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Alain Robbe-Grillet, The Novelist Behind the Venetian Blinds

by Catherine Savage

With the advent of a new generation of novelists in France, the novel form has evolved toward a more precise means of seeing. In the work of Alain Robbe-Grillet, it has become a psychological instrument, using optics, indicated verbally. Leaving aside much of the traditional contribution of human imagination, and many classical assumptions of the novelist, it has encompassed only the relationship between a human look, on the one hand, and an object perceived on the other. It has limited literary realism — and thus our assumptions about reality — to the content of such a seeing relationship. Like the works of the eighteenth century sensualist philosophers, it presupposes that knowledge comes through our senses, only. But unlike them, it does not assume that such knowledge is absolute or universal. It explores only the personal look, the limited relationship of one or a few seeing human beings to the world of shapes, colors, and textures around them. It makes no statement about its own *general* validity; it has only a self-contained truth. It is, to take Zola's phrase in a new sense, "the world seen through a temperament." It is a literary relativism.

Robbe-Grillet, like fellow new novelists, most of whom have been published by the same house, did not spring from the Parisian literary establishment. His training was scientific; he had personal experience as an agronomist, specializing in tropical fruit research. He recognized no literary master — although it is clear that Sartre's *Nausea* and Camus' *The Stranger* are the immediate ancestors of his own novels, without which he surely could not have pushed so far in his experimentation. His first novel, *The Erasers* (1953), struck an uncomprehending public as a curiosity. Since then, his extremely personal view and technique, combined with his total lack of romantic individuality, have made him the chief figure in French fiction today.

Robbe-Grillet's new way of seeing is twofold, the two aspects being interrelated. The first is philosophical. Rejecting the pathetic fallacy, Robbe-Grillet insists that in the exterior world we can, if we are honest, see no human image, no meaning, no reference to ourselves. No human qualities are in the world. It is neither tragic, nor comic, nor indifferent to us; it simply is there, it *is*. If we believe we see it in a humanized way, we are anthropomorphizing, without justification. In Robbe-Grillet's rigorously scientific view, this is incorrect, therefore dishonest, therefore harmful to ourselves. We need to surpass, he insists, our tragic and romantic notions about a relationship between the world and us. He believes that if we do so, we will know ourselves better and be able to deal better with our presence in the world, with our dilemma. What he means by our dilemma is not a particular social or political situation but the whole complex of factors that govern who we are and how we live and the image we have of ourselves.

On the literary plane, this unemotional, straightforward manner of seeing the world becomes stylistic objectivity. Objectivity, in Robbe-Grillet's writing, is first of all a refusal of metaphor. Metaphor sees qualities shared in common *behind* forms and surfaces; Robbe-Grillet sees only the forms and surfaces. No storm can be like the passion in a man's heart: a storm is merely a natural phenomenon. Therefore such comparisons and adjectives as "stormy" must disappear when we are speaking of anything besides a literal storm. Objectivity is also, literally, a concentration on objects, which form the world around us, to which we are not related in any moral or otherwise meaningful way, but which are a constant part of our field of vision, composing our outer space and furnishing our minds. The object is treated as pure phenomenon or thing-in-itself (to use Sartre's term somewhat differently), not as a projection of a personality. Moreover, the visual qualities are insisted upon at the expense of what the French critic, Roland Barthes, has termed the visceral qualities — characteristics of taste and touch, bunches of associations that often cluster around an object. The thing seen remains a relationship of planes and angles, separated as a rule from its utilitarian role, and seen spatially. The result of these two aspects of objectivity is that Robbe-Grillet's prose is flat, without resonance, neutral in the ordinary sense, without images; and his novels, like Samuel Beckett's, are populated by objects.

Starting from this point of view which refuses all

Barney Fortier

anthropomorphism and which insists upon the object-quality of our world, Robbe-Grillet nevertheless has written novels about human beings, and about passion. The critic is obliged to inquire how Robbe-Grillet manages to deal with the objective world and with the human world, using one to illuminate the other, without confusing them in a false relationship. The critic also asks himself how Robbe-Grillet believes our different looks can be transmitted to each other through words, and *why* he wishes to convey to others *his* way of seeing. I hope to elucidate some of these questions by what follows, drawing examples from his *Jealousy* (1957).

A primary technique for conveying in the novel form his sense of the objective world — a technique to which he remains faithful — is the suppression of the "I," both the "I" of the author as found, say, in Sterne, and the "I" of a principal character. This elimination of the character who says "I" is, certainly, just another step in the trend that began when Flaubert remade the French romantic novel in an impassive, objective, nearly impersonal way — a trend that continued through Maupassant and Henry James. It is a rigorous adhering to the Flaubertian notion that the novelist is an observer. By keeping this convention, Robbe-Grillet holds at bay the temptation to color the world with a strong first-person personality.

Next, Robbe-Grillet eliminates psychological analysis and commentary by the author — not only explicit interventions, but also any attempt to explain his characters to the reader even indirectly. The characters simply appear; they are there without justification or elucidation. We do not see the strings that manipulate the character-puppets; we do not know their *character*. It should be observed that, in this respect, Robbe-Grillet has probably been influenced by Sartre's assertions that human nature does not exist and that no one possesses a ready-made character to be discovered, analyzed, judged.

A third technique, and the most important, is the use of objects, not to symbolize human emotions, but to act as what Bruce Morrissette has called "objective correlatives." This term, borrowed from T. S. Eliot, indicates here the *subjective* use of an *object* in some way related to the subjectivity. The reader wonders how so strictly an objective writer as Robbe-Grillet can consent to use relationships of that sort, after having denied their philosophical justification. Let us note that, in using the object to connote something for us, Robbe-Grillet does not let it be anthropomorphized. The banana groves in *Jealousy* remain throughout exactly what they are — banana groves. They are kept at a distance by the repeated, mathematical description. Let us further note that the hero of *Jealousy*, like the heroes of all the other Robbe-Grillet novels, is not a sane or "balanced" man. He is led into finding signs, where there are none, for his passion; into seeing images of the triangle relationship in all parts of the house; even into distorting deliberately the accurate physical image of a scene. He is a victim of all his surroundings, which indicate to him, not intrinsically but because he projects onto them, the passion which he fears and which, masochistically, he dwells upon. A calendar picture contains, in itself, nothing which points either to or against something in the human psyche. But used by this psyche, it can become attached to human emotion and ultimately become an instrument of action, that is, a sufficient impulsion to make one act.

Thus we discover in his fiction this paradox: as an artist, Robbe-Grillet countenances the use of the object as a correlative. Indeed, it is his chief technique and one which he uses in a strikingly original way. Yet as a judge of the world, and of the human dilemma, Robbe-Grillet denounces the trap by which we are led into projecting ourselves onto the world. This denunciation is explicit in his critical writing, but it is also an integral, though subtle, part of his fiction. Without any appearance of moralizing — indeed, evading all issues normally thought of as moral ones — Robbe-Grillet ends up by being a moralist, showing us through characters like the jealous husband our own errors and our consequent suffering. It is no surprise, then, to see him insisting in a critical essay that he wants to create, not only a new *novel*, but a new *man*. He wants to work a Copernican revolution in man's understanding of himself.

The technique of the objective correlative bears practically the whole weight of *Jealousy*. It carries what is ordinarily thought of as characterization and plot. Looking at it differently, we can say that there is no plot or characterization in the novel, but only an organization of objects, in a time-space sequence, which points to the presence of human beings and to what can be considered a dramatic situation. The evolving emotions that are mentioned explicitly in such classical studies of jealousy as *Othello* and Proust's *Swann in Love* are not named in Robbe-Grillet's work.

It may even be argued that there is no main character. Certainly, the husband can be called a narrator only in a special sense — for he does not pretend to speak to anyone, or write his story. We have only his thoughts about shapes, patterns, and colors, in a stream-of-consciousness presentation that leaves out the pronoun *I* completely. Nor is he a recognizable, visible person whom we could know from outside. He always sees, is never seen. At most, he is a *point of view* — a human being reduced to his essential function of seeing. Flaubert said that the novelist should be like God: everywhere present, nowhere visible. Robbe-Grillet's jealous man is similarly present, without being visible. His position has been qualified by the novelist as a *hollow*.

The advantage of thus "emptying" a central personage to reduce him to a viewer is not immediately clear to the reader. Nor would Robbe-Grillet so wish it, I should suppose. For the advantage is precisely this: to draw the reader into the hollow, make him espouse the central viewpoint for which there is no visible owner, and thus make him undergo the experience of jealousy. Presumably, this is in view of a catharsis or purgation akin to that of the theater. Again, I should point out the hidden moral concern. Like Proust, Robbe-Grillet does not simply set out to tell a story. He has something to communicate by

which the reader, experiencing it, is bettered.

There are a number of objections, theoretical and practical, that can be made to Robbe-Grillet's own conception of his artistic aims and their fulfillment. One which may be pointed out briefly is that in every case, the experience undergone by a Robbe-Grillet character is a degrading, violent, even sadistic one, and that because these characters are uniformly sick, their behavior may be read as atypical rather than typical, with the result that the reader blocks out their possible significance for himself. Nor is it quite clear to the reader or critic how the projection constantly indulged in by a character like the husband or the sadistic Mathias in *Le Voyeur* can be rendered responsible for all the character's violence, since, even if projection is a widespread human error, we do not all become sadistic murderers or crazed by jealousy. There is, I fear, a predilection in Robbe-Grillet for a *certain kind* of projection which his theories and intentions, neat though they are, do not account for entirely.

The background of Robbe-Grillet's fiction thus drawn, with his principal techniques reviewed, it seems appropriate to turn to the text itself to see how a fictional revolution is carried out, and to elucidate certain problems insofar as possible. We begin, in *Jealousy,* with a set of purely visual, spatial data, offered by an impersonal voice which is that of a faceless observer who posts himself on the porch, or behind a blind, and communicates in flat prose what he sees. The data are expressed in mathematical as well as ordinary descriptive terms — angles, lines, geometrical shapes with utilitarian value subordinated. The reader is led, by this beginning, into thinking that he will be offered only rigorously objective information. This impression is partly true. Throughout the novel, there will be no description and no thought of the husband who is speaking which can not be depicted in objective, usually visual terms. There is an unwritten assumption that the original data of the husband's optical viewpoint and his close visual examination of objects are trustworthy.

Nevertheless, as the novel progresses, the husband begins to interject into the description a subjective element, that of mental arrangement, juxtaposition and transfer. His subjectivity "clings" to shapes and incidents. Even the neutral descriptive elements such as the balustrade and pillar begin to "take on" — by dint of their abnormally detailed reappearances — suggestiveness. This mental arrangement and fixation operates in a special psychological time, about which I shall have more to say later. Thus the strictly geometrical description, which we are supposed to "believe," becomes tainted with subjectivity and starts to serve as a correlative for a mental drama.

It will be clear, then, why critics reading *Jealousy* began to speak of Robbe-Grillet's "objective subjectivity." Far from having a scientific content, the book contains the distorted, unique view of a single mind, who turns to the outside world to find support, that is, proof, of something that has, *per se,* no verifiable reality. This mind commits what I call the Robbe-Grilletian sin: that of confusion of oneself and the world.

We are thus drawn into the husband's mind where all the descriptive and episodic elements exist *simultaneously* and co-*extensively* with one another. We encounter a time-space complex which makes *Jealousy* one of the most remarkable of the modern novels dealing with time. There are two aspects to this time-space complex: inner or psychological time, as opposed to clock time; and its experience by means of space. The novelist has expressed explicitly his understanding of what is often called inner time. The notion of inner time is, of course, very old. The technique of imposing this psychological time on a narrative by destroying normal time sequence is a discovery of the generation of Proust, Joyce, and Faulkner. Robbe-Grillet, like two other important new novelists, Claude Simon and Michel Butor, has assumed the views and some of the techniques of these illustrious predecessors, for whom not only the days of a man's life but also different generations exist simultaneously. Robbe-Grillet has noted that memory has no time, and that "last year" and "this year" are frames of a mental film forever playing on a dozen screens at once in our minds.

The systematic expression of time by means of spatial notations is generally considered a revolutionary invention of the new novel school, of Robbe-Grillet in particular. The perception is not a new one, but it has found exciting expressions by means of which we *undergo* the experience of time in space and free ourselves from the too-rigid traditional understanding of time. It is not a coincidence that many of the new novels are composed, like Joyce's *Ulysses,* of a complicated peregrination. Robbe-Grillet's other novels contain a central structure of wandering. But in *La Jalousie,* Robbe-Grillet does not lean on explicit *movement in space* to indicate time. Nor do we have an experience of the flowing of time in the novel. Rather, we have fixed indications, given by spatial orientation (position of objects, condition of marks) which indicate elapsed time. Roland Barthes has pointed out that the "shots" in *Jealousy* are like the frames of movies: we jump from one to the other, and real "time" or change is what happens in between, but our perception of change is in the still shot. The changes, or the movements of time, can be both backwards and forwards. Thus the curious episodes of the novel where a change, previously seen, is suddenly perceived again as unchanged, in its original state. The spot left by the crushed centipede moves in mental time, sometimes being "seen" as present, sometimes not.

In this continuum of space and time, we can pick out a few scenes which, while not being stable, serve as landmarks as we are drawn into *Jealousy.* One is, certainly, the dinner at which A. and Franck decide, aloud, that she will accompany him to town. It is probably at this meal that the original killing of the centipede takes place — though such an interpretation is by no means certain. This would explain the strong association between this motif and the husband's jealousy. We should also note in passing that

the killing can be interpreted by the husband as a demonstration of Franck's virility. Even without the help of traditional symbolism, we make the association because the husband makes some sort of connection between Franck's gesture and his relationship to A.

Another landmark or guidepost is, of course, the day of A's absence, when the husband is alone in the house, and then the night spent without her. By this time, in his mental life and in the texture of the story, all the previous images associated with Franck or A. — bridge, cars, truck, centipede, chairs, cocktails, letter — crowd into his mental film to contribute their part to his suffering. Thus the day of A's absence is the richest of the episodes, and the one in which images switch and alternate most rapidly. Clearly, the husband has lost his capacity to control his imagination and his memory, even to verify objectively certain elements of his mental picture. Still another landmark is the following day, that of A's return, when Franck drops her off before going back to his plantation; another is a subsequent lunch, at which Franck and A. make some reference to his lack of mechanical ability.

Around these events cluster all the obsessive images. We are drawn into a mental fantasy, and we are exhausted, as is the husband, by their haunting presence, and by our inability to assign to any of them an objective truth. Into the "hollow" of the blank central personage, the novelist has drawn and trapped us. He is making us undergo something the hero is undergoing, reach for a solution as the hero reaches. We too peer from the Venetian blind. With the fictional elements, Robbe-Grillet is making us write our own novel.

The *transitions* between the various elements of the mental continuum are dictated by the emotional states of the husband; or, better said, they reveal those states. Certain of the transitions spring from logical or sense connections. For instance, the crackling sound of the brush in A's hair recalls the slight sound made by the centipede before its death, which in turn recalls the dinner at which Franck killed it, which in turn recalls their decision to go to town, etc. Any sound of a car or truck speaks to the husband about A's absence, her delay in returning, and the car breakdown. The marks on the veranda floor recall the position of chairs, the closeness of A. and Franck, etc. A calendar image recalls the port, a departure, an absence — perhaps also a body floating on the water — which in turn would make jell in the husband's mind a wish to kill. Cries of beasts in the brush at night suggest signals, absence, perhaps sexual encounters.... The dead centipede leads to images of violence, perhaps both sexual and homicidal.

Between certain of these elements, there is not only transition but metamorphosis. The centipede "becomes" A's hair on the mental film of the husband. A smile of A., preserved in a photograph, is animated to become a "real" scene. Most important of all, in the key image of the killing of the centipede, the white tablecloth, which, in the original scene, A. clutches, becomes, in a subsequent "rerun," a white sheet, the setting becomes a bedroom instead of a dining room, and her fingers, originally clutched from fear and tension, tighten in what we may suppose to be sexual pleasure. There is a possibility that the floating object which the husband scrutinizes on the calendar "becomes" an image of A's body. Certain critics even believe that there is a real murder — that he corners A. in her room and kills her.

There are other images we should note which, in addition to being very personal, are also supported by traditional associations. It has been observed that the pulsating roar of the truck suggests to the husband, as to the reader, the rhythm of sexual intercourse. The rolled napkin with which Franck crushes the centipede at one blow may have similar sexual significance for him. A knife has clear sexual significance. The "dark," later called "red," stain which runs from the window onto the veranda certainly suggests blood to us, and perhaps to him — whether one accepts or not the hypothesis of a murder.

Other images contain within themselves, curiously, references to the novel itself — its construction, its assumptions. Think of the flawed window pane through which, if the husband moves his head slightly, he can *distort* at will the scenes in the courtyard. This is an optical equivalent of what his mind does with the data concerning A. and Franck. Similarly, the native song which one of the servants sings has, says the husband, no discernible form, no apparent beginning or ending, but simply moves in a constant continuum of sound, with random ups and downs, repeats, etc. There is another, more disconcerting reference to the novel within itself. At the end of the volume, there is an allusion to the African novel about which A. and Franck talked. Here, the husband gives a sort of rendition of the novel's content, as he may have grasped it from their conversation. But the curious thing is that this paragraph of summary contains few statements which are not immediately contradicted. This puzzling paragraph, a "mirror image" of the novel, suggests to us the many contradictions of the book we have just finished reading, and the ultimate unknowability of its reality, as of all reality. All statements, one could gather, can be equally true. The reader — and the human being — must choose his own, arranging them as he sees fit. All knowledge is only hypothesis. Again, we return to the idea that knowledge — though based upon as scientific a kind of vision as possible — remains relative; we are prisoners of our subjectivity.

Proust spoke of the great artists as those who opened up for us windows onto a world which, otherwise, we should have never known. This world is colored by the view of the artist — indeed, it is *his* world — but through the transformation of style, it is made available to us. The individual subjectivity is overcome. Since Proust, the French novel has be-

come more subjective, and that window through which we all could have looked out has become the closed circuit of an I/eye, seeing through its own mind and enclosed within puzzling data that have no validity and cannot be verified. Novels by writers as different as Beckett, Simon, and Butor conclude with the impossibility of knowing, *a fortiori* the impossibility of traditional communication. It has been proposed that the new French novel will tend toward silence — the total failure of the literary project. The images of reflection that abound in Robbe-Grillet, as well as other novelists, are mirror images, referring only to themselves. As the jealous husband can find no corroborating data or outside determining factors to resolve his uncertainty, the writer seems to operate within a closed system, more or less arbitrary, which may have internal cohesiveness but no validity other than that of its own structure.

With the advent of symbolism in France at the end of the nineteenth century, and post-impressionist painting, modern art assumed an autonomy art had never before claimed. When the new novel appeared, it seemed that fiction had joined the evolution of poetry and painting — becoming self-contained, self-referring, purely *formal* — no longer a mirror of a mind. Yet we should observe that, even arranged formally in a system of self-reference, words do communicate; and, moreover, that Robbe-Grillet has written a dozen articles and prefaces to elucidate his work, to claim for *his* views the term *realism* which no longer fits the old styles, the old myths. We may conclude that, as the great vogue of his fiction must indicate, he is speaking to us about reality and ourselves, and that, from his limited viewpoint behind a window, imprisoned in a subjectivity, he is turning his searching gaze on us all.

THE SHADOW ON THE WALL

At the beginning of my hour the wind
falls. In the thick branch of my dark
the sun howls. When only light
carries the river along, you see me.
Turn three times around, close
the left eye only, and I grow.

In tricks of light I come to live.
Beneath the dark my own dark slides.
I divide upon stones.
I become too many to see.

From what day leaves behind
I make signs: Beware the Deep Woods;
Do Not Think You Are Ever Alone.
All directions I give where I stand.
Tree branch reaches out. I am the tree.

And I am the first dream you find,
now on the hill the color
of wind, now on the shore
the color of bones,
and rain, saying:

I can be anyone you need.

— *Lawrence Raab*

Concerning The Game

by John Morressy

Q) What is the game?
A) *The game is our heritage and our way of life.*

Q) Who are the players?
A) *Everyone must play. There are no exceptions.*

Q) Who controls the game?
A) *The game is not controlled. Primary operations are in the hands of the Directors. They play the game at the highest level, but they do not presume to control it.*

Q) How is the game played?
A) *Rules of play are contained in* The Book of The Game, *which is the final authority on all matters relating to the game.*

Q) Give a brief description of the game.
A) *It is impossible to describe the game briefly. There are those among the Directors who believe that the game is impossible to describe.*

Q) When did the game begin?
A) *Long ago.*

Q) How long ago?
A) *The progress of the game is not measured by ordinary standards of time. It is measured by moves and cycles.*

Q) What is a cycle?
A) *A cycle is a unit of play of unspecified duration consisting of the necessary moves of ritual, passage, and function, and terminating in a move of consequence.*

Q) Explain the terms "moves of ritual, passage, and function" and "move of consequence."
A) *All terms are explained in detail in* The Book of The Game.

Q) How many pieces are used in the game?

A) *That is subject to dispute. Some believe that only those pieces described and named in* The Book of The Game *may be used in play, while others interpret certain passages in the book to mean that the possible number of pieces is infinite.*

Q) Is it true then that the number of pieces is subject to change?

A) *No. The fact that certain pieces have been retired from play and the names of others have been revised has led some to claim that such a thing is possible, but this is not true. Nothing about the game is subject to change, neither rules nor tactics nor the number of pieces nor their moves.*

Q) What pieces have been renamed?

A) *No piece has been renamed; certain terminology has been corrected as a result of the reinterpretation of obscure passages in* The Book of The Game.

Q) What pieces have been retired from play?

A) *Five Silver Coins, The Dream Obelisk, Noon, and Meditation on the Thunder are no longer in active play.*

Q) For what reasons?

A) *The reasons vary.*

Q) Give the reasons.

A) *The piece called Five Silver Coins is unsuited to current playing conditions, which emphasize mobility and power rather than subtlety and enchantment. The Dream Obelisk and Noon have been withdrawn from active play until study of* The Book of The Game *has clarified their purpose.*

Q) Why was Meditation on the Thunder retired from play?

A) *The reason cannot be revealed.*

Q) The names of some pieces are such that it is difficult to visualize the piece. Please describe them in detail.

A) *The pieces are not easily described. Some are indescribable.*

Q) How can a piece be indescribable?

A) *A piece is not necessarily a concrete and tangible object. A state of mind, a posture, a series of events not fully comprehended, may constitute a piece with significant strength. Some of our most powerful pieces are of such a nature that it is impossible even to assign them a name, much less attempt to describe them.*

Q) How many new pieces have been introduced?
A) *A new piece can never be introduced because such a thing does not exist. There are only undiscovered pieces whose prior existence becomes clear through study of the book.*

Q) How many pieces have been discovered?
A) *The annals of the game mention three.*

Q) Does this not mean that the game has changed?
A) *The game can never change.*

Q) Consider: pieces that once were active are no longer in play; other pieces remain in play but are known by different names; still other pieces are now in play that were not known in earlier cycles. Is this not change?
A) *No.*

Q) Is the end of the game near?
A) *Yes.*

Q) What will be the final outcome?
A) *The outcome cannot be predicted with certainty, but our victory within seven cycles is a strong probability.*

Q) What is the prize?
A) *The prize for victory is victory itself.*

Q) Is there no other reward?
A) *Victory is a sufficient reward. We exist to struggle against The Opponent, and to succeed in the struggle is to fulfill our purpose. There is no greater reward.*

Q) What follows victory?
A) *Oblivion. The game is the only reality, and when the game ends, there is nothing.*

Q) If victory leads only to oblivion, why do you play?
A) *The game is our heritage and our way of life.*

That's Your Story, Baby

by Florence M. Hecht

The telling of a tale and the living of it seem to have at least one thing in common: the necessity of making choices. For this reason, lots of people get hung up on beginnings and never get past them and lots of people never get to a beginning at all. I've got more of them than I know what to do with; not knowing what to do with them is of course the problem.

But there's a certain safety in sticking to facts. This is a fact: Jonathan once told me he could never hear the opening movement of Milhaud's First Symphony without thinking of me. "Lynn baby," he decided, "it *is* you." Half-dressed, I was still covered with our peasant lovesweat as he spoke this ducal, cooled-off apogee. So I said, "Really, Jonathan? How odd. You know what? Whenever Dinah Washington gets to that line, *The blues ain't nothin' but a woman lovin' a married man,* I think of you darling, you . . . "

This because he was just the kind of snob who'd choose a way-out metaphor like that, one that would send me chasing down to Goody's the very next morning to buy the Milhaud record — and later, playing that first movement a dozen times, trying to link its cool, delicate beauty to whatever it was supposed to resemble in my own earthy self. Finally I settled for my true reflection in the mirror which was neither delicate nor beautiful: a tall, heavy-boned girl of twenty-five with a longish nose and interesting cheekbones, the confident smile it took six years for an orthodontist to give me, and sawdust hair worn short and tough like Iris Murdoch (her picture in the Times Book Review so startlingly like me that I even tried the cigarette dangling from the corner of my mouth) and knew that a quarter-inch less on the nose would have brought me closer to a British don and lady novelist than the shapes of Milhaud's music. I could also be taken for the classically hard nurse with a heart of gold, or a dependable head-bookkeeper, or the social worker in Spanish Harlem which I was. And believing as I did in certain physical realities, I wanted to look like Me, Myself. But Jonathan didn't even want to *be* himself.

He was always the victim of his irresistible theatrical urges. In the conference room of his plush Madison Avenue office, he once assembled a bunch of people he knew (who brought people he didn't know — some genuine music-lovers, some genuinely thirsty) for the sole purpose of hearing a new recording of Mahler's First Symphony. And the moment after the opening chords had blasted from the hi-fi, he took it off, saying, "Wasn't that great? That's all I wanted you to hear. That's the best Mahler opening ever recorded. But the rest of it is plain lousy. Let's drink then to that opening!" They wanted to lynch him with his own natty Jacques Fath tie. But even then, the first time I ever laid eyes on him and decided that he was marvelously mad, I only laughed — shocked into that special perception of hypothetical action in which I knew I would have saved him from that lynching and, if necessary, thrown myself between him and a jungleful of advancing lions. There was still time then to ignore those grey-green eyes, to flee that wedding band vised on a long bony finger. And there was even time to forget the sound of his voice shouting goodnights to everyone, the fact that he'd already forgotten my name, and was so unaware of the life that I was prepared to feed to the lions — for his sake that I knew he could pass me on the street the next day and not recognize me. And he did. And of course, I loved him even more for the stupidity of his senses.

I depended on Kitty, the mutual friend who had brought me that night, as on some blind but benevolent fate. Two weeks later Kitty gave a party and there was Jonathan with his arm around a small dark woman who neatly downed four double scotches in less than an hour. A little sad, but encouraging, to see his encircling arm as only a solicitous support of his wife's petite blurred prettiness — to interpret his wedding band as merely symbolizing further support of her expensive habit.

When she later disappeared into the bathroom, I might have been thrust from some cannon of knocking-opportunity, so swiftly and unsubtly had I landed there beside him. And as if touched by my flight through space, I was oh-so-cool, so lofty, so veddy sweatlessly ethereal, as we stood there with two heavy-lidded glass-clutchers discussing the hindsight accusations Mahler's wife made against him in the bitterness of her mourning . . . "Only a *woman* would believe that his creation of the *Kindertotenlieder* had tempted the gods," said Jona-

than, with such an infuriating smirk that for nearly thirty seconds I forgot how much I liked the shape of his mouth.

Just time enough to lose my head, descend from this aerial posturing — "Bullshit," I said. "Show me a man without some fearful dread of tempting devils and you show me a eunuch with nothing to lose!"

"Well!" he said, but seemed to be laughing now at both of us. "I tell you, lady, it's nice to find there's a woman under all that butchered German verse . . . Really, I'm friendly, harmless, drinking seltzer on the rocks . . . one last small question: if I admit that it's possible for certain reversals of inspiration to occur, that an artist can not only receive ideas from the gods but he can just as mysteriously provoke all sorts of mischief in the spirit world — "

"Dear me," groaned the bolder of our two dreary chaperones, and with huge disgust, at last delivered their exit line — "Excuse me! Is this a party or a seminar?" And we grinned with a sense of achievement so oddly mutual that our glasses underlined it with a delicately wry touching, and even our comment on it arrived in perfect unison: "Do you suppose it was something *we* said?"

Tragic poetry, German or otherwise, fizzed into a fit of giggles through which I finally managed to sputter, "Oh, mister, lemme tellyuh, all the hatred in the world comes from this here f-failure of communication . . . if people would only *talk* to each other . . . "

"There would be peace and plenty in the world, sister," he said, hand over his heart, all deadpan gospel gravity.

Count ten, I told myself, count ten. Take the necessary few seconds of precaution, the seconds which ultimately determine whether two people are really riding the same wavelength and live in the same world. And then, whatever it is that falls out of the sky and floats you landward under a billowing silk cloud, soft-landed me right on my fool head. From the searching look in his eyes, it occurred to me that he too felt that brief suspension, became a victim of the prevailing winds . . . and whether nettles or ocean, he needed to dive into *something* — maybe the overcrowded hole in the ground people look for when their drunken spouses are making the sort of slow, unsteady return across a room which gives them time to ruefully contemplate obstacle courses of a more serious nature — "Thirteen years," he said, watching her zig-zag closer. And though I was prepared to despise him for some contemptible comment on this, meaner than my own unspoken one, there was unmistakable sadness in his voice, real regret exposed beneath the thin but sweet defense he built for her: "Poor girl — she's never gotten over the shock of hopefully marrying Dr. Jekyl and discovering that life-can-be-horrible with Mr. Hyde . . . "

But I wasn't ready just yet to transfer my sympathy to her. It was admittedly rather simple-minded not to see it all as a warning: PRIVATE, NO TRESPASSING. or ENTER AT YOUR PERIL or simply, MAD DOG: KEEP OUT. All the same, I was overcome by a rather naive but imperative desire at that moment: I wanted Jonathan's smile to return; I wanted to see it in his eyes when he looked at me. And in my clinging aquamarine dress, replete with go-go fringes, I was a gin-brave Salome, Jezebel, and Delilah, who could handle the beast in any man. Such a tough and hardened wench should speak only tough and hardened truths, like: "From what I've seen of you, I think you'd probably kill your own mother if you thought it might hand her a surprise."

"So you know that about me? And so soon . . . Say," he went on, new interest dawning green in his eyes, "if you know that, doesn't it bother you? Don't you mind?"

"No, dammit, no," I said, swallowing the hook of the bright, curved smile he threw me; and as it painlessly pierced the roof of my mouth, I smiled back, saying, "Mothers shouldn't be murdered, even for laughs. Poor things, they mean well. For instance, my mother tried to give me an original and lovely name, hoping people would remember it . . . "

"Oh I'll remember it this time — you can bet your fringes I'll remember. Two capitals, no space or hyphen — MaraLynn — Christ, what a handle."

"We all have our private hells," I said cryptically, slinking away as his wife slid home and grabbed his elbow. And over her dark curly head, our eyes met in solid recognition — a collusion of tall, fair devils hotly convinced that they'd feel comfortably at home in hell.

So much for Beginning #1. To paraphrase Jonathan: the opening chords were great but the rest of it is plain lousy. There's a middle and finish that won't cohere without some oblique peek into the past. Begin again, MaraLynn. The picture won't hang without that frame of reference. Once more, with hindsight, take it from the bottom:

By the time Jonathan came along, I should have known better. After years of stumbling over the debris of several failed love affairs, I'd begun to see some pattern to this journey, perceived the absence of a destination. It was all risin'-'n-fallin' with no sustaining gospel singing me to glory; I wasn't on my way to anywhere. Once I realized this, there was hardly a morning when I didn't wake up thinking: Yes, that's the way it is with me. A guy says or does the one right thing in the world at the exactly right moment and makes the whole thing worthwhile. And there I am again, under a naked heel. Kick me, don't kick me, what's love for anyway? But stay. Selfless love? A new charity? No, nothing so grand. Only love as a pillow you sometimes hugged and sometimes punched, but always needed in the quiet darkness, on the defenseless borders of sleep.

None of them really understood this. Jonathan was the last one not to understand this, the last one who would never again lean lithely on to my love-swelled breasts, straddling my life like a colossus.

When it was all over, my solitary night-courts of grim reckoning began — long sessions of unsweet silent thought, cross-examining my suicidal heart. A crafty defendant under pressure, it pleaded its own case, told me:

listen, MaraLynn Glazer — why are you worrying so much about your personal ovaries? A woman of twenty-six who hasn't borne a

child is not necessarily a non-woman. Nine-to-five, five days a week, you're in the business of practical compassion for girls with overworked orgones. Is this such a small contribution to society? To be rewarded with the amorphous womb of Spanish Harlem? So maybe you're not prancing around in Honeybugs at three a.m., an infant yowling on your shoulder while its father dreams unspeakable treacheries — But in your low-heeled Chandler shoes, trudging up and down rickety stairs, back alleys, cellar nurseries — so simpatico with La Prensa rolled around your field book — who could say you were a non-woman?

and why, oh why, do you worry so about your shallow unproductive sins? You're forgetting again — there is always the prospect of those enriching night classes in Calligraphy or Sculpture for The Masses at The New School — see how easily you can pad out a few thin nights with time spent profitably among the horny intelligentsia . . .

So spoke my screwy, unscrewed heart in the months after Jonathan.

I came to him in the rain once, shoes drenched, stockings dripping, a pulpy newspaper . . . and my insides even more severely drenched in some awful ovarian self-pity. And he took away my shoes, rolled down my stockings, and washed my splattered legs with warm towels. "Oh, Jonathan," I wept, "You're really good, really kind . . . there should be more of you, many more . . . I want to have your children and I never will. They would have green eyes on sunny days and grey on rainy ones, the way yours are right now — and they too would be very good and understand all about how shameful it is to have mudsplattered legs when you've come to see someone you love . . . "

"You leave me speechless, you home-wrecker," he laughed, fingers tugging at my skirt zipper. "How about the three green-eyed monsters I've already put into the world, who are not at all good, understand next to nothing, and would never-never understand this . . . "

"Neither do I — oh, neither do I —"

"Still," he breathed into my mouth, "there are no bad boys, only bad fathers —"

" . . . and worse mothers . . . ."

"so why should we make the world worse than it already is . . . let's make it better, absolutely . . . at least let us begin darlin Lynn . . . wemustcertainlybegin . . . ."

and he was of course only interested in beginnings . . . surrounded by the blueprints of half a dozen unfinished buildings he'd designed, there on the green-carpeted floor of his office, in the green velvet primordial slime . . . fluid, senseless as amoeba in that pulsing dialogue forever doomed to lose in translation — still, oh-so-cleverly avoiding finalities of nine-month evolutions, the possible reward of this effort, the several thousand potentials of ambiguous good all spilled prematurely on a love-washed leg, sparing those distressed but ingenuous unwed ovaries Love's Social Burden . . . .

And later he turned to me and said: "Someday I'll build a house for you. Just like you — completely good, as things in nature are good . . . as an apple exists in perfect goodness, excellent in all its parts . . . the outside simple, unadorned, related to the space around it as if grown there . . . the inside, even more deeply beautiful and yet so comfortable, so right and rare, that visitors will gasp with wonder . . . ." He grabbed a sketch pad and a few crayons and quickly drew a round, funny building on a hill — red, with a stem for a chimney.

"For chrissake, Jonathan," laughing, though I wanted to hit him for always leading me to expect a poem and delivering a limerick, "What do you call it — the Hotel MacIntosh?"

"How crude you are, Madam! This is a very classy villa by the sea. I call it La Pomme-Pomme," and as he rolled it up and placed it squarely on my outstretched palms, I laughed even louder, but I could have wept just as loudly. Hanging off his desk was an unfinished plan of a suburban gas station — fantastic in conception, lunar, space age; a theater, a church, a department store — all of them projects abandoned with the first flash of enthusiasm. (I can afford to abandon them, he once told me — they're only my private recreations. I'm getting rich on the banal pleasures of the paying customer.)

"I wish I were Maria Rodriguez," I said.

"Who's that?"

"A thirty-year-old apple gone bad — a rotten apple who lives on W.128th St. A whore with four bastards running wild in the streets. Last week I told her: Maria, the city is not going to keep paying for your mistakes. Why don't you straighten yourself out? Why are you doing this? . . . 'I love Stanley,' she told me. 'He tells me to do it.' But Maria, I said, if Stanley loved you, he wouldn't send you out to do this and make you give him the money. Don't you see how he's using you — you and all the other girls? 'Oh, he like me best,' she answered, laughing, 'he never hit *me* . . . I very happy working for Stanley . . . The last baby *his*, you know, but he don't believe me. He say I too stupid to know for sure, but I don't care — I *know* — is his . . . and I very happy' . . . And you know what, Jonathan? All week long I've been saying this little prayer to myself: Please God, make me stupid. Oh please God, make me stupid."

And that's when he held my hand and gave me this jazz about the Milhaud First, forcing me to squelch that poor comfort with a low blow about Dinah Washington truth-telling with the blues. When I went to look out the window, the rain had stopped; but Madison Avenue was still grey, hung over with some bilious malady. "Enceinte," I said, "but only with gloom, like me. Sometimes I think I was meant to be an ignorant peasant, chained to house and hearth, a slavish wife who got pregnant every year."

It broke him up — between chortles, he finally managed, "That's your story, baby — you'll just never make it as a tragic heroine in Czarist Russia. If you insist on a costume today, try this on for size — a snappy courtesan in 19th century France, the delight of the oppressed aristocracy — or number one wife in the harem of a healthy Sultan. You know — something suited to your naturally happy disposition, an ambience to nurture your brain, brio, and brimstone —"

"I'm not, Jonathan — I could be happy, but I'm not — and it's all your fault, you monster."

And he didn't even smile as he said, "Ah . . . what can I *do?* What is it you want? You know how things are with her . . . everything . . . so what is it you want?"

