and re-echoing; and a random, sporadic collection suddenly becomes a statement, a cry, and a unit.

It is proper, however, first to acknowledge the variety within the unit—other rhythms amid the one over-riding major theme. Richard Barker, for instance, realizes the impending Bomb:

The city caught fire in a moment  
the child became a 'star-burst  
at the burning breast.

He understands too the epiphany which rises from human love:

in your hair bright flowers  
whisper great butterflies into the sun.

Marguerite Harris faces the brutish urban world:

bestiality  
artifice  
the sell . . .

But moving monumentally between and through these and other subjects comes the one prevailing theme. These poets, symbols of our decade, return always to it.

They are in pell-mell flight from the present world. In desperation or in yearning they flee from the here and now. By dream, fantasy, or anguished acts of the imagination they turn in headlong rush away from a world they consider drab and brummagem. In imagination, if nowhere else, they locate a world of color, vividness, and quality. By dwelling in what Mary E. Mayo calls "never-lands" a good number of these men and women are enabled to survive and write.

Without visions a people perish, they say, or at least without illusions. "I need all my phantoms," Howard Ant cries. Writing about drunks, Don Katzman observes their exemplary need for adventure, for vitality, for hopes which the world does not waste and destroy:

All men have come through a bar-room door  
To down a leopard in a glass of beer,  
Trample snakes hissing in spittoons,  
And to see each old lady young enough  
To ride pink horses to the park.

We need fidelities and surcease, and none remain about us in a dull and tawdry civilization. "All my illusions of the world are gone," John Keys mourns. "What would I give to turn my heart to the rose again!" Bob Nichols personifies that rose of warmth and succour as a "Miss Taylor" to whom a whole community appeals for comfort, but Miss Taylor, like the rose, is dead and unavailing. Then in a world of the sterile and unfruitful, these poets affirm, through imagination we must create viable and fertile convictions and dreams. The present world is uninhabitable; it can not be made habitable; by a powerful impulse of imagination we can fabricate something possible. Diane Wakoski puts it this way: "Inventing means to see you, I stay awake." The real world is undeserving of our affection; we can invent better.

Not really with revulsion do these men and women reject the civilization of the

1960's. It is more with a sigh. Few are angry or quarrelsome. It is their direct, unemotional conclusion that the actual world of our time lacks sustenance for the imagination and the heart. There is little protest; there is the quiet certainty that the 1960's about us are tired, unworthy, and unbeautiful.

It is well for everyone to contemplate what we are doing to ourselves when we manufacture a world which the fine spirits of our time simply consider unlivable.

—Willis D. Jacobs

Dr. Jacobs is a professor of English at the University of New Mexico. His reviews frequently appear in *New Mexico Quarterly*.

PROBABILITY AND THE LOGIC OF RATIONAL BELIEF, by Henry E. Kyburg, Jr. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961. 350 pp. \$10.00.

As explained in the introduction to this knotty work, the logic of rational belief is the yardstick by which one determines conclusions relative to a certain situation, which are warranted (rationally) by the evidence at hand. Professor Kyburg's book is an attempt to formulate an interpretation of probability in such a way that

we can answer *all* of the questions which arise with respect to rationality (of the ordinary, non-transcendental variety) by the single answer: it is rational to believe what is highly probable, irrational not to believe it; and it is irrational to believe what is highly improbable, and rational not to believe it.

The reader who is not equipped with a reading knowledge of mathematical logic, especially the protosyntax of Quine's *Mathematical Logic*, will have considerable difficulty understanding the author's definition of probability, stated quasi-symbolically.

Very roughly speaking, Dr. Kyburg defines the probability of  $x$  relative to known (accepted) empirical facts or data with a specified degree of precision by a pair of fractions. The fractions determine the interval, so to speak, in which the probability lies. As the degree of precision is increased, the interval decreases. The definition is stated in terms of randomness, biconditional connection, and the like. Even a reader who comprehends the definition, and he will not be a layman, will find only scanty justification for this as *the* interpretation which will answer *all* questions of rationality.

