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NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY

THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN IMAGINATION

Edited by GENE FRUMKIN

Revised with v. 39 No. 1

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, 1969

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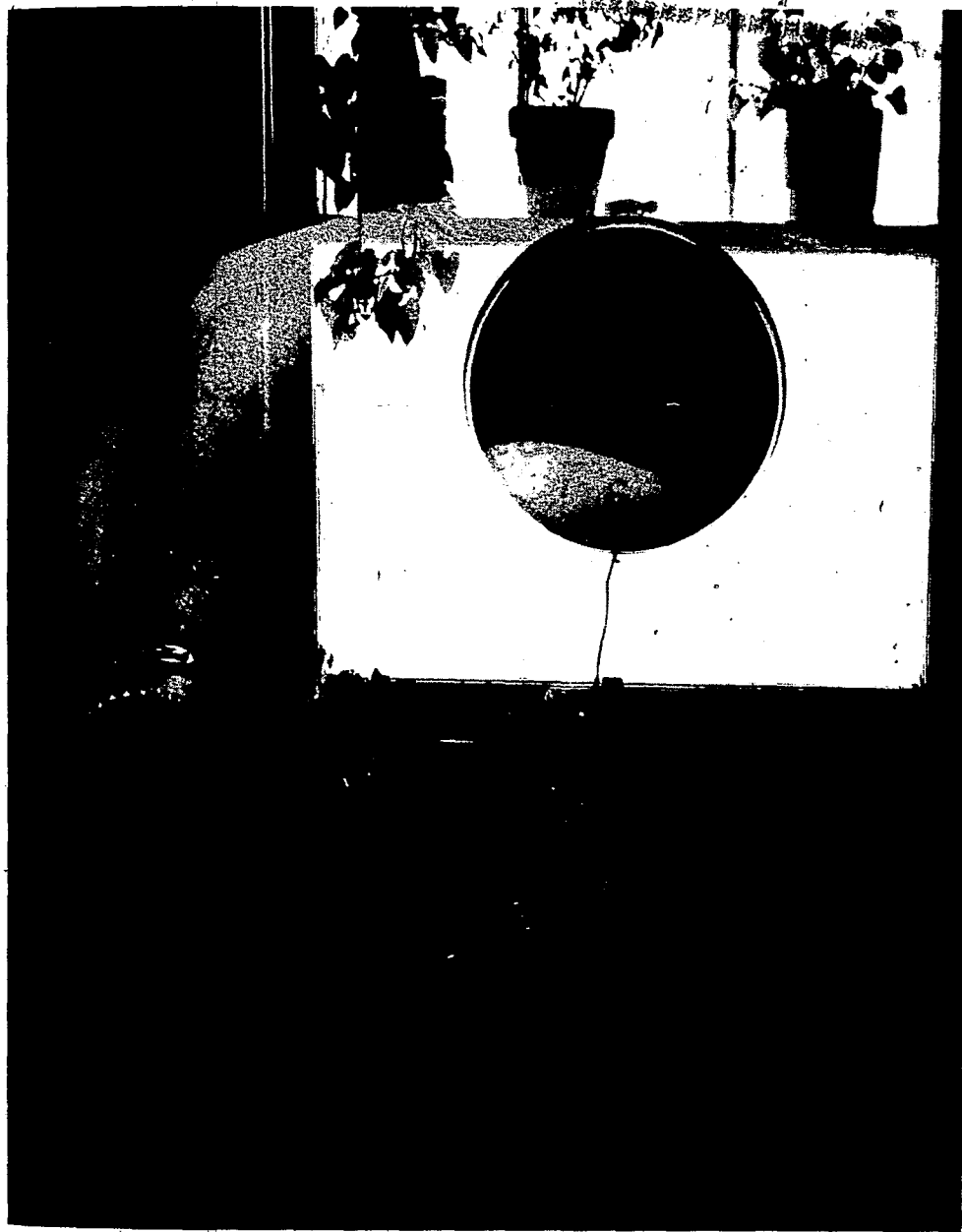
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P R E F A C E

This final number of the *New Mexico Quarterly* strikes me as extraordinarily fine. Its special editor, Gene Frumkin, poet and teacher of creative writing at the University, has brought together a group of poems, stories, and critical essays that happily climax the long career of the magazine. Appropriately entitled "The Contemporary American Imagination," the issue presents both experimental and traditional writing as various examples of what today's writers are doing. As in issues of the past, some of the authors have established reputations, some have growing reputations, and some appear for the first time. Though as I suppose every editor has said when one of his issues was criticized, "Yes, it is uneven," that very lack of a too slick evenness may be regarded as the hallmark of the *Quarterly* and even as its glory. Shakespeare had his unevenness too; and while we can claim no Shakespeare among past or present contributors, many have achieved literary recognition—often beginning with contributions to this magazine.

From its beginning in 1931 the *Quarterly* has been a regional magazine, yet except perhaps at the very start a magazine that broadly interpreted the region in terms of the nation and the world. As the authors of *The Little Magazine: A History and Bibliography* wrote in 1946: "The great virtue of the *New Mexico Quarterly* is its intelligent compromise between regionalism and universalism in its attitudes and contents." Yet the words "compromise between" fall a little short of accuracy. Rather I should suggest "recognition of"—sometimes uneasy, sometimes despairing, but mostly happy and creative. Perhaps half the present number contains works that are regional in the sense that they have the Southwest as their scene or that their authors live or once lived in the Southwest. But the Southwest is a microcosm, though to newcomers and old settlers and natives with a very special flavor of its own, and authors move. So such poems as "Its Hour Come Round at Last . . ." by Robert Chetkin (a graduate student at the University) can make use of that Irish "regionalist" Yeats ("Only then will Yeats, forgotten, / Have at last earned / His prophetic, / Decomposing / Grin"); and in "The New Style Western" Anselm Hollo (a Finn by

birth) can sardonically write of "the two horsemen / on opposite banks of the Rio Grande . . . they would be back / but not in this movie." Both poems belong to the *New Mexico Quarterly* because both have excellence; and all the poems and stories that appear here exhibit "The Contemporary American Imagination" on regional, national, and worldwide levels.

The way I came to know the *Quarterly* may deserve relating as typical of readers of my generation. Sometime in the late 1930's friends in the East were talking about it as the magazine in the Southwest that one ought to read. Few if any of us had visited New Mexico or even seen it from the windows of the Santa Fe trains. But it meant something to us as the home of artists and writers, and the magazine meant more to us by presenting them and meant even more by offering a sense of the vigorous culture of the region. Not many of us subscribed, I am ashamed to say, but we made a point of keeping up with it in libraries. In those days T. M. Pearce was editor as he had been since 1932. He was a contributor too, and I must have gone back to an earlier issue to read his humorous "On a Certain Condensation in the Metropolitan Mind" (May, 1936), in which he took to task the *New York Times* reviewer who named Albuquerque as an example of "theatrically barren communities." Today I have picked up a number (May, 1938) at random from among those I had currently read and find in it a hitherto unpublished poem "O! Americans!" by D. H. Lawrence, another essay by Professor Pearce in which he ably answered the then widespread charge that folklore accompanied fascism, and an amusing sketch on "Santa Fe and the Tourist." It was worth going back to.

Dudley Wynn succeeded Matt Pearce as editor in 1940 and remained editor until 1947. I have also re-read one of his numbers (Summer, 1945) that appeared soon after I came to the University. It moves unselfconsciously from a symposium on "Problems of the Rio Grande Watershed" to "The Place of Literature in a Liberal Education." Its stories include one by Jessamyn West, whose earliest published writing in this magazine appeared in 1940. Again I find an enjoyment not only of nostalgic return but of contemporary meaning. In his editorial in this issue Professor Wynn could hardly have proposed a view of education more pertinent to today's academic world when he wrote: "The necessity of keeping commitment open to change is part of the commitment we have to make—and that is a strenuous enough paradox to

please the most scholastic-minded, a practical enough difficulty to keep us from lapsing into any easy Utopianism."

Except for Roland Dickey, who served as editor (1956-1966) concurrently with his directorship of the University of New Mexico Press, Professors Pearce and Wynn had the longest tenure as editors. I cannot help thinking that under them the magazine had its finest years; they gave it a continuity, a momentum, an impact that the shorter editorships did not achieve or that the divided duties of Mr. Dickey did not allow. But the other editors produced a magazine that anticipated or followed the pattern that they established: Paul A. F. Walter, Jr. (1931-1932), Charles Allen (1947-1948), Joaquin Ortega (1948-1951), myself (1951), Kenneth Lash (1951-1955), Paul M. Sears (1955-1956), Mary Adams and Gus Blaisdell (1967), Mary Adams (1968), and Joseph Frank (1969). At the same time each made the magazine his own, and I wish that I could describe in detail their individual experiments and accomplishments. But this preface serves only as a reminder and not a history. I hope that the magazine will have its historian soon, for I believe that the *New Mexico Quarterly* deserves a book that will show in detail its significance as a literary and cultural force during its thirty-eight years of publication.

—G. A.

DEAD MAN'S GUIDE TO MALLORCA

William Eastlake

"During the Spanish Civil War," Dr. Villanueva told us on the terrace of the Hotel Londres, "the Italians, Mussolini, took this Loyalist island, Mallorca, for Mr. Franco. We are not far from the Spanish mainland here, about forty miles. It was an excellent base from which to bomb the Loyalist government at Barcelona, and this the Italians did every morning with big Savoia Marchetti bombers. The Marchettis had three engines. They were very powerful and always quite low when they flew over my house. I could see the pilots' faces. But the bombing was a small part of it. It was the terror that was the thing. While the Italian military was in charge it was not so bad, but then Mussolini sent his own man from the Fascist Party. He was a Black Shirt Party man called Rossi. That began the terror. Every night there were at least fifteen killings. The Italians would cover the countryside in trucks, kicking in doors, take the whole family sometimes, kill them near the cemetery so they could be buried easily in the morning. Every afternoon Rossi would drive crazy through Palma in an open Lancia. He always had a general on one side of him and a priest on the other. I guess the priest was to legitimize his moral insanity. Rossi was always putting generals in prison, so each time he drove through Palma he had a different Italian general. The priest's name was Cadello. I knew him; he was a Franciscan. The order wears brown robes and these were always trailing out from the Lancia. Rossi had Father Cadello shot before Rossi returned to Italy. From this terrace you could watch the prison ships at night; Rossi had them all lit up. The prisoners were not fed and most died. The bodies would float in to the beach here in the morning but the families did not dare claim them.

"Yes," Dr. Villanueva said. "Yes. While we were bombing the government of Barcelona—. Because I am alive I say we bombed them, but what could we do?" Dr. Villanueva opened wide his hand and looked out again in the direction of Barcelona. "I think this is typical," he said. "The government anarchists in Barcelona held the telephone exchange and when the President of the Republic called the Prime

Minister of the Republic and they had been talking for five minutes the anarchist's voice from the telephone exchange interrupted them. 'Listen,' he said. 'You are boring us. We are no longer interested in your talk. Stop boring us and hang up!' The Prime Minister and the President hung up." Dr. Villanueva ran his delicate fingers along his heavy chair. "That," he said, "is what we were bombing. But we should not talk about this now," he said.

"You brought it up," I said.

"Yes," Dr. Villanueva said. "But we are supposed to be gay, care-free Spaniards. You notice we always sing while we work. It is not that we are forbidden to talk about this. We are discouraged but not forbidden to talk about this. I suppose it is a medical thing, a psychosis, a block, that has affected a whole people. We cannot yet talk about it because we cannot free ourselves from our past. It is only when we can talk about it that we will be a people again."

"But certainly among yourselves—"

"I believe very little," Dr. Villanueva said. "They have not found a way yet that it can be discussed without opening up ugly wounds in the mind. That hurts very much," Dr. Villanueva said. "It is not a Spanish problem, it is a human problem." Dr. Villanueva looked at his watch. "But I have talked enough about it. That is all the therapy I will have for today."

We had met Dr. Villanueva the second day we were on Mallorca. Martha was still suffering from something she caught at Casablanca and the Hotel Londres had given us Dr. Villanueva's address. He said that almost everyone caught this at Casablanca and he gave her a pill. He wanted to talk in English. He said his therapy had not reached the point where he could talk about Spain in Spanish. When he learned I was a writer he was curious about that. He said, "Our writers write about nothing." And he said, "What is there to write about?" He said, "When people have no past how can they have a future? You can have a kind of present," he said. "You can sing, talk about the weather and the bull fights. That's about it," Dr. Villanueva said. "Did you know that I too was a Fascist?" This had come out quickly and I figured he had been planning it for quite a while. He had wanted to get it off his chest. There was no proper way to say it so he had blurted it out.

"I was very young then," Dr. Villanueva said. "Now I do not know what I am. The easiest thing to say in Spain is that you are a Monarchist. You will hear that frequently on the mainland, but what does that mean in this day and age? It means nothing. It means I do not

think. It means I refuse to think." He paused. "Yes, death is the goal of life," he said. And then he said, "I do not tell you about all this because you are a writer but because you are a foreign person. What will you write about? Nothing happens on Mallorca. What will you write about? I can tell you where to go and what and who to see, but what will you write about?"

"I don't know," I said.

"Later you will know," he said. "And your Martha? She is your collaborator?"

"More than that," I said. "Much more. She does the spelling and the typing."

"Pobre Marta," Dr. Villaneuva said. "Pobre Marta brava." He paused again, staring blankly at the end of his cigarette. "Something did happen once upon a time. But we must not think about it. I refuse to think."

Poor brave Martha and I left Dr. Villanueva who was still refusing to think and rented a car to take a drive around the island. The car rents for two hundred and thirty pesetas, about five dollars, plus gas, but with unlimited mileage. They are Seat 600s with a water-cooled engine in the rear, about 35 horse-power, but as an Englishman told me, "They are nippy," and they are excellent for the narrow roads of Mallorca with hairpin turns in the mountains.

Speaking of the English, they have taken over Mallorca. Having quit all the colonies they have founded a redoubt here in a part of Palma called Torrena beneath a Fourteenth Century castle. Their fortress is the Gran Hotel Bretaña. The first impression you get of the British is that they are insensitive and arrogant. Yesterday there was an English lady on the terrasse of the Gran Bretaña that overlooks the harbor in the direction of Ibiza. She was complaining about the weak tea to a Mallorcan official who was trying to explain to her that now, after six months, her visa would have to be renewed, and between complaints about the weak tea she kept repeating in a strict voice, "No, no. I haven't the time. This will cause Spain trouble. Very much trouble. You will be punished for this. Oh, yes, the Spanish will be punished," she said, waving her long arm vaguely in the direction of Gibraltar.

I said the British arrogance and insensitiveness is the first impression, but the big thing is they have a sense of humor about themselves. Not a humor directed cruelly at other people, but a humor about themselves. There will always be a duchess on the terrasse waving the Spanish government vaguely toward Gibraltar, but the duchess will give you a wink when she does it. "Oh, I may be a bit of a fool, but I am enjoying

it very much thank you. Americans, I believe? Strange people. Strange people, the Americans."

We swept past the duchess now, bounced past the duchess in our Seat and made it out of town towards Inca on the Via Puerta road. We were going to Puerta de Pollensa near the Cabo Formentor to a pension on the beach run by a Señora Tarrogonia that the doctor had recommended. The island is about forty-five miles long and thirty miles wide. We were going down the length, down the spine of the mountains along the west coast. We went through a town called Valdemosa and Martha asked me why we didn't stop. "The glass factory," she said.

So we went back and saw the glass factory. It was a dungeon in a medieval setting, emitting a tall pillar of smoke and filming up, shooting out myriad stars of light from a molten crucible surrounded by small boy workers, children in the brilliant light, each gathering a ball of molten glass at the end of a sword stick and bearing it away like a giant lollipop to the maestro who gathered it and blew it, at the end of a pipe he played, into a shimmering globe of light. Now he kneaded it on the anvil into a vinegar carafe with quick Cellini movements while the child went back to the crucible and returned bearing more glittering taffy. This was dropped by the Maestro, a thin stem of it, on each side of the carafe making the point of contact hot enough, weak enough, so that when he blew into his carafe again a hole appeared into the stems. More blowing and they became tear-shaped and hollow, then he waited long seconds until they were brittle and clipped them off with a knock on the anvil, and he had an oil or vinegar carafe fit for the Borgias, selling for two hundred pesetas—three dollars and eighty cents; more than the children got each day, more than the maestro. In the half hour we were there the children and the maestro made six of them.

"But there are difficulties and expenses," the dueño, the owner, told us. He was standing amidst the shattered coca cola bottles his art was made of. "Then too," he said, "something of quality does not always sell."

We bought one of them to show him that they sometimes did, and made our way back to the Seat through the crowd of children bearing more baked red apples of glass on sticks.

When we got back to the Seat Martha said, "While we're in Valdemosa we should go and see the monastery where George Sand and Chopin lived."

"Do you think you can make it?" I said. "Chopin lived there and said it was cold and dank and the roof leaked. Do you feel up to it?"

"I don't feel up to it but I can make it," Poor Brave Martha said.

I had always imagined a forlorn ancient pile of rocks on a lonely mountain side. The monastery stood alongside the church and was right in town. There was a narrow road that swept around the mountain and up to an escarpment where the monastery was. It was the same trail that George Sand had got Chopin's piano up when he complained about the lack of this instrument. She tried to fix the roof when he complained about that, and did her best to get some heat when he complained about the cold. When he complained about her cigar butts in the bedroom she just threw rocks at him. Anyway, that's the way the story goes that brings the visitors here. There are so many romantic legends, so many spiritual myths that Valdemosa has decided to go with a tough one, so they had it that George Sand conned Chopin into coming down here under the pretext it would cure his T.B., that it was a beautiful warm monastery in the sun where the peasants danced all night and the burros were so sweet they melted at a touch. She hadn't mentioned a leaky roof or her cigar butts and when Chopin wanted out there was no boat so he spent his lonely hours in a wistful vigil on the turret tower of the monastery watching for a sail that would take him back to Paris, but there was only the distant pillar of smoke moving up the mountainside of Valdemosa as George Sand made her way back to the bedroom with a Corona-Corona.

The interior of the monastery was a magnificent sight, vast vaulting corridors, noble and endless, running off fountain and Arabic-tiled patios, a riot of mosaic. The fountains were working now. They hadn't been when Chopin was there. He had complained about that too. Off the Gothic fluted corridors were the rooms where the lovers had dwelt, opening out on magic casements and the distant sea. Each room had a guide dressed in silk medieval costume to tell you what happened there. There hadn't been any medieval costumes in 1840 when the lovers were here but it looked good. The first room we went into was a study that kept all the books that George Sand had written. The guide was looking out the magic casements, a young girl in a red turban picking her nose and blowing a bubble with bubble gum that was already as big as the window. We left before it burst. We went into the room where all the trouble had begun, the reason for the trip, the failure, the success, the gossip, the Champs de Mars, the bedroom. The room was pristine, tidy, impeccable, with all the cigar ash tidied up.

"It shows you what a hundred years can do," Poor Brave Martha said.

A child guide was asleep on the bed, her moccasin shoes out of J. C.

Penney soiling the counterpane. She will hear from Chopin about this, not George. Evidently George Sand would take anything.

We were out in the vaulted hall again. George Sand had exquisite taste in monasteries and perhaps in lovers too. We would never know. It would be the big secret the ruins never revealed. On the way out the child who had blown herself up with the bubble gum was waiting for a tip. She had a Walt Disney Donald Duck watch on her wrist as she extended her olive hand. I gave her a duro, five pesetas, and we were off in a cloud of children who had come running, but too late, when they discovered there were Americans. My last view, my last memory was the child guide blowing another huge bubble into which the ghost of Chopin stepped, then exploded in a cloud of smoke.

Poor Brave Martha had stood up well. When she closed the door of the Seat it came off, but on our trip to Deya she held the whole car together with her will power. Deya is the town of poets. Robert Graves lives here and a cult, a covey, of poets has settled in the foothills. Deya clings to the sides of precipitous rock-strewn, uninteresting hills and the only inspiration you could get is the thought of getting out. For local color there is a gas station from which it is impossible to get gas if another car is coming down the cliff. We found this out and decided to try to make it to Pollensa before we filled up. My memory of Deya is not good but it must be a fine place for poets.

Before we got to Pollensa we ran out of gas and Poor Brave Martha got out and pushed. "If you can just make it up that rise," I said, "just one more little rise and we can sail into Pollensa. It's all down hill." But it was an optical illusion. When finally we did get going into Pollensa and Martha was inside with the Seat door on her lap she said she was beat. "Now I know how Chopin felt," she said.

There was a gas station before we got to Pollensa. It was on a slight rise but we swept up to it and got to the pump using gravity. I went inside and had an anise. Poor Brave Martha had a Pepsi Cola. I asked her how it was. After the first sip she said it was better than anywhere else. "It may be that it was just a good year," I said. "It probably doesn't ship well."

The owner came in now with a friend who had a dog. The man with the dog said the dog was very intelligent and could understand six languages. The man ordered a cup of coffee and gave one of his two sugars to the dog. I thought the dog took the sugar very intelligently. I told the man with the dog that out here in the hills was probably not a good place for a precocious dog. In the city there would be more opportu-

nities, I said. The owner of the station felt out of it and he brought out a bird in a cage that he said was very intelligent. It was a mountain thrush and he said it was more intelligent than any dog. I thought the dog owner took this well. Martha took some more of the Pepsi Cola and couldn't make up her mind. "The mountain thrush," I said. "How many languages does he speak?"

"None," the bird owner said. "Why should he bother?"

"That's very intelligent of him," I said. "He's probably an Existentialist bird."

"What else?" the bird owner said.

"Or something worse," the dog owner said, fighting back for the first time. Poor Brave Martha took another sip of the Pepsi Cola and said she was going to be sick. The dog owner insisted we go up on the roof and see the ocean five miles away. "In the other direction you can see the poets," he said. "And the house of George Sand and the man who played the piano. But that was a long time ago," he said with a sigh, as though there were no need for us to go on the roof.

"But the poets are still there I think," the bird owner said.

Poor Brave Martha was picking up the door of the Seat when we got out, and arranging it on the side of the car. "I'm warning you," she said as we swept down the hills to Pollensa. "Don't run out of gas again. That's the last time I'll push."

"Which was the best," I said, "the dog or the bird?"

"The Pepsi Cola," she said. "It ships better than you think."

The Puerta de Pollensa is a miniature harbor that lies just below the break in the mountains. Cola San Vicente and the Pension Ultimo of Señora Tarragona, according to Dr. Villanueva, was somewhere close. "Muy cerca." We found it at the bottom of a granite canyon just off the harbor. It had a private white beach that shimmered from way up. Poor Brave Martha didn't want to go down. "Can the car get back up?" she said.

The Pension Ultimo had twelve rooms on two levels. The Señora Tarragona had her own apartment on the beach level where we were sitting now while she was talking.

"So Dr. Villanueva sent you?" she said. "He's always doing that. Even in the off season. He must know I am closed now, but he wants to remind me."

"Remind you of what?"

"That he still has his guilt," she said. "He told you about the war, didn't he? He calls it a catharsis therapy, but it is his obsession. How far

did he get?" she said. "Did he get to the part where they drove through Palma in the Lancia? And where they threw the bodies near the cemetery?"

"Yes."

"He is going through his phase of morbid melancholia again," the Señora Tarragona said, "He speaks of that time as the moral insanity of the world." The señora touched her pointed chin with her long fingers and looked at us to see if we were worthy. "He was part of it you know," she said. "He was in that Lancia too. He will tell you that later. He will tell you all about his moral insanity later. He must have told you about the prison ships with the search lights on them at night. That was my home during the war," she said. "That's why he sends me customers now. This obsessive guilt, then morbid melancholia. It would have been easier for him if his side had lost. Then he could have been punished. But his side won and nobody punished him. Even after the Second World War he expected the Americans to land and to punish him. When you called on him about your wife he must have thought you had come for that reason. You disappointed him," she said. "And because no one has punished him he has decided to punish himself. The next time you see him he will tell you the part he played. He is working up to his catharsis. He is about to punish himself again. Moral insanity is his favorite word when he enters his phase of morbid melancholia."

"You must have studied medicine," I said.

"Before the war, before Dr. Villanueva's moral insanity, I was a doctor too," she said.

Señora Tarragona had a long, dusty, olive face with huge eyes under too delicate eyebrows that swept back and gave her a kind of tragicomic look. She sat stiffly and delicately as though fragile and a sudden movement would break her.

"That is why he sends me customers," she said. "Because he can no longer send me patients."

I gathered that Dr. Villanueva had ruined her, destroyed her as a doctor when he was powerful, his moral insanity, but I did not want to push it and I changed the subject.

"Is there some place else you can recommend?" I said.

"This side of the island is no good," she said. "There are prevailing winds here all winter. Why don't you go to Madrid and see the Prado?"

"Martha would like to get some sketching in and I thought I would work here a while," I said. "Get some writing done."

"Before you can write," she said, "you should have something to

write about. Go to Madrid and see the Prado. And do not be overwhelmed by Goya," she said to Martha, placing a long finger at her temple and staring at us intently. "Goya always overwhelms everyone at first. You have to learn to live with Goya. Ten, twenty years and then he does not overwhelm you and you can appreciate Goya. You can always appreciate El Greco. Velasquez takes more work, but he is worth it. When you come back to Goya, when he no longer overwhelms you, then you can appreciate his subtleties, his tremendous color, his impeccable sense of form and organization. You can shorten this period somewhat," she said, "by turning a Goya upside down."

When we left Señora Tarragona's pension the Seat 600 made it up the cliff okay that Martha had been concerned about.

"It doesn't have much power, but it has four gears," I said as we made our way toward Puerta de Soller for lunch. To get to Puerta de Soller you have to drive inland again and go back through the Monasterio Lluch and Fornalutx, through incredibly steep splendid mountains and switchbacks where you have to come to a dead stop and you can see all the way to Ibiza. Puerta de Soller is another natural harbor that the sea has cut out of the rocks. It is about two miles wide, a dark, deep, indigo blue all the way from Sa Calobra where the light house is, over to the esplanade where we sat in a broad outdoor sidewalk cafe after Martha got some Bisontes from a corner kiosca shaped like a castle. Martha asked the waiter for the mapa. After she had asked the gas station attendant for a carta to tell the roads it was natural that she should ask the waiter for a mapa to tell the foods, but he brought her a carta anyway.

"You're wrong," she said to me. "They speak Spanish here and they brought me the menu."

"They speak Mallorquin here," I said, "and they bring everybody the menu."

We had the turistica, a prix-fixe lunch whose price is controlled by the government depending on the category. This category was 1B and it cost fifty-five pesetas, about a dollar, vino de la casa included. The Mallorquinos are loyal about their wine, but I find it a little rough, a surprisingly aggressive wine to be cultivated and encouraged by people who are so gentle.

"That's an Italian ship in the harbor," I said, looking out and noticing the flag. "So Dr. Villanueva's Italians have returned."

"But this time," Martha said, looking up from her mapa, "without the moral insanity."

I noticed now there were Italian sailors sitting around the cafe. They were being treated like anyone else.

"People don't forgive," I said, "but they forget because they have to forget, because it's too painful to remember."

"Not Dr. Villanueva," she said.

"He's a special case," I said. "Not only that he did more but that he, should have known better."

"He's the only one who wants to talk about it."

"Maybe he's the only one who has to," I said.

I tried out my Italian on a sailor who was sitting alongside us. We had crossed on an Italian ship, the Leonardo da Vinci, and had worked at learning Italian. I asked him how he liked it here. He said the food was not bad but he found the wine a little sharp. Then he added as an afterthought, the people are a little strange. Then his comrade broke in with, "I don't like the way they look at us. You'd think we were criminals."

"Yes," the first Italian sailor said. "You'd think we had done something wrong." Then he leaned back his head in recollection, but he could think of nothing, and then he said quickly, as though recalling, "We helped them during their war. What more do they want? That is, I believe we did. I am too young to remember."

"That's right," the other sailor said. "We are all too young."

Then the first sailor took a drink of his wine and set down the glass carefully. He had a short, close-cut beard and a face that was dark, as dark as a Spaniard's. "All I can remember," he said carefully and in genuine thought, "is that in their war we helped them. If it went wrong it must have been their doing."

"Remember," the other sailor said, "when it happened we were not born."

They got up now to go back to their freighter that was leaving. They left a ten peseta tip on the table and when the Italians left the waiter handed the tip back to them.

"And we were not born," the bearded Italian protested spreading his hands palm up to me before they turned for the ship. "We were not born."

We wanted to get back to Palma before it got dark so we cut over to Inca, a flat road down the center of Mallorca that would avoid the mountains. It went by an endless phalanx of huge robot windmills out of Cervantes that must have been here before anyone was born, never.

In Palma we had dinner inside at the Formentor. We had the lan-

gostas a la parilla with a Spanish wine from Andalucia which cost only a few pesetas more than the local. Then we had cafe-solo, the best coffee in the world, before we went back to the Londres.

At the Londres the desk clerk said that Dr. Villanueva had called three times and I was to call him at this number. I told the clerk it would not be necessary but he kept holding out the piece of paper as though I did not understand. I took it to relieve him and we climbed the three more flights up to get to our room. You already had to climb up one flight to get to the lobby. When I took the room I told the clerk that three flights would kill Martha and he told me that the lobby floor was reserved for people who took the full pension. He said if we took the full pension mi esposa would not be killed. I said the food on the full pension would probably kill her too and she preferred to die climbing because the Formentor just outside was probably the best restaurant in Spain and that is the best way to die.

"They're always talking about me dying," Martha said as we climbed all the way up and put our coats on the big delicate brass bed. "I'll be all right as soon as I get over what I caught in Casablanca. Dr. Villanueva said there was nothing more he could do for me, that it would just take a little time."

"I don't think we'll be seeing Dr. Villanueva any more," I said.

"I don't think we will either," she said.

Dr. Villanueva called very early in the morning, at about six o'clock and I refused to take the call. At nine we went out for breakfast at the Formentor. In the lobby the clerk asked me if I had learned about Dr. Villanueva. I said, no, I was not interested. When we started down the final marble flight of stairs the clerk hollered after me, "He did it with a small Italian pistol, a Biretta. Dr. Villanueva es muerto. Dr. Villanueva is dead," the clerk said.

LOUIS SIMPSON

THE SILENT PIANO

We have lived like civilized people . . .
O ruins, traditions!

And we have seen the barbarians,
breakers of sculpture and glass.

And now we talk of "the inner life,"
and I ask myself, where is it?

Not here, in these streets and houses, . . .
so I think it must be found

in indolence, pure indolence,
an ocean of darkness . . .

in silence, an arm of the moon,
a hand that enters slowly.

* * *

I am reminded of a story
Camus tells, of a man in prison camp.

He had caryed a piano keyboard
with a nail on a piece of wood.

And sat there playing the piano.
This music was made entirely of silence.

LOUIS SIMPSON

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

A bearded man seated on a camp-stool—
"The geologist. 1910."

"Staying with friends"—a boy in a straw hat,
on a porch, surrounded with wisteria.

"Noontime"—a view of the Battery
with masts passing over the rooftops.

Then the old horse-cars on Broadway,
people standing around in the garment district.

A night view of Manhattan,
light-lines with sweeps of shadow.

"Jumpers"—as they come plunging down
their hair bursts into fire.

Then there are photographs of a door-knob,
a chair, an unstrung tennis-racket . . .

"Still life. Yes, for a while.
It gives your ideas a connection.

And a beautiful woman yawning
with the back of her hand, like this."

LOUIS SIMPSON

IN RUSSIA

I can see my mother's family
sitting next to the kitchen stove,
arguing . . . the famous Yiddish theater.

The sisters return . . . they're breathless,
they've been down to the river . . .
with their arms filled with wildflowers.

Then, later, night has fallen,
and the stars are luminous,
gliding above the trees and rooftops.

There's a love-song, an air.
And then they turn down the lamps
in the old world long ago.

WILLIAM PILLIN

SLEEPLESS NOCTURNE

My thoughts knock
on blind windows,

on doors
that never open.

*

I walk in the driveway
looking for footprints.

I mutter a drowsy lament.

I am kept awake
by changes of the moon.

*

So many sleepers
toss and sigh!

They swallow pills
against anger and bad dreams.

They work so hard,
they try so hard,

grow old
and rebuffed by the world
quietly die.

*

If I could hear
the faintly beating

heart
of the universe. . .

I hear nothing.

*

My thoughts are waves
searching for the moon.

WILLIAM PILLIN

NOCTURNE

After Delvaux

A classic landscape
Horizon
defined by walls
lights arcades

On tiled walks
nudes
sleepwalking
They are cool

Their mouths
are seafoam
their throats
a whispering in the leaves

They pass
staring straight ahead
as if in another
dimension

one hand touching
the genital rose
the other
brushing aside

waves of dark hair
Everything here
is asleep
houses in the moonlight

trees birds fountains
sleep
waiting for a cry
that never comes

WILLIAM PILLIN

NOCTURNE AT TWO IN THE MORNING

At two, at two in the morning
is a time
for the inventory of spent seasons.

You try to think
of another landscape.
It is lost in mist.
A tear hangs over your pillow.
Her hand is a seal of silence
over the guilty eyelids
at two, at two in the morning.

And the winds accuse you
for those who must bear
their bundles of sorrow.
Will you conjure away
their tears in the darkness
at two, at two in the morning?

Are you to blame?
You stare at the criminal stars.
Whom shall you blame?
From whom shall you claim
at two, at two in the morning?

Yes, yes, the wolf stood darkly
on the path to that human Eden
foretold at every birth
by dreaming housemaids.
Yes, yes, we build our homes
in the shadow of collapsing
monuments. How true, how true!
at two, at two in the morning!

Now is the time to explain,
time to be sorry,
at two, at two in the morning.
Now is the time of insidious moonlight
and the damned wind in the stricken azaleas,
at two, at two in the morning.

