



The Piper

PREFACE: Towards the Moment and Metaphor

Experience is our only access to meaning, but its accumulation alone is not enough. There is something deep, deep in us which demands more than a daily incremental rendering. What we live for are moments -- moments in time that partake of the timeless. We cannot force these moments, we cannot predict them. They accost us and we receive them. But there must be that willing quality of recognition, and creation is included in our reception of the moment because we cannot sit still. Not by explicit direction but by implicit necessity, we are compelled to create light in the darkness.

And language is ineluctably involved with these moments that redeem experience because metaphor has that incredible ability to dissolve exteriors with interiors. The wonder is all in the agility. Metaphor is a passageway, a conduit, through which the real is made real.

1.

Sweet lunacy dripping from
the night skies edge
Dripping like honey from
the moons white eye
Saturation of the uncertain image
incarnate in these two stars
Inundation of the wavelike motion
within this static reflection

Rhythmless vibration
falling
The nights seed spilling
The warm sperm dropping
in puddles
here
on the strangely barren earth;

And I Albert Einstein with my dark guitar
On the dark shore of my imagination
Sing quietly
Remembering indistinctly
The shadow of a face
drawn like a curtain
across the window of the moon.

2.

Abou ben Adhem squirms like a corkscrew
At the top of heaven's list:
What could not be gained in humility
Throws back the poet's tattered coat of virtue
And the lesson is answered in the object.

3.

The uncertain resurrection of
a body wholly body
decays into a tomb completely vacant

(and the eyes that turn inward
See only the bones this flesh is hung upon --

The stone which gives no shelter
The well that holds no water: only dust,
and death --

across these several generations
across the earth by sky held fast
across the unbroken, the unknown,
the unremembered firmament).

The finger pauses against the string;
The note undulates into the silence
(the moon stirs against the cloud;
The image -- reflected -- falters

The window of a face draws closer
To the curtained shadow of the moon.

Bill Meikrantz

To Geoffrey

Lightrays
Slashing lightrays
Reveille
The sun beats rising
Glaring into eyes dazed
lost from a moment
Seeing no one
and lost
in a detachment
of expressive glare
maintained
Risen and maintained
for aloneness

Reveille
And the act
the pout of non-expectation
darting in and out
of interaction
of simple time lost
of simple conversation
of happy, happy
vague commentary
for reaction

Lost
with the rising sun
is spontaneity
lost to space outside the sun
Aloofness -- pretended
pretense won.

Linda Reas

I stand and shadows fall back.
Now clearing, running tall
i see. climbing, singing
i move the stone. heavy dead,
wiping sweat, steaming rest,
it's all sane, down under
we gaze in a standoff bout.
spirit light, warming grace
i wait. where is home?

pouring out to you until i am dry.
crushing silence, am i so lost?
quiet night song,
i see lights from the window,
follow, find me.
i whisper in wonder.

David Nikias

Birdsong

These secrets
cannot be
shared.
They are for
everyone's
own.
I will give
you mine if
you.
can take it . . .

Karl Stephan

The Religion

I believe in the allocation of misanthropy
The mislocation of symmetry
Parrallell antitheses
and continuence

I believe in hardening inigmas
Fluid paradoxes
Gasous absolutes
and the end

I believe in the belief of no belief
I am strong with the strength of no strength
I am trapped in the tangle of emptyness
and believe that the end is so near
that it will always be seen
as far away

I believe in never telling what I believe
for then I will not believe it.

Mark Foxworth

Cassie's Bar

At Cassie's Bar there were no survivors
Empty dance floor spoke no love
Blank and hostile stares of defiance
From the dusty men, calloused, rough

Broken waitress cold and crooked
cards the ladies, lets the guys get by
see why?

Losers drink to cheer the winners
All together hear them sigh

Quick my lady
sit down here beside me
Let me get you a beer
I have waited so long to find you
I'm not surprised to see you here

At Cassie's Bar there were no survivors
Old and young they lost the same
It's not the points it's how you buy them
Not who won but who watched the game

Paul Swain

These two pieces form part II and III of Extension On One Chord, which appeared in the fall issue of this year.

Joose de Wit

II

Aknock on the door awakes me. I remember that I locked it before going to bed. My throat is hoarse from generer and cigarettes when I ask who's there. Pascalle whispers her name. I put on my grandfather's silk morning coat while cursing the empty green bottle on the table.

Pascalle looks at me with her green eyes.

'Did I wake you up?'

'Quite, but don't worry, I should have been up hours ago.'

'I have some coffee. Would you like some? Oh, and here's the paper.' She doesn't wait for an answer but goes back down the steps to the kitchen. The paper is in my hands. I open it. "Volunteers off to Lebanon to join UN forces," I read on the front page. They are the heroes of peace; I sit here and drink and downstairs a nervous girl with green eyes and silver earrings makes me black coffee. What have I done for her, except lend her a Chopin album? She thought I was playing the piano myself that night.

I look out the window while dressing. The park is covered in whiteness. The ducks are crowded together in a black corner of the pond that they have managed to keep clear. The old man is there again. He's hacking the ice with a piece of wood, clearing the ice more for the ducks. Next to him in the snow lies a plastic bag with bread. I have a sudden urge to go outside and be near that old man. The ducks are like little islands of snow against the dark grey winter.

Pascalle returns with the same fancy tray and cups.

'What do you see out there?' she asks.

'A good-natured old man taking care of the ducks.'

'Will you come down and choose some plants for your room?'

'I would like to see your paintings,' I say, 'I've smelled them walking by your door.'

'Oh great, I would like a sharp eye to look at some of them. Those guys at the Academy never enlightened me.'

'How do you know I have a sharp eye?' I ask, wondering at her presumption.

'If you took those photos on your wall I trust your sense of the visual.'

Reminded again of my inactivity, I feel like changing the subject. Shall I ask her to go down to the pond with me? 'Do you have any Camels by any chance?'

She gives me one. 'Drink up your coffee,' she smiles, 'and maybe you'll wake up.'

'It's that transparent green monster over there.'

'Why did you do that?'

'Do what?'

'Drink all that.'

'Because I felt bad.'

'May I ask?'

'No.'

'It's not the end of the world is it?'

'Why do you make me coffee and bring me the paper?' I wish she would leave me alone.

'Are you offended?'

'No. I don't find coffee offensive. The paper I don't care about.' My eye falls back on the headline. I wonder why that news should be at all necessary.

I decide to throw away the roses. Their color is gone. The empty green bottle goes the same way. Inside remain white walls and outside a white blanket of sterility.

'Let's go look at those plants,' I suggest.

The paintings are good scenes from the countryside. Pascalle tells me about the Academy. 'They don't approve of what I do. They are interested in overabstraction that I can't follow anymore. So I left. I imagine they will all get jobs as commercial designers and live in the city for the rest of their lives. No beauty.' She gets up and waters her plants.

'Is that why you give me plants?' I ask.

'They might give you pleasure.'