An application of the logic of rational belief would run something like this: Suppose Mr. A believes that event  $E$  is quite likely to occur. One can test the strength of Mr. A's conviction by finding the betting odds, which he is willing to give, concerning the occurrence of  $E$ . These odds, of course, are determined by Mr. A's knowledge of the conditions, facts, and data which are pertinent to  $E$ . Professor Kyburg maintains that the given facts can be symbolized in his logic of rational belief and that one can then determine, to a given accuracy on purely logical grounds, the probability of event  $E$ . Should the numerical correlate of Mr. A's degree of belief fall in the interval between Kyburg's fractions, Mr. A's belief is rational, i.e., his degree of belief is supported by the facts known to him which

relate to E. It very well may be that Mr. A doesn't know all that there is to know about E. and that a more enlightened individual would have a different degree of confidence in E. None the less, Mr. A may believe quite rationally on the basis of his slight knowledge of the facts relevant to E.

Mathematicians, logicians and philosophers (especially philosophers of science) should find it rewarding to inspect Dr. Kyburg's efforts first hand. There are interesting insights in the philosophical "problems" of induction, randomness and probability in this book. There is also an excellent bibliography of over 300 entries.

Although the stated method of ascertaining the rationality of a belief may be valuable to the scientist, it is very probable that the logic of rational belief—as set forth in this book—will not be used by the average citizen (whoever *he* may be) to determine the rationality of his separate beliefs. The many pages of symbolic manipulation, which are the crux of Kyburg's argument, would render it impossible.

For those mathematically trained who may wish to pursue the matter a little farther the argument can be stated with greater accuracy as follows:

To say that the probability of the expression  $x$ , relative to the rational corpora of level  $\gamma_1$  and basis  $F$ , is the pair of expressions  $(y; y')$ , in symbols  $x \gamma_1 \text{Prob}_F (y; y')$ , is simply to say that there are expressions  $x'$ ,  $w'$  and  $z'$ , such that  $x$  and  $x' \in z$  are biconditionally connected in the rational corpora of level  $\gamma_1$  and basis  $F$ ,  $x'$  is a random member of  $w'$  with respect to  $z'$  in the rational corpora of level  $\gamma_1$  and basis  $F$ , and that  $\text{pct} (w', z', (y; y'))$  is a strongest statement about  $w'$  and  $z'$  in the rational corpora of this basis.

—J. Dalton Tarwater

Like the author of the book reviewed, Dalton Tarwater has prepared in the disciplines of both mathematics and philosophy. A science graduate of Texas Technological College, Mr. Tarwater was awarded the degree of M.A. in philosophy at the University of New Mexico where he was vice-president of the philosophy honorary association and is presently an instructor in mathematics. His thesis subject bore on the philosophy of decision procedures for the propositional calculus.

**THE LABYRINTH OF SOLITUDE: LIFE AND THOUGHT IN MEXICO.** by Octavio Paz, tr. by Ly-sander Kemp. New York: Grove Press, 1962. 205 pp. \$3.95.

Octavio Paz is a poet and this is a highly individual and impressionistic interpretation of life and thought in Mexico. Moreover, the book was published in Spanish more than a decade ago, and, one suspects, not thoroughly edited for this new American edition before translation. Much has happened in the last ten years that is not reflected in the book. In spite of the author's patriotism, erudition, and historic perspective, in presuming to speak for *todo* Mexico, or even for all Mexican intellectuals, he presumes too much.

It is debatable, for example, how many Mexicans including intellectuals would choose as symbolic and typical of the Mexican, the so-called *Pachuco* or displaced, urban, ill-assimilated Latin beatnik of Southern California. Of art, Señor Paz writes of the *meagerness* of the creative output. As a Mexican artist, he is overly modest. Only on the basis of a ridiculously high idealism, possibly comparing Mexican art with the Italian at the peak of the Renaissance, could this meagerness be substantiated. So conscious is he of the ancient Indian history that he perhaps ignores the fact that in its present mestizo-democratic complex, Mexico is a comparatively new country. It is strange that Paz apparently does not admire this vigorous adolescent, growing up rapidly with attendant growing pains certainly, but also with great promise.

Perhaps the most glaring flaw is the author's naïve nationalistic penchant for confusing his Mexicanism with the human predicament. Here is a sample from a footnote.

