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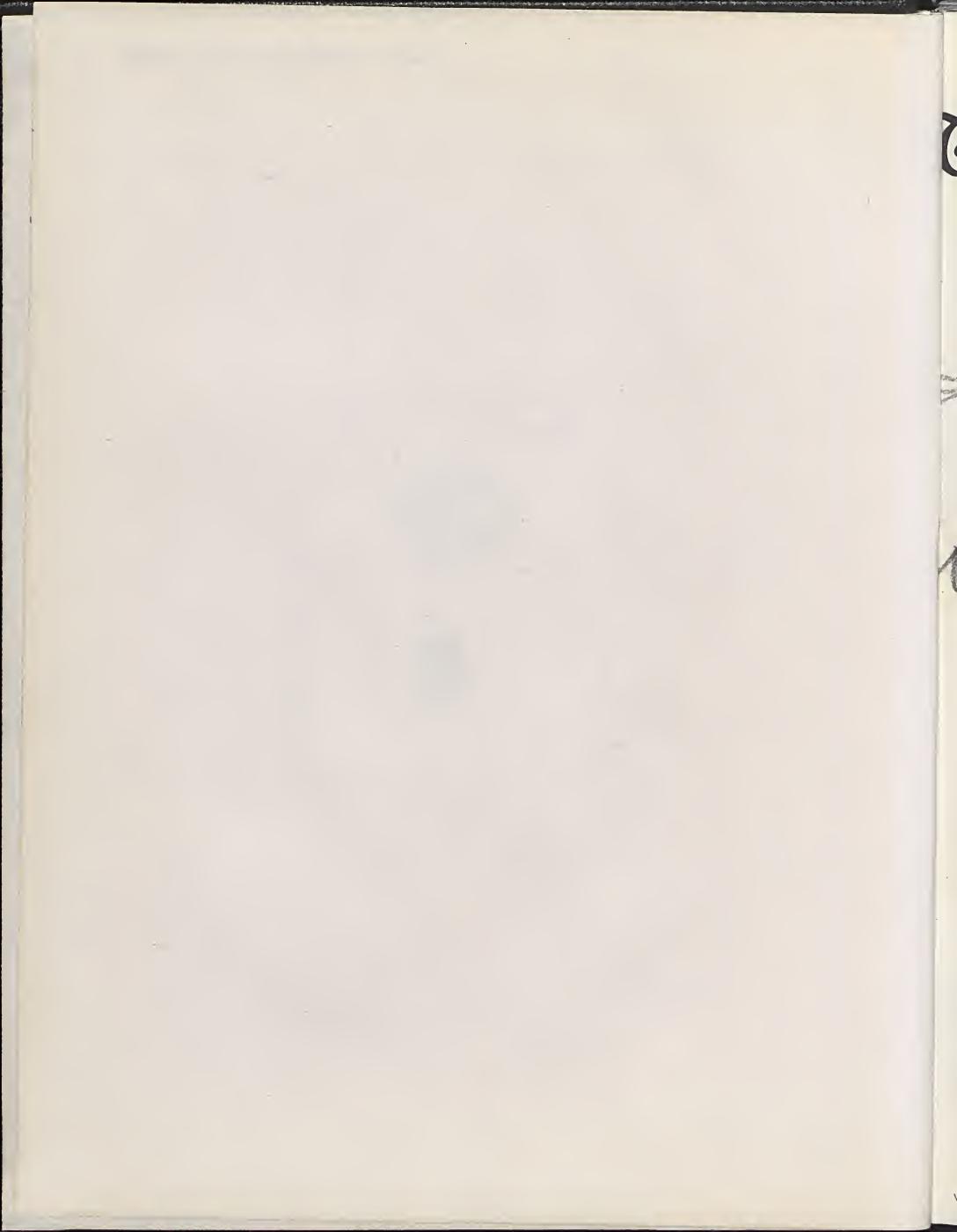


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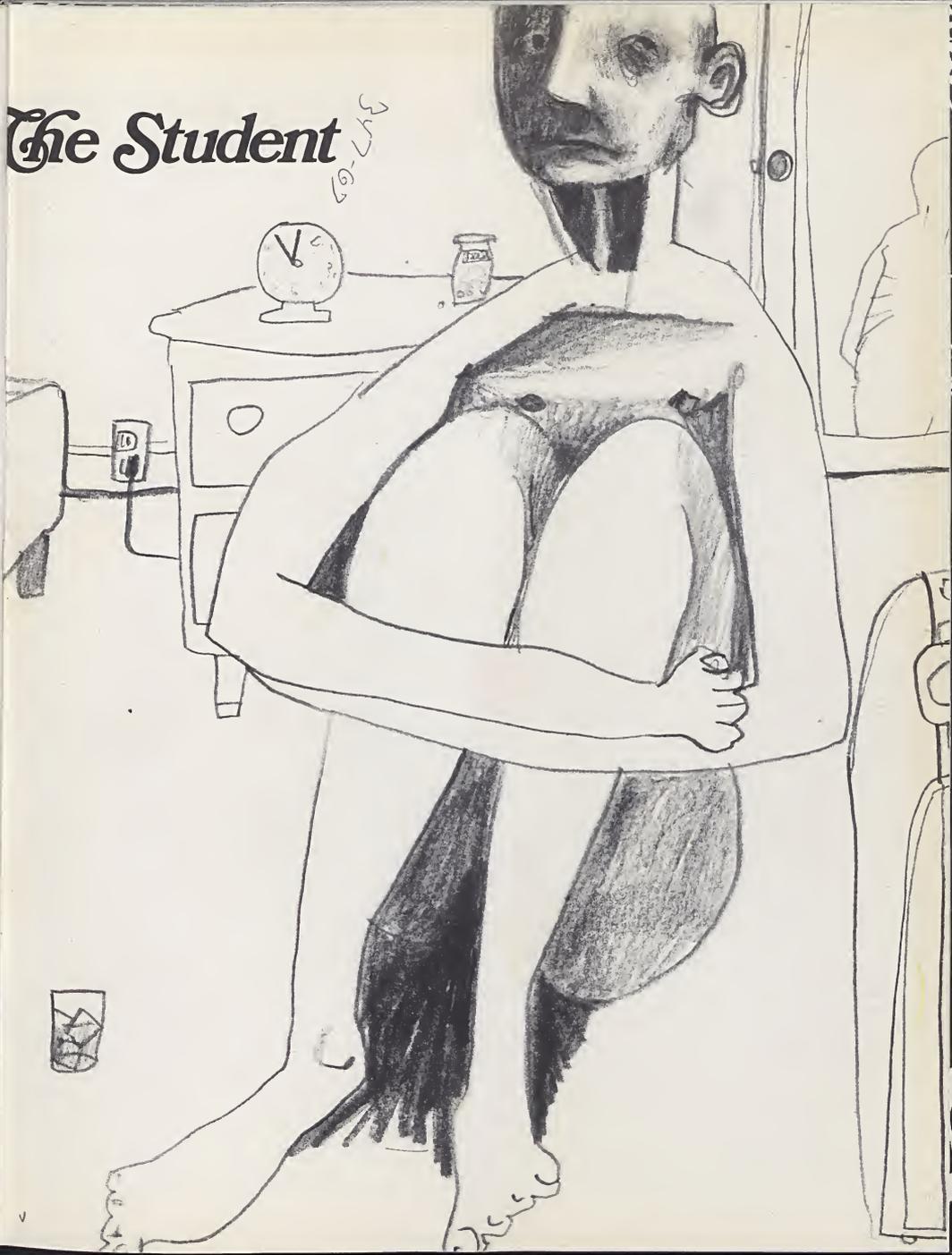
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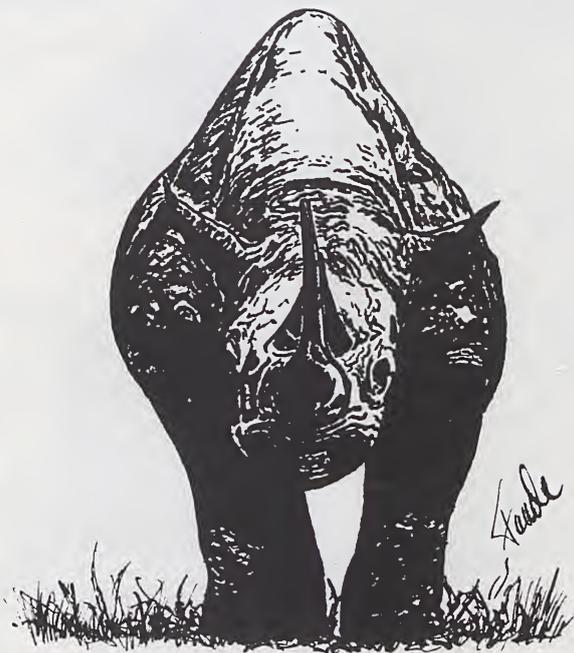
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Scand