GEORGE HITCHCOCK

BATTERSEA PARK, LONDON

Cowled in madras, two silent women
 Sit beside me on the bench.
 Beyond the house of mirrors
 The carrousel starts up, its horses
 Tinted like upholstered rainbows.
 The bingo dealer twirls his plastic keg,
 Casts Cockney spells. The women cough.
 Hindu, they're far from home, perhaps
 Tubercular. The moon drips shadow.
 A familiar hand falls on my wrist.
 Now that ancient piping starts again:
 Too late to move, against my will
 I'll watch the captive animals,
 Riders and ridden, rise and fall
 On pillars of brass.

STEPHEN RODEFER

SUSAN STONE'S SHOES

I'd never seen another pair
 like them. Neither had you.

*I'd rather put a quarter in the juke box
 than do almost anything.*

Love is that drunkard
 believes it, flinging himself
 thru ten beers in two hours
 and two others.

People
 who need people
 are the luckiest people
 in the world.

Peace man, peace woman.
 Let's live in pure affection
 and leave contention and wit
 to those who choose it.

I'm sittin in the morning sun,
 I'll be sittin when the evening comes.
Forever, forever, why not
 believe it.

Just put the money
 in the box
 and don't stop
 playing it.

Susan Stone's shoes. What
 am I telling you?

I think king James was beheaded,
 but queen Elizabeth lived a long long time.

STEPHEN RODEFER

THE ELECTRIFIED WORLD

What is it in us
 that will not let
 be done
 what cries out
 hopelessly in us
 to be done

here in this
 electrified world
 where in one vast cloud
 of vacant desire
 everybody is looking
 for everybody else.

HOWARD MCCORD

MY COW

The stones rattle on the hillside
in the fog: the brindle cow is lost,
or drunk again on jimson weed.
She wants to fly, thinks
she is flying, but her hooves
run out of air deep in the heart.
She shakes her head like a dog,
and lows with long, dizzy notes
slipping from her throat, the white
depths groaning under the press of flowers.
She is dreaming, and clambering
toward the moon, or a sunrise
spliced into the night.
The light from her bones blinds her,
the soft edges of stones reach out
like bramble fingers, pluck at her ribs,
pinch her ears. She's speaking Chinese
now: "Wan wu chih mu" she bugles,
calling on The Mother to tame
the stones, melt the snow
that burns in her four bellies, get
her back to earth.

I follow two miles in the fog,
find her the lee side of a watertank
in soft repose, belching,
smiling like an old man.

HOWARD MCCORD

CONSUMMATION

It is somewhere else you go
 when your eyes slip past my face,
 sweep back inside and turn
 behind me into a corner
 I cannot reach with any mirror.

I know it is the secret place of paradise,
 cut from the world by the arched wall of the spine,
 its only language a heavy air pushed through the throat,
 its silences rapped out by ten convulsive fingers.

None of us allows the other entrance
 and you can never tell me how you live there
 or what your knowledge is
 of the god who warms himself inside us all
 or why he calls you by a different name.

HOWARD MCCORD

AFTER GILLES' REQUIEM

Pacing the length of an alley,
 one finger writing in the air,
 suffering quietly, when
 a screech owl crashed like a dead limb
 in front of me, ear tufts
 taut back like a cat's,
 crying, wailing, swirling in a maniac
 dance of pain, died.

The paradigm was mine,
 the labyrinthine architecture
 of collapse, the fall,
 the scream some lover's broken patience,
 knit and ended simply as a boy with a .22,
 aiming, firing,
 prophesying with his eye
 and one more curling finger
 willed death.

KAISER AND THE WAR

Simon J. Ortiz

Kaiser got out of the state pen when I was in the fourth grade. I don't know why people called him Kaiser. Some called him Hitler too, since he was Kaiser, but I don't think he cared at all what they called him. He was probably just glad to get out of the state pen anyway.

Kaiser got into the state pen because he didn't go into the Army. That's what my father said anyway, and because he was a crazy nut according to some people, which was probably why he didn't want to go into the Army in the first place, which was what my father said also.

The Army wanted him anyway, or maybe they didn't know he was crazy or supposed to be. They came for him out at home on the reservation, and he said he wasn't going to go because he didn't speak good English. Kaiser didn't go to school more than just the first or second grade. He said what he said in Indian and his sister said it in English for him. The Army men, somebody from the county draft board, said they'd teach him English, don't worry about it, and how to read and write and give him clothes and money when he got out of the Army so that he could start regular as any American. Just like anybody else, and they threw in stuff about how it would be good for our tribe and the people of the U.S.A.

Well, Kaiser, who didn't understand that much English anyway, listened quietly to his sister telling him what the Army draft board men were saying. He didn't ask any questions, just once in a while said, "Yes," like he'd been taught to say in the first grade. Maybe some of the interpretation was lost the way his sister was doing it, or maybe he went nuts like some people said he did once in a while because the next thing he did was to bust out the door and start running for Black Mesa.

The draft board men didn't say anything at first and then they got pretty mad. Kaiser's sister cried because she didn't want Kaiser to go into the Army but she didn't want him running out just like that either. She had gone to the Indian school in Albuquerque, and she had learned that stuff about patriotism, duty, honor—even if you were said to be crazy.

At about that time, their grandfather, Faustin, cussed in Indian at the draft board men. Nobody had noticed when he came into the house, but there he was, fierce-looking as hell as usual, although he wasn't fierce at all. Then he got mad at his granddaughter and the men, asked what they were doing in his house, making the women cry and not even sitting down like friendly people did. Old Faustin and the Army confronted each other. The Army men were confused and getting more and more nervous. The old man told the girl to go out of the room, and he'd talk to the Army himself, although he didn't speak a word of English except "goddammey" which didn't sound too much like English but he threw it in once in a while anyway.

Those Army men tried to get the girl to come back, but the old man wouldn't let her. He told her to get to grinding corn or something useful. They tried sign language and when Faustin figured out what they were waving their hands around for, he laughed out loud. He wouldn't even take the cigarettes offered him, so the Army men didn't say anything more. The last thing they did though was give the old man a paper which they didn't try to explain what it was for. They probably hoped it would get read somehow.

Well, after they left, the paper did get read by the girl, and she told Faustin what it was about. The law was going to come and take Kaiser to jail because he wouldn't go into the Army by himself. Grandfather Faustin sat down and talked quietly to himself for a while and then he got up to look for Kaiser.

Kaiser was on his way home by then, and his grandfather told him what was going to happen. They sat down by the side of the road and started to make plans. Kaiser would go hide up on Black Mesa and maybe go up all the way to Brushy Mountain if the law really came to poking around seriously. Faustin would take him food and tell him the news once in a while.

Everybody in the village knew what was going on pretty soon. Some approved, and some didn't. Some thought it was pretty funny. My father, who couldn't go in the Army even if he wanted to because there were too many of us kids, laughed about it for days. The people who approved of it and thought it funny were the ones who knew Kaiser was crazy and that the Army must be even crazier. The ones who disapproved were mostly those who were scared of him. A lot of them were the parents or brothers of girls who they must have suspected of liking Kaiser. Kaiser was pretty goodlooking and funny in the way he talked for a crazy guy. And he was a hard worker. He worked every day out in the

fields or up at the sheep camp for his parents while they were alive and for his sister and nephew and grandfather. These people, who were scared of him and said he should have gone into the Army perhaps it'll do him good, didn't want him messing around their daughters or sisters which they said he did from time to time. Mostly these people were scared he would do *something*, and there was one too many nuts around in the village anyway, they said.

My old man didn't care though. He was buddies with Kaiser. When there was a corn dance up at the community hall, they would have a whole lot of fun singing and laughing and joking, and once in a while when someone brought around a bottle or two they would really get going and the officers of the tribe would have to warn them to behave themselves.

Kaiser was okay though. He came around home quite a lot. His own kinfolks didn't care for him too much because he was crazy, and they didn't go out of their way to invite him to eat or spend the night when he dropped by their homes and it happened to get dark before he left. My mother didn't mind him around. When she served him something to eat, she didn't act like he was nuts, or supposed to be; she just served him and fussed over him like he was a kid, which Kaiser acted like a lot of the time. I guess she didn't figure a guy who acted like a kid was crazy.

Right after we finished eating, if it happened to be supper, my own grandfather, who was a medicine man, would talk to him and to all of us kids who were usually paying only half attention. He would tell us advice, about how the world was, how each person, everything, was important. And then he would tell us stories about the olden times. Legends mostly, about the *katzina*, Spider Woman, where our *hano*, people, came from. Some of the stories were funny, some sad, and some pretty boring. Kaiser would sit there, not saying anything except "Eheh," which is what you're supposed to say once in a while to show that you're listening to the olden times.

After half of us kids were asleep, grandfather would quit talking, only Kaiser wouldn't want him to quit and he'd ask for more, but grandfather wouldn't tell anymore. What Kaiser would do was start telling himself about the olden times. He'd lie on the floor in the dark, or sometimes up on the roof which was where he'd sleep in the summer, talking. And sometimes he'd sing, which is also part of the old times. I would drift off to sleep just listening to him.

Well, he didn't come around home after he went up on Black Mesa. He just went up there and stayed there. The law, which was the county

sheriff, an officer and the Indian Agent from the Indian Affairs office in Albuquerque, came out to get him, but nobody would tell them where he was. The law had a general idea where he was, but that didn't get them very far because they didn't know the country around Black Mesa. It's rougher than hell up here, just a couple of sheep camps in a lot of country.

The Indian Agent had written a letter to the officers of the tribe that they would come up for Kaiser on a certain day. There were a lot of people waiting for them when they drove up to the community meeting hall. The county sheriff had a bulging belly and he had a six-shooter strapped to his hip. When the men standing outside the community hall saw him step out of the government car, they made jokes. Just like the Long Ranger, someone said. The law didn't know what they were laughing about, and they said, Hello, and paid no attention to what they couldn't understand.

Faustin was among them. But he was silent and he smoked a roll your own. The agent stopped before him, and Faustin took a slow drag on his roll your own but he didn't look at the man.

"Faustin, my old friend," the agent said. "How are you?"

The old man didn't say anything. He let the tobacco smoke out slowly and looked straight ahead. Someone in the crowd told Faustin what the agent had said, but the old man didn't say anything at all.

The law thought he was praying or that he was a wise man contemplating his answer, the way he was so solemn-like, so they didn't press him. What Faustin was doing was ignoring the law. He didn't want them to talk with him. He turned to a man at his side.

"Tell this man I do not want to talk. I can't understand what they're saying in American anyway. And I don't want anyone to tell me what they say. I'm not interested." He looked at the government then, and he dismissed their presence with his indignation.

"The old man isn't gonna talk to you," someone said.

The agent and the sheriff big belly glared at the man. "Who's in charge around here," the sheriff said.

The Indians laughed. They joked by calling each other big belly. The governor of the tribe and two chiefs came soon. They greeted the law, and then they went into the meeting hall to confer about Kaiser.

"Well, have you brought Kaiser?" the Indian Agent asked although he saw that they hadn't and knew that they wouldn't.

"No," the governor said. And someone interpreted for him. "He will not come."

"Well, why don't you bring him? If he doesn't want to come, why

don't you bring him. A bunch of you can bring him," the agent said. He was becoming irritated.

The governor, chiefs and men talked to each other. One old man held the floor a while, until others got tired of him telling about the old times and how it was and how the Americans had said a certain thing and did another and so forth. Someone said, "We can bring him. Kaiser should come by himself anyway. Let's go get him." He was a man who didn't like Kaiser. He looked around carefully when he got through speaking and sat down.

"Tell the Americans that is not the way," one of the chiefs said. "If our son wants to meet these men he will come." And the law was answered with the translation.

"I'll be a son of a bitch," the sheriff said, and the Indians laughed quietly. He glared at them and they stopped. "Let's go get him ourselves," he continued.

The man who had been interpreting said, "He is crazy."

"Who's crazy?" the sheriff yelled, like he was refuting an accusation. "I think you're all crazy."

"Kaiser, I think he is crazy," the interpreter said like he was ashamed of saying so. He stepped back, embarrassed.

Faustin then came to the front. Although he said he didn't want to talk with the law, he shouted. "Go get Kaiser yourself. If he's crazy, I hope he kills you. Go get him."

"Okay," the agent said when the interpreter finished. "We'll go get him ourselves. Where is he?" The agent knew no one would tell him, but he asked it anyway.

Upon that, the Indians assumed the business that the law came to do was over, and that the law had resolved what it came to do in the first place. The Indians began to leave.

"Wait," the agent said. "We need someone to go with us. He's up on Black Mesa, but we need someone to show us where."

The men kept on leaving. "We'll pay you. The government will pay you to go with us. You're deputized," the agent said. "Stop them, Sheriff," he said to the county sheriff, and the sheriff yelled, "Stop, come back here," and put a hand to his six-shooter. When he yelled, some of the Indians looked at him to laugh. He sure looked funny and talked funny. But some of them came back. "Alright, you're deputies, you'll get paid," the sheriff said. Some of them knew what that meant, others weren't too sure. Some of them decided they'd come along for the fun of it.

The law and the Indians piled into the government car and a pickup

truck which belonged to one of the deputies who was assured that he would get paid more than the others.

Black Mesa is fifteen miles back on the reservation. There are dirt roads up to it, but they aren't very good, nobody uses them except sheep herders and hunters in the fall. Kaiser knew what he was doing when he went up there, and he probably saw them when they were coming. But it wouldn't have made any difference because when the law and the deputies came up to the foot of the mesa, they still weren't getting anywhere. The deputies, who were still Indians too, wouldn't tell or didn't really know where Kaiser was at the moment. So they sat for a couple hours at the foot of the mesa, debating what should be done. The law tried to get the deputies to talk. The sheriff was boiling mad by this time, getting madder too, and he was for persuading one of the deputies into telling where Kaiser was exactly. But he reasoned the deputy wouldn't talk being that he was Indian too, and so he shut up for a while. He had figured out why the Indians laughed so frequently even though it was not as loud as before they were deputized.

Finally, they decided to walk up Black Mesa. It's rough going and when they didn't know which was the best way to go up they found it was even rougher. The real law dropped back one by one to rest on a rock or under a pinon tree until only the deputies were left. They watched the officer from the Indian Affairs office sitting on a fallen log some yards back. He was the last one to keep up so far, and he was unlacing his shoes. The deputies waited patiently for him to start again and for the others to catch up.

"It's sure hot," one of the deputies said.

"Yes, maybe it'll rain soon," another said.

"No, it rained for the last time last month, maybe next year."

"Snow then," another said.

They watched the sheriff and the Indian Agent walking towards them half a mile back. One of them limped.

"Maybe the Americans need a rest," someone said. "We walked a long ways."

"Yes, they might be tired," another said. "I'll go tell that one that we're going to stop to rest," he said and walked back to the law sitting on the log. "We gonna stop to rest," he told the law. The law didn't say anything as he massaged his feet. And the deputy walked away to join the others.

They didn't find Kaiser that day or the next day. The deputies said they could walk all over the mesa without finding him for all eternity,

but they wouldn't find him. They didn't mind walking, they said. As long as they got paid for their time, their crops were already in, and they'll just hire someone to haul winter wood for them now that they had the money. But they refused to talk. The ones who wanted to tell where Kaiser was, if they knew, didn't say so out loud, but they didn't tell anyway so it didn't make any difference. They were too persuaded by the newly found prosperity of employment.

The sheriff, exhausted by the middle of the second day of walking the mesa, began to sound like he was for going back to Albuquerque. Maybe Kaiser'd come in by himself, he didn't see any sense in looking for some Indian anyway just to get him into the Army. Besides, he'd heard the Indian was crazy. When the sheriff had first learned the Indian's name was Kaiser he couldn't believe it, but he was assured that wasn't his real name, just something he was called because he was crazy. But the sheriff didn't feel any better or less tired, and he was getting jumpy about the crazy part.

At the end of the second day, the law decided to leave. Maybe we'll come back, they said; we'll have to talk this over with the Indian Affairs officials, maybe it'll be all right if that Indian didn't have to be in the Army after all. And they left. The sheriff, his six-shooter off his hip now, was pretty tired out, and he didn't say anything.

The officials for the Indian Affairs didn't give up though. They sent back some more men. The county sheriff had decided it wasn't worth it, besides he had a whole county to take care of. And the Indians were deputized again. More of them volunteered this time, some had to be turned away. They had figured out how to work it: they wouldn't have to tell, if they knew, where Kaiser was. All they would have to do was walk and say from time to time, "Maybe he's over there by that canyon. Used to be there was some good hiding places back when the Apache and Navaho were raising hell." And some would go over there and some in the other direction, investigating good hiding places. But after camping around Black Mesa for a week this time, the Indian Affairs gave up. They went by Faustin's house the day they left for Albuquerque and left a message: the government would wait and when Kaiser least expected it, they would get him and he would have to go to jail.

Kaiser decided to volunteer for the Army. He had decided to after he had watched the law and the deputies walk all over the mesa. Grandfather Faustin had come to visit him up at one of the sheep camps, and the old man gave him all the news at home and then he told Kaiser the message the government had left.

"Okay," Kaiser said. And he was silent for a while and nodded his head slowly like his grandfather did. "I'll join the Army."

"No," his grandfather said. "I don't want you to. I will not allow you."

"Grandfather, I do not have to mind you. If you were my grandfather or uncle on my mother's side, I would listen to you and probably obey you, but you are not, and so I will not obey you."

"You are really crazy then," Grandfather Faustin said. "If that's what you want to do, go ahead." He was angry and he was sad, and he got up and put his hand on his grandson's shoulder and blessed him in the people's way. After that the old man left. It was evening when he left the sheep camp, and he walked for a long time away from Black Mesa before he started to sing.

The next day, Kaiser showed up at home. He ate with us, and after we ate we sat in the living room with my grandfather.

"So you've decided to go into the American's army," my grandfather said. None of us kids, nor even my parents, had known he was going but my grandfather had known all along. He probably knew as soon as Kaiser had walked into the house. Maybe even before that.

My grandfather blessed him then, just like Faustin had done, and he talked to him of how a man should behave and what he should expect. Just general things, and grandfather turned sternly towards us kids who were playing around as usual. My father and mother talked with him also, and when they were through, my grandfather put cornmeal in Kaiser's hand for him to pray with. Our parents told us kids to tell Kaiser goodbye and goodluck and after we did, he left.

The next thing we heard was that Kaiser was in the state pen.

Later on, some people went to visit him up at the state pen. He was okay and getting fat they said, and he was getting on okay with everybody the warden told them. And when someone had asked Kaiser if he was okay, he said he was fine and he guessed he would be American pretty soon being that he was around them so much. The people left Kaiser some home baked bread and dried meat and came home after being assured by the warden that he'd get out pretty soon, maybe right after the war. Kaiser was a model inmate. When the visitors got home to the reservation, they went and told Faustin his grandson was okay, getting fat and happy as any American. Old Faustin didn't have anything to say about that.

Well, the war was over after a while. Faustin died sometime near the

end of it. Nobody had heard him mention Kaiser at all. Kaiser's sister and nephew were the only ones left at their home. Sometimes someone would ask about Kaiser, and his sister or nephew would say, "Oh, he's fine. He'll be home pretty soon. Right after the war." But after the war was over, they just said he was fine.

My father and a couple of other guys went down to the Indian Affairs office to see what they could find out about Kaiser. They were told that Kaiser was going to stay in the pen longer now because he had tried to kill somebody. Well, he just went crazy one day, and he made a mistake so he'll just have to stay in for a couple more years or so, the Indian Affairs said. That was the first anybody heard of Kaiser trying to kill somebody, and some people said why the hell didn't they put him in the Army for that like they wanted to in the first place. So Kaiser remained in the pen long after the war was over and most of the guys who had gone into the Army from the tribe had come home. When he was due to get out, the Indian Affairs sent a letter to the governor and several men from the village went to get him.

My father said Kaiser was quiet all the way home on the bus. Some of the guys tried to joke with him, but he just wouldn't laugh or say anything. When they got off the bus at the highway and began to walk home, the guys broke into song, but that didn't bring Kaiser around. He kept walking quiet and reserved in his gray suit. Someone joked that Kaiser probably owned the only suit in the whole tribe.

"You lucky so and so. You look like a rich man," the joker said. The others looked at him sharply and he quit joking, but Kaiser didn't say anything.

When they reached his home, his sister and nephew were very happy to see him. They cried and laughed at the same time, but Kaiser didn't do anything except sit at the kitchen table and look around. My father and the other guys gave him advice and welcomed him home again and left.

After that, Kaiser always wore his gray suit. Every time you saw him, he was wearing it. Out in the fields or at the plaza watching the *katzina*, he wore the suit. He didn't talk much anymore, my father said, and he didn't come around home anymore either. The suit was getting all beatup looking, but he just kept on wearing it so that some people began to say that he was showing off.

"That Kaiser," they said, "he's always wearing his suit, just like he was an American or something. Who does he think he is anyway?" And they'd snicker, looking at Kaiser with a sort of envy. Even when the

suit was torn and soiled so that it hardly looked anything like a suit, Kaiser wore it. And some people said, "When he dies, Kaiser is going to be wearing his suit." And they said that like they wished they had gotten a suit like Kaiser's.

Well, Kaiser died, but without his gray suit. He died up at one of his distant relative's sheep camps one winter. When someone asked about the suit, they were told by Kaiser's sister that it was rolled up in some newspaper at their home. She said that Kaiser had told her, before he went up to the sheep camp, that she was to send it to the government. But, she said, she couldn't figure out what he meant, whether Kaiser had meant the law or somebody, maybe the state pen or the Indian Affairs.

The person who asked about the suit wondered about this Kaiser's instructions. He couldn't figure out why Kaiser wanted to send a beatup suit back. And then he figured, well, maybe that's the way it was when you either went into the state pen or the Army and became an American.

STEVE KATONA

THE WOODCUTTER

old monk of country ways
 bearded in overalls
 bullshit & wisdom
 we took the deuce & a half
 up the mountain
 to cut firewood

ponderosa pine began at
 about eight thousand feet
 scrub oak but
 standing pinon
 we were after

the four wheel drive
 cut into the caliche
 rocks of the forestry road

up up the old truck climb'd
 behind us the whole
 of northern New Mexico spread
 gilded mesas
 rio grande valley
 green line headed north south
 rio puerco meets it
 sangre de cristos jemez mountains
 tip'd with first winter snow

"quite a saw you got there"
 a brand new homelite
 small but I cd cut twice as fast as he
 with the ancient hypochondriac
 mcculloch

his son bounced in the back
 tried to hold down the two saws
 the gas cans the axes
 smiled bright sixteen year old smile
 "cant keep that boy in school
 when I go up on this mountain"
 I tried to roll a smoke
 too bumpy

low range now first gear
following the forestry fence
"if the rangers catch us
tell em we're cutting on the land grant"
he hollerd
above the groan of the truck
laughing thru his grey streakd beard
"never did bother to get a wood permit
did you?"

in the middle
of one of the longest pulls
the truck sputterd died
he jerkd the emergency hollerd

"set a rock behind those tires
what the hell's wrong now"

six miles down
I thot
as he began to fool
with the truck
the wind cold
standing at nine thousand feet
the side of a mountain
high

but in thirty minutes
with pliers crescent wrench
a piece of copper wire
he rebuilt the fuel pump
kickd her over
and we're at the top

"no one ever told me I cdnt fix anything"
he chuckld
"never knew any better"

saws roar axes crash
and the boy
drags pole wood to the road
we're cutting a good stand of tall
heavy pine

only moving a few feet
from tree to tree
only stopping to refill the saws
with gas and oil

he workd with his head down
whistling
trees fall are trimmd
cut to length in the road
loaded two cords in four hours

his boy ran all the way down
met us at the bottom

we hit the hiway
and passd a man riding a horse
all deckd out in cowboy hat
new levis five hundred dollar saddle

"sells washing machines at monkey wards"
he sd spitting
onto the twilight road

BILL DODD

JACK

I lived a year where
he was born and reared,
as they in Vernon,
or Texas anywhere,
and from it learned something
of where he got his soul
and jazz: partly from
that same old black man
who would have been
a young man, when Jack
was a boy, peddling his tamales
from a call, calling,
"Tamales, get 'em hot,"
and across the street
the high ivy-covered wall
of the rich widow, who
was young, at least younger,
when Jack was, and better
looking, and on this side,
the poorer white,
and the black man with
the tamales in the middle,
and the barbecue and bootlegging
in the flats where
Jack and I heard New Orleans
on big 78's, scratched and brittle,
and punch boards in the little
stores because few could buy,
outright, a box of candy, and
live channel cat for sell
and cork boats on the city
reservoir, &, &,
life if you lived through it
like Jack Teagarden did.

BILL DODD

THE MENTOR

How false it is,
and its truth, too.
Why haven't I written
five good books, or,
why haven't I loved you?
How the world is bad;
therefore, good, or,
the world is what I see;
therefore, the world is me,
observes the observer,
says Krishnamurti.
How I am young as you
were once, and you
are not as old as me.
Not answering you direct,
since questions such as yours
are similarly what we affect.
But age you have and dollars, too,
and I cannot respond in kind,
for if I've partially lost time
its been in part to learn,
among the other pointless things,
as you yourself have said,
that time is all we have,
so not even love is anything
but what the second feels it is,
nor homage else than being kind,
or arbitrary, expecting no return
but same, which is merely
truce. I've loved and hated,
no secrets here intended,
nothing their same number of letters,
and likewise in this business of
writing, it comes to this: if
emotions and nature are the same,
then how we put it prettily is
all that seemingly matters,
and as you must remember,
I wrote a book arguing against that,
made no money on it, either,

sent it to you with a note
which you did not answer,
for whatever reason.

BILL DODD

THE HAWK

The hawk howls
now, and takes me back
there, where I spent a
long, very long time,
a flat, one-time prairie,
the panhandle, where
the wind enured us
to the selfsame silence
of each ultimately,
and I do not mean death,
for when the wind
prowls in the eaves
and burglars every corner's warmth,
even with rags poked into
the crevices of door jambs
and window sills,
the dead lie in a warmer
climate, and the blowing
limbs and grass tell nothing
in their roots to sleeping
bones of their all too familiar past.
Relatives that lie there, live
there still, the stillness,
whether dead or living,
that wind there brings
like the sun in Algiers.
Certainly, I told him,
I feel an affinity to Camus.
What other visions in the wind
when it pours upon the fields like this?

MARK TIME

BACKWATER

I

it is late winter
afternoon

we cross the Atchafalaya river
and drive thru Lottie, Texas
then into Louisiana

which is swamp, backwash, bog, bayou, river, pond, stillwater,
stream

a highway that has to be one long bridge over the swamp
trees that grow out of the wet underbrush

trying to find sunlight
chickens, cows, horses, sheep
black cows on green fields
hawks, red birds, vultures, ravens, trees with nests
Spanish moss, fungus, parasites
algae in stillwater

pigs
hunters wading with shotguns
nothing but clouds for sky
in some places beautiful
lush, wet as hell, fields soaked, black birds,

sparrow hawks with red rust backs
and then so many antique antique stores
full of antiques

selling their antiques
always water by the side of the road

Shreveport
and we drive onto the overpass
right over the cemetery
and when the freeway drops down
on the other side of the cemetery
we know we are in

Shreveport
the signs say
DON'T PARK ON SHOULDER
SLIPPERY WHEN WET

and it is always wet
the abbreviation for Louisiana is LA period
la la la

la la
brown trees only a few flowers

II

on the way back through Louisiana now
 we were in New Orleans
 Mardi Gras
 in a big crowd waiting for the parade
 memories of an old drunk wino queer approaching me
 lusting after my young male body and long curly hair
 calling me woman and chickee
 he stands staggering, scratching, rubbing his balls
 throwing his arms around me
 hugging me
 someone in the crowd takes our picture
 and I just being nice
 and he asks me for a kiss
 and I tell him I like him and I understand
 and I show him my girl-friend who has been standing right next to me
 the whole time
 and he grabs me again and hugs me and starts to pant
 and move up and down
 and I squeeze out of his bear hug
 and I tell him that he understands me as well as I understand him
 and that I still like him and that he ought to go find himself
 some nice young boy-friend
 and he says, "I'll bet you think I'm a dirty old man."
 and I say, "Yes, you are a dirty old man and I still like you
 and you know you understand."
 and he says we've treated him nicer than anybody else ever did
 and that he's worthless and no good for anybody anymore
 and he starts to cry
 and I tell him to forget it
 and he hugs us all and leaves, slowly

III

and I remember the French Quarter
 in tremendous close crowds
 cramming the streets with people
 everybody drunk, shoving
 then we go to bars that have girls dancing in their underwear
 Sandy, Maria
 lots of bumps and no grinds
 then leaving drunk
 and three big thugs hired by the bar come out and grab me by the hair
 and shirt.

and demand that I pay again for the beers that cost a dollar a piece
 and we had already paid for them once, inside
 and I say that we've already paid
 and they say look, do you want us to take you around back
 and take off your glasses
 and I am forgiving and humble and kind and considerate and
 say we've already paid
 and they slug me in the stomach and try to drag me around back
 but I grab onto a post and hold on
 and Dan rushes up and gives them five dollars
 and they drop me and I look at them and say, "How can you do this?"
 and they leave except for one who stands at the door of the bar
 and Dan tries to drag me away but I tell him to wait a minute
 and I go up to the thug and say, "How can you do this?"
 and he says get lost
 and I say, "How can you do this?"
 and he says nothing
 and I say, "You dickless shit-head."
 and he pushes me and I fall in the gutter and Dan picks me up
 and we walk off

IV

then Tulane University
 the campus and the people
 and that's that
 the old houses all over
 black slums shacks shacks shacks shacks shacks
 beautiful awful old white house mansions with great green growths
 of trees and bushes and grass all over the houses
 shops
 100% human hair wigs for sale
 still on the people
 more cemeteries under the freeway
 crayfish nets for sale
 so many blacks in gas stations
 old black man in cap shuffling down the street
 Mardi Gras parades with hundreds of kids dressed up in military
 uniforms that we're supposed to like
 young girls with black dresses, and black boots, and black belts,
 and sunglasses, and bayonets, and rifles, and helmets,
 and guns, and formations, and marching
 and with their rifles with the bayonets on the end
 sticking straight out and up from their hips

my guts turn over and gush out of my body
the slosh runs down the gutter

and then finally some nice rhythm and soul bands
playing as they dance in the street
and floats with dressed-up people throwing brass coins
and strung beads

V

the difference between the old black man shuffling
and the old white wino talker
is that the old white man is the best pool player in the world
8 ball, 9 ball, one pocket, snooker, etc.
and all drunk and talkative
and has to tell you his story
and say how pretty your girl-friend is until finally he's saying
she looks like Pocahontas
and then the old black man is unseen
because he has transcended almost everything
all in his head
and knows completely that it doesn't matter at all at all
and he just shuffles as he feels
and is living it out simply because nothing is to talk about
and he can not be hurt because he realizes he can't
and he knows that death is good and he lives it
and everything disappears from around him and he feels
his own body move slowly in the wilderness
and it is all right
and he doesn't worry about anything, whether it is a small matter
or a tiny one
and he hardly thinks at all because he just is
and he almost knows
and he's a little past all that because he's old
one's universe is one's universe
and I watch as he shuffles down the street
and he doesn't see or look at me
because I really don't exist
and neither do I see him

VI

and we took the ferry across the Mississippi
for free
and got very cold

and had to stand around when we got back cold cold
 and the Mississippi isn't very big at all
 only about half a mile across or less
 and dirty and oil on both shores in the form of old docks and
 boats and dry docks and hydraulic monsters of boats
 and barges and noises
 and the South is everywhere present in the South

VII

I wake up after no sleep
 three in a bed
 cheap motel
 outside of Baton Rouge
 on the way out of Louisiana
 back to New Mexico
 and walk into the early morning thick late-winter bayou
 and look into the stillwater and brambles
 thorns everywhere
 and find a way around the sitting water
 and climb over a barb wire fence that I don't even hardly touch
 for the undergrowth
 and climb deeper into the vine thorns
 and brown twigs and trees on top of me and underneath
 pulling at my skin
 the thorns and sticker bushes and brambles
 and in the middle of the thorn bush I crouch
 clawed on all sides
 and a scarlet bird flies up all scarlet only scarlet
 like the sun twenty feet away
 and blue jays and woodpeckers and robins
 little grey tiny birds that fly up close and actually
 right thru the tangle maneuvering perfectly
 and I cold
 and sometimes I feel like Jesus among the soldiers
 and sometimes I feel humanly awful among the perfect animals
 and perfect birds of absolute nature
 and sometimes I feel other things that are less
 and sometimes I don't feel
 as I ride in the car going home
 walking down the road
 sitting in the thick prickly bushes
 the thorns pulling me from the outside and the inside
 down and apart
 into the fallen leaves that mold and disintegrate into earth

C. G. HANZLICEK

CANCER

So many drugs at this stage
That the room pulses
Along with me.

The old women are praying
Beside my bed, ticking away
Like harmless bombs.

For a second the ceiling
Snaps open
And I am torn

Upward to a paradise
That rocks
Like a heavy boat.

My body turns
Soft as a woman's
Thigh and will not move.

Walking toward me a child—
Torn coat and a yellow
Star on his breast—sings:

The bird has lost his feathers,
The bird has lost his feathers,
He's naked as a thumb.

The boy puts a finger to his lips.
No, he whispers, no, not now.
He is right: my words

Would have made neither a friend,
Nor an enemy,
Nor sense.

WILLIAM HEYEN

AFTER A WAR

I

Our generals clear their throats: we'll napalm
the monsoon itself, or the fields

will never dry; the paddies, though thick
with excrement, dead fish, will never yield

all the bodies we've claimed.
We'll burn the land to a desert.

II

It is beginning April. Winds rise
in the southwest, swirl. Gusts of rain

scatter the husks of rice. In waters
where the dead lie camouflaged

and still, April begins in watery syllables. Eyes,
tongues of the dead dissolve in their skulls' sockets.

III

Yes, let us gather the relics together:
from the west a wristbone to beat a drumskin with;

from the south a ribcage strummed by a plow;
from the east the tuned teeth of a jawbone struck,

as though in a music box, by circling oxen;
from the north the curved bow of a legbone.