When I arrived in France in 1945, I was amazed to find that the young men and women of certain quarters, especially students and "artists," wore clothing reminiscent of the *pachucos*. . . . Was this a quick, imaginative adaptation of what these young people, after years of isolation, thought was the fashion in . . . America? I questioned a number of people about it and almost all of them told me it was a strictly French phenomenon.

Cultural patterns which are temporal and non-nationalistic he would preempt as Mexican. Again he states, "Reality . . . was not invented by man as it was in the United States. . . . The history of Mexico is a man seeking his parentage, his origins." For a scholar of Marx, and he demonstrates aptitude in the school, it is strange his historical perspective did not permit him to see only a lesser degree of concern with origins in the feared Colossus of the North of which he is so conscious.

Contrasting the American and Mexican, Paz writes, "We are sorrowful and sarcastic and they are happy and full of jokes." This large assumption contrasts strangely with another made by a big, jolly American in this reviewer's presence in Mazatlán recently—a man Paz, I am sure, would erroneously characterize as "happy and full of jokes." This man has known Sinaloa for many years and thinks it is a place where the good people go when they die.

"I have never known anyone like the Sinaloenses," he mused. "Everything is a big joke here. Lose your money? Who cares—it's screamingly funny! Your aunt died? How jolly! My wife ran away with the *lechero*, you say? Ha, ha, ha—Ah that *puta* is the cute one!"

Paz writes of Mexican masks and what the American remarks as the character of the people of admittedly a single state may be one of them. However the author does not make the connection nor does he admit any but Mexican masks. The tradition of the clown laughing with tears in his eyes, Pagliacci, Andreiev's *He*, is not a picture of the Mexican Paz gives us. Instead we get a picture of a sad formalist, indulgent toward homosexuality, regarding woman as a chattel, yet showing the wounds of his love. The Mexican is psychoanalyzed in the light of his Indian heritage, stigmatized with a "servant mentality" and bitterly denounced as a son of the violated. Unlike the European,

he is genuinely religious, but we do not learn from Paz whether this is good or bad, nor does he say, uncharacteristically, that his own lacerating self-castigation is a purely Mexican trait.

The long, essentially unconnected, middle part of the book concerns Mexican history and prehistory—a rather brilliant, if biased, interpretation. The pernicious influence of North American exploitation is exposed. In a final chapter on the present day, Cárdenas and Toledano emerge as heroes of the Left. The word *bourgeoisie* used frequently and disparagingly rather dates the work. “The banker is replacing the revolutionary general.” The Soviet Union comes out better than the United States while he spoon-feeds us with warmed-over *Communist Manifesto*:

As we know, there is a method whose efficacy has been proved. Capital, after all is simply accumulated human labor, and the extraordinary development of the Soviet Union is nothing but an application of the formula. By means of a controlled economy which avoids the waste and confusion inherent in the capitalist system . . . the Soviet Union [etc.]. . . .

But enough. He voices a more modern truism when he writes, “Backward countries share two ideas that once seemed irreconcilable: nationalism and the revolutionary aspirations of the masses.” While admitting that his country lacks capital, he is not in favor, of course, of foreign private investment on the stated basis, not of his prejudices, but that profits will be taken out of the country and that “the result is bound to be economic dependence and, in the long run, political interference in our domestic affairs.” In saying which, Señor Paz parts company with the current national trend and economic policy of his country.

This book is no bomb; it is merely one intellectual’s opinion, however orotund and oracular, of various Mexican facets; but it lacks a successful attempt at coalescence. The picture, brilliant in patches, seems distorted almost beyond recognition.

—Richard C. Angell

CHRISTMAS ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER, 1800-1900, by John E. Baur. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1961. 299 pp. \$5.00.

Although this is primarily a seasonal offering, the book can be read with pleasure and profit at any time of the year owing to the historical framework in which the author projects the expansion and colonization of the frontier. Letters, diaries, and historical records not only yield documented evidence in regard to the cultural impact made on American life through the importation of European traditions, but also present a focus on the diverse pioneer racial qualities

of courage, endurance and resourcefulness. Combined with an historical objectivity in treatment and style is a sincere subjective attitude on the part of Mr. Baur towards his subject. He prepares the reader for this approach in the Foreword:

Christmas on the frontier should be interesting and important to us all, for most of us will agree that the first Christmas was the greatest frontier in history. The Shepherds and the Wise Men were trail-blazing pioneers in the wilderness that was the ancient world.