Sam Page

Monuments

Grounded giants catching time
in cracks and faded walls,
Wash to the earth
and mingle with the clay
from which they were raised.

— Dennis G. Manning



Sam Page

Response #21

Sharp Distance
Even tho' I heard you say
 closeness does not befit you
 in any crowd
 held by four words in public
Then to me the many more untold

Yet,
Still,
 Sharp Distance.

Unknown Unheld
My inner self screams at the times
 I've heard you
 seen you
 sport boredom as if it were the latest fashion
That you seek such in that wave
 to stand firmly askew
Yet you breathe, feel
 with masked countenance.

I hear more, yet unformed
 Still I do not know when
 moving toward you if I
 push away
 trip
 fall
 reverse
 embrace
 touch
 stroke

Frustration's challenge
 Impresses itself upon me.
I'm not sure I want to know
 The preconceived notions of
 where you are from someone else.

Seeing what you hate
 That ever ending list
 and your lines
 with absolutely no pastels.

Unsure, yet firm so you say
 structuralism is dead
 and you've designed the nuclear crematorium.

Sharp Distance, reverberating.
What is it that holds you?
 Back?
 Away?
Me?

— Laura Veach Boies

With tired eyes, Chris Gallos watched his godfather as he gradually began his ascent up the hillside, and beyond him, watched the fishing boats as they made their way out to mid-harbor or open sea, thinking all the while what a clever man Callinicus must have been. Architect, man of letters, and inventor of a weapon so ingenious, so deadly, that merely a rumor of it caused a hasty retreat of any enemy. The dread and surprise of those Saracens as the seemingly harmless putty missiles exploded into fire on the wet reeds of their ships! The genius of an indefensible weapon. The horrible gift of a new way to die. As a soldier, Chris had to respect that. But there was more. For Callinicus had not been a soldier, but a scientist and an artist, a civilized man who had kept his hands clean in a brutish and violent age. With his wits, he had avoided the battlefield, avoided the enemy. Who would dare risk such a clever man? He had probably never even seen a man die.

Greek Fire

Chris lay back on the grass, letting the dew soak his neck and hair. These were the sort of things that passed through his mind after a night of tending the flock—images, half-memories, distant anecdotes. As day broke, his eyes would blink against the rude light and bitter cold, and exhaustion would get the better of him, leaving him prey to thoughts he would rather not have had. Just like after a long shift in the silo, or cramming for exams at the Academy. He usually prided himself on his mental discipline, but in these dawn hours, he could muster little control. And yet this morning was good. Yes, it was very good, he thought, to have remembered the story of Callinicus this morning.

Uncle John had made it halfway up the hill, stopping now to wipe his forehead and drink from an unmarked bottle of yellow wine. Chris smiled. Since arriving in Tegeon six months before, he had seen the old man drink countless bottles of Retsina. Each day, John brought six bottles with him to the hilltop, supplemented by another few bottles one of his grandchildren would bring him with his dinner. By nightfall, Chris would invariably find him passed out beneath a tree, wrapped tightly in several thick blankets. No matter—the dogs did all the work anyway. To be a shepherd meant simply to be patient and not think too much. Chris would wake the man, who would then insist upon drinking one final toast with his American nephew before returning home for the night.

It was a fascinating ceremony, this toast they drank each dawn and each dusk. In his sack, along with the bottles and pistol and bread, Uncle John carried two chipped wine glasses that had been in the family since his grandfather had taken them from a murdered Turk. With these, they would toast the day. But not before John told the story of the clinking of the glasses.

by Stephen Amidon

The old man would squint and stroke his stubbed beard, theatrically trying to recall the story he knew better than his own name.

"You see, Christopher, wine is the only thing on this earth that can satisfy all a man's senses. Nothing else can do that. Not even a woman. They talk too much." He would pour a glass and hold it to his nose. "We smell, and the nose is satisfied." He would hold the glass before his eyes, letting the early sun filter through it. "We look, and the eyes are satisfied." He would touch the glass to his lips, leaving a thin film of wine there. "We touch, and the skin is satisfied." Then he would run his tongue twice over his wet lips. "We taste, and the taste is satisfied." He poured Chris's glass. "But what of the ears, my boy?" He handed Chris the glass, who held it aloft. His uncle would then touch the glasses together, and the ancient crystal would ring clearly, loudly. John would wait until the sound had died away. "Now the ears are happy. This is why we must clink the glasses. Drink your wine, Christopher." Every day the story would be the same, and every day the crystal's ring would sound more beautiful to Chris.

So this morning, it was the absence of the glasses that told Chris there was trouble. Not the old man's solemn demeanor, or his silence—these were habitual. He sat down heavily beside Chris, looking out over the flock. The sheep were still scattered over the entire hillside, ringed by three active and nervous dogs. John rubbed his grey whiskers and sighed.

"It's bad," he said, without turning.

Chris looked hard at his uncle, for a clue.

"What is bad?"

"Nicholas sent us a message last night. He knows. Either you marry Haliklia or he will kill you." John now looked squarely at Chris.

"Unless, of course, you kill him. Then you would be free, for luckily, he has no sons, and his nephews are all in the Navy."