'I grew up in a rural village that is now slowly being incorporated by the big city. They built a subway station smack in the middle and row houses are being built for the commuters. I disappeared with the fields.'

'You're back in the city now,' Pascalle says while she lights a cigarette.

'At least there's the park and people like you and that old man out there.'

'Why did you come back?' she asks. She plays nervously with her cigarette. I don't mind talking. I find her company refreshing. She's not sure.

'I'm hoping I will get something done, something meaningful,' I say. Her face is a questionmark. I can't talk about it until I've realized in my mind what it's going to be.

'Do you want to go down to the pond and look at the ducks?'

III

As we pass by the kitchen on the second floor Pascalle takes a minute to gather some old bread in a paper bag. We tromp down the paintless wooden steps and step outside into the sharp and piercing cold. The rays of sunshine bounce off the bright carpet of snow, as if alive, and blind my eyes like arrows. Pleased to be outside again, I look up and see a group of birds passing over our heads like a giant living letter V. We walk on, leaving our footprints behind us violating the smooth harmony of the field of snow.

The old man is walking away from the pond. I tell Pascalle about my urge to be near that old man and she nods. 'Let's in any case follow his example,' she says and starts tossing the breadcrumbs into the water, which is now a dark greyish green. The ducks that had been following the old man come waddling back to us, ecstatic on their orange feet. Pascalle laughs and welcomes them with pieces of bread. Smiling brightly, she lets them pick the crumbs from her hand. The ducks in the water jealously scramble onto the land and try to get to Pascalle's hand. I sit on a bench and watch the scene and look at the snow covered trees.

'It never snowed in Eden did it?' I ask.

'I don't think so. I think it was perpetual spring there. I'm dying to see the spring, although the snow has something enchanting about it. I sometimes go for walks late at night and just to see those dark trees bending over me as if they want to drop their loads over my head . . . so terrifying.'

'You aren't afraid though?' I ask.

'In a way I am,' she says, folding the empty bag and holding out her hands to show the ducks the bread is gone. 'In a way I am not.'

'It makes me think of Napoleon's army in Russia,' I say, 'petrifying.'

'Yes, there is definitely something destructive about it,' Pascalle says.

We move away from the ducks to where the pond is frozen over. We walk on the ice, trying to reach the other side. I feel as if it's about to give in underneath us.

Joose de Wit

there's a wink
in the night

how dead am i
with nothing to die for
no causes
no lovers
no americans (land of the home
brave of the free)
no greater beings
no big-time re-run messiahs (saving the
too-bored-
to-sin)

how dead am i
from living in a parchedness

a fruitless dividing

from lighting more candles
when i know i'm still twelve
(lying as usual)
and want to be 3 hundred and twenty 6
and still ticking
(lying as usual)
(lying as befits the deceitful dead)

how dead am i
among all my cells
splitting
(it's post-mortem they say
when he's 3 hundred and twenty 6
when he should
by all rites
by still
(lying as usual)

there's a wink
in the night

i am still (as usual)

a smug wink
in the smug (as usual) night

--Heidi E. Hirschman

Autumn

October explodes
in a blaze of
fiery leaves
and rests
in the embers of
leafy fires
as the last of the day
whithers away

as the last of the day
whithers away
the sun slides down
another weary sky
and Autumn
whispers cruelly
winter's secrets
making our hands
blush with the cold
as the last of the day
whithers away

as the last of the day
whithers away
we plunge
into stiff
just-raked
leaf-pools
and reveling
in
our mourning
we splash
their crispy death
all over
October

--Heidi E. Hirschman

Because of Three Kisses in a Subway [epilogue,
finally]

I

excuse me for intruding
but i keep forgetting
i'm only remembering

II

and when i found
that i couldn't
read my poems to you
because you touched me
too hard
leaving only lonely bruises
on my only lonely soul

i touched
and
i touched
as hard as
i could
and
i could

but
without a soul to bruise
my touching display
of unbruises
clattered
and
clattered
on the floor

III

and if morning
ever
gliding through my room
ever
exposes the you
that glides through
my pre-dream-dreams
and hides in
my post-dream-daze

i could never
hate you as hard as
or
love you as soft as
i do in my pre-dream-dreams

--Heidi E. Hirschman

Sinking Venice

while we sleep:
wrinkled antiquity
takes her gifts away
from the blundersome tourists
and gives them to
the little fishies
who pull seaweed coverlets
around their gills,
nestle in the barnacles,
and nap in

Piazza
San
Marco

--Heidi E. Hirschman

The Act

That close of day crept up the elms
That always stood deformed as if by fire,
And branches limped with moss, like worn-out banners,
Recalled a time of some significance.

"At long last, here's this pond," he thought
Standing where the bank slid way to mud.
John Lanthrop dared to come again
But not this time for fish,

"The season's gone too far along."
The seasons . . . and the boy he hardly knew,
But couldn't quite forget,
Wanting that fifth of Dago Red:
Always the alley on tentative steps
Wearing a boldness he'd never find,
Past the trash by kitchen doors
Past the worn-out kitchen table talk
With eyes that sought a window
Opening to black.
The delicate knock,
The sweat-fisted hand thrust with the coins
Awaiting the touch from the shadows blind,
A recognition, a cool release of sorts,
And then the brown swathed bottle
Liquid to go dreaming by,
He was right for fishing then;
His companion quelled his fear.

A fish jumped,
Shattered the silence of the water
While concentric rings reached within the hollow of himself:

Kisson would be right by him
Perched upon the bank
Watching his conscious fingers
Thread the worm along the hook.
In all expectancy they waited,
The line flattening in the sheet
(Sometimes they could feel it
Quiver in the mud)
Stirred only by the feeding fish.
It was always evening when they sat,
And nothing much was spoken
To relieve their concentration
On the dark and viscous water.

And the rings
Continued their escape
From the moment of a single movement:
Afresh disturbance, unheard
Along the pond's far edge,
That agitates the algae
And ends in ripples on the shore.

Almost he thought he saw his son
There, on the far bank,
His hands around his mouth
Hollering a name: his name
Across the pond that lost itself in black
As sunlight fell behind the trees . . .
But all he found to do
Was lean out from the bank,
Like a child straining
For a look behind the counter,
And catch the bare reflection
Surrounded in the dark.

Chip Loughlin

Coming to Birth

I have walked among the oaks,
Watched the growing dusk
Hang across the limbs in weariness,
Watched the roots and limbs
Their muscled postures agonized the air
While finer than the chill that licked the night,
Almost at once again I felt
The weariness was burned in fire
That for a moment stirred the leaves --
Still soft with summer's texture --
With what was movement and surprise
Until the juices were spilled dry
The petioles were hardened
The leaves were brittle scrolls
Closed, decayed
Scattered round the feet of one who sought a word
Lasting through the habit of the dead.