IV

After a war no one could win, come,
let us honor the Asian dead we exhume.

Let us stand, heads bowed, solemn,
at a flag-draped monument of stone.

Let us listen to their harsh, disparate music,
until the dead be counted, or be damned.

KEITH WILSON

DAY OF THE RABBIT

Jackrabbit: a shy, swift creature
with round, shiny eyes, fur
that ruffles in the wind

One Sunday, they rounded us kids up,
promising a picnic and loaded us into pickups;
chattering we rode through the dust, screaming
with joy at the bumps, any high fly through the air.

At the ranch all was nearly ready:
a huge beef turned and smoked on the spit,
pickles in barrels, beans in great clay pots,
red chilis crumpled into jagged flakes
and dropped into the bubbling brown sauce.
Dutch Oven biscuits, hot & steaming
being sampled by the cook.

The pickhandles were piled just beyond.
Each of us was given one, the details explained
by the potbellied rancher: we were to form
a huge circle, about two feet apart.
The men would join us, then we would close.

Later, moving slowly through the grass,
we scared up several rattlesnakes, various
small rats, a bird or two. The dust closed
on a tight pen in the center and there they
were —over a hundred rabbits, cottontails
& big Jacks milling, trying to break free.

Then the rancher took a pickhandle from one
of the boys and, laughing softly, walked to
the pen and hit one of the rabbits, breaking
his back. The rabbit screamed high & shrill,
went on screaming, he hit another and another,
soon all the boys were in there, hitting, blood
all over them, the big eyes of the rabbits
shining out of the dust, their screams cutting
the air, boys shouting & the older men sat
back, watching, smoked their brownpaper Durhams
& smiled, thinking of the rich feed to come.

—Cambray, New Mexico, 1936

KEITH WILSON

WOODCARVER

Nobody's uncle but mine, he cut
whistles from slippery mountain
birch, carried them home in his
pocket, for me

—a drunk, he lived
by his wits, an old robber, he stole
books, told lies for bootleg whiskey.

Sitting very straight, frosty, winter-
eyed he stayed in his room, sipped, a
gentleman drunk at noon, calling for
me, shouting my name: and when I
came, he just looked at me, four,
but not ashamed before his eyes.

When he died he filled the longest
casket old John Allen had, plain white.
They stuck a naked pink bulb above the
open lid, for color. They said he
only slept:

Eyes shut, he didn't look
asleep, his pale face, thin fine hair
slicked down, he looked ready to rise;
pink light streaming along his beak of
a nose, he looked ready to get up staring,
blue eyed, the crisp woodchip smell of
him darkening all the roses.

KEITH WILSON

THE TOUCH OF MOONLIGHT

My male ancestors
prowled this land
like heavy mountain
cats spewing their
hatred & their life
dropping spoor, flicking
tail, a howl in their chests
for the darkness, the chipped
winds of the highroad valleys

—my dad was tailed by
a puma all the way back
from some girl's house. He
forgets her name but he went
back the next night, quick
—shadowed as any cat, its
cries like a woman's cries
breaking through the shafts
of moonlight

I walk the high thin
fences, domesticated,
dig my claws in rotten
wood & feel my belly
rock from side to side
as the door opens, yellow
street light! and out
into a night crisp with
exhaust smoke & pretence

I am a fatcat and walk
the slender fences of a city
remembering woods

the touch
of moonlight on my eyes, the
touch of moonlight

EVAN S. CONNELL, JR.

from NOTES 2

Mirabilia testimonia tue, Domine.
Lord, thy marvels be witness.

Murshid ibn Munqidh, Emir of Shaizar,
copied the Koran forty-three times,
each time adding the fruit of his meditations,
which were different each time.

There is a world of streaming shadows that hides within
the forehead of every man.

Origen was so carefully tortured in Caesarea
that he could not die. Eusebius tells us
he appeared joyful beneath the hands of his tormentors,
and much at home, as though he had experienced it all before.

Voluptuous and ignorant
the people persist.

Sennacherib was beaten to death with statuettes of the gods.
This may be interpreted several ways, according to the context
and to the listener's understanding.

Centuries pass
with their lights,
agony and mutation.

Lat. 16.12 S.; Long. 71.34 E.
I have just this moment heard someone say:
He is nothing in himself.

I think with images and intuitions,
as women think.
People stare at me. I honor none of them by recognition,
but continue as I please. My small eyes
gaze inward.
My face, unless it becomes animated by some emotion,
indicates weakness and sloth. I breathe
with difficulty through my nose.

My mouth, with thick sensual lips, usually is open.
Few know what I have suffered.

They say I have about me a curious dreaminess
which causes me to remain indifferent to the future.
They say I am sunk in putrescent indolence. Yet
every man has nine round holes in his body
which exude abominable filth.

Do you understand?

When I was young I abstained from women. I would not throw garbage
into a chasm.

Now the rain has ended. The wind has changed, and blows
steadily from the south. It is night.
I lie in this room alone, sick and old, thinking
of a woman I met nineteen years ago in Marseilles.

J'ai reve tellement de toi. J'ai reve telle. . .

The spider spins a web out of its venomous self.
Good wine sours in an ugly glass.

Aethiopians are black Saracens.
Chingis Cham was slain by a thunderclap.

Dragons attack elephants
in order to drink their blood.

Amber is congealed sea-foam.

What artisan has made so deft and marvelous a thing
as the small sphere that is the head of Man?

To acquire the head of another man is a measure of power.
To shrink the head is a final demonstration
of mastery and of possession.

Pawn takes pawn.

Whatever fate commands us to do in this world,
neither Allah nor Jehovah shall punish in the next.

The American warden, Duffy,
as well as the German commandant, Hoess,
emphasize the humane nature of gas
as an instrument of execution.

According to Mr. Hoover,
despicable crimes must be dealt with
realistically.

The contract for the construction of the first guillotine
was awarded to a German harpsichord maker, Tobias Schmidt,
who was the low bidder, and who explained that sometimes
he set aside the practice of his art in order to assist
the realization of discoveries that would benefit humanity.

The Cross gradually has evolved
into three forms:
crux immissa, which has four arms;
crux commissa, which has three arms;
crux decussata, or Saint Andrew's Cross,
to which the victim is bound
by a leg and an arm.

Tacitus, though he mentions the Crucifixion,
fails to perceive it. Our eyes focus
on what they are accustomed to seeing.
Videmus nunc per speculum. . .

I have been asleep. Five hours have passed, hours
in the gaseous, senseless sleep of man's outer senses
during which life centers morbidly in the imagination.
Desire for the eternal, resident in each of us,
here finds expression.

Just now I heard the explosion of the cannon across the bay.
Sundown, and I shall withdraw
the black Knight.

My brain grows phrensied among its own imaginings.

Not far from Hebron on the mount of Mamre stands an oak
which the Saracens call *Dirpe*, but we call the Dry Tree
because it has been there since the beginning of time

and was green and had leaves until the day Our Lord perished.
Some say that when a prince of the Western world shall sing
mass beneath this tree it will turn green once again and
bear leaves and fruit. But I believe the hour is past.

Beside the Dead Sea grow apple trees beautiful to behold;
yet if you cut these apples you find them full of cinders,
which is a token that by the wrath of God the land was scorched,
and the cities of Gomorrah, Sodom, Zeboim, Aldama and Zoar
sank into this briny body.

If a man casts a ball of iron into the Dead Sea
it will float; although a feather on this water
disappears quickly, like a city sodden with sin.

Mundus vult decipi.

Without knowledge the mystic sees
without sight, without
information, without contemplation,
without description, without
veiling, without veil.

According to some, the pre-eminent cause of all
that is perceived by the intelligence
is not anything perceived by the intelligence. I will
consider this.

More than once I have begun the study of metaphysics;
each time I was interrupted by happiness.

Ruiseñor, usignuolo, nightingale, Nachtigall.
The name in every language is melodious.

Immanuel Kant sets high value on sudden ideas.

Lat. 28.14 S.; Long. 40.03 W.
Coming events cast their shadows before.

The words *sickle* and *hammer*
come down to us from the Stone Age.

Ou mam Hactani.

The man of yesterday has died in the man of today;
the man of today dies in the man of tomorrow.

In a cave beside the Dordogne my brother and I discovered a picture of a bison painted with remarkable individuality, and later we found a slab of slate showing the cartoon of this same bison, which of itself is most surprising; however what surprised us even more is that we did not find these two together. The preliminary cartoon was unearthed in the département of Ain, from which we conclude that some man or woman of the Ice Age very greatly admired the artist's sketch, and bought it or stole it, and carried it one hundred and eighty-eight miles.

According to Carl Gustav Jung, the artist who speaks in primordial languages speaks with a thousand tongues. He grips and overpowers, elevates that which he treats, and lifts it from the individual and transitory toward the eternal. He exalts the personal lot to the lot of Man; thus he releases in each of us those forces that have enabled humanity to rescue itself and to live through the longest night.

Where there is an obscurity too deep for reason it is good to sit down with description, periphrasis, or adumbration. That is the advice of Sir Thomas Browne.

Five hundred years ago Raymond Lully attempted to solve all mysteries by the use of a frame with unequal, revolving concentric disks subdivided into sectors with Latin words. Such is the progress of vanity.

According to Plotinus, the part of us that sees cannot be troubled.

The convictions of my predecessors make them appear to me in this enlightened age like pawns in a game of chess played with neither rules nor object, mindlessly following an incomprehensible plan where much was left to chance.

It has been established by historians that Columbus knew very little astronomy

and was not adept in the use of nautical instruments.
It has been demonstrated
that when he employed a quadrant to determine his latitude
the result was merely approximate.
Navigators and learned cartographers attempted to dissuade him
from the voyage he projected.

Spanish chroniclers of the 16th century describe the discovery
of the American continent as the most significant event
since the creation of the world, save the incarnation and death
of Him who created it. To my mind they are wrong, wrong
not once but twice. I will say no more.

Man lives only to learn.
This needs no exegesis here.

Some ask the use of knowing things that are useless.
They ask me the use of maíz-pinto, crystals, and feathers.
I respond: There are many senses.

The word *maize* for Indian corn is derived from *mahiz*
which is the name of the plant in the language of Haiti.
And yet, strange to tell, the word *mayse* signifies bread
in the Lettish and Livonian languages of northern Europe;
furthermore, the word *maise* means food in Irish,
and in Old High German we find that *maz* is meat. Therefore
we think the Spanish *maiz* must antedate the time of Columbus,
testifying to some far earlier communication.

The common pineapple, *Bromelia ananassa*,
is reputed to be of American origin.
Why is it represented with exactitude
on Assyrian monuments?

There is unquestionable significance in this fact:
Bessmertny has compiled a bibliography of approximately
twenty-five thousand publications devoted to Atlantis.

I agree with Plato
who situates Atlantis beyond the port of Gades.
My brother, who is a scientist, disagrees
for the following reason:
in that area he has sounded the ocean bed and discovered

a layer of pelagic red clay eleven thousand feet thick
composed primarily of the shells of plankton.
He has learned, furthermore,
that one thousand years are required
to deposit three-tenths of an inch of sediment;
so he calculates
and calculates, concluding that
five hundred million years have elapsed
since the bed of the Atlantic was exposed,
from which it must follow, according to his argument,
that only a fool would say with certainty:
This is the location of our lost continent.

The essential dates of history remain for centuries
undetected.

I believe and continue to believe
we are like cats or dogs which wander into a library
and observe the books, but have no idea what they mean. Or say
we are sleepers who shout in our sleep.

None of us can suitably express what occurs; inevitably
it defies understanding.

As the parallels of geometry intersect at infinity,
so our parallels cross in the immutability of Man,
to whom the gods granted that he should be the measure of
everything on earth, at once its beginning and its end.

Thursday. I am forty years old. Flocks of parrots
darken the sun.

A branch of fire has dropped from the sky
six leagues beyond our ship. What does this portend?

We live in a world of enigmatic punishment
and indecipherable transgression.

In China many were executed for defying the imperial edict
of Shih Huan Ti; so many that melons grew
in winter on the burial ground.

Thus much concerning those thing which I beheld most certainly
with mine eyes, I friar Odoricus have here written:
other strange things also I have of purpose omitted,
because men do not believe them unless they should see them.

Currents flow. The needle turns north
by northwest.

Not long ago we sighted a vessel whose sails, floating
in the wind, were green and slick with moss. We boarded her.
The deck broke beneath our feet. At the helm we found a skeleton
and beside the panel three more, ten in the crew's quarters,
six on the bridge. She is the *Marlborough* out of Glasgow,
last seen in April as she neared the straits of Magellan
with a cargo of wool and meat from Littleton, New Zealand. I
remember my father speaking of her. She was lost when he was
thirteen.

I have spoken with Captain Warren of the Greenland whaler
Herald. He has described to me the apparition
that bore down upon him while the *Herald* was becalmed.
The ghostly vessel was sheathed in ice, he said.
It glistened in the sun. Spars, sails, and ropes
glittered with ice. There was not a sound
except the creak of timber and the wind
through the rigging. Captain Warren, followed by
four members of his crew, went aboard. In the forecastle
on each bunk he found a corpse covered with blankets.
He counted twenty-eight. In the master's cabin
he discovered the captain slouched in a chair with a quill pen
on the table beside the fingers of his right hand,
and the logbook open. She was the *Octavius* out of England,
bound east on the China trade. Captain Warren believes
she was seeking the Northwest Passage.

God knows where we are bound. The sun sets early
and there is not a star. The compass wanders
like a child's toy. We have petitioned our commander
to turn back to Spain. But he has set himself apart from us,
out of his mad desire to count the Indies.

What a man loves, that he clings to
and everything that obstructs his way he despises,

lest he be deprived of what he loves. This I have learned
from St. Maximus the Confessor.

Now the earth is augmented
and now the earth diminishes,
according to the diastole and systole
of my heart. Someone approaches,
suggesting. . .

I could not say how long I have been here.
I stand beneath the bridge
with water fouching my sandals and wonder if I have the right
to climb this metal ladder. Death does not obsess me,
it is life that oppresses me.
I cannot think of one man or woman who would condemn me. Not one.
Lord, let there be a witness. A world of streaming shadows
lives within us.

The influence of Plotinian doctrine on our thought is manifest:
since all things have their origin in God
they must finally return, after their dispersion, to live
again in Him.

If someone, having seen God,
has understood what he has seen
he has not seen God; he has seen of God
His known creatures.

Now the boy approaches, swinging the censer
as it swung in adoration of Bacchus
I remember that the cassock of our priest
originated in Persia, his veil and tonsure in Egypt.
Alb and chasuble are prescribed by Numa Pompilius.
His stole he borrowed from the sacrificial victim,
while his white surplice is described by Ovid.
His formula for the exorcism of evil spirits
he derives from the magicians of Chaldea.

Hilka! Hilka! Beshal
Besha!

This day I mark with a white stone.

SPACES

Gus Blaisdell

She said can't. As yet she was unwilling to say won't.

He answered by removing himself to one corner of the room and rocking his chair against the wall. He wanted to think about what she might have meant without having to ask her what she meant. But, as usual, he thought only about what he thought about rather than about what she might have meant, about what (possibly) desperate thoughts (feelings) might have prompted her to make (utter) a statement (proposition) in which can't was the single, the central, the essential four-letter word. Besides, can't was a contraction.

Exasperated, she asked what he thought he was doing in the corner even though she knew that he was meditating with fascination on his own presence in his own thoughts.

Inventory! In a conical hat. On a high stool. I used to clean erasers after school. That was punishment too. I would clap the bottoms of the erasers together. Up puffed choking clouds of chalk. I coughed. And I coughed. But how I beat their whitened bottoms back to black!

* * * *

Opposite the corner where he sat looking pompous, seriously sullen, and metaphysical, was an object. It came to about a man's hip. It was a dome of reflecting glass with a skirt of red fringe around the base. There was an electric cord at the base and when it was plugged in, a blower inside made the skirt flutter. It might have been an enormous Christmas ornament or a scientific model for something. Whatever it was he thought of it as windowless and called it Danom.

* * * *

The eyes are not the windows of the soul. You cannot look through them into the world beyond. Your own reflection in the eyes of the beloved, the beholder, is a model, nothing more than an imaginary reconstruction based on inference and scant images turned rightside up while on the eye the image is still upside down. What happens in between? After the eye's register but before the mind's correction? What

sorts of spirits pace that space at the speed of light, moving, at the speed of sight, through the tangled fibers of the optic nerve?

* * * *

The domed mirror distorted the room, elongating the space, vibrating the stationary air in the space, cartooning the occupants submerged in the cubic inches of the space. Threw back images of ceilings bulging inwards, windows curling up high like waves rushing in, and the areas of the room receding to multiple vanishing points, sucked into Danom along invisible coordinates strung throughout the room like so many fibers of a spiderweb. The middle distance curved out of existence like a plane parallelogram mapped onto the top of a great circle: 2-space into 3-space, n -space into n -plus-1 space. No way in or out: only inside out.

But in Danom they lived in a castle of white plaster, of dark beams, huge tables, great doors, high windows, and shadowy ceilings. Blowing wind was ocean. The deserts inside and outside were momentarily forgotten as the space between shrunk while the middle distance expanded and expanded.

She was beautiful. He was stark, gaunt in some sense of handsome. He intensely disliked watching her grotesque reflection even though the changes of his own features were an endless fascination. He went through his changes between surfaces of mercury and glass all the while trying not to let her go through hers. But walls, sides, edges, known proportions were beginning to fold up and in upon themselves, coming and closing together slowly. Gastrulated or blastulated, a squeeze in any n -space (where n is greater than 2) and any cube becomes a sphere.

* * * *

The letter from his only remaining correspondent read, in part: "Your last letters have been so odd that I thought I should mention it and hope that you could explain them to me. Your world—I guess this is the way to put it—seems to have become completely discontinuous. At least I can't make the connections, the transitions between paragraphs. They just sit there on the page as obdurate as stones, as if you put them there to keep your letters from blowing away. Nothing connects, nothing hangs together. What's happened? Too much Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza? As usual? But what I don't see is how you can take their worlds so seriously. They are just alternate fictions, a little more elaborate, a little more bare than the usual schemata. . . ."

He wrote in reply: "The life I hope for, struggle for, sacrifice for—not the one I have been trained for, not the endless daily blather and busy work I am paid for—no: the one within, the inside one: It only comes in bits and pieces, at most in segments. Flashes of insight? Consecutiveness like a string of beads?

"I am a fractionally awake monad to which parts of a universe are presented.

"Now do you understand? No thing connects, you write, and you are right. No thing hinges in an other thing. Yes. Right again. Things do tend to fall apart. It's their nature. But there are real, necessary connections between my late afternoon beer, my recalling Mallarmé seeing himself nonexistent in a mirror, my reimagining Descartes staring at his hand for days and sniffing beeswax, my seeing Spinoza's lungs turn as crystal as the constellations, my pondering Wittgenstein playing planets with disciples. . . . God, man, all these hunks, all these little pieces, all these bits are parts of my experience, parts of what is present to me, parts of me—things I bind together! I can't go on and on, on forever, soaring to Andromeda from my backyard, and from Andromeda through the Coal Sack, and then on and on until I get to the farthest geometrical point in the universe, and rest—which finds me seated in my chair, in my study, a note pad on the desk before me, a pencil in hand, and everything, including me, reflected. . . .

"Remember this: A conceptual scheme is an idea that orders sets of other ideas."

Unfinished, unsent; but jotted on the back:

"My mind, my letters, my feelings, yes, even my life. All parts of a shopping list. No connection between one item and the next except that they appear in the list: each will be purchased. That's all that binds things together. What is there that binds things together? I? Me? A list is even less than a recipe. At least a recipe shows you how to concoct, connect, how to put things together, how to order things and make something else out of them, something new . . . I shall begin reading dictionaries. Alphabetical order is a low form of order. What about my language? What about my love? Inside?

"OUTSIDE! The way out is the way in."

Wind blowing. Seeking grip, leaves claw ticking across icy pavements. Now this way, now that, swirling left-handed, circling right-handed, coiling up into eddies. Somebody's picture of the freedom of the will. Wrong. Wind stops. Nothing creaks. Snow falls down. Under eaves still windbells. Why? Down and in, vortexing and spiralling and fun-

nelling to a center, closing in on the wizening pupil of the eye be-
holding. In, always in. The way one person is said to come in to another
person's life? Doubtful. Something sounds.

"Space and time are points of recapitulation. And it's all in time,
and time kills!"

* * * *

The longer his hair grew the blanker his mind grew and he slept for
longer and longer periods of time. He went to bed right after work so
he would not get fired. That was his first strategy.

By the time his hair was over his collar and into his ears he realized
that he was in trouble. He was sleeping thirteen hours at a stretch and
on weekends he seldom bothered to get out of bed. So he began sneak-
ing back into his office after closing hours and curling up in a bedroll
under his desk. That was his second strategy. His office began to smell
odd.

About this time he thought he might take a crack at reading a novel
if he could stay awake long enough, if he could figure out a way to keep
his hair from falling in his eyes. But to figure out a way to keep his
hair from falling in his eyes he would have to stay awake long enough
to figure out a way. . . .

For the past few weeks it seemed that his chairman was hesitant
about asking him a very important question. Was his chairman pur-
posely avoiding him?

He began casting the *I Ching*, studying the result. His children called
him a hippie. His wife called him a nut. The neighbors continued to
gossip about that weird couple next door. And when he stopped smok-
ing and drinking he discovered that a mere hour felt much longer than
just sixty minutes. His days and nights began to improve and to shorten
and to lengthen. His world waxed and waned as a whole.

He cast the *I Ching*. He liked the way that it too was founded upon
unconnectedness, that it too lived in the moment and was as distraught
as himself. The *I Ching* and its principles perfectly reflected him and
his strategies. He tossed and cast away. The *I Ching* was distraught but
it was also fraught with meaning, which is what he most wanted, which
is what he wanted to connect his words to himself with, his words and
himself to the things outside both his words and himself—to connect
and fill the gap between things, between all the different sorts of things
that were obviously intimate parts of the universe presented to him,
who was even now only fractionally awake.

The chairman, working late one night, distinctly heard the sound

of money hitting the floor. He walked down the hall and noticed that there was a light on in one office and that the tinkling seemed to be in there. On opening the door the chairman noticed that the light was under the desk. He bent down. Not only was there a light under the desk but there was a man under there with a book in one hand and three pennies in the cupped palm of the other. And as the coins rang out on the tiled floor, the chairman noted the wild visionary glare in the dark eyes blasting above the light that was flooding out from under the desk.

* * * *

There was a small circular park nearby. He walked through it on his way to and from work. His path was always the same, a diagonal. On either side of the diagonal, trees formed a long colonnade. The length of the diagonal was one hundred thirteen steps, and there were nineteen trees on the left, eleven trees and a stump on the right of his path. In all, including the trees lining the diagonal, there were seventy or eighty trees throughout the park, and from certain angles, and in certain moods, the park recalled a clump of trees verging on a field.

In summer the park was full of children. Families picnicked. Lovers knotted necking together on blankets or drank beer. The park was empty during the winter and it was unlikely that he would find any spilled change in the dead grass. But, at night, love persisted in the cars parked around the park, windows fogged and engines running and exhausts smoking in the cold air. The only sign of life in winter was when a window rolled down and a beer can clattered toward the gutter, louder than usual in the unmoving icy air.

Each year, usually in early spring, park attendants piled up mounds of manure in the park. It might sit for weeks before a crew spread it evenly throughout the park. In anticipation the bare trees would begin to bud. A cycle that never stopped started to begin anew.

And each year the piles of fertilizer disturbed his walk, his idle musings, his otherwise imageless, inhuman thoughts locked tightly on the bones of some philosophy. They were graves. Of hastily buried, quietly but brutally executed enemy soldiers. Nor were they deep. The corpses lay shallow. Inches below upthrusting grasses.

A strong gust of wind!

A scratching, sniffing, rooting animal;

A heavy, driving, ceaseless rain!

A hand with a stopped watch loose around the bones of a wrist. Exposed. Were there as many as ten mounds? Maybe twelve, fourteen?

Surely no more than fifteen! Say there were ten mounds piled here and there in the park, each humped up at the base of a tree, and underneath the manure warming the decomposing corpse, the dead were adding theirs to the cycle.

The enemy soldiers, hands behind their heads, uniforms torn and shoes broken open with ice and mud, were marched into the park in single file. Some limped as if in pain. One crawled, dragging a flopping leg. And others were proud and erect while still others supported another between them.

Once under the trees each captor chose his enemy and then picked out his tree. (The exposed watch as a historical object, and, as historical objects, the bones of the wrist still in articulation with the watch, proved that the captors had not stripped their personal enemies, also historical objects.)

Each executioner smoked a large cigar and on each stubbled chin was a brown dribble of juice as if locusts drooled and struggled out from smoking mouths. They puffed and puffed, pulled and pulled on their cigars, and their puffs were larger than usual because each was composed not only of smoke but of excited hot breath amplified by the cold dome of unmoving air enclosing executioner and victim.

He trotted through, eyes on the ground, coat flapping, shoulders rounded, head down, and clenched hands deep in coat pockets, the air closing tightly in around him with a snap like water freezing.

The field beyond was full of mirrors through which he broke, sloshed, legs trying to hold back running feet, and cold feet stomping on and on. How the roosters along the shelled fence swelled chests like bellows and screamed, and screamed, and screamed. How they heralded his approach and his flight till he stopped in the road and flung his automatic weapon at them and then threw himself into the drainage ditch vomiting and crying bitterly. Broken ice pecked at his submerged head. His sobs bubbled to ice in the freezing water, and as they froze and rose he wanted to hold a handful. The roosters cocked their heads and rolled their eyes and clucking looked down at the ditch.

Love clattered toward its gutter. Under a shattered crystal a season stopped forever at 5:01. A.M.? P.M?

* * * *

He wanted to live inside something round. Right angles and cubes partitioned space in the wrong way. One thought vertically in cubes, and horizontally, coming to believe that a straight line was the shortest

distance between two points in any and every space. While it was not even true in the normal, common spaces through which one passed. A linear trap. Navigators knew that it was false but then navigators were free.

At such times he desired her comforts and the sullen releases she could offer him. But the areas between them could not be crossed. One had to reach toward the other. One had to touch the other first, had to risk exposure across several linear feet of floor, had to pass through some thousands of cubic feet of unmoving air, which was all they shared now besides their two ghostly presences, each of which displaced so much space, staking some kind of claim. One would not come within several feet of the feelings of the other. Round. They moved round one another. They prowled and stalked, circling. From any point of view an eclipse was plainly visible. Streaming with darkness, their overlapped shadows lay tensed, quivering between them—not mutually exclusive but mutually occult like stones which point to their homes.

* * * *

Langorous, indolent as Baudelaire's unkempt and hotly dreamed of women with coarse black manes into which a trembling man could plunge his trembling hands and BE! Yes, BE—a long time unremembering. Un-re-mem-ber-ing. But Baudelaire had named that poem "Lethe," and his women had all been giantesses monstrous and mad. Did he hear oblivion's hum? The windy uncoiling of total annihilation?

He died converted and absolved.

The animals were not emblems or symbols. There were animals being themselves

uncaged
with their
freedom
and their
sinuous
being.

Yet they held an undue fascination, intimated a power beyond their mere actions. He dreamed, and in the middle of his dream

rhinos crash forward
humping, a cheetah sprints
away, leaving spots behind
smudging the fiery air
bands of mandrills patrol

the only waterhole
a python unhinges its jaws
pink to fit over silence.

He dreamed himself inside and now watched himself struggling to break through a shattered mirror's webbing. Different points of view came into existence as quickly as he created different selves with differing requirements—he was surrounded and enveloped by countless of his own reflections; he was immersed and fighting upwards through total darkness; winds curled and curled and curled round him; again and again he smashed his fists against the endlessly varying surfaces. Fibers stretched; cracks increased, expanded and spread outward in rays from the weakening, crumbling center of his attack.

He woke in the middle of his screaming. He thought, "Can't," but as yet he was unwilling to surrender.

GEORGE AMABILE

FIVE SKETCHES: TORONTO/MEXICO, 1968

1.

Across the sealed window
jet speed presses the raindrops
into a school of clear sperm. The heads
collect highlights, overcast
as far as the eye can see. . . .

Solid ground sinks, tilts
disappears, and there is nothing
but the close doubtful mist. Inside
three girls, tanned
and firm under crisp skirts:
They've been through this before.

And we come through
to a blue sky over the cloud fields
and cloud cities taking the light.

Outside your window the temperature
is 63 degrees below zero. . . .
I watch the sunset burn.

2.

Dust. Glare. The loose stones
of streets that seem about to clatter downhill
under your boots, plaster dust, pebbles,
talus eroded from adobe walls
where a burro nods
up & down, pumping its dry well.

In the *jardín*, meaningless bells
& clocks top the stones, stone chips, mortar—
those thick fronts built up
against the sun. From a distance
it seems like nothing
so much as a mirage,
the dark trees grown by invisible courtyards.

It is repaired often.
The work is difficult
intricate, rhythmical and very slow.

Perhaps the men in their straw hats
and patched clothes know
that time is never less than life itself. . . .

3.
The rough cliffs & cities
of the clouds, entered
dissolve to vast mist.
Left behind, they stand
at a distance I will never master.

In the smokeless fire
of afternoon
the white clouds gather
and grey, the air
electrifies as it cools.
The town's unglazed
ceramic textures grow diffuse.

But seeds, pellets, rosettes
of rain collect
until the dust begins to look
like topsoil. The stones gleam
amethyst & smooth coral in the aquarium light
as trickles grow to a rush of cloudy water.

Earth colours have returned
to dry walls, the once powdery doors. . .
Can this be entered?

4.
We sit in a patio, complete
with fountain & banana trees
talking weather in three languages.

Outside the sky burns
darkens. Down by the arroyo's
viscid green, near the dump

animals raise their mixed wiry cries.
Sometimes a dog still dies, poisoned,
convulsing in the street without shame.

Electric lights come on.
 They soon black out.
 No one even bothers to light a match.

The host explains
 "It's nothing too serious,
El cambio de la luz."

5.
 Evening. A woman
 carries a
 pail of live coals
 from the lower streets
 to her taco stand in the *jardín*,
 and as the wind disintegrates
 dense embers, it lifts
 a swirl, a comet's tail
 of light fiery seeds
 from a smoke-blackened pod
 into a sky already thick with stars.

STAN BRAKHAGE

F Acts

I make IF of it
 As I make It of it
 As IF I make It
 As if "as" were "A-Z"
 As "it" "is"
 "Is" "As"

and so for THE: Axe:

AXE: :the

S A won, mind moving now axiomatically, viz:

- (won): of script of brain, say: "gray matter".
- (too): (d) scrip (of Chaucer) mine(d: bray IN as)
 print(er: IMitater) a(ver((b)) as handwriting),
 say: "Coll or as sociate mat."
- (the re): (see) script (see Shakespeare) my(((e))nd:
 "T,/ But now 'tis made an H") refer(((h))ence:
 Anthony and Cleopatra, IV, vii,8) other(((X))YZ:
 Zukofsky's Bottom on Shakespeare, page 33, top),
 say: "Dis cull or dis A-Z ocean ma(h)."

(F, or): (be) scribe (be((e)) Milt-) Im eye (be I((n))
Whit-) "cookie-" (be eye in ((g)) -on -man)
"pusher" (be in((g)) Pound), say: "Disc all
or 'dis a sew see on 'em'".

(F I've): (a) scri(m) and (a((m))) a (ma((n))) and
(((S))((A))) : "Fire of waters."

AS Kelly

"The truth of the matter

is this:

that man's body

lives in a fire of waters
& will live forever in
the first taste."

AS Collage

"The taste"

FAS

"The truth"

FA-Z

"of the matter"

IF

"is this:

that"

I

"man's body"

F Acts

"lives in a fire of waters
& will live forever in
the first taste."

F aXe, thus, makes bode of man's
makes waters subject to his
(and particularizes Z)

A CONTINUAL INTEREST IN THE
SUN AND SEA

(Excerpts)

by

Keith Gunderson

```

    0      0      0      0
    0      0      0      0      0
    0      0      0      0      0
FISH FISH FISH FISH 0
    I WANT TO CATCH A FISH
      0      0      0      0      0
      0      0      0      0      0
      0      0      0      0      0
    FISH FISH FISH FISH FISH
  
```

(Mel's thoughts)

```

    o      o      o      o
    o      o      o      o      o
    o      o      o      o      o
fish fish fish fish o
    I want to catch a fish
      o      o      o      o      o
      o      o      o      o      o
      o      o      o      o      o
    fish fish fish fish fish
              o
              o
              o
I want to catch a fish
I want to I want to I want to
              o
              o
              o
want, to catch a fish
              o      o
              o      o
              o      o
— catch a fish fish want to
want to want to want to
  want want want
    o      o
    o      o
    o      o
    a fish to catch a fish to catch
catch catch catch a catch a catch
      o      o      o
      o      o      o
      o      o      o
catch a fish catch a fish fish
and then I want to catch another one
  
```

T
E O
X W
A E
S R

Concerning:

the oil derrick on a barge with drill plunged into the seafloor
like a greedy wasp
with its stinger in a plum.

What's called a "Texas Tower". A scar on the seascape
which took getting used to.

Nudged in a bit sometimes.

Sometimes nudged out.

We'd guess about distances:.....3 miles?...2½?...2?

Then it's gone.

Nobody sees it leave. And the next night

we miss it. Like the tides, or driftwood, or weather, it was worth
talking about,

decked out in its lights

like a low-slung constellation.

We'd ask each other

what the men did out there.

Their individual tasks.

How, it must feel going on into the night

as the shoreline flicked one after one itself off,

as behind us the singing of insects surrounded the ankles
of mountains,

while behind them

only the moon was,

and the invisible noises

of Japan.

gulls wrestling
 with the
 wind. this is hardly
 an odd day. yet
 the way your skirt flies up suggests
 loudlier than usual the higher than
 thigh-white of you. yes. that's the mood
 I'm in, as you stand on the porch, thus: sun-
 light flung
 over your right shoulder.