Chris pulled off the thick wool blanket and stood, stretching his muscles. The cool air felt good against his bare neck and arms. It was a different kind of cold than in America, he thought—a cold that seemed accustomed to man and to which men were accustomed. Most things here were different in that way.

Haliklia. He had met her just after arriving in Tegeon, when he went to work with her father, Nicholas, in the small quarry just outside of town. She would bring them lunch each day, watching Chris shyly, very confused and attracted by the foreigner, yet deathly afraid of her father. A few times, Chris had tried to chat with her, but her eyes would immediately fall upon Nicholas, who stood frozen, hands clenched, looking grimly at the broken stones by his feet. So Chris had given up and settled for exchanging occasional glances with the shy girl.

She was not beautiful by any standard Chris knew—some-what heavy in the shoulders and hips and dark in a solemn

way. And yet he felt himself violently attracted towards her. Perhaps it was her deep eyes or the strange shyness. But more than these, Chris knew, was that this was the first time since his marriage that he had felt the possibility of another woman. Jennifer was thousands of miles away, sitting in the kitchen with a cup of coffee and perhaps a neighbor, trying to conjure a new life. Andrea was in New Mexico with some ex-hippy and had long since forgotten her father. Chris, Jr. was dead, having wrapped his Porsche and his prom date around a hundred-year-old oak. So suddenly, this young, silent girl had become something she would never have been in Montana—a possibility. And in a village scarce on youth, she was more than attractive—she was available.

One day, an attack of gout had kept Nicholas in bed. Just after noon, Haliklia had come down to the quarry. She had not even brought the lunch. The rest of the men had gone home to their families to eat. Chris was not surprised that she was a virgin—since everything was surprising here, nothing surprised him. Looking now over the flock, made restless by the sunrise, Chris could clearly remember her—the bitter-sweet and crude odor of her young flesh; her back arching up, higher and higher into him; her head shaking back and forth in the dust and leaves; the rapid dialect he couldn't understand. She had left quickly, and he had gone back to his work. The others returned soon after and went silently about their business. He had not seen her since that day several weeks before, nor had he really cared to. There was a striking finality in the way she looked at him from behind her matted black hair, the way she rearranged her several skirts as she walked quickly from the quarry. Making love to her had been the most thoughtless, the most natural thing Chris had done since early childhood. And yet afterwards, the act had taken on all the airs of some great decision, although Chris couldn't have said at the time what that might have been.

"Here," said John, handing up a half-empty bottle of Retsina. Chris drank expansively from it. He had hated that sour resin taste at first, but now drank the wine like water. He handed the bottle back to John and stretched again. The alcohol in his stomach awakened the juices and reminded him that he was hungry.

"Well, I'd better get down to breakfast. I don't want Helen to feed it to the goats again."

"Are you going to fight him?"

"I cannot marry Haliklia. I have a wife."

"Then you will fight."

As simple as that, Chris thought. At times he admired the simplicity of thought in Tegeon. It wasn't the simplicity of brutes or dullards, but a refined economy—as if every choice that didn't matter had been trimmed away over the years, leaving only the easiest and the most difficult. But at other times he hated the either/or intellect. A man felt trapped.

"Perhaps," he said, not looking at his godfather.

"No. Not perhaps. If you don't fight you become a coward. That is worse than being dead."

"Uncle John, if I fight Nicholas, I will kill him. He is old. His muscles have been eaten away by gout. I can use a knife—I've been trained."

"Then he will die," said John.

Chris knelt on his haunches beside the old man, putting his hand on John's shoulder. He was struggling with the strange language, trying to explain. Below, one of the dogs began barking loudly. John looked at Chris.

"He knows that, Christopher."

"I don't want to kill anyone, Popú. That is why I am here. That is why I left. I can't explain it all to you, my Greek is not good enough. I just cannot fight that man."

For a moment, Chris thought he saw a hint of compassion, of understanding, in the old man's eyes. But John did not speak. The dog's barking increased—almost maniacally. John looked down the hill. A lamb had strayed perilously close to the cliff's edge. Instinctively, John was up and moving with a surprising alacrity down the hill.

"Tonight, after dinner, at the café, he says. You must fight, Christopher. . . ." the old man yelled over his shoulder.

Chris remained kneeling. The boats had reached the harbor mouth by now. He thought again of Callinicus. It must have been simple to destroy the enemy. A game almost. Games. Chris's imagination began to work some simple equations, to figure the trajectory that the Greek Fire would have to have taken to burn those ships. Familiar, perfect curves. No problem. Like sitting ducks. Chris closed his eyes and shook his head. Twelve years in the silo. Old habits die hard. He picked up his bundle and headed down toward the house for breakfast.

It was about two kilometers from the series of hills John used as grazing land to his house in the center of Tegeon. The path ran roughly along a small stream that flowed in from the bay to the town, then dissipated inland. It was a narrow way, a footpath worn by generations of shepherds and their dogs. About halfway to the village was the town cemetery—a cramped affair surrounded on all sides by small hills, like a miniature amphitheatre, built on one of the few local tracts of land not based upon solid rock. It was usually empty when Chris passed in the morning, except perhaps for an occasional woman who had come early for the daily mourning. Chris would meet the rest of the townswomen below on the path, dressed in black and carrying flowers for the recently dead, or lacking them, the forgotten, the long dead. He only vaguely understood what occurred each morning when all the women gathered there, being male and therefore forbidden to attend.

So this morning Chris was surprised to hear several voices in the cemetery as he neared. Perhaps the women had started already. He stopped, not wanting to violate custom. And the distinct sounds of a spade breaking earth didn't exactly spur him to move on. Instead, he jumped over the stream and scrambled up the far bank, climbing to a position where he could see the cemetery undetected. It was a long climb, but Chris made it easily. His long legs and arms were still thin and muscled, although he had been out of college for twenty years. His face had also kept its youthful appearance—dark eyes still clear, large nose still thin, cheekbones still gaunt and

visible. Chris had always been a little vain about his good looks. Perhaps it was the uniform.

Below, a small group of people in full mourning dress stood solemnly around a grave, watching two men in shirtsleeves dig the hole. Males, females and children were in attendance, and Chris recognized them all to be from the same family. He relaxed, reasoning that he had merely come upon a funeral. But something was different here—Chris could not see the priest or the acolytes. And also, no coffin. He ducked down instinctively, his muscles tensing with fear. They were opening the grave.

It wasn't long until one of the workers muttered, "Finished," and tossed his spade at the feet of the still family. Both men's heads disappeared under the lip of the hole. After several moments, a single hand emerged, holding a blanched skull. The eldest woman of the group kneeled and began to examine it closely, along with two men Chris recognized to be her husband and son. All the while, the two workmen were making a pile with the remaining bones on the far side of the grave. The rest of the family, perhaps ten of them, watched the trio kneeling by the skull intensely. After what seemed to Chris to be a very long time, the old woman asked a question

to both her husband and son. They nodded. She stood and faced her relatives.

"It is clean," she said, her voice ringing triumphantly.