Structurally, a chronological pattern for narrating and describing frontier Yuletide



customs and traditions is followed, some of which may be familiar to the reader; slaves dragging in the Yule log in the great mansions of Virginia, a traditional midwinter ritual followed by the druids of ancient Britain; German settlers in Pennsylvania importing the Christmas tree tradition; "Noel" first sung by French trappers in far-off unmapped valleys—the song that subsequently echoed down the years at Christmastide in every part of our land.

The spiritual significance of Christmas is, of course, most apparent in the imprint of Spanish exploration and colonization in the Southwest. Integrated Spanish and Indian religious ceremonies have for centuries formed the core of this season in many areas of New Mexico. In the chapter "Spanish and Pueblo Navidad," the author unifies this perspective by describing the Indian Christmas dances, performed prior to midnight masses, in many Rio Grande mission churches, notably at San Felipe, Acoma, and Isleta. Summaries are given of the religious folk dramas, *Los Pastores*, and *Las Posadas*, so zealously produced for centuries in Arizona and New Mexico.

According to the author, the amount of homesickness that the thoughts of Christmas aroused among the mountain men and other early adventurers can never be measured. Our heart goes out to Ross Cox among the Flatheads in the northern Rockies at Yuletide in 1821:

I thought of my preceding Christmas off Cape Horn and was puzzled to decide which was the most enviable—a tempestuous storm in the high southern altitude, after losing a couple of men—or a half inundated island without fire, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains covered with sheets of snow.

Happiness on Christmas day in far-flung

army posts was conditioned by the temperament of the individual. Consider the egg-head of that era, one Phillippe Regis de Tobriand, stationed at Fort Stevenson in Dakota who wrote that "although the holiday food was plentiful, the conversation was banal and uninteresting." One could always count on the cowboy, symbol of the romantic West, to stir up some kind of excitement. Here we see him making that Christmas puddin' regardless of the fact that he had neither baking powder nor raisins; taking up a collection for a young widow and her threadbare children; making "whoopie" at the Christmas dance he organized.

On through the years, and over the constantly expanding frontier the reader journeys, always aware that the heart has no boundaries. Christmas spangles of kindness, of pioneer sacrifice, of giving and sharing add a seasonal lustre to the American Frontier that will never tarnish. Dr. Baur, currently history instructor at the Los Angeles County Museum, has made a memorable contribution to Western Americana, and Charles McLaughlin, associate curator of ornithology at the same institution, adds significance to the subject by the primitive appeal of his many illustrations.

—Julia M. Keleher

Associate professor emeritus of English at University of New Mexico, Miss Keleher has contributed extensively to these columns.

**GOD HAD A DOG: FOLKLORE OF THE DOG**, by Maria Leach. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1961. 550 pp. \$9.00.

In this book Maria Leach, who edited the Funk and Wagnalls two-volume *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* (1949, 1950), has now focused her talents on a treatment of dog lore, ancient

and modern, from all over the world. Part One presents some of the myths about dogs, told by many primitive groups as well as by ancient peoples of Western Civilization. Here are included stories of dogs associated with the creator or other deities, stories which provide justification for the somewhat startling title of the book. Part Two deals with the prehistory and world-wide diffusion of the dog, with the many functions that he has performed in man's societies, and with the beliefs which man has held about him as a creature of this world and of supernatural realms. Various types of folktales about the dog—"why" stories, legends, saints' tales, fables—are recounted in Part Three. Parts Four and Five treat of the dog as guardian, omen, and symbol, discuss his place in the law ways of western culture, and present proverbs, riddles, names, and other verbal practices involved with canine lore.

Despite the extensive information packed between its covers, this volume is more than an encyclopedic compilation. It was evidently written for the general reader as well as the specialist. The material it includes is authentic, culled from a vast range of sources. The folklorist will find here the scholarly impedimenta necessary in books useful to him: a list of narrative motifs in which the dog is featured, based upon Thompson's Motif-Index (pp. 382-98); notes and references on the text (pp. 399-440); notes on the drawings (pp. 441-51); a bibliography (pp. 453-75); and an extensive and valuable index (pp. 477-544). But this material, discreetly tucked away at the end of the book, may be ignored by readers who love dogs better than bibliographies. Furthermore, the myths and folktales have been selected rather than

merely compiled; they have been retold rather than merely reprinted. The writing is lively, even sprightly in places. There are also more than fifty excellent black and white sketches by Mamie Harmon, depicting dogs in the art of the world. In addition to the information they convey, these drawings add to the pleasure of the book. Readers who believe that the dog is man's best friend will find ample evidence in this volume that, among animal domesticates, the dog is also man's oldest and most ubiquitous friend.