Almost at once again I could recall
The grim endurance and the need
That drove a people to the sea in English ships,
The planks of English oaks,
Compelled in darkness and desire,
(An inherited perversion in the blood
That screamed survival was not all.)
And from the time the longboat's keel
Tore the waiting, water-smooth sand --
They were not shaken by the yawning land,
A mutual intractability --
From the first bloodless winter
Of aspect like the frozen rocks that weighed the shore,
Something struggled to be born --
The legacy consigned by generations.
But never was the land enough:
I look through wintered oaks
Face to face with the expressionless scowl of the moon
And wonder where you are.
I tread the silent-frosted ground
And know the journey looms much closer.
A darker ocean you and I must cross
And dare to speak within the wilderness
Where all beginnings are conceived.

Chip Loughlin

Thaw

The sycamore resisted
The insatiate winter winds
That threatened its greater boughs --
Boughs tensioned by a rod,
Steel inflicted at the crotch,
To hold their strength intact:
Then witness how the spring
Thaws upon the bark,
Blurs the old initials,
Flays the weathered skin
In clamorous, silent work.
White limbs reach boldly
'Bove the cautious trunk;
The sap outruns the steel.

Chip Loughlin

An Evening In the Zoo

"Mais le ciel reste noir et Dieu ne répond pas."

Vigny

I drink a coke while Alain has his dinner; it was good, he says, therefore I will not overdo it. Is he still hungry when he puts down his napkin and reclines in his seat?

The coke is watery, icy and black like Polar waters; but where do the bubbles come from? What is there under Polar waters, Alain, that makes bubbles? That is the breath of the living explorers, he says. In a coke? I ask in amazement. No under Polar waters, Alain gets weary. I would get weary too under Polar waters. I get hot at the thought of people under those waters way down deep crying up bubbles to the surface of my coke. I have got to go and Alain comes along.

We do not discuss where we are walking to but we go to his room. Alain says, I hate artificial light, and he sets fire to a red candle that frightens me. Where did you get that fire Alain? From the gods, he says. Does it hurt? Does what hurt? Is Alain getting weary again? Yes I get weary of the pain; I wish they would just take the whole thing instead of picking at it like that. I shoot the scavengers from my hot air balloon; they drop like flies into the glass bowl of the lizards who feast on them, awful prehistorical monsters. I like them, Alain says, because they look so ancient. I get hot again but Alain wants to burn the candle. I take off my coat and pick up Moby Dick heavy and thick.

Ishmael would rather be a sailor because as a passenger he would not get paid. He has got to go too; weigh anchor! He does not want to look at the coffins on display but go where the key is. I get hot at the thought of being inside a coffin; I would rather have the key too, that brightly glistening thing, so that I can open the coffin and take a dip in the Ocean, any Ocean as long as it is not icy and black.

There are llamas on Alain's table and Don Quixote, also a tiny statue, stabs them one by one with his lance. Alain has total control; he can decide the destinies of all in this war of the angry continents. Who are you Alain? Why did you not have him stab the scavenger birds? He was not around then, Alain says and he plays Miles Davis on the stereo as if everything is normal. What else can you make him do? I can make him clear channels after the fire. It is so hot in here with all those fires.

Alain has Don Quixote drive the llamas over the edge of the ravine; one is already on the floor and one is hanging on with its hind legs but I do not believe it because I go by the book. That explains these dark shapes flashing in my visual field: the wings of the windmills. I want to go back to the windmills in the end and live in one when I stop having these hot flashes.

Alain talks to me about stuffing a cardinal. What will the Pope say Alain? He means a bird cardinal beyond the suffering stage, red as a candle. They are not as nice as pelicans though. I try to get my mind off the candle and send it back to the Ocean, any Ocean, where a pelican is fishing. He has caught something shiny but it is not a fish.

Before the lizards there lived a fish in the glass bowl but it died. Alain held a wake; while he flushed it down the toilet Andre and Pierre read from Camus and the Bible. The fish was called Huevon, after a Peruvian politician.

I really have got to go Alain, the candle is so red and hot. I have to avoid it.

When I reach my door I can not find my key. A flash goes through my mind. The pelican . . . he has got it! He found it in the Ocean among the mariners. Drop it, I scream, give it to me, I want to get in! I run away from the house to the Ocean, into the night, the icy black night, and frozen water falls on my head. Who are you Alain? The pelican does not hear my cries.

Joost de Wit

Todlied

from SINS OF THE MAD FIDDLER

scaling time; there is another
death in the family,
the last one lasted
fifteen years,
and you scrape off the daylight
underneath a three day moon,
where the light burns
the hair on the back of your neck,
like fireflies going out.

Fiddlers in the crooked time,
break bread beneath trees,
wine clings to a leaf,
cold at October's feet,
song charges in the seasonal shape.

And the fiddler creases the air
with his steaming bow,
music under rattled branches,
the cold apple in the bough,
ripened-red from a hard night, plucked like an eye.

Let the fiddler go in the wild, dark night,
under his hand, the flashing bow
casting more shadows to enfold him, laughing,
and listen to the night creak beneath time;
because the crickets are mad.

roy parkhurst

Two Fragments from "Cataract" or "Classical Mythology in 10 Easy Lessons"

I.
leaving Athens you peel the city back from your skin,
the slow shedding of the last three days.

eclipsed by someone's eyes and
the sky, shedding its skin --
the residue follows the summits of old mountains
bleeding back its own rain.

at Levidia the springs of memory and forgetfulness
run down through stone, you drink in one, then the other,
and always eclipsed by someone's eyes.
the sky is folded over thick and very dark.
remembering one but not the other.

the rain is inconsistent, no one can predict
what will come, what might interfere with travel plans,
only the moon sees, and always dimly.

II.
the ribbon of the river, wound on both sides with whitest sand
has not lost any lustre over time.
below, ancient Olympia where time is buried
under 15 feet of dirt;
the river drowned it out with silt.
we uncover a single pillar, and the river
leaps back under its new face.

where the Peloponessus ridge the unframing sky
the sun lifts the past, we are only eclipsed
by our own inadequacies to love in another way.

under cyprus, under our eyes, and shadowy --
death is hidden there,
we uncover it and its fragile pieces crumble,
down inside, where we bury our dead.

roy parkhurst

This then is life
 This is what has come to the surface
 after so many throes and convulsions --
 Walt Whitman

8:30

The light expands like ladies fans
 Between the leaves in Avery County.
 I may try to reconstruct the dawn
 Which came while I was sleeping.
 I suppose
 The woods were grey until the day had pulled
 From shadows stones appearing
 Still more hidden than apparent,
 As something primitive and fierce,
 Or perhaps as some vision that recurs in dreams,
 Alarmingly familiar.

That is one result of reason,
 The most probable answer
 Until more of dawn is known,
 Dispelling all of dawn already known.
 Dispelling all I know of dawn
 And rigidly shoving its heels into the precarious
 landscape.