The words echoed for a moment, and then the entire group broke into a celebration. Broad smiles, hugs and kisses—wine was produced, as was brandy and ouzo. An elderly man pulled a small sitar from his coat and began to play a lively tune on it. Some of the younger ones began to dance. The group carried on this way for perhaps a quarter of an hour, gradually making their way out of the cemetery and back to the village. The two workmen had continued working all the while, picking out the smaller and more obscure bones, then loading the whole severed skeleton into a wool sack and placing it in a small mausoleum dug into the side of a hill that bordered the cemetery. This done, they sat down to the wine and brandy the celebrating family had left behind.

Chris climbed up over the boulder and half-slid down the embankment into the cemetery. The two men were startled at first, but soon recognized Chris and offered him a bottle and a place to sit. He knew the elder of the two, Dmitrios, from the quarry. The other, a huge, silent, brooding boy of about fifteen, was his son.



"So, you were spying on us, eh Christopher?" Dmitrios said loudly, jovially.

"I didn't want to intrude," Chris responded.

"Good idea. Some people get very touchy about the dead."

"Why is that?"

"Many reasons. Like today, for example. If those bones had been dirty, any intruder would have been quite unwelcome."

"Dirty?"

"Yes, you know. Still covered with flesh and hair. For that would have meant disgrace for the family. It would have meant the deceased was not a virtuous man."

"But they were clean."

"Yes, yes. As pure as my wife. So that proves it—Mrs. Poulus's brother was a virtuous man."

"How long has he been dead?"

"Five years."

Chris accepted the bottle from the boy and drank hard from it. The brandy stung his tongue and throat.

"Do you do this in America?" the boy asked, gesturing to the grave and mausoleum.

"No," said Chris, smiling slightly.

"Then how do you know who was virtuous?" the boy asked. Chris looked up into his eyes, wondering at the question and if the child were really an idiot after all.

"They don't," yelled Dmitrios drunkenly. "That's why our friend has come to Greece!"

The father laughed loudly. He did everything loudly, and yet never seemed to offend. Chris and the boy remained looking at one another.

"But what if one wants to know if he's virtuous—before he dies?" Chris asked. The boy looked disturbed and shook his head, nervously drawing crude figures in the dirt with a stick. Dmitrios stopped smiling, sensing the interchange between the other two men. He then joined Chris in watching the boy, who continued to shake his head and press the stick into the dirt. He seemed stricken by the question, and his mouth worked nervously, as if it were trying to frame an answer.

"That is a problem, Christopher. It's a mystery one shouldn't concern oneself with. Better left to wisemen, to churchmen," Dmitrios said, still watching the boy.

"O.K.," said Chris, standing up and giving the bottle to Dmitrios. He nodded to the boy, who had looked up, and began to walk towards town.

"Will I see you tonight, at the café?" Dmitrios called loudly. Word travels fast, thought Chris. He turned and shrugged his shoulders.

"Another mystery," murmured the old man.

"Perhaps," thought Chris. He quickened his pace, hoping his aunt had prepared enough food to satisfy the hunger all the early morning alcohol had aroused.

Chris found his aunt Helen sitting with the local priest when he came into the kitchen. He was a short and frail man, who over the years had adopted several effeminate

habits from the women he was constantly around. His delicate walk, his soft smile and speech, the perfumed smell of incense on his robes, all added to this impression. Even his long beard, streaked with olive oil and grey hairs, did nothing to change this. Indeed, Chris thought he stroked it just as a little girl would stroke her hair. The men of the village ignored him, except for Sunday mornings.

"Good morning, Christopher, good morning," the old priest said, half standing. "How are you today? How do you like your new job? Do you prefer it to the quarry?"

Chris had long since learned that the priest didn't require answers to his questions—he enjoyed asking them in themselves. Their relationship was somewhat strained—Chris had made it quite clear he was neither Orthodox nor interested in becoming one. And yet he felt a true affection toward the old man. He was such a hopeless figure—ignored by the men, left out of all the important rites, like this morning's, left to wander from kitchen to kitchen, chatting idly with busy wives. Chris had even helped him a few times with minor repairs around the church, a job none of the townsmen dared take on.

His aunt stepped between them, placing a large plate of bread and fatty bacon on the table.

"Here. Sit down. Eat. It's too bad if it's cold—but you should feel lucky. I was going to feed it to the chickens."

Chris smiled as he sat down, and the priest winked back at him. His aunt's ill temper was nearly a legend around the town, spared on nobody. Chris had not heard her say a pleasant word since he had arrived. And yet she was perhaps the kindest woman he had ever met.

Helen was very small, very thin, but her exact size was debatable, due to the many layers of clothing she wore even on the hottest days. The only places her flesh was visible were a small bald spot atop her head, her heavily wrinkled face, and her hands. They were incredibly ill-fitted hands—bigger than those of a large man and so thickened by calluses and arthritis Chris couldn't imagine how she moved the fingers. He had seen her arrange hot coals in the stove with her bare hands and then moments later weave a baptismal cloth so intricate and fine it could not have been spun by a machine.

"So, you've been with Haliklia and now her father wants to fight you. And you can't marry the girl, because that would be a sin. Am I right, Father?"

The priest stared noncommittally into his coffee cup.

"So everyone says you're to fight. Well, that is foolish. You are not from here. This is your parent's land, not yours. Our ways don't apply to you. You won't be judged if you stay home tonight. No one will call you a coward. Am I right, Father?"

The priest remained silent.

"But if you go, you may die. Or worse, you may kill a man. And then you will have truly sinned—and you shall truly be judged. Father?"

He looked up this time, directly at Chris. And yet his eyes were not those of a judge—they were simply compassionate, and very tired.

"Am I right, Father?" Helen repeated impatiently.

"You don't have to be right, Helen. You may just live, and

you shall be blessed. Yet our young friend here—he must be right.”

The old priest then stood, blessed them both, and left. Helen looked after him awhile, confused, then swore loudly and finished cleaning the kitchen. She left just before Chris was through eating, without saying a word, hurrying up the path to the mourning ceremonies.

Chris pushed his plate away, unable to finish the pile of food. The priest had left a newspaper for him, as was his habit. Sometimes it was an old copy of the *Herald Tribune*, but more often, like today, it was an *Athenian Daily*. Chris stared at the front page. One large, hysterical headline ran across it, atop several pictures of policemen standing around corpses draped with white blankets. He labored over the article—the sophisticated dialect of the capital was almost a different language from the countryside’s simple diction.

After awhile, Chris began to understand. It seemed that three or four Orientals, employed by an Arab organization, had ambushed a group of Israeli tourists from atop the observation deck at the Athens airport. A group of Swedish retirees had been unfortunate enough to wander into the fray and caught the majority of the machinegun fire and shrapnel. The sole surviving terrorist, upon his arrest, had expressed regret at not being able to collect his salary. Fifty-six people had died. Chris put down the paper and thought awhile about Nicholas, about his home, about Callinicus. Then he went into his room and collapsed on the small bed, falling quickly into a deep sleep.