"Middles and endings. Dramatic middles and happy endings, like the good fairy tales and the bad old movies. You know what, Jonathan? My love life is one long series of miscarriages."

"But you're literate, you live in the world, don't you? You've been warned by people who care about you and people who don't — that's the fate of all homewreckers — are you blaming *me?*"

"So far no children have lost their fathers on my account. Every last damn one of them went back to his wife, or never left her in the first place. Like you, Jonathan. Did I tell you that my parents have gone into high gear with Project: Husband?"

"Well," he said gently, grey eyes now dead serious, "it might be the best thing for you, Lynn. Maybe it really is what you want. And it might save you from snakes like me."

Oh really, it was such a kind and friendly thing for one's lover to say — so unselfish and altruistic, so terribly unlike a snake that it lay coiled in my belly like hope stillborn. And I knew then and there, it was nearly the end of the beginning. My stockings were dry, my eyes drier, my insides kicking up dust. But not yet, not yet; I always have to hear the death rattle to be sure. And I left him, smiling the happy smile he wanted to see, feeling that at this moment his kiss on my lips was the only moist, living thing I possessed.

How obvious — the Something Missing even in TRY #2. It needs some small insight into my daily life at home, parental influences, etc. No true interpretation of human relationships can be made without it. A social worker should forfeit her degree and resign her job if she doesn't know that. And so, for the third and last time, MaraLynn, get with it:

Despite the fact that the apartment houses built on Grand Concourse immediately before World War 2 are reputed to be "good buildings," the walls in the average 4 1/2 room dwelling are so thin that, even secluded in her bedroom, a girl can hear her mother weeping on the foyer phone and her father talking a blue streak as he gambles away fortunes in the kitchen.

MaraLynn's mother, Mrs. Glazer, has a generally cheerful disposition and believes that tears like precious jewels should be given only to one's nearest and dearest. And so, when she discusses her daughter's marital status with mere friends, acquaintances, and distant relatives, her telephone voice joyfully rolls out a fabric so rich and glittering that the words seem vulgar embroidery. Still, wisely she knows that the true and tiny details often obscure the generalized lie.

This recently came through the wall: "So what's the rush? She's got plenty of time! . . . Did I tell you about the supervisor test? . . . What do you mean, *passed?* The top 10% of the whole city! . . . Of course, a salary increase! . . . Ha-ha — believe me, she doesn't have to worry — she's sitting on top of the world, my MaraLynn . . . ."

But often lately, she can be heard talking to the most nearest and dearest (the first-born married son: provider of one granddaughter), hysterically forgetting all about the toll charges to Garden City: " — but I'm not blaming you, Jerry . . . . No, I'm not blaming Edith either. Only you mingle with big shots all the time, you handle the books for a dozen top corporations . . . and Edith, with her clubs, her societies, her courses — in the whole city, both of you never *once* met a decent fellow that you could *do* a little something . . . My God, a girl like that — with such a shape, such a face, such an education, she plays piano so beautiful . . . "

Suspicion of an imminently bankrupt house once brought MaraLynn out of her room and she stood on the top step of the dropped living room, eavesdropping on the gambling rites in the kitchen. Though an undisputed pinochle champion, her father seems to be losing heavily to Blum. A small man with a small grunt of a voice, Blum is big in Butter & Eggs, with three sons, one still single and only a little bit retarded. It seems that Mr. Glazer also knows a thing or two about butter, about schmearing in the right places, about Blum's ego prospering with a series of winning hands — "So you took him in the business after all, hah Blum? It can't be he's as dumb as you made him out all these years . . . . Sure, sure, you're right. How much brains do you need to pack egg-crates? . . . Strong as a horse, naturally. . . . Oh, I remember. Good-looking too! . . . Listen, with a father like you, does a boy need more, I ask you. With your system, the business is practically running on ballbearings! . . . Tell me, is he going around with someone? . . . You don't say? So shy? . . . No, I agree. It's not healthy. A boy of thirty-five, I would worry too . . . "

Mr. Glazer, who despises losers and losing, is certainly making self-sacrifices here. All the same, MaraLynn can't help seeing a second sacrifice in this. If not for the sex of the progeny, if not for the introduction of egg-crates, there would be a stirring Biblical tone to this father's desperation for patriarchal joys, for begetting at any cost. Be honest, well-meaning father: would you sell your girl down the river for a merger with Blum's Better Whipped Butter and a few dozen twin-yolk Jumbos? What price grandsons? A sacrifice worth the sound of Blum's fat hand again smacking the table in triumph, piggishly squealing, "You lose, Glazer!"?

Several nights after this eavesdropping, MaraLynn went to her room and sitting calmly at her desk, wrote the following:

(Though I've trifled with the idea, this is not a last will and testament. Only the mood of that idea remains.)

To my Future Husband, Whoever-You-May-Be — I bequeath this body, which no man has touched for almost a year now. I swear I am as chaste as any nun. Like a regrown tissue, remorse has closed over my sins; abstinence lies like a frozen flame between my thighs. The nuns apologize to God with rocks in

their beds, flagellate the devil from their flesh with whippings self-administered. It is the same for me, punishing the endless banality of human sin, forever falling — no, diving — as I do into foul quicksands of love. I have the sickness of the martyrs, but without the noble causes that would give it grace and glory. It is as private and useless as a nausea, and its purging is pure regurgitation — no more.

Husband-To-Be: the above statement is a pretentious lie. Ignore it. The truth is that I have been forced into ten months of virtue, shocked into a silence of the flesh. It bears little resemblance to holy vows taken freely. It is more like the stunned behavior of a bride deserted at the altar with roses wilting in her arms. It is more like Faulkner's Emily, my hair fallen on a pillow in a bed where every night Jonathan in cold and bitter deadness slept beside me. Because the living Jonathan played a last shock-provoking prank on everyone. It was of course another new beginning for him, an old amusement, to leave us all gasping with surprise — his wife, children, me. I do not think he will ever put the finishing touches on that house either. Small comfort. So much time has passed that even my well-earned pain has abandoned me; I summon it sometimes only to appease the rumbling emptiness it left.

But I have my work. Surely there is enough pain all around me every day to satisfy anyone's need of it. Yesterday an ugly pimp named Stanley was stabbed to death in a street fight. And a woman named Maria laid her head on my desk and wept for him — simply, openly, with all the stops pulled out. I pleaded with her to calm down and she finally said, "You not understand, Miss Glazer . . . You nice, but you not married lady . . . you never understand, you not know how I love him!" Was it for this moment that I fought my way through endless crap courses on human relations? "Shut your big mouth!" I screamed at her. "I know more than you've ever dreamt in your whole stupid life!" Ah-h . . . si . . . Maria's wide astonished eyes answered . . . ah, si, si! you do know . . . maybe you not such a cold fish after all . . . maybe you know how a man's hand on your belly . . . Aloud, she said, "Please, Miss Glazer — you forgive me?" and "Yes," I said, "Yes," refusing to ask her forgiveness in return, only covering her hand with my own, giving her the only help to be given: "Come on, Maria. There are still some papers you have to sign now." As for me, I too have now identified and buried all the bodies; they will never belong to me again.

I warn you, Future Husband, Whoever-You-May-Be — you had better be a very articulate fellow, because we are a family of facile talkers and cannot tolerate people (however wise) who come on stuttering, or mealy-mouthed, afflicted with a hare-lipped brain. You'd be better off a mute — an expert, graceful mime enchanting us with clever choreography. Yes, do, please be a mute who never once will speak a bunch of lying lovewords in my ear. I will prefer it to obligatory scenes, the climax of recriminations citing who said what, falser than the first false words they mean to exorcise.

I've found the perfect hiding place for this True Confession. The cardboard jacket of Milhaud's First Symphony has become a treasure trove of trivia. It contains: the record, and a folded sketch of a ridiculous apple house, ruined with the cigarette burns made by some insane female on a long warm night in May — the night a casual friend named Kitty telephoned to say: "You remember that fella Jonathan I introduced you to? Well, guess what that nut went and did. He's run away to Mexico with this stunning Eurasian model. You met her at my party, remember? — the one we said didn't have a brain in her head, she should just shut up and stand there? . . . And his poor wife got this letter about a Mexican divorce and drank herself right into the violent ward at Bellevue! And him with three kids and all — can you beat it?"

I'm saving the worn record, the scorched drawing, and this testament, all in one neat package. I may need it someday if forced to recall the shapes of reality. Cure, antidote, the victory of reason over passion. I shall stamp my chart, myself, discharged from sickness of the soul, diseases of the heart. And behind me in this sunny valley of the cure, I see the long, long shadow of some bitter understanding — The thing that drew missionaries to leper colonies and holy madmen to hairshirts, the thing that drove me to improve the holes that human beings share with rats — it must be this that also drew me, arms outstretched, ready to embrace the miseries of Jonathan and all his brothers . . . Perhaps I saw them trapped, disappointed, running in familial circles to whose ever-hungry stomachs they were signed, sealed, and delivered: legal breadwinner, euphemism for galley slave. My step might be a little lighter if I could believe this, and not complaints exchanged in powder rooms: honey, all the good ones are married, and there's something wrong with all the ones who aren't.

Because it's time now to be sensible, time at last to answer the hungry voices beyond the wall, to feed them a little something. On a recent call to action, they seemed louder than ever:

"MaraLynn — Jerry and Edith want you to come to a dinner party next Saturday night. There'll be some wonderful people there. What should I say? Will you go?"

"MaraLynn — Guess what? Blum's boy got two tickets to the Philharmonic! He's a big music-lover — you didn't know? Don't you remember when you were kids how you used to love when he played the harmonica? The only thing is he's too shy to ask you himself, so Blum asked me to ask you . . . "

Re: Requests of Mother and Dad: I asked the hung-up glass girl on the wall over my dresser what she thinks. She looked at me with dull eyes, a remarkably stupid expression on her face, but she did nod, unmistakably a nod. So I shouted through the walls — YES! YES! I'LL BE THERE! I'LL GO! TELL EVERYBODY YES!

And their sighs of relief, those damp warm winds of hope reached me like a swamp stench. Until the Day of Choices then, until A New Beginning forces me to find and use this as a text, a guidebook to the why and how of what I choose, I mean to fill my lungs with hurricanes of stinking hope.

Ray Bradbury's Song of Experience

by L. T. Biddison

Ray Bradbury is popularly acclaimed one of the greatest living writers of science fiction and fantasy. His fictional world is a terrifying one, inhabited by spectral beings and practitioners of the occult. His landscape is most typically the "October Country," the world of autumn and twilight, of witches and ghosts, of soul-less bodies and disembodied spirits. Resembling Poe's misty mid-region of Weir, Bradbury's Green Town, Illinois, is a ghoul-haunted village where the nightmarish realities of shade and shadow creep from beneath the trees and stalk the streets after set of sun. It is the logical setting for midnight carnivals, with its freaks and magicians, with its magic mirrors, magic theaters, and magic rides. It is the kind of place where one expects — and finds — flying shoes, time machines, and restorative elixirs.

And yet there is really nothing at all unusual about Green Town, Illinois. It is an ordinary small American town, whose inhabitants are ordinary men, women, and children, who have an assortment of quite ordinary experiences in the course of living and dying. Those who have read the stories of Ray Bradbury as "escape" fiction are probably not always aware of the extent to which he deals with the profound realities of the human condition. He delves not so much into the distant future or into the fourth dimension as into the subconscious — and even unconscious — mind of man. He shows that the adult's world of prosaic and often meaningless fact is not the real world at all — that one must become as a child to see things as they really are. The typical juvenile protagonist in a Bradbury story, like Wordsworth's Child, can still see the "splendor in the grass" and the "glory in the flower." The visionary gleam of childhood has not yet faded into the light of common day. And because of its poignancy, Bradbury often treats of that transitional period of childhood between the ages of ten and fourteen, when, according to Wordsworth, "Shades of the prison-house begin to close / Upon the growing boy."

This paper examines one of a pair of Bradbury's novels which together chronicle certain events occurring in Green Town in the summer and autumn months of the late 1920's. Although the point-of-view characters of these novels have different names, they can be understood to be the same person.[1] The twelve-year-old Douglas Spaulding of *Dandelion Wine,*[2] who first glimpses the metaphysical facts of life and death and the essential loneliness of the individual, becomes in *Something Wicked This Way Comes*[3] the composite character of thirteen-year-old Will Halloway and his dark "twin" Jim Nightshade, who are initiated into the sexual rites of puberty to discover that in their common sexuality fathers and sons inhabit the same universe after all.

Dandelion Wine, as its title suggests, shows how winter months need not be deprived of warmth and sunshine if care is taken to keep alive the wonders of summer. The illusion of eternal innocence, freshness, and happiness is suggested by the summer mood maintained throughout most of the novel, as Douglas Spaulding grows in wonder and delight at the rich possibilities of existence.

Douglas's open-eyed exploration of his world ultimately reveals that life takes its deepest value from the fact of its transitoriness. His development commences with a boy's unquestioning participation in nature's rituals and ceremonies. But as his twelfth summer begins, he acquires self-awareness in a moment of intuitive insight, and thereafter grows increasingly reflective. Seeking to know the inner significance of recurring human activities, he passes through stages of wonder, despair, and, finally, joyful acceptance. What he learns is as profound as it is simple: the individual life is a temporary and imperfect part of the on-going process of General Life. It is the metaphysical truth recognized by all Transcendentalists and which Shelley expresses in *Adonais:* that though the Many change and pass, the One remains.

If *Dandelion Wine* deals with the initiation of a small boy into the metaphysical and ethical dimensions of reality, *Something Wicked This Way Comes* may be said to treat of the psychological and physiological realities of early adolescence. It is Ray Bradbury's "song of experience" as *Dandelion Wine* is his "song of innocence." The change in background from summer daylight to autumn nighttime reflects the shift in mood between childhood and

adolescence. Douglas's discovery of self-hood occurs in the brilliant sunshine; but Will Halloway and Jim Nightshade come alive to their sexual natures on autumn-darkened side streets and in midnight erotic dreams.

Something Wicked is, like *Dandelion Wine*, a story about people trapped in time. Although it deals with the frustrations and fears of several residents of Green Town, the novel centers on three lives in particular: on Jim Nightshade, who is eager to become a man; on Will Halloway, who is reluctant to leave boyhood; and on Charles Halloway, Will's father, who regrets he does not have his life to live over.

The novel considers the painful relationship between fathers and sons. Charles Halloway, at age fifty-four, finds it difficult to communicate his heart to his thirteen-year-old son; and Will, who suspects that his father would regard his erotic adventures as sinful, feels he must somehow keep these secret from his virtuous parent. Will is reluctant to accept his newly-found sexual dimension as natural and good. Jim, a little more aggressive than Will, is darkly aware of his destiny. He regards as natural his sexual urges and early sees what he must inevitably do with them. Charles Halloway looks on the two boys and understands the significance of the changes about to take place in their lives. He knows that though they are friends they are also strangers and alone, even as he is a stranger to them. He watches them race through the darkened streets one night and realizes the comparative immaturity of his son: "Will runs because running is its own excuse. Jim runs because something's up ahead of him." And yet they run together still, "Jim running slower to stay with Will, Will running faster to stay with Jim." So far, the bond of friendship has kept Jim from growing up before Will is ready to join him.

On a metaphoric level, of course, Jim and Will together comprise a single being: an adolescent experiencing the dilemma of two opposing tendencies within him. Will, as his name suggests, represents that aspect of the psyche which Freud labels the superego; i.e., the conscience, or that which desires to reflect the parental ideal. Jim Nightshade, on the other hand, is an obvious signification of the dark, instinctual forces of the libido — those passions which D. H. Lawrence would associate with "blood consciousness." Will's guilty fear of new and "un-natural" sensations and Jim's eagerness for them are but the conflicting desires within any normal adolescent boy. In *Something Wicked* one must remember that Bradbury is symbolizing this dichotomy of the psyche in the two distinct persons of Will and Jim.

Throughout the novel Bradbury relies heavily on Freudian symbology to tell of Will's and Jim's sexual development. From the lightning-rod salesman in Chapter One, who predicts that lightning will strike Jim's house on the night of his fourteenth birthday, to the dizzying merry-go-round in Chapter Fifty-one, from whose ride Jim emerges a changed person, the reader is given visual images of the mental and physical states of the boys during their progress toward maturity.

The novel opens with the lightning-rod salesman's prognostication of stormy weather,[4] and the almost simultaneous arrival of a midnight carnival at Green Town. The tents and music attract almost everyone in Green Town who is ripe for a change, but especially men who hope to regain a sense of their lost youth and boys who are curious about the mysterious stirrings within them. This carnival, as any good carnival should, has something for everyone.

As with Will and Jim, Bradbury makes it clear through conventional Freudian wish-fulfillment symbols that the frustrations of the others are sexual in nature. The lightning-rod salesman, for instance, cannot sell his bag full of charms; Mr. Crosetti, the barber, stops his spiraling pole and closes shop; and Charles Halloway, the library janitor, is tired of spending night after night pushing his broom through the dusty stacks. The ineffectual rods and poles and brooms all attest, symbolically, to the lost virility of these men. All of them, accordingly, go to the dark carnival, and all but Charles Halloway become freaks in the side show because they have sinned against nature: in requesting a return to the past they have denied what they in fact are.

Chapter Six paints in rich Freudian symbolism the scene prior to the coming of the carnival, in which Will and Jim first experience sexual stimulation. Theirs is a quite ordinary case of pre-adolescent voyeurism, but Bradbury presents the event not as it was but as it appeared to the uncomprehending Will. The experience occurs, appropriately, at the end of summer and in the darkness of night:

> Until this summer it had been an ordinary street where they stole peaches, plums and apricots, each in its day. But late in August, while they were monkey-climbing for the sourest apples, the "thing" happened which changed the very air within the gossiping trees . . .
>
> For it was no longer the street of the apples or plums or apricots, it was the one house with a window at the side and this window, Jim said, was a stage, with a curtain — the shade, that is — up. And in that room, on that strange stage, were the actors, who spoke mysteries, mouthed wild things, laughed, sighed, murmured so much; so *much* of it was whispers Will did not understand . . .
>
> And Will, hanging to the limbs of the tree, tight-pressed, terribly excited, staring at the Theater, that peculiar stage where people, all unknowing, flourished shirts above their heads, let fall their clothes to the rug, stood raw and animal-crazy, naked, like shivering horses, hands out to touch other.
>
> What're they *doing!* thought Will. Why are they laughing? What's wrong with them, what's *wrong!?*
>
> He wished the light would go out.
>
> But he hung tight to the suddenly slippery tree and watched the bright window Theater, heard the laughing, and numb at last let go, slid, fell, lay dazed, then stood in dark gazing up at Jim, who still clung to his high limb. Jim's face, hearth-flushed, cheeks fire-fuzzed, lips parted, stared in. "Jim, Jim, come down!" But Jim did not hear. "Jim!" And when Jim looked down at last he saw Will as a stranger below with some silly request to give off living and come down to earth. So Will ran off, alone, thinking too much, thinking nothing at all, not knowing what to think.

Will and Jim, by virtue of their different degrees of "readiness," react oppositely to the sexual "play" going on in the house. Will, perplexed by this thea-

ter of mysteries, falls in a daze to the ground, begging Jim to join him. But Jim stays up, wholly absorbed by what he sees within. Prior to this time, Jim and Will have been on the same developmental level; but as a result of Will's inability to stay "up" with Jim in the sour-apple tree of knowledge, there exists for the first time the relationship in which the boys live up to their significant names. Henceforth, Jim sees Will as "a stranger below with some silly request to give off living and come down to earth."

The symbolic representation of psychological distance between two characters is repeated in key scenes of the novel. In a post-midnight outdoor session about sin and goodness and guilt and fears, Will and his father come to understand each other a little better. Will gains sympathy for his father when he begins to see the "boy" in him, and Charles feels closer to his son when he sees the "man" in him. As he prepares to go to bed, Will climbs the moss-covered rungs on the side of the house, moving swiftly toward the open bedroom window. Will turns to look down at his father: "From just this distance, Dad looked as if he were shrinking, there on the ground." He reminds Will of a small, lonely boy, "like someone ditched by someone else." The father-son seminar is climaxed when Charles Halloway follows Will up the wall and into the bedroom, where they embrace "with grand fine exhaustion" and "eyes bright with each other and wet with love."

Will's nights (and Jim's as well) are haunted by erotic dreams and accompanying guilt feelings, all of which Bradbury describes in the language of a Freudian case-history. The Freudian premises are so well-known it is unnecessary to rehearse the particulars. However, it seems almost certain that Bradbury had an open copy of *The Interpretation of Dreams* before him as he wrote.[5] He presents Will significantly scaling and descending facades of houses, entering and leaving rooms through windows, and grasping and wielding elongated objects — sticks, poles, ladders, tree-trunks, arrows, chimneys, lightning-rods, and garden hoses. He frequently has sensations of flying and falling and of pursuing.

One hour after going to bed the night of his conversation with his father, Will awakens involuntarily to the sensation of a balloon hovering above his house and Jim's house next door, a balloon rising and falling in time to his own breathing rate. His unconscious mind continues to manufacture images that correspond to the condition of his aroused sexuality, and the fantastic adventure which ensues is a symbolic representation of what happens to him that night both physically and psychically. Will recognizes the balloon as belonging to the Cooger and Dark Pandemonium Shadow Show affiliated with the midnight carnival on the edge of town, and he knows they are looking for him. In the balloon's basket is a blind witch whose hands reach to stroke Will and Jim in their separate bedrooms. Neither boy is able to "will" away the caresses of these obscene hands. Simultaneously, the boys sense the danger in the witch's presence, and Will crawls across a clothesline pole to Jim's bedroom. Inside, they feel that she must be marking their roof to make the house recognizable in the morning. The boys are panic-stricken when they climb to the roof of Jim's house and see in the moonlight something resembling the "path left by a gigantic snail." The "silver-slick" shimmers on the rooftop, and the boys know that in the broad daylight this one house will be conspicuously different from all the others. Jim bends down to touch the substance, and "a faint evil-smelling glue cover[s] his finger." Deciding a little water will remove the witch's identifying mark, Will fetches the boa constrictor garden hose from the lawn and, together, he and Jim flood the evil paint away.

But no amount of cleansing can dissolve Will's sexual guilt nor eliminate the fear that the blind old hag will visit him again and bring discredit on his house. Will cannot go back to sleep after he and Jim have had their initial encounter with the witch. As he contemplates her inevitable return, he decides he actually would like to confront her again, this time alone, and to put an end to her menacing tricks by deflating her balloon with his bow and arrow. Not wanting the witch to find him in his own house, though, he gets dressed and runs to an abandoned house several blocks away. He climbs the stairs and emerges on the roof, "where he stashe[s] his weapons behind the chimney and [stands] tall." The shadow of the witch's balloon is "almost like black flesh" as it strikes him and drapes over him. He tries to shoot but his bow breaks and he stares "at the unshot arrow in his hands." Desperately, he seizes the basket below the balloon and, in a last frantic action, pierces the balloon by throwing the arrowhead flint "with all his strength." He hangs on as the balloon wrinkles and shrivels, and then lets go. He falls through the night air and lands in a tree, exhausted, waiting for the balloon "to die in the meadows from which it had come, sinking down now beyond all the sleepy, ignorant and un-knowing houses." For a while, Will does not move, "But then at last, gone calm, he gather[s] his limbs, most carefully searche[s] for a prayer, and climbs himself down through the tree."

The next morning, Jim reports that he has dreamed of a funeral and "a coffin *forty feet long!*" Inside the long coffin he says he saw "a big wrinkled thing like a prune or a grape lying in the sun." When he tells the dream to his mother, she cries and yells and calls Jim "her criminal son." Jim asks for reassurance: "We *didn't* do anything bad, did we, Will?"

During this one wild night Will has experienced, first, an erotic dream producing, among other things an involuntary erection and, unless the events described as taking place in Jim's house are regarded as shared sexual experimentation, the dream is accompanied by a "nocturnal emission." Fear, of discovery, mixed with a non-rational desire to repeat the thrill of forbidden pleasure, drives Will to an empty house, where he tries to put an end to his troublesome erotic excitement through violent masturbation. In the morning, however, his fears return as Jim hints that his mother knows that he, too, has masturbated.

Later, near the end of the novel, after much opposition from Will, Jim's actual initiation into manhood

takes place, as such rites often do for small-town youths, in a carnival setting. Here, he knows, is the promised magic carousel that will spin a boy into a man. Unaccompanied by Will, he walks toward the forward-moving merry-go-round, where "he [has] always known he must go." Trembling, he grasps a brass pole and is swiftly "torn from his roots in the earth."

Watching his friend aging with every revolution of the carousel, Will cries out to him much as he did from the base of the apple tree earlier. "Jim, get off! Jim, don't leave me *here!* . . . Jim, jump! . . . I need you! Come back!" But Jim is now older than Will and cannot understand the boy's strange request. As he comes round again and again, he sees "Will — Willy — William Halloway, young pal, young friend who would seem younger still at the end of this journey, and not just young but unknown! vaguely remembered from some other time in some other year . . . " Despite his urge to keep his ties with Will, "Jim [cannot] let go the pole, [cannot] give up the ride."

Charles Halloway, watching the whole procedure, is powerless either to hold Jim back or to urge Will on. He knows that time will take care of the maturing process in everyone. He knows, too, that it is unnatural to try to change the forward direction of the carousel; a middle-aged man can enjoy only the vicarious thrill of a boy's first ride, for initiations are always once-in-a-lifetime events.

Ray Bradbury's world, as it is presented in *Dandelion Wine* and in *Something Wicked This Way Comes,* though not the best of all possible worlds, is nevertheless the only meaningful world there is. Its beauty and sordidness, its good and its evil help compose its rich texture. No one time of day or night, no single season of the year, and no particular age is free from terror, loneliness and death. And yet coexisting with these negative aspects are the realities of deep love and friendship, ecstatic pleasures, and generally heightened existence. It is a world in which summers of innocence are inevitably followed by autumns of experience.

NOTES

1. And that one person bears a striking resemblance to Bradbury himself, who was born not in "Green Town" but in Waukegan, Illinois, in 1920.

2. First published in 1957 by Doubleday and now popularly available in the Bantam Pathfinder edition.

3. Copyright 1962, Simon and Schuster. Available in the Bantam paperback edition. The title is taken from one of the witches of *Macbeth* announcing the approach of Macbeth: "By the pricking of my thumbs, / Something wicked this way comes." The "something wicked" is, of course, a mere mortal who is "wicked" simply because he is a mortal and heir to all that flesh is heir to.

4. That Bradbury has read Herman Melville and shares his buoyant fatalism is evidenced not only in the character of the lightning-rod salesman, who seems to have been transplanted, intact, from the pages of his short story "The Lightning-rod Man," but also in his having written the screenplay for John Huston's motion picture version of *Moby Dick.* And as an epigraph for the present novel, Bradbury quotes one of Stubb's most stoical remarks: "I know not all that may be coming, but be it what it will, I'll go to it laughing."

5. See especially pages 170, 171, 235, 236, 237, 242, 243, 244, 245, 250, 251, 264, 265, 266, 275, and 278 of the Modern Library Edition (New York, 1950).

NIGHTRIDE

Field green and lunar white,
You warn me death with highbeam headlights
Traffics toward me from a velvet void,
Towards which I had turned except for your glance.

Turn now! your twinkling eyes invite.
Follow this quick string of rubies
Whose flashing leads the way
Along down valleys and up hills.

At curves and dips
The swift line faints without trace,
But swings bright again
Every time a corner's turned.

This takes us to our way home,
To our turnoff and tight ramp down
To our phosphorescent streetname
And cat's-eye number.

There, no more signs say come or go,
Keep Right, or DO NOT ENTER, or
d e a d e n d
But every one: stay.

— *Joe Tetlow*

past the first two houses and he was greeted by those sitting on the porch. The hands were in from plowing and were cooling off.

"Howdy, Cap'n." And he would nod.

When he came to the third house, his right eye crinkled a moment in decision, and then he pulled up to the wooden gate.

"Mary!" he hollered. There was no man, no one rocking on the porch at this house. A skillet clanged against a wood stove inside. A woman of maybe forty came onto the porch. She was hefty with strong, thick arms and big hams of hips, thighs and calves.

"Suh?"

"You might send one of your girls down to cook supper for me. Miz Simmons's gone for a while."

"I kin come down if you want," she answered.

"No. You go on with what you're doing and send one of your girls." He spoke flatly and decisively.

"Yessuh."

Bo clucked to his horse and rode on down the lane. He had allowed Mary to stay on the place even after her husband had one day up and left. It was unusual for Bo to do this because he needed the man for the fields, but he had left everything sort of hanging, telling his wife that Mary could help her at the house. He never told Mary flatly that she would be able to stay. This made her feel even more the unsubstantiality of her place, made her a better worker.

When Bo came to the big, dingy farm house, he took his horse to the lot and unsaddled him. He gripped the heavy work saddle with one of his powerful arms and stepped into a room next to the crib. Several ropes dangled from the ceiling, each with a loop at the end. He threaded the one free rope through a hole in the saddle and up and over the horn. The room lent itself to fancy in the dusty gloom — the dark-tanned, textured hide of animals, fashioned into something that related to human kind, but hanging static, or swinging gently in the thick, powdery silence.

A thick rat scooted off as Bo stepped heavily on the wooden floor. Briefly it scared him. He leaned his head out the door and called, "kitty, kitty, kitty." The high, almost falsetto of the call sounded strange, coming from the stern and masculine face of the man. A white cat bounded across the lot and stopped silently, anticipatory, with uplifted face, looking with one blue eye and one gold eye.

"Ppsst, ppsst," Bo hissed, and turned back into the saddleroom. The cat leaped inside and stalked around the sacks and cans cluttering the floor.

"Ppsst — catch 'em!" Bo urged. Suddenly the cat hit — thunk — and a rush of little bones swatting the floor. Her teeth had cracked the base of the neck, gripped, and the huge rat was slung from left to right in a furious, primeval rage.

Satisfied, Bo went to the corn crib and gathered ten or twelve ears of corn and dumped them in a box for the sorrel.

He swung the backyard gate open and treaded up the brick walk. From the gate to the house the character of the land and foliage changed. This one thing, all the shrubbery and flowers, undertaken by his wife and grumbled about by Bo himself, was in fact a secret pleasure. He had growled about having to plant and cultivate the whole thousand acres and keep up fifteen miles of fence, but he liked it all.

Once in a while it was quiet enough to sit on the long back gallery and especially then he liked it. But most of the time the damn children were screaming and yelling. He wished he had never had the first one. But you needed one to pass the place on.

Now it was quiet. He did not realize the new freedom at first until he got to the back door. A family man expected, was inured to, noise and commotion. Sanctuary had to be found somewhere else, away from home.

He went to the bathroom and washed the dust and grit from his hairy arms and his face, exhulting in the freshness. Then he went to the icebox and took out a bottle of homebrew and poured it into a clay mug until the frothy head looked over the side.

The sun was setting as he went out again to the back gallery and propped his feet up on the railing and leaned his chair back. This last batch of homebrew had come off good. A light amber, not the darkness of the last crock.

As he drank the cold beer he thought about what he had to do the next day. More corn had to be laid by. Had to get one of the hands up with a mule in the morning to plow the garden. His wife had been after him about that. Damn woman. These two acres around this house caused him more trouble than the whole place.

He got up to get another beer and noticed that one of Mary's girls was coming down the lane. By the time she got the back gate opened he was already seated again. It was the one called Gloria. She was maybe fifteen.

"Evenin', Mista Bo." She approaching him.

"Hey, girl," looking at her.

"Mama says you want me cook some dinner. Says Miz Simmons gone," she said, just saying anything.

"See what you can find in the icebox and go ahead and start. I'm going to take a bath."

"Yessuh." Gloria walked up the steps of the gallery and past Bo. She trailed a thick smell behind her and it pricked the flow of Bo's thoughts. He watched her walk through the screen door and noticed her buttocks jut out. He remembered how Louis, a field hand, had remarked about it one day when Gloria had shuffled by them on a dusty lane.

On his way to take a bath, he got another homebrew from the icebox, poured it into his mug and started the water. He thought how much easier it was now that there was water from the cistern piped into the house. And he thought how much he enjoyed (when he was in the mood) lying in the tub and sipping a homebrew. It was not often that he felt relaxed enough. As he was washing off, he realized there was no towel.

"Damnit," he muttered, "Gloria!" He bellowed the name. A couple of rooms away she yelled back, "Suh?"

"Bring me a towel."

Soon she knocked and said, "Here it is," not moving the door.

"Well, throw it in here, girl."

She opened the door just enough to throw in the towel, but she saw in a wink Bo Simmons as few had ever seen him. But there was a studied lack of recognition by both of them — a dark immobility on the girl's part, a feigned otherworldiness on his part. But the recognition was there. Bo dried off and went to his room where he found a loose-fitting shirt and a pair of khakis. He didn't bother to put a belt around him, but got into some slippers.

When he came to the dining room there was a plate full of sliced cucumbers and tomatoes waiting, which he promptly set to. The scratching of his knife and fork brought Gloria to the door. After she confirmed that the boss man was there, she went back to the kitchen and came out with a big slice of fried ham in one plate and a bowl of blackeyed peas. She moved close to Bo and set them down near his salad.

"Mista Bo, did you want another homebrew, or some milk, or jest what?" she asked, looking down at him.

He thought a second and turned his face to speak and he was confronted with the looming bulk of her breasts. His eyes fastened on them and he spoke as if he was directing his request there.

"I reckon you can bring me another homebrew."

"Yessuh, hit sure do make you feel good on a hot night." But she said it with an insinuative lilt to her voice, a prerogative gainsaid now by the image in the bathroom and her cognition of Bo's last glance, a glance he had not in fact directed but rather halted.

"You can pour yourself one if you think you can handle it," not looking at her.

"Yessuh. I think I can," assuming her womanhood by the challenge, the awakened forces freed of anything servile, obedient.

The sound of caps popping on two bottles stirred Bo now to the point where there was little question whether, but only when. The problems it might bring crossed his consciousness slightly but the alcohol quietly dismissed the future. Anyway, he was Bo Simmons.

Gloria came back to the table with a plate of french fries and a mug of homebrew. When she had placed them on the table Bo Simmons whacked her on her butt.

"Mista Bo!" she yelled, and ran out to the kitchen, leaving Bo grinning at the table.

They sure have hard rear-ends, he thought. That's what field work will do.

Before he had finished the meal, he heard the cap pop on another bottle.

"All right," he yelled, "you better go easy on that stuff!"

A quiet grunt from the kitchen. Finally she came into the dining room to clear away some of the dishes, this time from the other side of the table. Then she sat herself down in a hide-covered chair just inside the kitchen door. He ate slowly and stole glances while he chewed his food. She sat knowing he was looking and he sat and ate, knowing that she knew.

She wet her lips with her tongue, moved it in that learned way, left her lips open. Then, as if it was part of the ritual, she began to move her crossed leg up and down gently, undulating her body in the way school girls do on the front row. Gloria had never been to school.

The flirting was easy. Perhaps for someone who had fallen into a world of tease, this would be like

any other happening. But these were not lovers, tired of the world. Her world was limited by the dirt road which she had walked coming from her cabin, the fields where she sometimes worked, the river, and now and then the house of the Simmons family. Several years ago she had been awakened to her sex by the frantic caress of a grown field hand, a friend of her father's. This had pushed back the boundaries of her world more than anything else that had ever happened to her.

And Bo. Living in a circle of work made for his own diversion, working himself away from some place inside him that was too complicated for him to understand.

The slap across the rear did not altogether make clear to Gloria where she stood. The evening had been beyond any foretelling, that was certain. The recognition in the bathroom had been clear, and an awful excitement had engulfed her; that was substantial. But men had taken the license Bo Simmons had taken before and meant nothing, except to make clear what was theirs or could be if they wanted it.

It was time. Bo finished his supper and she picked up the few remaining dishes and went to the sink. Bo followed her and as he came up behind her, held onto her hips.

"Mista Bo, you gotta stop now," looking straight ahead, not confident, a little afraid.

"Never mind bout all that, girl. Forget them dishes and get on in here with me." He started out of the kitchen.

She didn't move, only moistened her lips that kept drying. He turned, looked at her strangely, then grabbed her wrist and pulled her along with him. She did not pull back, neither did she move forward on her own, but kept her feet dragging under her, so he would know it was all his doing.

"Take your clothes off, girl," he said and sat down heavily on the side of the mammoth tester bed. There were solid oak posts ten inches at the base and a browness that spoke of permanence and stability. It had come from a prominent home when the family failed. His back to her, he undressed, threw his clothes on the nearby stand and finally stood there naked. He started out of the room, said, "You better have that dress off before I get back or I'll tan your hide. I'm gonna git us some more homebrew."

When he came back, her plain dress was on the floor and she was sitting in the rocking chair next to the fireplace, the ashes gunbarrel grey, cold, the fires long out. She had settled there out of habit, as if being there was a comfort to her. He handed her a clay mug and she got up and followed him to the bed.

After he had possessed her and she had exhausted him, he napped with his head on her chest beneath her big breasts. His knees were pulled up close to him in a position unseemly for a man so big. She did not sleep, but remained staring at the designs of stars and new moons in the canopy above her. The face was young and her cheeks had the fullness of a young woman, but something about her reflected knowledge that had been beaten to shape and tempered long before this small fire had been lit. In the midst of her dark, shadowy lap lay his calloused hand, the digits slightly curved to the grip of an ax, or a gun.

For a while the young woman did not think of much beyond the bed. With her head propped on the pillow she could study his head, the long, brown hair with silver sides like the silver-sided fox she had heard his dogs hunt, his neck reddened by years in the sun. She stared almost uncomprehendingly at the sudden change to the alabaster skin of a child covering his torso, an awful whiteness, sharp against her own dark body.

But the heat and their half-dried, perspiring bodies soon forced her to other thoughts. How she had cleaned and swept this room and made this bed for Mrs. Simmons, never seeing the room like this. For some reason the thought of chores reminded her of her mother and she reflexively moved one of her legs. Bo stirred and pulled his whiskered face across her chest, straightened out his legs, and lay on his back. His eyes were open, but he didn't say anything for a while.