—Stanley Newman

Stanley Newman, co-editor of *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, is a professor of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico. A specialist in American Indian linguistics and folklore, he has published widely in scholarly journals. *God Had a Dog* has been selected by the Dog Writers Association of America as the best non-technical book on dogs published in 1961.

A SHORT HISTORY OF MEXICO, by J. Patrick McHenry. New York: Doubleday-Dolphin. 240 pp. \$ .95.

The author, a free-lance artist, book-seller and teacher in Mexico, has attempted with this work to present a synopsis of the history of Mexico. Of interest primarily to the layman and tourist who wishes to obtain more than a guide-book knowledge of the historical development of Mexico, this work traces the history of Mexico from its aboriginal beginnings in ten thousand B.C. to the year 1960. The emphasis upon the major figures of Mexican history results in a certain anecdotal treatment that, while adding interest to the narrative, does not illuminate the major forces operative in Mexican history. Nor does this method allow sufficient depth and perspective of subject matter to permit the author to capture

the spirit and flavor of the sweep of Mexican history. In spite of the exaggerated time span, approximately three fourths of the work concerns the republican period of Mexican history, while the pre-columbian, colonial and independence periods receive a rapid summary treatment.

This work, taken primarily from secondary sources, would be of scant interest to the serious student of Mexican history. Certainly its value is reduced measurably by the author's implying that the *encomienda* was a land grant, a fact which leads to a rather odd interpretation of the New Laws of 1542 (pp. 50 and 63). The method of presenting each chapter under a chronological heading rather than a thematic one is not the most felicitous manner of presenting historical material, lending, as it does, a certain rhetorical and pedagogical quality to a work supposedly popular in nature.

In short, this work offers, in a readable although not particularly scintillating style, a concise summary account of Mexican history useful to the layman who wants a quick introduction to major figures and events in Mexican history in chronological order.

—Frederic W. Murray

A Ph.D. candidate in Latin American Studies at the University of New Mexico, Mr. Murray is specializing in Latin-American literature and history.

LOVE AND BE SILENT, by Curtis Harnack. New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1962. 246 pp. \$4.50.

This story of two unrewarding marriages is carefully etched without strong contrasts. The two love stories, both sad ones, are recited in a monotone flat as a midwestern twang, but they are skillfully told nonetheless and in their drab way achieve a certain universality.

The death of Robert's cautious, frugal, and autocratic father frees this corn farmer to marry Donna. The amicable property division favors his maiden sister, Alma, who has devoted most of her life to her father's care. Robert and Donna settle down to a humdrum pattern of babies and farm chores.

Roger, a friend of Robert's from CCC-camp days, visits the couple, is introduced to Alma, and gently coerced into marriage. This proves no solution. Alma's married life is lonelier than her former spinsterhood.

Some of the best writing depicts the little hillocks of happiness rising from the drab North Dakota plane of Alma's life—a routine of raising chickens and running a railroad cafe. As we read, we weep for her frustrations and the humdrum in our lives while marveling that Harnack can sustain our interest in these pale people without once resorting to brave color.

—Adelaide Angell

Mrs. Angell, who attended Vassar College, is a housewife and mother of five children. Her home is in Portland, Oregon, where she is very active in community affairs and is the professional secretary of a large Unitarian Sunday school.

A SEASON IN HELL AND THE DRUNKEN BOAT, by Arthur Rimbaud, tr. by Louise Varèse. New York: New Directions Paperbook, 1961. 108 pp. \$1.35.