It wasn’t far from John’s house to the café. Just a few turns through some steep, winding alleys, and one was there. The village did have a main road, but nothing of any importance was on it. The houses and shops were instead scattered over several layers of twisted paths and stairways, determined by time and the hillside rather than any master plan. It had taken Chris several months to learn his way about. And still, after a moonless night of brandy and cigarettes, getting lost was a possibility.

Tonight, Chris knew the way. His senses were clear after a long sleep and a large meal. But his mind was troubled—he had dreamt fitfully during the day. Nothing specific, mostly nonsense about local characters, and yet just before waking there had been a disturbing series of images from his life. Not the momentous events, like returning from Vietnam or Chris’s death, but the daily things, which had become so familiar that they were easily forgotten. The smell and touch of his wife as she slept, the layout of the instrument panel he had sat before for so many years in the silo, his spartan room at the Academy, dinner with his family. It was a troubling new self-consciousness. He had always thought of himself in terms of a couple of dozen major events, but tonight, stepping through the garbage and past the sleeping dogs, smelling the rancid burnt olive oil, his past struck him instead as a series of dull, gradual habits that had slid one into the other, almost unconsciously, out of his control.

He had tried to explain to Jennifer; explain that he simply did not want to be a violent man. Everything in his life, he felt, stemmed from his work, which was violence. To his family, to his friends, he was a reliable man in uniform who drove a green Dodge Dart thirty-five miles and then disappeared into the earth. To defend. To fight. Whatever. His hands, of course, were always clean. They had never killed a man, not even in Vietnam. He worked around spotless machinery—he punched in flawless equations—he told small jokes to the colonels and captains around him. He had the technology to be a soldier in a brutal era and yet never kill a man. It was perfect.

As perfect as the parabolas they would draw in the planning room. Butte to Vladivostok. Culverton to Moscow. On and on—there were hundreds, and new ones were always in demand. Once, he had seen two of his co-workers laboring feverishly over a computer, trying to solve an equation to make a new flight path for the Titan. It was a difficult task, since a new thrust system was being employed. After a long while, they did it. They clasped each other’s shoulders, smiled, suggested going out later for a beer. That had been enough for Chris. He signed his pension over to his wife and came to his father’s birthplace.

The café was deceptively quiet. If it hadn’t been for the yellow light it weakly cast into the alley, Chris would have thought the place deserted. He hesitated awhile outside the door and listened. The village was very quiet, except for some dogs, the noises the wind made and the sounds of women setting their houses in order for the night. The sun had not yet set, but nightfall was not too far off. Chris hoped that his uncle would not have too long to wait.

Nobody seemed to notice him when he entered. The men all stared down at their drinks and Turkish cigarettes or talked furtively among themselves. No women were in the café, of course. Chris recognized several of the men. He nodded vaguely to Dmitrios, who turned away. On a table in the center of the café were stuck two knives. They were old, roughly equal in length and rustiness, with chipped and crooked blades. He didn’t see Nicholas at first, but soon noticed him at a corner table, talking, talking with some other men.

Chris stayed in the doorway, uncertain. The café was dark, lit only by oil lamps placed on a few of the tables. Two young boys, sons of the proprietor, served the bottles. Their father sat at a corner table, drunk and immobile, yelling an occasional order at his boys. The place smelled of cheap alcohol and damp wood. A thick layer of sawdust covered the floor. After a few minutes, Dmitrios caught Chris’s eye and beckoned him to sit. He poured a glass of brandy.

“So—you fight.”

Chris ignored the remark and stared at Nicholas.

“What is he doing?” he asked, gesturing with his head.

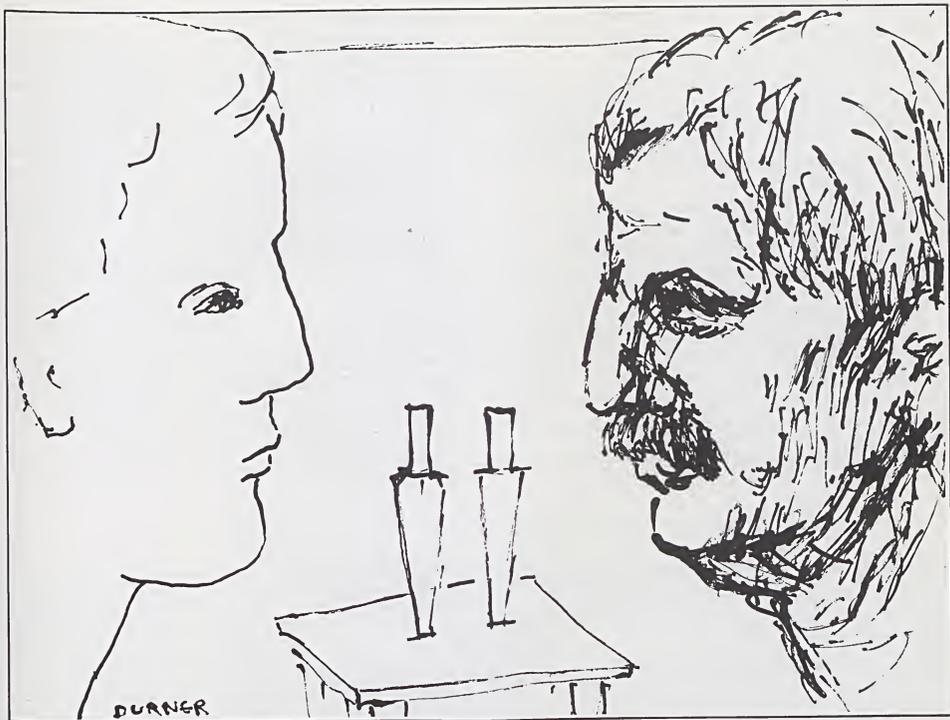
“Drinking heavily. He is afraid. Someone told him today that you were a U.S. Marine.”

Chris laughed ironically.

“Not exactly. Air Force.”

“Same thing.”

“I don’t like this waiting. I have to work soon. How can I



settle this?"

"Stand up."

Chris followed the directions. Every eye in the place turned to him now. Even Nicholas, who downed the remaining brandy in his glass and stood up. He walked as far as the knife table. The two boys continued to move stealthily among the tables, replacing empty bottles with full ones.

"You have dishonored my daughter," said Nicholas, his voice loud with fear.

Chris walked to the table. He had known Nicholas for a while, yet never had the older man seemed so thin, so small. And he was shaking with illness and alcohol. If it came to a fight, it would be easy to kill him. In the back of Chris's mind echoed the drill instructor from the Academy. Feint, thrust and twist. Feint, thrust and twist.

"I am sorry," Chris said, "I didn't intend that."

"Will you marry her?"

"I cannot. I have a wife."

Nicholas reached out an unsteady hand and twisted one of the knives out of the table. He handed it, handle first, to Chris. Then he took the other for himself. Feint, thrust and twist. The

older man then crouched, waving the knife gently before his face. Chris stood motionless. Nicholas watched him warily, afraid to lunge. He knew something about fighting, but Chris could tell that he had never before been in a situation like this.