When he ran his hands along the lines of her body, she didn't move. Something in his touch reassured her. She waited, knew now that he was awake, that the next move had to be his. She did not think what it would be and did not want to care.

"You better git on home now," he said, and his words were heavy in the thick air of the room. She rolled out of bed, the shape of her naked body barely visible against the papered wall. She got dressed in the dark.

She didn't look at him again and went out of the room quickly, not bothering to close the door. On the back steps she could hear the Brahmas lowing across the fields. The man's voice reached out to her where she stood.

"Don't you tell anybody bout this."

"Nosuh Mista Bo," she said. "I ain gone tell nobody." And she moved from the darkness of the house to the darkness of the road, where she knew her way.

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Hodding Carter Talks with NOR's Editor-at-Large

JOHN WILLIAM CORRINGTON: *I want to talk about the young Hodding Carter who was in Louisiana and active during the Huey Long days.*

HODDING CARTER: Oh, yes, I remember. Well, I would say this, that our experience — experiences — in fighting Huey Long were responsible for everything that has happened since. We were the last newspaper, as far as I know, to fight Long. I think we even outlasted the Times-Picayune which did a great job of opposing him. Because we did this in the little town of Hammond, we were asked to come to Greenville, Mississippi.

CORRINGTON: *What was the name of your paper?*

CARTER: *The Daily Courier.*

CORRINGTON: *Were you a native of Tangipahoa Parish?*

CARTER: Yes. I was born on a farm and raised there ... Well, I remember saying, "I won't do it till Huey Long is gone first," and then he mercifully was killed in an understandable American political tragedy, so we went to Mississippi, backed by seven very prominent people of Greenville who made no demands at all, not even that of exercising a veto power. They said, "we'll match your money, we'll sell to you as fast as you can buy us out, for what we've put in, and you'll have the complete control of the paper."

CORRINGTON: *This was the first, then, of the Delta Democrat-Times.*

CARTER: Yes. So we went up there, and we started a competitive paper, the most deadly paper — thank the Lord — that ever was published in America — a little daily. And we licked the opposition, an established daily, in a year and 10 months.

CORRINGTON: *1934?*

CARTER: 1936—'37 when we licked them.

CORRINGTON: *You must've left Louisiana, then, right before Long was assassinated, in '35.*

CARTER: No, right afterwards. We left in '35, and we went to Greenville in '36. And that's where we've stayed.

CORRINGTON: *Let me ask you some questions about Long. In North Louisiana many people say, "Well Long certainly used dictatorial methods. But they were essential to breaking the New Orleans regular crowd." Is there anything in that?*

CARTER: Well, I would say this. Long was raised in the old Populist tradition. His father and his grandfather were Populists. I would have been a Populist had I been living then. I think Long was a man who had great vision and no conscience at all. I didn't like his techniques. I got sandbagged by one of his bodyguards, for instance, and all that. So I could not have any affection for him, but I can remember coming out with some trepidation for such suggestions of his as free lunches, free school books, free bridges, and all the other things that the Standard Oil crowd would not accept. I was for those, but I could not accept the techniques, particularly the dictatorial techniques that he used.

CORRINGTON: *You've made a point which is worth some comment I think; that of all the Southern demagogues from around 1900 onward, Long was the only one to reach a pinnacle of great power without the use of overt racism.*

CARTER: That's very true. He — that's the one thing I respected him for way back there, that he was not a racist — of course he didn't have to be. But I'm not sure that he would have been even if he had felt he had to be.

CORRINGTON: *If Long didn't have to be, why indeed would Talmadge or Bilbo or any of the rest have to be?*

CARTER: It's a way out, the easy way, and then Bilbo was a real hater. Whether Gene Talmadge was or not, I don't know, but I suspect he also was guilty of this southern racial antagonism.

CORRINGTON: *I wonder, though, if in a way this is not a discussion of psychopathology — suggesting that had Bilbo been perhaps a politician in certain Midwestern towns he might have been anti-semetic.*

CARTER: Well, he was anti-Catholic. I can remember getting into a big row with him when he wrote an Italian woman in New York who had criticized him — and he wrote her a letter which started off "Dear Dago" ... Bilbo, though — it's a strange thing. Bilbo, except for race was a liberal. What he did for Mississippi, as Huey Long did in Louisiana, and as so many of the Southern demagogues and racists did in behalf of the common man, was considerable.

CORRINGTON: *Some people, though, myself among them wonder if perhaps Louisiana's relatively happy history in terms of race in the last two decades may not be a part of the Long heritage.*

CARTER: No, I think it's part of the Latin and Catholic heritage.

CORRINGTON: *Well, but of course, the state divides in that sense. And protestant North Louisiana has not had the agony of Alabama and Mississippi.*

CARTER: But they haven't had Negroes either. It's not a heavily populated Negro area of Louisiana. Of course, Louisiana is not a heavily populated Negro state.

CORRINGTON: *Shreveport's 36% black.*

CARTER: Well, she's unique, because . . . No. The population of Louisiana as a whole is no more than 40%, if that. No. I would say it's Catholicism.

CORRINGTON: *Part of a general laissez-faire attitude.*

CARTER: It's more than that. It's a — I suppose you could call it spiritual toleration. But you can certainly call it a toleration that you find more among Latins than you find among Nordics, among Anglos.

CORRINGTON: *So, in essence then you would not view the line that the Long political tradition in its refusal to use the race issue might have moderated possible racial troubles in our own time?*

CARTER: I don't think so, because it never became an issue. Some of the old guard anti-Long group tried to invoke racism, but it never worked, so whether Huey would have used it himself we'll never know.

CORRINGTON: *This is interesting. In one sense Long was and remains, with the possible exception of Altgelo, the only Socialist ever to hold gubernatorial office in America. If you call populism a sub-genre of Socialism . . .*

CARTER: Well, of course, it was. Long inherited it. And I think, speaking of political dishonesty and honesty, I think that that was one of the things at the beginning that he was thoroughly honest about. He wanted to change the way of life, the way of government for the common man.

CORRINGTON: *Long wasn't alone in that. There's a monograph published by LSU which points out that the tradition of political radicalism in Louisiana was such that during the Long years — when Huey was rising to power — in the 20's, Gene Debs was collecting a serious Presidential vote in Winn parish.*

CARTER: Well, of course, Winn Parish was the center of populism in Louisiana, which is where Long and his family were from. That would be true. But Debs wasn't collecting much of a vote anywhere else.

CORRINGTON: *I think it's interesting to see Long as a native phenomenon digesting what you might call alien ideas, and using them in a native manner.*

CARTER: Well, they weren't alien to him. He grew up with them.

CORRINGTON: *Even today a Louisiana governor is still bound in many ways by the broad outlines of the Long philosophy in matters like old age pensions, free school books, and so on. No one is likely to repeal these.*

CARTER: Well, I mean, I don't know how one-sidedly you can give Long the credit. After all, a guy named Franklin Roosevelt came along about then too. And I think he probably had a — well, certainly in the South at large, if not in Louisiana, — a greater impact on social thinking than Huey did. Because you've got to realize that Roosevelt was deified — but he was the one, I think, that brought our country, our people — and particularly the 'have-nots' — around to a different philosophy. Long, outside of the 'share-our-wealth group,' and the things he did locally and in Mississippi, was not so much a social thinker as he was a political leader.

CORRINGTON: *Let me turn to the South of the 30's. It was a time of great crisis in the south. Roosevelt called the south the "sick man of America" — I think that was his phrase. This is the age that turned out the famous book by Walker Evans and James Agee — I know you remember it* — Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. *I think it's important to remember that the anguish of the southern white in the 30's was as great as that of the negro.*

CARTER: Except that he had the one distinction of not being black.

CORRINGTON: *During the decade of the 1930's, it seems to me the last remnants of the old South pretty well came apart. A lot of things in America came apart, but that particularly did, and the thing we call the new South began to take shape. I wonder how that decade seemed to you. What kind of experience was it?*

CARTER: Well, to me it signified a belated awareness on the part of the so-called Southern leadership of the needs of the poor man, of the poor white. We became socially conscious for the first time in the South's history and that was the great thing to me, that was the lasting indirect, involuntary contribution of the depression to the south.

CORRINGTON: *As an eyewitness to that decade, how would you measure the relative anguish of the South attempting to move from an attenuated feudalism into a modern industrial state, compared with that of the North which was an industrial state* in extremis?

CARTER: I'd find it hard to give an unequivocal answer to that. I would say that where the leadership was present, the South was less hurt because, if you've got dirt in your backyard instead of bricks, you can grow something to eat. And I grew food. And my father, who was a college man who'd been nothing but a farmer from the time he got out of Tulane, he saw to it that his tenants grew food. I never knew what it was to be hungry — we weren't in that kind of circumstances anyhow — but I knew nothing about how it was not to have far more than enough to eat and a diversified diet from the land. And our tenants didn't know. And you could get awfully hungry in the North, as you can still today. I've just come back from a four-day conference, sponsored by Tulane, on hunger, and I made this point: give a man even twenty square feet of dirt and he's not going to starve, his children will not become undernourished. So I think that the inability of the North to provide food for themselves, and the South's ability, where it was encouraged, was a great contrast. There were always hogs and chickens and greens.

CORRINGTON: *By and large it could be argued that except in some of the really red-dirt areas, perhaps Southerners ate better than Northerners.*

CARTER: No doubt of it. I'd say that even in the red-dirt areas they ate better than they did in, well, in the northern urban areas. Now I'm not speaking of rural areas in Connecticut or Maine or elsewhere in New England, where people lived off the land too.

CORRINGTON: *It has always seemed interesting that concurrent with the Depression, acceptance of extreme radicalism — the John Reed clubs, Communist Party membership on the part of many notable men,*

some of whom are still in public life today — was an almost automatic consequence in the North. But this was rare in the South, and it would be rather difficult, really, to cite Southerners at any level who looked for a radical solution to what seemed in those days to be the breakdown of capitalism.

CARTER: That's perfectly true. I went to school and graduate school up East — they were New England schools — and we had no real communist influence. I never met a communist until years after I got out of college and spent an experimental and delightful six months on a radically new newspaper in New York called PM, and it was lousy with communists. That was the first time that I'd ever known one as such.

CORRINGTON: *Some months ago I was at the University of California and as a sort of 20-years-later footnote on that, the students asked me how the Draft Resistance was doing in Louisiana, and my response was, "they're doing well — both of them." Things have not really changed much in that respect, have they? I noticed parallel to that, moving more to our own time, that the black nationalist and most of the radical groupings have made virtually no headway whatsoever in the states that formed the Old Confederacy. Have you any observations on that?*

CARTER: My principal observation is that they haven't made much headway because they'd rather stay alive. God help them if they start anything like this in Mississippi, and I say this very seriously. One reason is that we're more used to shooting people than they are up North, and we have no compunction about doing it. I'm not saying this is right: I'm just simply saying that it's so. That they'd kill 'em off.

CORRINGTON: *On that same subject, it might be interesting to go a step further and suggest that black people in the south don't seem to have had much interest in radicalism.*

CARTER: Well, I would say this: that no matter how hard some of the black militants are trying, they cannot destroy the affection or the loyalty of the Negro for his country or for his region. They can't do it. I have fought beside Negroes; I know the kind of jobs they have done — they've gotten killed off in greater numbers proportionately than the whites because they were more susceptible to draft than white boys. And I am not aware of any cases of widespread Negro desertion. They haven't been flocking over to the North Vietnamese or to China. They have stood there and died, and I think that we're doing our country and our Negro fellow-Americans a great disservice by saying that they are not loyal, that they are not good Americans. I think most of them know that however slowly and torturously it's happening, they are moving step by step ahead, and to change the analogy, they are breasting the current with a success and a rapidity that as a boy I never would have thought was possible.

CORRINGTON: *It just might be that the famous cliché which has been enunciated by numerous Negro spokesmen and so forth is really coming to pass in our day, that when and if racial amity and true integration, in the best sense of that term comes to be, it will be first in the South. You're a man on the inside of that, really, with thirty years' experience. Do you agree with that contention?*

CARTER: I completely agree, except that I would make this amendment, that it has happened in great part in the South already. What happened, what we have suffered from, is that when a murder occurs in the South, it's headlined. When it occurs elsewhere, which is too often, it is not a headline story. We, in my little town, we have Negro policemen, complete suffrage, integration without a single lawsuit or active violence. We've got judges down there who are colorblind. They'll send the black man and white man to jail on the same terms everyday in the year. We get along. I have had Negroes in my home as guests both within the church and outside of it, and I'm not damned greatly because of it — so do other people. And this is more than most Northerners — no, they don't even know the people who work for them. Now, I'm very pleased at the rate of change. It's not rapid enough to suit me, but it's real change.

CORRINGTON: *Mr. Carter, among your many books I think two stand out. In my own reading experience they've been landmarks. And I have to admit that I think they've had some influence on me. The two books that seem most important to me are* Southern Legacy *and* The Angry Scar. *I want to discuss them in reverse order, if I may. What prompted you to begin writing this book which has become in the minds of many Americans the definitive text on Reconstruction?*

CARTER: I will have a hard time answering you, because I've never thought about it. The Reconstruction period has interested me since my college days because I thought that the rest of the nation has not understood its impact upon the latter day South. I became involved in the Reconstruction period in college and have stayed with it, and I had always hoped to write something about it, but as always happens, I put it off until Doubleday asked me to do one of the books in that series,° and asked me what I would like to write about. And, immediately, of course, It leaped to mind. I called it *The Angry Scar*, because I think that that was what it was to the South, the livid scar of a wound that is just beginning to heal, plus the fact that as the grandson of two post-Civil War Ku Kluxers, I grew up with these stories. And I delighted in writing that book, more than any I've done. As for *Southern Legacy*, this I think has some amusing overtones. One of my not-so-well-wishers told me that he realized that I had to get Yankee publishers to publish my books, but that I could never get a Southern publisher to do it. And that made me mad. I was thinking about doing a semi-autobiographical book for my regular publisher, which at the time was Doubleday, and so I said, "Well I'll make you a little bet that I can get it published right here in Louisiana." So I wrote the director of the LSU Press, and told him the same story and said "I'm going to send you a book. If you don't like it, send it back. I can get some Yankees to publish it." They grabbed it. And I poured out my heart, partly because I was mad at what this fellow had said. I spoke from my heart more than from my head. I wrote with the personal approach to all these things. I wrote the third chapter of *Southern Legacy* about a poor white kid who went to a school where there weren't free lunch programs or school busses, or anything else, and you brought your lunch in a paper sack or like my brother and sister and I — in beautiful lunch boxes. And we came to school with fried chicken and sandwiches and God knows what else. I can remember this poor white boy — the first time I'd ever eaten with him was on a rainy day, and, as I say, we

° Mainstream of America Series

had no cafeteria — and he pulled this paper sack out of his pocket — a tiny paper sack. I was beginning to eat my fried chicken and other stuff, and he took out a cold sweet potato and a piece of cornbread, and I gagged. And I said, "Listen, I can't eat all this stuff. How about eating it with me? Take some of this chicken. Take some of this. One nasty little cold sweet potato — that was his lunch. And he said, "I'm not hungry." And he refused to take anything from me. But it made me lose my appetite, though, for a very long time to come. Well, that was an angry scar, too. I suppose that was one of the motivating memories for *Southern Legacy*. Because I grew up as a well-to-do man's son in a poor parish.

CORRINGTON: *Out of* The Angry Scar, *it seems to me, an awfully lot of implications flow. You say at the end of the Introduction, if I can quote, "I have become convinced that it has been almost as unfortunate for our nation that the North has remembered so little of the Reconstruction as that the South has remembered so much." Now,* The Angry Scar *was published in 1959. I wonder if you would wish to modify that statement. Or do you think that even today, after a decade of what we call radical revolutionary thinking, in social and political matters, it still holds true?*

CARTER: It holds true, but I'd say to a lesser extent, if only because we're becoming more ignorant of our past in the South.

CORRINGTON: *The basic cast of American thought almost from the birth of the nation has been a severe and dedicated anti-historicism, and if I can paraphrase the language of Malcom X, anti-historicism is one of the chickens that has come home to roost upon us. A nation without a history is not a nation at all, and the forgetting, as it were, of what both of us might agree is the Southern legacy, is going to cost us more than the remembrance ever could.*

CARTER: Well, as someone whose basic interest, undisciplined interest, is history, I would say that a nation which is unaware, or remains unaware of its history is almost a doomed nation. I am disturbed at the ignorance I find in our universities among the students and especially among adults who presumably have as complete an education as I do. They really don't but they are accepted as having that kind of education — they don't know their country. I'll bet you that I could take as symbols fifty words or phrases from "little round top" to "Chateau Thierry" and give them to a hundred Americans who are prominent in any walk of life, and they wouldn't have a single damn answer to more than twenty percent of them. I think it's shameful.

CORRINGTON: *One of the results of this kind of ahistoricism — I think of it as the kind of phenomenon where every person conceives of history as having begun with his own birth — is a kind of bewildered and virtually total confusion about the problems of the present day, all of which have their roots in the past. Now I have a catch phrase for this, which was not mine but Faulkner's. He said, in* Intruder In The Dust, *"The past isn't dead; it isn't even past." The result of forgetting this, moving from Faulkner to Santayana, is that "those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it." I think this may be the agony of America, that we forget everything, that before it's finished on the drawing board we're prepared to destroy it.*

CARTER: You know, I am, in my secret heart, a poet. This is a thing that has hit me over and over again. I think poets see this more readily than other people.

CORRINGTON: *I think of the famous remark of Edmund Burke, to paraphrase it, . . . those who have no respect for their ancestors are unlikely to care for their posterity. On that same line of thought, I wonder if we could move back a minute to the concept of Black Nationalism and work with the suggestion that the young Negro — whether he be Ron Korenga or Rapp Brown or whoever — is trying desperately to establish some kind of continuity, in a mistaken way possibly, but nonetheless trying to establish a past from which to depart. Can you see that as a possibility?*

CARTER: I have a great sympathy, coupled with some contempt, and I suppose some fear of the Black Nationalist movement. I understand it, but I can't accept the notion that they must have a nation of their own within a nation, that they can occupy universities and burn them down. That's how to get people hurt without accomplishing a great deal.

I have asked myself from time to time, if I were black, how much of a Negro militant would I be. I don't know. I think I'd be a rebellious Negro, but I cannot accept destruction as the way out, which is what I am afraid they are doing.

CORRINGTON: *We were talking about Faulkner a while ago, and that brings to mind the marvelous story Walker Percy tells of his one almost-meeting with Faulkner. Shelby Foote was a close friend of Faulkner's . . .*

CARTER: Shelby's first job was on my paper. And Walker's adopted father, William Alexander Percy, a great writer and humanitarian, lived in Greenville. I bet I fired Shelby six times, and every time Will would phone me and say "take him back."

CORRINGTON: *Speaking of Percy and Faulkner, anyway — because Percy, who is certainly one of the finest writers the South has produced in the post-Faulkner generation, and because Faulkner lived here for a while — brings New Orleans itself to mind, especially as a writer. It occurs to me that compared with its two nearest competitors, Atlanta on one side and Houston on the other, New Orleans is in a mess, culturally speaking.*

CARTER: It really is. And you know, I first met Bill Faulkner as a cub reporter when I came home from up East and got a job on the old Item — now the States-Item. You had Roark Bradford, Lyle Saxon who was too much of a playboy to live up to his potential, Faulkner, Sherwood Anderson. It was like sitting in the lap of the gods. I was a cub reporter living in the Quarter, and . . . . The Little Theater was so much better then than it is now there's no comparison . . . . and all of a sudden you get Harnett Kane.

CORRINGTON: *Do you think that New Orleans has any cultural potential in the true sense of the term?*

CARTER: Not for writers today. It has for artists.

CORRINGTON: *Well, New Orleans' set up, vis-a-vis graphic art and music is much better than it is in literature. Perhaps it requires a more sophisticated city to offer a place for writers because it's a lot harder to demonstrate your ability as a writer. It's a much longer term proposition. Let me ask you a couple of questions about Southern Literature. It occurred to me that there's a tremendous similarity in your prose style and Faulkner's and Wolfe's and Wilbur J. Cash's just to name three. But I would bet that I could take sections of one of your*

books, of one of Faulkner's, or of Cash's one book. The Mind of the South, *and some of Thomas Wolfe's stuff, intermingle paragraphs, and almost no one could tell them, one from another. It seems to me that there is a kind of Southern rhetoric of the great bulk of Southern prose writers. Would you agree with that?*

CARTER: I think I would. Of course I'm immensely flattered by being included in that august company. I wish I smacked more of each of the other three, but I think that we're all in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. I think it's the most beautiful prose in the world, the sweet English tongue. I think it leaves the French a mile behind. We were all influenced by the same factors. I was greatly influenced by the King James' Bible.

CORRINGTON: *What was the common factor? I was going to mention the King James' Bible as one of the documents. Then perhaps the political writings, you probably read them too, when you were young. Jefferson, Calhoun, Alexander Stephens, Mr. Davis'* Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government.

CARTER: Yes, of course I did. You get a rhetoric there that I think in the hands of a master of it, approaches a majesty. And again I don't think there is anything that matches it outside of the Deep South's writing. We've never had to apologize for — maybe some of the ideas of our writers we wouldn't go along with — but certainly not for the writing itself. It's extremely powerful.

CORRINGTON: *Do you think that there is — in contemporary Southern writing — do you think there is a falling off? Or would you say that the term "Southern Renaissance" which usually applies to the period embracing Faulkner's career, yours, Cash's, Thomas Wolfe's and so forth — would you say that is continuing?*

CARTER: I would like to think so, and I believe I do think so. I see no diminuition in — I'm not speaking quantitatively, now, qualititively — in Southern writing. I think you've got men like Walker Percy, whom you mentioned, and Shelby Foote, both from my town — I don't sorrow for what is happening in the South. I think that we're holding our own.

CORRINGTON: *Have you read anything by Cormac McCarthy?*

CARTER: No, I haven't.

CORRINGTON: *He wrote* The Orchard Keeper, *and a new one called* Outer Dark *and it's magnificent. Cormac McCarthy. He's from around Gattlinburg and Knoxville.*

CARTER: No. You know I said to you earlier, one of my regrets is that I don't have time to read. And that's a great pity.

CORRINGTON: *Mr. Carter, it seems that you've made the full circle. Did you ever stop to think of that? You were the target of the right-wing extremists in Mississippi since the time I was a little boy. I knew you for that reason. Now you have been attacked by left wingers.*

CARTER: Well, I was raised by a father who was at one and the same time one of the most courageous men I've ever known — physically courageous as well as otherwise, and in a place where it was hard, and a great morality. He possessed a sense of right and wrong that he pounded into us — is this right or is it wrong — and I've never gotten over it.

CORRINGTON: *I remember that a professor at the Law School of the University of Virginia was once asked to define character and he said well, that's very easy. He says it has nothing to do with morality in the sense of adultery or in the sense of honest business dealings. He says, it's finally based on the question of whether a man will tell a lie or not, that finally there are men of great character who are evil, and there are men of no character at all who are virtuous.*

CARTER: Men of great character who are evil — let me think a minute.

CORRINGTON: *I would think of Oliver Cromwell, perhaps, who virtually decimated the Irish people. Or, as a matter of fact —*

CARTER: He must be aware that he was evil —

CORRINGTON: *No, I doubt that he was. But I doubt that Hitler was, I think Hitler believed everything he said; I strongly suspect that Hitler believed . . .*

CARTER: Now you know, I never thought of Oliver Cromwell in that context. I knew what he had done to the Irish. Let me tell you a story about that. My first trip to Europe many years ago, that I took not long after college — my friend and classmate and I who were seeing Europe for the first time together — got ourselves two bicycles in Ireland and spent our first two weeks just cycling over Ireland. They had just murdered an Irish prime minister named Kevin O'Higgins and the Black and Tans were fighting — this was during the late 20's — so we came to this little village, and we didn't know where we were and we wanted to find where we could get a beer. We stopped and this old Irish woman, said, "I don't know if you American boys are safe on the roads, because there's so much bloodshed." And we said "We don't think anybody's going to hurt us." And nobody did. And I said, "You've had your troubles, haven't you?" And she said, "We have troubles now, but not like we had. Do you realize that right down the road that you've come on your cycles one hundred Irish lads were burned at the stake?" And I said, "Oh, my God, we've been reading about the bloodshed going on but we didn't know you were doing that. When did this happen?" She said, "Cromwell did this, the dirty dog."

CORRINGTON: *This is, by the way, a conception that virtually ruled the South at one time — the notion that that which happened a long time ago was nonetheless an act of the contemporary. I wonder again if this doesn't connect with the whole concept of radical and revolutionary tactics in our own time, that these kids are going to have to live with the world as a continuity because it is one. Atoms conjoin and spread asunder and conjoin again in an ordered fashion — that's a physical fact. Evolution is a biological fact. And in a way the revolutionary generation seems to want to repudiate this, to start anew and this perhaps is going to lead them only to further anguish. What will be the end of this experiment in repudiating or cancelling, nullifying everything that is of the past, everything that is older, all institutions?*

CARTER: It can only mean tragedy.

CORRINGTON: *Can it — Is it going to be a case like in the past where today's radical is tomorrow's conservative, or do you think this one is different?*

CARTER: I think it's different.

CORRINGTON: *But do you think it's different in kind? I often wonder because of all of us, I think, went through a period like this. I can remember when I did.*

CARTER: Not like this.

SATRAPIES

These graphs, that throbbing mountains make,
their peaks, their gorges, their ravines;
the wires that link our bodies to machines:
strapped calves, strapped wrists, and strung across the chest;

the vaseline on spatulas that once held down our tongues
in urgent peerings down our canyoned throats,
those fevers and these strafings, the thunderbolted leapings
that bridge coagulations and link us, reeling, to kinetic graphs, —

the universe, the ruling, — show that we yet are satraps
in our little worlds, and strong; else, not a steady beating,
or erotic, were recorded, but black line, straight and longest, —
and surest line, eclectic, as of death: trapped smirkless,

mirrorless to mouth, massaged within bleak cut within the riot-
clotted chest, and the erratic beatings of no, not moving mountains,
but the graphs; their drawn and wayward routings: where no, not screams,
but, errant, — beepings, — and electric: unto before deep plungings

into those dark and fissured cliffs from where no promise of a
bright returning
is
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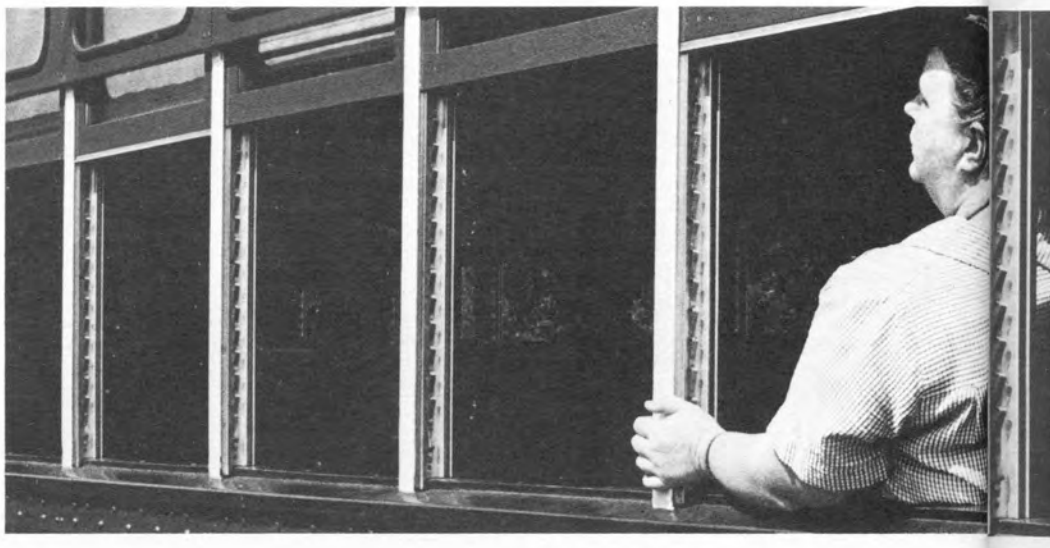
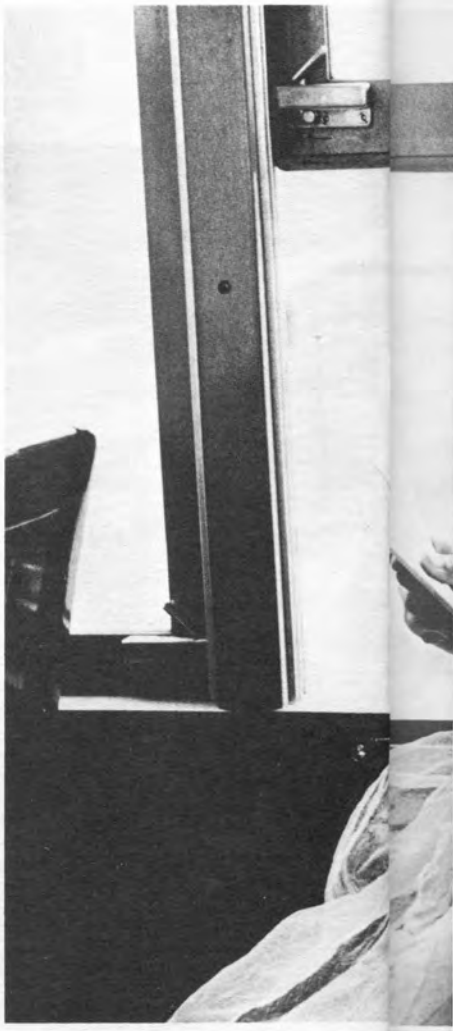
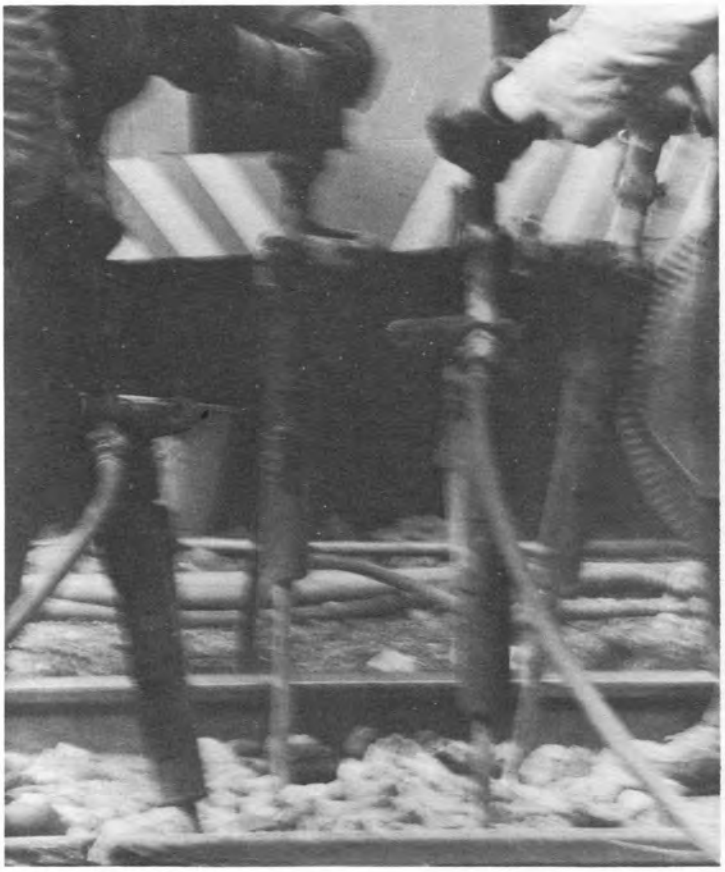
— *Konstantinos Lardas*

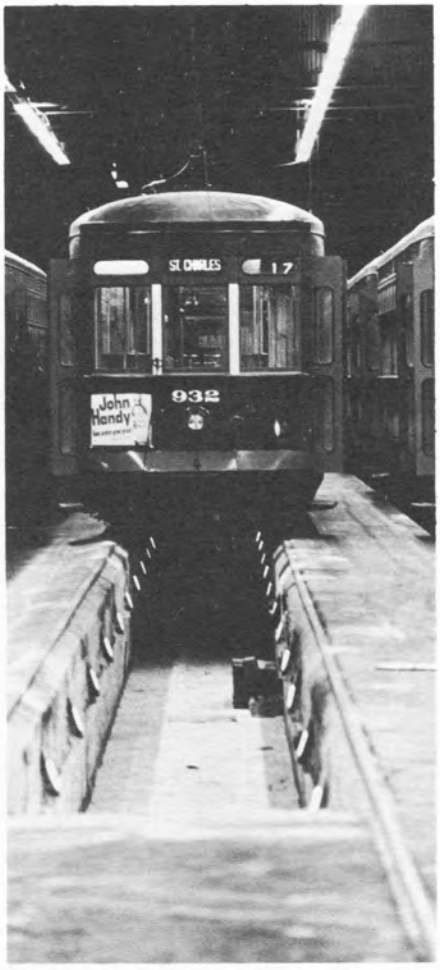
Streetcar

by Barney Fortier





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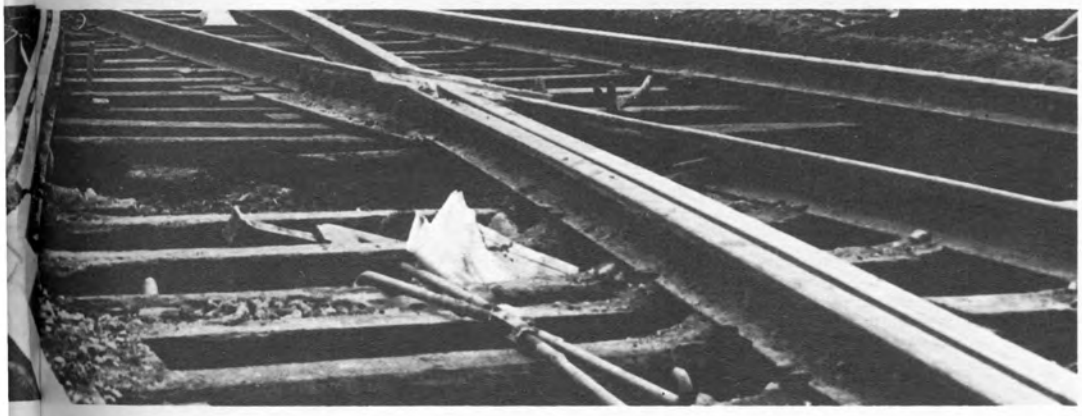


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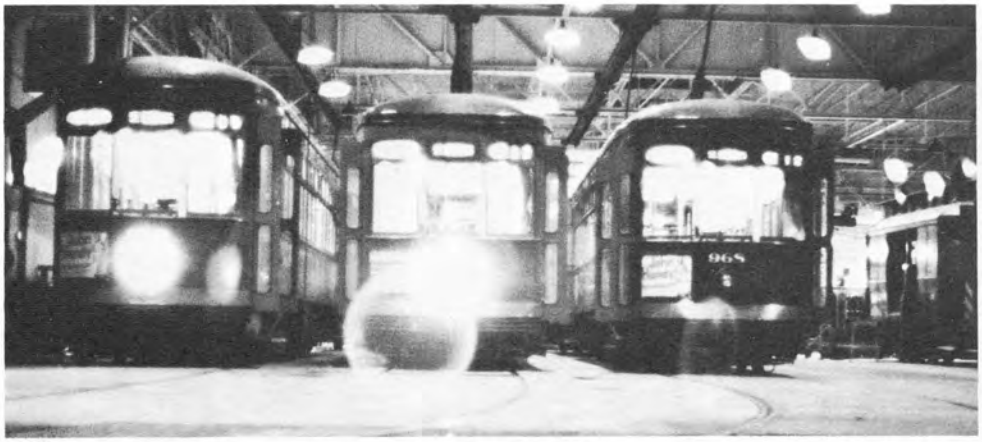


ELSEWHERE

Paris because Odette lived there
and because Villon did
because Rimbaud Baudelaire Mallarme
And because Breton Aragon Eluard

Paris framed (A calm lady of Persia
reposing in a garden behind her a landscape
Framed in gold personally)
Years of framing and slow delicate gilding
and now the acceleration toward a new picture
As if Europe knows better
having suffered more

'Elsewhere' — framed and hanging on the wall
in the dark studio where no fresh air enters
and no rescue seems possible
America that stuffy room

Illuminations by Norman Rockwell

Fungus cracking the Mondrian facades

A dying battleship keeling toward Fascism

The fat lips of Patrick Henry still prattling
'Give me liberty . . .'
his voice muffled in cellophane
' . . . or give me . . . '
the product of a mass-produced
' . . . death'

Elsewhere You speak as if elsewhere
were another place
But Los Angeles 'will follow you You will roam the
same
streets And you will age in the same
neighborhoods . . .'
'That's only Cavafy' you say smiling
Because you are more than half grey
and because Paris is a moon away
your smile twists an iron bar

— *Gene Frumkin*

Machine Intelligence and the Arts: The Compleat Imitation Game

by John Mosier

"See Mystery to Mathematics Fly"
— *Pope*

The relationship of science, and scientific methods, to the creative process in the arts has become one of the most important problems facing the arts. The problem itself, in theoretical form, is not new. On 12 November 1936 the English mathematician A. M. Turing read a paper before the London Mathematical Society called "On Computable Numbers, with Application to the *Entscheidungsproblem.*" Although Turing's title was somewhat awesomely esoteric, except to those working with the problems raised by Goedel's proof and the Hilbertian program, the implications of sections six and seven were clear enough: a machine could be made to do any work that a human could do provided the human were obeying instructions given to him before he began the task. By work, Turing meant intellectual work, such as computing numbers. His interests were theoretical and not practical, which is to say that he assumed that technology could provide us with the machines, given the answer that machine operations were logically possible. Most people would consider the question absurd, especially in the light of modern computer technology, but in the thirties the problem was important. In 1950, when the world was on the verge of the major breakthrough into computer technology, Turing produced a second, and much more accessible paper, entitled "Computing Machines and Intelligence." In the paper, Turing considered the limitations, and potential, of machine process activities. Many of his conclusions were tentative, suggesting that much more work needed to be done. One conclusion, which we are now faced with, was that in the near future the machine would be able to compete successfully with man in all fields of intellectual endeavor.