In recent years Arthur Rimbaud's brief and hectic life and his briefer and, if possible, more hectic poetic output have been studied by Enid Starkie, fictionized by James Ramsey Ullman, and whitewashed by Elizabeth Hanson, to name only a few of the more notable contributors to the growing shelf of Rimbaudian biography and criticism. He was one of the few writers whose biography is as intrinsically interest-

ing as his work; and since his death in 1891, his influence has continued to grow and flourish in most contemporary literatures. To discover his work is a deeply moving experience, to study his life is to arouse one's deepest sympathies and faculties of admiration, and to re-read him is to renew one's original reactions. One's skepticism at first becoming aware of the fact that all his major work was completed by the time he reached the advanced age of nineteen soon evaporates before the display of genius and verbal pyrotechnics of his poetry and one realizes that Rimbaud was indeed a *great* poet (whatever that much-abused word may mean), adolescent or no.

Rimbaud requires no criticism. Every line of his work speaks for itself, and as should be the case with all poetry, each line evokes an immediate and lingering response in the reader's mind. This facing-page-translation edition of two of his three major works (the third, *Les Illuminations*, is also available in a New Directions edition), *Une Saison en Enfer* and *Le Bateau Ivre*, wisely devotes almost no space to criticism, but gives the barest outline of his biography and work. Louise Varèse, who has translated such modern French writers as St.-John Perse, Stendhal, and Proust, translates the poems as well as anyone could wish for. It is a thankless task, however, for anyone who wants to know Rimbaud's work to read it in any language other than his own French. Half at least of the value of Rimbaud's verse is to be found in its sounds. He was carried away by what he called *l'alchimie du verbe* to such an extent that the sound of the words and their meanings are so inextricably welded together that neither is complete without the other. Rimbaud in English is not Rimbaud. Neverthe-

less, this little book is valuable for a reader who may wish to try his hand at unraveling Rimbaud's meanings—no mean task in itself. The *Saison en Enfer*, his swan song, is easier to follow in both English and French than is the *Bateau Ivre*, which goes along its reeling way over acidulous seas of ink that are constantly being spilled in largely fruitless attempts to explicate it.

—J. R. Feyn

DESERT WILDLIFE, by Edmund C. Jaeger. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961. 319 pp. \$5.95.

For many years, Mr. Jaeger, well known California science teacher and nature observer, has been exploring the North American deserts and recording his observations in a series of volumes which are pleasurable reading as well as useful guidebooks.

Based on solid scientific materials, but non-technical in style, each of the forty-two chapters of this latest book, *Desert Wildlife*, is a well-organized lecture and covers all points necessary in the identification of a given animal. About ninety percent of the book is devoted to mammals, birds, and reptiles, but smaller "denizens" such as land snails, millepedes, and common insects are not neglected. Wildlife areas included are the Great Basin, Mohave, Sonoran, and Chihuahuan deserts.

Some of the material is a revision of the author's *Our Desert Neighbors* (Stanford University Press, 1950). However, many supplementary sketches from recent field notes, a number of additional photographs and pen drawings, and eight new chapters parts of which appeared in *Desert Magazine*, virtually qualify this compilation as new work.

Always the teacher, Mr. Jaeger frequently demonstrates his field methods, stressing the importance of living "unobtrusively" with the animal studied. "At least once a week I go into the remote desert, where my roads are those made by pioneers and miners and where my companions are the birds and other animals."

In harmony with the desert, the author pictures a serene land, alive with innumerable busy creatures perfectly adapted to the rigors of the climate. From desert tortoise to mountain sheep and wildcat, silent or noisy, plodding or agile, each performs according to his inherited abilities, and each is an integral part of the desert and of nature's economy.

We see these elusive creatures absorbed in their private affairs, not in desperate flight from their worst enemy, man. We see them diligently hunting and storing food, building homes, rearing their young. We see them enduring drought, or drinking (sometimes fishing) at waterholes. We see them in hazardous situations, grappling with or outwitting their natural enemies, and signaling warnings to their own kind. Too, we see them luxuriating in dust and sunbaths, or, in pure exuberance, waltzing on the sand, playing tricks, even indulging in games of leapfrog.

Sensitive as the author is to animal personalities, he never overdraws his characters. The sprightly little antelope squirrel with the birdlike call is "a decent friendly neighbor of the finest sort." The face of the ring-tailed cat, favorite pet of hermit desert prospectors, is "alert and gentle." The badger? "I especially like him because he des-

pises ease and shows so little gregariousness; for his midnight meals he is willing to dig hard and deep."