So the peasant nearly attacked when Chris dropped his knife on the damp wood floor and broke it cleanly in half with the heel of his boot. Nicholas relaxed only slightly, wary of a trick. After a moment, he stood and sneered, though obviously still frightened.

"Run!" he yelled, gesturing with his knife.

Chris stood still. The old man, slightly emboldened, moved slightly forward and repeated his gesture.

"I could kill you in ways you've never dreamed of," Chris said, speaking in English. "Any weapon, anywhere, anyhow—I can kill you. I can kill anyone." The words were not boastful. Chris said them slowly, sadly.

Nicholas was confused by the other man's lapse into his native tongue.

"Run, coward," he repeated, somewhat less derisively.

"No," said Chris, still in English. "I won't run. And I won't kill you."

"And you won't kill me," he said in Greek.

The old man blinked in anger and confusion. He knew Chris was right, but his pride had frozen him.

"Will you put down the knife?" Chris asked.

Nicholas didn't move.

"Listen, this has got to stop somewhere. . . ." Chris started in English. Then, switching to Greek. "Please, put down the knife. I won't leave until you do." There was a long stillness. "My uncle is waiting."

"Look, you'd better do what he says," Dmitrios yelled. "If John goes too long without wine he'll surely die!"

The joke was enough. The men in the bar began to laugh and some poured from their new bottles. Nicholas frowned and dropped his shoulders. He tossed the knife at Chris's feet.

"Go ahead, big foot. You like breaking knives so much."

"Come on, Nicholas, sit down and drink!" Dmitrios called. "Don't be depressed. These goddamned foreigners and their screwy ways. Let them have 'em. We still have our honor." After pouring Nicholas a drink, he looked up at Chris and nodded. Then, he motioned to the floor. "Go to your uncle,"

he said softly. "Go to your uncle."

The village was very dark now. The sun had gone down some time before, but it would be a while before the moon came over the hills. Chris was glad he knew the hillpath so well. He moved quickly, his mind remarkably clear. As he passed out of the myriad alleys and began to rise above the village, he could hear the noises of bedtime. Children calling, men tripping through the streets, their wives shaking rugs or tossing out buckets of dirty water. Halfway up the hill, he could see the bay and the small lights of some straggling fishing boats shining at midharbor, and he could hear their engines laboring for the shore. He stopped, watching for awhile, but his mind now let them go undisturbed. Chris started back up the hill with a lively step, thinking that Callinicus was not such a clever man after all. No, not so very clever. He saw his uncle's thick shadow beneath a tree and heard his riotous snores. He called the old man's name—loudly, almost triumphantly. The Greek sat up quickly and smiled at the boy he had named. By now Chris was almost running—to relieve his uncle, to do his job, to the clinking of the glasses.



Sam Page

Release me

Hobbled
 Withered age
Longing for
 Eternity
To come

like a balloon
Hollow, opulent
Filled with the lightness
That no one can seal.

— *Becky Garrison*



The Continuum: Highway NC 58

They will spend their life and time in that perforated margin
of a right-of-way. On farms lined from Pollocksville
to Maysville, off the continuum.

The fields cringe beside sunburned pines and
rusty barbed fingers pick a dream of winter rest and profits
from the piecemeal of starved topsoil.

This land will always yield their imagination, their necessity:
but the rest they pray for has already been damned—
their comfort money squandered on offering plates of Charleston brass.
Between the smooth slope of polished sky and infested land
the farm hands exalt the virgin, curse the love made
with sluts behind the curing barns.

Curing barns and burning souls invite the weevils that rivet
the marrow of pinewood caskets in church pews
holy dust and ash, while on the levee the rusty running boards
steer towards goshun swamps and the crypt of a July thunder-dusk.
The swarthy bristling bitch hounds follow their masters like light
through the evening wind that stirs the clay hill willows.

The mason jars wait out there with a transcendence
that does not vanish with the hiss of words, the clink of coins,
but dies only with the mind's eye and its imaginings
of unknown solitude.

— Kenneth Prichard

Prairie Poem



Sam Page

women on women on women on
womenonwomenonwo
men.
the fragility of a breath,
caught on the bare-wintere willow
hanging. just hanging
to be tossed in some sweatless night
a slap as skin sticks
clinging it claws,
hardens and prances acrost unfertile sheets—
prairie dancer skirting moonlight.
gnawing it groans,
the spit of cactus milk comes.

— Nancy E. Rivers

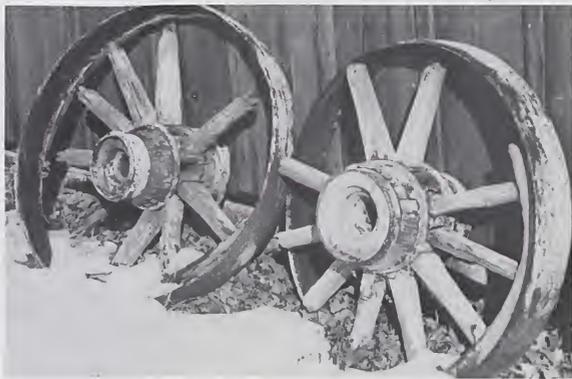
Along old highway 421
an exploded bombshell mows
her lawn.

She wears number 81 of
the Minnesota Vikings and
sags like a shot
defensive lineman hit
by one rolling block
too many.

I surmise, however,
some man
once sent her flowers or
valentines or
presents in
boxes with
ribbons.

Probably, she was once
some man's
dream.
Some man—
who mowed her lawn
along old highway 421.

Miss America Mows Her Lawn



Sam Page

—Lawrence V. Fox



A New Generation:

The Student of the Eighties

by Esther Hill

"Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart, this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never reached."

—Max Weber (from
*The Protestant Ethic and the
Spirit of Capitalism*)

We look back with a mixture of nostalgia and contempt at the students of the sixties. In a time of student solidarity, they knew their power and wielded it with fury. Secure in the pragmatism of our age, we debate the worth of the angry demands, the protest marches, the turmoil. We may envy their dedication to an ideal, yet we pity their naiveté. Utopia was only a futile dream.

The questioning intellectuals of the sixties followed the silent generation of the fifties, students shaped by the patriotism of post-war life and the paranoia of the Cold War. With finger-pointing authority, McCarthy had demonstrated the dangers of radical thought. Left-wing sympathizers could expect to lose their jobs because of their political beliefs. The Constitution's guaranty of freedom of thought did not seem to allow reading anything contrary to it, such as *The Communist Manifesto*. Patriotism was equated with a rabid fear of communism. The majority still accepted a Horatio Alger theory of life: work hard, be good, and enjoy the resulting wealth and security. The best form of movement was within the system.