The paper had, however, two major parts. The first was Turing's discussion of how the question "can a machine think?" can be correctly, and meaningfully stated, while the second was the systematic demolition of all the arguments that could be put against thinking machines, both philosophical and practical. Although later writers have carried the discussion still further (Turing died in 1954), their arguments have not advanced much beyond Turing's paper, and in several instances have fallen lamentably far below it.

As far as the artist is concerned, the impact of Turing's paper lies in his solution to the problems brought up by the question "can a machine think?" Turing replaced this question with what he called a relatively "unambiguous" statement. This unambiguous statement took the form of a game, which Turing called the "imitation game." It has two stages, three players, and some rather ominous implications. It is, in addition, a game that scarcely anyone has tried to play. In fact, I know of only two people in the arts who have tried — William Gaddis and Jorge Luis Borges.

It is called the imitation game because the object is to imitate successfully something else. In the first stage, there are three participants: a man, a woman, and an interrogator. The questioner tries to decide, by asking questions, which player is the man and which is the woman. At least one of the players is trying to imitate the sex of the other through responses. If the players are put in separate rooms, and the interrogator receives his answers by typewritten messages, as Turing specified, the game becomes difficult. Note that the basic problem is to discover the true identity of the players through intellectual means only. This becomes especially important in the second stage of the game, when a machine is substituted for one of the players. The game has two stages because Turing wanted to emphasize that confusions of identity are not exclusively a function of substituting a machine into the game. If we omit any criteria except the intellectual, which is accomplished only through discourse, a woman can imitate a man's responses with a good chance of success, and vice versa. The reason is that we can only judge the "existence" of the players by what they have produced in the way of typescript answers to our questions. Although Turing did not say so, it is a fair inference that the imitation game is the only acceptable way of separating man from woman — using purely intellectual criteria, which of course no one does. With the substitution of the machine for one of the players, we are forced to make our judgments solely on the basis of the pile of typed an-

swers, because the issue at stake is one of thought; the machine is not disguised as a man, it imitates the responses that a man might give. With the addition of the machine, of course, the game becomes perhaps the only logically satisfactory way to answer the question "can a machine think?" But, as Turing pointed out, there are numerous objections to this simple substitution. Turing answers all of the objections satisfactorily, and even anticipates a few. The one that concerns us the most is his answer to G. Jefferson's Lister Oration, published in the *British Medical Journal* under the title "The Mind of Mechanical Man." Jefferson argued that no machine could signal satisfactory responses to questions that involved either creativity or emotional states. Jefferson's specific example was poetry, and Turing constructs a hypothetical dialogue demonstrating that a machine could very well carry on a conversation about poetry in such a fashion that it would be difficult for the interrogator to decide which was the machine and which was the man. The machine is able to do so, of course, chiefly because conversation about the arts involves logical rules, or at least conformity to logic in discourse. Turing's only prophecy about the question was that by the year 2000 the average interrogator would have only a 70% chance of identifying the players correctly, given five minutes of questioning. His figures are probably conservative.

Mathematicians are very like the French, Goethe observed. Whatever you say to them they translate into their own tongue, and at once it becomes something else. The relevance of the imitation game to the problems of the artist may be difficult to see; certainly the relationship is complex. The key to the connection lies in two seemingly unrelated bits of data. The first is an extension of the implications of the game. The second is a general observation about the development of criticism in the last thirty years.

Although the goal of the game is imitation, its ends are achieved through a confusion of identities. The interrogator wants to know which is man, which is woman, which is machine. The machine wins if the questioner is unable to tell the difference between it and the man. The questioner can only win if he can prove, through the scrupulous analysis of answers from both, that one must logically be the machine (or the man). Rember Turing's defense of the machine's abilities to defend itself as an authority on poetry, on its ability to signal responses to emotional states (it could do so, obviously, because the signals would take the form of answers to questions, discourse ruled by some type of logic). Suppose that instead of the two heaps of typescript we have instead two paintings, or two poems. According to the arguments of Turing, we will have difficulty in telling which work was produced by machine, which by man. Although machines have produced poems, and musical and visual compositions, perhaps we would be fairer if we stated the problem this way. Suppose Rembrandt and the machine are playing the game. A fair question, perhaps the ultimate question, might be: can the machine produce a painting? Recall Turing's proposition in the first paper: machines can do any work done by humans with prior instruction. Apprentice painters, and forgers, produce "imitation" Rembrandts all the time. There have been, historically speaking, some embarrassing confusions between counterfeit and real. Given the present state of technology, the machine could, both practically and theoretically, produce an imitation. More importantly, the imitation would be more convincing done by the machine than if it were done by a man who claimed to be Rembrandt.

The skeptic may very well raise objections, but they are getting fewer and fewer: what seemed a plausible quibble in 1950 no longer seems so comforting. The old standy-by objection, outlined by Turing as "machines may do all these things, but they will never do x," becomes a very weak prop, as machines constantly remind us that they are indeed capable of doing x. The short of it is that the artist is dispensable.

The dominant tendency in criticism in the last thirty years has made him doubly so. Increasingly criticism has moved to a new orthodoxy in which the work of art is valued, has value, both in and of itself. It is studied not as a product of a given man, or of a given time, but as an object having little relation to external factors. Neither does it, necessarily, have relation to such things as truth. The artist, I. A. Richards has observed, is concerned with pseudo-statements, statements whose value is not determined by their relation to outside concepts. Since the forties, intentionalism, or concern with those forces found outside of the work itself, has been formally condemned as heretical, rigorously castigated in theorectical and practical discourse, and hooted out of the classroom. It is only recently that his orthodoxy has in any way come under fire from the critics themselves.

In large measure such steps have revitalized criticism in the arts. In equally large measure, they have helped to banish the artist. If we put the implications of the game together with the drift of modern critical theory, the point is quickly reached where the critic works directly with what is produced by the machine. A good poem is a good poem, regardless of who produced it. Although no one seems much concerned by the fact, the process described above takes man a notch or two down on the scale of being. Even his intelligence, and what is even more unique, his creativity, can be simulated.

There are logical ways out of such impasses, but they have precious little appeal for most artists. Already there is serious talk that the arts may be in some sense obsolete. There is also, presently, a frantic trend towards the reproduction of objects that could in fact be produced by machine, such as beer cans in bronze and soup cans on canvas, as though the arts are hastening to make the machine's task of imitation as easy as possible.

Whatever the solutions, and the drift of the arts, the implications of Turing's logic are permanently with us. The game implies this: not only can science, through the machine, produce art, or reproduce it, but, more importantly, scientific methods can be used to decide problems of artistic identity and value. In fact, as the game makes abundantly clear, only rigorous scientific methods give any hope of solving

the problem. This recognition on the part of the artist, or at least on the part of two of them, William Gaddis and Jorge Luis Borges, has led to some of the most original writing in the last fifteen or twenty years, for both Borges and Gaddis have attempted similar, whimsical, and slightly mad commentaries on the problem. Not unexpectedly, therefore, their solutions take the form of paradoxes, but they are valuable solutions all the same.

Borges' version of the problem was conceived both after Gaddis's and independently of him, but I will begin with Borges, both because our understanding of the possible shortcomings of his solution allows us to grasp more thoroughly what Gaddis does in *The Recognitions,* and because, as we shall see, taking later works first is a procedure of which Borges heartily approves.

Andre Maurois has called Borges a "great writer who has composed only little essays . . . . Yet they suffice for us to call him great because of their wonderful intelligence, their tight, almost mathematical style." The work to be considered is under ten pages in length, and is entitled "Pierre Menard, author of the *Quixote.*" It is probably his most famous story, although not for the reasons given below. A brief description of it will illustrate the problems raised by Turing.

The story commences with a catalog of the "visible" works of Pierre Menard, dated from 1899 to 1934. The most important work, Borges adds, after listing the catalog, one which is perhaps "the most significant of our time," consists of the ninth and thirty-eighth chapters of the first part of the *Quixote,* plus a fragment of chapter twenty-two. These were composed by Menard, Borges says, who did not want to compose another *Quixote,* but the *Quixote* itself. If one fails to grasp the significance of the distinction, one is lost for the rest of the work. Menard does not want to translate, or to copy, the *Quixote,* he wants to apprehend it, as though it were an ideal form that could be caught and put on paper through the appropriate mental gymnastics. His *Quixote* is the work itself, word for word and line by line. To put it a different way, Menard wished to achieve the insights of the seventeenth-century work through the workings of the twentieth-century mind.

As a helpful explanation, Borges prints a passage from each. The passages are identical. After each there is a brief comment: of the first, he says "this enumeration is a mere rhetorical praise"; of the second, the same passage, but written by Menard, he says, it is "astounding . . . brazenly pragmatic." Borges as the interrogator faced with two identical works has an appallingly simple solution: to rip down the paneling and drag out the man. Menard's *Quixote* is better, it is "almost infinitely richer." Why? Because "to compose the *Quixote* at the beginning of the seventeenth century was a reasonable undertaking . . . perhaps unavoidable; at the beginning of the twentieth, it is almost impossible." More went into Menard's text than Cervantes'; there was more struggle, and our awareness of this struggle forces us to new insights. Menard, Borges insists, has enriched the technique of reading, has forced us to read every work as though it were posterior to works that actually it antedates. Such a technique fills "the most placid works with adventure."

I have found you an argument, Dr. Johnson once observed, but I am not obliged to find you an understanding. Borges can always be counted on to produce an original and fascinating argument, but understanding it is often something else entirely. One reason lies in Maurois' description of his works: they have an almost mathematical tightness. Mathematics has been defined as the science that uses easy words for hard ideas, to which the novice might very well add that it uses simple sentences and short paragraphs. Borges' brevity, like a mathematician's, may lead to confusion, or, what is worse, incomprehension.

The Recognitions may, simply because it is an enormously long novel, present the problem in an easier fashion. Gaddis is also easier to understand because he uses visual metaphors rather than verbal ones: it is more convenient to imagine a man imitating in a painting than in a poem or a novel. One of Gaddis's major characters, Wyatt Gwyon, possibly the major character in the novel, is engaged in imitating paintings. To be blunt, he is a forger, or so Basil Valentine, an art critic, assures him.

Wyatt Gwyon's answer is virtually incoherent, and several pages long; it occurs some two hundred and fifty pages into the novel, and it fundamentally alters the course that the novel takes. "Do you think I do these the way all other forging has been done?" Gwyon asks. "Pulling the fragments of ten paintings together . . . the recognitions go much deeper, much further back . . . the X-ray tests, and ultra-violet and infra-red, the experts with their photomicrography. . . . Some of them aren't fools . . . they look with memories. . . ." Gwyon speaks incoherently — my ellipses probably make the passage clearer than it stands in the novel, at least for our purposes — and abruptly he switches from his catalogue of the scientific expertise of the critics and analysts to the statement that places him very much in the company of Pierre Menard:

> — And . . . any knock at the door may be gold inspectors, come to see if I'm using bad materials down there, I . . . I'm a master painter in Flanders, do you see? . . . . They demand that . . . and this exquisite color of ultramarine, Venice ultramarine I have to take to them for approval . . . . because I've taken the guild oath . . . . you, you have nothing more to do with me than if you are my descendants. . . .

Gwyon, like Menard, is not producing a *Quixote,* he is producing the Van Eyck, the Van der Goes, because he has reached the state of mind that they had, much as Menard reached the insights of the *Quixote* through being Menard.

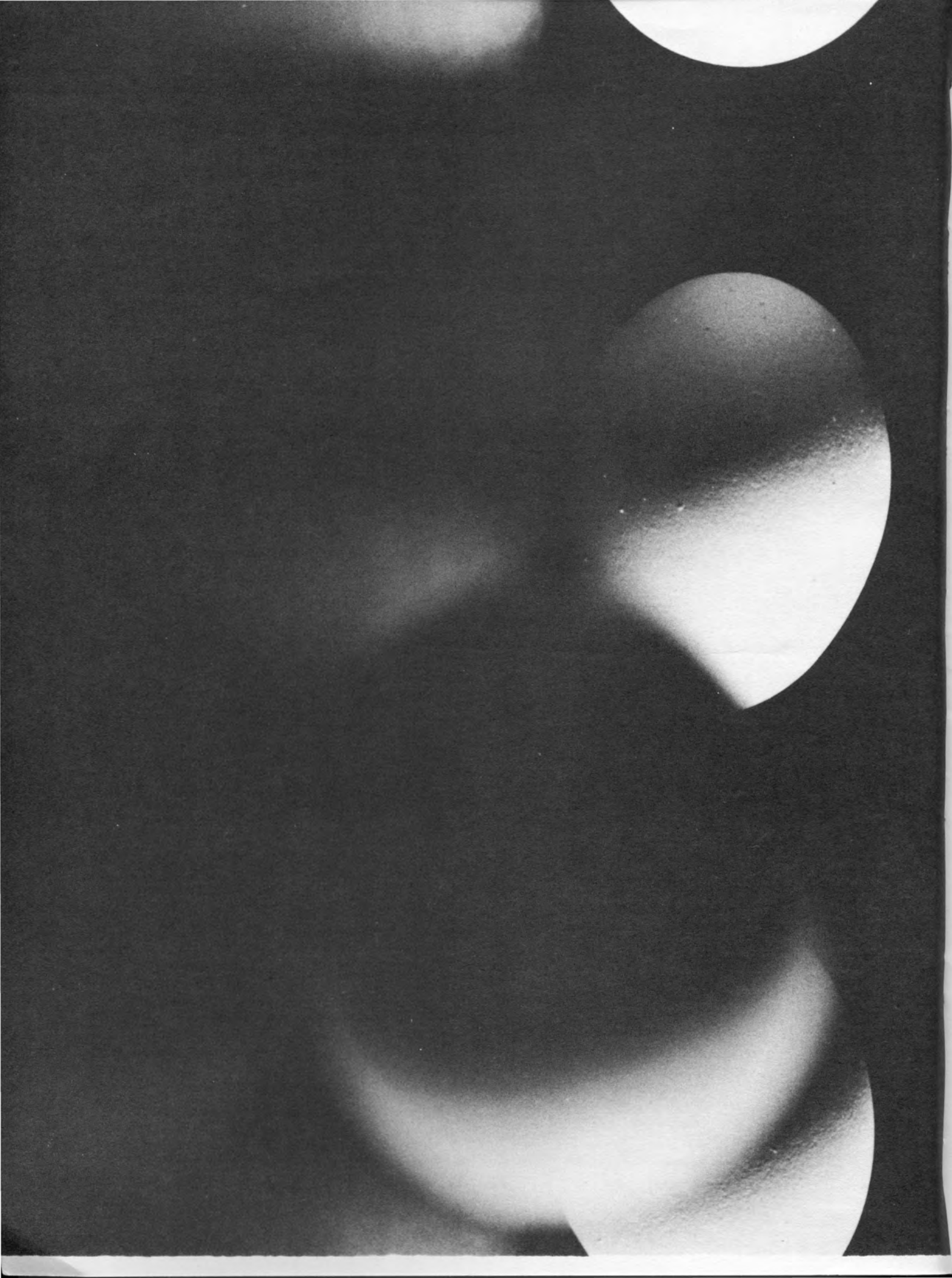
With Wyatt Gwyon, who has become the painters he studied, and who produces paintings that are indetectable from the supposedly "genuine" works of the masters, Gaddis produces a situation very

much equal to the one envisioned by Borges. But he goes further, because the process of composition becomes more important than the finished work itself, both to Gwyon and to the reader. It is here that Gaddis's situation becomes more understandable: Gwyon is a character to whom we are exposed for long periods of time, from his childhood sickness, when he is saved by the Reverend Gwyon sacrificing his pet ape, through his unhappy marriage, and on through his life, until finally we see him musing on his works at the Real Monasterios de Nuestra Señora de la Otra Vez in Spain: "You'll say I should have microscopes for this," he tells the visiting novelist, "Yes, egg white, egg yolk, gums, resins, oils, glue, mordants, varnish. You'll be surprised how they're put together . . ." and so on for half a page, while his listener stands agape. And so do we, for it is the end of whatever sanity that Wyatt Gwyon ever had.

But in following the man, we build up both interest in him and respect for his methods: Gwyon is the defense of what Borges asserts about Menard, that his *Quixote* is more valuable because it was harder to produce, and therefore behind it lie the profoundest insights. With Borges it is a flat assertion: we hear, but we may not believe. With Gwyon, we believe, because we see the suffering, the transformation, the effort that it costs him to produce works that are identical. *The Recognitions* is concerned with much more than the imitation game, but its other concerns — of the uselessness of science understanding important concepts, of the banality of the so-called "legitimate" artists, of the vast wasteland in which the characters live and die . . . all these provide reinforcement for Gwyon's attempts to play the game. They emphasize the reality of his success, paradoxical though it may be, and set it off against the world where there are "critics talking about every object and . . . everything having its own form and density . . . but is that all there is to it?"

Clearly it is. The game can be played many ways, and doubtless will be played again in the future. At the present time, however, there is perhaps some comfort in the fact that two people have played it well.

Sylvia Roth



Marie

by William Kotzwinkle

Marie Cobbinski picked up her dress. We could see her legs, Ducky Doodle, Ralph Jenkins, and me. A summer wind blew through the room. Paper birds flapped on the window. Life was sweet, we were young, teacher was in the hall.

"Ya, ya!" yelled Ducky Doodle. "Last day in second grade!"

The meadow tossed its perfume. A serpent danced in the sunlit grass. The earth was turning.

"I wore my tap shoes today," said Marie. Intoxicated, we stared at her knees.

"Higher, please," said Ralph Jenkins.

Marie rose from her seat and stood before us in the aisle, blonde, beautiful, if a bit too full in the nose. She smiled shyly, tugged her dress up higher. Openmouthed, we stared. The class was sailing airplanes. We were hidden in delight, beside the papier-maché mountain in the corner.

"Show us your panties, Marie," suggested Ralph Jenkins. Ducky Doodle drummed on his head. I said, "Oh, Marie."

Swept up in our admiration, she twirled in the sunlight, as a flower opened inside her, and the wind dove in the window, beguiling her. Unable to resist, she showed her panties.

Our souls reeled. The distant ages wheeled into view. Ducky the Jester stood on his hands. Ralph Jenkins wiggled his ears. Our princess skipped down the aisle, holding up her dress with two fingers. The lilac bush beat on the windowpane. How nice her black two-shoes tapped.

"More panties!" yelled Ralph, wet-mouthed, calling the toast.

Over the seven hills of the valley came the summer goddess, trailing her veils. Marie bent over, threw her dress up from behind.

Her panties were as white as Christ's linen, pure as the summer, filled with promises, sweet, untouched by vacationing boys. We buzzed around her, drawn by her delicate essence, her petalling prepubescence. She danced, we sang, teacher was forever down the hall, splashing in the fountain.

The clock ticked and jumped. We had the answer. It was Marie Cobbinski, Ducky Doodle, Ralph Jenkins, and me. We cut the moorings, sailed away, out of the classroom and into the air. There, in the sky, the trapeze: I am swung from it, she catches me, we hang, suspended. I gaze into the face of love, uncertain if I am Ralph, or Ducky, or me, when suddenly, we are upended. The high wire is broken, the team is falling.

"What is going on in this room?"

Marie's eyes crossed, she bit her lip.

Standing in the doorway was the teacher, a musty old bird of gloom, eggs petrified inside her. Cackling, she ran to her perch in front of the room.

Ducky and I wheeled in front of Marie. She pulled down her dress. Teacher didn't see the panties, she was scratching in her nest. "Marie Cobbinski, get to your seat immediately!" she said, and charged down the aisle with a ruler.

Marie ran to her seat. We stood frozen beneath the beak of the hoarfrost bird. "How dare you!" she shrieked, snapping Ducky Doodle by the suspenders. "Hey, hey," was all he could say. "How dare you interrupt this class with your . . . ." She smacked Doodle on the head. " . . . antics! Now *sit*," she said, and catapulted him down the aisle.

She turned to me. There were the little people in the village under the paper mountain, working with their rakes and shovels. "Who do you think *you* are?" she asked.

"Nobody," I said.

"That's right," she said. "Hold out your hands!"

The ruler came down. There was a fire in my palms. I looked up. Taking my head in her claw, she clamped me in my seat.

Ralph Jenkins stood alone, wet-mouthed and surprised. The class laughed. Ralph was a dumbbell. He'd catch hell.

Head trembling, she went for him, past the open window. The wind caught her hair, waved it aloft. "Oh," she said, touching her bald spot. "Why do you torment me?"

She sailed toward Ralph, a Chinese dragon kite, red-faced and terrible, flapping her horny tail. "I'll teach you," she said. Ralph ran to the window, tried to fly, it was too late. He searched the sky, hoping to jump the room, but the summer goddess was playing with other boys in the valley, boys on the loose

and miles away. The magic was ended. The dragon kite descended like a goblin from the moon.

Beating her boney wings, she nested on him, pressing his head into her ribs, burying him in her paper gown. He was doomed, he was going under. He yelled the secret.

"Marie Cobbinski showed her panties!"

The earth stopped, the wind died, the dragon kite collapsed into an old woman. Far away in the next county, the summer goddess shuddered, fell to the grass.

"Yeah, yeah!" screamed Ralph Jenkins, unable to bear the silence he'd created with the enormity of his curse.

I looked at Marie. Her head was down. She was crying. The class was laughing. They would sing, *we saw your panties.*

"Marie, I'm ashamed of you," said the teacher. She walked slowly to the front of the room, climbed wearily onto her perch. So this was how it ended, she thought. This was how they left her.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA SALESMAN

The red town is not glad
when its dogs bark
and its children have questions
for the black-cased stranger

who can only smile and say:
Is your Daddy home?

Hello, sir, my name is
Friendly Young Man

I have in my hand the handle
of every wise thought
you never had

the answer to every intelligent question
your children will never ask you

It will cost you but
a dime a day
the rest of your life

and at that my bosses
will still drive Ramblers
only that Socrates (b 470 BC)
should not be forgotten

just a small downpayment
we throw in the bookcase free

I'm working my way through college

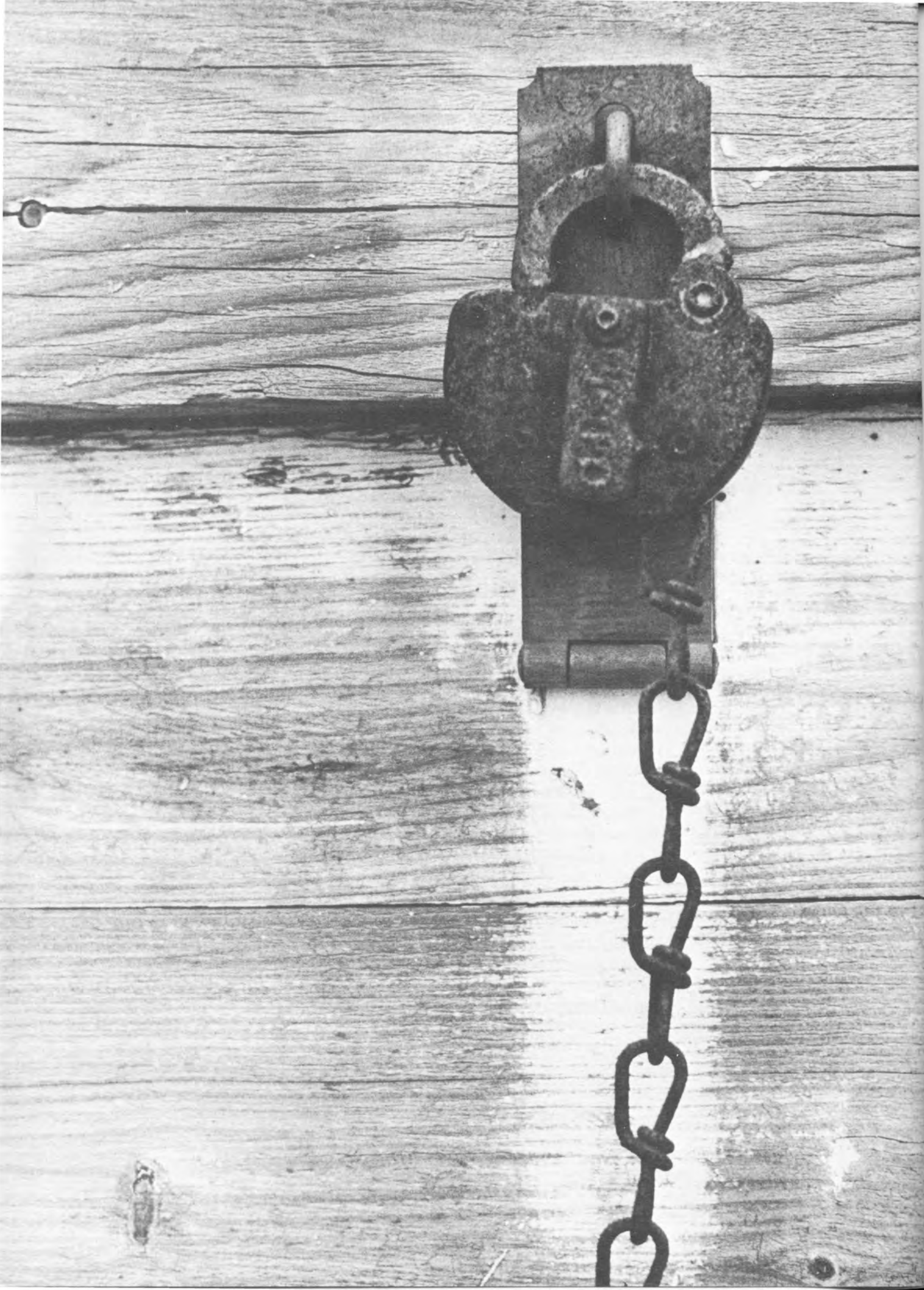
— *Ralph Adamo*

HUNGER

That week my hunger began. At first only
Snacks and nibblings: a piece of lampshade,
Electric wire, knobs from the radio.
At night I fasted. I was afraid.
Then, at my birthday dinner, I could not stop.
I ate the Wedgwood dishes, the maple table,
The Danish chairs. I ate, I left nothing
In the room, the house, but walls, windows,
My children and my wife. The forsythia cried
Never again, and I fasted, The birds,
Black berries like words in their mouths, perched
On the window ledge. The refrigerator filled,
New chairs appeared, a table, a tablecloth,
A flowered rug, pictures on the walls,
Their lights shifting like water, their colors
Fat as fruit. I ate. I slept. I fasted.
Radios burgeoned my ears, cameras my eyes,
Amplifiers swelled my lungs, ballbearings blossomed,
Tools sprouted from my fingers, wheels from my legs.
I used them, ate them, picked my musical teeth.
More grew. In my steel stomach, in my wired groin,
I felt the kingdom of my power. I felt
My bones stretch arching to a vault.
I devoured more nails, more bolts, more hooks,
Windows, columns, altar, walls and roof,
Carved doors of bronze, with spreading lawns,
Gardeners busy as flies, with flowers like trees
And fruit like the sun. Possessions such as those
Required more children, required more wives.
I ate them, fasted again, more others grew.

All this, of course, is a dream, for there
My father fasts forever in my bed,
The forsythia cry *never* in the long rain,
They never cry you have loved us enough,
And my children, what waking what shall I feed them?

— *Robert Pack*



Barney For

Blood and Land in 'A View of the Woods'

by Don Riso, S.J.

The thematic relationship between blood and land is an ancient one, familiar in the Odysseus, Aeneas and Beowulf epics; kings and princes have fought for their land and for their families' rights to it. The land is Mother, the sky, Father, and as in nature, the Father-symbol dominates the female symbol, as a man does a woman in sexual intercourse, the male asserting ownership and power over the female (the land) by his nature and his blood. Flannery O'Connor uses this archetype in "A View of the Woods," a study of the inter-relationships between blood-loyalty and love of the land. The story can be analyzed on various levels; I have chosen the *explication de texte* which lends itself to symbolic interpretation, since through symbol one is able to be concrete on various levels of connotation simultaneously.

The two main characters of the story, Mr. Fortune and his granddaughter, Mary Fortune Pitts, constitute thesis and antithesis, whose clash results not in a new synthesis, but in self-annihilation and violence which are in fact reversals of the "Southern Myth." Mary Fortune's name itself is suggestive of the dichotomy which will lead to her death; the same double standards have led to Southern atrophy: "Mary" connotes the innocent, the naive, the romantic approach to life; "Fortune" is her pragmatic, worldly side — that part of her nature which is unregenerated. "Fortune" suggests wealth which suggests, in turn, corruption. In her person, "Mary Fortune Pitts" embodies the New Southern dream of maintaining the old ways of innocence and purity while at the same time reaping the lucre of the bourgeois who prostitute the land for the sake of "Progress." Materialism, immersion in the world of things, in an industrialized South is the ordinarily accepted means of social regeneration; but in doing so, the South may be digging itself into a state of moral atrophy, spiritual poverty, a "pit."

Mary Fortune is a Pitts. Her grandfather, Mr. Fortune, for whom she is named, has taught her to despise her father, Mr. Pitts, and to think and act as a Fortune would. He has, in effect, taught her to renounce her blood relationship with her father for the prejudicial, blind hatred which results from contact with a "Fortune." Mary Fortune is therefore a paradoxical person, doubly so, for she is taught to hate the receptive passivity of her blood-bonds and love the cunning rationality of her grandfather. She is a tight combination of opposites — innocence and cunning; love (of her grandfather) and hate (the rational rejection of her parents, that is, the repudiation of her blood, and hence of her past).

Mr. Fortune hated the Pittses since they moved onto his farm when his daughter married Pitts. They are the "poor whites" he discriminates against, creating one more crippling class distinction. The Fortune farm is thus a microcosm of the entire South.

It is in this microcosm that the land predominates — it is the source of power and wealth:

> What Pitts made went to Pitts but the land belonged to Fortune and he was careful to keep the fact before them. When the well had gone dry he had not allowed Pitts to have a deep well drilled but had insisted that they pipe their water from the spring. He did not intend to pay for a drilled well himself and he knew that if he let Pitts pay for it, whenever he had occasion to say to Pitts, "It's my land you're sitting on," Pitts would be able to say to him, "Well, it's my pump that's pumping the water you're drinking." (p. 56). *

Having land is the only weapon Mr. Fortune has against Pitts and he uses it as a weapon to dominate Pitts on the extra-familial level just as he uses Mary Fortune to corrupt the Pitts family on the intra-familial level. Mr. Fortune's hate of the Pitts family is one explanation for his irreverence for the land — for there is an intimate connection between the love of one's family and the love of the land. A close analysis of the following paragraph will illuminate these relationships:

> Being there ten years, the Pittses had got to feel as if they owned the place. The daughter had been born and raised on it but the old man considered that when she married Pitts she showed that she preferred Pitts to home; and when she came back, she came back like any other tenant, though he would not allow them to drill a well. Anyone over sixty years of age is in an uneasy position unless he controls the greater interest and every now and then he gave the Pittses a practical lesson by selling off a lot.

*All references are to O'Connor's book *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966).

> Nothing infuriated Pitts more than to see him sell off a piece of the property to an outsider, because Pitts wanted to buy it himself. (p. 56).

The Pittses feel as if they own the place because they have worked the land and have given birth to their family there; the land has been enriched with their blood and sweat, making it the only link they have with their past and with future generations. The land is thus an external expression of the family's perpetuation — as long as Fortune has the legal rights over the land, the family is in danger of annihilation, of being cut off from the past; and to have the land sold to strangers, piece by piece, is like killing child after child, a symbolic diminution of the family and its stability.

Fortune's hatred for the land began when his daughter left him to marry Pitts; "she showed that she preferred Pitts to home; and that when she came back, she came back like any other tenant . . ." By leaving the land to marry Pitts, the daughter left Fortune, a widower, childless; for him, this meant the dissolution of his immediate family and the eventual dominance of an outsider, the poor-white, Pitts. He interpreted his daughter's marriage as a personal rejection, and in turn, he rejected her, his blood tie; as a necessary corollary, he also rejected the land.

The land was now a means whereby he could hurt those whom he thought had disrupted his own life. Fortune is therefore characterized as a rational, business-like person, bent on revenge by the dissolution of the Pitts family. Note the business terminology in the above paragraph: "tenant," "position," "controls," "interest," "practical lesson," "lot," "property," and "buy." Instead of being a source of future life as well as a link with the past, the land becomes the vehicle of social decay, which will bring cheap progress through gas stations and grocery stores on the communal level and death to the old man and Mary Fortune on the personal level. The future will be as meaningless as the past, because both will have been uprooted from the land which gave them roots.

Mary Fortune alone is the old man's hope for the future — she is the resurgence of his blood:

> When the baby came, a girl, and he had seen that even at the age of one day she bore his unmistakable likeness, he had relented and suggested himself that they name her Mary Fortune after his beloved mother, who had died seventy years ago, bringing him into the world. (p. 57).

He schooled her in his rejection of the land and his love for "Progress" by encouraging the dissolution of her natural blood relations in favor of an unnatural relationship with her grandfather:

> She had, to a singular degree, his intelligence, his strong will, and his push and drive. Though there was seventy years' difference in their ages, the spiritual distance between them was slight. She was the only member of the family he had any respect for. (p. 57).

Yet there is an all-important difference between the old man and Mary Fortune: because of her youth, her reactions to life are more intuitive and spontaneous; she is closer to the land; she has a passion for it; she is jealous of it, far more so than the old man:

> 'If you don't watch him,' Mary Fortune shouted above the noise of the machine, 'he'll cut off some of your dirt!'
> 'Yonder's the stob,' the old man yelled, 'he hasn't gone by the stob yet.'
> 'Not YET he hasn't,' she roared. . . . 'He's shaking the stob on the other side!' she screamed and before he could stop her, she had jumped down from the hood and was running along the edge of the embankment, her little yellow dress billowing out behind. 'Don't run so near the edge,' he yelled, but she had already reached the stob and was squatting down by it to see how much it had been shaken. She leaned over the embankment and shook her fist at the man in the bulldozer. (p. 58).

The old man is basically afraid of the land and of nature: "I said don't walk so close to the edge," he called, "you fall off there and you won't live to see the day this place gets built up!" (p. 59). Just as the old man does not care for the land, likewise he does not really care for the best interests of Mary Fortune, at least not enough to risk his precarious relationship with her by correcting her. It is part of the old man's *hamartia* that he does not discipline Mary Fortune by whipping her as her father does. His love for her is permissive, it is a selfish love which tries to gain favor by bribing her. He never laid a hand to her. This "being out of touch" with Mary Fortune is unconsciously relating to his being "out of touch" with the soil; where there is no pain and suffering, there can be little love. The old man never worked the land and consequently he never loved it; likewise he has never risked a painful contact with Mary Fortune, and consequently, he has never really loved her, nor she loved him. Pitts, on the other hand, has suffered both with the land and with his daughter, and so they both are, and remain in a sense, his:

> A look that was completely foreign to the child's face would appear on it. The old man could not define the look but it infuriated him. It was a look that was part terror and part respect and part something else, something very like cooperation. This, too, would appear on her face and she would get up and follow Pitts out. They would get in his truck, and drive down the road out of earshot, where he would beat her. (p. 60).

The necessary pre-conscious situation is therefore present for Mary Fortune's reversal back to her original blood ties. When the old man accuses her of being cowardly because she does not stand up to her father, she denies it three times, vowing that if anyone ever beats her, she will kill him. She is in conflict between the archetypal male forces which her grandfather has taught her and the instincts of blood, implanted in her by her father. The old man cannot accept her "both-and" position of her loyalty to him and to her father and insists that she take a "black or white" position toward her family — she must attack her father when he touches her. But with Fortune stubbornness she refuses to admit to anything and a temporary impasse is arrived at.

The old man then tries for the upper hand by revealing to Mary that he has decided to sell the pasture between the Pitts house and the road to a local red-neck merchant. Mary Fortune responds violently to this — her innate feeling for the land predominates her loyalty to her grandfather: she takes an overt stand against him. However, in standing against her grandfather, she, at the same time, stands with the Pitts family.

For Mary Fortune, then, love and loyalty to the land is the cause of her return to the family and in a larger sense, to the community. But her rejection of him only crystalizes his course of action: he announces his intentions to the family. Pitts reacts to what seems to be the dissolution of his family by staying in contact with his daughter in the only way he knows — by beating her and thus reasserting his blood ties against the false loyalties proffered by the old man:

> . . . loosening his belt as he went, and to the old man's complete despair, she slid away from the table and followed him, almost ran after him, out of the door and into the truck behind him, and they drove off. (p. 65-66).

In despair, while trying to rationalize his decision to sell the land, Fortune takes a look at the woods and has a Joycean "ephiphany" — he gains insight into the reality of the union of the land with his family blood:

> The old man stared for some time, as if a prolonged instant he were caught up out of the rattle of everything that led to the future and were held there in the midst of an uncomfortable mystery that he had not apprehended before. He saw it, in his hallucination, as if someone were wounded behind the woods and trees were bathed in blood. After a few minutes, this unpleasant vision was broken . . . (p. 71).

Conscious of the union of the blood which is now the land and the land which has borne the blood of generations, he must accept this reality and repent, in humility, or reject the land, Pitts, Mary Fortune, his vision and ultimately, himself.

In the final scene, as a punishment for Mary's attacking Mr. Tillman, the new owner of the land, Mr. Fortune drives out into the country in order to beat Mary Fortune as her father has done. He is trying, on the symbolic level, to establish the same blood ties between Mary Fortune and himself that Pitts has by nature. This cannot wholly be done since Fortune has already rejected the possibility of reconciliation by selling the land to Tillman, Mary Fortune is repulsed by the prostitution of the land, once calling her grandfather a "whore." (p. 64). She cannot allow him to touch her or try to establish the bonds between them.