I want you
 everywhichway. want you
 while the lizard carved out, of that which he lies on,
 his rock, is a sort of bas relief.
 it is too early for lunch
 too late for exploring the tidepools.
 so let me just undress you here. continue the explor-
 ations long ago begun as the sun swings
 over us on its way towards 12:00.
 the tide grows high-
 er. Walt Disney, had he had a more interesting
 mind could have filmed in
 s l o w m o t i o n
 the act of love
 beginning with

gulls; could have wrung
 each visual pleasure from its progressions
 with those tricky cameras of his.
 we have instead

THE LIVING DESERT

the way the flowers come on. and I've been
 told that in another film he made lemmings charge
 over a cliff, something, I've also been told,
 they don't do by nature.
 what have I learned?
 invented?
 been born with?

do I
 undress you
 by nature? here, now,
 as the sun swings over us,
 as the metabolism of lizards
 keeps up
 the awkward rhythm
 of things.

A GAME CALLED
TRYING TO DISCERN

THE INDIVIDUAL JOURNEY: or try to keep your eye on
a single wave coming in
pick any wave coming in

go on,
go on,
pick one:

now

try to keep
your eye on
your eye on
your
eye on

on

it

is it

still
the very wave
you'd
picked?

(for those who do not
live near the sea
use a leaf
or a flake
of snow
fall-
ing

()

()

()

()

BLUE SEA bless your BLUE WHALE

wherever he might soon

not()be;

you,

even you,

would be

small-

er

with()out

him

()

()

()

()

()

()

you
hold ho
hand
s
and wa
and walk
and walk
d walk
walk—

34

ALVARO CARDONA-HINE

PETER HEWITT AT THE PIANO

lilac

(a sprig)

released

a faint moon

pinning a tree

against the forest floor

the moss running on without profile

tattling across the hard terrain

and sunlight of twenty years

a lock of its hair

pressed against memory

a pedal

a fingernail

a curtain

dust on the electrical panel

bombs exploding in the earth

cadavers of children

a girl

April

another life

where does it take us

such language?

each of your fingers is the arc of a pebble

tossed into

midsummer/

the plum orchard/

from time to time a fruit drops on the sand

the silence burying Debussy in its limestone

the breeze seeping through tall cedar

Chagall in armfuls

when lilacs last and love were painted

infinite days and clouds

the eye

its word of light

across the vellum skies
the spider under water

the yellow grapefruit endures through the night
to glow again

grateful as a man
its seed a dimness of sparrows

/hammering home
/I was going to say less about

strange
that the earth should thread the spines of fish
with young terror
the Chinese cook folds the net over the open door
canaries moult

you know
a single thread might break

I was going to be accurate
about dwelling in air
about

urine
(something within the soundboard)
but it went away
in agony
gone
gone

not even I can doubt what/ I am/
come to this
art as refuge
banked fire
of the agrarian yesterday

the sounds are what I am
proximity of weapons
radiance
the remembered hovering of bees
about the flowering
the valley like a cup
of wine that's blue

simultaneity
a minute folded in half
and placed inside another
rain
thoughts like steppingstones
pecked clean
by the sharp beaks
of the most persistent notes

two feet of water in the flooded church
trout in the pews

echoes
no one comes to hear what I hear

in the sacristy
a lobster crawls into a vermilion slipper

what I hear isn't to be heard
I have waited
no sound is possible
an utter perfection of silences follows me

CAPTURED ENEMY
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN A
DEAD AMERICAN CHILD WHO
FELL INTO HIS SWIMMING POOL
EARLY THIS MORNING AND
THE VIET CONG

Stanley Kiesel

Dear American Child Who Just Drowned,

We would like very much to make contact with you. We are sure you do not represent that segment of the American people who encourage white teeth.

Cordially,
The Viet Cong

Dear Viet Cong,

I am glad to write to someone across the ocean.

I go to Henry David Thoreau Elementary School and I am in a class for the gifted.

My mother saves coffee cans of cooking grease for the poor Mexicans in Acapulco. I have a lot of things I can send you if you're interested. Last Christmas I received a set of bombs. They are rubber and inflatable and come with three patches.

Sincerely yours,
Little Corpse

Dear Little Corpse,

We are so happy to have heard from you. Your letter gave us excellent opportunity to practice our English.

Please tell us about your swimming pool. While there are many pools of water here we do not swim in them.

We all thank you for the sugarless gum.

Please say hello to the film stars.

Your friends in Viet Cong

Dear Viet Cong Friends,

In reply to your last letter, my pool is just great. It's completely enclosed with two wading areas, a diving board, a heater with thermostat that keeps it always at 70 degrees, two automatic filter systems and a man who comes every third Friday to vacuum clean it for leaves and dead bugs. We wouldn't be without one.

Do you have any hobbies?

Yours sincerely,
Little Corpse

Dear Little Corpse,

There are Chinese here and Burmese but to the best of our knowledge we have been unable to discover any Hobbese.

Since last hearing from you we have been busy strengthening our earthen dikes which have been badly in need of repair.

My older brother asks if it is true that in America used swimming pool water is shipped to impoverished rural areas for drinking purposes?

All best,
Viet Cong

Dear Viet Cong,

There is no truth whatsoever to the story about used swimming pool water going to negroes. Water is free in America.

I'll explain what I mean about hobbies. It's what you like to do in your spare time. For instance, I am a rock hound. I have a very good collection of igneous rocks. And I also have over a thousand abalone shells. My sister collects dolls from all nations and my mother travels every summer and hunts up sayings from old gravestones. Dad used to have a miniature railroad. Then he changed to photography and his own dark room. Now he's taking a wine-tasting class. That was lucky for me because I got to keep the corks for my bottle cap collection.

Your friend,
Little Corpse

Dear Little Corpse,

We are reading your letter by our one candle here in our cave school. We have a number of rocks we can send you for your collection. We attend school by night as it is unsafe to go out by day. The light is poor and many of us are suffering eye and head aches. But your letters afford us much joy. Do you have many friends? We are so interested in your mother's collection of gravestone sayings. Please send us some. We go

to school from dusk to midnight. We are studying punitive tactics in wars of liberation and English colloquial speech.

Your good friends,
Viet Cong

Dear Viet Cong,

I look forward to your letters so much. I have a lot to tell you. First, my dad was drafted today. Second, to answer all your questions. We go to school in the daytime here. It's nighttime that the streets aren't safe. I don't have any friends here yet. There is an old man next to me who nods to me but doesn't say much else. He was in the army a long time ago and still wears his uniform. On the other side is a very nice lady named Miss Mortimer who was a school teacher and died from inhaling too much hair spray. She's been trying to teach me sentence structure. But of course she's not my own age and sometimes goes for days without talking to me she's so busy pulling roots out of her hair. Her hair, by the way, is very long. She is proud that it still is growing. It's hard for me to remember my mother's gravestone collection because I'm forgetting a lot. I think one goes like this: Here lies Thaddeus Putnam, famous Orator who, like his predecessor, now holds pebbles between his teeth. Silly isn't it? Grandma Betty visited me today. She was my babysitter when my parents went to Las Vegas to gamble. Who sits for you?

I miss my grandmother most. Do you have a grandmother?

Your friend,
Little Corpse.

I hope you answer real soon.

Dear Punctual Little Corpse,

Please send us a description of your father. We are most anxious to meet him.

Now dear friend, we wonder if you have ever read Karl Marx? Our study group anxiously desires to acquaint you with his work and thoughts.

We are expecting the rainfall momentarily. Until it comes we cannot plant the rice. We are kept busy however sharpening bamboo stakes.

Thank you for sharing your mother's collection with us. Do you also have a stone with a saying? We would enjoy hearing it. Yes we have grandmothers. Lately they are very busy smearing stakes with buffalo dung.

We hasten to tell you to please give your father this good advice:
Throw it back. Don't fall in. Lie down quickly.

Affectionately,
Your friends in Viet Cong

Dear Viet Cong,

How are you all? My father is five foot eleven, weighs one hundred and sixty-seven pounds and whistles through his teeth. My picture is in his wallet.

My grandmother is very good with her hands also. Crocheting and such. I keep thinking about how my grandmother blamed my mother for my falling in the pool because she said Mom should have been home with me instead of at the Beauty Parlor. And Mom said it was Dad's fault because he didn't want to spend the money on fencing the pool. Whose fault do you think it is?

♦ Always your friend,
Little Corpse

Dear Little Corpse,

We have had several heated discussions in our cadre about the ideological ramifications of the question you posed in your last letter.

It seems that the problem of possible male chauvinism on the part of your grandmother plus the larger issue of low priority economic goals in relation to safeguarding the interests of a rising class of fenceless children demand a broader national commitment to programs involving the peasantry.

Your friends,
V. C.

Dear V. C.

Thank you so much for your interest. It rained today. The box I'm in is leaking.

—What does Karl Marx say about roots?

All my best,
Little Corpse

Dear Friend,

Today we found your father's wallet but your picture was not in it. Yes, it is starting to rain here also. But not enough. It has been necessary to use our scoop to maintain proper level in the fields.

We are sending to you, under diplomatic pouch, two books: *The Roots of Marxism* by Franz Lehar, and *Marx and Rootism* by Jacques Offenbach.

All our love,
Viet Cong

Dear Viet Cong,

I don't know why but I feel sort of sad today. I haven't heard from you in a while. What have you been doing? By the way, you misunderstood my letter. Roots, tree roots, that's what I meant. They're a real problem here. Miss Mortimer resents them something awful. Once they get their hooks into you they never let go.

My mother planted a weeping willow over my grave and it's got two long roots. One is near my neck and the other is over my right foot. I try to talk to them. Miss Mortimer says it helps, for a while anyway. It startles them, she says. She has three birch trees over her head (it's a habit here to plant them in threes), and she says she's persuaded them several times to go in the other direction. But she's getting discouraged.

I was wondering what kind of a machine a scoop is? Is it like a power shovel? I had one that really worked. It cost twenty-five dollars and ran on batteries.

Always your friend,
L. C.

P. S. Colonel Jensen really doesn't have a uniform on. I got a better look today. All roots.

Dear Friend, Little Corpse,

Since our last letter to you, I know you will be concerned to hear that our crops have all been destroyed. We have been eating only rice husks. We have gotten the impression from your letters that in America there is an oversupply of roots—is this true? We hope someday to catch up.

The scoop is a basket hung on a tripod that shovels water up from one level to another. It is operated by one man who after several hours of scooping enables the water to rise to a proper level. This is, as you say it, one of our hobbeses. (Did we spell that correctly?)

Best,
Viet Cong

P. S. Of what political persuasion is your Colonel Jensen? Which war is he?

Dear Viet Cong,

I was sorry to hear about your crops. I tried to talk to Colonel Jensen yesterday about you but he got very angry. He said you were the yellow peril (please explain that). He's working very hard, he said, on a project he wants to promote for everybody, he says, who isn't "true blue." It's called Suits of Roots. I'm not sure what that means, but anyway that's how he's persuaded. I don't like him. Miss Mortimer says he's from a very early war. The root over my head has grown down to my arm and if my handwriting is shaky it's because it jiggles my wrist every so often.

All my regards. Will sign off now,

Your little Corpse.

P.S. What is a rice paddy? Is it like a salmon paddy?

Dear Friend, Little Corpse,

I regret to say we were much put out by your refusal to accept the books we sent you. The package has come back stamped: Whereabouts of Addressee Unknown. Our French friends have informed us that you presently lie in Rosebud Cemetery, plot number 302. We urge you to reconsider and react with a more favorable attitude towards those who have always loved you and respected your memory.

Viet Cong

P.S.: We saw your father today but will not say anymore until we are sure he is five foot eleven.

Dear Viet,

Of course I didn't reject the package! Plot 302 is Colonel Jensen and did he raise a ruckus when he saw the books! He's talked to all the friends who were in his very own war and they're going to contact people in high places and make trouble. But Miss Mortimer said not to worry because the Colonel can only contact people in very low places, and they don't count, she said.

My mother visited me today. She kept crying and whispering, "Come back, please, come back." I told her I was really O.K. except for the willow tree but she didn't hear me. She pulled out some weeds around the tree and that gave it so much confidence it grew an extra inch. One root is around my chest and the other is tangled in-between my toes. I had a long talk with the roots. Today they listened. "We can't stop," they whispered to me. "Nothing stops." They really give me the creeps.

I know you're going to ask me what creeps mean so I'll just say it means the shivers.

Please answer soon,
Little Corpse. Plot # 304

Our Dear Little Corpse,

This time we have successfully bypassed your Fascist Provocateur Jensen. So now what do you think of Lehar and Offenbach?

Thank you for the Band Aids. Do they come in, as you say, life-size? Please thank also Miss Mortimer for the boxes of ball point pen re-fills. We are not sure yet how we can put them to best use.

Regards,
Viet Cong

Dear Friends in Viet Cong,

What a wonderful surprise! They brought father in at ten this morning. He looks real neat in his uniform. His beret matches the grass.

"What the hell has happened to you?" was his first remark. I was a little embarrassed? I laughed.

"I fell into our pool, don't you remember?" Then I looked at him carefully. "Gosh," I said, "where's your other leg?"

"Where the hell do you think it is!" he replied, pretty miffed. Anyway, I talked up his medal and that gave him a big boost. It's the Congressional Medal of Honor. I certainly feel proud of him. Colonel Jensen has been so friendly. I never heard him talk so much before. As for Miss Mortimer, she just nodded to Dad and turned away.

There's a new root coming down. It's very impressed with Dad's medal, it seems to be heading straight for it.

Devotedly,
Your Little Corpse

Dear Little American Corpse,

We have been incapacitated by the loss of our water buffalo and have not been able to plow. Nyat San Get, my older brother and some of his friends have surreptitiously procured several what you call GOLF CARTS—am I correct?—from your officers' headquarters in our capital.

These are a boon to us except they have a tendency to stall in furrows. We have been able to keep them running on rice wine. They are

especially worthy as one man can plow and another stand and be a lookout for mines.

The entire cadre wishes to thank you for the ball and jacks.

Best wishes and regards
to your roots,
Your friends,
Viet Cong

Dear Viet Pals,

I know that you will be happy to learn that father is right here with me in the front lines fighting the roots. I don't dare tell him however about our correspondence as he gets upset when I mention you. He doesn't say anything but I know he misses his leg. I have a special favor to ask you. Do you think you could locate Dad's leg and ship it out here by Christmas? I would really appreciate it so much. Miss Mortimer talked a long time to dad this morning. She says he must cultivate a world view. And stop feeling sorry for himself. He called her a bony Socialist. She said she would never speak to him again.

Mom visited Dad today, and did lots of crying. The roots get excited even when the ground gets a little damp. Mom planted a new tree by Dad which has caused us a lot of concern. However it's a pine and Colonel Jensen says they're slow growers.

You don't mention any of the latest things I sent you. Just add milk, there's already dried strawberries in the corn flakes—it is really delicious and satisfies minimum daily requirements. —Actually what fruit over there is now in season?

The paper umbrellas have been coated with a special plastic to resist the sun's rays. I know it is hot where you are.

Love,
Your Little Corpse

P.S.: Dad's in a stew. He said he expected the ribbon to go but not the metal.

Dear Dear Little Corpse,

You must excuse us but we have eaten both the Corn Flakes and the umbrellas.

As regarding your request about your father's leg. Please send us a brief description. You must understand there are many legs here, some of course, belonging to us.

We must end now as our entire village has just been ignited. Thatch burns incredibly fast.

V. C.

Dear Viet Cong Pals,

I've been talking to Colonel Jensen about Dad's leg. I haven't told him much except that you might be willing to help us look for it. I've never seen him get so excited. All day yesterday he was tossing about composing a letter to you. He's insisted I send it to you.

Best wishes,
Your Little Corpse

Gentlemen:

According to Agreements of the International Control Commission with respect to severed limbs I quote article 21 Final Declaration, Slash and Hack Dismemberment Conference at Smithereens, Nova Scotia, signed, Supreme Military Commander, General Piecemeal; I quote:

"The liberation and repatriation of all limbs detained by each of the two parties at the coming into force of the present agreement shall be carried out under the following conditions:

(a) In cases in which place of burial is known and the existence of said limb or limbs has been established, the Commander of the Forces of either party shall, within a specific period, permit the other party to enter territory under their military control for the purpose of finding and removing arms, legs, hands, feet, heads and any or all intact organs except individual fingers and toes or unidentifiable fragments of same.

(b) It is understood however that these limbs shall not be surrendered to the appropriate authorities of the other party unless due and circumspect recognition be given to them under present international law by a Joint Commission representing both parties.

(c) Not more than fifty (50) limbs including those belonging to officers, shall, during any one month, be permitted to depart that portion of the area north of the provisional military demarcation line unless properly replaced by process of rotation, "rotation" being defined as the replacement of limbs by other limbs of the same echelon. Rotation shall be conducted on the basis of piece-for-piece of the same type and with similar charac-

teristics, such as, one blue eye for one blue eye, one hairy arm for one hairy arm, etc.

(d) Each party shall notify the Joint Commission at least two days in advance of any arrivals or departures of separate or single limbs, which units must enter and leave only through enumerated entry points.

(e) In the event that said limbs cannot be adequately identified or are contested by either or both parties, said limbs shall be displayed for a period of thirty (30) days in the demilitarization zone after which time said limbs shall be converted into bone meal and distributed under auspices of International Under-developed Foreign Aid Assistance Program.

"In accordance with clause fifteen (15) article ten (10), description of missing leg herewith appended:

Left leg, blue-veined, full calf, knobby knee, slightly fatty joints marked by several freckles with tattoo of mushroom cloud in three colors just below thigh; exceptionally large big toe; blood vessels slightly distended, healthy and red; bold instep and prominent heel; unmistakable American leg."

Dear Little Corpse,

We received your letter today with Jensen enclosure. Disappointed that you alone could not undertake leg project. However all available facilities alerted but must warn you of extenuating circumstances which may develop and delay plan, namely an overplentifulness of legs, some of which are spurious counterfeits planted by enemy insurgents designed to inculcate a false sense of security among our forces.

We are affixing a list of questions to this letter and hope you will answer them promptly to the best of your ability. My Battalion Commander, who by the way, is just your age, would like to know if you are a Caucasian or a Negro. If you are the former, are you by chance, as white as this paper?

Awaiting your reply,
V.C.

To All My Friends in Viet Cong,

I shall try to answer all your questions. First, I have always gotten all "A's" in school. "A" means one dollar. "B's" are fifty cents. My

parents could never agree on what to give me for "C's," so I tried not to get those.

Secondly, I wear braces on my teeth because my occlusion is not normal. (By the way, I was disappointed in the snapshot to see how many of you guys suck your thumbs. Believe me, you'll be sorry later on.)

Yes, I like cookouts. Have you ever baked potatoes outdoors? It's just great.

Oh and about how white I am. That's hard to say because I'm so tan. When I peel I still am brown. Of course my bones are white. I know you are a dark color. Are you the color of Puerto Ricans or our cleaning lady? I'm just curious.

Sincerely,
Little Corpse

Dear Little Corpse,

It has taken us a while to reply because both your letter and those friends we gave it to are not here anymore. However, we remember nearly all you asked.

Enclosed is a sample of our skin which has peeled. Many of our people are peeling now, but do not be deceived by the color, our skin is normally brown, not black. You are indeed fortunate to have your father close by. I have not yet located my own. We have been offered 16,000 piastres to enter this camp. So we have moved. With some of this money we can buy a hoe and a hammer.

The search goes on for your father's leg. There are many here with fatty calves but none yet with cloud tattoo.

In our foraging for legs we have located many medals—would you like us to send you some? There are French medals, Japanese medals, Portuguese medals, Chinese medals and Mongol medals. Which would you prefer? Many are in excellent condition.

As always, your friends
in Viet Cong

note new address: Strategic Hamlet 237A

Dear Old Friends,

The leg arrived safely yesterday and we have been in a dither ever since. Father swears it is not his! Colonel Jensen also declares that the tattoo is a fake and that it is obviously an Oriental leg. Miss Mortimer took a long look and muttered something about she hasn't experienced too many American men's legs but she's positive it's like no leg she's ever seen.

Father doesn't want it, and I don't know what to do with it. I don't want to hurt your feelings because of our friendship but can you take it back and send some of those medals instead? About six of each? That would cheer Dad up I know, since now his own medal has become so rusty and covered with roots. Speaking of roots, they're all over me now. Quite friendly but I don't ever get the feeling I'm alone anymore. But things are getting better. Nobody visits me anymore so there's less crying and that cuts down a little on root growth. We had a lot of dry weather too so that one of Miss Mortimer's Birch trees died. We're celebrating that tonight. The other trees are holding on for dear life. Today they mowed the lawn and accidentally ran over the new Pine that's over Dad. It's stopped growing! Excuse this long rambling letter. But I have to stop now as we are expecting a lot of Dad's buddies momentarily.

All my love,
Little Corpse

Dear Little Corpse, our American,
as you say, Pal,

We are distressed to hear about the leg. You must know this situation has split our cadre wide open. Some of us believe we must continue to cooperate and seek yet another leg; others in our group demand we abrogate our original agreement and withdraw the leg immediately; and yet another group—a splinter group to be sure—wants the leg to be placed under international controls, a trusteeship of the non-aligned.

Actually, the discovery of your father's leg was relatively easy because his seemed to stand out among the rest; the others we found being mostly from women and children.

However it is vital that we critically reappraise our position on legs in general. Absolutely essential to unmask all unprincipled revisionists.

By the by, did we ever get the chance to tell you that those packages of sugarless gum really helped us, as you say, get "over the hump" with the cavities from all the candy bars?

Keep in touch please,
Viet Cong

Dear Viet Cong,

They've opened a new section here for Dad's buddies who arrived last week late at night. They're awfully noisy. Even the roots can't take it, a lot of them have gone off in other directions. I'm angry at Dad and

haven't talked to him lately because of what he called you. He said you were sneak-eyed yellow-skinned little dickheads. And he said all your mothers who were cleaning his barracks and washing his shirts were lazy little dirty bug-outs. Dad's always been fussy about his collars.

Dad's buddies liked your medals but they did complain about their being dirty. Finally one guy figured out that if he could get one between his teeth he could polish it by rubbing it on his shoulder.

Now I have a special favor to ask of you. I am awfully lonely without kids my own age to talk to. I would sure love some company. Do you think you could send me a friend or two? I would prefer someone who has their arms and legs, maybe somebody who fell into a swimming pool.

Thanks for your consideration,
Little Corpse

Dear Little Corpse, Rosebud Cemetery,
Plot number 304A,

We are sending you, under separate cover, nineteen (19) children, seven of whom were drowned when a dam was destroyed, the other twelve dying from eating poisoned rice. They range from six months to fourteen and are most anxious to make your acquaintance.

Much love,
Viet Cong

Dear V.C.,

There must be a mistake! I got 19 children but they're all black, covered with burns, and refuse to say anything to me! I think all three of your groups ought to seriously investigate your shipping room people what with Dad's leg and now these kids—someone's flubbing up the works!

Your disappointed friend
at Rosebud,

L. C.

* * *

Dear Viet Cong,

It's been so long now that I've heard from you that I've forgotten who wrote last.

It's been wonderful here since my new friends came. There's John and Michael who got killed on the freeway, Alice and Debbie who died from playing with matches (they don't look half so bad as those kids

you sent out), Tommy, who was smothered in an old refrigerator, Pamela who swallowed ant paste, Timmy who got bitten by a rat, little Joey who drowned in his tub, Marsha who choked on her mother's credit card, Gregory who fell off his father's motorcycle and of course the twins Jay and Janet who both drowned in a flood control reservoir. So you see things have a way of working out!

I've saved the best news for last. They've opened a new Veterans' section next door to us and they get all the attention, lots of visitors, lots of crying. The gardeners hardly ever water here anymore, all the trees are dying, the roots are very weak and only need to be nudged to make them grow in another direction. There's even talk of blacktopping the entire area and building a supermarket.

Don't bother sending out any more kids. There's plenty here now and more coming.

So long for now,
regards to all,
Always your pal,
Little Corpse

P.S.: A new one just came in—nice kid named Sammy—played with his mother's electric knife—

YOUR NOSE IS GONNA GROW

Lionel Williams

One bleak fantasy morning in the long ago, I was born in a deep-seasweat that went womb, soft womb, I feel so afraid womb in the county hospital in Oxnard, California. I looked like the other splib babies except for my red kinky hair, my pine wood color and my big red ears that didn't look at all like you would expect an ordinary splib's ears would look. But the length of my nose was something that made everyone ponder. My nose was long where the other splibs noses were short, thin where theirs were thick, and sort of rounded in various places where theirs were square. But the most peculiar thing about my nose was that it gave the impression of still growing, and the problem was that I was born with a longer nose than any other splib baby in the hospital. In addition, when I got older I had to wear bifocal eyeglasses and when I was born I looked like a sad-eyed orphan doll, for a lingering sadness seemed to hang over me like a halo.

My parents were very upset about my appearance; especially my nose; my father going so far as to suggest that perhaps I wasn't his; but my mother assured him no one could be as ugly as I was and not be my father's child. My mother was afraid that with such a deformity as a long nose that I might have brain damage; but the doctor told her that I was a normal baby in every way except for the shape of my nose, and he went on to tell her that it was merely a superstition to believe that my nose would grow any longer, or that its length was due to any unnatural conditions such as black luck or some kind of evil; its length was just one of those things that happens, that's all.

But my various relatives didn't believe the doctor's explanation about my nose at all. Those relatives on my father's side said my nose was the fault of my mother. If she hadn't been the sort of woman she was: running around with other men, and so on, the Lord wouldn't have made my nose so long. But those relatives on my mother's side said my nose was an outward manifestation of my father's sin. My father being a crazy man, a man who lived in dream worlds, a man who let women make a fool of him. And then, there were those relatives, god-mothers

and aunts, women, old with wrinkled black faces and putty-grey hair sprouting from beneath wide floppy hats, who said my nose was a warning from God, that my life might go all right so long as my nose didn't grow any more, but if it started to grow, and that was why it looked as if it wasn't through growing yet, the growth would be a sure sign that I had done something in my life to trouble the waters, and that I would end up sinking.

Then those relatives with the black wrinkled faces and putty-grey hair would look at me and shake their heads and moan and groan and sing prayers to God that He wouldn't let my nose grow any longer. Then they would file by me and each one of them would kiss my nose in turn, and each one of them would place a silver coin on my nose for good luck; the coins and, I've now come to think the luck too, I would immediately shake off with glee.

And though I knew what the doctor had told my mother was true, that it was silly to think that people's noses grew, the warning of my black relatives worried me, and I tried to be good and stay clear of trouble; but this became very nervewracking, for I was constantly running into people, situations that made my nose throb and hurt, because any growth, any worthwhile change in your life is usually accompanied by pain; and to keep from suffering while you live is usually impossible.

When it came time to name me, in order to make up for my nose, it took my mother and father almost two weeks before they could find a name they thought would be suitable for me. At the outset, it was decided that I would be given a special name, not one of those everyday common slob names such as Bill or Joe, or heaven forbid, Sam. And so, my father and mother had my relatives bring them all sorts of books that gave the explanation of royal names. But it was one of my aunts with the wrinkled black faces who finally helped my father name me, my mother tired of the waiting and confusion having given up long ago. My aunt said she had a vision about the Apostle Peter and she said that Peter should be my name. Before officially having me christened my aunt made my father kill a cock and boil him with his feathers on for good luck.

ORIGINS—AND ANCESTRAL CURSES

Melvin Wilk

I was born in Brooklyn, in Brownsville—one of those New York neighborhoods that is always poor. Today it's a slum, an undeclared disaster area along with East New York and Bedford Stuyvesant and Williamsburg. The streets are thick with Negroes and Puerto Ricans and a few Jews up to their souls in debris, submerged in a circle uncharted by Dante, swelling out of their boundaries, searching for the connection that leads to Queens and trees and the better life of the grasslands.

When my grandfather brought his family to Brownsville in the early twenties, the place was moneyless; but it wasn't a slum. Rather than being a hole, it was a haven. Isaac and Sara huddled there with the other immigrants as if the world beyond Saratoga Avenue were being battered by a pogrom. They were thankful for being where they were. Safe. But it wasn't that way for their children, particularly Ada, my father's sister, the older one who seemed to think from the moment she got here that the pursuit of happiness phrase in the Declaration of Independence was written especially for her.

Twenty-some-odd years ago, when I was a boy, Aunt Ada dressed with a tawdry splendor that won her immediate and hostile recognition wherever she went in Brownsville. She paraded her fat-buried beauty through the cheap streets, enjoying the stares as if she were a Hollywood queen of glamor. Her wide, furiously feathered, furiously colored picture hats; her purple glass earrings, necklaces and bracelets; her keen needs announced by her heavy toilet waters enhanced her neighborhood notoriety.

If you did not see Ada, you were likely to hear her. The curses she screamed at my grandparents gave everyone who passed their street something to gossip about. How could a loudmouth such as Ada come from such a kosher home, the home of pious Jewish parents? No one could answer.

Ada's screaming tantrums—she squawked like an infuriated infant—scratched her beautiful singing voice until it was torn irreparably. When

I was very young there was still much loveliness left in it, and a few old-timers expressed sympathy for her because these aged ones remembered how lyrical her voice had been when she was a schoolgirl just come from the other side. But her lost voice was only part of the story.

The general agreement was that Ada had ruined her life and the lives of Isaac and Sara Woolf by marrying a William Pavlovovich or Pavlenkovich—what difference?—he was a goy, a Polack. From one end of Hopkinson Avenue to the other, they talked about my aunt as if she were a slut. Aunt Ada said that whoever did not like what she said or did could kiss her ass in Macy's window.

Ada had dreamed of becoming a singer, a dream which her public school teachers encouraged; but her mother frowned on such wishes. Musical talent had always been in the Woolf family—didn't Isaac, the nut, still sing in the *shul*?—and it amounted to as much as a fart in a blizzard. A few teachers tried to convince Sara that Ada's ability was rare, but she didn't trust them, as she didn't trust all who weren't Jewish. Sara clutched at her daughter's spirit remorselessly, as if by blocking Ada's freedom she was saving the world from harm.

Ada cried that she would work to pay for lessons, but Sara insisted that work brought only worn hands, a weak heart, and an early old age: it did not bring success. Besides, too much ambition tempted the evil eye.

Sara had a different idea of what sort of life was best for her daughter. "Find a husband," she told Ada, "and I guarantee you'll never be happier than if you have children and raise a family in an apartment not too far away from home."

To Ada, a husband meant a prince who would suddenly appear and make her blossom overnight, transplanting her, transforming her.

One day towards evening, while supper was cooking on the stove, Ada drifted into her favorite subject, in Yiddish, watching her mother expectantly.

"Mamma, I want to be happy," she said reproachfully, staring at the big supper pot as if her mother were refusing to feed her.

"So? Who's stopping you?"

"Who's letting me?" Ada announced sadly to the world.

Her mother said that where they came from no one ever mentioned happiness. "I saw your father just once before they married us." She laughed devilishly. "I wish now that the first time had been the last."

"But Mamma, this isn't the old country, this is America."

"My American," Sara said in broken English.

Sara raised her eyes until they reached her eighteen-year-old daughter's breasts, larger than her own had ever been. Her eyes lingered on them admiringly, as if they were well-risen loaves of bread.

"You always act as if I'm doing something wrong," Ada said.

"Your big mouth is my calamity."

"That you never did anything to train my voice, that's the calamity."

"Stop it with your voice."

Ada retaliated with full force: she told her mother of her date with a goy.

"You'll go out with him over my dead body," Sara said calmly.

America was a free country, Ada protested.

Sara stared at distorted images on the chrome handle of the ice box without answering.

"What's so terrible?" Ada prodded.

"When you live in my house, you'll do what I say or move out. And if your father ever finds out, God help you. Crazy as he is, this he wouldn't stand for." Sara laughed, as if the matter were too ridiculous to get upset over.

Ada moved closer to her mother, behind her chair, and stroked her hair, but Sara brushed her hand away. Ada gave her mother's head another affectionate stroke while she appreciatively sniffed the mists bubbling out of the supper pot, and this time her mother didn't brush away her hand. Ada's chest dropped with relief, her shoulders slumped forward like an old fat peddler's after a crafty sale.

"I'm old enough to go out with whoever I want, right, Mamma?"

Sara placed a hand on her heart and said, "Shut your mouth before I vomit."

Ada began to weep with hiccougging sounds, but her tears did not soften Sara's feelings. Suddenly her mother lifted her eyes to the cracked ceiling and wailed:

"As God is my witness, I shouldn't live to wake up if she goes with a goy." Sara begged God to take her life, not her daughter's, her own. "I shouldn't live to open my eyes if this girl lives in my house and does such a thing to me."

Her mother could be defied, but God was something else again. To quickly avert His wrath, Ada blurted out, "What? Where? Who? Me go out with a goy?"

"If you wanted your father to kill you that's all you'd have to do."

"Pappa's a nut, Mamma, and you know it."

"Nut or not, he's your father, have respect. I can say what I like."

Ada quacked like a duck, imitating one of Isaac's mannerisms. Sara laughed and a gold tooth gleamed. Still laughing at Ada's skillful mockery, she said, "And if he doesn't kill you, I will."

"Mamma darling," Ada crooned, "What's wrong with you? May I drop dead on the spot if I would do such a thing to you," she swore in a rush of lies. Spontaneously grabbing her mother's arms in her feverish hands, standing behind Sara's chair at the kitchen table, Ada began to sing:

"I chanced upon a big brown bear," she sang, *con dolore*.

"Leave me alone! Leave me alone! What do you want from me?" Sara shouted, struggling to get Ada off her, but Ada squeezed harder and sang on, and Sara listened to the story of the big brown bear and mourned. The dusty daylight in the alley beyond the kitchen window lost all its energy, the grim lines about Sara's mouth softened, and Ada's singing drifted up past the windows in the alley like sacrificial smoke.