These conservative values decreased in importance as society became more affluent in the sixties. In a national study conducted by Daniel Yankelovich, Inc., for *Fortune* in the fall of 1967, it was found that "student emphasis on self-expression, creativity, and freedom from constraints was accompanied by a de-emphasis on money, success, and traditional morality; and both were strongly related to whether or not the student felt he could take the bread-and-butter benefits of college for granted."¹ As affluence removed the need for strict career orientation, more students began searching for values beyond material ones. They directed this search toward social issues. A study in 1969 by Richard Braungart concluded that "left-wing student activists do not come from working-class radical homes, but instead from predominantly upper-middle-class homes where the father is highly educated and generally employed in a professional occupation."² Security led to a sense of stagnation, and students sought to find their answers in social action.

Students began forming as a cohesive force with the Civil Rights movement of

the early 1960s. Reared in a belief that the principles of their country should be more than rhetoric, they rejected the hypocrisy of the social station imposed upon the blacks in American society. The sweet land of liberty of their textbooks did not provide equality and justice. They protested through sit-ins, voter registration, and other methods within the legal system. However, nothing seemed to happen. Students grew frustrated with their seemingly hopeless efforts to put basic rights into practice.

Along with the apparent failure of non-violent tactics in 1964-66 came escalation of the war in Vietnam.³ Whether on the basis of idealism or in the interest of personal safety, as American youths were drafted in increasing numbers, students condemned the involvement of the United States in Southeast Asia.

The campus served as yet another representative of the power structure, and it gradually became a focus of politicized student action. Universities that accepted government ROTC units on campus seemed to be an extension of the Establishment. The university provided the closest and best vehicle for

voicing the students' message. Earlier opposition to violence dropped when students decided that overt force might be the only way to gain the attention of those in control of the campuses and the country. Student activism rose to such an extent that in 1970 a Gallup poll revealed that the majority of the public thought that campus unrest was the most important problem facing the country.

In 1970 the Yankelovich study found a sharp increase in student mistrust, alienation, and despair above levels they had found in 1968-69 studies.⁴ Two-thirds of the student body thought student radicalism would continue to grow.⁵ Yet abruptly, student opinion changed. A year later the majority believed that radicalism was leveling off or declining. The increase in militant action may have alienated some supporters.

The partial success of their protests, especially those resulting in changes on campus, may have alleviated the need for revolt. A vast majority believed that ending the war in Vietnam would not bring about a permanent peace. Even if student protest helped end the war, government policies would soon involve the country in another war.⁶ The Yankelovich study concluded that: "Withdrawing emotional involvement from social and political matters, they have channeled their feelings into their own private lives, where they experience more control, less frustration... and greater contentment."⁷

By the early 1970s, the student movement had lost momentum. The "me generation" became a cliché as a focus on self pervaded the public. In 1974, *Time* reporters visited two dozen cam-

puses and found that the greatest worry among students was the possibility of not obtaining employment after graduation.⁸ Reforming society became less important than finding ways to enter it.

We, as students of the eighties, are inheritors of this pragmatism. The world has become too complex for any sure answers, so we have ceased looking for them. Our return to materialism is similar to the mood on campuses in the 1950s, but dramatically different in our lack of ideals. Students are afraid to believe anything, afraid to adopt ideals which, like those of the past, may be shattered. We need a synthesis of the idealism and energy of the sixties and the practicality of the seventies. Although we cannot expect to find ultimate answers, we must work toward discovering the best answers for our times.



Reprinted from the Winston-Salem Journal.

Notes:

¹Daniel Yankelovich, *The Changing Values on Campus: Political and Personal Attitudes of Today's College Students* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1972), p. 4.

²Richard Braungart, *Family Status, Socialization and Student Politics* (doctoral dissertation, Penn State University, 1969), p. 241; reprinted David Westby, *The Clouded Vision* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1976), p.42.

³David L. Westby, *The Clouded Vision: The Student Movement in the United States in the 1960's* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1976), p. 161.

⁴Daniel Yankelovich, *The Changing Values on Campus: Political and Personal Attitudes of Today's College Students* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1972), p. 6.

⁵Yankelovich, p. 21.

⁶Yankelovich, p. 10.

⁷Yankelovich, p. 8.

⁸"Now, The Self-Centered Generation," *Time* September 23, 1974, as reprinted by *Student Political Involvement in the 1970's* (Port Washington, N. Y.: National University Publications, 1979), p. 118.

To gain a more comprehensive view of the student of the eighties, *The Student* posed the following question to randomly selected members of the Wake Forest faculty and student body:

"The advent of the student unrest in the sixties brought the unsettling and even the dissolution of many conventional mores, and, in many respects, it altered the image of students. The new generation now entering college is among the first not *directly* affected by the issues of that time. How would you characterize the student of the eighties?"

Beth Ellen Anderson

The student of the eighties is lacking courage—not daring to make waves, simply riding them.

Glen Andrews

The student of the eighties rests on his laurels, that which he has already achieved. Time passes too fast to sit back and reflect on one's past achievements. The student of the eighties has the potential to be an achiever but there is no incentive. He is slowly succumbing to apathy.

David Bailey

Today's student is much different from the student of the sixties. He is more concerned with his appearance, his new car, and how much beer he can drink than with the hostages in Iran, the national debt, or the current oil crisis. The student of the eighties also holds his social and materialistic values above his religious life. If he goes to church, he does so only because he is "supposed to" or because it "looks good." Today's student finds more conventional ways of expressing himself; he does not riot or participate in sit-ins but goes to discos or rock concerts. The student of the eighties is also not subject to the draft—yet. If the military draft is reinstated, today's student may open his eyes and take to the streets. Until he is awakened from his dream, the student of the eighties will continue to live in his small, materialistic, socially centered world.

Brett Bennett

The student of the eighties has reasoned that it is better to flow with the "already-established" rather than consistently dissenting against virtually meaningless issues and institutions that are ingrained into society today. The student of the eighties is a good deal more conservative, not only in political theory but in their social interactions and attitudes as well, but not necessarily less conscious of the issues of the day.

Dan Castell

One must realize that any statement about the "student of the eighties" is a gross generalization. But one can point to certain social phenomena that contribute to the ambiance on campus. We have been nurtured on Vietnam, genetic engineering, Watergate, and space travel. We also have inherited many of the social changes and sharp awarenesses of problems that the sixties "movements" fought for. This has given us the ambivalent nature of being cynical and yet knowing the human potential for progress. These circumstances have faced us with the challenge of integrating them consciously or blindly into cogent attitudes and behavior patterns capable of sustaining us through our lifetimes.

Kimberly Jeane Dennis

I think the student of the eighties is primarily interested in the nineties. The biggest question for many of us is "what will I be doing in ten years?" I think society in general respects the college student and realizes that we'll be the ones running this country in a very few years. We see things that need to be changed and as always there are those who give of themselves to see that these changes take place. Being from North Carolina and attending a small Southern Baptist institution, maybe I haven't been exposed to a great deal of the student unrest that does exist today. From what I have seen, though, it seems that students of the eighties are as interested in reconstructing many American systems as the students of the sixties were but just willing to go about it in a more organized and less extreme manner.