When he tries to whip her, Mary Fortune responds with violent defiance: "Nobody has ever beat me," she said, "and if anybody tries, I'll kill him." (p. 78). She attacks her grandfather "as if he were being attacked not by one child but by a pack of small demons all with stout brown school shoes and small rocklike fists." (p. 79). Buffeted and near exhaustion, the old man instinctively appeals to her natural-though-perverted blood relationship with him: "Stop! Stop!" he wheezed, "I'm your grandfather!" After a moment:

> She paused, her face exactly on top of his. Pale identical eye looked into pale identical eye. 'Have you had enough?' she asked.
>
> The old man looked up into his own image. It was triumphant and hostile. 'You have been whipped,' it said, 'by me,' and then it added, bearing down on each word, and 'I'm PURE Pitts!' (p. 80).

She paused, not out of concern, but in order to completely reject her grandfather and to identify herself with the land, her father, and, universally, with the agrarian mystique against that type of progress which would destroy the Southern way of life. Outraged, the old man seizes the opportunity he has to destroy her, and in so doing, robs the Pittses future fullness on the land. He smashes her head against a rock.

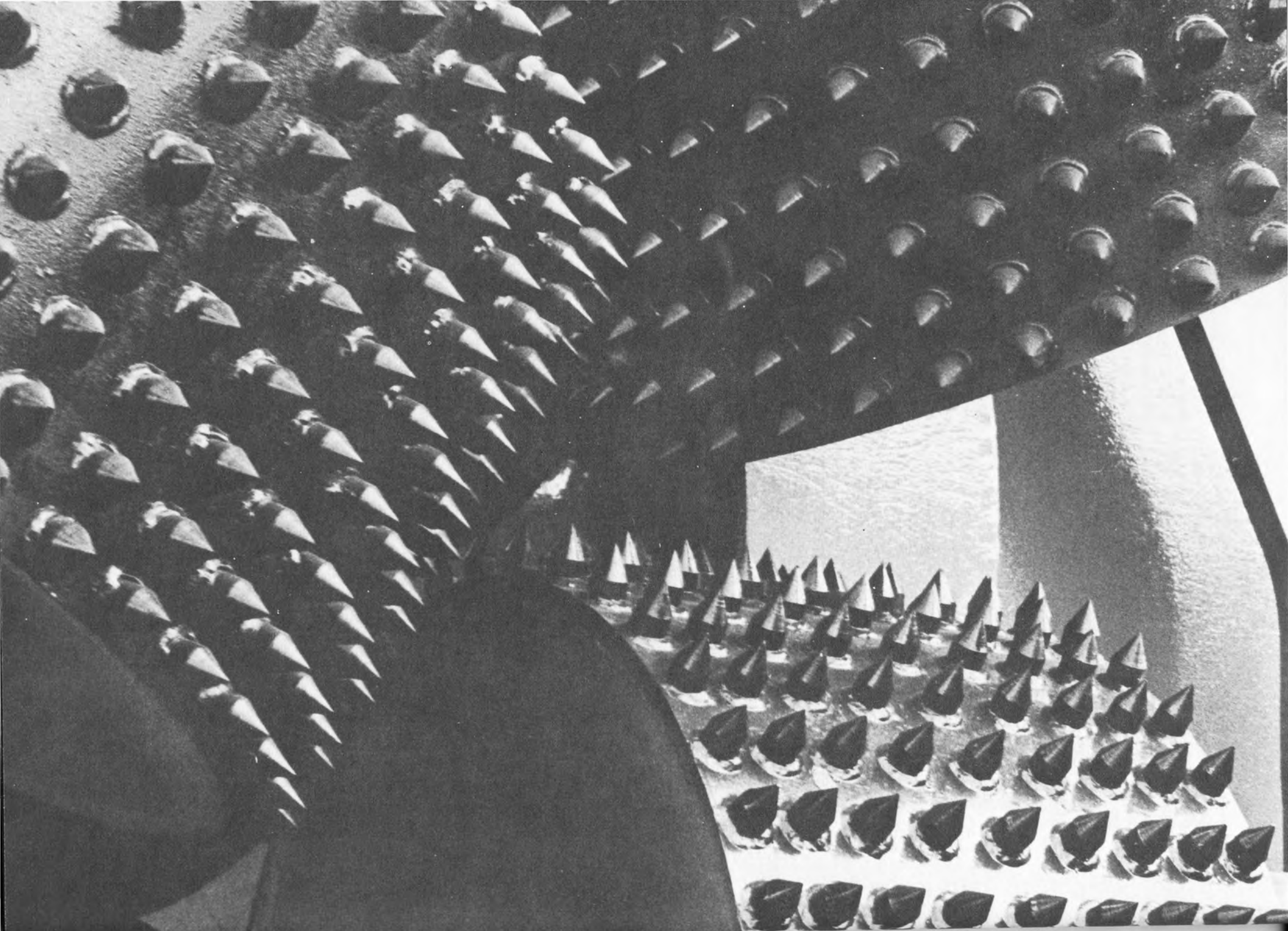
But the old man also suffers a reversal as he collapses under a heart attack, brought on by his overexertion. The land, enriched with the blood of another human, appears to swallow him up. He cannot escape it, and dies.

Ironically, the old man is totally frustrated since Mary Fortune (his sole beneficiary) is dead; the land will go to his daughter, and hence to Pitts, who will keep the land intact against the perversions of the new materialistic ethos of the South.

WERE THERE IDENTIFYING MARKS ON THE BARRACUDA?

My maiden name seems naked when I hear it.
I wait for something else to follow:
long spears of silence,
beaches full of rocks,
the cold Maine sea,
a face-mask sucking in
the whole Caribbean.

— *Ann Darr*



Brenda

Secrets

by Lawrence Judson Reynolds

She was sitting at the small wooden table that served as her dining table and her writing desk. Beneath her fingers the high, looping letters of her handwriting leapt up on the page. *Anyone could tell it's mine,* she thought. *Anyone who looked at it would say: "Why, that's Ruth Pritchett's writing."*

When she realized this she put her hand down across the paper as if to blot it out. Her hand was white even against the white background of the paper. Her fingers were long and slender but the nails were clipped short and had never been painted. She had tried so hard to disguise the writing, to shorten the loops and straighten up the slant. But now, though it frightened her at first, it did not truly displease her to know that he would know. If he were to be hers, he would have to know anyway. There could be no secrets between them as there were now between him and his present wife. Secrets which the note beneath her hand would expose. And through the handwriting, she would expose herself to him, thus eliminating the necessity of her having to make an open confession to him before they could be married. There could be no secrets in married life. They could not start off by hiding the truth one from the other.

She left the note on the table and walked over and straightened the blankets on the bed where he had so recently lain. In the folds of the top blanket she found a sixpence and two ha'pennies which had dropped from his trouser pocket as he reclined there. This had happened before and she took the three coins and put them in the vase on the metal nightstand by the bed. She always told him about the money, but he insisted on leaving it in the vase. He called it their mutual savings account, and once he had said that they would use it when the time came to buy their marriage license. Sometimes she thought of it as her hope chest and added a few pennies of her own. She wished she could add more. She sometimes wished that she could add the six pounds that she sent every week to the nursing home in Gloucester where her mother had been living for nine years now. But that was a sinful thought she knew. Even the girls who wore short dresses about on the street and smiled when they were stared at would not think such thoughts. It came from not thinking of her mother enough.

She smoothed the blankets with her hands and fluffed the pillow. She did not like thinking of her mother anymore though. She liked thinking of him. He would not like her mother, nor her mother him. He was too happy, to concerned with living to worry about dying. She wondered if she wasn't like her mother after all. She had refused him today not so much for forgetting that it was her birthday as for his good-natured, red-faced frivolity which on previous occasions had always sent her into fits of giggles. But she was thirty-three today and she wanted to talk seriously about their future. They had been seeing each other longer than was proper she felt, even in a city of such impropriety as London. When was he going to be honest with his wife and file the paper for divorce?

He had wiggled up close to her as she sat on the edge of the bed and put his hands on her buttocks, but she forced herself away from him and got up and walked to the window. He called her a mouse: His little, brown mouse. She would help him, she said. She would help him pay for the divorce if she could get another job at night. He stalked her like a cat. She ran to the sink, then pushed a chair out in front of him and ran to the bed. Then back to the window again. Wouldn't he please talk seriously? The bank closed at three and she could easily take a second job in the evenings if that was what was needed. Mr. Prescott would give her good recommendations.

He was a cat, a big tomcat. She did not run, but turned and looked out the window. He had her in his paws. He was going to eat her. But she was thirty-three today and would not be devoured.

She left the bed and went and stood at the window that looked out just at street level. She could see the legs and feet of people when they passed. Across the street she could see the old townhouses that joined one to another making a solid wall that ran the length of every block on Sinclair Road. Her breath spread grey across the windowpane, then receded in the chill of the room. Then spread again. She still had time to walk to the corner and post the

letter before the evening pick-up. Tomorrow was Sunday so it would arrive Monday morning, while they were eating breakfast probably. The note stated the situation plainly. She would have to take action against her husband now since he would take none against her. It all seemed so simple. She hoped he wouldn't come tomorrow so she wouldn't have to live a lie for that one day. Monday he would know, they all would know, and a great weight would be lifted from their chests.

She touched her nose to the glass pane and held her breath. The glass was colder than she had expected. Across the street she could see people hurrying along with their collars turned up about their necks and she remembered that it was autumn already. Soon she would have to put extra shillings in the meter for the electric heater. Summer had passed so quickly this year.

"My, didn't summer leave us in a rush, love?" Miss Ernhart had been saying for the past week. It was only now that she realized what the old woman had been jabbering about. She dreaded going upstairs and through the hallway past Miss Ernhart's door with the letter. She didn't want to have to hear her say that again. She didn't want to have to stand there holding the letter in her fingers and chat with her about the chilliness of her room. She didn't want to hear the old woman say that some tenants must be having chills under their blankets the way she kept hearing the beds bumping against the walls. She didn't want to have to have to lie anymore.

She sighed suddenly and watched her breath spread again on the windowpane.

In the misty evening outside the window a pair of grey trouser legs passed along the street and her heart leapt again. But after a full minute of silence inside the house she went back to the sink and drew some water in the electric kettle for her tea. She knew everything would be all right. Today was only Wednesday. It had only been four days. Some things couldn't be worked out in such a short time.

She sat at the table and ate some of her steak and kidney pie while she waited for the water to heat. Mr. Prescott had said he would give her recommendations if she really needed to take a second job, but he advised her that the bank did not look with favor on employees who worked at night. One had to be one hundred percent efficient at the bank. Errors meant money lost, in the literal sense of the word. She told him about her mother. She implied that it was for this reason that she must take a second job. She couldn't tell the truth. She knew she didn't love her mother enough, but now she had used her.

After she had talked to Mr. Prescott she was distraught and did not seek an evening job as she had planned. Perhaps, she told herself, it wouldn't be necessary for her to take other employment after all. Perhaps he had taken a second job. That would explain his absence this week. That would make things easier. She would tell Mr. Prescott the truth.

The knock at the door rattled in the silence of the room and she gave a little start of surprise and joy. She stood up and wiped her hands on her dress and took the plate of uneaten food and put it in the cabinet beneath the sink. He was just in time to have some tea with her. She hoped she'd add enough water for two. She must tell him about the letter — that she had written it. She must tell him before he started playing, before they did anything else.

"Rent, Miss Pritchett," said Miss Ernhart.

The old woman stood in dirty pink bedroom slippers in the doorway. Her body was massive, having taken on the many sweaters and the voluminous skirts that were its winter attire.

"Wednesday is rent day, Miss Pritchett. You forgot this morning. First time in nine years you've forgot. You must be getting old like myself, Miss Pritchett. Your mind must be failing you. Your mind fails, it's a sign you're getting old. I was telling Countess Waluski just this morning . . ."

She walked numbly to the bed and got her purse and took the folded money out of the wallet. She had forgotten completely. She had walked right past the door this morning and she had forgotten.

"Four pounds, five bob," said Miss Ernhart from the door. "And you're a-lucky to be having it for that, Miss Pritchett. I've gone up on all my other tenants. But you, being your mother's keeper so to speak, I'm letting you stay by the old rent. Now mind you don't tell anyone of the others. Why, they'd be on me in a minute, and then I'd be forced to raise yours too, wouldn't I?"

She unfolded five one pound notes and found two shillings and a ha'penny in the bottom of her purse.

"I don't seem to have the change," she said. "Can you change a pound?"

She watched Miss Ernhart in the doorway. She could have offered to walk back upstairs with her but she didn't. She knew it would be the right thing to do since it was she that was to blame for this inconvenience anyway but she didn't say anything. She watched the old woman look back at the stairs and move just enough to ruffle the folds of her skirts.

"Why don't you take some change from the vase, dearie?"

"What vase?" she shouted. She hadn't meant to shout but it had come out that way, with a ringing sound that echoed in the room.

"Why, that vase," said the old woman pointing an accusing finger. "There's money in that vase."

"What? What money?"

She shuttered beneath the force of her own words.

"There's no need to shout, dearie," said the old woman.

She put her hand to her throat as if to stop herself and pulled at the skin on her neck.

"How do you know there's money there?" she cried, but not with the same involuntary force as before. She felt her voice splitting in her throat. "How do you know?"

"Why, I've seen it, dearie. I do clean on Mondays, you know."

She felt the tears teeming above her eyelids.

"Everything can't be secret, now can it, dearie?" said the old woman soothingly. "I am your landlady after all. It's not like I was a common snoop a-spying on your life. I just happened to see it there — when I

was a-cleaning."

She stared at the huge woman's blurred image and tried not to listen to her words.

"I'll not take the money from the vase," she said firmly. "It's for something special."

She emphasized the word "special" so as to shroud the vase in some deep mystery beyond the simple fact that it held money.

"And what might that be, dearie? Getting a new electrie kettle, are you? I've notice how your old one is rusting out around the bottom. For three guineas, you can . . ."

"I'll have change for the pound, please," she interrupted.

When Miss Ernhart was gone she lifted the corner of her sweater and wiped the tears from her eyes. She would be fine now. She would clean the room herself from now on. She would not have her life intruded upon ever again.

She waited by the window for Miss Ernhart's return. She tried to hope that he wouldn't come just now, that he wouldn't come until after the old woman was back in her room again. She tried to hope that he would come at all.

"One like this can be had for three guineas," said Miss Ernhart.

The old woman was standing in the doorway again with an electric kettle in one hand and the change in the other.

"I wouldn't advise you getting one like it though. It's dreadfully slow."

"I *am not* getting an electric kettle, Miss Ernhart," she said emphatically.

"Well, you needn't be sassy about it, dearie. I was only offering a word of advice. You certainly need a kettle badly enough. That thing you have'll be flooding your room soon enough."

The old woman put the kettle down on the floor beside her and counted out the pound's change.

"That'll be four pound-five now," she said very officially when she had finished.

She counted the money back into the old woman's hand. She wanted her to leave now. She wanted to be alone again. She wanted to wait and watch the feet on the street. She didn't want to talk and end by feeling sorry for Miss Ernhart again. She didn't want to end by feeling sorry for herself.

"Whatever you do," said the old woman, "don't buy one from that Greek place up past Olympia. Countess Waluski got one there and it blew up in her face the second day."

"I'm not getting a kettle," she said again firmly.

"Good thing, I'd say," Miss Ernhart said. "Looks to be no more than two pounds in that vase. You couldn't get much of a kettle with two pounds, now could you?"

She felt the hot swell of tears again. The old fool had counted it and now had revealed its worth, a secret she had kept even from herself.

"I don't guess you were counting on something quite so dear as a kettle, eh? Two pounds won't fetch you much nowaday."

It'll fetch me a man — something you never had!" she said spitefully, adding quickly: "I'll be getting married soon, Miss Ernhart. I'll be moving out soon."

She felt the pettiness of her anger invade her body. She hated herself, and Miss Ernhart, and the room, and electric kettles. She hated him for not being there, for not coming, for never coming. The tears shot like melting candle wax down her cheeks.

"Well . . . Well, a fortnight's notice," said the old woman defensively, gathering the outmost of her sweaters around her neck. "I'll not accept less than a fortnight's notice, mind you."

She didn't say anything as she watched Miss Earnhart retreat to the door.

Then she tried to say, *Your kettle, Miss Ernhart. You're forgetting your kettle.* But the words caught in her burning throat.

She pointed through the tears toward the kettle on the floor and watched as the old woman came back for it.

"Thank you love," said Miss Ernhart tentatively. Then after a long silence: "I'll hate to be a-losing you. You've been such a nice tenant. You've never given me a minute's trouble. Why, I've . . . I would never . . . You can stay by the old rent of course, dearie, until you leave. Of course."

She moved stiffly back to the doorway again and gathered her sweaters about her and reached for the doorknob, but still she did not go.

"It's such a long time you've been here, dearie," she said finally. "And yet it did fly, didn't it. I hope it's a good man you've found, not some scoundrel who'll . . . But of course it is. Of course."

She stepped out into the hallway and started to pull the door closed.

"Countess Waluski is coming down to play cards with me tonight," she said, her face barely visible in the dark hall. "It's many a-week since you've played cards with us, dearie."

She wanted to say: *My man will be coming tonight and I shan't play cards with you ever again.* But she only shook her head feebly as the tears spilled over her eyelids again.

"Countess Waluski could tell you about marriage all right. She's been married three times. Got a bad one every time too, she did."

After the old woman was gone, she lay on the bed and wept silently so that no one would hear her. She tried to tell herself that it was all right, what she had said. She had told the truth. She just didn't like being forced to tell anything. There were some things that should be kept secret. She wished desperately that he would come and give her more secrets. She wanted him to come on cat's paws. She wanted to be his mouse again. She wanted to be devoured.

But he did not come that night nor the next and on Friday she went and played cards with Miss Ernhart and Countess Waluski and told them about the letter and about the way he had called her a little mouse. She told them how she had used her mother when talking to Mr. Prescott and they both agreed that she must go to him and tell him the truth. But she did not tell them where the money in the vase had come from even though she knew that they wanted to know, and though they hinted that they did know. There were some things she felt that had to be kept secret.

REQUIEM

Tonight the house beats slowly. You have come
From fifty miles away, the nearest kin,
To make your pity fact. No muffled drum
Occasions solemn things of state within
This room or up the stair, but only feet
Laid soft with some restraint against the floor.
The house has changed. Ten years ago the street
Was twenty steps across; tonight not more
Than ten, and there your uncle stood so tall
He had to stoop to set the weathered plates
Before you, kings and cousins one and all.
But now the clock has struck, and names and dates
Whirl off to distance like the street outside,
And turning, you should think of how to leave
That past, when in a game you lined to ride
Clutched to him. But tonight you come to grieve
And will not talk of children's games, how he
Would swing you toward the ground you somehow
missed
Giddy then to your feet beneath a tree,
His day's work pressed to thumbprint on your wrist.
It is dark now, and you must move to rooms
Where candles light you to a different day.
Turning, you move in silence deep as tombs
To deeper silence there where you shall pray
For motion stopped, stillness whose thumb
Plucks shadow, empty air above its shelf.

Tonight the house beats slowly. Senses numb.
Your fingers search your wrist to find yourself.

— *Robert S. Gwynn*

The Arms of Venus

by James Tipton

Before I ever began writing poems and stories, I tried my hand at writing dedicatory pieces to friends, etc. "The author wishes to thank Michigan State and Purdue for what they tried to do, and these people for what they did . . ." During five years at Purdue, I accumulated eight-hundred and forty-seven names on seven typewritten pages. My longest work to that time. It was rejected by every major magazine in the country, and by two magazines in Argentina.

Diane Alberti was always at the top of my list; she always said I'd be a writer; and even now, occasionally, she writes me, requesting a copy of my book. She married a man from Madrid, who draws plans for bridges. Diane used to be thin in college, but I could tell by her ankles she would thicken. She used to sit in the restroom in the Student Union and read Rimbaud. At three o'clock she'd meet me in the Cyprus Room for coffee.

"Jim," she'd say, rubbing her lips between words, "will you take me to the laundromat tonight?"

Sometimes we washed our clothes three times a week. We were nothing if we weren't clean. One time we took a shower together, but we had our clothes on. It was the night we spilled spaghetti sauce on the stove and it wouldn't light.

Diane was a Spanish major for awhile. When I met her she was majoring in physics. She graduated in philosophy; philosophy of logic, originally, but later, aesthetics. I was in English. My friends said she was mad; but she had brains, and she had big breasts, and that, they said, made up for it. One night in the laundromat she told me she was in love.

"I love you too," I said.

"I'm in love with Dostoievsky," she said.

I choked a dime into the coffee machine. "Haven't I told you about my epileptic fits?"

"Idiot," she said, "you know I love you."

"Yes, I certainly do know that. Yes, I certainly do." She slid a delicate finger over the funny wrinkle in my smile.

That night it was raining when we left the laundromat. On the way home we stopped inside St. Tom's; and stayed, even after it stopped raining.

"This is where I read Dostoievsky," she said. In the dark quiet, her voice was strong. She didn't talk anymore about Dostoievsky, and I was happy.

"When I was young," she said, "I used to see saints swinging in the trees at home. Or maybe they were old nuns." She was a nun in the dark. I could only see her face.

"One time my aunt told me there was an angel in the attic. I spent three days among the family treasures, and found only an old statue of Venus. Iron, I think. It had rusting eyes."

"Do you think Venus had lovely arms," I asked.

"Venus had lovely arms, but she left them in Greece. Her arms were her most beautiful parts. That's the whole point. The understanding of art ultimately rests on the understanding of mutilation."

I had been through her theories of art before . . . the Vampire Theory, the Fill-the-Void Theory, the Woman-Writer-Shouldn't-Have-Children Theory, the Empty-Vessel Theory . . . and now, the Mutilation Theory. I understood immediately.

"If I mutilate myself, I'll become a work of art? May I give you an ear?"

"A museum," she said, "would pay me a fortune for Van Gogh's, but not for yours. But I'm not advocating mutilation as a way of life. This is why I prefer an armless Venus. And this is why the arms are really the best part. Reality denies their existence, doesn't understand their existence. Reality denies the existence of clean clothes. I only *try* to keep them clean. And not only the Venus de Milo is armless, but also the stooping one, Aphrodite Accroupie, I think; and the stooping one has, I hope you understand, a bullet hole above her left breast, into her heart."

I tried to see into a meadow, miles behind her eyes. I thought perhaps she was sleeping there and the person talking was someone else, talking about things one picks up in strange ways, sometimes in classrooms.

"But the angel," she went on, "the angel in the attic is the best of all. Mutilated beyond existence. Sometimes I dream about him. He has giant genitals. Do you ever watch clouds? Angel orgasms on summer afternoons? We do have signs. That's the angel I was looking for, but I was only fourteen, and didn't know that then.

"I think your arms are very lovely," I said. I kissed a shadow, and it was wet with rain and sweat.

"You're sweet," she said. She kissed me very softly on my lips. I've kissed peaches very softly, exactly the same way. To be clever, I suggested we play Salome and John the Baptist. She suggested we play something else. Said I'd send her my head sooner or later anyway. I didn't understand, and I wasn't very amused.

She stood up, and she looked very tall in the empty church. "Let's talk to each other over the chasm," she said. "You go to that wall, and I'll go to this one." I got up and walked over to my wall.

"I can't see you," she said.

"I can't see you either," I said.

"You're a boneless stranger," she said.

"You're a boneless stranger, too," I said.

"Echoes," she said, and it was quiet again. In the moonlight above, saints were smiling. One was feeding birds. An old woman once offered eight-thousand dollars for a stained picture of God. I hadn't remembered that for a long time. When I was young I wanted to be a painter.

"What do you think of El Greco?" she shouted.

"El Greco's O.K." I said.

"I mean how would you describe him," she shouted.

"Basketball players with beards," I said.

"No! . . . Mad, noble, misshapen, . . . mutilated by their very existence!"

And it was very quiet again. El Greco painted saints, I remembered now. And maybe a picture of Don Quixote. Someplace on the other side of the dark, Diane was thinking, probably thinking I was an idiot. But I wasn't thinking much about Diane, I was thinking about myself. I'm not even a Catholic. I've never been to confession. I bought a rosary once at a lost-and-found sale sponsored by the Student Union; but it was broken, the cross was missing. I gave it to Diane. On a dare, she ate one of the beads.

"I LOVE YOU!" I shouted, louder than anyone.

Her voice was softer than mine. Mine was echoing in my head. "I didn't hear you," I said.

"Meet me at the altar," she whispered. I moved slowly, an acolyte in a turtleneck, toward the altar. An acolyte without a candle. "No candle," I thought to myself, "No candle . . . I'm sorry, we'll have to let you go."

At the altar, her kiss was hard and deep. Already her blouse was unbuttoned. But I couldn't remember. Perhaps I had unbuttoned it earlier. When I was very bold.

It was almost dawn when we left, and the rain had started again. One of those early morning rains when spring seems more than a promise.

Diane broke the morning. "Someday you should live in a cathedral. You could put your typewriter on the altar, light the candles, invite me over for bread and wine, and we'd make love." Her eyes weren't watching me then.

A man with a briefcase was peddling toward us, toward a distant classroom somewhere in April. Our laundry bags were damp.

"It isn't Dostoievsky at all," she said. "It's a man from Spain doing doctoral work in engineering. I've always wanted to live in Spain. He comes from a noble family. His nose is crooked; your nose is crooked too."

We didn't do our laundry together anymore. Mine gathered in my room until summer. Diane graduated in June and I never saw her again. Sometimes she orders a book I haven't written, and once she sent a picture of herself sitting in a bikini on a beach in southern Spain, surrounded by horses.

SUNSET POEM (for Gordon Quinlan)

Now that you've spoken
I say Give me that! There's no
need Who are
you I too can roll an orange seed around in
my mouth nick it bit by
bit with my teeth
until
        O say Can you
Afterwards we'll terrorize the heavens
with our eyes fling our fat
brown green hazel blue bloodshot
orbs up into
                Stones in water
A smudge of air visits my lungs
        We can take the
ferry across the bay 5 miles
an hour moving only by failure of
How are yuh buddy glad tuh
see yuh
                Such a nuisance

proper words Recollect *mon ami* that irreparable tear
how it happened how the harmonious circuit
stopped Even a Navajo
paused to stare
Okay then Say it
Can't you see I'm
trying to I keep moving back to the
lefthand margin back to the
starting blocks maybe this time
So there we were in
Santa Barbara chewing pinon nuts
discussing the war no particular
war Kids rode a boat on wheels
driven by a mother I noticed there was no
horizon but didn't
miss it much
Are you done yet
There's still some sun there
behind the photograph of
Tsar Nicolai the high-collared tunic
the dull medals We'll have
breakfast in our spacecraft
but quickly now
and mind the baby
There's going to be
trouble Notice how *le ciel* pales a star already
faintly visible at 45°11′ The blue reddens
Close your eyes observe the dark
interior of your lids That's all
it is brown muck with a few billion
tingling pinheads of light a matter of
nerves of solar energy
Fortunately the news was
good today No one starved
No human quantity slaughtered by beestings
No jetliners fell No avalanches or
cyclones The forest fires were impeccable
There was applause from the picnic tables
in response to an appeal for funds
to build shelters for homeless unicorns
Several frenzies of unilateral sex
were easily quelled with light loss of sperm
There's snow in my shoes
Don't worry your feet will melt Besides
it's August
Look the gulls
depart the sky Where Show me
They're gone Another thing I
didn't see
Another day glides down
into me

— *Gene Frumkin*

A CITY THEY HAVE MADE SAFE FOR POETS

A person could be sorry, like as not
Forever. Imagine the fourth straight month
Of February thaw: the dairy's large
Curd in open revolt, tangles with punch
Card machines. Snow refuses to melt, sticks
To the ground in ninety degrees. The zoo
Cages spring open at a sudden stitch
In the earth. Parrots occupy the broadcast
Stations, log jams buckle into champagne
Herds of manatees, each with a grass skirt
And smile. Cockatoos flutter from the fridge
Spilling popcorn pans of salted angel fish.

Inside hidden mountain cabins, hammered
By hollow nosed mantises the size of crows,
Poets stand huddled over re-entry plans,
Shuddering at mice that tramp among the chinks.

— *David Steingass*

LOVE POEM BEGINNING WITH I

I am drunk
And you have locked me out,
Barring the double doors with slabs
Of marble. Children and animals
Are there with you, knives and leather.

I fire the place with pine
Chips and my torch.
The flame crashes off my steel
Headpiece and the snow,
Vanishing in my bearskins.

I could not love you more
If you chose to stay.

— *David Steingass*

NO FATAL LAUGHTER

They intended a pasteurizing process
when they said from their cowls:

"You are not crazy,
not anymore worth destroying. But
imprimatur denied your dreams.
We declare these illicit and invalid.

Item. Machiavelli with a Jesus brow and
a firm grasp on the short hairs of God,
moving like an operatic Faust toward the
evidence, the word — 'crotch' — line
twenty-two in the poem demurring sex as
the ultimate ground of all being, finding
the word, muttering, 'Save the pure body
of holy mother church even from the sound!'
but stayed at the teetering moment by
shadows, human, who pointed jury fingers
at the melting, dancing rock. Invalid.

Item. Green copper rooftops, burlesque
chimney pots with cock-a-hoop hats, red
incense candles crammed close to Saint
Sulpice, its towers like primitive flutes,
hollow; green roofs and chimney pots and
a man astride the ridgepole of one roof
whose wings were on the downbeat, forever
down, unable to come closer to the sun,
and the stillness of liquid, transparency
of water, breath not needed, waiting
for Faust to make his discovery. Illicit."

But I am,
crazy and germ ridden like crinkling cheese,
an exultant red flare processional
on a night road leading to some embarrassed
Jaguar with a crumpled rear-end;

do not take away the warning of it,

that the crotch rots first,
uric acid is powerful stuff,
(the only one on Great Finchley Road who
laughed that business afternoon,
was a smelly tramp in everyone's tweeds,

and he was good luck;
at *aux deux Magots* more good luck,
two clochards, married, no children, asleep
in a doorway embrace, more lasting than night,
right near Malraux's latest metamorphosis)

but pasteurized, nothing germinates,
no fatal laughter is caught:

And if I am pronounced worth saving, sane,
I will fly only as high as the rooftop,
and never say crotch 'til I die and I rot,

but if not,
with a fist made for dust,
and one hollow laugh for the roof,
I am rigged, fermented by dreams and a two-
penny Faust,
for the best reproduction of all,
and the last.

— *Francis Sullivan*

REARRANGEMENT FOR THE BRAIN

Make this assumption:
There is no difference between good and bad
right and wrong.
Then, all things being equal, begin.
First, exercise freedom.
Taking hold of your right ear,
rip upwards.
As the canals fill with blood,
expect to lose your balance.
Second, display power.
Insert any object close at hand —
letter opener, tuning fork,
master key or ice cream scoop —
being careful not to use discretion.
Pry apart as much as you can,
working day in and day out.
Make sure the corpus callosum is cut,
that is to say, the connection between hemispheres,
using history as your guide.
Third, reserve judgement.
Anticipate the appointment
made for your heart,
by pronouncing death yourself.
Use this form:
I, the undersigned, assume full responsibility
for the disappearance of pulse and hope.
And finally, be temperate.
Listen to the clatter of sighs, rites, and stretchers,
strung together like wooden police lines,
as permeable as silk stockings.
Know that your ghost will elude them,
like an amoeba hiding at the edges of a slide.

— *Gary Margolis*

SCARLET TANAGER

The heart hunts a home
The way hunger forages
And thirst rolls wide eyes

In secret synapses
The mind knows nothing of
Without the grating
Of argument

As automatic as the split
Of cells
As unremitting as the flit
Of tanagers

The heart rests
On uncertain perches
To test
Whether they hold

— *Joe Tetlow*

HONEY

The clear, amber honey
flows from the jar.
We spread it on biscuits;
into the cells of toast.
In it some see trays of bees,
their close swarming like
bunched berries.
Some feel intensities of humming;
the striped solitude of drones;
  deep yellow vaults in darkness:
    hexameters.

— *Larry Johnson*

REPORT CARD

I am distraught
by students who can barely stammer
one half-formed fragmentary thought
in broken grammar;

I am unstrung
by minds I see grow soft and rotten
because our subtle mother tongue
has been forgotten.

I smoke my pipe
and say to my book-cluttered wall,
civilization's overripe
and soon must fall.

Its atmosphere
has grown malodorous and cruddy,
and it's polluted most right here
inside my study.

Tonight the smog
sulks damply up and down the street
outside the spacious house I hog
as my retreat.

What prophylaxis
prevents the public slum nearby?
It is supported with my taxes,
which are too high.

I like to rage
against the general public air
yet breathe it for a decent wage.
Why should I care?

I too am stunted
in the unfolding of my spirit;
I don't mind, and I'm not affronted
to have to hear it.

I play it cool
and steer clear of the FBI,
and send my girls to private school,
and we get by.

And if you say
the smoke in here will give me cancer,
I shall reply: Indeed it may.
And that's my answer.

Let children thrive
who've been turned out on the sidewalk,
where some have reached the age of five
and still can't talk:

they learn to steal
and to set real estate on fire
and represent a kind of zeal
I can admire.

And so farewell,
great culture that I've tried to learn;
next week I'll teach you how to spell
and let you burn.

— *Richard Moore*

KEEP IT UNDER YOUR HAT

Leave it for the papers
and the politicians,
shouting the words in boldface,
mouth to mouth.
Don't let the cat out of the bag.
Save it for later when you
will not have to share it with outsiders,
who will demand a piece for themselves.
Don't give it away.
Make a tight fist,
squeezing the confetti
until the colors dye your hand,
and then, when you can see
the stars on his shoulders,
let some go, piece by piece,
commemorating
an unconditional surrender
fifty years from now —
a treaty signed half-way
between here and there.
Remember, no matter how much you wish to lose,
this is important.

— *Gary Margolis*

THE STANDARD SHIFT

Entering the night
she too drunk to drive
flashing keys to say
You, please

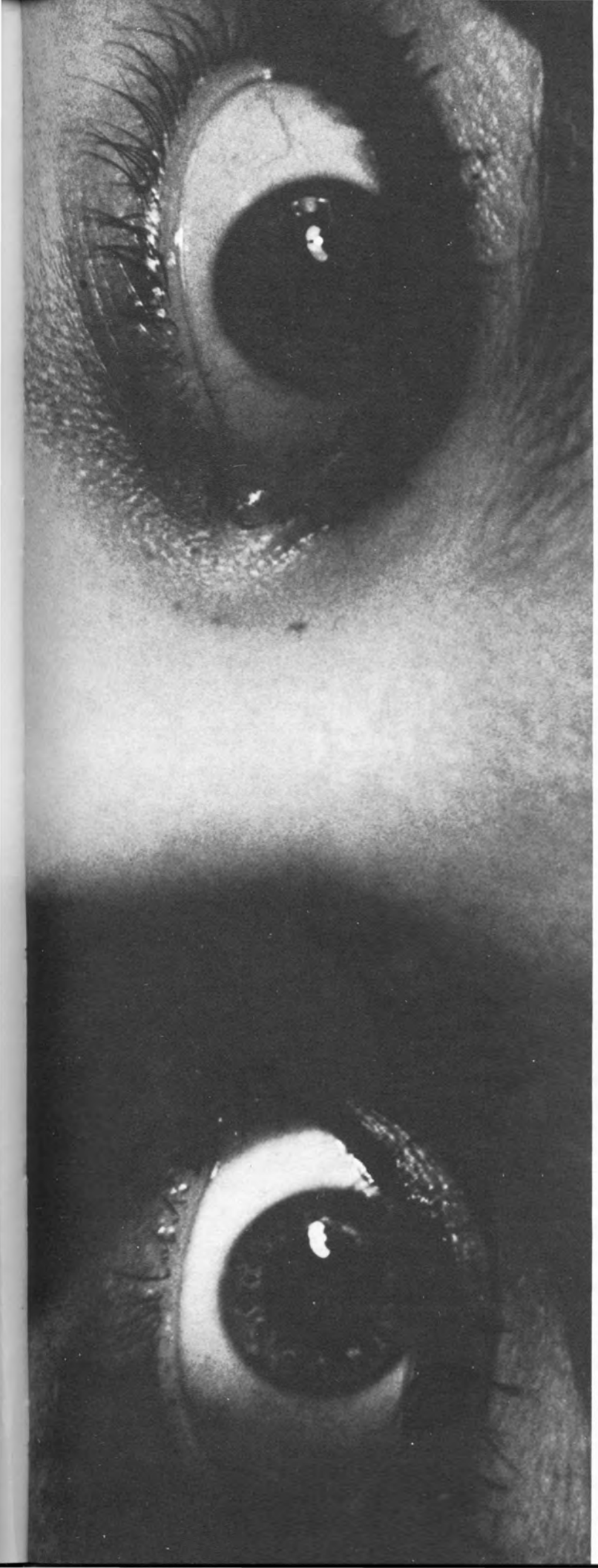
And how do I reply
say and smile
I've never done this before
I don't know how
and she in teasing lips
Try

A compromise is all we reach
You move the stick
and I can press the clutch

So moving out
she pushes to reverse
I feed it too much gas

We shudder stop
she says *You broke it*
and all we do is laugh

— *Ralph Adamo*



L'OUVERTURE/Fort de Joux

The dark.
These very chains.
Skirring vermin keeping a distance
In this cold place —
I have stood for something.
More than an itch beneath a crown.

Darkness thickens, something stirs:
A shape. A word I feel but cannot call
Would name it.

The tales my father told,
The tales. Long ancestral cadences
That swell into the fire-held night
Bringing shapes that cannot hold
With the sun.
Have I not heard them?
Have I not seen the spray,
The voyage here, like bursting gourds
Above the water?