Ada's passion for William made her forget the mournful dreams that the songs of her childhood brought back to her. She rushed towards him as if he were all the warmth there was in America. Here was boyishness and cleanliness and strength. His almost blond hair was crisply cut and straight; his nose straight and so were his teeth, all of which Ada interpreted as signs of an upright moral nature. The regularity of his features conveyed something blank, an eyeless statue; but not to Ada. She filled in the details and the effect overpowered her. In comparison with the boys she knew, William qualified as a Hollywood star. She had never seen a Jew who looked like him. He made her want to grovel before him—the feeling was irresistible. When she was away from him, she thought about him often, but thoughts of him brought her unpleasant memories. In particular, he aroused one memory which disturbed her more than any other.

In Russia, on Easter Eve, He rose from the dead. The Christian children bearing torches of brightly burning wood chased Ada into the woods while they searched the night for the risen Christ. She was alone in the hut with her baby brother, Lou; Sara was gone grieving with a widow, and their father, Isaac, was lost in America. It wasn't the cries but the flames that terrified her. She darted barefoot into the darkness for her mother's help. The children encircled her and accused her in Russian of hiding the Lord in her house. Although she trembled and was wetting her pants, Ada denied their accusation. Whereupon one boy, the tallest, the strongest, their leader, whose handsome face Ada

never forgot, brandished his flaming wood and led the others towards the hut. The gang shouted and screamed and followed him for their Lord.

Ada darted away from the puddle underneath her as fast as her naked feet could fly. But she was not left alone, for she had crucified their Lord. When they caught her, they encircled her and the mixture of fear and beauty in her face attracted them and made them angry. They tore her dress and singed her hair. In sharp howls she cursed them in her own language and so ferocious was she that the searchers after Christ were astonished and left her as if she were mad. Alone, Ada slumped to the hard earth thinking of the handsome lad's face guiltily, as if it had been she who had done the wrong.

Ada told her story to William, who had never had a Jewish girlfriend before and the force with which she told it bewildered him. In her way of talking, as in everything else she did, William felt a lack of self-control which made sleeping with her seem a certainty. He was twenty years old and eager to get rid of his virginity, as if it were a disease.

Ada quoted passages to him out of the Song of Songs and he would have believed they were her own erotic utterances if she hadn't corrected that impression. She was a gypsy, a pagan. William wasn't passionate and he wasn't unusual, but he was in a hurry, which made it easy for him to tell Ada that he loved her in order to get it.

One lovely, long summer night in the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, Ada felt for the first time what it was like to have William inside her. Every emptiness within her was filled. And William kept uttering I love you, like a medicine man. When it was over he did not say I love you, ever, but Ada slept with him regularly after that anyway, until she became pregnant.

Ada pleaded with him to marry her, and when he hesitated, she threatened to kill herself, she threatened to kill him, and after looking at him like a possessed witch—her eyes wide, her mouth slightly open, and her hair pulled apart by her own hysterical hands—she stooped and kissed his fingertips. Her face near his fly made his penis throb excitedly. Such mastery was more than he could resist. She pressed her face between his legs, trying to make him realize that he wasn't making a mistake.

He married her late one afternoon in a judge's chambers in Manhattan in September 1931.

When the news was out, Isaac said that after all a Christian for a

son-in-law was better than a bastard for a grandchild, but Sara said that if she could have stoned Ada, she would have. Sara spat at Ada's explanations and called her a whore. Each time his wife cursed his daughter, Isaac mumbled and quacked like a duck. In her fury, Sara invaded Ada's room and tossed whatever she grabbed onto the kitchen floor. Her foot caught in the hem of a skirt, and she kicked at it, too madened to be restrained.

"Why didn't you tell me, you old devil!" Isaac said, his lower jaw protruding angrily.

"Because I knew you'd be as much use to me as you are now," Sara muttered, freeing her foot with an impatient jerk. At the sound of her dress tearing, Ada screamed. Isaac stepped back, and looking at them said, "My first born," in disgust and sorrow. Tears fell from his eyes onto his mustache.

At the sight of his tears, Ada looked at her father with such hatred that Isaac said to her, "Your face should only freeze that way." But Ada didn't answer him, she turned instead on Sara.

"You old bitch! It's my dress. You old bitch, you."

"Get out of my sight, disgusting animal. You should never have been born. Die, you whore, die and let me live in peace!" Then Sara turned on Isaac venomously. "You stand there and let her get away with it. The both of you don't deserve to live. Out! Get out!"

Isaac turned and with his hands flapping behind him, he edged away quacking like a heartbroken duck. Sara threw Ada's clothes after him, across the kitchen floor.

At this, Ada swept up her mother in an embrace, beating her resistance down, swearing that no matter how long she lived and whom she married, she would never love anyone more than she loved her darling maminka. Sara held Ada in her arms and said quietly that she knew. She knew. Their quarrel abruptly over, they stooped together and gathered the scattered clothes. Ada and Sara crawled over the linoleum, weeping. But they didn't weep all the time: between their sobs they cursed and shouted at Isaac to keep out of their way.

Ada carried her belongings out of the house in a yellowish pillow case and she brought the stuffed bundle down into the hot subway and rode to Manhattan. While on her way to him—away from home but not yet with her new husband—she impulsively thought of deserting him. And then. She wanted no husband and no home. But her will was weaker than her imagination and she wept, feeling powerless to

make any decision. She dragged herself and her clothes behind her up to William's place, her only thought and fear, once there, that he wouldn't take her in.

In the Chelsea section of Manhattan where William lived, all that Ada had loved through habit was gone, and she was lonely and bored. She stopped eating meat because there were no convenient kosher butcher shops. She perspired over his suppers, but if it was pork, she did not eat. The smell of chops broiling made her want to vomit.

Ada had had no idea that she would react so strongly. But there were many trifles and she responded as violently to all of them. There was beer. Beer in the ice box, beer at the supper table, beer in the bedroom. It was worse, however, when instead of beer William drank milk when meat was served—even if the meat were pork. It was clear to her that William was ignorant and she referred to him as The Brute. It was beginning to be as her mother had said it would be. Mealtimes were a pagan spectacle which she was forced to serve as punishment. Her happiness was more costly than it was worth.

Ada longed for Brownsville. But she couldn't give up William quickly, because whether they were Russian or American, Ada thought that the princes of the world were blond and gentile. Whatever contempt for him she expressed, no matter how uncivilized she claimed he was, she still suspected that *fundamentally* William was superior to any Jewish man she had ever in her life seen. It took Ada some time before she admitted that William did not belong to that superior race she dreamed of. For the rest—her anger, her contempt, her separation from her mother and father and brother—she brooded over these in the kitchen. While in their bed, she apologized and worshipped.

Her belly swelled and her breasts filled; but her face was thin and pale. She felt no joy, and depression buried her blood. It grew dark and cold in their forlorn apartment as the seasons changed, and Ada sat bundled in a black sweater on the tepid radiator, burning the gas in the oven for warmth. She was sitting on the kitchen radiator facing the open door when her pains began. The deep twists were part of the punishment she felt she deserved. Crying, she asked a neighbor to call a doctor for her from the telephone in the candy store five flights below. Then she lay herself down in the tiny bedroom waiting, the sweat dripping between her breasts, her forearms stuck to the sheet of the bed. She screamed and moaned alternately, begging God to forgive her, promising to do whatever He wanted her to do if He saved her and the

baby. She was exposed among strangers but she no longer cared, and her screams deepened into grunts that sounded pleasurable. She gave birth to a five-pound boy before William returned from work; the bed she lay on wasn't even paid for, but Ada felt happy and she was glad.

Her baby son had to have a *briss* but William refused to have his boy circumcised. Ada, however, had made her promise to God and she intended to keep it lest the evil eye claim her baby. As each day passed, her fear of the evil eye increased and she secretly began preparing herself for her escape. She decided to go home to her mother and father and bring her baby with her.

Although she had eaten little, Ada gained weight during the pregnancy which she did not lose afterwards. William complained that she still looked pregnant. He told her that she was as fat as a mountain. To this Ada made no response. Her teeth had started to rot, her body looked wide and fat, and all of this she blamed on William for having made her pregnant. But she did not argue with him because she felt that it wouldn't be long before she had the courage to go.

Their last night together William came home smelling of liquor, something he never had done before. He stood near her side of the bed and called her a fat, disgusting pig.

Ada asked him to go away because he stank.

"You are nothing but a fat, disgusting pig," he repeated with a drunken effort at articulateness. He opened the zipper of his pants. "That's all you want, isn't it?"

"Go away," she said. "You're drunk and you'll wake the baby up." He looked so ridiculous she wanted to laugh at him, but she was afraid.

"Take it, it's yours," he slobbered, fumbling with himself.

"You're the disgusting pig, not me."

"You don't have to pretend with me."

Ada cursed him in Yiddish.

"What you call me? Huh? What?"

"Shut up and go to hell. You're waking the baby up."

William plodded haphazardly around to his side of their bed, undressed, and fell in beside her.

And when she felt him near her she wanted him and she whispered that she would do whatever he wanted her to do if he still wanted it.

William said nothing. She repeated her offer. William said that he didn't care. Then, after a moment, he reached behind her head and urged her downwards.

Ada yielded to him hungrily. But she knew that he was no prince, and that he didn't love her, and that she wouldn't be there the next night.

That morning, after William had gone, she bundled her four-week-old son in a faded blue blanket and, leaving the bed unmade, she rode the subway back to Brooklyn. Sara beamed at the sight of her, clucking and smiling, lifting the baby out of her arms and beckoning her on. To the satisfaction of all the Wolfs, Ada was home again, forever this time.

The child's health was poor. By circumcision, Ada hoped that the evil eye had been propitiated, yet all through the chill and rain of an early spring, a cold lingered. Ada carried him to the local health station, where he registered a low fever continually. Then, in late April, when the days had grown warmer and it seemed the baby was almost cured, he was stricken with croup.

Five days after the coughing began, her baby gasped to death during the early hours of the morning while Ada, exhausted, dozed in the rocker—near his crib—in which she kept her nightly vigil. She had been singing lullabies before both of them had fallen asleep. Although she awoke, she could never forgive herself that sleep.

Sara believed that all Jewish people suffered excessively always, no matter where they lived, even in America, and it was in this spirit that the family accepted the baby's death. Pleased as she was to have a toilet that flushed, she did not doubt that at any moment all her new pleasures could be taken from her because she was a Jew.

Ada wanted no part of Sara's consolation. She did nothing all day at home but grieve and eat, alone. She ate and she grieved until she weighed over one hundred seventy pounds. Sara tried to treat Ada gently, but nothing she did pleased her. When she did not like the meals Sara prepared especially for her, she burst into abusive tirades. She screamed bitterly if the borscht was hot, or if the gefilte fish wasn't ground finely enough, or if she discovered a hair in the skin of the capons her mother roasted and stuffed for her. Once she made such a tumult, because the apple cake filling was not smooth, that ugly sharp sounds broke in her throat, as if she were trying to choke up a stuck core. At last she tore most of the music out of her throat and then she ate and ate and ate.

In time Ada went to work behind the counter in a bakery store, and with some of the money she earned, she bought much bright costume jewelry and cheap toilet waters. But the greater portion of her wages

she saved. With these savings she bought a piano and had it delivered to the apartment while Sara watched the movers through narrowed eyes. "You should only have a boil for every good dollar you wasted," she said. Sara urged Ada to sell the piano from the first day of its arrival, but Ada told Sara to shut up and mind her own business. She never learned to play, and the piano remained—beneath the two oval, dark-framed portraits of family ancestors—flush against the parlor wall commemorating, as it were, Ada's wasted talent and frustrated dreams.

On Saturday Isaac and Sara left the apartment to pass the day in shul, and that was the only day of the week when Ada did not scream. Late in the afternoon, Ada, bedecked with a matching set of purple glass—earrings, necklace, and ring—and a violet feather-flower blossoming in her black hair, Ada adorned but with no place to go, sat in the empty parlor and sang the songs she had learned in public school. While she sang, she stared at the keyboard, as if she were waiting for accompaniment by some miracle.

Aunt Ada sat, her hairy legs fat and wide apart, and nodded her head at the keyboard, and the feather in her hair trembled as she sang.

I chanced upon a big brown bear
And a mighty bear was he. . .

And if you were a kid coming home from the movies on a Saturday afternoon in the darkening light and you heard Ada singing, it made you feel all the unhappiness in the world. By the time you'd climbed the stairs, opened the apartment door and stepped into the kitchen, you were wondering how much longer it would be before your father had enough money to buy you a house of your own in some place like Queens, where life was better. Someone who'd been there said you could walk for miles and still not run out of trees. Forests everywhere. Wild animals.

WILLIAM WITHERUP

AFTER MY BREAKDOWN

After my breakdown
 I tried Compōz;
 I went back to Brylcream;
 I joined the Dodge Rebellion
 and the Pepsi Generation;
 I flew the friendly skies of United;
 I put a tiger in my tank;
 I ate the breakfast of champions.

After my first relapse
 I filled my cupboard with Wonderbread,
 my icebox with the beer beer drinkers drink;
 I packed into Marlboro country
 sporting a fresh tattoo;
 I stopped death and decay with Macleans;
 I killed my body odors with Jade East;
 I fought despair #8 with Excedrin
 and pain #200 with Anacin
 and anxiety #600 with Contac.

After my second relapse I cured myself
 with Gillette stainless steel blades.

WILLIAM WITHERUP

LOST NAMES

The hospitals are filled
 with those who have lost their names

who have gone travelling during sleep
 and returned to find a strange face in the mirror.

This morning I woke up and discovered
 my shoes were filled with blood

and that an ambulance was parked
 beneath my window.

Frantically
 I wrote out my name a thousand times.

PAUL LAWSON

THE AMBASSADORS

When we heard it announced
that our country had been abolished
we looked around from the top of the embassy
loving the station
no way to tell the sky from the water
and
sickened
went inside and started packing

back of the funny tick-tick
we sensed lions dreaming our bones

in the infirmary was a man who'd
had his bowels removed
thankful that his stomach was left in

when the embarkation tickets were distributed
without names (to underline our identity)
and we realized we wouldn't have a home again
we knew we had to be something other than a nation
and went back to packing
and unpacking
discarding, reclaiming
questioning
hurting one another
waiting for a destination
listening to everyone cry
and occasionally thinking of the stomach man

someone mentioned Pocahontas
who left England for Virginia
in sixteen seventeen
and died off Gravesend

PAUL LAWSON

FOR LUIS ROSALES

The stones remembering

the moon
spied over Córdoba

the turn of a glass
Granada banked
with roses
naming Federico

among the reeds
of the Guadalquivir
the crickets
admitting Federico

Luis Rosales passing by me
Cricket, breathe my
soul to him
say Federico Federico

Luis, my name was Federico

PAUL LAWSON

A HISTORY

Water is rising in our cups
a crow keeps dropping pebbles

we give flowers

men are pretending to offer us their country
Tippecanoe and Tyler
hooked to electricity

our bodies are touching

root for Mr. Edison and the Indians
the scoreboard scaffolding is sinking
in a bog

how long will our beauty last

cities are almost gone
the beavers are coming back
washing their food

we pick burs

checking windowpanes
for signalings
our faces shatter

the moon tugs

salamanders play tricks
knock things over
fade around wicket to wicket
shaping words

people were living

TOM MCKEOWN

WOMAN WITH FINGER

If you
have seen her,
then you know
that birds fly out
of her mouth
and light sleeps
in her hair;

Her finger
keeps making
circles
within circles,
movements
I cannot follow.

I imagine I see
her finger
tracing the night sky.

She has told me
that the night sky
is her invention
and her finger
a line in my poem.

DOUGLAS FLAHERTY

DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA

(‘My armaments are arms/ My pastime is in war.’)

He carries, strapped to his haunches,
a small flesh parcel from us all,
riding off on a skinny charger,
clothed in shag vestments of a knight.
Followed by a fat monkish friend,
he is directed with caution
of third grade simplicity.

Yet, it is the purity of the scene
which strikes the eye like a
chiselled medieval triptych:
reason dried in the brain
like rain on a hot copper roof.
The armor moulders, the helmet
is eaten like a skeleton’s mouth.

He called, his head beaten and bloodied,
for food to sustain the government of his guts.
Lying beneath each brown scab, a scab.
But the mind goes on without the arms:
colliding with windmills, indentured sheep,
the chamber pot crown of mistaken errantry.
Then the renounced fantasy, the signed will.

The populace, clothed in his spirit, picks
over the dream like an old sore to await
another Second Coming. Which detains us.
And we again contrive the most fitting day
to ready the inn, the animals, summon the page,
and plant redemption in the social head.

MICHAEL MCCLURE

PLUME ODE

THE PLUMES! THE PLUMES! THE PLUMES OF LOVE ARE DELICATE

They shine
with green eye, and blueshine, and yellow. Like plumes
of a peacock! The vanes are graceful
and ever vibrating in air at touch of an act.

They spray from the dark Cunt & Cock

REAL & PHYSICAL

&

BLACK!

The black plumes of Love and Hunger, delicately
vibrating to the image made by the Body—
to the picture of Desire in the Genes!

TO THE HUGE PICTURE OF CUNT AND FOOD, to the un-
realized Vision!

(((((Did Blake see Jesus within this sequence?))))

THE BLACK PLUMES LIKE THE PEACOCKS'

LET THERE BE PHYSICAL SUDDENNESS!

PLUME!

Piss on the metaphor!

MICHAEL MCCLURE

ON BEGINNING ROMEO AND JULIET

"Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs . . ." then let him
 think on love! ADDING LOVE TO LOVE himself becoming
 smoke burning the blossom incense of his meat.

Crave love, and add love to love, walk in deep
 night, make sighs, let tears fall in full
 knowledge of what few men
 know, or feel at his age.

AND LET HIM DIE THEN!

With momentary love never torn
 by bestial teeth of others
 from his womblike soul.

And let him die like Mercutio's

Grecian merriment not far (in days)
 from his ears! What ever could
 he hope for better? To die
 with memories of robust men
 and blood. (And Juliet's soft white
 childlike heavenly beauty

still tastewise on his lips and fin-
 gertips!)

TO BE A PROUD MURDERER AND LOVER

A CHILD COUPLED TO A CHILD

THE SIGH AND MEAT OF SIGH !

Oh, add them for they are clear smokey perfume

JOHN LOGAN

GRANDMOTHER DEAD IN THE AEROPLANE

Grandmother after that late eclipse
when I lay drunk in the weak, April grass
and watched the moon on the last, best Friday night
grow awful and cruel and then lean
slowly out of the light
(become an odd, dark rock
under which some of us
still have our moving lives) —
after that you can hold the very first
of your favorite Easters.
At least a good and gaudy card
came each year before you died.
There is no message yet this time.
Instead I feel you addressed
and mailed me on this Saturday plane.
Grandmother you have verified the myth
inside my head. . . . Inside my head
I carry your gentle, senile hunch-
back and your swollen ankles
still shuffle here in the airplane's halls.
Your rheumy, red old eyes leak out all our tears.
Look out, Grandmother!
Or else I will look in. The plane
window angles near us (well, between)
and your face
reflects. You are spread
thin and shiny over all this Holy Saturday.
Grandmother is there ever any Easter
without a hope? And will the moon
be light
for the Saturday dance again tonight?
I am angry at myself since you've died.
The 727 motor at my ear
is joining me fast to Detroit
on my Easter trip
and it has quite
disoriented my small, waning life.
Everything has died.
I'll learn how to mourn quite mad
if never to rave in love.

I want to stay up here forever,
grandmother. For I am tired of the fogged earth
down there
with its esoteric itch of flesh.
"Time Flies." I swear my soul has just turned
ninety too. On the night I visited
and stayed
in your sad, old ladies' home
I really shook. Sick, I shivered
from the barbed, tiny animals of dread.
I kissed you and I cried
and tried to sleep
in the ancient woman's bed
(your absent friend) —
her family plastered to the wall.
something flickered back
and forth in me, black and white,
and I touched myself heavily
again and again
to see if the young
man (I was twenty then) was anywhere around.
Oh you and I too have had our scenes,
since I was the chosen one.
When I was ten
and you were visiting the farm
you unwrapped your long,
red, lacy velvet doll
and then undid the bones
of china for its tiny house.
You took the picture albums
out of the attic trunk. And took that
milky, moonshaped paperweight.
We squatted crosslegged on the attic planks
and swayed and wept for what
you made me think
the two of us had lost.
Was it really only you
who were not young
and who no longer had a home?
Oh, I did love you my ardent old Mom.
It was the second time for me,
my first mother gone.
You pushed me proudly in my pram

and I remember this:
I wet my pants
right in front of your friends
until I knew you noticed me.
You fixed the rockers on my broken horse.
And just before the picnic once
put a poultice on my swelling thumb
to draw the sliver out.
Now I watch the nail's moon
blacken by my pen.
Look. My plane has never gone
far: it hovers in your air.
Christ what am I doing here?
Communing with you I guess.
Well then, come on,
my beloved crone. Open up.
Now I lay me down
in your aged lap and sleep
clean through this Easter.

Easter, 1968

THE DIVORCE

Jean Rikhoff

It was the summer the heat burned the front yards down to the roots, the summer that water was rationed and everybody's garden failed, the summer that began so badly and ended worse for me, though the rains came in time to save the autumn chrysanthemums and we had a clear October, full of brilliant leaves. (Everyone said the drought had made the colors brighter that year than any other—perhaps it was true; I never knew, but I heard it often enough to believe it.) I remember the heat and the October, but most of all I remember that year because it was the one in which my parents got their divorce.

I suppose the final separation didn't surprise many people. We had long been one of those families that neighbors and friends describe as "not getting on well." Like most clichés this one minimized those emotions not considered, by Indiana standards at least, socially acceptable. In our neighborhood we had a whole textbook of observations to water down disaster, and even now I find it difficult not to think in clichés, no matter what the situation.

My mother, on the other hand, had a positive loathing for homespun homilies, and she used to be driven nearly insane by being told, in a Hoosier twang, that "everything works out for the best," "nothing succeeds like success," and that "you can't teach an old dog new tricks."

"Marry in haste, repent at leisure," my grandmother used to comfort my unhappy, distracted mother; and my mother—unable to understand in her own way why her marriage was such a failure and even more incapable of explaining its failures to her mother—would fall back on her only resource, tears, to which my grandmother would say, "There's no use crying over spilt milk."

My parents had not got on from almost the first, but their differences were doctored by the community prescriptions for quarrelling couples: "It takes two to make trouble," "Two wrongs don't make a right," "The children come first." Besides, divorce in those days wasn't something nice people did. Like losing your money, losing your husband showed there was something seriously wrong with you.

As people constantly pointed out, you got as good as you gave. My mother had made her bed and now she would have to lie in it. She would have to take her medicine whether she liked the taste or not.

My mother and father had struggled through thirteen years of disputes, differences, quarrels, temporary separations, reconciliations "for the children," and they were no closer to coming to terms than they had been in the beginning. Given my mother and father, I suppose this was inevitable.

My father was one of those people who is always trying to get back to the land. In every one of his efforts—the plan to breed fine Holstein cows, the hope of making money off chickens, the pathetic attempt to make kohlrabi popular—he came to grief. We were constantly retreating back to the city to recoup the losses of the land, then moving back to the country with a fresh frail nest egg with which to put down our roots. It is almost impossible for me to convey how much I came to hate Nature in those years, but my feelings must have been mild compared to my mother's.

My mother loved excitement, crowds, all the pleasures of apartment living—what she used to describe as "being sensible and civilized." Our periodic migrations back to nature were a nightmare to her, but she bore them patiently and (with what was for her) subdued resignation. I remember one rainy day seeing her trying to chase chickens into a coop two feet from the brood, running back and forth pelting them with apples, drenched and half out of her mind with exasperation, shouting, "Oh, you filthy, dirty, horrible things, get into that house!" But of course they simply stood still regarding her blankly. A chicken doesn't know enough to come in out of the rain.

She picked up a handful of apples and threw them into the flock. One of the apples hit a chicken on the head—by mistake, I'm sure, for my mother had a dreadful aim just as she had a dreadful sense of direction—and it went crazy, running around in circles in the yard, its feathers wet and plucked-looking. My mother wept, standing by the chicken house, sobbing and saying over and over, "I never meant to do it. I never did. It deserved it, god knows, but I never meant to hurt it."

My parents were incompatible: at least that was the nice word used in our community for two people who found that they had no business living together and doing so drove them to saying, doing, and plotting meannesses they would never normally have contemplated. In the colloquialism of Indiana, "they brought out the worst in each other."

In my mother and father's case, all the clichés in the world had been

insufficient to cover their disappointment, their humiliation, their shame, their hatred of one another, and while the quarrels were violent enough verbally they were also almost inevitably bound to end up in my father using his fists and my mother screaming out her terror in the dark, dusty country nights. At these times my brother and I huddled under our blankets in the drafty upstairs farmhouse (or overheated city apartment) and tried to pretend we were asleep, that we couldn't hear these awful outbursts of passion.

Trembling, terrified, I would lie under the covers afraid to move for fear even the slightest creak of a bedspring would give me away. I don't know what frightened me so. I don't think I ever felt they would take their anger out on me—not beat me, that is—I was simply paralyzed by the idea that their voices would drop, there would be a pause, and one of them would call out, "Is that you, Jean?"

Invariably I ended up having to go to the toilet—a terrible calamity since that meant I had to get up and go down the hall to the bathroom, which was next door to my parents' room. I remember once going in the waste paper basket, crouched in the darkness, half sick with fear, hearing those heated, violent voices.

The morning after one of these terrible arguments my brother and I crept downstairs and pretended we had slept through the whole thing, inwardly shaking and sick, outwardly smiling and cheerful, coming down the steps and calling out in loud, hearty voices, "Hi! Breakfast ready?"

We always knew how bad the quarrels had been by mother's face. Sometimes she had a black eye or a bruised lip or a swollen cheek. More often she looked normal save that her eyes were puffed and she was martyrishly quiet bending over the stove. My father's frustrations—his inability to make the land love him back or his failure to make his animals multiply and be fruitful—came out in physical violence, something he was always mortally ashamed of but something he was unable in his rages to control. I remember seeing him pace up and down, his face contorted, his limbs shaking with rage, as he shouted again and again to no one in particular, "I will control myself, I will." But he always ended up smashing something: furniture or the car, crockery or my mother.

My mother, on the other hand, felt violence was a sign of weakness, and she despised him after these scenes not so much for his having hit her as for his having lost control of himself. She would look at him with pity and loathing, mostly loathing, the pity having long since

washed itself out in her tears, and not say a word. She went about her chores, ironing or sewing or washing dishes, calmly, as if nothing had happened, which would only drive my father into further anger until he went off, sullen and slamming the door, to disappear for a day or two. At the end of this time he would turn up, quiet and resigned, having determined after his experiences away from home (perhaps drunk or with another woman) to give it a try again. During those terrible hours when he was away my mother sat, sad-faced and mostly speechless, over her sewing, or she tried to read to us, the corners of her mouth trembling and her hands buttoning and unbuttoning the buttons of her blouse.

I loved both of them and I wanted the farm to be a success as well as I wanted my mother to have her parties and gaiety, but I did not see then how their opposite desires could be reconciled any more than I saw how their opposite dispositions could be altered. But most of all I wanted to be like the other children I knew whose mothers and fathers lived regular, happy, normal lives. It was only later, when I was married myself with children of my own, that I realized nobody has a regular, normal, happy life, but then I thought anything and everything was possible—if you only had the clue.

That summer that the heat broke over us like a Biblical judgment my mother and father were quarreling nearly every day. We were living on a bone dry bit of land that my father used to tell company he had "picked up for a song." The truth was that the earth was parched the color of cinnamon and that people all around us considered us fools. They called the place Harold's Folly, Harold being my father's name, and the folly being obvious. My father was trying to raise corn—he said there wasn't any reason why he couldn't raise corn on good Indiana soil, but there were plenty of reasons. In the first place, the soil was worn out, its dry gray top covering as powdery as dust. In the second place, the acres he had bought "for a song" were cluttered with rocks, weeds, briars, old tree stumps, rusty machinery, abandoned car parts. It would have taken years to rehabilitate that land, but my father was impatient to nurse the soil back to good health. He thought he had the cure: fertilizer. All that summer he was forever running over his five acres throwing manure to the winds, like the patient father forgiving the prodigal son and ordering a feast in honor of his wastefulness. Perhaps he was a fool, as the neighboring farmers said, and scatter-brained, as my mother's relatives pointed out; but he had his dream

and by god the land was going to send it up to the heavens, or he would go bankrupt trying.

My mother had just turned thirty. She had been and was then, I guess, a beautiful woman, but she was obsessed by the thought of losing her looks, their fineness honed away by the terrible sacrifices the land required, by the endless chores of the house, by the unrelenting malevolence of Nature itself. It was the dust she used to complain of most. Like a plague it blew through her windows, staining her curtains and sifting over her shelves, and no matter how much she turned her eyes inward on her possessions, those memories of parties and balls of ten years before, the dust was always around her as a constant reminder of what her existence had become. She spent her few spare hours wiping the sills down with a clean rag or reading fashion magazines, as if the secret of happiness were somewhere under a dust cloth or between the pages of *Vogue*.

Twice that summer my mother packed her things and went, in our exhausted Buick, to Indianapolis to her mother. And twice she came back. But she couldn't make the seeds yield or the land bloom any more than my father could stop the clock. The ground was cursed, my mother shouted at him. She was beguiled by the worthless dreams of trashy magazines, he said. Meanwhile my brother and I put on our assumed cheerfulness, like borrowed clothes for a play: we went about trying to act the part of what we thought normal children. Looking back, I can see we must have been grotesque; at the time we thought we were heroic.

One day in August when it had long been apparent the corn was nothing but a shrivelled mass of stalks and misshapen husks (but nobody would admit we weren't going to have a bumper crop of sweet corn), the flies came. The heat had been terrible all that day, worse than usual, raging from sun up on, the air vibrating and humming with heat. Looking out into that awful sunlight you saw yellow motes, probably dust, but they looked like concentrated cones of fire. About ten my father had turned the hose on the kitchen, which was a low one-story extension on the rear of the house, but instead of cooling things off as he had promised my mother, he only succeeded in raising a rich hot steam which obscured the windows and door, where shortly before I had seen her bent over the stove trying to eke out our income by canning tomatoes.

About noon the sky clouded over with swarms of horse flies passing

across our fields. They settled on the corn spikes and hung there, black and hairy, so thick the stalks swayed. The flies were big ugly brutes with a terrible bite. Later the farmers talked in awed voices of how their stings had driven the cattle crazy in a matter of minutes. My father and the hired man came into the house; it was dark but not cool. Nothing was cool under that sun. The hired man could not be persuaded to go into the living room; he sat in a straight chair in the steamy kitchen, his sweat-marked hat in his hand, watching my mother pack tomatoes into pint jars.

My brother and I were playing quietly in the old-fashioned dining room. Of all the rooms in the house we liked this one best because it was seldom used (except for Sunday and holiday dinners) and we could stay out of the way of the adults. There were two fine glowing prints there: "Bonnie Prince Charlie Crossing to Skye with Flora McDonald" and "Lee Surrendering to Grant at Appomatox." Our usual game was to play Secret Club under the dining room table, a game which involved our forming an organization known only to ourselves and drawing up lengthy and complicated rules for ourselves, prohibitions and penances, trails and quests. But that day we had our faces pressed against the window watching the clouds of flies drift over the land. My brother, who was younger and who spent every summer with his system poisoned by some noxious weed or other, was scratching rhythmically. I was terribly afraid he would give me his current infection, which was poison oak, though I had never had anything like it in my life, and I kept saying, "Get away from me. Go on, stand over there. You'll give it to me!" — "I will not," he said, moving closer, getting that voracious look on his face of the dedicated tormentor.

"Go away. This minute, I tell you." I began to push him.

My father, who had been in the living room, crossed the hall. "Stop it," he called to us. "I have enough on my mind without having you two quarrel."

He was very angry—his face was quite white and the two crescent-shaped creases at the sides of his mouth were firm and deep. He was also very nervous, not in any specific way but generally nervous the way he sometimes got so that I had the impression he was trembling, though he never actually did.

My brother moved away from me and stood at the opposite side of the room. I played with the folds of my dress and didn't say anything. I knew that my father's fits of irritation with us generally signaled the prelude of one of his spells of rage with our mother and I was terribly

frightened: first, by the fact that because of the flies I was shut up in the house with them; and secondly by the fact that the hired hand would probably hear my father shout and see my mother cry.

My father stood watching us a few moments; then he turned quickly and went back into the living room. When he came back he was carrying a book. "Here, read this," he said, "Or look at the pictures. But don't go out. You'll get stung if you do." For the first time I noticed he had red welts on his hands and arms and around his neck. I took the book and my brother sat down meekly on the floor ready for me to read. I was only nine and did not read well, but Tommie was only five and I knew it didn't much matter. He didn't understand the relationship of ideas very well. Besides I was pathetically grateful to my father for having thought of us at all; so often he was so engrossed with his own problems that he seemed to have forgotten we existed. I opened the book; it was *Huckleberry Finn*. "You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* . . ." I read.

"Who?" my brother asked.

"Tom Sawyer."

"Who's that?"

I thought a moment; I didn't know but because I was four years older I was supposed to know everything. "Some boy," I said abruptly.

My brother looked at me; then he began to chew on his finger. I read on, in the background the sounds of the flies dashing themselves against the windows, my mother rattling glass jars in the kitchen, my father pacing back and forth in the living room. Only the hired man was quiet; he was paid to turn up the earth, not to cultivate the art of conversation.

The book was long and discouraged me. There were lots of words I couldn't even begin to guess at. Presently I saw that my brother's eyelids fluttered and his head drooped against his regularly breathing body. When I was sure he was asleep, I closed the book and sat quietly thinking about Nancy Drew.

Nancy Drew had for me the most wonderful of all lives: according to her author she lived with only her father and a housekeeper in a big, well-run house; she had a car of her own, a snappy little roadster as I recall, though she was only sixteen, and her life was an endless solving of interesting mysteries during which she exposed herself to terrible dangers and proved that she was brave, noble, admirable, cheerful, intelligent, and single-minded. Disasters only strengthened her conviction.

tions. Everyone admired her. She seemed to me the most remarkable person I had ever heard of, and I wished more than anything in the world that I had her problems and not my own. I knew that, given the right circumstances and conditions, I could prove myself.