Entering the woods I sense
 That I am the first to pass today,
 Except for more nocturnal creatures
 Scattering at my approach.
 I pause, only for a moment, on my way to work.
 Thought comes later.
 Now, in the morning, I am tired
 And speechless
 And not deceived into believing I belong here.

The Two Waters of New Orleans

I

Bourbon Street is like the River
 That presses the side of Le Vieux Carre,
 So thickened by movement
 If I stare long at its surface it appears suspended
 Motionless.

The distortion of Bourbon Street
 Makes the neon crinkle and sway
 Like stars reflected on the ripples
 Of the vivid water.
 And the solid and soulful saxophone
 Is like the brass rays
 That streak the river.

In New Orleans
 The mighty wrought iron
 Defines small courtyards.
 It is splendid.

II

"That river sometime seems to me
 Near as mournful as a man
 An just as weary.
 Could I have a quarter, sir,
 For a street car?"
 The old man,
 Rusted like the fence he leans on,
 Spreads his night's paper
 And tosses his bottle
 To the languid river.

The Excavation

I dreamed the sea had turned to stone
 Where Lauren and I sat pressing our feet
 Against its impenetrable surface.
 There, on the stiffened edge of the sea,
 We spoke of lovers and of needle point.

Here, recalling this dream,
 I think of my feet pressing, pressing. . .
 The anthropologist, grinning,
 Holds a tree shrew.

The sea whispers in evacuated shells
 Pressed to the ears of children.
 The sea whispers in empty shells,
 But cries out the centuries anguish.
 Crashing and shattering on rigid boulders.
 Run, the waves clutch at the coast like fingers,
 Run, you cannot run too far
 The sea has tucked fossils like omens into the hills.

Inertia

In the old days shepherds
 Cast their fears across the careless stars
 And said,
 "God."
 Shepherds, clapping hands together,
 In the blue nights
 That leaned over solitary hills,
 Puffed out sharp white breath
 Blinked at the stringent air
 And played their gods
 Against the bleak cold lonely watch.

Oh lover, you pointed to the stars
 And said my name
 That was when I knew that leaving you
 Meant nothing.

The Passion of Dutch Creek Falls

Black birds in an instance swell to the sky
 As if the earth thrust them upwards
 In one sudden heave.
 So the surface was extended to the sky
 In the violent moments of our beginning.
 Those were the Appalachians
 Once giants, young, rebellious, surging.
 Times violence has lulled them down to hills,
 Full, sedentary
 But unsubdued.

We walked down to Dutch Creek Falls at mid-night
 Single-file and cautious against night-hidden roots and stones.
 Then, when we stood before the falls
 That shattered on the granite
 With a roar like silence,
 We stripped and swam in the pool.
 The water was so cold it made our bones feel like silver.

The fierce No Trespassing
 Is replaced by the cool uncompromising "Violators will be..."
 They have cleared the path of menace
 And made steps down to the pool,
 It is safe now.
 I will not return; deliver us from safety.
 The hills are sullen, secretive
 And coiled.

"Church of Reason"

(The anthropologist watches me from the corner . . . laughing)

The light through hazy windows,
 Here, in the second story of the book stacks,
 Is more relaxed than languid.
 The dust suspended, almost motionless, ignites briefly, fades,
 And settles on the volumes.
 Man here is extended, is preserved, accumulates
 Becoming culture adapts to the extension and preservation of man.
 The silence of the shelves whisper their canticle.
 Man has passion, reason, and the power to create.
 Man has passion, reason, and the power to create
 Therefore let us rejoice.
 Knowledge is not immaculate,
 And I half acknowledged,
 Am half rejoicing.
 But let me instead rejoice in all myself
 All my choices,
 For it is by my choices that I am reassured.
 I have passion, reason, and the power to create.
 I stand firmly.
 Rejoicing.

His fingers drew across my shoulders
 Like tiny waves.
 Already I felt his remorse pressed against my flesh.
 My lips tightened on his like a prayer, clinging
 As he recoiled.
 We have passion
 And reason
 And the power to destroy I turned away dressing quickly.

Good Friday

Because God has receded from the landscape
 Dragging His feet scratched the tracks we fill with asphalt
 Because God has receded
 This morning
 (his hands left felt tracks upon my shoulders)
 My feet on the floor board feel the tires
 Yield rubber panicing to the streets.
 Run.
 This is the day that man has made
 Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
 Man has passion, reason, and the power to rejoice.

Mary Anna Turner
 August-November 1979

Of Variations Legion

of variations legion
 I am a soldier
 but I fight wearily, with half my heart
 sometimes I win a smile
 others, lose a laugh
 The day is grey again
 and the birds fly only inches above the ground
 Temporarily, I think this is Seattle

My brother lives there; he called me
 "Go, Rhino," he said, "do it."
 Oh but John, it's such a fuckin' bummer
 when you're so soggy
 you block the sun right out of your mind
 a good cuss sparks no heat
 and the wind stops at nothing
 even knocks the coal from your cig
 My brother lived here; he called me

of variations legion
 the Kuomintang had my problem
 Funny you should say that, I keep telling everyone
 I lived in Japan
 The cherry blossoms would be snowing right now
 and train employees striking
 No smiles or laughs lost there
 No afternoon tea by the Inland Sea
 no ticket for the subway
 My parents live there, they write me
 praise the Lord, and pass the ammunition
 but I fight wearily, with half my heart
 smiling grimly laughter losing

This isn't the first time.
 I've written this instead of a paper
 my foot tapping staccato a late-night neon rhythm
 I imagine Reischauer frowning
 from his tower in some great imaginary hall at
 Harvard
 I don't like to think of class tomorrow
 if I stay awake to make it
 and afterwards,
 in the blessed relief of the illusion of night
 my body sobs "medic!"
 as I lay waste
 in the company of a few good friends

of variations legion
 my evolutionary struggle nears several
 of the many inevitable conclusions
 whatever I'll see
 beyond empty shells of brick
 in the laughter passing
 scattered to the realm of winds
 maybe it won't hurt as much
 in the long green rest of summer
 if I don't win this smile

Paul Swain

I had come to the first line. The flight has lasted forever. Now, released from the surreal space-timelessness of twentieth century jet travel, my eyes were slow in taking in normal sights. There were many people in front of me, none of them speaking in a language that I knew, apart from the vaguely familiar consonant clusters. I had encountered in Russian 100 some years ago before dropping the course. I stared at the floor and tried to decipher the pattern involved in the brown-tan-white alternating tiles. I closed my eyes. If I kept them shut tightly I could see that endless arch of blue. Changing planes again and again. Why had I wanted to come to Moscow. Moskva. I had been to Berlin last year. The line inched forward.

Soon I was in my room. Intourist had been gracious but sparing. I picked up the magazine or newspaper and stared at the lines of incomprehensible print. On the first page there was a picture of a girl with very crooked teeth smiling. Under her chin ran a sentence with an exclamation point. И ПАБЛА, I opened the door and he was standing there. The rabbi. I have blue eyes and I am a Jew. He came inside but did not sit down. He looked like a photograph of a man I had seen with a beard. It was a magazine in my high school library. Someone had erased the eyes and drawn them in, crossed. This rabbi had the erased eyes. He stood facing me.