No place for secrets, here.
All must be clear:
The shape that creeps upon me
In the dark: figure of a boy
On a beach
Hurling pebbles back into the sea.

— *Alvin Aubert*

Leonard Louis White

A QUESTION OF BILOCATION

Memories whittling the wait
in the superstructure of Santiago
between fingerprints and photo.
Identification. I know
the part of me you are, pert,
the slim cut of your prints,
the Eve of your face engraved
on the eyelids' ebony,
the stubborn tear on the lash.

questions intimately probed
over dusty desks of yesterday:
the school where I was born
between *je t'adore* and tragic Dido,
Pittsburgh — where I live
behind the ribs in the . . .

Señor, su carnet.
They know they have only checked
part of me. They *know*.

— *Thomas Kretz*

LORD TARZAN DRUMS A MESSAGE TO HIS JANE

I track you through dark jungles where the sun
Is baffled by the foliage, swing on vines
Across great waterfalls and diamond mines
With miles of gold-lined caves where Solomon
Was said to keep his treasure. Dangers run
Raging before me, still I mark the signs
Of piles of bones and words on ancient shrines
And crush them all to dust. I am a Hun.

Love, do not think I am a man of clay
Because I sweat. I wear these horns and furs
For lack of better garments, well-content
To satisfy your fancies when I say
I have no time to think in metaphors:
I simply am attracted by your scent.

— *Robert S. Gwynn*

Mogen

by Gerald Locklin

One day, with nary a warning, Mogen's luck changed. He didn't know it until late afternoon when he arrived home from the aircraft factory where he worked as a welder. His wife was waiting for him at the door of their Lakewood tract home.

"Mogen," she said, "Larry was here this afternoon."

He pecked her on the lips and brushed past into the living room.

"Larry, huh? Larry in the afternoon?"

"The exhibit, Mogen. They're going to do the exhibit."

It was the best news he had ever had in his life. He waited for some truly tidal wave of release to overwhelm him. But there was no wave. He smiled as he knew he ought, and shook his head from side to side: "By God, Joyce, that's wonderful, that's just . . . just wonderful!"

"On La Cienega. The Fairmont Gallery. A whole three weeks. Just you."

"I didn't think it could happen. I'd begun to think it just . . . just couldn't ever happen."

"Come here," she said, "my Michelangelo!" And she threw her arms around him. He did his best to respond.

"And now," she said, "I'm off to the kitchen to put the finishing touches to the Beef Stroganoff, my great Rodin's favorite meal."

"That's wonderful," he said. "I love Beef Stroganoff. Where are the kids?"

"They're spending the night at Nana's. You remember. We'll tell them in the morning."

"Oh, it won't mean much to them at their age."

"Of course it will," she said. "Of course it will mean something to them to be oh so prouder than ever of their wonderful dad!"

It was a delicious meal. Quiet without the kids. A couple of soft Ahmad Jamal LP's on the stereo. The cute little bundle of a wife in a freshly ironed dress. A bottle of B.V. Cabernet Sauvignon. Chocolate mousse for dessert. Any other time it would have seemed an extravagant meal. But now there would be extra money coming in. No, they weren't going to be rich, but still there would be the unexpected sales to be celebrated in ways such as this.

And, as Joyce knew, Mogen did treasure his moments of dining, all the more so now that he found it necessary to curtail his eating somewhat. Eating and drinking, perhaps the earliest of pleasures, were two things Mogen could still enjoy.

He allowed himself a cigar after dinner, but as it burned down to a stub his wife became aware of his restlessness.

"Mogen," she said, "you really want to work tonight, don't you?"

For as long as they had been together it had been a rule that Mogen worked on his sculpture at least three nights a week and one afternoon on the weekend.

"No," he said, quite truthfully, "I really don't feel like working tonight."

"Now, now, I know you're just saying that because you think my feelings will be hurt if you don't spend the whole evening with me. But I'm going to do the dishes and some of the ironing, and you are going out to the garage, and later, when we've both done our work, we'll still have time to watch some television."

"Okay," he said, "okay, I'll go do my work."

He went to the garage and stood in the midst of hammers, chisels, scrap iron, coat hangers, saw horses — all the implements of his art. Before him, laid out on an asbestos pad next to his oxy-acetylene torch, was the tangle of metals he was presently melting and pounding into a study entitled "Man Bereft of Illusion." It was, he figured, about three-quarters finished. He knew what had to be done to it. That was what scared him, knowing what had to be done and living with the fear that he would botch the execution.

He went back inside and said, "I'm not working tonight. I want to go out for a while."

Joyce took her hands out of the dishwasher and turned to him, a worm of disappointment creasing her forehead. "All right, Love. Be back soon?"

"Yes, I think so. Hour . . . hour and a half."

"All right, Love."

In fifteen minutes he was at Jean's apartment. She was surprised to see him. When she closed the door behind him he kissed her against it.

"Baby" he said, "for once I bear good news. We're going to have enough money to have you taken care of."

"I've got even better news — I started my period."

"You're kidding."

"Nope. You're going to have to revise your theory — the worst doesn't always happen."

"I can't believe it," he said. "I think the gods are planning an ambush for me."

"Maybe your luck is changing," she said. "Maybe you've just run out your string of bad breaks."

He didn't leave the apartment until after eleven. Joyce would be in bed by now. He felt a little bad about having run out on her. Always he felt a little bad when he did things like that.

But she would be in bed by now anyway.

So he stopped in Woody's to shoot a game of pool. And for a change he shot pretty good, seemed to get better, in fact, as he went along. He won a couple of games from the kid who was bartending and then a big guy with a big gut said, "All right if I challenge?"

Mogen said sure.

"What we playing for, a beer?"

Mogen said he didn't care.

"How about five bucks?"

"Hell no, I'm not that good."

"You said you didn't care."

"I said I didn't care if we played for a beer."

"You're a real hostile guy, aren't you?"

Mogen didn't answer. To himself he thought, Oh shit, here it comes.

"I mean you must figure you can handle guys twice your size or something."

Mogen rolled a practice shot up the table. He made it. Then he turned just in time to see the big oaf swing and miss him. He raised his pool cue fast, bringing it up with a sharp crack along the other man's temple. His opponent went down.

Oh God, thought Mogen, I've killed him.

But he hadn't. He and the bartender checked the man's pulse and then the kid told him to leave before the guy came to. Mogen left, thanking his lucky stars that he hadn't killed anyone and, at the same time, more than a little pleased with his spontaneous act of self-defense. At home, Joyce woke up long enough to ask him if he'd been at Woody's.

"Yes," he said, "and I got into a fight. You know it's the first damn fight I can remember winning in my whole life."

He went to sleep satisfied with the way things were going.

Which is the way they continued to go. His consultations with the gallery director were proceeding smoothly. He was managing somehow to keep both Joyce and Jean happy with him. At the factory the union negotiators walked out of the final contract discussions with a nineteen cent an hour raise and broadened medical-dental-psychiatric coverage. At Woody's he was playing way over his head.

The only thing wrong was that he couldn't get anywhere at all with his sculpting. Every night he went out to the garage and every night he returned to the house within forty-five minutes. Most of the time he never even picked up a tool, just stood there looking at the unfinished "Man Bereft of Illusion." He felt tired, not physically tired, just unwilling to test himself against the demands of creativity. The once or twice that he did try to continue the project he almost spoiled the good work he had done. The once or twice he tried to get started on new things, the results were lamentable — blobs of steel and copper resembling nothing quite so much as cheshire foetuses.

One night in Woody's, very drunk, he got talking to a girl who became more attractive to him with each beer. He ended up going back to her apartment with her. In bed, afterwards, she sobered up a little and became hostile.

"What did you say your name was . . . *Mogen*? Isn't that a Jew-name?"

"No," he said, "actually it's Irish. All four of my grandparents were Irish. I figure the name got shortened somewhere along the line from Mogenhan. That's related to Moynihan and Monaghan."

"Irish, my ass," she said. "You're as Jewish as they come."

"Really," he said. "Do you really think so?" And he thought about it himself for a while, until she reached for him again.

The one-man show opened on August 1 and closed after only a week with not a single work sold. About that time Jean began to pester him that he never took her anyplace public. He relented and took her to a night club. Visiting royalty were there the same night. The next afternoon, while Mogen and Joyce sat watching the six o'clock news, Mogen and Jean appeared on television, toasting each other with champagne. It surprised him when Joyce left him. He had presumed she knew he was seeing someone else, but now he guessed she must have been kidding herself along. He held all this against Jean, to the point where it no longer gave him any pleasure to be with her. He stopped seeing her and began to drink heavily.

After missing three mornings in a row from work, he was fired. He got a lower-paying job at an outboard motor plant, but lost that also. Joyce was taking him to court for money. One night in Woody's, drunker than he had ever been in his life, he felt a wet, fat hand on his shoulder. He no sooner turned around than he was sitting in the middle of the floor with a split lip.

That weekend he completed "Man Bereft of Illusion," a magnificent jungle of metallic nerve-endings, and started drawing up plans for his masterpiece: "Laocoon as Herpetologist."

Shedlitz

by Shael Herman

In Shedlitz the usual diet was tea
brown bread and fools
every family had regular schnorrers
and at least one soft touch:
in my wife's family it was her mother
the poor came to her and
sat at the back door
crying for money on weekdays
and food on Shabbas
(on Saturdays you didn't handle money)
on holidays she fed them chicken soup
in a tureen / the old women sucked it down
religious men
with earlocks draped over their black caftans
paraded through the streets
begging bread
for the town's orphans
the chicken soup they kept for themselves

as a child
my wife sat at her father's knee
learning about his family
and dozens of misfits he knew as a boy
she remembers his stories well
for he was a misfit too
he was a quiet man
bald and fat after the war
and a storyteller;
sometimes his stories lasted past her bedtime
and she fell toward sleep
to his soft Yiddish voice
speak English
she would tell him
no, Helen, English you learn in school

in America
she could learn to be proud of her name
but his stories held her roots in Shedlitz
it was from him she learned that Shedlitz Jews
didn't believe in anything
but "Tsuros" (his favorite word)
it was this:
their common suffering kept them together.

Helen's folks were merchants
selling crops
from land they didn't own
her grandfather

with a beard like moss
worked hard all week
to enjoy the Sabbath
on Friday night the family sat around
singing in Yiddish
and joking about their landlord Chaim Yankel
a filthy little man
who kept his wife in the kitchen
his dog in bed
and his cleaning woman in a hovel
under the steps
two days a week he spent in jail
because he wouldn't keep his outhouses clean
he slept in the cellar
so he could collect rent
on the good rooms
the town matchmaker was Victor Kartoffel
a wiry soul with patches of curly hair
scattered about his chin
Victor claimed to be a mayvin
but everybody pegged him for a schnorrer

matchmaking was his specialty
but it was seasonal work:
twice a year he put on a caftan
and his only white shirt
and waited at the train station
for prospects;
when a train rolled in
he raced down the platform with two girls
whispering to them both
they'd get rich boys
and Victor had a way of finding them;
darting through the crowd
he picked the sallow faces
and sunken eyes
he knew belonged to students —
to read Talmud all day the family had to be rich
Victor could spot a poor boy too:
if a boy's pants had a ring on the seat
it came from sitting on stools
and buckets
stools and buckets
no chairs;
Victor never made a match in my wife's family
but when her mother got engaged
he asked for money anyway
"Can you imagine what I would have made
on this match?" Victor told her father
he'd take half the fee
and be done with it

Shedlitz had one famous fool:
Yidilkopf
a lean body stuck to an oversized head

did anything he was told
no matter how strange:
according to Shedlitz legend
a cemetery marriage could rid the town
of cholera
so one night ten old Jews
brought Yidilkopf to the cemetery
gave him a clean shirt
and married him to a deaf-mute
who lived in a village down the road

Yidilkopf later became the town's coffin keeper
wood was scarce and
the Jews used the same box for years —
Yidilkopf would put the corpse in the coffin
take it to the rabbi for blessing
and carry it to the cemetery
where he emptied the coffin
stood it in a corner
and took his seat at the cemetery gate
waiting for a new body to fill it

there were also dreamers like Emil:
Emil's father was a scholar
which means he didn't work
so his mother took in laundry;
every Sunday
Emil ran down Tomsky Street
with a bucket of hot water
for his girlfriend's bath

after the war he went back to Poland

II

last summer my wife and I
bundled ourselves on a coalburner
out of Prague
and headed for Warsaw to see her uncle

no one met us at the station —
we got a taxi full of gas fumes
and a driver full of vodka
who bragged about the local soccer team
and offered good prices for dollars
we drove across Warsaw
fields
potato patches
past old houses in ruins since the war:
the new ones
perched on rough cement blocks
didn't look much better;
we stopped on a pebble street
at a yellow house
weeds between cracks in the front steps

no one was home
so we went to the backyard to wait
in an hour cousin Yulik,
a thin dark-eyed boy came
bowed and kissed my wife's hand
he had waited all day at another station
with a sign:
I am looking for Helen and Shael

we followed him into his flat:
in the kitchen flies fought to get into a bucket
of milk turning to cheese
before we talked
he turned on the radio
and scampered from room to room
unplugging telephones
he told us his family
was leaving Poland for good
he said everything had been OK
till some Jews at school
got out of line/ the next day
the students were in jail
and his father was fired
with 5000 other Jews
the newspapers said they were traitors
he showed us a faded scout uniform
with ten loyalty badges

the next morning we toured Warsaw —
crossing the Vistula
we saw some old men fishing from sand bars
Yulik said they never caught anything
because the river was fished out
but it passed the time;
across the river he showed us his school,
the places he would remember after he left:
parks full of roses
a steel soccer stadium
and palaces packed with long marble tables
and grandfather clocks that once belonged
to kings

that afternoon we saw Emil / he was a big man
with blue eyes
thick folds in his face made him look
like an overripe squash
we met his wife and kids
and talked for hours about his adventures
in the Russian cavalry
and he joked about the schnorrers and fools
he knew as a boy
he wanted to leave Poland but he couldn't —
after the student strike
his son was in jail
I remember how sad he sounded
his big head in his hands

he couldn't believe it had happened
maybe when the boy was out
things would get better

III

Our last day in Warsaw
Yulik's folks came back
Uncle David asked had we seen everything
everything but Shedlitz Helen said
it's a dirty little town
Uncle David said
nothing like what you heard from your father
everyone is gone
but he agreed to take Helen to Shedlitz
he understood why she wanted to go
Yulik and I went along for the ride

the cobblestone road was empty
except for some farmers in mule carts
with potatoes and kids
in an hour we were there:
passing a brick church
and rows of plaster houses
separated by muddy lanes
piled high with manure,
we stopped at a yellow house
where the family lived before the war:
Uncle David pointed upstairs
where the family lived
downstairs was the store
in back was the kitchen
around the side was an alley
for delivery carts / the box on the door
was for milk
but cats sometimes slept there

Helen shot a picture of the house
found a spot on the door
where her father had carved his initials
and clicked off a closeup
she said her father had mentioned them years ago
before we left she stopped
twisted her lens
and took another shot

Uncle David told her
when the Germans first came
looking for healthy kids to work
(workers were the last to burn)
he and her father smeared their fingers
with tractor grease and mud
tied red kerchiefs around their necks
and joined —
two bookkeepers passing for farmers
for six months they split rails and laid track

from 5 AM to midnight on a cup of soup
when the tracks were finished
the Germans made a ghetto
squeezing Jews twenty to a room
there was nothing to eat unless you stole it

then we went to a gray clapboard house
where the family hid during the war
a woman unlatched the gate
and let us into the yard / three steps led down
to a trap door and the cellar
where they lived on bread and tea
for months
behind the house was a garden
tulips had grown there
but during the war they planted only potatoes
as he talked Helen shot
the garden, the trapdoor
the back of the house
and the trapdoor again

the last place we saw was a grassy lot
closed by barbed wire
around it were sentry boxes
where the SS stood
and fired when they got bored
my girlfriend was murdered here
David said
and pointed at the box where the shot was fired
in the center of the lot stood a monument:
here on August 22, 1943 Hitler murdered 17,000 Jews
Uncle David started to tell about Helen's grandfather
how he pushed away the guards
and stood erect
with a child in each arm
till the bullets came
but Helen wasn't listening
she was standing beside the monument
setting her lens for a shot
she snapped but it was empty

on the way back to Warsaw
Uncle David spoke German —
staying in Poland he said
had been a mistake
he wouldn't make again
while Yulik dozed
Helen rolled out her film
taped it shut and stuck it in a box:
on the outside she wrote "Shedlitz"
then she dropped it in her purse
and looked out the window
and didn't say anything

it was the curse of knowing her name.

Reviews

Books

A Card From Morocco, by Robert Shaw, Harcourt, Brace, & World, $4.95.

Robert Shaw has many faces. American movie audiences first became aware of him as the silent blonde killer in the James Bond thriller, "From Russia With Love," later as Henry VIII in Paul Scofield's "A Man For All Seasons." British audiences have for some time followed Mr. Shaw's successful stage career in roles ranging from Shakespeare to Pinter. But in addition to his considerable talent as an actor, Mr. Shaw is gaining a steadily growing reputation as a novelist and playwright — his play, "The Man In The Glass Booth" is considered the most important serious drama currently to be found on Broadway.

A Card From Morocco, Mr. Shaw's fifth novel (his *The Sun Doctor* was awarded the Hawthornden Prize in 1962) is the story of a deepening friendship between two men. The action is set in Spain where, for various reasons, each man is stranded. Slattery, the American, and a painter by profession, is in Spain because he has been expelled from most of the other European countries, and because his father sends him money in order to prevent his returning to America. Lewis, the Englishman, is a dropout from the British Foreign Service, with a sad history of marriage failures — one wife left in England, one in India, and one in Spain.

Both men have amazing problems, most having to do with the opposite sex. I note with some satisfaction, however, that homosexuality is *not* one of their problems — here is simply the tale of the progress of an extraordinarily deep male friendship.

The style is simple and straightforward — conversations between Lewis and Slattery ring true, as if they had been overheard. They are real men talking to each other. But overheard conversations are sketchy at best and rarely serve to create complete characters. I found myself needing to know both men better, and felt their problems were somehow out of proportion to the slight understanding of the men which Shaw allows the reader.

I wish that Mr. Shaw had gone deeper and farther with his two characters, but this is his style; his Man in the Glass Booth is never completely understood, either. That may be, after all, the most real quality of his characters.

Reviewed by Barbara Benham

The Glass House: The Life of Thodore Roethke, by Allan Seager, McGraw-Hill, 301 pp., $7.95.

Mallarmé wrote of Poe that after his death "Eternity at last changes him into himself." Put more prosaically, a poet's life is primarily in his poems, most truthfully in his poems, and his personal life is largely irrelevant. But many admirers of Roethke's work have long been exasperated by the fragmentary and minimal biographical information available. Into this breach comes Seager's biography. This first full-length account of Roethke's life is not exhaustive: in the very process of answering many questions about Roethke, the book implicitly raises others.

Allan Seager's own achievements as a teacher and novelist are brought to bear on the biography. It is the novelist's gift for rendering setting that re-creates so vividly the small town milieu of Roethke's home in Saginaw and the all-important childhood which was such a fertile source of poetic raw material for him. Seager's experiences in universities enabled him to write with insight about Roethke's teaching career. For the poet, it was a necessary way to earn a living, but he did not approach teaching merely as an odious obligation imposed by economic circumstance. He loved it and hated it, and brought to it the furious energy, effort and sensitivity which characterized his life. In return, he evoked affection, awe, respect and hard work from his students. At the root of his teaching was the neo-Romantic belief that animates so much of his poetry. As a teacher, wrote Roethke, "my particular function, put briefly . . . is a constant effort to recover the creative powers lost in childhood." And again, "Teaching at its very highest is . . . like the dance."

Seager is especially interested in the episodes of emotional illness that recurrently hospitalized Roethke throughout his life. He does not presume to diagnose the causes of the sickness, but he suggests them, and the reader is left to form his own conclusions (one of which may be that modern medicine still knows frighteningly little about the causes and cures of mental illness). The absence of dogmatism is one of the special graces of this book. Seager is not one of those "tiresome pontificators who prate of poetry" that Roethke himself detested, and his book is refreshingly devoid of academic-critical cant and cliches about poetry, poets, or the relation of a poet's work to his life.

Some aspects of the book are unsatisfactory. Roethke's relationships with women are treated too superficially. The obsessive relationship to his father, obvious to even a casual reader of the poems, is constantly reiterated. But to stress repeatedly that it was important is not to explore its complexities or to explain its nature. Toward the end of the book, too many pages are devoted to a chronicling of Roethke's travels, awards and meetings with famous literary people, without explanation of the meaning of these events for the poet.

As a personal friend of Roethke, Seager has perhaps too uncritical an admiration for the poet to permit the objectivity necessary to a biographer. Yet even his loving bias cannot obscure the reader's impression that Theodore Roethke was coarse, self-centered, vain, boorish, petty, guilt-ridden, and totally uninterested in anything but his own career. It may be that for the more admirable side of the poet, we must indeed, as Mallarmé suggests, look to the poems.

Reviewed by Margaret Vanderhaar

Melville and Authority, Nicholas Canaday, Jr., University of Florida, 62 pp.

In this well written little book, Nicholas Canaday, Jr. explores Melville's attitude toward authority and finds that it is a dominant and increasingly important theme in Melville's novels and romances through 1851. Canaday defines "authority" as the "power, vested by the warrant of moral right or legal right, in persons or groups, which coerces those subject to it in the spheres of belief and action." The early romances are concerned with the authority of state, church, society. Warranted authority is accepted by Melville's narrators albeit rather begrudgingly; abused authority meets with open rebellion. The theme of authority culminates in *Moby Dick* (1851) in which the authority of state, church, and society is replaced by the authority of God. In this instance, the narrator cannot judge and therefore either accept or reject, because the authority of God is inscrutable.

Canaday redeems Melville's early novels from their traditional classification and subsequent dismissal as mere travel books and examines them for their relevance in Melville's development of his theme of authority. In his works prior to 1851, Melville establishes a pattern of revolt. He also satirizes ineffectual as well as tyrannical authority as represented by sea captains, the church, and various forms of government ranging from absolute monarchy to democracy.

According to Canaday, *Moby Dick* (1851), which is concerned with the authority of God, summarizes the lesser authorities of the earlier novels since they all claim sanction from this higher one. Canaday states that the narrators in Melville's novels are not separate characters, but are all one character with different names, and that this one narrator is to be equated with Melville. This identification I find to be a weakness in the book. He may be correct, but Dr. Canaday offers no evidence nor any sources that might substantiate his claim.

Another weakness exists in Canaday's contention that much of the theme of authority can be found in the Biblical meaning of the name "Ishmael." The problem here is that although Melville certainly must have intended for the reader's impression of Ishmael to be colored by his Biblical predecessor, it is presumptious to interpret the characters as being identical and that therefore whatever is applicable to one is equally applicable to the other. Further, Canaday quotes only the first few lines of Genesis 16:12 to explain the significance of the name — " 'And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.' " Canaday thus concludes that Melville's Ishmael will be a "rover and by his nature oppose the coercing restrictions of authority." Canaday ignores the line in Genesis 16:12 which

Perspective

Fiction Without A Culture

by Thomas Parkinson

A good many novels have crossed my desk during the past several months, and the American novels especially seem to have a common quality that I think can best be understood by contrasting them with one novel especially by a Canadian and secondarily with another novel written by a Jamaican. Jamaica and Canada are at present living through a crisis of cultural identity of the first magnitude, and we have all heard the difficulties that have arisen from Quebec's interest in independence from the rest of Canada; I doubt, however, that most Americans realize that the Canadian identity crisis is not confined to the French-speaking area, but also includes the province of British Columbia immediately to our north. A Canadian living in, say, Montreal is presented with several cultural options: the first is the option of French identity as a separate unit in the North American continent; the second is a continuation of the Anglo-Saxon domination of Canada that comes from the long period of British rule; the third is the power of the giant to the south who needs desperately the iron ore and the nickel with which northeastern Canada is well equipped; and the fourth is some kind of national identity that manages to accommodate the variety of cultural options, each of them legitimate and valid, and having as a unifying force a sense of Canada as a land in the custody of men not to be exploited in the interests of international capital rather than human interests. These are real and legitimate options that any intelligent and responsible man living in Canada finds himself faced with. Hence in making up the contours of his life, choosing his vocation, and making his political alignments, the Canadian is responding to a genuine cultural situation.

I don't think that anyone can say the same thing about the novels written by Americans now, and especially those written by young Americans who are responding to what one may call the cultural situation of the United States. Some years ago there was a very funny controversy between Lionel Trilling and Delmore Schwartz and John Aldridge, the chief issue being whether it was possible to have a novel without manners. This at the time seemed to me a ridiculous argument that was won by Delmore Schwartz, who took the term manners and ridiculed it in a very proper fashion. I have always been puzzled by the idea that the novel is a genuinely serious artistic force — there are masterpieces written in the form, and it has a certain interest and validity for those who are concerned with social history. But the petty questions that are commonly raised by people that talk about the novel in the abstract seem to me confining and trivial. Perhaps it is best to look on the novel as a part of social history and as an index of the relation between the individual that is the novelist and the society that is his subject matter. D. H. Lawrence once said that the novel treated the point where the soul meets history, and certainly in the great novels like *The Charterhouse of Parma* or *War and Peace* or *The Rainbow* or *Women In Love*, this is the true subject matter. But with the current American novel, with a few honorable exceptions, one begins to wonder whether it is not a question of the psychology of men meeting their sociology rather than of the soul meeting history.

I find myself driven to speculating about the nature of the cul-

does not support his argument. The last line, "and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethern," apparently contradicts Canaday's interpretation of Ishmael as a wanderer and as an outcast. If Canaday means that Ishmael will be spiritually or emotionally isolated even while in the physical presence of his brothers, it would have been well to have made that point clear.

Canaday also uses the above passage to conclude that Ishmael's being cast off by Abraham was predetermined and thus Melville's Ishmael is "the subject of God's inscrutable authority." However, the omitted line negates the supposition that Ishmael's being cast out was predetermined. A better example of the Biblical Ishmael's fate's having been predetermined would be God's promise to Hagar in Genesis 21:18 that He will make her son "a great nation." That example, however, does not coincide with Canaday's assumption that whatever is said of one Ishmael applies as well to the other.

Canaday argues that Ishmael's reason for going to sea is his "melancholy brought about primarily because he lacks a strong moral principle. This principle is the authority (in other guises, in earlier books) that he has searched for but never found." Canaday states that Ishmael places himself "under the authority of a ship captain" as a substitute for this moral principle. Ahab ironically is immoral and therefore a poor substitute.

Another reason for Ishmael's going to sea is the lure of the sea which is interpreted by Canaday as the sea's mystery which Canaday associates with "devine authority in his (Ishmael's) own life, which constitutes the ultimate mystery." Ishmael's association of the sea with the ultimate mystery is further supported by the distinction between what the white whale represents to Ishmael and what it represents to Ahab. Moby Dick was a symbol of "divine malice" for Ahab, whereas it symbolized "inscrutability" for Ishmael. Canaday quotes from the chapter on the duality of whiteness as proof that, to Ishmael, Moby Dick represents inscrutability. Canaday states that "whiteness is inscrutable, the veil of God." Man's response to whiteness then as good or as evil depends upon his own consciousness. The mystery is that good and evil are interwoven and thus covered by the "veil of inscrutability."

Even though Ishmael submits nominally to Captain Ahab who has "proudly and consciously assumed whatever authority derives from the power of the evil will, . . . he still remains apart from Ahab's monomanical pursuit and ultimately recognizes it for what it is . . . . His temporary allegiance to the authority of Captain Ahab is a means by which he hopes to discover the meaning of a higher authority. Ishmael's aim, as indicated by his discussion of the whiteness of the whale, is to draw aside the veil of God." Ishmael does not participate in Ahab's final attack on Moby Dick, nor does he accept Starbuck's orthodox religion. Ishmael remains skeptical. He is not provided with the answers. Both the evil Ahab and the moral Starbuck perish by God's wrath, "and the import of the novel is that the authority of God is inscrutable . . . . It is not in this life that the mystery of God's authority is to be revealed."

Reviewed by Jo Agnew McManis

Bloodline, by Ernest Gaines. The Dial Press, Inc., $4.95.

There are five stories in this volume and they are like five sculptures in a setting; each is distinct, its own, but there is one unifying landscape. The book is a part of the *Winesberg, Ohio-Dubliners* genre.

The landscape is Louisiana, the time is the thirties and forties. Partly it's plantation life in the newer South and it ain't moonlight

Perspective . . . continued

ture or of the cultural problems that the current American novel embodies. If one were a sociologist or an anthropologist from Mars who in some way could read English and knew something of the traditions of the various Western languages and one were to read a representative group of novels written by Americans during any given month, the response would be that these were people living without a culture in contrast with, let's say, Hugh MacLennan's Canadian novel *The Return of the Sphinx*, which is a genuine embodiment of cultural problems and options and does show the human soul meeting history in a significant and passionately moving manner. Or in contrast also with *This Island Now* by Peter Abrahams, which shows the troubles and anxieties attendant upon striving to find some sort of meaningful action within the context of a recently liberated colonial island that has many parallels with Jamaica, the place of origin of Mr. Abrahams. The American novels as a group do not seem to refer to anything outside themselves, and perhaps my favorite example of this is a novel called *The Creep* from Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Now Farrar Straus is one of the most able and inventive publishing companies, and I am sure that the novel has a great deal of virtue to recommend it or they would not have printed it. The Creep is the hero of the novel and he has a personal identity crisis — he goes to a large city which is rather like New York and finds that he has no real identity, that nobody knows him and nobody knows his name, but after he has been living there for a period of time and he has gone through several comic adventures, he discovers that he does indeed have an identity and that everywhere he goes he is recognized as the Creep. Well, this is fine and an amusing idea, but does it really have any kind of human resonance beyond an adolescent resonance? Perhaps novels really are written only for adolescents, and perhaps only people who are emotionally retarded at the age of fifteen are capable of taking them with the sort of seriousness they merit. But there are novels that attract grown men and attract them for good reasons, and the cultural conditions in this country simply don't seem to arouse the kind of response in writers of fiction that would lead grown men to take them seriously. My own suspicion is that this is true of the whole of Western Europe and that the major fictional literature of the generation in which we now live is in the process of being formed in places like Nigeria, India, the Philippines, Jamaica — the various places where men are really striving for something other than a merely personal identity, and where the problems are of such urgency that each person has to make a large commitment within the cultural choices available to him, and where neo-Freudianism, for instance, is looked on as a peculiar aberration of the American upper middle-class. I don't personally mind the aberrations of the upper middle-class American, since some of my best friends, including my wife and children, are members of that select and miserable group. It is still a fact that the human meaning of the troubles of this very small group in the total population of the world at present is totally uninteresting. Those of us who deal with young people who are going through what is called an identity crisis, and almost all of them are, find that this is really an unimportant matter, important only to the person suffering from it and those who are interested in his well-being, his parents and his teachers. But there is something disturbing about the fact that this enormously wasteful and wealthy society has so arranged things that the young people have no legitimate cultural options which they can exercise, so that one yearns for a society where these options are meaningful. Perhaps only American Negroes have a real cultural problem of the first magnitude, and it may be that they — like members of other cultures than American culture — are going to be the ultimate source of the best literature that this country may produce in the next twenty-five years or so.

If one thinks of the novel in that very old-fashioned phrase as a criticism of life, the American novels that are now appearing are not criticisms of American life but negations of it. In so acting, the novelists are participating in the general sense of being ill-at-ease in their country that many Americans now feel. If there are no viable options other than acceding to and accepting the monolith that is American society, or perhaps blob is a better word than monolith, or simply opting out into some imaginary and perhaps nonexistent culture, then these novels are accurate reflections of the American cultural situation; and the only possible diagnosis is that the American cultural situation is perhaps worse than its most violent critics have assumed it to be.

Now in connection with this I have a novel before me called

and magnolias, more moonshine and mustard greens. But Gaines has told about this particular place so truly and well that the part is as big as the whole. He does not strain to create figures of mythic proportion, but several of the figures achieve this.

There is Aunty Fe in "Just Like a Tree," as big as the tree she resembles, and Mumford, teaching of manhood in "Three Men." And there is the title story, "Bloodline." Comparisons with Faulkner and other Southern writers are not necessarily inevitable and not necessarily useful, but the fact remains that Faulkner's imagination touched and transformed the agrarian South so awesomely that writers and readers of this world remain under his shadow. In writing of the conflict between the old order and the new, Gaines achieves two or three granite and final figures with old Amalia and Felix, Negroes, and Frank Laurent, the weak plantation owner, and brings us to the swelling, inevitable conflict that does not finally abort.

It is the handling of violent confrontation through such figures which must derive from the same source as Faulkner's (e.g., *Absalom, Absalom,* or *Delta Autumn*). But Gaines works in his own way and never with the rhetoric, the incantation of Faulkner.

There is a mature, comic sense in most of these five stories, especially in "A Long Day in November." This is told by a young Negro boy, maybe a first-grader, with typical problems: he wets his pants; he doesn't know his lessons in school; and he is confused and puzzled by his parents. Gaines hoists magnificent, broad pictures on believable emotions. The scene where the boy's father has to burn his beloved automobile to get back in the good grace of his wife is a small masterpiece.

Bloodline follows two novels by Gaines, *Catherine Carmier* and *Of Love and Dust*. It is fine and professional and deserves a wide audience.

Reviewed by William Mills

The Sleep of Reason, by C. P. Snow. Scribners. XX pp., $XX

This is the tenth in C. P. Snow's "Strangers and Brothers" novel-sequence. Taken together, these ten books stand as a monumental achievement, following the lives and fortunes of certain members of British society and dealing, along the way, with a number of pertinent modern problems. It is perhaps inevitable that when anyone writes ten novels about the same people, some of the novels are going to be weaker than others. This is one of the weak ones.

Its weakness is not simply in the fact that by now we are overly-familiar with the names in it. What begins as a thoroughly frustrating and tiring book becomes even more frustrating as one realizes that the first two-hundred pages could be omitted without any significant loss to the novel.

In these first two-hundred pages, Snow begins the readers sense of frustration as he fails to identify his central character fully enough, leaving the characters past problems and present notoriety only hinted at and never explained. The reader who has recently been through the earlier novels of the series will recognize Lewis Eliot and will recall his past experiences, but other readers are left to wonder.

Snow spends an inordinate amount of time filling the reader in on other members of Eliot's family and his social circle, an irrelevant love-triangle, and an unsatisfactory hassle about the role of the modern university regarding students' sex lives, and an incredible amount of time is spent dwelling on an eye operation.

The second half of the book is about a murder trial. Two girls in their early twenties, seeking further thrills than sex can give, kidnap, torture and kill a little boy. The trial becomes a systematic attempt by society to define human responsibility. This part of the book is quite interesting, tightly written, and relevant, but half-a-book is not enough. Perhaps, in his next novel, Snow will abandon the "Strangers and Brothers" sequence and tackle whatever

Perspective . . . continued

The Free Lance Pallbearers by Ishmael Reed published by Doubleday and Company. *The Free Lance Pallbearers* is certainly a very interesting book that has a kind of wild, free humor rather in the manner of William Burroughs. It is also a novel by a Negro and it has some of the vitality that Negro language has. It also has some of the wildness that we associate with writers like Burroughs and Richard Brautigan. The publisher has a dust jacket on the book which is their idea of what is going on in the book, though experienced writers write the dust jacket themselves and don't let publishers fool around with it. The dust jacket points out that the land of Harry Sam, which is the milieu of the novel, is perhaps recognizable to most Americans. Well, yes it is, and that is one of the tragedies of our life at present. It is a world without reason — it has no reason for existing, and nothing that happens in it has any reason for happening, except that it happens. My own feeling is that the madness described in this book is roughly equivalent to the madness described in *Time* magazine and *Newsweek*, except that its language is the language that most people use when they are not talking for publication. Beyond this, however, it has some of the special qualities of Negro language, and I would like to digress from the book for a moment and talk about the problems of Negro language.

Kenneth Clark, the distinguished Negro psychologist, has described the problem of Negro language rather well, and though I am quoting from conversation and incidental things that I have read by him, I don't think I am distorting his point of view. The Negro has a language, which is his own, and he has another language with which he confronts white people, and that is the language taught in schools and demanded of bank clerks and store clerks and other people who meet the public in some linguistic patterns. Clark says that this kind of English should be taught to Negroes as a second language, a sort of English for foreigners within the country, and this seems to me a very sensible idea if it allows the Negro to maintain the language of his home, the language of his associates, and see the possibilities within it for creative invention. I was talking recently to an administrator at a major university who asked me what special contribution Negroes could make to the culture of the college, and I replied that their language was the main thing that was from the point of view of literary art important, and I cited papers that I had read written by students in the ninth grade in the Berkeley Public School System, which had a great vitality and urgency of spirit. I conceded that they were not written in the syntax in which I speak and write, and that is the normal syntax of professors and doctors and lawyers and people of that sort, but I pointed out that in spite of all my efforts my own syntax remains rather deadly and incapable of invention, unless I am writing poetry. He replied that the language of Negroes was precisely the thing that he wanted to erase; he wanted Negroes to learn to speak exactly the language of the professor, the doctor, the lawyer, the businessman— in other words, he wanted to destroy their linguistic culture and in the process destroy their culture at its base. I told him I was very sorry but that I had to go off and milk a goat, and I left his office with great good cheer and went on to better activities.

Now this kind of stupidity among white people is hopeless, and it simply has to be changed. Kenneth Clark's idea of a double standard is perhaps the best compromise that can be made on the subject of Negro language, and it seems to me in many ways to be a bad idea. For instance, if one reads James Baldwin's first novel, which is full of the vitality and raciness of the speech of Negroes, and then turns to his more recent work, even though a book like *Another Country* seems to me a very fine book, one realizes that something has been lost: it's as if one tried to get Yeats to write Oxford English rather than the English of Sligo and Dublin, which was the chief source of his glory as a poet.