Real farm life I supposed I would like, but these barren acres of earth that refused to yield anything and the terrible labor that had gone into failure, my father's failure, it seemed to me, my mother's failure, too, shamed me. There was nothing in this house that I could see that was noble or brave or successful, and I thought that showed how doomed we were. In the middle of my thoughts I heard a terrible crash from the kitchen and then the sounds of my mother's quick response to any crisis, sobbing.

My brother awakened suddenly and began to whimper in a low voice. He put his short arms around his head, as if to ward off a blow, and rocked gently back and forth on his heels. This was his classic approach to sorrow; I had seen him in the same stance time and again. He was a very small boy for his age and extremely nervous—he had nightmares nearly every evening—and often when he cried he could not stop. He would begin by sobbing gently, his body heaving up and down in greater and greater gasps, until he got the hiccoughs or made himself sick. I considered him a terrible baby. To my way of thinking crying was a weakness and, like most children, I despised weakness of any kind. I gave him a push to quiet him and then went into the kitchen.

The crash had been a pot of stewing tomatoes that had apparently slipped out of my mother's hands. The kitchen was a mess, tomatoes and tomato juice scattered all over everything. My mother was weeping, her apron clutched to her face; the hired man was on his hands and knees, silently trying to clean up the mess as best he could; in the doorway my father stood, white-faced and tight-lipped, looking at both of them. "Oh my god," he said at last, "Oh my god, what next?"

My mother did not even look at him. For a moment she stood surrounded by tomato debris; then she walked out of the kitchen very quickly; from the dining room came the sound of her sobbing and the gentle echo of my brother's tears. I got a rag and began to help the hired man. There was so much juice that I had to wring the cloth constantly. We didn't seem, William and I, to be making any progress at all, but I didn't know what else to do. My father stood hesitantly in the doorway a moment, then went into the dining room. His voice came to us clear and sharp: "Leave the boy alone, Helen. You'll only upset him."

I didn't want William to hear them and I said, very loudly and cheerfully, "Here, William, I'll get a bowl and spoon and we can scoop them up. We'll get this done in no time flat, you'll see."

"Leave the boy alone, Helen!"

"There must be a bowl here somewhere," I insisted, making as big a smile as I could.

Then I heard my mother say, in a clear voice a little broken by her sobbing, "Don't touch me. Don't ever touch me again." There was an instant of silence, dead and heavy, stone still, and then the sound of scuffling, a scrape of furniture, then more scuffling. William and I stood rock still, looking toward the dining room where the sounds came from but where no figures could be seen.

"No, don't, Harold, not in front of the boy," my mother cried, and then there was the sharp smack of hand on flesh followed by my brother's rising sobs.

I turned to William. "When my brother gets one of his crying fits," I said, "sometimes you have to slap him to make him stop."

William looked at me.

"Are the flies still there?" I asked. I was afraid to look myself because I knew there were tears starting in my eyes and above everything, and because of everything that had happened, I did not want William to see them. It would give the game away.

"I'll go and see," he answered, shuffling toward the door. He stood for a moment, his back toward me. For that one instant I thought he was going to turn around and I worked with my mouth, trying to make it into a smile, but instead his hand lifted, clutched the door knob, turned it slowly, and an instant later he had gone out into that terrible heat, the sky still black with bugs. It was the last time I ever saw William.

A second later my father was gone too, slamming the front door, and I went into the dining room. My mother was lifting Tommie up; he still had his arms around his head, but he wasn't crying anymore. She had a hard time making him stand up because he kept slipping back down to the floor. All the time he kept his hands over his head. "Stand up, Tommie," my mother said, not unkindly, but firmly. "Stand up like a good boy."

He stood up.

"Now," she said, turning to me, "leave the tomatoes. They don't matter. I don't care," she said bitterly, "if I ever see another home-grown thing as long as I live. I want you to go upstairs and get your

things together. Put them all in piles on the bed: your underwear in one pile, your dresses in another, your pajamas separate. Make a separate pile for each thing. Do you understand?"

I said yes, I understood.

She bent down and kissed Tommie. "It's all right, honey. Everything's all right. You can come upstairs and watch me." She looked up. "Go on, Jean, go upstairs and get your clothes ready. You understand, don't you? Each thing in a separate pile?"

I nodded. She waited until I started up the hall stairs. All the way to the top I could hear her saying, "It's all right, Tommie. Everything's all right. You have to take care of Mommie now. We're not going to have Daddie with us anymore. He'll be here and we'll be with Grandma. You know, you have to be the man of the family now and men don't cry." Then I heard her catch her breath. "After all," she said in a voice that sounded almost exactly like my grandmother's, "a leopard can't change its spots. I'm just," she added, "at the end of my rope."

In her most difficult moment she had fallen back on the hated country wisdom which she had never really, I think, until then, understood. More than the weather changes.

THE MAN TO SEND RAIN CLOUDS

Leslie Chapman

I

They found him under a big cottonwood tree. His Levi jacket and pants were faded light blue so that he had been easy to find. The big cottonwood tree stood apart from a small grove of winter-bare cottonwoods which grew in the wide sandy arroyo. He had been dead for a day or more and the sheep had wandered and scattered up and down the arroyo. Leon and his brother-in-law, Ken, gathered the sheep and left them in the pen at the sheep camp before they returned to the cottonwood tree. Leon waited under the tree while Ken drove the truck through the deep sand to the edge of the arroyo. He squinted up at the sun and unzipped his jacket—it sure was hot for this time of year. But high and northwest the blue mountains were still deep in snow. Ken came sliding down the low crumbling bank about 50 yards down and he was bringing the red blanket.

Before they wrapped the old man, Leon took a piece of string out of his pocket and tied a small gray feather in the old man's long white hair. Ken gave him the paint. Across the brown wrinkled forehead he drew a streak of white and along the high cheek bones he drew a strip of blue paint. He paused and watched Ken throw pinches of corn meal and pollen into the wind that fluttered the small gray feather. Then Leon painted with yellow under the old man's broad nose, and finally, when he had painted green across the chin, he smiled.

"Send us rain clouds, Grandfather." They laid the bundle in the back of the pick-up and covered it with a heavy tarp before they started back to the pueblo.

They turned off the highway onto the sandy pueblo road. Not long after they passed the store and post office they saw Father Paul's car coming towards them. When he recognized their faces he slowed his car and waved for them to stop. The young priest rolled down the car window. "Did you find old Teofilo?" he asked loudly. Leon stopped the truck.

"Good morning, Father. We were just out to the sheep camp. Everything is o.k. now."

"Thank God for that. Teofilo is a very old man. You really shouldn't allow him to stay at the sheep camp alone."

"No, he won't do that any more now."

"Well, I'm glad you understand. I hope I'll be seeing you at Mass this week—we missed you last Sunday. See if you can get old Teofilo to come with you." The priest smiled and waved at them as they drove away.

II

Louise and Teresa were waiting. The table was set for lunch and the coffee was boiling on the black iron stove. Leon looked at Louise and then at Teresa.

"We found him under a cottonwood tree in the big arroyo near sheep camp. I guess he sat down to rest in the shade and never got up again." Leon walked towards the old man's bed. The red plaid shawl had been shaken and spread carefully over the bed and a new brown flannel shirt and pair of stiff new Levi's were arranged neatly beside the pillow. Louise held the screen door open while Leon and Ken carried in the red blanket. He looked small and shriveled, and after they dressed him in the new shirt and pants he seemed more shrunken.

It was noontime now because the church bells rang the Angelus. They ate the beans with hot bread and nobody said anything until after Teresa poured the coffee. Ken stood up and put on his jacket.

"I'll see about the grave-diggers. Only the top layer of soil is frozen. I think it can be ready before dark." Leon nodded his head and finished his coffee. After Ken had been gone for a while the neighbors and clanspeople came quietly to embrace Teofilo's family and to leave food on the table because the grave-diggers would come to eat when they were finished.

III

The sky in the west was full of pale yellow light. Louise stood outside with her hands in the pockets of Leon's green army jacket that was too big for her. The funeral was over and the old men had taken their candles and medicine bags and were gone. She waited until the body was laid into the pick-up before she said anything to Leon. She touched his arm and he noticed that her hands were still dusty from the corn meal that she had sprinkled around the old man. When she spoke Leon could not hear her.

"What did you say? I didn't hear you."

"I said that I had been thinking about something."

"About what?"

"About the priest sprinkling holy water for Grandpa. So he won't be

thirsty." Leon stared at the new moccasins that Teofilo had made for the ceremonial dances in the summer. They were nearly hidden by the red blanket. It was getting colder and the wind pushed gray dust down the narrow pueblo road. The sun was approaching the long mesa where it disappeared during the winter. Louise stood there shivering and watching his face. Then he zipped up his jacket and opened the truck door. "I'll see if he's there."

IV

Ken stopped the pick-up at the church and Leon got out; and then Ken drove down the hill to the graveyard where people were waiting. Leon knocked at the old carved door with its symbols of the Lamb. While he waited he looked up at the twin bells from the King of Spain with the last sunlight pouring around them in their tower. The priest opened the door and smiled when he saw who it was.

"Come in! What brings you here this evening?" The priest walked towards the kitchen and Leon stood with his cap in his hand, playing with the ear-flaps and examining the living room—the brown sofa, the green arm chair, and the brass lamp that hung down from the ceiling by links of chain. The priest dragged a chair out of the kitchen and offered it to Leon.

"No thank you, Father. I only came to ask you if you would bring your holy water to the graveyard." The priest turned away from Leon and looked out the window at the patio full of shadows and the dining room windows of the nuns' cloister across the patio. The curtains were heavy and the light from within faintly penetrated; it was impossible to see the nuns inside eating supper.

"Why didn't you tell me he was dead? I could have brought the Last Rites anyway."

Leon smiled. "It wasn't necessary, Father." The priest stared down at his scuffed brown loafers and the worn hem of his cassock.

"For a Christian burial it was necessary." His voice was distant and Leon thought that his blue eyes looked tired.

"It's o.k. Father, we just want him to have plenty of water." The priest sank down into the green chair and picked up a glossy missionary magazine. He turned the colored pages full of lepers and pagans without looking at them.

"You know I can't do that, Leon. There should have been the Last Rites and a funeral mass at the very least." Leon put on his green cap and pulled the flaps down over his ears.

"It's getting late, Father. I've got to go." When Leon opened the door Father Paul stood up and said, "Wait." He left the room and came

back wearing a long brown overcoat. He followed Leon out the door and across the dim church yard to the adobe steps in front of the church. They both stooped to fit through the low adobe entrance. And when they started down the hill to the graveyard only half of the sun was visible above the mesa.

The priest approached the grave slowly, wondering how they had managed to dig into the frozen ground and then he remembered that this was New Mexico, and saw the pile of cold loose sand beside the hole. The people stood close to each other with little clouds of steam puffing from their faces. The priest looked at them and saw a pile of jackets, gloves and scarves in the yellow dry tumbleweeds that grew in the graveyard. He looked at the red blanket not sure that Teofilo was so small, wondering if it wasn't some perverse Indian trick—something they did in March to insure a good harvest—wondering if maybe old Teofilo was actually at sheep camp corraling the sheep for the night. But there he was, facing into a cold dry wind and squinting at the last sun light, ready to bury a red wool blanket while the faces of his parishioners were in shadow with the last warmth of the sun on their backs.

His fingers were stiff and it took him a long time to twist the lid off the holy water. Drops of water fell on the red blanket and soaked into dark icy spots. He sprinkled the grave and the water disappeared almost before it touched the dim cold sand; it reminded him of something—he tried to remember what it was because he thought if he could remember he might understand this. He sprinkled more water, he shook the container until it was empty and the water fell through the light from sun-down like August rain that fell while the sun was still shining almost evaporating before it touched the wilted squash flowers.

The wind pulled at the priest's brown Franciscan robe and swirled away the corn meal and pollen that had been sprinkled on the blanket. They lowered the bundle into the ground and they didn't bother to untie the stiff pieces of new rope that were tied around the ends of the blanket. The sun was gone and over on the highway the east-bound lane was full of head-lights. The priest walked away slowly and Leon watched him climb the hill, and when he had disappeared within the tall thick walls, Leon turned to look up at the high blue mountains in the deep snow that reflected a faint red light from the west. He felt good because it was finished, and he was happy about the sprinkling of the holy water; now the old man could send them big thunder clouds for sure.

ROBERT CREELEY

FOR A VALENTINE

The so-called poet of love
is not so much silent as absorbed.
He ponders. He sits on
the hill looking over. . .

A day late—
your love was
still there.

Little bits
of it.

They are useful
people.

No sense one
should do different.

GLENN A LUSCHEI

THE BLUE WILLOW

1. My Western Imagination

Because I'm a
Western Tanager
It's hard to keep to nesting.

I keep flitting off
In your direction,

Up here
In the loom of the maple
I'm yellow silk on the spindle.

Tamped with a batten
Of willows
Woven beside your window.

Fly with me, love,
Away from dynasties.

Our bones won't mingle
Forever
I want a little for now.

2. Magic

You went by my house
Again
Just as I was reading up
On aphrodisiacs
And seductions

Nard and saffron
Pistachio, pomegranate

I utter my charm over betel nuts
Pretending all this is comical

3. Without Lights

Even though the rain drives
 Without lights
 And my family
 Is coming down with flu

I'm happy.
 I can be at your house
 In 15 minutes!

We hear the rain
 Thump past on snow chains
 You warm up my feet

And scratch my back
 In Euclid's patterns.
 Faustus at his drawing board

Circles

tangents

World views all on my back!
 I'm the envy of harems.

Whoever thinks
 I'm going to the
 Devil
 Let him remember
 It's raining pitchforks!

4. Marina Cvetaeva

Marina,
 The story of you
 Not meeting your lover
 Because you had no shoes. . . .

Take my sandals
 It's summer,
 The onion tops in tower!

He complains about my reflex
 Though my knees
 Flip
 Like Cossacks.

Marina,
 Can't he see
 I only want to screw?

Marina,
 Take my shoes!

5. Elk

I have no telephone
 Cables are down in the snow
 Only
 The antlers of my pelvis
 Catch me in

Still
 You have reached me
 Square bales of hay
 Make me think of your pueblo
 And you going about
 A thousand times smaller

The red tunic!
 Your long braid.

6. The Bean Dance

In the kiva
 The beans have sprouted
 The Hopis
 chant

My belly
 is strung each breast
 the pick
 of a mandolin

7. Yoruba

Why aren't you happy
With me?
Why aren't you happy in Yoruba?
Purple
Banana blooms unfold
Like the cocks of stallions.

The praying mantis
Part of me
Waits
Beneath the blue batik.

8. Night Song for a Friend.

We were banished
To pocks in the moon

Rafts on the desert
Sail and boom

Nights wore veils,
Camel bells

Hours ran
Without bobbing their heads

And carried me
Eight days without water

DEAN N. SYRACOPOULOS

FABLE I

The Leader packed me solidly in moss, planting a flag in my skull. It was emblazoned with a bear that had once fluttered over an opium dealer's tent in Oran. What a picture of majesty I was! That afternoon, a Prince descended from his saddle and bent down to examine me. Taking one of my ears in hand, he commanded a lieutenant to divine the situation. Try as he could, the flunky failed so the Prince deposited a diamond by my lips. Soon, a shiek rode by and asked the meaning of this, a rag-picker replying it was all nonsense. His camel brayed and then fell dead at the sight of its puzzled master. The caravan departed, winding its sinuous course toward a sunset. No doubt, my next visitor would be a prophet, a yogi riding on his tiger.

I awoke the next morning. My flag was gone. My jaws had been nailed shut. Ants ate at my eyes. A police official took copious notes, pausing only to brush at the butterflies lighting on his tablet.

DEAN N. SYRACOPOULOS

LOKI

My concerns've always been hooligans.
jostling decent folk out on Sunday walks.
Not that I should forget grinning at my
own execution and the dignity lent to it
by the presence of the Pope.
Fondly, I'd peered up at His Holiness
while gnawing on his kneecap.
Such implacability in the face of reverse.
He barely noticed me, his frown an omen
of shyness and the forbidding lusts
of shoguns resplendent in stolen jade.
Good for him.
I bribed Lucifer to leave his son pregnant.
Complications aside, he couldn't even guess
the gender of the child.

These horns of mine are fuzzier than usual.
So I spend afternoons jousting with oaks
and an overriding greed for new subjects.
The sun blazes with such arrogance.
My eyes are pearls.
The smile did belong to Pan, copied from a
jar found north of the Zambezi, scant
inches from the Cradle of Man.
I giggle at the malice coursing through my two brains.

It is time to sharpen my wits on politicians.

JONATHAN WILLIAMS

"FOUR-WAY GAY"

Dave and Jack;
Rick and Jim;

Dave and Rick;
Jim and Jack;

Jim and Dave;
Jack and Rick—

plus fours!

JONATHAN WILLIAMS

A PUBLISHER'S INQUIRY FROM MR. C. J. KANT, OF ST. LOUIS

Sir:

Would your current program allow for a work on Communist Power,
original cartoon work included?

I also have ready a study on the symbiosis and hegemony
of skiing and astrology.

I will use
first-class
mail.

JONATHAN WILLIAMS

HUSHED, LAVENDER TONES IN THE BAR OF THE TAOS INN

I hear
my dear

20,000 hopis—I mean
hippies, ha-ha—

are coming from
California

via a smoke-in in
Grand Canyon. . .

think of all those sand fleas and crabs,
we'll all get
bucolic plague!

whoopie,
let's hurry,
Mary,
my dear!

not a crotch in a carload is
butch. . .

LARRY GOODELL

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE VEILS OF ANGELS

/for P.

Woman
you are beautiful

(1 drops down)

—kites
float in the fog
there are no kites
there is no fog
here

(2 drop down)

—water over the hands
around them
& in them

(3 drop down)

—how many veils are there?
the essential mystery
is contained in the answer

(4 drop down)

—the hands & the eyes are like each other
separate
without denying one another

(5 drop down)

—you are yr own body balanced inseparably
sings its own
beauty well told
for the performance of love

(6 drop down)

—woman there is no shame in the heart of union

that produces children
 eyes
 on you
 the beauty lives in yr pores
 & yr flesh
 is the soul of yr face

(7 drop down)

—the woman is naked to acceptance of herself
 the beauty I love
 ugliness is the mind's destruction of flesh
 no more
 the angels dance
 have thrown off their veils
 for you
 for me to see the language
 spoke it across

the way I dance you
 to love yrself
 who think yrself ugly
 no more

ADRIANNE MARCUS

**"THE MEDITERRANEAN IS SO ODDLY BLUE: HE
 HAS NEVER BEEN ABLE TO COMPREHEND IT."**

Not sky, that pale refracted light
 of necessary stars, the flying weather
 with its color always distant;
 nor celadon, for all its endless
 variations, grained with blue
 to chemical perfection.

But so oddly blue, this sea defies
 description. The eye returns
 to stable rocks, the white indifferent
 shore, as if by compromise
 a metaphor is true:
 knowing all along that what we see
 is too exact for words.

A NOTE ON THE INARTICULATE AS HERO

John Logan

This essay is dedicated with love to my senior students in Literary Criticism, 1963, for whom it was originally written.

Reading Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* recently and finding myself as stirred by it as the first time I read it I found myself wondering why it is we are so deeply moved by a figure who is incapable of speech. I am thinking of course of Benjy whose interior monologue we are given in the first section of the novel and who reappears in crucial ways throughout the book. Now, there are special reasons in the context of Faulkner why Benjy's inarticulateness is important, if I read the book aright. But at this time I want to get some perspective on him by considering Benjy in relation to a recurring figure in literature and art—in an attempt to shed some light on the general emotional resonance we find around such a figure. The total mute like Benjy is surely very rare as a character in literature, though we find him occasionally as in Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. However, the partial mute, or the simply inarticulate character is not so rare. Here are six examples that occur immediately: the hero of Poe's short story "The Man Who Lost His Voice." Billy Budd, the stammerer in Melville's novel named for him. The man with the injured tongue who is the central figure of Joyce's short story "Grace." The Philomena figure of Greek mythology, of Ovid and of Eliot's *Wasteland*. The prophet in Ionesco's play *The Chairs*. The boy in Steinbeck's *A Flight* who at the conclusion of the story tries to speak but, because of his dying, thickened tongue, cannot. Six figures in films who are mute or partially mute also come to mind; one is the girl in an older film, *Johnny Belinda*, the part played powerfully by Jane Wyman, a mute and deaf girl who is brutally raped. A second female figure is the character representing Helen Keller in a recent film, *The Miracle Worker*, where the muteness is again combined with deafness. I wish to emphasize that I am not speaking of Miss Keller herself and her problems but of the ar-

tistic figure made from her story who moved us so deeply as part of a drama. Four other figures are males: one is a singer whose part was played by Frank Sinatra in the film *The Joker Is Wild*. This man is attacked by vengeful hoodlums and his throat slashed so that he can no longer sing. He loses his voice totally for a time. Two others are characters in works by Ingmar Bergman: The Magician in the film of that name and one of the three rapists in *Virgin Spring*. The final one I wish to mention is the figure of the prize fighter played by Anthony Quinn in the recent *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, who like classical heroes generally, is made to suffer through the very thing he is excellent at, through his particular virtue: for this man partially loses his power of articulation as a result of blows to the voice box suffered in the ring, the place where he is a prince.

Now if one will assume with me that these figures have a peculiar power to move us in the art works of which they are a part, we ought to try to find out why, and indeed it is likely that there are different reasons for our being moved in the different works. It is hard to suppose for example that the magician and the rapist in Bergman's two films move us for the same reasons. But let us explore the material a little and see if there are any relations among them. Let us, that is, put ourselves in the position of students observing a teacher who is himself unsure of what he wants to say and is struggling (as I am at this moment) and who is therefore himself one of the types of the inarticulate—whether heroic or not in this case clearly remains to be seen. We remember that there is also a type of the inarticulate as buffoon, fit object for kicks in the behind. Let us see.

It seems to me we can begin here: There is a part in each of us which responds to the inarticulate for we are all throughout our lives somewhat in the position of Socrates' slave boy in *The Meno* who did not know and who therefore or for that very reason could not say—he became and we become articulate only as the result of prodding and response, as the result of willing ourselves away from the direction of the vegetable, which (or who) is the absolute inarticulate in some sense. The struggle to articulate I mean is related to the struggle to become educated, to *Paidea*, to use Werner Jaeger's title, which title reminds us that the central concept of education for the Platonist Greeks was the notion of being led outside oneself—being moved toward another state than that which one finds oneself in toward the higher inarticulateness of ecstasy. Plato's esoteric doctrines he tells us in his *Seventh Epistle* are not to be found in his writings: they are present as

flames in the minds of listeners fanned to brightness by the dialogues which themselves are thus seen necessarily to lack full articulation. The importance of effort and labor and discipline in the auditor is crucial here, and I feel sure that one of the reasons we respond to the partially inarticulate hero like the prize fighter I spoke of or Billy Budd or even the standard Marlon Brando mumblor is that we are all born mumbler, while only through trying and effort as Plato considered it, do we come to wisdom. The true inarticulate in Plato's *Meno* is not the ignorant slave boy but the facile *Meno*, who paradoxically has much speech, who has learned definitions and passed many examinations and taken, we feel sure, several degrees; *Meno*, who can repeat, but who finally strikes us like Polonius does as a figure of impotence despite his flow of words because his words are out of touch with his self.

A logorrhea or torrent of words of the kind released by many students in oral examinations or by many teachers as well as students in seminars or by many inferior poets in their work or by many preachers in their sermons or by the character of Lucky in Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* strikes us not as a sign of power but as a sign of powerlessness, so that there is finally no very profound connection between inarticulateness and powerlessness, for the apparently articulate director of flows of words can strike us as equally powerless. The question is this: to what extent is the power of articulation in touch with the root of the man, with his own self—or to take a physical figure paraphrasing D. H. Lawrence, to what extent is a man's penis the instrument of his speech? Lawrence said in *Lady Chatterly's Lover* that unless a painter paints with his penis the work has failed. Lawrence believed the same for the writer or reader. Now, don't misunderstand me. I am not simply saying some reductive, psychoanalytical thing about the connections in the unconscious between semen and ink and between pens or brushes and phalluses and the equivalence of these to power, nor was Lawrence doing so. These things perhaps are true but they are half truths. They are heresies. Faulkner points up their heretical nature, the false equating of penis and power, by making Benjy in *The Sound and the Fury* both mute and castrated while at the same time allowing him power and righteousness and perceptivity of an almost god-like kind. He is thus contrasted to two other castrated figures: the hero, if one may call him that, of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, who lacks power, and Clifford Chatterly in Lawrence's novel whose outward, castrative war injury strikes one as an outward symbol of his actual inner powerlessness and inhumanity. Thus I am speaking now not so much about

the organs themselves and their presence or absence; rather, I am speaking of the powers or spirits (in the ancient phrase of Galen "the faculties") behind organs, and I am suggesting that as the flesh of the larynx (or Adam's apple as it is so perfectly called) is contiguous with the flesh of the arm and the abdomen and with the flesh of the genitals so the power or spirit behind the larynx is contiguous with the power or spirit behind the genital, behind the organ of the man as man or the woman as woman, so that a failure in one is felt as a failure in the other through the very integrity or spiritual (I prefer personal) unity of the human being. Now we seem much more willing to see the larynx as the organ which marks the man than to see the penis so, for the larynx houses the word, the word is sacred for it has been made flesh and speech connected to the rational part of man is much more his mark than the penis which is an instrument he shares with animals and its power a power he shares with them, we smugly say. In my opinion there is about as much sense to the idea that the human genital serves the same function as the genital of an animal (say the rabbit) as there is to the idea that the human voice box serves the same function as the voice box of the rabbit—who by the way is capable of an eerie scream that rakes the heart to the bone. Remember that a rabbit doesn't care about Billy Budd, Benjy, the injured prize fighter, or Poe's man who lost his voice or any of the castrated figures I mentioned—and not simply because he is unable to perform syllogisms. To say that a rabbit, or whatever, is an animal is simply to say that he possesses no organ of love *whatsoever* and at the same time no power of love. The thing which makes a man a man is his ability to love; if a man's reason is not in the service of his powers of love but is used to defend himself against love or on the other hand to commit offenses against it as in the calculated seduction scene which fails to take into account his person as a man and his partner's person as a woman, then his rationality is not a human rationality at all. Reason can be inhuman, Only love cannot be.

What has this to do with the inarticulate as hero? Precisely this: that which every man primarily wants to articulate is this very fact that he is first of all a lover. We feel such blows as the slashing of the vocal cords of the figure in Frank Sinatra's film or the raping of the girl in the Jane Wyman film, or such failures as Billy Budd's in Melville's story or that of the man who lost his voice in Poe's story very deeply not because of the universal fear of literal castration as some would hold but because these blows and failures strike us at the very heart of our own inarticulateness, the inarticulateness of ourselves as lovers, and thus they make

us feel our boyishness. For who has uttered his love totally or succeeded in separating his love totally from hatred, ending the ambivalence of youth? The struggle of Anthony Quinn in *Requiem for a Heavyweight* to express his love for his girl or his feeling for his friend is simply symbolized by the injury to his voice box. The reality of his struggle goes far deeper and joins with the reality of our own isolation and of our own pathetic but, God willing, our increasingly successful attempts to turn ourselves further into lovers of our wives, of our girls, of our parents, of our students, of our friends. It is only to the extent that we can make ourselves lovers that we can make ourselves men, for the part that hates is the part that is not a man.

I must say this seems to me to be a religious idea, a religious interpretation of the fact that we are moved by inarticulate heroes. There is a further development of my interpretation which I also believe to be religious. It is this: Only when we have begun to make ourselves men through the articulation of our love (the step dealt with in the tragedies of the young—as of Hamlet or of Raskolnikof) can we then begin to make ourselves saints and seers and oracles (the step dealt with in the tragedies of the aged as of Lear and Oedipus at Colonnus). It is in this second stage, the stage of the superman or oracle (I prefer to call him saint) that we see the further positive meaning of our response to the inarticulate hero, for the utterance of an oracle, like the parables of Christ, is highly inarticulate, related to the sounds of the wind and to the keenings of the Greek choruses, except for him who in the words of the New Testament “has ears to hear.” The greatest moment of articulation of the fullest man we find is a moment of silence. “The rest is silence,” of the end of *Hamlet* is such a moment. There is another at the end of St. Thomas’ work where he says that all he has done is as nothing and there is still another at the end of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* where he says, “Wovon mann nicht sprechen kann daruber musst mann schweigen.” These silences are very different coming as they do at the ends of profound works. The silences at the beginnings of works are the ones of which we should beware. In the 10th book of his *Confessions* Augustine says of the work he has done, “In sound it is silent; in affection it cries aloud.” There is such a moment in the silent ecstasy of “St. Theresa in her wild lament” caught by Bernini, of St. Augustine in his loud repose caught brilliantly by Botticelli in a fresco over the inscription “St. Augustine so lived that he does not yet know he is dead.” I am speaking of the unique moment of articulation or inarticulation—one hardly knows which to say—to which we are directed

by the Bible: "Be still and know that I am God." The quiet of a saint or the obscure utterance of a seer, which is like an image of silence, is very different from the silence of Iago at the end of his tragedy. The saint shuts up so that he can hear better the ineffable Voice. Iago shuts up as a natural result of his own self-castration and so that he will not have to give an account of himself.

The first problem of a man is to learn how to utter his love, which is the articulation of himself as a person, and the second problem is to learn how to shut up, which is the articulation of himself as a saint. Therefore both in the struggle to speak and in the active quietness of the inarticulate hero we see ourselves in depth, and we reaffirm our hope of change and we experience through them, these superb incompetents, what Nietzsche so beautifully called "metaphysical solace." It is these factors more than the factor of apparent loss of power (superficially real as it is) which moves us in these heroes. My proof is this: we are really more or less prepared to deal with the feeling of the loss of power or the lack of power, for we have been familiar with it since infancy and have lived with it as children who could not have what we wanted or as masturbating adolescents or as adult neurotics, so that it is a feeling which is not finally very moving—we are, that is, at home with it. However we are much less prepared (and much more afraid) to tap in ourselves the feelings related to our painful articulation of our human love or the speechlessness we feel in the presence of God. And it is these feelings, not those of the impotent boy but those of the powerful man and the oracular saint which the inarticulate hero calls into our minds and hearts and which he, through the art of his creator, articulates.

Poor, mute Benjy gives us our voice as poor, drunken, dead Faulkner gave Benjy his. I believe Faulkner himself is more closely identified with Benjy than with any other character, though all his characters come out of him, for the artist is an idiot, a mad man, the poet in Shakespeare's phrase lets his eyes "roll in a fine frenzy," and the word "nothing" in "A tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing," source of Faulkner's title, gains meaning as we see this and as we begin to reflect on the positive meanings of the concept of "nothing" like the positive meanings of the concept of silence. "Nothing" in this phrase as it applies to Faulkner's novel is I believe related to Stephen Daedalus' "Nothung!"—the oath he uttered as he struck the chandelier with his cane in the brothel scene of *Ulysses*, ending his hallucinations and his illusions, and freeing himself. For Stephen this apparently inarticulate noise, this ejaculation, was not an end to meaning. It was a beginning.

WARD ABBOTT

THE APPARITION

Your eyes move
as wolves complain
near starving
some distance
from here.
Irreproachably stoic,
I look at you.
The air is cold.
Orion rises.
River phantom
noise in woods
unseen. Tired
thoughts circulate,
circumambulate the mind,
like wolves,
hungry, patient.
You once said
that you lived
at the bottom
of an empty glass.
Now, I can see
what you meant
as the glass
of you surrounds me.
From the bottom
I watch the sky.
Orion rises. Your
eyes move. My heart
cannot stop the soft pain.
The wolves complain
of hunger.

JANE HAYMAN

A WIND

A wind awakes
 in the schoolyard;
 this is a dream
 seen through a gate.
 Within, a winter sun
 and leaves that scrape the walk.
 Children make rings and turn,
 possessed,
 into the sky
 with shouts inaudible
 or late
 and then gone.

I am alone with
 you, a name
 that wakes in my throat.

WILLIAM PEARLMAN

CARAVAN

Another trip, though tiring. Oh I went on. What a show, I heard somebody
 say. A regular walking circus. All the way through god to gold to green.
 All picture postcard network. So utterly beautiful, assuredly not real.
 Fun house reflectives of the impossible. I wanted to get the film over;
 There was much too much technicolor, not enough matter.

I want the chance to direct a spectacular. Bring everything up the hill,
 baskets of food, kegs of Coors, banana trees, horses, huge negro-dancers
 carrying us in great caravan to the peak as the drug brings the eyes to
 find diamonds in the fields, fluttering crescents in the garden.

WILLIAM PEARLMAN

VENICE PAVILION

He had hashish on the walls, a loving cup of Acapulco grass,
assorted roach holders, a shelf of imported pipes from China,
and a room full of black cats

A strobe light in the head, a sunken bath, a shower full
of lilac water, and that marvelous little waterfall in back
of it all

The way up to the tower that was his bedroom was lithographs
and poems and paintings of the ancient creatures who reached
the summit and died

ROBERT CHETKIN

"ITS HOUR COME ROUND AT LAST..."

And when the last revolutionary
Stumbles down from the mountains in triumph,
Spits on the corpse of Goliath,
Snuffs a stolen cigar
In a massive, vacant eye;
And when the first official messiah,
Priest of the glorious new order,
Leads him into an empty sewer
And silently, impassively,
In the name of internal stability,
Slits his throat;
Only then will Yeats, forgotten,
Have at last earned
His prophetic,
Decomposing
Grin.

ROBERT CHETKIN

INCANTATION

Nothing survives in the temperate zone,
 The seeds of Middle and Mild have grown
 A fruit which changes men to stone;

Dwarves in the tropics writhe and moan,
 And giants roam the Poles alone,
 But nothing survives in the temperate zone.