The customs people were thorough but polite. Obliging. Smiling. One of the attendants had smiled at me. She handed me my valise and smiled, emitting a stream of jellied consonants and loose, sliding vowels. I smiled back at her, though when I was small my parents had sent me to an orthodontist. I wore a nightbrace like phylacteries though I have never worn the latter. I have seen them, though. I rode to my hotel from the aeroport with two Germans (I think) and an American businessman. We did not speak.

Moscow is both extremely ugly and charming. The Soviets are proudest of what is ugly; the tourists like the charming-- which makes the USSR a difficult place to visit. On my first day out with my guide and our group (the first time most people see Moscow in a group) we passed a building. Something about it made me ask what it was. We stopped and we were informed it was a

synagogue. I was surprised. Later I asked the Intourist official at the hotel if I would be able to attend a service there. It was arranged.

The rabbi looked at me intently. It was exactly the same as the night before in the synagogue, except here we were alone face to face. The silence was the same. He spoke and asked if I would go with him to a certain place. I was unsure but decided to go along with him. We left. The lobby was empty. The clerk was not behind his desk; gone for coffee, or for something else, maybe. We went out into the street. It was dark and cold.

I was told that it would be best not to attend services this sabbath, but to wait another week. I was agreeable. I guessed that some official prepping was called for. The next day I visited Lenin's tomb. The whole thing was too organized, too hurried. As I walked by the mummified corpse I stared at the face, a little shrunken, but still obviously the same face as that of the countless pictures, posters, statues, etc., etc., that had made me too familiar with this profile, these features. Lenin's faceless face, I thought.

When I walked under the Brandenburg gate I thought of Bach's Brandenburg concerto, the one in G major that has only two suggestive chords for the middle movement. Walking across Red Square after coming out of Lenin's tomb there was some music I was trying to think of. I could hum a few notes and then I would forget the whole thing.

We walked, the rabbi and I, along the dark sidewalk. There were people out, but not many. He turned to me. Do you believe in God? he asked. I was suddenly taken by the fact that he spoke excellent English. I turned and looked at him. Pause. The stare. Again the silence. No, I was the one who broke it. He nodded and we walked on. It was some time before the silence was broken again, this time by him.

I was escorted the next Friday night to the synagogue door. At the door I asked my guide if he was going in to the service, too. He smiled broadly, though without opening his lips, and said that he would wait. When we were inside he stood in the back of the room. I was greeted silently by several members of the congregation. Hands appeared and supplied me with kipa and tallit. I joined the congregation and the service began.

When I left another girl, the attendant inspecting my valise, smiled at me and beckoned me aside to a waiting area. I had expected as much. She picked up a phone and spoke rapidly and quietly. I smiled too, in a frozen sort of way. A man in an official uniform came out of a door to stand behind the table.

I noticed the beams of the ceiling running overhead and across the walls. They were covered with flowing, spiny Hebrew lettering. I thought I recognized some of the texts.

I understand, then, your silence, he said. No, I wanted to say, that isn't it; that's simple and obvious; that is an explanation: but this is something I cannot explain. I have always been able to pray before . . . But I did not say this. The rabbi continued. I know this feeling well. Again we stopped. I have a dream, he whispered, I dream of a throne, and the throne is empty. I did not understand. I dream of girls with crooked teeth, of Lenin's yellow skin, of statues that speak meaningless syllables. I dream of newspapers I cannot read . . . He was still speaking. I dream of unrolling the torah scrolls and finding them empty, or covered with cyrillic obscenities.

I remembered what Pravda meant. Truth. I walked to a newsstand and said Pravda and walked away with a newspaper covered with sentences and picture captions whose meanings I could not begin to decipher. Pravda even looks like it should begin with the second letter. Two of the letters are all wrong. I opened it and looked at all the pictures.

The service began. It was like the services I had attended before, at home as a child and elsewhere. I do not know Hebrew but know the service almost completely by heart, and had no problem following along. But something puzzling happened: I found that I could not pray. I stared at the words, I could hear them running through my head, but they would not come out my mouth; I could not even move my lips. Around me the people of the congregation were nodding and sing-songing the words but I stood still and lifeless like a statue in their midst. I began to feel confused and uncomfortable. I grew warm. I looked up and saw the rabbi, standing facing the congregation. He was staring at me. I started to lower my eyes, to bury them in my

prayer book, but then I noticed that the rabbi was not speaking, was not praying. We turned the page.

I turned to the rabbi. You do not believe in God? No. But you are a rabbi, you -- Yes. I have not forgotten that. And there is one special task that I perform tonight because I am a rabbi. We will be there soon. I realized that we were heading toward the synagogue. I was curious and fell silent. Here I thought is a rabbi who dreams too much.

In my hotel room after the service I lay down on the bed. Images ran through my head, words, phrases, ideas. Why had I been unable to pray? And the rabbi? I had seen no reaction from the people. Was his behavior unremarkable to them? The synagogue building had been so small, but the congregation was smaller still, and there were no young people or children. When the ark was opened, at that instant, I looked straight down at the floor: I could not look up. I did not look up the entire time the scrolls were carried in a circle around us and held the tzitzit of my tallis limply between my fingers. I could hear the shuffling of feet and whispers from where the women were seated. I opened my eyes and sat up in bed. There were whispers out in the corridor. I got up and drew the shade, then turned out the light.

Standing in the street I began to fold the paper -- in half, in fourths, in eighths. I made it smaller and smaller in my hands. I rolled it like a ball but did not drop it on the street. If I was in Leningrad, I thought, -- Peter's city, and hence Rome's rival -- I would walk the length of the Nevsky Prospekt and drop the paper into the Neva. To my left someone was washing the windows of a storefront. I watched the water evaporate in rainbows off the glass.

We approached the synagogue. The door was unlocked. We went inside. We did not speak. It was shabbat; apparently the rabbi would not turn on the lights although he did not believe in God. But then again maybe the reason was not religious.

The line moved slowly forward. I could not see the face of the man standing in front of me. He was carrying a brown cardboard suitcase and what looked like a blanket rolled up under his arm. A clock high up on the wall gave Moscow time. I

looked down at my watch. When I set down my suitcase I will have to remember to reset it.

There was a radio in my room. I found a station that was clear: all it played though was marches. Military marches.

The rabbi had come to visit me that Friday night, it was dark, I had slept fitfully since I had come back from the service. I was bothered by dreams.

I had been unable to look into the ark.

We walked down the Prospekt Kalinina, our tour group had; a street ten lanes wide. There was something I could not understand about the Soviets. I have visited many countries in Europe and travelled across America. This though was my first visit to a foreign country.