With this in mind, it seems to me that Ishmael Reed's first book is a very promising and interesting book. I suspect that when I read the second book I will do what all people who review books do and say that oh dear, wouldn't it be nice if it was like the first one. My sincere hope is that his second book will not be like the first one; it seems to me that his first book is a very conventional book, in spite of its use of the dialect and idiom that he has learned from the cradle. It seems to me a book that could just as well have been written by a committee that worked on Negro idiom plus the concept of William Burroughs, plus the wildness of Richard Brautigan, and put it into a computer. Mr. Reed is a much better writer than that, and I suppose that his next book might take up the genuine cultural conflicts that he and people like him face all the time, so that he might make a contribution to the coming literature of the United States that would be perhaps a

philosophical issue he sets for himself with a new cast of characters who will not be bogged down with the problems brought with them from earlier books.

Reviewed by Barbara Benham

Bruder Jesus, by Schalom ben-Chorin, Paul List Verlag, Munich, 1967, 249 pp., DM 21.80.

At the 1963 convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, central coordinating body of Reform Judaism in America, the Union's president advocated that Judaism reclaim Jesus unto itself, that the personality and the teachings of the first-century rabbi from Nazareth be taught in synagogues and religious schools as part of the heritage of Judaism. He was challenged immediately by the president of Reform Judaism's rabbinical seminary, who maintained that it would be a grave mistake for organized Judaism, after two millennia, to suddenly begin to take formal notice of Jesus.

The debate between these two rabbinical leaders reflects the ambivalence felt within Judaism about Jesus. Many Jews have always been attracted, not to Jesus as Messiah or Son of God, which claims most Jewish scholars would deny he ever made regarding himself, but to the life of service to others that he led and to the ethical teachings, derived completely from Jewish sources, that he enunciated. To many Jews who think along these lines, Jesus is the arch-typical Jew, the man who remains a witness to the presence of God and His moral law in the world, even to the point of enduring pain and death that God may be glorified. There are, on the other hand, Jews to whom Jesus does not appeal, not because of anything he said or did, but because of the many crimes that have been committed against Jews in his name. This type of Jew prefers to ignore him, saying that since the time of Paul he has belonged not to Jewry but to the non-Jewish world; let him remain undisturbed, therefore, in the bosom of those who have chosen to revere him.

Schalom ben-Chorin, a German-Jewish essayist resident in Jerusalem for over thirty years, is a spokesman for the first class of Jew. Ben-Chorin is a lay leader of the Reform Jewish community in Jerusalem, and is the author of *Conversations with Martin Buber* (in German). In his present work, *Bruder Jesus* (Brother Jesus), ben-Chorin draws upon a quotation from Buber for his title: "From my youth, I have regarded Jesus as my great brother." *Bruder Jesus* is a portrayal of Jesus from a Jewish perspective; the material preserved in the gospel narrative is supplemented by extensive quotations from the rabbinic literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, dating from roughly the same period. The man who emerges is not the johannine Logos, or the Second Person of the Trinity. Neither is he the Messiah, nor a prophet in the Old Testament sense, nor the single Righteous One who takes upon himself the sins of mankind. For ben-Chorin Jesus is one of the central figures of Jewish religious consciousness, one of the greatest of the witnesses to the covenant that links Israel to God. A revolutionary of the heart, Jesus did not seek to overthrow the Law of Judaism, but rather to give witness to the unity of law and love in Jewish faith. Though the belief *in* Jesus divides Jews from Christians, ben-Chorin says, the faith *of* Jesus is what can unite them. "We see him still, the Jew upon the cross," the author writes. "His voice rings through the centuries: 'What you have done to the least of my brothers, that you have done to me.' "

This is the finest book of its kind that I have read. Its purpose is not mere scholarship, or apologetics, but it is pervaded throughout with a truly religious spirit that speaks to both Jews and Christians. The Christian is led to an understanding of the Jewish milieu out of which Jesus sprang, and to which he remained ever true, while the Jew is led to an appreciation of a noble personality who should never have been lost to Judaism. The author's German style is a pleasure to read, and his ability to bring details of New

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guide post for others. He has the intelligence, he has the talent, and he has the energy: what he has to do is take all this and put it in the service of something that is genuinely relevant to the interests of mature people; there is something to say for the idea that a novel ought to be written so that a grown man can read it without feeling embarrassed about indulging himself in the kinds of fantasies he lived in when he was fifteen years old. This is of all the books I have read by American novelists recently one of the best, and it is so much one of the best that I wish these energies would be directed toward something that would present an image of human life that is not just a parody of the sort of nonsense that we get in the mass media.

Closely allied to Mr. Reed's first novel is Norman Mailer's *Why Are We in Viet Nam?*: it uses the same extended permissions of vocabulary that have marked out literature since the trials surrounding *Lady Chatterley's Lover, Howl,* and *Tropic of Cancer*. It also has the same nervous discontinuous narrative movement interrupted by interjections, frivolous interventions, arbitrary voices. It is surprising to remember, on reading these two books, that a few years back William Burrough's *Naked Lunch* was accessible only by importation from the Olympia Press of Paris. Now his work is easily available in paperback and he has become a major figure in the literary imagination and a primary influence on American fiction. Mailer reflects this, and he has in preceding works reflected the technique of Dos Passos, Kafka, Hemingway, Kerouac — sometimes Mailer's work seems an anthology of dominant styles from the panoramic designs of Dos Passos to the free psychological picaresque of Burroughs. Mailer does not pretend to originality; any stick is good enough to beat a mule, and he takes what comes to hand.

In this book even more than in earlier ones he is beating a mule; he is following Ed Sanders' advice and conducting a total assault on American culture. The assault is evident in the continuous insults directed toward the reader and the unrelenting presentation of Texas in the most obscenely offensive terms that the language provides. Fortunately for Texas, those terms and their possible combinations are limited, though their limitations do not make the occasion any more fortunate for the reader. Further, the book drives ever more deeply into Mailer's obsession — already evident in *An American Dream* — with finding the absolute base of experience, base in the conventional sense, base in the sense of an absolute reduction of experience to the limits of taste and smell, base too in the sense of the further implied reduction to the forms of molecular biology. Reading reviews of the book is a curious and frustrating experience — the book itself is not what one would call a pleasure but it is a radically illuminating adventure.

In the first place, it is a book that shows Mailer's sense of sexuality in a glaring clear light. Anyone who finds the sexuality of the people in this book attractive should not be allowed to read it — he has something very wrong with him. Far from being conducive to sexual activity, the book is a powerful inhibitor; far from making the sexual act attractive, it makes it uncomfortably disgusting. The Reichean search for the orgasm that motivated *The Deer Park* and was shown to be inadequate in *An American Dream* was a barren ideal, literally barren in its implied isolated sterility, its end in an end. Here that sterility becomes even more evident. In treating sexuality, American novelists have tended to despise it because it is generative and related to the continuity of the species. Only by isolating it from that continuity could they properly express their basic subject, the contempt for the biological community. Mailer has taken this subject as far as it can go, into the world of absolute zero where the ideals resemble those of low temperature physics.

Anyone puzzled by the title *Why Are We in Viet Nam?* while reading the book shouldn't worry — on completing the book he will understand. At least, he *should* understand. Unfortunately, defenders of the book miss the point as often as its most violent detractors. For this is a novel of people who lack not only a culture but a biological community. Son is separated from father, husband from wife, comrade from comrade — the only possible camaraderie is a camaraderie of death, inflicting it without, carrying and cherishing it within. These are human beings with total control over their environment and total irresponsibility. They suffer, but their suffering is the isolated pain of the damned — it is not functional, does not purge, has no salvation in the offing. The knowledge that the narrator wins through to in the final passages is smug, secret, deadly for himself and murderous for others. His sensitivity to others has been ultimately excised — he has no inner life except his secret knowledge that he carries and can

Testament scholarship to the ken of the general reader constitutes an enviable achievement.

Ben-Chorin's presentation of Jesus does not agree in every particular with my own interpretation, but throughout his book he relies upon sound scholarly opinion. Bornkamm, Bultmann, Carmichael and Winter are among the contemporary gospel scholars that have been consulted. The one major area which I think the author has neglected is a consideration of the cultic aspects of the Crucifixion; viz., the very real possibility that Jesus wished to die as a sacrificial offering that would initiate a "new age" in salvation history, just as Isaac had died (according to certain ancient interpretations of Genesis 22) to initiate the previous age. The description of the events preceding the Crucifixion led certain scholars at the turn of the century (e. g., Paul Wendland) to recall the customs connected with the Roman Saturnalia, when a "Carnival King" was sometimes invested with mock royal regalia and then scourged and put to death as a "substitute" in place of the actual king or ruler. Similar customs were observed from time to time in the ancient Near East. Not too much attention has been paid in recent years to these interpretations, but I am convinced that they have much to recommend them. The Crucifixion and the events leading up thereto can be best explained, I feel, by a combination of circumstances: Jesus' own desire to die to initiate the new age, the desire of the authorities to rid themselves of one more potential organizer of armed rebellion, and the cultic usefulness, from the standpoint of pagan folk belief, of slaying a "substitute king" in order that the real rulers might survive.

Bruder Jesus is an important book, one that deserves wide circulation and reading. It is to be hoped that an English version will soon appear, one that will preserve the tone of the original — its lucidity, its scholarship and its true and deep spirituality.

Reviewed by Roy A. Rosenberg

Jewish Philosophy In Modern Times, by Nathan Rotenstreich, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 282 pp., $6.50.

Kant declared that he deliberately avoided cultivating style in his philosophic writing, because he wished his readers to pay close attention to the nuances of his thought and not be beguiled by the superficialities of literary style. Nathan Rotenstreich, Rector of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and distinguished scholar and writer in the philosophy of the modern era, seems to have taken Kant's example to heart in *Jewish Philosophy in Modern Times,* for there is little attempt to make the material come alive for the general reader. More particularly, there is no discussion of the lives of the eleven major thinkers whom he analyzes, and of how their thought may have flowed from their personal experiences.

Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) deserves the credit for initiating the modern age of Jewish religious thought. An interpreter of Kant, Mendelssohn taught that the metaphysical foundation for a doctrine of God is to be searched out, not in Judaism or in any other revealed religion, but in philosophical speculation that is purely rational and non-denominational. The religion of Judaism, he said, is a system of "revealed legislation." By subsuming religion under law and ethics, Rotenstreich says, Mendelssohn reduced Judaism to dimensions that satisfy the moral mind but not the religious temper. "If Judaism defines only what is right and wrong in action but not what is true and false in beliefs, and if the laws of the Torah are not indispensable to salvation, why should Jews continue to abide by them?" Though the author faults Mendelssohn for thus vitiating the function of religion, the fact is that Mendelssohn strikes a chord which has always been prominent in Judaism. The Talmud already quotes God as saying, "Would that

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spread death. D. J. — the narrator — is a Texan Typhoid Mary carrying a disease that makes a typhoid plague seem like a wine-tasting party.

It's impossible not to admire this book. If it infuriates, enrages, and disgusts some readers, that is exactly as it should be — even sympathetic readers should be infuriated and disgusted not only by the actions of the book but also by the cultural conditions that have led the most distinguished mind in my generation that has lent all its powers to working in fiction to a book of this sort. This book simply defies all the categories of evaluation — it's not a good or a bad book but an existent object, something inevitably made out of the debris of what once could be called American Culture. It is dealing with an unspeakable foulness. Why Are We in Viet Nam? Because the United States has destroyed itself within and, in the full panoply of its power, is destroying as much of the world outside itself as it can drop bombs on. Is this a culture, in any sense of the term, or is it a throbbing mass of malice and self-contempt? Mailer shows all the designs and values of human life being ground under and ultimately assimilated into a world of absolute zero.

Mailer's work raises certain basic questions about American fiction, and the principal one is "Are people like Baldwin, Mailer, Heller, Bellow, and Burroughs trying to write novels?" Because if they are, then they are like men flailing in the dark against a possibly imagined enemy — they can't expect to hit the mark, if there were one to hit. My assumption is that they are not, in any conventional sense of the term, interested in the art of the novel. They are willing to use it, its techniques and conventions, much as the Department of Naval Ordinance is willing to use the technique and conventions of physical science, in order to wage war. Art as a weapon seems quaintly archaic as a notion but this is precisely the notion at stake. To think of art as an instrument of understanding and knowledge implies that there is something knowable and worthy of contemplation, that there is something out there that has meaning and is not merely an enemy. Artists take up art as a weapon only when menaced.

It is startling to turn from Mailer's extraordinary polemics to the gracious, low-keyed, thoughtful, even contemplative novel by Hugh MacLennan, *The Return of the Sphinx.* This is a novel of Canada, by a Canadian, that answers to the problems raised by the conclusion of Northrup Frye's lectures at the time of the Canadian Centennial celebration in 1967. Frye's lectures in *The Modern Century* betray the basic queasiness that cultivated Canadians experience when they consider the possibility of entering the modern world, as willy-nilly they are. He points out that

> One of the derivations proposed for the word Canada is a Portuguese phrase meaning "nobody here." The etymology of the word Utopia is very similar, and perhaps the real Canada is an ideal with nobody in it. The Canada to which we really do owe loyalty is the Canada that we have failed to create .... I should like to suggest that our identity, like the real identity of all nations, is the one that we have failed to achieve .... What there is left of the Canadian nation may well be destroyed by the kind of sectarian bickering which is so much more interesting to many people than genuine human life. But, as we enter a second century contemplating a world where power and success express themselves so much in stentorian lying, hypnotized leadership, and panic-stricken suppression of freedom and criticism, the uncreated identity of Canada may be after all not so bad a heritage to take with us.

It is easy to idealize Canada, especially easy for Americans who have seen their own identity debased to the extent symbolized by Norman Mailer's *Why Are We in Viet Nam?* Mailer practically asks us to hold in mind both his narrator — D. J., disk jockey, electronic captive — and Huckleberry Finn, and as several commentators have pointed out, *Why Are We in Viet Nam?* is in the main line of mythology in the American novel, but much as a Black Mass is in the tradition of the Church of Rome. Frye argues that Canada has not effectively created the kind of vocal being that the United States has created and betrayed. His own book, all unconsciously, indicates why this should be so: it could as well have been written in Berkeley or New York or Chicago or Santa Barbara as in Toronto. It mentions more or less in passing all the O.K. books of contemporary culture and could be used as a reading list for those who want to be au courant. I don't mean that he doesn't say many relevant or important things — Frye is an extremely thoughtful and at times brilliant man; but his introduc-

men might stop speaking of Me, and instead keep My Law," and modern Jews, both professional thinkers and laymen, betray an instinctive lack of concern for metaphysical theology. The recent "God is dead" ferment in Christianity, for instance, made very little impression in Judaism, since most Jews did not consider the question important enough to discuss, except perhaps as an ephemeral curiosity symptomatic of the age in which we live.

The modern Jew's neglect of theology (as distinct from the very earnest interest of the medieval Jews of the Mediterranean littoral in the subject) is illustrated very nicely by the fact that, of the eleven philosophers whom Rotenstreich considers, the names of only four of them (Mendelssohn, Rosenzweig, Kook and Gordon), are familiar to any contemporary Jews save specialists. Of the others, S. D. Luzzato was an Italian mystic who followed Mendelssohn in teaching that ethics, with its divine imperatives, constitutes Judaism. Moritz Lazarus carried the process a step further by establishing ethics as an independent sphere in its own right. He said that ethics is not the content of religion, but that "religion is the arena for ethical activity and its most conspicuous expression." Hermann Cohen, the great interpreter of neo-Kantian idealism from the faculty of Marburg, developed the idea that religion is more than the formulation of moral principles and has an ontological ground not found in ethics. He taught that "ethics defines for itself its own God as the Guarantor of morality upon earth, but beyond this definition and the postulate of this idea, its means are of no avail. Through its trust in God, religion creates the ethical God-idea." Cohen was the dominant figure in Jewish philosophical thought at the turn of the century, but nowadays few pay him much heed.

After his discussion of Cohen, Rotenstreich turns to the Jewish disciples of Hegel; viz., Formstecher, Hirsch and Krochmal. These men spoke in terms of Judaism as a manifestation of the "world-soul," or "spirit," or the "absolute spiritual." Needless to say, these concepts have little appeal today. During the nineteenth century the chief Jewish opponent of idealistic philosophy was S. L. Steinheim, who sought to establish that Judaism is a product of Revelation. Paganism, he said, was a religion of reason, or natural religion, while Christianity is a mixture of the two. While the philosophical idealists have few followers today, Steinheim stands even more forlornly alone.

One of the German Jewish philosophers who still exerts an influence on contemporary Jews was Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929). Rotenstreich does not relate Rosenzweig's "conversion" experience: he had resolved, like many assimilated Jews of his time and place, to leave his ancestral faith and accept the more comfortable status offered by affiliation with Christianity, but he wished to formally take leave of Judaism by attending, for the last time, the service for the Day of Atonement. This time, however, the power of the liturgy reached him as it never had before, and he decided not only to remain with the faith in which he had been born, but he saw in it what he called "the star of redemption." God is the Creator, but He also reveals Himself to man, and through revelation He becomes the in-dwelling God, the Redeemer. The two basic facts of Jewish consciousness, Rosenzweig says, are that the Messiah has not yet come but the Kingdom of Heaven is already here and now. On the Sabbath the community feels as if the Redemption were already present, and the leap from the Kingdom of Heaven to the Kingdom of the Messiah already consummated. The Sabbath "is the recurrent festival of Creation, a Creation that took place for the sake of Redemption."

Judaism, Rosenzweig said, may be compared to the burning coals of a fire and Christianity to the leaping flames. The Christian community is en route between the beginning and the end of time, between the coming of the Messiah in the past and his advent in the future. The Jew has already reached his destination and lives his life at the end of the Way; the Christian, however, must begin his work every day anew in order to possess it. A Jew is born into the faith, the Christian must acquire it as he treads the

tion and coda, relating what he says to Canada, seem interventions. Using his book as an index, one would conclude that Canada is a library surrounded by wheat fields; and in that library is a very bright articulate person thoroughly at home in Western Culture — the culture constructed with so great labor over so long a period of time that it has to be called a civilization.

He does not mention MacLennan's work even in passing, and though it might seem a melancholy honor, rather like being the shrewdest Assyriologist in Salome-Where-She-Danced, MacLennan is the most serious Canadian novelist. Edmund Wilson thinks so, and as the *New York Review of Books* is alertly defensive to point out, he is never wrong, not even a little wrong. *The Return of the Sphinx* is a good book, one that does credit to the country of its origin. It is wise, perceptive, and finely imagined. In it there are figures that do not appear in *Why Are We in Viet Nam?* There are a brother and a sister who care about each other and a father who cares about them both. There are comrades and friends and lovers. There is a land, a generously scaled milieu, about which people care deeply. There are languages and customs and designs of life that have almost ritual sanction. It seems old-fashioned and quaint — the family summer home where so many years of shared affection have effectively sanctified the area; the man with a real job who genuinely wants to do something so that he can justify his conduct to himself; the comrades who have suffered through war and prison and see each other infrequently while maintaining their mutual love. None of these realities appear in Mailer's novel, though I suspect that Mailer himself envies a world where such realities are omnipresent and dominating. One curiosity about the novels is that they are about what should be called establishment people, those who make major decisions about the qualities of the human environment. D. J.'s father is a corporation executive; Alan Ainslie is a minister of the state. D. J. himself walks protected on all sides by a fur-lined womb; so does Ainslie's son. When D. J.'s father is in any sort of danger, a helicopter lifts him to safety, and while Ainslie is never in any physical danger, he has to take the responsibility for his actions — no deus ex machina for him except his love for his family and his land that permits his sacrifice and salvation. And those very words define differences: love, salvation, sacrifice, courage, vulnerability — these are all real entities in *The Return of the Sphinx* and present only by default in *Why Are We in Viet Nam?* When Ainslie's son ultimately takes his life in his own hands he does so by a violent action directed toward a human political world, and he goes to prison for it. The brief moment of vulnerability for D. J. puts him first in the comical position of a little boy and finally in a rage of misunderstood yearning for comradeship that leaves him frustrated in his own peculiar hell where he ends, as did Mailer's Sergeant Croft, hating all that is not himself, and thereby hating himself. When young Ainslie catches some fish out of his deep need for food, he throws the offal into the bushes for the small animals of the night. Animals are killed by D. J. and his companions as trophies and the only game they kill and eat is spoiled by their own incompetence.

The restless energy of Mailer being what it is, he will surely go on writing novels, though his energies have been turned more to some intellectual understanding of his environment lately. I am grateful for his *The Armies of the Night* and *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*, but it is grotesque to argue that they are really better than his two most recent novels; this is comparing apricots and umbrellas. Their function in the history of the novel is to turn the attention of novelists where it belongs — on the main problems of the culture. But white America cannot define its problems, let alone embody them in meaningful fictional terms, and largely because of the corruption of its being that results in books involved with personal identity crisis only. There are no individuals in these novels worth contemplating because individualism — the sense of the isolated self — does not foster personally meaningful life. A person is a complex of cultural forces that form an identity of which the self is not aware because it encompasses so much more than the mere self can. The great figures of fiction are always more than they know, and narrowing the ground of knowledge and being to the point of purity that makes the isolated self the only important reality can create silliness but not comedy, and messes but not tragedy.

MacLennan, Reed, Mailer, and Abrahams, each in a very different manner and tone, have shown a path that could restore fiction to its main purposes. But Mailer's genuine excellence is a very faint start, full of clues and indirections, not a stopping point. One can say the same of the other works, accurately, but the possible ranges of immediate growth appear larger.

path towards Christianity. Ideas such as these influenced Martin Buber, who collaborated with Rosenzweig on a beautiful German translation of the Hebrew Bible. (Inexplicably, Buber is not discussed by Rotenstreich in his book.) Rosenzweig has also influenced a number of contemporary Christians interested in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Rotenstreich does a service to his readers by discussing two Israeli thinkers whose ideas are not well known in the West, but who have much of interest to offer contemporary man. The first is Abraham Isaac Kook, the Chief Rabbi of Palestine who died in 1935. He developed no unified system of philosophy, but taught instead, in various aphorisms and sayings, a mystical pantheism. In reality there is no world, but only God who is present in all things and in whom all things live and move. The world is harmonious because God is Harmony; in it there is no distinction between the sacred and profane, for God is the Holy of Holies; it is a world of repentance because man is not removed from his origin but is immersed in the Source of all being. In the reflection of His radiance man fixes his gaze on the unchanging scene beyond the passing pageant.

A. D. Gordon (1856-1922) lived on a communal farm (kibbutz) and is the great teacher of the value of work upon the land. In his religious thought, Gordon was very much impressed by Buddhism. He was opposed to the view that regards religion as faith in Revelation. It is, rather, something that flows from human nature, from the point where man and nature meet. Religion does not come from without, but its source lies deep in the nation and its forms express the corporate soul of the nation as it develops its highest ideals. Gordon expresses the convictions of secular Zionism, and of many contemporary Israelis, when he emphasizes Judaism as the product of the national spirit of the Jewish people.

Rotenstreich closes his book with his discussion of these mystical thinkers. He does a disservice to his readers, however, in omitting such a thinker as Mordecai Kaplan, an American disciple of John Dewey, who has developed a thoroughgoing religious naturalism known as Reconstructionism that has greatly influenced contemporary Judaism. Most Jews today, whether orthodox or liberal, are highly secularized, rational and not in the least mystical. Some mention of this trend in Jewish thought should have been included. There should also have been more discussion of the role of the Jewish people and its destiny as analyzed by the various philosophers. Jews today are much more exercised over questions such as "who is a Jew," "what is unique about Jewish identity," "what is the meaning of Jewish history and destiny," than they are in the classic philosophical questions centering about the nature of God and revelation.

Reviewed by Roy A. Rosenberg

Man in the Glass Octopus by J. Michael Yates, Sono Nis Press, Vancouver, 109 pp. $5.00.

By now everyone knows that individualism is dead, and yet few writers have accepted the artistic challenge to create new literary forms that express the consciousness of our time. In his foreword to *Man in the Glass Octopus,* Robert Harlow points out that "for some time now, our literature has been dull, ordinary, repetitive and, above all, imitative . . . Our writers of prose, poetry and drama struggle with marvelous energy to use the consciousness of a generation ago to try to communicate how it is now." Modern man and his "expensive and complicated system of engines" has synthesized a world that demands a different literary sensibility. Kafka, Valery, Borges, Robbe-Grillett — like these, J. Michael Yates refuses to be anthropocentric. He explodes the myth of reality by refusing to regard the world as if it were the private property of the human race. *Man in the Glass Octopus* is not the literary equivalent of a new theory of milieu with socio-biological implications, but an "inquest" into the possibility of a new literature.

Yates is a newcomer to prose writing whose language — and for this he deserves to be made welcome — expresses the consciousness of the man of our time lost "in the slender glass nerve-ways" of a technological labyrinth where everything is possible, where the individual is himself a mere collection of possibilities. So, too, literature means possibilities for J. Michael Yates. He has written several dramas, a movie script, many radio-plays that have been broadcast both in Canada and Europe; and he has published *Hunt in an Unmapped Interior* and *Canticle for Electronic Music,* his most recent volumes of poetry.

The language of *Man in the Glass Octopus* is not the language of a beginner struggling through a jungle of words that threatens to engulf him. On the contrary, Yates uses words like an experienced surgeon his scalpel. His prose is sharp, incisive, self-conscious and detached. Yates records with the objectivity of the photographer. His sentences take on the shape of the object itself. Sometimes asymetrical, surreal almost, they congeal into an image, or streak like "Thunder of light/Across a naked lens." Yates' language is without ornament, without rhetorical flourish, without sentimentality. It is unemotional, cerebral, and reflects the cold and glassy neon-lit landscapes of our cities — our northern latitudes of the mind.

What distinguishes Yates' book is his technical virtuosity and imaginative use of point-of-view. *Man in the Glass Octopus* is a collection of twelve parables, paradoxes, stories or fictions. Sono Nis is the central consciousness of the book. As an author, Nis is master of ambiguities. He weaves in and out of focus, performing acrobatic tricks on the taught rope of consciousness that stretches from fiction to fiction. As a character, Nis is a master of disguise, appearing successively as runner, broadcaster, hunter, librarian, fighter, photographer. Sono Nis is everywhere: in the streets, the voice on the radio, crossing a desert, desecrating a temple, hunting in the regions of the polar north, waiting in the airport, searching in the library, working in the office, waiting in line to take examinations — until he finally emerges as the photographer taking pictures of himself. In a sense these fictions are the photos of Nis' consciousness, the moments of his passage through time and space.

Nis is all people. He is all possible points-of-view. In "The hunter who loses his human scent" he becomes aware of his moving "north" toward the zero latitudes of the mind where "all previous assumptions of order vanish suddenly; things become dislocated; emphases fall differently." Nis, the hunter, gradually loses his human attributes and turns into something other than human. The narrator finishes with an Epilogue, telling the reader some interesting facts about the effect of the cold on unsuspecting travelers: "A man, warmly dressed, in perfect health, mushing his dogs a short distance between two villages, never arrives . . . . While those who find the frozen man suspect the circumstances of his death, always they marvel that one so close to bed, warmth, food, perhaps family, could stray so easily into danger."

If his obsession with space drove the hunter to the polar regions of the north, it is the photographer's obsession with time that compels him to record the moments of his passage through space. In "an inquest into the disappearance and possible death of (the late) Sono Nis, photographer" we meet Nis armed with camera and x-ray equipment exploring his "Welteninnenraum" (inner space) in order to substantiate the authenticity of his possible existence or death. As the scholar, Sono Nis, inquisitor, who has edited the shredded remains of evidence that prove inconclusive, ironically comments: "Only a madman would obsess himself with peering inside himself in the first place: while he's doing so, he turns his back on all space outside himself. How can he expect to relate to anyone outside if he's gazing at his own gizzard?" Nis' problem is the problem of the artist of our time. Having become conscious of being conscious, where is there to go? The book ends appropriately with this sentence: "Not words. An act. I'm going to the darkroom."

Man in the Glass Octopus is a dance on a fictional rope in XII Acts. Sono Nis is the acrobat, and he delights as much as he frightens. His madness is our madness; his game is our game, a frightening game once we become conscious of it, for as Robert Harlow puts it: "To be conscious of one's consciousness is to woo insanity."

Perhaps Nis invented the author. Nothing is certain about this book or its publisher, the Sono Nis Press. But whoever Sono Nis might be, one thing is certain, J. Michael Yates has written an interesting book that opens the door to the possibility of a new literature. This is no small feat.

Reviewed by Peter Paul Fersch

Tunc, by Lawrence Durrell, E. P. Dutton, 1968, 359 pp.

Felix Charlock, the hero of Durrell's latest novel, shares many of the neuroses and characteristics of previous Durrell protagon-

ists. But unlike the others, Charlock is an inventor and a scientist, not a writer or a man of letters. He solves his problems, both internal and external, through the creation of actual physical objects, rather than through poetry or novels. Largely because of this, he is a man to be reckoned with in a way that Darley and Pursewarden were not, and *Tunc* emerges as an impressive documentation of the plight of the modern creative man, as he moves from indecisive founderings to self-expression, and finally, to escape from the society that he has helped to create. The novel stands as a more serious undertaking than anything of Durrell's to date.

The importance of the novel may be missed by the casual reader, because one reads so much of it with a sense of *déjà vu*. Durrell's witticisms, and his penchant for a narrative line that is almost opaque upon occasions, doubtless have much to do with this feeling. But it is finally the sequence of events, the structure of the novel, that confirm one's feelings about repetition. *Tunc* is a highly compressed version of the *Alexandria Quartet*, so much so that one can construct a sort of standard Durrell plot. In both works we are given creative, yet inexperienced, naive, and radically introspective heroes — Darley in the *Quartet*, and to a lesser extent Pursewarden and Mountolive, and Charlock in *Tunc*. This hero, Darley/Charlock, becomes entangled with the literati of Alexandria — now become Athens — and specifically with an enticing whore. She, Melissa in Alexandria, now Iolanthe in Athens, although possessing both heart and purse of gold, is deserted by Darley/Charlock for the greener pastures provided by Justine/Benedicta, mysterious and sexually enthralling ("tie my wrists to the bed darling") in a kind of kinky upper-class way. Such a heroine only simulates emotional involvement, however. She is controlled, owned, by Nessim/Julian, who has in *Tunc* migrated from occasional husband, casual cuckold, and enigmatic Copt to distant lover and relative. Julian, as he is now called, is again only half of a team, the other half being his ingenuous brother Jocas, a retread of Nessim's brother Nerouz. In both works the brothers operate vast and wealthy mercantile empires. While the simpler brother stays at home and tends the store — literally — Nessim/Julian diverts the resources of his gigantic empire into obscure political machinations that ultimately become overt in the Coptic-Zionist plotting of Nessim, but remain secret in *Tunc* — although they may be revealed with future novels, which Durrell admits may well follow. Our hero wanders through this bizarre and highly intriguing labyrinth and then exits, sadder, and hopefully wiser.

Darley indeed does this, but Charlock, towards the end of the novel, exemplifies the transformation that has taken place in the work and its characters. For the primary problem facing Darley, which was how to survive his relationship with Justine, only appears to be the chief problem that Charlock must confront — escape from the society that has become a sinister and yet still friendly master. He contrives to solve both of these problems, and the fact that he does suggests that Durrell has given his traditional characters a violent wrench off into another direction.

Darley, of course, existed in that state of passive ambience by now so characteristic of the modern hero: he was perceptive, and altogether likeable, but he was totally ineffectual. By the time Durrell wrote *Justine*, these characteristics made Darley a traditional figure in modern literature, akin to Eliot's Prufrock, Joyce's Dedalus, and so on. Durrell added several new wrinkles to the tradition, and, in doing so, produced a highly entertaining work. He gave Darley and his compatriots an exotic setting to replace the urban wasteland of their predecessors, so that Alexandria becomes perhaps the most interesting character in the novels. He also gave Darley a sense of humor, and, what is more important, gave to all the characters the ability to exercise their rather highly developed sex drives: the quotations from De Sade scattered through the novels were not tacked on merely for pretension. The *Quartet*, in short, utilized traditional characters and motifs, but it transformed them into something complex, amusing, and yet relevant.

One is tempted to say that *Tunc* is a further step down the road. Durrell's version of the introspective, intellectually frustrated, and spookily passive society of the forties and fifties portrayed in the *Quartet* has given way to society of violence — rather too relevant to the sixties for our own good. Further, where Darley was sensitively creative, Charlock is more of a slob, muddling through, and yet, engaged in a much more elemental struggle. There comes a point in the novel when he realizes that Merlin, the monster corporation of Julian's, that seemingly controls the world itself, has him firmly in its grasp and will not let go. Through Benedicta, and through their son Mark, and through his ties to his work, he has become embedded in the very matrix of society. At that point he becomes not merely or exclusively modern man, but any man who has been lured into civilization for his special skills and who, then, like Samson, finds his only hope for salvation to lie in some appallingly decisive act. One imagines Charlock as a terribly ludicrous Samson, true enough, but they both have one thing in common besides women, and that is enormous power. Samson's was in his hands, Charlock's is in his dactyls, mysterious inventions that transmit and store knowledge instantly, and in Abel, his monstrous computer; not to mention the weapon that is produced almost by accident as his brainchild. Charlock's discovery of the chain of ideas and people that produces the weapon is the high point of the novel: he sees his idea transformed, he watches appalled as it becomes reality, he protests, like any good intellectual. But the lesson has been learned, and somewhere in his mind he begins to connect himself with violent enterprises. Transcending the prosaic muddling that is very largely his character, he acts: first he comes to grips with Benedicta's domination of him, giving her bare bottom a good thrashing with the smoking barrel of her own gun. Then he plots the death of Mark, and his own escape. As the novel ends, he is apparently at large, having faked his own death.

"We have all the time in the world," Julian tells Benedicta at the end of the novel. It is then that they hear the ambiguous explosion, presumably signifying Mark's death. The lesson, and its relevance, are not lost: Charlock is out there, also with all the time in the world, the first of the super-barbarians to go into revolt against the super-society. Like the first barbarian who discovered true steel, only to flee back into Germania's forests, he is dangerous. Beware the next installment.

Reviewed by John Mosier

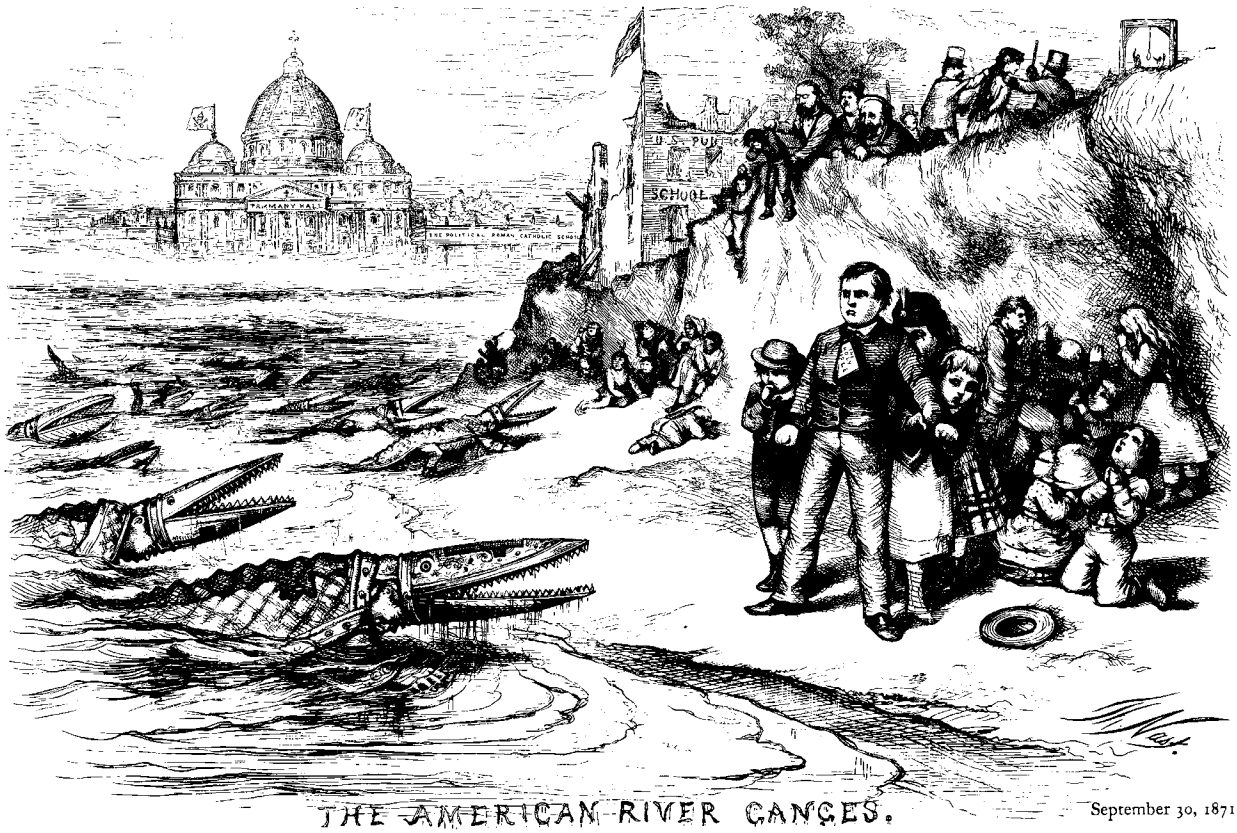
BRIEFLY NOTED: Counterfeitors, Caricatures and Custards

Inventor's Handbook, by Terrence W. Fenner and James L. Everett, Chemical Publishing Co., 309 pp., $7.50; **Counterfeiting in America**, by Lynn Glaser, Clarkson F. Potter, Inc., 274 pp., $6.00; **The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast**, by Morton Keller, Oxford University Press, 353 pp., $12.50; **Kops and Custards**, by Kalton C. Lahue and Terry Brewer, University of Oklahoma Press, 177 pp., $4.95.