STANLEY NOYES

DREAM OF FAIR WOMAN

At black five in the morning
 Woke—you stood naked by my bed
 Long hair to your elbows. "Do
 You want a woman?" you asked, shaking.
 "Yes." Threw off pajamas, guest in your house,
 Mind on your husband in the next room,
 On teen-age kids in other rooms.
 Made quick love, too quick,
 Lay clenching your tough, athletic body
 Thinking of your husband's .38 he'd showed me.
 "Aren't you afraid he'll find out?" whispered
 Finally. "He knows," you whispered, shivering
 Still. "He's a dear man and I love him dearly."
 Separate I lay, trying to separate truth
 From dreaming. After wiggling me uselessly,
 You sneaked away to his and your own opaque
 Bedroom, where I heard him snoring.

CHARLES G. BELL

STRANGER

Out of towering darkness,
Flash and thunder;
The lights go off together.
The old woman

Understands a moment
Then forgets, gropes
From lamp to lamp
To flick them on,

Bewildered
Calls the cat. . .
To bring the years'
Lost kittens from the storm.

A door slams in a gust,
Trees brush the window,
Rain in sheets goes
Solid on the screens.

She trips and stands smiling,
Lost but not worried
(It is we
Who draw back in fear);

The smile on her lips,
She calls into the darkness
Further
Than drowned light:

"Here Kitty,
Kitty, Kitty;
Come Kitty, Kitty;
Come Kitty."

DAVID JOHNSON

DAKOTA TERRITORY

Years before I saw it
elevators juttred erect out of the grasslands
amazed and awkward banners announcing
a stand of poplars, a few frame houses
a dry goods store threaded by iron rails
a steam driven artery moving to the horizon
beyond the tip of your finger
safe in bushels and a new spur

Fargo grows like a wild weed
barbecues and patios past
the city limits / Sears sends credit cards
with the catalogue suits and overalls
walk side by side / the college has an idea
or two and West Fargo's the home of the 16th
largest stockyard in the world
and yet downtown—at the center
a few of the old pillared homes
are for sale and an unsavory crowd
frequents the bars near the tracks
last December another run of the Great Northern
Railway / Fargo to St. Paul
was discontinued

some cities like giant cedars
develop heart rot at maturity
Ottertail, Minnesota once had blood
in its veins 1600 people 3 grocery stores
stables for horses and a creamery
an important stop for the Fargo-St. Paul train

ANSELM HOLLO

THE NEW STYLE WESTERN

the two horsemen
on opposite banks of the Rio Grande
shook
their fists
then solemnly turned
their knobble-kneed steeds
and rode away

they would be back
but not in this movie
which was about the strange and amusing ways
prairie dog
owl and rattler have
of living together

AN ACCOUNT

Lennart Bruce

This is not an attempt at literary criticism but just an account of what happened to me as I started writing five years ago. Before that time I led an entirely different life; being thus reborn at an advanced age creates a certain urgency to write whatever you want to get out of yourself rather than bothering too much about how & why.

Having been executed, at least financially, & publicly at that, I passed into afterlife with that delightful feeling, which, I suppose, is characteristic of all ghosts, of not caring too much about reasons or manner but just plainly enjoying the "spooking" itself.

I was in West Africa at the time, living under the stress of a climate & surroundings notorious for bringing out any latent psychosis & even driving perfectly sane people crazy, when everything started to crash all around me, inexplicably as it seemed: all I had built, from zero to the most sizable food distribution company in the country apart from the first public transport, etc., including coldstorage plants, food processing supermarkets, bus line, etc. I won't enter into the question, by fault of whom, because the crash itself revealed to me in its glare that the fault was nobody's, not even my own. At the end of a long period of exhaustion I became physically ill with high fever. The mental strain was great & I started hallucinating as though my whole life had risen in phantasms around me in a huge wave that wouldn't break. At the same time as I got scared I couldn't help but become fascinated by the visions, so much so, in fact, that I had to try to describe them; & this was the starting point of my writing. Later, I of course found that my experience was in no way extraordinary. Its most spectacular parallel brings me back to 1742 when the Italian engraver, Giovanni Batista Piranesi, at that time 22 years old, is said to have fallen ill with a violent attack of malaria. The fever-visions from this period of illness are said to be the origin of his masterpiece, a series of engravings published in 1745: *Invenzioni capric' di carceri*, or as they are commonly known, *Carceri* or *The Prisons*. These extremely powerful drawings introduced a new sensibility into European art: romanticism, part of the "fantastic" in art. In his great series, *Antichita Romane de Tempi della Repubblica e de primi Imperatori*, Piranesi

pictures ruins of temples, pyramids, theaters, forums & arenas with the utmost clarity & an abnormally sensitive feeling for the interplay between the architectonic & the creatures sparsely placed in these desolate surroundings as though they were strangely passing & coexisting without any connection, not being made for each other, part of two different worlds. One cannot be sure the creatures are living humans even—dwarfed, antlike among these torturously colossal constructions, hinting at the presence of something unavoidable & cruelly indifferent, an atmosphere of something holy which has been deserted. The order seems irrevocable & pertaining to other natural laws than those we know of. Piranesi's Carceri has had a great influence &, as a weird curiosity, it's worth mentioning that he directly influenced the English architect, George Dance, who later built the Newgate Prison in London. One of the best analyses of Piranesi's Carceri was written by Marguerite Yourcenar, to whom, apart from the Swedish writer Lars Gustafsson, I am greatly indebted for the wakening of my interest in Carceri. Marguerite Yourcenar writes in her *Le cerveau noir de Piranese*:

The real terror of Carceri is not so much created by some seclusive scenes of torture as by the indifference of the human ants erratically moving through the enormous rooms. The different groups practically never enter into contact with each other, even do not seem to be conscious of one another's existence, & still less they seem to notice that someone condemned is being tortured in a dark corner. And the most alarming characteristic of this insignificant group of humans is perhaps their immunity to vertigo. These people rambling about with the greatest ease & in good spirit at devastating heights seem to be completely unaware of the fact that they're moving on the edge of an abyss.

The French critic Roger Caillois has also, in his *Au coeur du fantastique & Images*, images, centered on "the fantastic" in art, the truly imaginative which sharply differs from the grotesque & fabulating: ghost stories, fairy tales, etc. The difference between these two, again using Carceri as an example, lies in the fact that there has been a displacement of our surroundings & living conditions. Piranesi's imagination has stretched them without ever letting them entirely lose connection with the actual well-known conditions we are living under.

I clearly recognize this stage from my own experience; the phantasms I hallucinated during the crisis in my life were strangely real & never let go from what we call reality &, therefore, were immensely threatening. It was as though all I had perceived in my life, & forgotten by my

conscious memory, had been ruminated into large blocks of information in my memory banks without my conscious cooperation & had suddenly surged to the surface threatening the organization of my individuality, although they, by their terror, chased me out of the cave where I wanted to hide from everything that crashed around me. I deliberately trained myself to pin these phantoms down & the series of weird happenings connected with them, calling them forward again & again, describing them until this activity actually triggered me into a new life of writing & reading, which I up to then had never touched. I found this a very fertile ground for imaginative processes which proceeded without my forcing them. I managed to train myself, at least that was my purpose, to somehow get farther down, behind the visualization of the eye into the area of intricate cooperation between the brain & the eye in image-forming which has demonstrated to me clearly that the common likeness of eye to camera is wrong & proven to me the constructive role of the brain in this cooperation. This area of human imagination is also blatantly honest, disrobing the individual completely &, therefore, also obscene. In its crude undressing it doesn't stop with sex but goes all the way to the ejection of the body's excrements, the most naked of all human stages.

The realist tradition, very strong in America, consciously removes itself from the territory of imagination characterized by Carceri. But to me during my crisis there was only one reality, the one of threat, & premonition, the reality I lived with for months & that pushed everything else into secondary position. How would I describe this in so-called realist terms? I cannot use reality before it happens, & yet my premonitions were more real than anything I had experienced, so I had to try to describe them. I cannot possibly do so using conventional logic. A presentiment, for example, does not simply fall within any such category. I have had to find the means of communication & this to me presents a challenge & invites creation.

The process of thought starts with perception through the senses, whether through sight, hearing or touch, etc. The information is then worked on by the brain; it may be led back into a subconscious loop or worked on directly. The next step on the scale is creating emotion & farther up this road we enter the area of reasoning. I find the main creative challenge in using as my starting point the territory of perception/emotion rather than emotion/reasoning, since I sense great pitfalls there. And one thing I am sure of—you cannot go backward: reasoning-emotion-perception. Doing that you wind up with faked surrealism.

THE ARGENTINA MEAT DEAL

Lennart Bruce

(Instalment from a novel in progress.)

I meet one of my old-time girl friends, as I'm lying floating in a swimming pool suddenly her face appears out of the water between my feet. She has just come to town and I invite her to come and stay with us. I share an apartment with two friends, although we are just about to leave the city by ship. The day of departure, I'm of course late; finally I manage to get through customs and all other controls. Once on board I slowly whirl around in my cabin with one arm outstretched before I fall asleep with the idea that it's a submarine; now we're diving, but only in a submerged tunnel winding like a bobsleigh track under the water: it's an exercise, I have to say that the tavern "Submarine" has improved, its bar is tops, I'm dead drunk, a triangle capsizes, inside it blue eyes and curly hair but no one I know, I swirl round and it vanishes, I shrink in my tight black sweater, it's suffocating me, I let down my shoulders from their slyly lifted position, take a couple of polka steps, my eyes also lose their sly expression and my whole attitude becomes normal, relaxed. The man with the long nose slides past, his posture looks silly as he leans forward because of the weight of the nose—and then I thought I was alone! Inside the left-hand bulge of my forehead a sudden fire flares up, the features of my face feel larger, twice as coarse; I avoid checking to see if this is correct, preferring to be delicately fine-limbed and small featured, totally relaxed. I lift my fieldglass to the eye in the same manner as a musician his trumpet to his mouth and gaze, a tall house rushes up to my face, a pair of clips give off a subdued shine from my ears, O.K. I'll have to wait until January, so what? There is a difference between the horrible and the ugly, a clearly defined difference between the terrible and the ugly to the advantage of the former; does the detestable exist? I get goose-pimples, an exhausted muscle is saturated by lacteal acid and stops functioning. By means of intense activity it is possible for me to choke within myself the state which is created by acclamation and praise from the outside, none of its satisfactions lasts and therefore its origin is of

no importance. It's the night of the jackbirds, roofs and trees are black with them, they scream at dusk, I slip my hand over my face, the tip of my little finger is caught in a wrinkle on my forehead, the fold of skin hangs on to it for a little while and then snaps back in numbed elasticity, in a corner sits the owl man in his circles, round-egged round-eyed round-headed hunchbacked armless; a psychic enlargement threatens to bust the cranium from inside; in order to hold together my organized structure I move into position quick as lightning concentrating. From somewhere in my memory my most beautiful attire emerges, a marine blue topcoat thirty years old. I'm just lifting it out of the delivery carton, tissuepaper is falling from its folds, the unused cloth is covered by a fine blue fiber-down: I'm happy but overtake time in the fast whiff of a snore and wake with the topcoat lost, the one who formed the mouth to say something has said it. I play cat catch rat with my penis but have to give up because it grows too big. What in the last analysis woke me up was the torment of a rectal cramp, then for a while I lie chuckling and humming, happy again because it let go, a great drama. A slit opens up and lets in a little light as I'm busy with my little specialty. Two white automobiles are lying one on top of the other, the one underneath with wheels in the air, the one on top twisted above the body, they are lying clenched in a fucking to death; deep inside a belly the contours of a fucked fetus, a blinker signals to death, a headlight throws forth a cone of light, I come and leave, try to be my usual self in spite of the accident; maybe they're nothing but toys? Perhaps I'm a giant unable to see the end of me? My head the top of a distant mountain, a vertebral bone pops in its neck although so little and in this connection invisible. The realistic surrealism is as ancient as the Oracle of Delphi, a wise man all drugged talking and talking with all doors wide, speaking directly out of his subconscious, his words fitting anything. The giant is on the go, he's colossal, before you know a thing he explodes into the room in his black suit. Meantime I sit in front of the young mother, she shows me her little baby, I turn it upside down and happen to drop it on the gravel, it's so tiny and all moist, it becomes covered with dirt all over its fine white skin. The baby forms its face in the shape of a howl, the mother snatches it away from me: I fail in everything I do: The giant is on the go, he seizes his victims by the collar or by the flaps of their coats and, as he tosses them against the wall, they vanish and there remains but a huge black hole while the room stands quaking. He looks up with his eyes and mouth of a lizard in his halfmoon smile of scorn, the chin is small and malicious, eyes

yellow at the corners, he takes his next victim & throws it against the wall, the black hole opens in it and the victim vanishes beyond all laws of nature with a strange harsh-sounding thunder, the giant comes rushing in looking for a new victim, seizes it throws it against the wall, again there's the familiar earthquake, the black hole and the harsh thunder. We climb up the trees but I'm detailed as the last man remaining on ground to throw the sticks up into the trees. Having dropped their leaves, their branches are naked and black, some of them dead, winding in bizarre shapes. On one of the lowest branches an old man is sitting who in turn has been chosen to receive the sticks I throw up to him, he's sitting a little too high up but I start throwing them. First I take those with a shape well suited for him to grab, or should he miss, for them to stick among the branches; still many fly by and fall back down, time is scarce; he climbs all the way down to the lowest branch, I concentrate on throwing the sticks in a straight and not a slanted trajectory in order not to miss the tree, it works better, now he catches stick after stick but all of them up till now have been provided with some twig or twisted form facilitating his grabbing them; eventually only the completely plain and straight canes formed like spears are left; they demand great precision although we have now acquired a certain skill. Nevertheless it's difficult. The smooth canes slip through the fingers just as they're about to close around them. When it's time to eat somebody throws a bag of food to me, the bag coming down meets a stick coming up, pass each other within only a couple of inches, the bag is white, contains various foods, among them a lemon, surroundings heave and sink in deep breaths, a phenomenon I'm only aware of for an instant. A tunnel filled with blue light opens, at its far end stands a black ship ready for take-off. Nobody really knows what's going on inside the walls of the palace, it covers a square mile, the Oba himself never lets anybody in but steps out into a specially constructed ante-chamber to receive visitors, very rarely lets someone pass behind its walls. The heir of his title and kingdom is sent away immediately after birth, only after the death of his father is he permitted back into the palace of the Oba, now as the Oba himself. Thus many unnecessary patricides are avoided. Only the Oba is permitted to wear colored beads, he's dressed in them from head to feet, his shoes are covered with them as well as his hat, his dress is so heavy that as he sits down his servants have to lift his arms onto the arm supports. The pope of the overgrown primates refuses to accept the pill and with it he is rushing toward his own annihilation, dragging his church with him. An enormous gravel-pit opens. It's

THE ARGENTINA MEAT DEAL

a holiday and the idle gravel trucks stand in long rows behind it. A cherub turns in the ceiling of a church around its beautifully pouting buttocks and blows its trumpet between its huge round richly pouting cheeks, somewhere half-way in between there's a churchyard just behind a junkyard, a couple of tough women with diamond eyes are approaching; again a psychosis slips out growing growing inside my head blowing it up to four times its size on the verge of bursting; it caves in and disappears broken down with the utmost concentration by my weak consciousness, long tracks of pain and behind them mountains turning blue in the distance; the front edge of a wound dissolves in some kind of radiation or fluorescent lines pulled backward indicating high speed in the direction of the wound, its center blood-red jelly; by all means, the bomb is disturbing but probably not very dangerous, can probably be locked up along with the gas from the first World War. More serious are chemical and biological weapons because of their low cost of production, and above it all towers the threat of general biological changes achieved by science rapidly bringing us to the road of parting: annihilation—survival.

The telephone is ringing, I answer, it's Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf in one and the same person, saying: I'm wearing granny's nightcap—it's been a long time, I say, how are things with you—going to hell, have reached the far extreme of the rope, am going to hang myself so you can sell the corpse. I say, take it easy, one has to learn to live within oneself, no one else cares, you have to do away with the illusion that things are happening outside of yourself. The Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood yell into the receiver: it's ugly it's ugly. I answer, no it's horrible, terrible, but that's something quite different. Now the telephone cord has become twisted between us, I take the receiver from my ear and let it hang straight down unwinding itself, the receiver is shouting: where are you where are you?—here here I am, I shout here, I know it isn't easy, I say, but you have to live in the instant, think of the fact that red fully ripe tomatoes are beautiful—sure, sure for me everything goes to hell, I drop them on the floor so they burst and lie there like intestines split open with their slimy contents swelling from their wounds—we have to get together, just a moment, I have to pull the blind, I say, now it's O.K., yes sure we must keep in touch, this week is rather full I lie, but perhaps the next. A big human form out of stone sits staring at us with evil eyes between us on the borderline of our sections of the city. I see nothing but grey traversed by fine capillaries, now it's capsizing into a great plain covered with

houses, behind it rises a wall of stone and over its edge falls a thin cloth in the shape of a huge cigar filled with air bending in a long beautiful loop, slowly flying it rolls over the wall, on the other side of which, and out of sight sits Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf in granny's nightcap desolately crying; an aeroplane is towing another airfilled cigar across the sky I yell: hello do you see it—yes yes I see it too—don't you see that it's beautiful—yes yes I see I see—We both see it, each from our different positions, so let's keep in touch—yes yes let's keep in touch. We hang up, the delicate arch of an enormous bridge collapses in our ears, a lightbrown and a black dachshund runs across the floor of my apartment, I see a woman with shadows in all her openings, beautiful against her blonde hair, we put our meaning on everything, that's the reason we insist on calling everything by name; originally it has no meaning. Right in front, the pointed ears of an ass are rising. Switzerland as a forerunner has automated its telephone system entirely, small improvements are planned but largely the system is perfect, telephones are even provided with a meter system of the same type used in cabs, permitting the one who talks to follow exactly the cost of his words. The United States of America is not, as it claims, number one but only number two after Switzerland in the automating of its telephone system. Scandinavian and some other northern European telephone companies have also greatly automated their telephones but keep their mouths shut about both Switzerland and the U.S.A. each one of them trying to give the impression of being leaders in the field, talk constantly about "the cobra," a new type of receiver sitting on the dialing disk which is released only when the receiver is lifted; its great disadvantage: it ties up both hands and cannot be cradled on the shoulder. Other countries are planning improvements in their telephone systems, but with no fixed date for total integration and automation; half-automated communication nets are available. I push a couple of barn doors wide open: there stands a figure skinny and mean like one of the assistants of death, and his skeleton just as white. A blue-white spot of light blossoms on a nose cone burning in friction, the light radiates in long lines which, before they vanish, resemble burning letters and numbers, compass legs run back and forth in a half circle accompanied by a pneumatic sound breaking the silence. My legs and arms are far behind me, only attached to my body by the lines drawn by their movements away from me as they're slipping behind; I'm again completely round, my extremes are the ring muscles of mouth and rectum and the round lids in front of ears and eyes which just have snapped, locked and enclosed the

sound and the light whirling inside my interior under a fine web of shining veins; there are only two straight lines: the tracks of arteries and veins on my neck; time just flies past and releases its system of bells. Creation is a coincidence, call it fortunate if you wish but beware of contaminated words, they may be spikes in your electroencephalogram. Threat's shadow slips in from the side, it's terrible and eerie out walking in thin air; I seek cover behind the shell of my backbone, throw the words around me, they are burning me. A young woman approaches, I lie down on my back with legs wide apart, she lies down on top of me between them but suddenly she throws back the upper part of her body and throws one hand over her bare ass, runs away weeping, shining needle dangles in its black thread, through space it grows darker, the thread grows brighter. From the surface of two butterfly wings, out of their beautiful pattern, two big calm eyes are looking at me.

JOSEPHINE SAUNDERS

GUEST

During world war two, when just about all
the men were overseas, we
were married at my Father's house in
the presence only of the immediate family, and one
of my two best friends.

Partly out of exhaustion,
partly out of fear that
I would be a burden to you (and
I have been a burden to you, dearest, more
than I ever dreaded being),
I got drunk at the wedding.

Seated on the terrace after the ceremony,
"Do you
see what I see?" said
the friend. Across the lawn between
my house and my Father's approached
the only boy I knew who had not been drafted.

He drew up a chair to join our minute group,
"What's new with you?" he asked me.
"I got married," I said, "a few minutes ago."

He flushed and made polite remarks about
having missed the boat.

But what interested me was that this
was apparently the way
he imagined we spent our suburban afternoons:

the men city-suited; the women hatted, gloves
and purse in lap—and all
sipping champagne without even
the excuse of a party.—

NEIL NELSON

Come my
poem

un
liked
miss

used
abused
pet

I'll
bet you
can

NEIL NELSON

THE JUNCTURE

for Pound (my dog)

Up, to late, perhaps
reading, the dog
yelping at the moon,

howling at the bitch,
in heat, a-
cross the street

O well
it troubled my sleep,
I'll tell you

But,
came quick fast dawn
& the morn again, I

awake, I
Awake & find my
dog all

hanging out,
raw, like some
lump of. . . Opened

at the juncture
of tendon & bone
the muscle & blade

of the shoulder
exposed,
red on white—

laid out, bare;
&, look, there for
christsake, what

a sight.

JAMES BRADFORD

FOR MY FATHER

A man in a white suit
is handsome in the sunlight

Falling behind his eyes
are granite cliffs

Coils of ice
are faster than the eye

Guilt edged pictures
every several frames

White on white

JAMES BRADFORD

WINTER MORNING, ALBUQUERQUE

An old woman in a black coat
turns at Central and Second
and hobbles toward the sun

Ages of crows
have passed through her

Lightly
she steps
into the sky

THOMAS MCGRATH

from *LETTER TO AN IMAGINARY FRIEND, VOL. II*

1.

_____ and always halftime at The Funeral—but once, in Samsara. . .
That is: NOW—start in the empty anytime: arrive.
Ahead of time: HERE: in the filledup nowhere, and go
FORWARD

—“Cain’t hear you boy—ain’t no color but the night
Down here—get out in the stream and sing!
Who be ye?”

’Tis only myself. . .
the last man of the century. . .
going
Home

“Who you talk to then?
Dark here, cain’t see
You.”

I’m just a worn piece of leather that was once well put together. I am
The one who has come at last to wake the reluctant dreamer
Out of his surfeit of continental sleep.
to free the Bound Man
Of the Revolution
to make your jawbone book and heavenly
Credit card.
Sunrise in the rock. . .
the light of my house
Burning. . .
Do you read my blaze
down
there
in the dark?
Over.

“Ah—that old resurrection man!
Talk like you found it—

Place you get out.

But my foot

—stuck here in the stone. . .”

In the time it takes to make one step is the life of my poem.
And unless the step is endless, hell is forever.

But hell

Shakes at one step; shatters.

It is not daybreak

Provokes cockcrow but cockcrow drags forth the reluctant sun not
Resurrection that allows us to rise and walk but the rising
Of the rebel dead founds resurrection and overthrows hell.

2.

What I am doing

ain't nobody

nowhere

done before. . .

Have come a long way and arrive tired, the feet
Of language: raw: trailworn: needing to be reshod,
And myself with saddle sores from the long night ride.
I arrive near death, near the stall of silence. . .

but that's no matter—

What began in the first blaze—despair—is to end in joy:
After showing you hell I'm to blaze you the trail to heaven. . .

Arrive cold—after the long fall into
The past that must be the future the future that is my past.
I see the bus go by advertising DOGMA and the blind
Veteran asking bread in the cold teeth of the night O
Ancient Witness

—and all unchanged in the time of this poem. . .

All to be changed.

I offer as guide this total myth,

The legend of my life and time.

But the message arrives from far off:

From some future galaxy—arrives very fast, very faint, in a language
I can barely translate. . .

and always the danger of shortfall, noise,

And the plaindamn inability of readers to know good sense and song. . .

And so—nights of waiting for a single word and nights
When all arrives at once like a migration of birds.
Days when I turn it off in order to breathe, days
When only an enigmatic phrase comes through from another galaxy—
Poem

—nights. . .

when I am only food for the moon. . .

But hang-ups are no substitute for real agony.

And I

Am born every morning. . .

And once

in Samsara

and the ceremony done. . .

—Warped and bandaged arc of a broken bow I am bent

On straitening. . .

3.

Begun before Easter of a different year. . . Skyros. . . Dakota

The world:

outside my window

changed and unchanged.

I have come

Back toward the light

(my brothers houses all burned this year)

toward

Morning.

Beyond my window the armless windmills are marching

Into the sea.

And the iron poet strides over

The dark village.

Cockcrow. . .

—and always springtime in Hell. . .

* * * * *

I have come here—too young for this world and too old for the next—

From my violent acres crying for incarnation, to claim you,

To found our hungry legend in the field of bread, to find

Our bread in the bank of hunger, in the lame streets of the dawn,

To find our sign past sleep or the sleepy reveries of an insomniac Harp. . .

_____ have come to claim you, to build, on the angry winds of the renegade

Angels, the four blueblowers of the compass points, this stand

For the round song and the commune;

in the moon of bad weather to build

The pure rock of this passage oasis of song in the cold
And desert night. . .

(first the stars and the sea, now

The rock and the wind)

—have brought you here: beyond the four

Elements: stripped: naked for travelling. . . (the dead fly up,

Having lightened load, through the rock. . .)

Now: all the trails are blazed:

The evidence is given, the Fisherman is rising, the Kachina is made—

The ceremony is done.

—Now only the incantation.

I confidently wait

Your rising.

Night, pure crystal,

coils in my ear

like

song. . .

4.

Begun before Easter. . .

Sign of the Fish. . .

wind whining

Out of the black north's cold quadrant, the moon

Glistening on the folds of the coulee snow and a far scar

Where the river sings and ceases, locked in its house of ice;

Cold front sliding in: a wisp of high cirrus

Rides over the Indian graves, the barometer drowns, the burning

Clock of midnight turns on its axis of darkness. . .

Had come there,

To that House, first sign in the blessed zodiac

Of all my loves and losses. . .

—to sing and summon you home.

* * * * *

Now: the wind shifts

a star

falls in the sea.

Skyros

the statue of Brooke on the citadel.

{

Time interposes

A discontinuous strata, the sediments of the summer:
What was and what is slide along old fault lines, history
Condenses its marble heroes

a metamorphic palimpsest
Hardens between the farmhouse and here: and I dive
Into the nightrock

terror

Now I call you:

I call

You:

from the four Winds and from Fire, come forth now
My thunderbird jawsmiths and soapbox phoenixes;

out of the ice-lined

Rolling coffins of the U.P. Line: rise;

I call you

From Water;

blind marble of those tolling bones
Walk home forever now from the cold dismembering sea;
I call you from holy Earth:

boneflower: starform

I call you now:

Goddess, sweet land I love, Old Lady, my darling ones—

Come:

We'll walk up out of the night together.

It's easy. . .

Only:

open your eyes. . .

slip your foot out of the stone. . .

I'll take you. . .

my darlings, my dear ones. . .

over the river.

TWO FACES OF DEATH IN ANAIS NIN'S *SEDUCTION OF THE MINOTAUR*

Wayne McEvilly

("They awaken, to become guardians of all the living and
the dead." Heraclitus)

In what Jung called the process of individuation there comes the moment, crucial, heightened with archetypal significance, of the meeting with the minotaur of one's own self, the minotaur whose foreboding countenance we spend so much of our days, and nights, avoiding as if to face it would bring instantaneous and total dispersion, oblivion. Yet as awareness grows and the face remains unseen we are seized by the certain knowledge that everything depends on removing the veil, a knowledge we would like to relegate to the vague and uncertain realm of suspicion, hunch, where it might easily be dismissed so that we might be free to "do other things," "get on with living." And it is at such a point that the suspicion takes other forms: perhaps there is no life, without this encounter which we avoid; perhaps we are all dead here, until we look into the face which alone can waken us. Life seems to expand, and we become conscious that the point which we occupy might constitute only a narrow corner from which we fearfully project what might be put parcels of the self into a future whose rigid, unmoving, Parmenidean constrictions serve to stifle and to kill. There is that within us which wants us to expand with the flow of life, to occupy points ever farther removed from the quiet center of the vortex of living, to become flowing selves, free and at home with our essential condition.

Anais Nin has written about the growth of awareness of a woman, Lillian, who as a result of her journeys into the cities of the interior (a phrase which forms the title of Miss Nin's "continuous novel") has begun the journey homeward. Many journeys, one journey.

Seduction of The Minotaur, like all of Miss Nin's novels, touches reverberations in us, sometimes of themes long familiar, problems long since met and solved, sometimes of those as yet unannounced themes

the import of which still escapes us, themes which we yet clearly anticipate. She who has been there, where we have been, and she who has been there before us, where, we suspect, we must go if we are to continue the journey, she who holds the golden thread, she leads the way. That is to say, the novel has something to teach. As do all of Nin's novels. Their resonance in life must be charted at depths to which few novels reach. That is to say, the novel is difficult. As are all of Nin's novels. It is a novel which requires not merely reading, but meditating, or, to use a most exact word here, reflecting.

To read Nin's novels, one must become reflective. The femininity of this author has been universally acknowledged. Everyone has said it, in one way or another: "Nin is a woman." Henry Miller. William Carlos Williams. Lawrence Durrell. *The New York Times*. Even a scientist at Stanford. This "feminine touch in the arts," as William Carlos Williams called it, is not something which, like truth, loves to hide! But what does it mean? What about the men who read Nin? What might they need to know about how to read her, given the fact that it is woman writing? "It's disturbing, it forces a man to an opposite extreme," said William Carlos Williams, of the feminine touch in Nin's work.¹

It would be terribly easy—and dangerous—for the mind to begin playing games at this point. But what if it were already too late for playing games? What then?

First of all, one must beware: not every woman who writes has this feminine touch. Unfortunately, however, all the comments made by all the men about femininity in art are posed in such a way as to propagate such a fiction. The fact is otherwise: this so-called feminine touch is a rare quality, found in so few writers that the possession of it by one, Anais Nin, is alone enough to distinguish her as among the very finest, subtlest, most acute sensibilities in recent literature. The possession of this quality is a rare gift. Should we not, then, consider ourselves responsible for a more honest articulation of its defining properties than is conveyed by the vague term "feminine touch"?

If it were a matter of a "feminine touch" alone, all women writers would convey what Nin conveys. Not so. Her vision is distinguished, and even in ways unique. Her metaphysic reveals a particular point of departure, a place from which the voice of this extraordinary woman and novelist speaks to us in such a way as to invite our reflection. For

1. Quoted on the jackets of many of Miss Nin's novels.

it immediately strikes an attentive reader of Nin's books: here is a world I would do well to enter, a world rich in promise of insights, revelations, perhaps the golden thread itself, leading to the very center of the labyrinth.

But there is difficulty at the beginning. ("It's disturbing," said William Carlos Williams.) One suspects very early in his explorations of the world of Anais Nin that it is one difficult to know, that to read the novel *Seduction of The Minotaur* without somehow encountering one's own shadowy self at the center of one's own labyrinth is not to have read the book. The path to the book ought to be well-marked: "Danger" "Not For Everyone" "For Lovers of Self-Knowledge Only, If Any There Be" "Magic Theatre". For just as in Hesse's *Steppenwolf* there is a magic theatre containing all the doors to the self, doors opening onto archetype after archetype, so in the magic theatre of the world of Nin's fiction (where everyday reality is infused with the glow and "patina," to use one of the novelist's favorite words, of symbolical transformation) one finds himself face to face with the mythical proportions of the everyday and the near-at-hand. It does not take much exposure to this world to begin to suspect that here nothing is absent, nothing avoided, that somehow the theme is life itself, far beyond any "feminine touch." Life itself, seen through the eyes of woman. Yes. That is more like it.

Increasingly, then, as one reflects on the world of Anais Nin, he begins to see that openness to that world is prerequisite to entering it. It is the world of woman, yes. But not only that. It is the world of woman's wisdom. She has offered it to us, the woman of clear insight; clairvoyance, the artist, the maker of illusions. This distinguishes her. One cannot insist too strongly on that.

The feminine touch which truly disturbs, disturbs in the creative sense, which urges toward openness, expansion, insight, entry into the Heraclitean fire of nature and life, that indeed is present in all of Nin's work. "It forces a man to an opposite extreme," said William Carlos Williams. Yes. Toward the anima. As though Nin's success as an artist were proven by the effect her work has on the psyche. The Literature of Bread: all of Nin's work belongs to this genre, as yet an uncatalogued company. Perhaps never before in the history of literature has the anima been so conscious of itself as it is in the works of Anais Nin: a consciousness which belies the presence of animus at the very core of the being—so that within the work one feels the most compelling evidence

of the reality of that toward which those who strive do indeed strive: precisely that totality of being which is the end toward which the process of individuation tends as towards a fate. Caught up in the dynamics of this process, the individual who happens to have the good fortune to come upon the door to the world of Nin's work will immediately recognize within a clearly articulated image of that process, a body of work which provides an enlightening guide to those cities of the interior through which he himself will have been traveling. This will, of course, be an exciting moment in his life. Even if disturbing.

Miss Nin's work has recently gained a careful, a concerned audience among the young. She has virtually become the Princess of the young, much as Cocteau at another time and for different reasons was the Prince of the young, and indeed in many ways still is. That audience comprising those who read Hesse, consult the I Ching, search for meaning and truth (to use the old-fashioned words), those who are listening to Indian music and the soundless sound of OM, those chanting mantras, those many who are seriously studying oriental philosophies, that is, increasingly more of the young, are also turning toward the work of the writers who know. (Wisdom—that attentive and receptive activity of giving heed to the nature of things—stands apart, said Heraclitus, from all else.) This increasing audience is simply the latest addition to Nin's previous one, but it is a significant addition: there seems now to be an intense awareness of the crucial importance of awareness. And Nin is above all aware.