Nervously I walked through the streets, deserted, back to my hotel. I thought I was being followed, but could not be sure. My inbred fear of Communism, I realized, had much in common with my fear of the dark. I breathed easier when I came within sight of the hotel. I was still holding tightly to my bundle. The twin scrolls felt hard against my chest.

The rabbi walked slowly to the ark. I followed him. His hands shaking, he opened the ark. Then, slowly, and trembling, he bowed down until his head was touched completely to the floor. I watched from the side bewildered. I watched him reach for one of the scrolls. I watched while he removed it from its place of exaltation. I followed him to the rear of the room where he wrapped it in paper. The silence again. He handed it to me without looking at me. No stare, no silent understanding, no shared communion. I took the package and he led me to the door. I understood that I was to return alone. Before I left he spoke once more. The night air was cold and the wind was biting. You must understand, was all he said.

I could not see his face because of the shadows.

He turned back into the darkness of the building. I began to walk back to the hotel. I could picture him sitting, in the darkness, motionless, silent. The ceiling beams over his head, carved with the Shema and the laws.

When I walked into the lobby there was no one there. I did not know what time it was; I had left my watch by the bed. There was

a light on at the clerk's desk. I walked up to my room.

The man in the official uniform began to inspect my suitcase. It was 3:00 p.m., Moscow time. He smiled up at me. I understood. Regulations.

I am sorry, he said, smiling, in flawless English, but you cannot be permitted to take these items out of the country. These are treasures of the Soviet people. And he began taking things from my suitcase. Seizure was too strong a word. I listened to the bells on the torah scroll tinkle as he removed it and realized I had expected no more to happen. Perhaps it was what he had expected, as well.

The plane would be late to Berlin.

--Bill Meikrantz

Mrs. Jones' Umbrella

One day Jones got off the bus
And headed home: to dinner and wife,
A briefcase and newspaper under his arm,
A few extra dollars under his hat.

His wife reminded him as he kissed her cheek
That the Smiths would be to dinner that night;
So she went bustling about to prepare
While he took a nap upon the couch.

Near dinner time, Mrs. Jones came in
To get her husband ready to dine,
But he was nowhere, nowhere in sight!
And the front-door bell began to ring.

"Just a minute!" she nervously answered the bell
As she frantically raced from room to room
Till she stopped again to look at the couch
On which a slim umbrella lay.

"Oh, no!" she cried in desperation,
"He couldn't! He did!" her helpless cry.
Just then the doorbell rang again.
"Coming!" she could no longer hide.

Please do come in, please do sit down.
Something dreadful had occurred."
And pitifully she told her tale;
The Smiths did not interrupt at all.

Then Mr. Smith said, full of awe,
"You mean he just closed up, like that?
Into an umbrella and just lies there,
No matter what you do or say?"

And Mrs. Jones began to cry
And Mrs. Smith said, "There, there, dear."
And Mr. Smith just sat and stared
At the umbrella on the couch.

At last, he rose and picked it up
And shook it towards the wet-eyed wife;
But nothing happened when he shook it
("Except it rustled," he later said).

He moved his thumb up on the catch,
And raising the cane, pushed it up:
And the umbrella, whoosh, undid;
And very slowly folded up.

--Bill Meikrantz

Initial Draft of a Subsequent Poem. K.S.

The whiteness of the walls like a vacuum
 The whiteness of the gessoed canvas like a vacuum
 The hand a shadow
 The shadow is blue
 --dark blue like death like the sky the night
 like my shirt like my eyes

And if unknowing I hope to gaze
 here

on this silent glistening idea
 still like an unborn child in the mind's womb
 embedded like fire in the cracks and
 fissures of the brain,

or should I say --

this matter unrolling in furrows
 unburrowing in waves and fluxions
 spread like paste,

like paint;
 the oil like blood
 stretching its yaws, gaping like an
 opening wound.

(And here within -- beneath the flesh,
 behind the bone

--what is it Karl that creeps sullen and still
 the length of my spine
 tunnelling into my eyes
 if not the sight of
 the face emerging from behind the face?)

Freezing, dried tight and taut
 This tension -- tensile strength,
 (Or should I say,
 unremembered pain, and unanticipated suffering?)

I stand before my mirror
 And watch motionless the smoke of my cigarette
 Inch its away across the plane of my field of
 vision . . .

Blood, yes, I know that word --
 Blood of saints and martyrs and Jesus Christ
 And I stare at the palm of my hand
 Unstained by grief or passion
 and raise it, in a Byzantine gesture,
 And let it fall empty of fire or dust,
 And let my face rise:
 encircled by the halo of what I know has passed

(And feel overcome by my sense
 --of what? Let me tell you this:
 When Roy was reading John Graham in class
 I wrote down in my notebook,
 "Art is a cross-eyed woman with no hands,"
 and did not think -- either then or now -- that
 seeing a thing can mean much more than
 it ever has).

--Bill Meikrantz

Collages

to Sarah

An integration is a whole:
 a sum of small moments,
 each too small too be much more than nothing,
 of which they are an approximation.

(To bring down in epiphany
 integration in structure
 an idea held fast by the form)

Not the thing itself,
 or even an approximation,
 but a regression towards
 the best way of expressing knowledge
 at best incomplete.

shaped and torn
 red like clumps of dirt (of clay, North Carolina dirt)
 and grass
 the contortions of sentences within a paragraph

and the scissors that carefully remove
 the halo from Baby Jesus' head
 the paste that
 holds this together against
 this denatured substance

But like all the children begat by
 missionaries to this heathen land
 who see neither god nor fire in the eyes of
 the dark night

the tendrils of the roots collapse onto
 the conformity of the soil
 driven to the still deep water
 and hope of thirst

And our sin dissolves like rain
 running into the earth on which we stand
 naked in our standing

scissors in hand*

integration by division;

(these shorn fragments and Sarah Taylor poised
 against the steps of Hege-Cox, with cocktail glass
 and cigarette held unerased, cha-cha style,
 like Mrs. Dana in the lounge)

not only this but the flickering glimmer
 the hostile sun and the unfeeling night
 the limp cigarette
 stale smoke
 and unqualified yearning.

--Bill Meikrantz

Seven Lyrics

1
 Dry
 like a well
 holds no water

 echoing dully
 the sound of words

 stone-made
 earth-built

 singing no song
 but
 I catch two birds in my shadow

2
 leaf-tree
 root-stone

I press
 clinging

and
 hold the sun in my fingers

so green

3
 wind like the wind
 winds like the wind

tell me, Sapphira

4
 one drop
 called rain
 wind-blown
 tree-caught

Blinks twice my eye
 my open hand
 blinks

drop

If I could sing

5
 Dust makes me
 remember

I shudder but
 dare not dream

brings darkness

brings starlight

6
 Always before
 the flower
 the spring

two fingers and the moon
 one octave apart

yes

7
 Too like a hand
 to take

receive caught-star
 &
 know no more
 than this;

what I could not sing,
 I said.