Often the author reports his "red-letter" experiences such as the discovery of a female fox homeward bound with a wood rat in her jaws. "Gracefully she trotted along with her head well up and her eyes gleaming."

The red-letter day of all days for everyone interested in ornithology was Mr. Jaeger's discovery of Nuttall's poorwill in apparent winter torpor. A series of observations and experiments, lasting over four consecutive winter seasons, confirmed his supposition and produced "the first concrete evidence of hibernation in birds."

Throughout the book, the great dependence of one group of animals on another is carefully assessed and the author repeatedly warns how "the slightest upset in the balance of nature can have wide-reaching effects on the lives of many of the smaller creatures."

Bringing an animated desert to the attention of the uninitiated is a worthy project. *Desert Wildlife* should provide a truer comprehension of our misnamed "miles of empty wastelands." An index and three pages of selected references complete this excellent and very readable guidebook.

—Olga Wright Smith

With her husband "Cap," Olga Wright Smith spent a year prospecting the Lechuguilla Desert, where GI's called desert warfare training "Operation Furnace." This resulted in her *Gold on the Desert*, published by the University of New Mexico Press. "All that glitters," she says, "is probably mica," but she struck it rich in contentment, coming to know and love the land and its creatures.



drawn by Harold A. Wolfenbarger, Jr.

MATADORS OF MEXICO, by Ann D. Miller. Globe, Arizona: Dale Stuart King, 1961. 312 pp., 185 photos, 75 drawings. \$6.75.

This is not just another book on bullfighting; this is a different book—a graduate study. Written by a real fan who happens to be one of the girls (and anyone who has ever attended a Dodgers game will know they are the realest), *Matadors of Mexico* may be one of the best books ever written on the *fiesta brava* as far as giving an immediate inside view from the *sombra* at ringside. It bears the same relation to the bogus art books on the subject that the sports page does to coffeehouse poetry.

The bullfight as an English nonfictional literary form is a comparatively recent innovation although it has been going on for generations at a less pretentious level in the Spanish press. Hemingway may have been the innovator of the genre in *Death in the Afternoon*. But Hemingway accomplished far more and a little less. While he covered brilliantly the careers and styles of his heroes: Joselito, Juan Belmonte (Mano-

lete was yet to appear on the scene), and many lesser lights, he also enunciated a philosophy. Mrs. Miller skips the poetry and philosophy and attacks the solid subject with considerable skill and objectivity, keen journalistic writing, and a rather staggering up-to-the-minute inside knowledge.

*Matadors of Mexico* is not for the great American public but for the *aficionados*. It is assumed that the reader has passed the primer stage, read Hemingway, Lea, and Conrad and may have even spent a few afternoons at the *corrida*. As critic of border rings for six years for the *Arizona Star* and frequent contributor to *Toros* magazine, Ann Miller has spent more than a few.

Matadors, unquestionably brave, have a reputation for being proud and sensitive, yet when it comes to adverse highly personal criticism of their work, Mrs. Miller does not hesitate to call an *espada* an *espada*. She apologizes for selecting but twenty-six Mexicans upon whom to comment, but she is ruthless in her criticism of these, her choices, on their bad afternoons. With dead-

ly aim she throws more than cushions and Coca-Cola bottles in a way that would make a strong man wince. In her moments of truth, she goes in over the horns. She makes an interesting but perhaps too sweeping generalization comparing the brand of fighting in border rings with that of deeper Mexico and the capital. The heroes of the frontier are the *valientes*, those circus clown-daredevils who pass the bull kneeling, touch the horn, kiss the forehead, turn the back, sit on the *estribo*, and play *teléfono*. The artists are those who perform in the center of the southern rings with their slow classic passes and sculptural cape ef-

fects. Some Mexican matadors, she observes, have mastered both styles, reserving one for the border and one for Mexico, taking their cue as necessary from the crowd.

A short chapter is reserved for each matador, who is introduced by his formal portrait in *traje de luces*, the "suit of lights," profusely illustrated with excellent and most typical photographs illustrating the fine points of his style, together with pen-and-ink sketches. The only drawback to such a book, is that a sequel must be written in another decade. However, this is Mexican bullfighting at its best, right now.

—Richard C. Angell

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