Anais Nin, like everyone else who writes, has two kinds of readers: those who are searching, and those highly skilled in traveling the labyrinthine roads of the cities of the interior, deep-sea divers, old salts. In *The Novel of The Future* Anais Nin confides that she has a whole trunk full of letters from those who have said, "You are writing my diary." Those would be the searchers, I suppose. The old salts would know that she is writing her own diary, which is my diary, your diary, his diary, everyone's diary. A man at home with the Upanishads, with the Koan approach to awareness, with Nietzsche, with Jung—he will readily enter the world of Anais Nin. He will know, surely, its vastness soon after he enters. "This is no small world," he will be obliged to say. "In it, one must spend much time—before its dimensions begin to reveal themselves, vast dimensions, perhaps illimitable." To say that is to say something which distinguishes a work. This no mere matter of a "feminine touch," a phrase which begins to sound more than ridiculous at this point.

The Golden Thread:

Some voyages have their inception in the blueprint of a dream, some in the urgency of contradicting a dream. Lillian's recurrent dream of a ship that could not reach the water, that sailed laboriously, pushed by her with great effort, through city streets, had determined her course toward the sea, as if she would give this ship, once and for all, its proper sea bed. (*Seduction of The Minotaur*, p. 5)²

A magnificent opening! We are in the heart of the myth. ("Proceed from the dream outward," said Jung.) There is the sense of wonder which comes from closeness to the elements. Something momentous is about to occur, a breakthrough.

She had landed in the city of Golconda, where the sun painted everything with gold, the lining of her thoughts, the worn valises, the plain beetles, Golconda of the golden age, the golden aster, the golden eagle, the golden goose, the golden fleece, the golden robin, the golden-rod, the golden seal, the golden warbler, the golden wattles, the golden wedding, and the gold fish, and the gold of pleasure, the goldstone, the gold thread, the fool's gold. (S. M., p. 5).

Taste that prose! If ever prose tasted good, really good, this must be it. Wattles, warblers, weddings—all suffused with gold. What can this mean? There is something vulgar in talking about symbols.

The visionary artist doesn't merely use symbols. He sees that they are there. His seeing is itself in essence symbolic transformation, and he knows this as his point of departure, it being that which gives his work life. He sees that things are golden, and so they are.

Lillian has come to Golconda to escape. She, fugitive from herself, would like to burrow into forgetfulness. Yet her fate (yes, fate—as though at times things are decided for us) is to meet the golden illumination of Golconda, and through her very first encounter there its human counterpart: the wise, visionary, illuminating, clairvoyant Dr. Hernandez. He is marked for death, and this fact touches him profoundly. It is that which does not allow him to join the games which the others play. It is that which dictates his truth and his concern. It opens him, this death (has he chosen his death, could he not have escaped it?) for deep encounter. But as Lillian will later have reason to see, he has not been fully opened, he has lived with more caution than

2. Hereafter, all quotes from *Seduction of the Minotaur* will be identified by page reference in parentheses.

one would have thought necessary or proper for a man living so close to the realization of our mortality:

He had something to say, which he had not said, and he had left taking with him his secrets.

If only Dr. Hernandez had not postponed that deeper, wilder talk which ran underground through the myths of dreams, shouted through architectural crevices, screamed eloquently through the eyes of statues, from the depths of all the ancient cities within ourselves, if he had not merely signaled distress like a deaf-mute if only awareness had not appeared through the interstices of memory, between bars of lights and bars of shadows . . . if only human beings did not draw the blinds, don disguises, and live in isolation cells marked: not yet time for revelations . . . (S.M., p. 95)

Yet it is this powerful passage of regret for things unsaid which leads directly to the magnificent moment of effective discovery: "Lillian was journeying homeward." (S.M., p. 95) There is an aesthetic swing here in the novel, impossible to convey, where the poetry of revelation and the music of the prose come together in a rhythmic pulsation wholly appropriate to the dramatic and psychological situation, and Lillian is borne forth toward the future on a wave whose force is brilliantly conveyed by the chemistry of art. We experience directly the fact of her growth, and because the art is finely wrought, the experience is an exciting one. Anais Nin, not unlike her own character Dr. Hernandez, issues, through her work, compelling invitations to live differently, more fully, more flowingly. This is not to say she is a moralist; it is to say that she is an artist, one of the rare artists whose work it has been to fashion a literature of bread, a work which feeds the soul (let us allow ourselves the old-fashioned word, for the word psyche seems to resist flow).

Our criticism does not allow a grouping of works into anything like a literature of bread. That is a pity, for if it were possible so to place a work, we would have gone some way toward defining the crucial importance of Anais Nin, in simply placing her work there. Many correlations would be seen directly which otherwise would, as is indeed the case, have been invisible and therefore in need of explanation. What we need is some kind of explanatory principle, akin to the notion of a bead game in Hesse's fiction, which would, by placing Nin where she truly is, show us who her companions in art and in life are. Hesse did

TWO FACES OF DEATH

this for himself, choosing those companions whom we meet in *Magister Ludi*, *Journey To The East*, and *Steppenwolf*: Goethe, Albertus Magnus, Paul Klee, Mozart, Schubert, the I Ching, Pablo the drug user, St. Thomas Aquinas. And into this magic circle steps Anaïs Nin. There is much more than a "feminine touch in the arts" at work here. Her readers have placed her in a very special circle, the circle of magicians.

Henry has fallen under the spell of a remarkable old man who is fantastic and psychic, a painter gone mad in Zurich, who talks in symbols. When this old man Crowley met me he refused to look at me. He said I was a mystic, all light, thousands of years old, that I ensorcelled men's souls and that he did not dare look into my eyes.³

Perhaps the old man was right. In any case, he saw the light and the wisdom ("thousands of years old") without reading the books (then, of course, mostly unwritten) and that is more than one can say for the more myopic of the literary critics, those who fail to see that the artist, too, incarnates spirit. Our age has forgotten this, the ancient and indeed sacred role of the artist, who brings us the bread which nourishes and sustains, the bread which is the wafer, the symbol, the cipher, that which we absolutely require if we are not to be lost in the ever expanding regions of the space which life reveals to us as we move on toward the ultimate dispersion, that which perhaps has spoken to us haltingly in natural phenomena, as wind over water, that which speaks to us so clearly in the work of Anaïs Nin.

The artist, too, incarnates spirit. It bears repeating. Our age has forgotten this—has chosen to forget it, one is almost tempted to say—and thus the lack of energy, the lack of a real aristocracy of art, the lack of a metaphysical and psychological literature which I have called the literature of bread. But Nin is the princess of the young—showing the way—and one of the miracles is that she is of our age, our tired age which has produced more trash and taken it more seriously than any other age in the history of man.

The Encounter:

There were tears in Lillian's eyes, for having made friends immediately not with a new, a beautiful, a drugging place, but with a man in-

3. February, 1934, *Unpublished Selections from The Diary*, The Duane Schneider Press, Athens, Ohio, 1968.

tent on penetrating the mysteries of the human labyrinth from which she was a fugitive. (S. M., p. 19).

It is Dr. Hernandez, marked for deep encounter, he who investigates in his laboratories the ancient Indian drugs of remembrance (Pablo, of Hesse's *Steppenwolf*), he who controls the traffic in the drugs of forgetfulness (he has enemies, mortal enemies), he who is called "The Lie Detector" in *A Spy In The House of Love*, and perhaps the modern Christ in *House of Incest*. "He was suffering and it was this which made him so aware of others' difficulties." (*Seduction of The Minotaur*, p. 21). Lillian has come to Golconda to forget, but she encounters Dr. Hernandez, and sees that there is too much light for forgetfulness. She has arrived at her destination, only to see that the journey has just begun. But it does not really begin, not the swing homeward, the real entry into Heraclitean fire, until the death of Dr. Hernandez. "Lillian could not believe in the Doctor's death." (p. 93). A death impossible to believe. The modern Christ. Only in the refusal to accept death, even in the very face of the most brutally telling facts, does Lillian begin to move toward the minotaur. The passage in which this movement is traced is one of such beauty, and such power, that it must be quoted in full here.

Lillian did not believe in the death of Doctor Hernandez, and yet she heard the shot, she felt in her body the sound of the car hitting the pole, she knew the moment of death, as if all of them had happened to her.

He had something to say, which he had not said, and he had left taking with him his secrets.

If only Doctor Hernandez had not postponed that deeper, wilder talk which ran underground through the myths of dreams, shouted through architectural crevices, screamed eloquently through the eyes of statues, from the depths of all the ancient cities within ourselves, if he had not merely signaled distress like a deaf mute if only awareness had not appeared through the interstices of memory, between bars of lights and bars of shadows . . . if only human beings did not draw the blinds, don disguises, and live in isolation cells marked: not yet time for revelations . . .

. if only they had gone down together, down the caverns of the soul with picks, lanterns, cords, oxygen, X-rays, food, following the blueprints of all the messages from the geological depths where lay hidden the imprisoned self. . . .

According to the definition, tropic meant a turning and changing, and with the tropics Lillian turned and changed, and she swung between the drug of forgetfulness and the drug of awareness, as the natives swung in their hammocks, as the jazz players swung into their rhythms, as the sea swung in its bed

turned
changed

Lillian was journeying homeward. (pp. 94-95).

After this passage, Lillian moves out of the present of Golconda, backward into the deep abysm of her past, forward into a future where she will be able to see things, as though for the first time, with her own eyes. She has climbed the ladder to fire, has touched the fiery center, has descended into the labyrinth even with the golden thread of her inability to believe in the death of Doctor Hernandez, has met the minotaur, has come through:

Lillian was journeying homeward. The detours of the labyrinth did not expose disillusion, but unexplored dimensions. Archeologists of the soul never returned empty handed. Lillian had felt the existence of the labyrinth beneath her feet like the excavated passageways under Mexico City, but she had feared entering it and meeting the Minotaur who would devour her.

Yet now that she had come face to face with it, the Minotaur resembled someone she knew. It was not a monster. It was a reflection upon a mirror, a masked woman, Lillian herself, the hidden masked part of herself unknown to her, who had ruled her acts. She extended her hand toward this tyrant who could no longer harm her. It lay upon the mirror of the plane's round portholes, traveling through the clouds, a fleeting face, her own, clear and definable only when darkness came, (p. 111).

It was Heraclitus, master of clear obscurity, who first articulated the premise that it is in changing that things find repose. This is something we hear directly in music, where eternity and the transitory become one in the most illogical, improbable and yet totally compelling union of opposites. *Seduction of The Minotaur* ought to be read, at least on one of its many levels, as music. Then we would understand readily enough the dynamic peace which pervades the glorious ending of the book, not a peace without strife (the common condition is strife, said Heraclitus, without which nothing would be) but a passionate serenity, a belief in the richness of life, a fullness, an illumination, a fire, gold.

The death of Doctor Hernandez has been the death which brings life, and Lillian is Lazarus, come back from the dead with a new and keen awareness of our mortality and thus of our vividness. About this return there is great sadness ("Jesus wept.") but no morbidity. Lillian is alive when she leaves Golconda, and we, who have been with her on her journey into the cities of the interior, are disposed toward her with a trust in her capacity to remain alive, even to bring others to life through awareness.

As though to balance the light which suffuses this book, at the very core the novelist has let fall over the structure the shadow of death, not a death in which it is not possible to believe but a death of living, palpable, black, silent, ominous, sterile presence.

In the middle of a party on a Mexican general's yacht, in the middle of the fireworks of illusion, the comet tails showering light on the water, Lillian meets a young man, Michael Lomax, and confides in him: "Every now and then, at a party, in the middle of living, I get this feeling that I have slipped off." (p. 59). And he answers, "I have that feeling all the time, not now and then." (p. 59). He invites Lillian to his house, in an ancient city, and she travels with him through the night, through the valley of the shadow of death, into the ancient city, into the heart of darkness, death itself. Here she finds ruins, silence, muted streets, vultures, but no singing birds, and no wind. Even the fireworks here have an aura of desperation, and the children fling themselves under the showers of gold, as if to take upon themselves the momentary promise of life which the dispersing intensity seems to offer, but in vain. Here, Michael is king of all the dead, but he has no subjects, for the dead do not exist at all, not at all. They who do not move, do not exist. This is not the death of Doctor Hernandez, who set in motion the wheel of the dharma. Perhaps in the case of Doctor Hernandez, there is no death. One would do well here to reflect on the meaning which so clearly strikes home in the last pages of Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilych." Not that Doctor Hernandez is Ivan Ilych! No, nothing like that is meant. Rather, what is being suggested is the genesis of the book, *Seduction of The Minotaur*, itself. Why not come right out and say it? Anais Nin as bodhisattva! Perhaps that would be a bit crude, after all.

For what we see when we look behind the book, to the artist, this artist who possesses a certain "feminine touch," to use that phrase again, is not precisely she who sees clearly that what people need, absolutely need, more than anything else perhaps, is the transfiguration of things, transmogrification, transcendence, transformation, the artist

transpiring (wonderful word!) to transmit the truth if not the fact, death and transfiguration. And so Anais Nin shows us the two faces of death.

Michael is a fool: time's fool, and his homosexuality is but one manifestation of his more fundamental fleeing from the truth of his own being as incarnate. To Lillian he has said: "All I ask, since I can't keep you here, is that in your next incarnation you be born a boy, and then I will love you." (p. 67). Not being able to live within the real channels of his present incarnation, he lives within the dream channels of a world without women. Could Michael Lomax be saved through awareness? The answer to that would be another novel, and, of necessity, a seduction of the minotaur. But for the present novel, as for the present life, Lillian has no choice but to leave him in hell with his dream, which is death. He has refused the gift of presence. While present, he is absent, even as in his city, the city of the dead, there are tolling church bells without ritual:

The church bells tolled persistently although there was no ritual to be attended, as if calling day and night to the natives buried by the volcano's eruption years before. (p. 60).

Has any philosopher ever defined the real as that which is truly capable of receiving love?

It was St. John of the Cross who said, "Where you do not find love, put love, and there you will find it." Yet everything would seem—would it not?—to depend on receptivity. The valley of some dreams is not receptive to love.

Michael's dream is of that which cannot be realized. It is the dream of death. Lillian says, "But not to feel . . . not to love . . . is like dying within life, Michael." Precisely. Anais Nin has shown us the two faces of death. That has been the place within the form of this book of this shadow of death which falls in its midst, reminding us that the lights of the carnival which dominate the book's many scapes are transitory, fleeing, fleeting, fire. In light of the level at which Anais Nin's vision is here operative such a complaint as Oliver Evans makes, in his book *Anais Nin*,⁴ that the author's portrait of Michael "is lacking in sympathy" must be judged irrelevant. The author's compassion touches Michael as it touches and illumines all her characters—as though to know precisely where a character is is thereby to create him in compassion—but her vision is too clear, and she sees far too much, to allow

4. Southern Illinois University Press, 1968, p. 172.

her to tell anything but the truth. If the truth is devastating, it is devastating. Sympathy has nothing to do with it. As far as the vision of this particular book extends, Michael is lost. But Anais Nin's world is in the deepest sense one which nourishes hope. There is no finality, no system, no judge, no absolute. There is the river, the flow, and always the possibility of encounter. Such an encounter as between Lillian and Doctor Hernandez. Michael Lomax might in another context emerge as Lazarus, wakened from the sleep of death. Wakened; drawn from absence into the epiphany of presence itself, unadorned and irrevocably real.

Wind over Water: an Image of Dispersion

In the ancient city of the interior where Michael Lomax dwells with his dream of an impossible, an unreal, world, there is no wind, no wind which moves, which animates, which gives life that exists only in the act of constant dispersion. Michael wants eternity, a frozen world from which the mischievous work of the womb will have been banned, a world where Eve stands frozen in the snow. Eve is never frozen. Nietzsche knew it well, for he asked, "What if truth were a woman, what then?" What then? Heraclitus, in a word. The river, the moving water which is fire. Water in communion with wind—dispersion, life itself, flux, change, chance, epiphany, flow. A world where fire and water do not combat each other.⁵ The union of opposites. The magic circle of yin and yang. Love, and bread.

But there is water, even as the book began with a thrust toward water. There are fountains playing on the terraces of that ancient city, yet they seem akin to the stone statue in *Don Giovanni* whose voice echoes from the hollow realm of shades, and what it says is Death.

With one of those quick transitions of which she is a master, Anais Nin brings us out of this valley of shades into the dazzling light of Lillian's new life, there where she has reached that point from which it is possible for her to look backward into the abyss of time which we call the past, there to see the receding distances, the muted cries of regretted acts, the dead loves, the things which, though remembered with what exquisite care, have receded utterly into oblivion. It is then that she sees that time does not recede in two directions, but only in one, the direction of the past, and that what seems to lie before her is

5. In the language of the Crow Indians of Montana, the same word is used to designate both fire and water. The meaning must be taken from the context.

something which men have been compelled to call the eternal return. Everything returns. It was Doctor Hernandez who said that to Lillian:

And one day we open our eyes, and there we are caught in the same pattern, repeating the same story. How could it be otherwise? The design comes from within us. It is internal. (p. 19).

And at that moment, he gave her a key to the labyrinth. The face of the Minotaur was her own face, hidden in the shades of what the Vedantins have so accurately termed avidya, unawareness. Doctor Hernandez was awake, he was wise. It was his death in which Lillian could not believe.

"Lillian was journeying homeward." (p. 95). She had begun to accept the gift of presence, the immensity of the persona, the heraldic proportions of things, events, relations. Life moves out of the picture frame, ceases to be one-dimensional, begins to astonish even where one would expect never to find the astonishing, even in the most humble, everyday reality:

It was as if having begun to see the true Doctor Hernandez, solitary, estranged from his wife and his children by her jealousy and hatred of Golconda immersed only in the troubled, tragic life of a pleasure city, she could also see for the first time, around the one dimensional profile of her husband, a husband leaving for work, a father bending over his children, an immense new personality. (p. 98).

And not only does Lillian begin to see the vastness of the face of her husband, she begins to see his face in other faces, that in freeing a prisoner who was a stranger she had in reality been freeing a prisoner who was her husband, that we are all prisoners whose freedom, if realized, would never cease to astonish, never cease to nourish, never cease to grow and to create. Yes, she is on her way, homeward:

Sudden death had exposed the preciousness of human love and human life. All the negations, withdrawals, indifferences seemed like the precursors of absolute death, and were to be condemned. (p. 103).

Camus said that we must imagine Sisyphus happy. Lillian is journeying homeward, perhaps even to teach her children to wipe the crumbs off the table. Perhaps to remember a black dog which, having eaten a

piece of newly baked bread, had crumbs scattered like stars on his snout. For on the journey homeward Lillian remembers. We could say that this remembering is all a part of the process of individuation, or we could simply see it as part of the poetry of living with one's own eyes open. Remember to remember. Here are we again, as we always were, in the cities of the interior, where dwell the archetypes, the hidden faces, the fatalities which we seem bound to repeat. Prospero, with what an informed love for his daughter Miranda, bids her remember, remember. Forgetfulness is misery, condemnation to abysmal repetition. Wakefulness is reality, even moksha, release.

In form, *Seduction of The Minotaur* is a perfect Sonata, in three movements: Allegro vivace; Largo, con molto affeto; Rondo, Allegro. The Largo movement is comprised of the dark, somber section on Michael Lomax. All else is the rondo, the round, the ever-recurring, the common ground of waking into joy—and we are left imagining Sisyphus happy. "Never separate depth from form," a friend said to me. "Say that, but do not use the word depth and do not use the word form," I said to him. "Art in service of release," he answered, with what a marvelous directness I had thought then.

INTRODUCTION TO DIARY, VOLUME III

Anais Nin

Dec. 1939

I left a Paris lit in a muted way like the inside of a cathedral, full of shadowy niches, black corners, twinkling oil lamps. In the half mist hanging over it, violet, blue and green lights looked like stained glass windows all wet and alive with candle light. I could not have recognized the faces of those I was leaving. My bags were carried by a soldier whose shoes were too big for him. I suffered deeply from the tear of separation. I felt every cell and cord which tied me to France snapping in me, the parting from a pattern of life I loved, from an atmosphere rich, creative and human, from intimacy with a people and a city. I was parting from a rhythm rooted very deeply in me, from mysterious enveloped nights, from an obsession with war which gave a bitter and vivid taste to all our living, from the sound of anti-aircraft guns, of airplanes passing, of sirens lamenting like fog horns on stormy nights at sea.

Thousands of umbilical cords snapping and tearing. I could not believe that there could be, anywhere in the world, space and air and light where the nightmare of war did not exist.

On the train to Irun. On the way to take the hydroplane: from Portugal. It seems as if I will never tear myself away from France, each mile of the journey, each landscape, each little station, each face, causes a painful tearing away. I carry with me only two brief cases filled with more recent diaries. At the last moment, when I had taken all of them out of the vault in the Paris bank, and packed them in two suit cases, I found out that the cost of excess weight far exceeded the money I had. I had to choose between paying excess for two valises filled with diaries, or buying winter coats for Helba and Gonzalo. So the greater bulk of the diaries went back into the vault. And now, in the train, I feel despondent, I feel ashamed to be saved from catastrophe, to abandon my friends to an unknown fate. For the second time America looms as a refuge. My mind is still journeying backwards in time. I think of the

Ligne Maginot which crossed near Louveciennes, in the Forest of Marly. We stumbled upon it one day on a hike. The young soldier took us through a part of it. He was very proud of it. A cement labyrinth with only cannon holes for apertures. He showed us a vast empty pool, which he explained would be filled with acid to dissolve the body of the dead. I think of my concierge who lost her husband in the first war and might lose her son in the second. I think of the Pierre Chateau's in danger because they are Jews, and those who escaped from Germany and are now once more afraid for their lives.

At Irun there was a period of waiting, a change of trains. I took a walk. There was a wall behind a Church, at the top of a hill. I turned my back on it to look at the Church. I felt pains in my back. I turned around. Suddenly I observed that this wall was pitted with gun shots. A Spaniard said: "Thousands of Spaniards were executed here." Vestiges of destruction all around me. Children still playing in the ruins of buildings.

The train again. Portugal. I cannot smile at the sun. I cannot smile at the white buildings and the women in black, at the wild flowers and the singing in cafes. I am in mourning for France.

The hydroplane is poised on the water. The refugees cheer it. Escape! A woman takes me to the ladies' room to search me, to see that I am not carrying a revolver or a camera or gold. To get inside the hydroplane we walk on the surface of the wing and enter through an opening in its belly. The metal was the same color as the sea. It seemed too heavy to fly, and as it coursed along the water with only one motor starting and then another, gathering speed but bumping against the waves, I felt as if in a nightmare in which one cannot fly upward even in the case of great dangers menacing you.

Strange that when it finally started flying the separation from the past seemed easier to achieve. Height and distance from the earth seems to stabilize the spirit, to liberate it from its sorrows. One enters the consciousness of the cosmos. The face of France grew smaller. Europe grew smaller.

Now there are only sky and clouds.

We landed at the Azores. The legends say this is part of the Atlantis which did not sink. Black coral rocks, black sand from volcanic eruptions. Pastel colored houses clinging to the rocks. A soft grey drizzle. The houses lean against each other and look shaky and frail, like Utrillo's houses. The women pass by in long dark capes, their faces hid-

den in large hoods supported by a frame, like nuns' hoods inflated by the wind.

When we left the Azores after refueling, the hydroplane again seemed too heavy. The sea was stormier, and it had difficulty taking off. The waves buffeted the windows. It rose after a great struggle.

Night. The stars and the moon impassive, unaffected, undisturbed, eternal. A little of their impassivity flows into me. They are consoling. They reduce the intensity and acuteness of human sorrows. Distance shrinks them. One rises above them physically and psychically. I feel less strangled, less oppressed. I transferred to the moon and the stars some of the trust in God I once had, and realized that serenity comes from an acceptance of death, the knowledge that man's life span is short, so there is an end to pain.

After dinner they pulled down the bunks. I lay down and opened my brief cases. I lie awake, rereading the last letters I received and writing in the diary. The essence of all I have lived the last ten years lies in those brief cases. I ran away with a part of my treasures, my memories, my artist's obsession with preserving, portraying, recording, to make eternal. All of us may die, but we will continue to smile, talk, make love in these pages.

Notes On Contributors

Owner of the Washington St. Bookshop in Santa Fe and editor of the *Desert Review*, **WARD ABBOTT** is now completing a second novel, is a previous contributor to NMQ.

Visiting writer in residence at the University of British Columbia, **GEORGE AMABILE** is editor of the *Penny Paper* and the *Far Point*. He has published poems in such magazines as *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *Harper's*, *Minnesota Review*, *Prairie Schooner*.

CHARLES G. BELL is a tutor at St. John's College in Santa Fe. He has published two books of poems, *Songs for a New America* and *Delta Return* (Indiana U. Press) and two novels (parts of a trilogy), *The Married Land* and *The Half Gods* (Houghton Mifflin). A second edition of *Delta Return* was recently issued by Norman Berg.

A former editor at the University of New Mexico Press, **GUS BLAISDELL** was most recently published in *Café Solo*. He is working on a book of poems as well as on various prose pieces.

JAMES BRADFORD, a graduate student at UNM, is co-editor of *Road Apple*. He is translating some poems of Cesar Vallejo besides working on poems of his own.

Film-maker **STAN BRAKHAGE** lives "in the ghost town of Gilpin, Colorado, in an 1890 cabin on the slopes of the Continental Divide at 9000 feet." Thanks to an Avon Grant and a Rockefeller Foundation Grant, he is now able to devote full time to his aesthetic films; "primarily inspired by and expressive of the environment in which we live and the events of our daily existence."

LENNART BRUCE, born in Sweden, started to write four years ago. "Before that I used to travel the world . . . first peddling fruit in South America and Europe, then invented a financial device to erect 10,000 houses for Jewish refugees after the second World War, distributed movies in Sweden, started a bus line in West Africa, etc." A book of poems, *Observations*, was published by Kayak Press.

ALVARO CARDONA-HINE's next book, a collection of reminiscences, called *Agapito*, will be published this fall by Scribner's. Two previous books of poems, *The Gathering Wave* and *The Flesh of Utopia*, were published by Alan Swallow.

LESLIE CHAPMAN is a graduate student at the University of New Mexico. This is her first story to be published in other than a student publication.

ROBERT CHETKIN is a graduate student at the University of New Mexico.

EVAN S. CONNELL, JR. is a widely heralded fiction writer. His latest novel, *Mr. Bridge*, was recently published. His two most recent novels prior to the new one were *The Diary of a Rapist* and *Mrs. Bridge*. A novella, "Puig's Wife," was published in the Summer 1967 issue of NMQ.

A visiting professor of English at UNM during the 1968-69 year, **ROBERT CREELEY** will be returning to his permanent post at Buffalo this fall. His latest work, *Pieces*, was published by Scribner's this summer; previous works include *For Love*, *The Island*, and *The Gold Diggers*.

BILL DODD, who is currently residing in San Francisco, is a former graduate student at UNM. His first book of poems, *Aloud*, was published in 1967.

WILLIAM EASTLAKE, whose former avocation was ranching in Cuba, N.M., is currently at work on a novel dealing with events of his youth. A book involving the Vietnam War is soon to be issued by Simon & Schuster. Previous works include *Castle Keep*, *Artist With 26 Horses*, and *Bronc People*. Mr. Eastlake will spend 1969-70 teaching at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where he now owns a ranch.

Co-editor of the magazine *Road Apple*, **DOUGLAS FLAHERTY** has one book of poems, *The Elderly Battlefield Nurse*, to his credit as well as publications in numerous magazines. He teaches at Wisconsin State College in Oshkosh, is completing work on his Ph.D. at UNM.

Former publisher of the *Duende Press* in Placitas, N.M., **LARRY GOODELL** has issued one book of his own poems, *Cycles*; is currently preparing other work for publication.

An associate professor in the philosophy department at the University of Minnesota, **KEITH GUNDERSON** is also a widely published poet, has appeared in such places as *Epoch*, *Massachusetts Review*.

C. G. HANZLICEK, who teaches at Fresno State College in California, is making his first appearance in *NMQ*.

JANE HAYMAN teaches first grade in Santa Fe. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Commentary*, and *Dissent*. She is married to Ward Abbott.

Poems by **WILLIAM HEYEN** have recently appeared in *Poetry*, *Southern Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *American Scholar*. He won a first prize in the Borestone Awards a couple of years ago. Mr. Heyen teaches at the State University of New York, Brockport.

GEORGE HITCHCOCK is editor of the magazine *Kayak* and publisher of *Kayak Press* books. He is widely known as a poet, fiction writer and theatre director. Mr. Hitchcock will be teaching at the new Creative Arts College at the University of California, Santa Cruz, next year.

Well-known as a poet and translator, **ANSELM HOLLO** spent the last year teaching at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. His poems have appeared in numerous publications in America and England.

DAVID JOHNSON is an assistant professor of English at UNM. He spent the last year in Guadalajara, Mexico, on leave.

STEVE KATONA, a former student at UNM, has published in *Ante* and elsewhere. A resident of Placitas, N.M., he makes leather wear.

STANLEY KIESEL's first book of poems, *The Pearl Is a Hardened Sinner*, was published last year by Scribner's. He resides in North Hollywood, Calif., where he teaches kindergarten.

Publisher of *The Charioteer Press* in Washington, D.C., **PAUL LAWSON** has had work published in *Poetry*, *Café Solo*, *Epoch*, and *Perspective*.

Presently on a Rockefeller Grant, **JOHN LOGAN** will return to his teaching post at Buffalo next January. His latest book of poems, *The Zigzag Walk*, will be published next October by E. P. Dutton Co. He served as poetry editor of *The Nation* last year.

GLENNA LUSCHEI is editor and publisher of *Café Solo* magazine, Albuquerque. A book of her poems, *Letter to the North*, was published in a bilingual edition by Ediciones Papel Sobrante in Colombia. Several poems appeared recently in *Prairie Schooner*.

ADRIANNE MARCUS teaches part-time at College of Marin in California and edits a weekly poetry column for *Pacific Sun*. Her poetry has appeared in *Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Shenandoah*, and *Road Apple* among other places.

The work of MICHAEL McCLURE in this issue appears in his book, *Little Odes & The Raptors*, published by Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles. Mr. McClure is the author of *The Beard*, *Ghost Tantras*, *Dark Brown*, *Meat Science Essays*, *Freewheelin Frank* and other books.

MICKEY McCONNELL, who designed the cover for this issue, is a student in the College of Fine Arts, UNM.

HOWARD McCORD teaches at Washington State University. His two most recent books of poetry are *Fables & Transfigurations* and *Longjaunes His Periplus*, both published by Kayak Press.

WAYNE McEVILLY is at home in Bozeman, Mont., where he teaches Vedanta, and the I Ching at Montana State University. He is currently at work writing fiction and other studies on the work of Anais Nin.

THOMAS McGRATH was on a Guggenheim Fellowship last year and was a past recipient of the Amy Lowell Fellowship. The second volume of his long poem, *Letter to an Imaginary Friend*, is soon to be published by Alan Swallow Press, with a third projected volume to follow.

Now teaching creative writing at Stephens College, Columbia, Mo., TOM McKEOWN last summer won a Hopwood Award in Poetry from the University of Michigan. A chapbook of poems, *Alewife Summer*, was published in 1967.

NEIL NELSON is a student at the University of New Mexico; he has a book of poems in preparation.

Several volumes of fiction by ANAIS NIN have been published by Alan Swallow Press under the general title, *Cities of the Interior*. *Collages* was a later novel and has been followed by two volumes of *Miss Nin's Diary*, the third volume of which is soon to be issued by Harcourt, Brace & World. Miss Nin also recently published a study of fiction called *The Novel of the Future* (Macmillan).

STANLEY NOYES, who resides in Santa Fe, has just completed a novel, *Shadowbox*, which will be brought out by Macmillan next spring. He teaches at the College of Santa Fe.

SIMON J. ORTIZ spent last year at the International Writers' Project at the University of Iowa. He received his B.A. from the University of New Mexico and resides in Albuquerque.

WILLIAM PEARLMAN is currently traveling after doing graduate work at UNM last year. A book of poems, *Superman Framed in Orange Karma*, is due out soon from Grasshopper Press.

WILLIAM PILLIN, a Los Angeles resident, will soon have poems in *The Nation* and *Illumination*. A "very slim book of poems," *Defined Passage*, is ready for publication.

JEAN RIKHOFF has published three novels (a trilogy): *Dear Ones All*; *Voyage In*, *Voyage Out*, and *Rites of Passage*. She was one of the founders of *Quixote* and its editor for six years. At present she is teaching at Adirondack Community College, residing in Salem, N.Y.

STEPHEN RODEFER, an assistant professor of English at UNM, has had one book of poems, *The Knife*, published by Island Press.

JOSEPHINE SAUNDERS, who divides her time between Tucson and Santa Fe, has published in *The Nation*, *Choice*, *Kayak*, and elsewhere.

Pulitzer Prize-winner LOUIS SIMPSON, who won the award in 1964 for his volume of poems, *At the End of the Open Road*, teaches at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. A new book of poems is being readied for publication.

DEAN N. SYRACOPOULOS lives in Albuquerque, did graduate work at the University of New Mexico.

MARK TIME is the *nom de plume* of a student at the University of New Mexico.

MELVIN WILK has an M.A. in creative writing from Boston University and is presently completing another M.A. at Brandeis University in Contemporary Jewish Studies. His work in this issue is a section of a novel he has written called *Gertrude's Dream Waltz*.

JONATHAN WILLIAMS is a poet, publisher (The Jargon Society), essayist, and hiker from Highlands, N.C. *An Ear in Bartram's Tree* (Selected Poems 1957-67) was published recently by the University of North Carolina Press.

LIONEL WILLIAMS is presently completing his studies for the Ph.D. in English at the University of New Mexico. The work in this issue is a section from a novel Mr. Williams has written.

Grove Press will soon issue a book of poems by KEITH WILSON called *Graves Registry*. He teaches at New Mexico State University and has published several volumes of poems.

WILLIAM WITHERUP is currently canning squid around Pacific Grove, Calif. He has seven poems forthcoming in the fall in an anthology called *Emerging Poets* from Doubleday Anchor Books.

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