This I would cause you to remember
 --Bill Meikrantz

To My Roommate

The feelingless
 I have no feeling left
 and have succumbed
 surrendered
 It is enough
 to at least feel numbness

So many of us
 have wiped out
 lost feeling
 for scheduled trivia

You have sighed
 a great rich sigh
 and heard it echo
 smaller and smaller
 until finally you've said
 from a facial dimension
 "I've died"

As have I
 challenged to carry
 what I can't feel
 I'm empty
 you're empty
 We all taunted
 by the dare of stoicism.

Linda Ress

Flattery
 vain, vague, and warm
 Scrutinizing
 discriminant charm
 love is called

In investments
 slinky dresses
 cold beer scents
 cold carresses
 love is scrawled

In vanity
 expensive fashion hopes
 friendly profanity
 warmth is groped for
 and love is called

unpretentious, alone
 love is hard to own.

Linda Ress

The wind up-swept
 and carried me
 lifted above esteem
 and crying
 with the jagged sea
 of beauty dreams

That once were spent
 on situations
 of contempt
 and crying
 love pretensions
 futilely went

Once more again
 the sea bellowed
 beauty profound
 and crying
 the wind echoed
 its sweet inanimate sound.

Linda Ress

Thoreau's Life And Walden
James Stephens

"A memorable picture has been left by Nathaniel Hawthorne's daughter of the three famous men of Concord skating on the river one winter's afternoon. Hawthorne, wrapped in his cloak, "moved like a self-impelled Greek statue, stately and grave". Emerson, stoop shouldered, 'evidently too weary to hold himself erect', pitched forward, 'half lying on the air'. Thoreau, genuinely skillful on his skates, 'performed dithyrambic dances and Bacchic leaps, enchanted with himself.'"

This exuberance to celebrate life and himself separates Thoreau from Hawthorne and Emerson. Hawthorne's darkly cast, sombre narratives and Emerson's elevated didactic poesy seem haltered and soiled in comparison to Thoreau's exuberant, energetic language. In places Thoreau is as poetic and restrained as Emerson, and at times he is just as sombre as Hawthorne; but in the places where Thoreau comes out of the text wearing Chanticleer's cockcomb he is lusty, cocksure and arrogant to such an extent that in light of Emerson and Hawthorne he seems ludicrous.

"My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing as some creatures use their snout and forepaws, and with it I should mine and burrow my way through these hills."

Una Hawthorne's description of Thoreau as one who was "enchanted with himself" seems quite fitting for one who was called by the great American novelist Henry James the most "unconscious and unblushing egotist" he had ever known. It is this self absorption that leads people to believe that Thoreau was a sloth and that he had no ambition. In Thoreau's funeral eulogy Emerson credited him with having the genius to have done the "engineering for America," but instead used it to be "the captain of a huckleberry party".

Emerson may properly be said to have been the greatest influence on Thoreau, even to the point where Thoreau was accused of emulating Emerson's very mannerisms. It seems as if Thoreau actively strove to incorporate the dictums of Emerson's *Nature* into his life. While Emerson was active as major influence of America thought for the better part of his life, Thoreau was perhaps more intent on achieving the integration of the transcendent moment into his own life.

"Methinks I should be content to sit at the back door in Concord, under the poplar tree henceforth, forever."

But at the same time Thoreau lived Emerson's philosophy outright. Is not Emerson's call to recognize the commonality in all men a call to resist a government fighting a war in Mexico, killing men over a land dispute? Is it not an enjoiner to support the spirit of a man like John Brown who was fighting for the emancipation of a sizable percentage of the United States? The ideal behind Thoreau's move to the cabin was an attempt at getting near the "bare ground" and "blithe air" of the transcendental vision, a life stripped of all encumbrances that cloud spirit in a commodity-minded world. But to Emerson Thoreau was too enraptured by his own "dithyrambic dance and Bacchic leaps" to properly use his energy. From Thoreau's eulogy by Emerson:

"Pounding beans is good to the end of pounding empires one of these days; but if, at the end of years it is still only beans."

From Thoreau's life, his own journals as well as biographies and journals done by people who knew Thoreau, we get a picture of a person who in many ways seems quite different from the "Walden Voice". Thoreau's name is on the cover sheet of the book and the opening words inform that the narrator is going to confine the book to himself since he knows no one better. In the first line the word "I" appears three times, so one perhaps rightfully assumes that Walden is an

autobiographical sketch. However there are numerous discrepancies concerning the Walden Voice and Thoreau. He did not actually write Walden while he lived in the woods but produced it in his parent's home in the seven years following his move from the pond. But the Walden Voice leads us to believe that he produced the book there while he lived for two years in almost complete isolation, living on what he could earn by his infrequent labor, and generally employing his hours intent with the spectacles of nature and personal reflections on his occasional encounters with society and inhabitants of the woods. To adequately pick up on the discrepancies that I have alleged it may be helpful to examine the background of Thoreau's life leading up to his Walden days and look at some accounts of these days from other sources.

Henry Thoreau lived all but a few years of his life in Concord. He moved there with his family when he was five and only left twice for indefinite periods of time: once when he attended Harvard College some twenty miles away and the second time several years before his move to Walden to go to New York as a teacher. The majority of his Concord years were spent in his parents' home. He was an average student at Harvard but proved his academic ability after his graduation when he and his brother opened an academy in Concord which was attended by the children of many of Concord's most prominent citizens. The school operated for several years until his brother's death. At the age of twenty-four Thoreau was taken in by the Emersons as a general caretaker. He, unlike Emerson, was able to use an axe and a hammer with great dexterity. During these years with the Emersons he contributed numerous articles to the "Dial" -- the Transcendentalists publication. Emerson decided that Thoreau should get some exposure to the world and procured a job teaching his brother's children for him. Living in New York Thoreau was surrounded by an intense literary environment but he found that he missed Concord so much that he returned to live with his parents. He went to work with his father in their own pencil business. However he soon lost interest in it after he perfected several techniques that changed their once unucrative operation into a somewhat successful business. In 1844 at age twenty-seven, just prior to moving to Walden's shore, Thoreau set fire accidentally to the woods around Walden. He reports in his own journal that he had been cooking fish on the shore of a pond when the fire that he and a friend had kindled in a pine stump set the nearby woods into an uncontrollable blaze. Thoreau ran into town for help, but on his way back he climbed a hill to watch the fire. The destruction of the three hundred acres of Concord's woods was in no way a positive addition to Thoreau's reputation of being somewhat of an indolent nut. He was often referred to after this incident as that "damned rascal". A recent Biographer of Thoreau, Leon Edel, suggests that at this time, Thoreau was quite frustrated with his life and that this last incident was enough to prompt his decision to go to the woods. Perhaps it was his wish to turn his ignominy into anomaly.

Thoreau writes in Walden, "Solitude":
"I have never felt lonesome, or in the least oppressed by a sense of solitude, but once, and that was a few weeks after I came to the woods, when, for an hour, I doubted if the near neighborhood of man was not essential to a serene and healthy life. To be alone I was something unpleasant. But I was at the same time conscious of a slight insanity in my mood, and seemed to foresee my recovery."