The innovation and imagination traditionally described as "Yankee ingenuity" has created such additions to American culture as the hula hoop, the stainless steel razor blade, the skate board, stretch socks and under-arm deodorants. Had the originators of these products merely invented them, however, they would not have met the full requisites of "Yankee ingenuity," for the natural American corollary to creating is capitalizing. For those inventors who are not aware of the multitude of possibilities for marketing their product, the *Inventor's Handbook* by Terrence W. Fenner and James L. Everett provides invaluable assistance. In an interesting and highly readable style, the book guides the inventor step by step into the process of patenting and the procedure of marketing and manufacturing an invention. For ambitious persons, it provides directions for starting and managing a business. For practical persons who wish to know which inventions are desirable before beginning to experiment, the book specifies inventions needed in electrical, chemical, mechanical and various other fields. The appendix contains the names of scientists and companies willing to give professional evaluation of inventions, a list of patent services, names of collaborating inventors, and model and prototype makers. While necessity may still be the mother of invention, this book will provide the services of an excellent mid-wife.

If any inventor has coined a new method of making money, he should read Lynn Glaser's *Counterfeiting in America* before applying for a patent. Somebody has probably done it before. As the author succinctly expressed it, "Counterfeiting must be the second oldest profession" on the rise since "human beings became sufficiently social for commercial intercourse."

In a series of fascinating and well-illustrated chapters, the author traces the prosperous role of counterfeiting in the United States. From somewhat unpromising beginnings — when the Indians managed to exploit the early settlers for the last time in history by trading with phony wampum — modern American coun-



terfeiting developed steadily during the colonial era and reached a flourishing climax in the years following the Revolutionary War. In its nineteenth-century heyday, cheap counterfeit currency encouraged free — or at least cut-rate — enterprise, and served as a vital force in the young, expanding economy. Bogus money bought much land in the West and helped to establish a number of businesses. The creation of the Secret Service in 1865, however, dealt a fatal blow to counterfeiting, and it has been slowly dying. Glaser enumerates the sophisticated counterfeit-detection techniques and the inimitable currency manufacturing devices used by the government to thwart any attempts to make a mint. Through the efforts of the wily Secret Service, counterfeiting has been gradually hustled out of the American picture. Talented criminals, seeking greener pastures, have abandoned the field to the naive and unskilled. Perhaps they have realized, as Glaser suggests, that "A counterfeiter should be possessed of the qualities of a Neitzchean hero," that there can be no counterfeiting in the mutually dependent, collective society of modern America which has lost its ideals of the rugged individual and the omnipotent hero.

The only artists in Nineteenth-century America were, by no means, merely counterfeit ones. In *The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast,* Morton Keller presents the work of America's greatest political cartoonist. Nast, famed for his creation of a popular political menagerie — the Democratic Donkey, the Republican Elephant, and the Tammany Tiger, remains a prominent American figure. His Boss Tweed caricatures have appeared in virtually every United States history text, and his political party symbols are ensconced in tradition. Keller, combining his own commentary with a series of Nast's cartoons from *Harper's Weekly,* presents a vivid portrayal of the era from 1862 to 1885.

Nast's cartoons brilliantly depict the sequence of hope and despair following the Civil War. Expectations for a better America and a new era of liberalism and humanity were prompted by the North's victory, but these hopes were soon dashed by rampant political corruption. Disenchantment followed expectation in a familiar pattern, and Nast's cartoons provide a striking pictorial essay on the rise and decline of the era in which he lived.

Nast was the great recorder of the Radical Republican spirit that, in its flowering, championed the mid-nineteenth century ideals of liberalism and nationalism. With wit, imagination and artistic skill, he wielded pen and ink against the alleged menaces to these ideals. Favorite targets were the Irish-Catholics who paid unpatriotic allegiance to a foreign pontiff (who had just illiberally declared himself infallible), and the democrats who countered nationalism with secession and liberalism with anit-Negro sentiment.

Since it is impossible to adequately display Nast's art in a written showing, an example of his work might help to indicate the scope of his talent. Nast began to draw a series of protest cartoons when the Democratic New York legislature appropriated funds to private — for the most part Catholic — schools, and Catholics began to protest compulsory reading of the King James Bible in public schools. The accompanying cartoon, one of this series, has been called the most powerful anti-Catholic drawing in America. In this cartoon Nast added ecclesiastical alligators, miters opened like powerful jaws, to his zoo of political animals. Every detail in the drawing serves to reinforce the central theme — that of Tammany and Tweed uniting with Catholicism in an ominous attack on the American public school system. To Republicans of Nast's variety, healthy public schools were central to the security and well-being of the nation.

Nast's work remains a brilliant commentary upon a dramatic era in American history, and the power and inventiveness it shows is as obvious today as it was then.

The transition from the somber, motionless pictures of Nast into the zany moving pictures of the Keystone Film Company is a striking one. In *Kops and Custards,* Kalton C. Lahue and Terry Brewer review the history of the "Fun Factory" of films that reigned over motion picture comedy from 1912 until 1920. Under the direction of humor scientist Mack Sennett, low slapstick became a new art form, and the screen comedy was raised from its somewhat colorless existence. The authors interviewed persons who helped to make Keystone comedies and studied data found in private collections, presenting a complete and accurate picture of the Keystone comedies. The book should be on the required reading list of film historians, comedy fans, and anyone who can remember such titles as *Barney Oldfield's Race For Life* and *Mabel's Awful Mistake;* or such names as Fred Mace, Marie Dressler, Ben Turpin, Slim Summerville, Gloria Swanson, Wallace Berry, or Charlie Chaplin.

Reviewed by Gayle Gagliano

Poetry

Summer Love and Surf, by Philip Appleman, Vanderbilt University Press, 71 pp., $4.00; ***Eight Poets of Germany & America***, edited by

Heiner Bastian and George Hitchcock, Kayak Press, 62 pp., $2.00; ***Once Again***, by Jean-Francois Bory, New Directions, 124 pp., $1.50; ***Watch Us Pass***, by Robert Canzoneri, Ohio State University Press, 106 pp., $5.00; ***Mr. Menu***, by Luis Garcia, Kayak Press, 58 pp., $1.50; ***Selected Poems***, by Yvan Goll, Kayak Press, 80 pp., no price given; ***Locations***, by Jim Harrison, Norton & Co., 62 pp., $2.45; ***Poems, 1933-67***, by H. R. Hays, Kayak Press, 80 pp., $1.50; ***The Unblinding***, by Laurence Lieberman, Macmillan, 89 pp., $4.95; ***The Collected Longer Poems***, by Kenneth Rexroth, New Directions, 307 pp., $7.50; ***New Hieroglyphic Tales***, by Edouard Roditi, Kayak Press, 40 pp., no price given; **What the Grass Says**, by Charles Simic, Kayak Press, 42 pp., $1.50; **Driving to Biloxi**, by Edgar Simmons, Louisiana State University, 56 pp., $3.95; **Inside the Blood Factory**, by Diane Wakoski, Doubleday, 96 pp., $4.50.

As I begin this review, I have in front of me a whole netful of books, pulled in from a sweep of the last three months of 1968. The array is a glittering variety, from 20-page minnows to epic monsters of several hundred pages. In sorting out the take, one is impelled to reflect on how various "poetry" is today. It is tempting to use terms like "gamefish," "bottom feeders," "squid," and so on; but it is not difficult to be direct, with terms that help to sort many language modes that have found their way into current poems. There are discourses, legends, happenings, pseudo-statements, circular incantations, translations, and concrete poems.

I.

The first category, and the largest, includes those books that prevalently offer poems as a cumulative, reliable way of discourse: — the turns of allusion, the cadence of the lines, the sustained sequences of topic and assertion all serve to advance a coherent, evident approach to an explicit topic. Like prose — like most prose — this poetry accompanies and guides any reader who will even temporarily identify with the writer.

Kops and Custards: The Legend of Keystone Films

Of the books in this group, those by Simmons, Lieberman, Canzoneri, and Appleman clearly establish themselves: all of these books sustain the reader's attention and reason; the authors are demonstrably witty, sophisticated, and adroit. Reading their work is participating in an intellectual life that extends into social, religious, personal interests. This is not to say that the language fails to provide lift and excitement, but the reader has a constant sense of worthy, *sharing* company. Every line is an increment of meaning.

Laurence Lieberman epitomizes this group. The first poem in *The Unblinding* establishes a voice, a confidence, a sense of progression:

> Unable to sleep,
> he halts the river
> of mindless thought
> and starts to feel
> the thoughts he wills.
> The sounds of a house
> asleep are stark,
> remote. He tries
> to listen for life,
> to hear the walls
> shake out their answers
> to ultimate questions.

Another quickly established control and progression with a sharing reader is a section in "Tree Praise," which is a poem that takes its place in a sequence identified as "Scenes":

> Beauty is poorness of posture, a studied unevenness of frame.
> Trees have sex appeal, gnarled character, a stubborn
> Knottiness; a refusal to grow one way;
> Preference for curves, fork-turns
> Over a sapling's uprightness; asymmetry
> Of branches, leaf shapes askew, imbalance of color scheme.

The ability to move about — in thought, in cadence, in leaps from line to line at *useful* intervals of the utterance — is manifest here; the reader participates, follows one of literature's most attractive offerings: the combining of surprise and approval.

That kind of reward comes to the reader also in the poems of Edgar Simmons. He often has the combination of subtlety and daring that readers today associate with Wallace Stevens: there is a sense of exploring an idea with increasing surprise and elation. This roving, probing analysis is demonstrated in "Implication as Absolute":

> How say we do not attain it
> Because we do not lay hand on it?
> Is not distance, is no separation
> A span as real and true as steel?
> How deny metaphor this fleshing?
>
> Curtains garnish us with the squint of appraisal,
> Gives the heart the necessary space
> Between itself and stage.
> Curtains and the space before it
> Give us a focus we can believe.
>
> Because a drum major's baton
> Is more often apart from him than part of him
> Is it not the more factual in those
> Blank instants it is away from him?
>
> It is at distances that we learn love,
> At distances that we sense perfection,
> That we see it shimmer. A space
> Allows a shimmer; how else would we
> See heat waves, but at a distance?
>
> They cannot dance else.
> This is the distant dance of metaphor,
> Real because it is the bough out of reach.
> This is why Romeo loves Juliet and not Romeo.
> The only queen
> Is the queen out of reach.

Also notable in *Driving to Biloxi* are poems on Dylan Thomas and William Faulkner.

In the volumes by Robert Canzoneri and Philip Appleman, too, the reader is moved and assured at once, as in the Lieberman and Simmons volumes. Canzoneri's poems are often about the weather, about seasons, about growing; the experiences of life are themselves treated as being organic: all living becomes like being a plant. And the plant thrives. The zest in this identifying with life can be demonstrated in the ending of a poem about Androcles:

> We could ask Plato, looking back, to place
> The abstract qualities
> Of this into a scheme: how many rungs
> Of love a beast can seize
> In one great charge, to land (with rasping lungs
> And flesh starved to his bones)
> Muzzling like a milk-fed cat at ease
> Against you on your knees.

Like Canzoneri, Philip Appleman writes on many topics; he ranges the world for topics. He is a steady presenter of what he finds. Some of his poems display the direct communication of prose along with the enhanced emotionality of poetry. An example is "Remembering the Great Depression"; another is "October 15." This special relish in the process of remembering shows up in another one of his best, "Thinking of Noubli Laroussi":

> . . .
> The moon cupped up behind
> the tips of seven palms;
> we felt the distance of
> horizons. "Look," he said,
> speaking to my silence,
> "It's very simple, really.
> If you give a grain
> of sand to one (he lifted
> a pinch of the Sahara),
> you must give a grain
> to the other."
>
> Through the level moonlight
> sprinkled grains of silver
> universe: simple,
> really. Reno. Sodom.
> Troy. A grain of sand . . .

II.

In a second classification are the collections by H. R. Hays, Luis Garcia, Charles Simic, and Edouard Roditi. These collections diverge from those in the earlier class mostly because of a prevalent impulse toward legend; that is, the content, no matter how direct and coherent, usually attains its poetic effect by implying something back of it, some over-arching story or impending meaning.

The easiest way to identify this quality is by citing from the book by Charles Simic; for instance, "Hearing Steps":

> Someone is walking through the snow:
> An ancient sound. Perhaps the Mongols are migrating
> again?
> Perhaps, once more we'll go hanging virgins
> From bare trees, plundering churches,
> Raping widows in the deep snow?
>
> Perhaps the time has come again
> To go back into forests and snow fields,
> Live alone killing wolves with our bare hands,
> Until the last word and the last sound
> Of this language I am speaking is forgotten.

Mr. Simic's little book is rich in such abrupt, tantalizing, implied legends. Back of what he writes there is a universe that shimmers.

Less conspicuously legend-oriented, but the possessor of the most impressive achievements in this classification, is H. R. Hays. James A. Wright in an introduction to Mr. Hays' poems reminds us of the admirable translations we owe to Mr. Hays. Those translations and a number of the poems in this collection do merit our high regard. A good example is "The James Family," beginning:

> "Delicate instruments attuned
> To each other's strings, what music
> You made, what a celestial consortium
> For the invisible ear!"

Too brief to display the sustained accomplishment of some of these poems, but a fair sample, and one that ends with a powerful assertion of the legend-effect, is "For One Who Died Young." Here is the last stanza:

> When we drink glasses of water,
> When we wind our watches,
> When we open and close doors,
> When we light fires and post letters,
> We speak to him and he answers.

The most extreme book in this group is the one by Mr. Roditi. His prose poems are based on dreams, and they exert themselves to break loose from the actual. In successive, strenuous declarations, the tales violate the expected: some kind of odd fate impends. An example is this first paragraph in the prose poem "Description of the Last Woman":

> Her hair was the last gust of a torrid wind.
> Her eyes were the last moments of a suicide. Her
> mouth was the ultimate ocean.

Making poems by means of statements that have tendencies, Luis Garcia belongs in this section of legend poems; for his collection steadily implies some not-explicit background. Not the most legend-like, but one of the neatest of his poems is "The Lovers":

> When I mentioned it, you disagreed,
> suddenly rose up and told me
> in your father's voice:
>
> The dye stays in the cloth.
> Or if it runs, it leaves a stain.
>
> Afterward you claimed
> you would be better soon. But there it was,
> down in your throat,
> a whisper, hate, hate,
>
> as silently you stared up
> at the moon.

III.

Perhaps the Rexroth book does not belong alone in a separate classification. But there are reasons for separating it so. For one thing, you could enter Rexroth's work for a sustained experience: he has written enough and been engaged and concerned enough. Also, he is ambitious, related to others, conscious of their place and his place, and the world's situation. Rexroth uses poetry as do the writers in the first group: he makes a sustained, traditional effort in discursive form. He also relies in a distinctive way on a number of special literary devices.

In the first long poem in this current collection, "The Homestead Called Damascus," Rexroth seems close to the Pre-Raphaelites. He composes in mosaics of scenes — the immediate, the far, the actual, the literary. You jump from slum to classic scenes. This strenuously literary tradition shows up again in "A Prolegomenon." There is a liking for the taste of philosophical words and the myths that go with the intellectual's view of the world.

With "The Phoenix and the Tortoise," a portion of Rexroth's production linked with the years 1940-44, there appears a theme that looms larger and larger: how the intellect is to comprehend history. Rexroth has never given up the attempt to make the mistakes of our past be intelligible in terms of the "right" adaptation of doctrines that did not quite prove adequate in the past. His poems become localized examples, scenes like minuets in which standard radical analyses ("War is the health of the state," for example) appear and re-appear, used for dramatic or emotional purposes.

Of this kind of poem, "The Dragon and the Unicorn" (1944 — 1950 is the period identified with this poem) becomes the longest, most ambitious example. In this work a travelogue alternates with political-sociological analyses. You get history delivered from a height:

> The Pope was once content to rule
> The rulers, the masses were
> Allowed their old worship under
> A new nomenclature. Feudal
> Methods of exploitation
> Required a homogeneous
> Society, a "natural"
> Religion. New methods,
> New Cadres. Capitalism
> Revived all the paranoid
> Compulsions of rabbinical

Judaism, coupled with
A schizophrenic doctrine . . .

To be exhilirated, one must join the hue and cry and accept undocumented attack. If you like headlong analyses validated by the emotion engendered in the pursuit, you can join the progression in these poems. The degree to which you must indulge excitement over observation may be noted in these close, typical lunges:

In K.C. everyone, even
The whores and an appreciable
Number of Negroes, looks like
Truman . . . (p. 252)
In Kansas even the horses
Look like Landon, ugly parched
Faces like religious turtles,
The original scissorbills . . . (p. 253)

IV.

At an extreme from the first group of volumes, and distinct from the legend and literary allusion volumes, is a kind of book represented by *Inside the Blood Factory* and *Location*.

Inside the Blood Factory consists of headlong utterances that scatter images like sparks. You feel you have to leap for what is happening. There are strangely recurrent, obsessive, parts; George Washington, for example, keeps recurring, without any apparent contextual excuse, in the poems. The book is like something you read in a big circle, again and again: the poems are different from each other, but in a strange way they are chanting the same thing. An example of the style is this, from "To the Man in the Silver Ferrari":

Do you remember someone born
with a stone in his mouth? In my dream life I was born
with a snowflake on my tongue. It was a snowflake
carved from some soft creamy stone and when I
spoke it fell out of my mouth
and you picked it up and put it in your pocket.
In my dream you were made out of coffee
but the cream had all turned into
snowflakes.
I am travelling on a train made out of snowflakes.
Remember how fast snow-
flakes melt, and understand our speed . . .

Jim Harrison, the author of the other book in this section — *Location* —, makes poems that reach out for something distinctive; they are made of separate, intensely crystalline symbols, not linked except by intensity and location on the page. Here is an example:

Grand wars; the final auk poised
on her ice floe, the wolf shot
from a helicopter; that shrill god
in her choir loft among damp wine-colored
crumpled robes, face against a dusty
window, staring out at a black pond
and the floor of a wood lot
covered with ferns — if that wasp
on the pane stings her . . .
cancer to kill child, child to kill cancer,
nail to enter the wood, the Virgin
to flutter in the air above Rome like a pipercub,
giraffe's neck to grow after greener leaves,
bullet to enter an eye, bullet
to escape the skull, bullet to fall
to earth, eye to look for its skull,
skull to burst, belly to find its cage or ribs.

Far as all this is from the kind of coherence exemplified in the books of the first classification, there is a certain kind of clarity about each scene. The cover blurb of the book speaks of "clustral, rather than geometric or linear . . . " Glittering as some of the pieces quoted above are, I believe part of what Mr. Harrison has working for him is that within the pieces his language works with precision, like the language of the volumes in the first group. The interior parts of his lines have a prism clarity. He may be onto something.

V.

Robert Frost's "Poetry is what gets lost in translation" is so quotable that in this assertion (as in some others) he has distracted us from a needed realization: in our time one kind of poetry lives by an idiom that gets forced onto our language by the requirements of translation. Reading two of the books in the netful under consideration brings this realization home. The two books are *Selected Poems of Yvan Goll* and *Eight Poets of Germany & America*.

The translations from Yvan Goll are done by writers who are currently very influential: Robert Bly, George Hitchcock, Galway Kinnell, and Paul Zweig. To read their Englished versions is to see a characteristic distance and a systematic strangeness forced onto language by a generation of writers whose devotion to international literature has led them to embrace whatever idioms are induced by the emergencies of translating. We discover that a determination to bring over a foreign poem can challenge a poet to use odd, variable, non-meticulous language: much poetry today flaunts the awkwardness that translators have taught us to bear, and even to cherish. Here is one of Goll's poems, "Resurrection," translated by Paul Zweig (the first line in French, for a lilting comparison, is this: Sous chaque pain de la mort . . .):

Under each bread of death
And under each death already the vermin
Eating and digesting death

Death! Death in the earth and the stone
Under the grain of wheat
A mountain pregnant with death

The sun at noon
Thinner than a man condemned to die
Brushing weakly over the young grass
And the ordeal of the burning widow

Half-moon, rise in my fingernail
For the last time!

Eight Poets of Germany & America, too, because it so abruptly matches German and English, and because it is persuasively done by knowing people, reinforces the current accommodation of English idiom to the necessities of translation. In this book you see that some of the best current poems in English are of a kind readily available in an alternate language: the effect depends on main, sequential assertions, not on the dance in syllables of the original language. Here, for instance, is such a poem, John Haines' "Foreboding," and then for comparison the beginning of the translated poem:

Something immense and lonely
divides the earth at evening.

For nine years I have watched
from an inner doorway:
as in a confused vision,
manlike figures approach, cover
their faces, and pass on,
heavy with iron and distance.

There is no sound but the wind
crossing the road, filling
the ruts with a dust as fine as chalk.

Like the closing of an inner door,
the day begins its dark
journey, across nine bridges
wrecked one by one.

The German version of the Haines poem, translated by Heiner Bastian, begins like this:

Vorahnung
Etwas Unermelsliches und Verlassenes
teilt die Erde am Abend . . .

VI.

The last classification, with one representative, is *Once Again*, a collection of "concrete poetry." The pages of this book sprout

words, syllables, letters, and a few models and pictures, all put into their places on the page for the purpose of making the language change back from invisibility as a bearer of meaning into visibility as a felt object in itself. In this book, language acts on its own; it becomes a joke, a drama, a sly actor. Novalis is quoted: "We must be astonished by the gross error made by people when they imagine they are speaking in the name of things. The nature of language is to be concerned with itself alone."

To be timely, and to end with a demonstration, I lift from the net, from this book, "Elegy for Three Astronauts":

w w w
i i i
d d d
a s t r n a u t
a s t r O n a u t
a s t r n a u t
w w w
i i i
d d d
o o o
w w w

Reviewed by William Stafford

Records

MAHLER: ***Symphony No. 4, in G major;*** Netania Davrath, soprano; Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond. Cardinal VCS-10042, $3.50.

Mahler completed this symphony on August 6, 1900 and first performed it on November 25, 1901. For the rest of his life, the composer-conductor sought to alter his orchestral textures so that they would act as he had created them: as active entities and not just coloristic fill. Just four months before his death Mahler conducted his Fourth Symphony in New York on Jan. 17 and 20, 1911. After these performances he again made extensive corrections in the tempo markings and instrumentation.

As Jack Diether in the record notes for this album points out, as early as 1929 a striking analysis of the depths of these revisions was made by Erwin Stein who consulted Mahler's own hand-written score, but it was not until March, 1963 that this unknown last version of the symphony was published by the editors of the Internationale Gustave Mahler Gesellschaft. This Cardinal disc represents the first recording of the Critical Edition of 1963.

The record has another distinction: it is the most relaxed and beautiful performance of this symphony to be had. Even those conductors who have served this music well must be counted out for top honors, and that includes Rafael Kubelik, Bernard Haitink and Leonard Bernstein.

Abravanel's conductorial efforts are imposing in the modesty of his artistic devices. He takes a miniaturist's view of the work, and on this pleasantly reduced scale the Utah Symphony performs as if it were a toy orchestra of celestial competence. Close miking with its spotlighting of detail and ravishing sound processing add to the delight of this recording.

The final surprise is Israeli soprano Netania Davrath's contribution. Her work alone in the proceedings would be justification for buying this album. Mahler directed the soloist to sing "with a cheerful and childlike expression absolutely without parody." Davrath does so with immaculate good taste.

If I were in the business of naming best recordings of the year, this would get my vote. If I had to lose my extensive record collection and could save only one record, this might be it.

MOZART: **Sonata for Piano, No. 8 in A minor, K. 310; Fantasy in C minor, K. 396; Rondo in A minor, K. 511; Variations on a Theme by Duport, K. 573.** Alfred Brendel, piano. Cardinal VCS 10043, $3.50.

Alfred Brendel is a pianist whose recorded performances run from well done to magisterial. However, he never has enjoyed the acclaim of a Cliburn or a Gould. The why of it all must lie in press agentry, not artistry. In this recording Brendel gives the listener on objective and technique-bright A minor sonata, a strong and energetic reading of the C minor Fantasy, K. 396 and a brilliant display of virtuosity in the *Duport Variations*. The other material on the disc is handled competently, but the aforementioned pieces are the highlights.

SATIE: **Homage to Erik Satie,** Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond. Cardinal VCS 10037/38, $7.00 (two disc).

All of Satie's orchestral works are here. In addition orchestrations of a few of his piano pieces by Milhaud, Roger Desormière, Poulenc, Debussy, and Roger Manuel fill out this engaging homage to that moving spirit of French music from 1876 to 1920. The five selections orchestrated by others are the *Gymnopedies* Nos. 1 and 3, by Debussy; two preludes and a *Gnossienne*, by Poulenc; the *Pear-Shaped Pieces*, by Desormiere; *Jack in-the Box*, by Milhaud; and the incidental music to *Le fils des etoiles*, by Manuel.

Much of this music is fragile and so lightweight that a listening session devoted to all four sides of this material will devalue the musical experience. This is mostly marchpane.

SULLIVAN (arr. Mackerras): **Pineapple Poll,** Pro Arte Orchestra, John Hollingsworth cond. Vanguard Everyman SRV 292 SD, $2.50.

Charles Mackerras played oboe in a Gilbert and Sullivan show in Australia, and he conceived the happy idea of making a ballet out of Sir Arthur Sullivan's zestful operetta scores. On March 13, 1951 at the Sadler's Wells Theatre the bright concoction was first presented, and this ballet with a nautical nonsense theme has remained a staple of the Royal Ballet ever since. Fragments from the well-known G&S pieces such as *The Mikado* and *Pirates of Penzance* are mingled with less-exposed items from *The Sorcerer, Patience* and *Ruddigore*. There is a version of the music with Mackerras leading the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra that is more aggressively bright than Hollingsworth's interpretation, but for clean sound and appropriateness for the dance demands the Everyman offering is preferable.

TELEMANN: **Orchestral Music,** Concerto for Two Flutes, Two Oboes, Strings, and Continuo, in B flat; Concerto for Three Trumpets, Two Oboes, Timpani, Strings, and Continuo, in D; Suite in G ("La Putain"); Musique de table, First Production: Conclusion for Two Flutes, Strings, and Continuo in E minor. Esterhazy Orchestra, David Blum, cond. Bach Guild BGS 70695, $5.79.

In 1961 David Blum formed the Esterhazy Orchestra modeled on the orchestra so named, chosen and trained by Haydn which performed that composer's works at Prince Esterhazy's estate. Blum's twenty-five man orchestra is a pickup affair made up of the top free-lance musicians in New York, but the conductor elicits from them a cohesion and esprit that makes them sound to the manner born. Currently Vanguard has Blum engaged in recording the Haydn symphonies, and they constitute the best performances on disc of this material, surpassing even the work of Max Goberman with the Vienna State Opera Orchestra and, more recently, the fine accomplishments of Leslie Jones with the Little Orchestra of London.

In the middle 1950's there was an outbreak of Telemann fever which resulted in a series of hastily produced recordings which did little credit either to the performers or to the composer. Tyro record collectors rushed to find out what was so hot about Teleman, bought the discs, got burned, and determined to avoid this "bad" baroque.

Happily Baroque and Telemann are again centers of interest, and in these performances Blum not only makes the music an elegant, charming, melodious affair but also a sprightly one. The bouncy interplay of solo instruments, the elevated peasant-styled tunes, the robust forward motion of all of the pieces, the urbanity and humor of the compositions combine to make this music for all the court and not just for the boudoir.

RECITALS

BEVERLY SILLS: **Bellini and Donizetti Heroines,** Donizetti: Linda di Chamounix: O luce di quest'anima; Lucia di Lammermoor: Regnava nel silenzio; Roberto Devereux: Vivi, ingrato; Rosmonda d'Inghilterra: Perche non ho del vento. Bellini: I Capuletti ed i Montecchi: Oh! quante volte; La Sonnambula: Come per me sereno. Beverly Sills, soprano; Sonia Draksler, contralto (in **Lucia**); Vienna Academy

Chorus; Vienna Volksoper Orchestra, Jussi Jalas, cond. Westminster WST 17143, $4.79.

Everything good that the prospective buyer may hear about this recording is true: Beverley Sills is the most interesting coloratura soprano going today; she is a marvelous actress in the opera house and can communicate the dramatic values of her material in recording; she reactivates this repertoire so long associated with the cold fish Miss Sutherland and the impersonal Caballé; and her fresh, full-bodied, warm voice comes forth with no apparent effort either at the top or bottom.

This is Miss Sills' first solo aria disc, and it is the happy talk of the opera buffs already exposed to its ravishing contents.

Reviewed by Don Brady

Jazz

Louis Armstrong

It is perhaps a hopeful indication of developing maturity in jazz commentary that the critical establishment is abandoning the old canard about Louis Armstrong's having diluted his art when he left the small band recording format that produced his masterpieces of the 1920s.

Armstrong's 1938 big band version of "Struttin' With Some Barbecue" (Decca LP 79225), recorded when the Swing Era was well underway, is proof that a full decade after the most reactionary critics claim Armstrong had sold his birthright he was creating with increased power and inspiration. In 1931 and '32 Louis had a ten-piece band with which he recorded some solos that compare favorably with the best of his Hot Five playing. They also contain evidence that there is a direct line from Armstrong through the other two most important soloists in the history of jazz, Lester Young and Charlie Parker. There are anticipations of Young and Parker not only in Louis' phrasing and in his rhythmic relaxation, but in specific passages of his solos. The most striking example of how far ahead of his time Armstrong was occurs in the first sixteen bars of his trumpet solo following the vocal on the rare alternate take of "Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea." (Epic 22019, *Very Special Old Phonography*). It could have been played by Charlie Parker in the late forties. Close attention to that solo dispels the notion that Armstrong didn't play on the harmonic changes of a song.

The premonition of Lester Young is apparent in the final measures of Armstrong's solo on "All Of Me." He floats through the conclusion of his statement, using long, relaxed notes, ignoring the artificial restrictions of bar lines which had chained the minds of most jazz players to conceptions that would allow only choppy phrases, often brilliant, but seldom connected.

Very Special Old Phonography contains two versions of "Stardust," the one widely distributed in the thirties, and another previously all but impossible to find which has a superior Armstrong solo, a study in relaxation and total inspiration. This collection is full of glorious Armstrong solos, and one of the most enjoyable has the least "artistic" merit. It's just Louis playing the hell out of his horn on "Tiger Rag", swinging as no one else could at the time, throwing in silly little quotes and, in general, having fun with the piece, which in those days was not recognized as a violation of the rules of music making.

Rhythmically, the ten-piece band is superior to the small Armstrong bands of the twenties. Frequently with the Hot Five, Louis was all that kept the time from flying apart. The rhythm section of the larger group is generally solid and dependable.

What is disturbing about the 1931 band . . . and what may have helped lead to the critical stand-offishness regarding Armstrong's playing with it . . . is the Guy Lombardo-styled saxophone section. In his notes for the Epic album Dan Morgenstern intimates the section sound is forgiveable because Lombardo's sax section was the only available popular model. But the arranger for Armstrong, Z. T. Randolph, could hardly have been unaware of the writing Don Redman and others were doing for Fletcher Henderson's band or of Ellington's scoring for saxophones. The fact is that Armstrong simply liked the Lombardo sound. It dragged down the quality of his band. But there it is, one of those strange lapses in taste often observed in artists whose own creations are in perfect taste. It has nothing to do with the quality of Armstrong's solos with the band.

This is an indispensable Louis Armstrong album.

Producer Frank Driggs has given up the artifical stereo that marred Epic's earlier reissues in the Encore series. The sound here is occasionally muddy, but it's believable. Monaural records are monaural records and any attempt to render them otherwise is deception and distortion.

Archie Shepp's new album on Impulse (*The Way Ahead*, Impulse 9170), has more musical interest than any recording of his I've heard so far, and I wish I could attribute the improvement to Shepp's playing. Rather, let's credit his good judgment as a leader. He has gathered here some brilliant players and conceived ensemble settings that are stimulating and full of fun. To hear the band paraphrase "Jumpin' With Symphony Sid" and build it into a free statement is unexpected and delightful.

The players are Walter Davis, Jr., piano; Ron Carter, playing beautifully, and beautifully recorded, on bass; Jimmy Owens, trumpet; Grachan Moncur III, trombone; Beaver Harris and Roy Haynes, drums; and Shepp, tenor saxophone.

Shepp inludes an Ellington tune, as he does on most of his LPs, and establishes again that he is not one of the foremost interpreters of Duke's standards. The victim this time, "Sophisticated Lady," has suffered and endured a great deal. She will no doubt gather strength and survive her encounter with the unsolicitous Mr. Shepp. The most successful performance on the album is a blues called "Damn If I Know" which is subtitled "The Stroller," presumably for disc jockeys who don't care to say "Damn If I Know."

I appreciate the sardonic humor in much of Shepp's music and the excitement he has injected into the group performances he has recorded. But, for me, his playing lacks continuity and sincerity, even in the angry black revolutionary role he has chosen, and I hope he finds himself as a soloist because there are indications in his work that he could be a very good one. If for nothing more than Ron Carter's bass work, this album is worth hearing through.

Chick Corea

Chick Corea has given us the most exciting and fully realized piano trio album since the Bill Evans-Scott LaFaro recordings on Riverside, even taking into consideration Evans' own recent magnificent Montreux Festival LP (Verve 8762).

On *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* (Solid State 18039) Corea and an unidentified bassist and drummer, possibly Steve Swallow and Joe Chambers, play *together* with a unity and empathy that suggests much more than intensive rehearsal. There are times when the three instruments sound uncannily like one. Corea has assimilated the jazz piano advances made by Evans into his own form of expression and ended with a strikingly pure, uncluttered and emotionally direct style, free of gimmickry. Even when he reaches into the piano to use the naked strings, which he does sparingly, it's for a solidly musical purpose.

The material in the album has a thematic consistency (but a variety of moods and tempos) that makes the music a kind of suite. There's a flow from one track to another, so that the listener tends to think of the LP as a single experience rather than a collection of tunes.

Two of the tracks are worth singling out. A composition called "Matrix" has a delightful melody line that sounds at once like be bop and a sea chanty. It has fine collective playing and a particularly successful bass solo.

For the first few minutes of "Now He Beats The Drum . . . Now He Stops," Corea plays unaccompanied and either uses or alludes to several aspects of the solo jazz piano tradition, including Lennie Tristano and Art Tatum. It's a magnificent performance. Later he's joined by the bassist and drummer for an extension of the ideas he developed alone.

Corea's touch . . . the consistency and correctness of it . . . is a vital element of his playing. It's the one most often neglected by jazz pianists.

"Now He Sings, Now He Sobs" is recommended enthusiastically.

The Adderley Brothers

Nat Adderley has erected a monument to New Orleans music in a composition titled "Sweet Emma." The piece is a tribute to Emma Barrett the bell gal, but it's a distillation of the spirit of the

city's musical tradition. It's interesting that New Orleans musicians who heard the song during the Cannonball Adderley Quintet's most recent engagement at Al Hirt's club were uniformly taken with it.

Three of the most prominent leaders in town, Hirt, Pete Fountain, and Al Belletto, immediately applied for lead sheets so they could work out arrangements. Such diverse artists as the volcanic modern drummer James Black and blues singer Cousin Joe commented separately that "Sweet Emma" captured what both called "Our Music."

"Sweet Emma" is a blues in C. The line is written with an economy that recalls the drawings of such Japanese masters as Hokusai and Nanrei, some of the music of de Falla, and the best piano improvisations of John Lewis. The spaces are as essential as the contours of the work, and the addition of a single note would lessen the impact of the piece.

The recording of the tune on Nat Adderley's new Milestone album (*The Scavenger,* Milestone 9016) has defects, but none of them obscures the beauty of the line. Adderley's solo falls short of the masterpiece he played one night at Hirt's, a solo that equalled the written song in its evocation of New Orleans music and which caused Cannonball to regard Nat with a radiant and vaguely puzzled brotherly smile. William Fischer's strings arrangement on the Milestone LP is disturbing in its harmonies; the accompaniment might better have been left to the rhythm section alone, as it is on the same tune in Cannonball's latest LP ("In Person," Captiol ST 162). Again, Nat has a good solo, but it doesn't come up to what he's doing with the piece now that he's lived with it for several months.

A performance of "But Not For Me" on the "Scavenger" album harks back to the 1954 Miles Davis recording of the song. The listener familiar with Davis' version will hear paraphrases of it, direct quotes and stylistic tributes, as in tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson's use of the gliding long-note technique Sonny Rollins used. Adderley has frequently recorded in Miles' Harmon mute style, but never more effectively. Pianist Joe Zawinul limits his bow toward the original to one phrase, but a telling one, inspired by Horace Silver.

Singers Nancy Wilson and Lou Rawls, accomplished imitators, appear for a track each on the Cannonball Adderley "In Person" LP. But the value of the album is its accurate reproduction of the spirit, audience rapport,high musical achievement, good humor and excitement that comprise an evening with the Cannonball Adderley Quintet when it is in top form.

ALSO RECOMMENDED:
Martial Solal/*On Home Ground:* Milestone 9014
The George Wallington Trios: Prestige 7587 (Reissue)
Jimmy Lunceford/*Rhythm Is Our Business/Harlem Shout:* Decca 79237 and 79238 (Reissue)
Clare Fischer/*Thesaurus:* Atlantic 1520
Paul Bley/*Mr. Joy:* Limelight 86060
Red Norvo and His All-Stars/Epic 22010 (Reissue)
Jimmy Rushing/*Gee, Baby, Ain't I Good To You?:* Master Jazz Recordings 8104
Jaki Byard With Strings: Prestige 7573
Tom Scott/ *Rural Still Life:* Impulse A-9171
Cap'n John Handy/*New Orleans and The Blues:* RCA Victor 3929
Robin Kenyatta/*Until:* Vortex 2005
John Coltrane/*Lush Life:* Prestige 7581

Reviewed by Douglas A. Ramsey

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