Ironically enough it is known that Thoreau scarcely passed a day in his two years at the pond when he didn't go into town to visit people or his mother and accept food at their tables. Franklin Sanborn, who lived for a time with the Thoreaus

and later introduced Henry to John Brown, said of Thoreau's years at Walden, he "bivouacked there" and "lived at home, where he went every day." It was a common jibe among the people of Concord that any time the Emerson's dinner bell sounded Thoreau was off across the woods to be first in line. In "Economy" it is evident that Thoreau anticipated such "cavillers" as myself who wish to point out that he did not strictly support himself, but dined out "occasionally". But with such frequency as this actually was occasioned, it is not realistic to say that he only consumed on the average twenty-seven cents worth of food per week as he claims.

The move to Walden dramatically improved his popularity with the township. It is said that at least a visitor a day came to see him and on weekends and in the summer he led nature walks and huckleberry parties for children and adults as well. By moving to the woods he did not completely become isolated from society, but rather he brought society to his doorstep where he could examine it to his liking. Although he did not attain the independence of society as he suggests that he did in Walden, he was able to create a psychological distance from Concord that he was unable to maintain in New York. Having his own cabin in the woods gave him a perspective of his home, even though he visited it every day, different than had he lived there. Many of his biographers seem to discredit Thoreau's life at Walden because of his frequent treks to town, but they seem to over-look the fact that he always returned to the darkness of the woods and the waters of the pond.

I believe that from just these brief insights into Thoreau's life one can discern that there is a different Thoreau in the book than the Thoreau that walked Concord's streets. This does not invalidate the possibility of setting up a hermit economy in the woods. However Walden does not validate it either. Those that see Walden as a manual for homesteading or as material for psychoanalysis of Thoreau the man miss the main import of the book and get little for their sacrifice. Walden is not complete in any sense of the level of social criticism. Thoreau picks up some loose threads of Concord society and gives them a hard yank, but he never follows through with them. He seems to turn away from the governments and institutions and picks out the individual. He starts from himself. He does not focus on the general or the "long ago and far away" but he comes right in on the direct issues of life. Food. Warmth. Shelter. Who starts their great novels (and I think this is worthy of that class as much as any) talking about what they do when they get up or how they get their food? From this base we might expect Thoreau to work his way out; maybe talking about society, or today it might be big business and the problem with the government, then moving on up the ladder to Religion or ethics. But where does he go from his day to day round? To what he lived for, what he read, and then sounds that he heard. He goes deeper and deeper into himself. The whole book becomes a focus on the individual and what exists within him -- "walled-in". Thoreau perhaps is harkening back to Emerson in *Nature* who demands that we become a nation that does not make its sole enterprise the commemoration of the past. He arrogantly stands on the rooftops bragging as Chanticleer of his own worth independent of others.

"The old have no very important advice to give to the young, their own experience has been so partial, and their lives have been such miserable failures, for private reasons, as they must believe; and it may be that they have some faith left which belies that experience, and they are only less young than they were . . . Here is life, an experiment to a great extent untried by me, but it does not avail me that they have tried it."

Walden is structured upon images of a hidden inner layer to reality. In essence Thoreau's trip to the woods is not an embarking into the wilderness, but a subterranean exploration of interiors. What the woods and the pond offer is the physical correlative to The undiscovered realms of the individual. There is a metaphysical wilderness that awaits for Thoreau within himself -- contained.

"Man's capacities have never been measured; nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried."

Thoreau's images of the light coming from within the darkness all point to this idea of innerness. The darkness represents the unknown, and it is the ministers of the dark that whisper their melodies in Thoreau's ear: the tree trunk from out of the pond, the loon, the fluid stream of decayed vegetation from out of the snowbank, the worm in the table. Thoreau is constantly digging, burrowing, mining or peering into the nooks and crannies of Walden or its woods to find the hidden. For him it is the inner which directs and informs the outer. "No man followed his genius till it misled him." Thoreau on the bank of the pond is trying to get in touch with this darkness within himself, the darkness which shares an occult relation with the darkness that he sees everywhere.

"However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it; and that is no more I than it is you. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. This doubleness may easily make us poor neighbors and friends sometimes."

The pond is a powerful image, in the light of this, of a primitive and a higher nature existent with one body. Having no inlet or over-flowing streams, Walden is a whole -- a cosmos. It one instant reflects the heavens, then a shift in location or a change in light reveals the dark, apparently bottomless depths. Still a further change and the water becomes opaque, neither reflecting or penetrable -- responding to the caprice of the wind. The multiplicity of our beings is centered in on one chapter after his discussion of ponds in "Higher Laws." The first incident that he describes in the chapter is the urge he had to devour a woodchuck alive. Not to make a pun out of this quote, Thoreau writes,

"We are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers. It is reptile and sensual, and perhaps cannot be wholly expelled; like the worms which, even in life and health, occupy our bodies."

On reflections on the sensual elements of life the Puritan blood seems to awaken in Thoreau to the end. It is perhaps the ability of Thoreau to fully accept his mortality; his very body, that includes him in the group of men leading lives of desperation. The higher being in him seems to be over-shadowed by doubts about the natural world. And so he devotes a great part of his life to rambling over hill and dale searching, and measuring and trying to define a higher element. As the "self-appointed inspector of snowfalls" makes his rounds it is as if he is, to quote Wordsworth, "more like a man/Flying from something he dreads, than one who sought the thing he loved."

"I fear that we are such gods or demigods only as fauns and satyres, the divine allied to beasts, the creatures of appetite, and that, to some extent, our very life is disgraceful."

And then a few lines later
"Nature is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome."

Although Thoreau seems to have led a more active life as a Transcendentalist than perhaps Emerson did, it becomes evident that he was more of an Idealist than any of the New England Romantics. This element in him certainly led him out of the society of men and women. Whitman said of Thoreau that he had a "morbid dislike of humanity". It is certain that he disdained the mass of men for their preselection to slave all their lives for the sake of their creature wants. The Chanticleeresque manner of Thoreau is not indicative of an egotistical tyrant, but is just some loud crowing to wake up the chickens pecking in the yard around him. His Walden vision is not life negating because of his insistence that nature should be overcome. In a manner it might seem so if you held that all life was one great huckleberry party while living in the woods.

It is rather a call to:

"Direct your eye inward, and you'll find
A thousand regions in your mind
Yet undiscovered."

The world for him is one vast metaphor for man. But the metaphor is not the ends to life, only the beginning. The newness of life will not descend upon man unless it comes from within him.

"Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star."

(The biographical information was obtained from Leon Edel's *Henry D. Thoreau*, and Walter Harding's *A Thoreau Handbook*. All quotes other than from Walden are taken from Edel's book. The Wordsworth quote is from "Tintern Abbey".)



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