Tim Fowler

The student of the eighties will be faced with many new problems such as energy shortages, population explosions, corruption in government, world unrest and war threats just to name a few. And the new generation will be expected to solve or help solve these and any new situations that will arise. The only way they will be able to solve these is through better education and dedication. People must not worry so much about their own comfort and desires but unite as the ancient Spartans and work for the good of the country first and when the country improves then everyone lives better.

Martin Godwin

I think a lot of students in the sixties were in college for mostly two reasons:

1. to stay in school so they could avoid the draft
2. because their parents wanted them to go.

Because of this, I don't really think they greatly valued a college education. I believe a major factor in their success was their surprising unity, which made for a powerful voice. Unlike the student of the eighties, they had a very high level of social consciousness. I would say that the present Iranian crisis is the most the student of the eighties has known about world news since Vietnam.

In my mind students of today really value a college degree and recognize the importance of one. They are in school because they choose to be and they work hard to stay in school and do well. The tremendous competition in classrooms today showcases this. Unlike the sixties' student, today's student isn't willing to strongly protest rules and regulations on college campuses and risk expulsion or arrest. For example, nine of ten students at Wake would probably like the intervisitation rules changed, but few, if any, are ready to stand up for their beliefs as did those students of the sixties.

Overall, I think the student of the eighties is more well-rounded with assorted and different interests and very interested in making the most of their years in college.

Mary Angela Hague

Students of the eighties are the type to put their causes' flyers on windshields, but not to wear buttons or make speeches.

Marilyn Hamrick

The student of the eighties is still indirectly affected by the shocking sixties in that there was a breakdown of conventions and obedient conformity during that period that left us with more freedom of choice in attitudes and lifestyles. This shock of the communes, drugs, and flower children has prepared our society to believe almost anything can happen, and the student of the eighties has his choice: nature lovers, health food nuts, professionals, druggies, money-machines, intellectuals, creators, preppies, punk rockers, or any combination from which to choose — and he does.

Mike Hastings

The student of the eighties learns to pass, but forgets to learn, intentionally.

Annette Kavanaugh

It is no longer the vogue to criticize the "American way of life". This change of fashion, more than anything else, accounts for the change in American college students. The bourgeois ideals of money and prestige are no longer anathema but gospel; most students seem to choose their major and even their extracurricular activities so as to guarantee the most lucrative possible job offers upon graduation. The resurgence of college fraternities reveal still more the renewed desire of American students to have a conventional "good time" and to cultivate proper acquaintances before entering the corporate mainstream. The student of the Sixties, in many cases, may have been a follower, but at least he chose to follow: he chose to consider alternatives to conventional middle-class materialism, however abortive some of these alternatives may have proven to have been. The student of the Eighties does not want to think there is another way; he assiduously cultivates an ignorance of his alternatives and scorns as "radical" (and therefore both laughable and repugnant) any desire to rectify injustices in the world beyond his own doorstep.

R. Jeffrey Klumpp

The students of the sixties matured in a time characterized by the growing concern over civil rights and human suffering. These students cared about the welfare of their fellow man. They rallied against causes which threatened that welfare: war, politics, and lies. The students of the eighties were raised in the seventies. A time period often referred to as the "Me Decade." They saw very little of the "help one another feeling" that was so abundant in the late fifties and sixties. The students of the eighties do, however, rally behind causes. The causes have names like Disco, Designer Jeans, and Perrier. The sixties were characterized by a certain fellowship among students; this feeling of brotherhood can no longer be found. It is not that difficult imagining the students of the eighties participating in a very dehumanized and calculated world. A world where individuals no longer care about the welfare of their fellow man, just how to impress them. If one takes a minute to reflect upon the destiny of man, it would seem that 1984 is not that far away.

Kate Lassiter

I don't think it is possible to define *THE* student of the eighties; there are too many different images. Students today can be more individualistic without becoming outcasts. One trait I do think a majority of the students today share is that of being career oriented. This is especially noticeable among women: more of us are here for an education than to find a husband.

Theresa Mosso

I would say the student of the eighties is confident, content, and has a good head on his/her shoulders. (Especially in contrast to the students of the sixties).

Kent Newsome

The student of the eighties can best be described as a student with a more relative viewpoint in general. The modern student seems to have shed the somewhat egocentric nature that led to such unrest during the sixties. Today's student appears to take a true interest in the direction of his society, rather than focusing on the personal sacrifices necessary for the general welfare. It is this new, more intellectual image that provides our generation with a positive expectations for the future.

Chris Stamm

I feel the students of the eighties are entering college with a definite idea and goal as to the endeavors they wish to pursue after their college years.

I feel that fewer college students are graduating from high school undecided as to their future plans. Many of the students are choosing either professional or business careers and are ready to face and conquer the long road that is lying ahead of them in the years to come.

I think it is essential for someone to love the work he is in (or doing now), and if one finally accomplishes a long time desire, then he will be very optimistic towards what his life holds in store for him.

I feel the students of the eighties are ready to turn what were once dreams as children into reality as adults.



To gain a more comprehensive view of the student of the eighties, *The Student* posed the following question to randomly selected members of the Wake Forest faculty and student body:

"The advent of the student unrest in the sixties brought the unsettling and even the dissolution of many conventional mores, and, in many respects, it altered the image of students. The new generation now entering college is among the first not directly affected by the issues of that time. How would you characterize the student of the eighties?"

Dr. Cecelia Solano — Assistant Professor of Psychology

In general, I found this a rather hard assignment. I know that the students at Wake Forest are not like the ones I went to college with. I don't know, however, if this difference is due to region (Boston versus Winston-Salem), time (1967 versus 1980), or situation (an unpopular war and boom economy versus an uneasy peace and staggering inflation). I am also constrained by not knowing what it is like to be a college freshman in 1980, and I don't like making unsubstantiated generalities.

I am fairly clear on what it was like to be in college in 1967 in Boston. Boston is a huge college town and was actively involved in many of the late Sixties commotions. Again, I doubt that my experiences were typical of other places in the country. Going to jail, being killed in a war, being thrown out of school for rioting, and killing yourself with drugs were the realities of my four years. The first three spring semesters were ended early by riots that closed the school. The feeling seemed to be that "come the revolution" everything would change. Since you couldn't bet on the future, dropping out was a logical choice. The social upheaval was obvious in every protest march, and every riot. The social repression was there from the smell of tear gas in the cafeteria, to the phalanxes of police in riot gear on the campus quad. I think college life must be pleasanter without this feeling of "apocalypse now" breathing down your neck. On the other hand, I do miss the drama of the times and the feeling that all ideas were open to questioning.

In regards to the students I teach at Wake Forest, I feel that you expect me to say that they are conservative and money oriented. I really don't know. In a time when making a living has become such a chancy business, being this way may be very appropriate. From my perspective, they are hard-working, intelligent, and polite. One of the things I look forward to from this issue of the *Student* is finding out what they are thinking.

Eva Rodtwitt—Lecturer in Romance Languages

Nice, polite, grade-minded and ignorant.

Maj. William D. Waller - Assistant Professor of Military Science

I see the students of the Eighties as relaxed individuals. They are less radical, leaning more toward conservative thinking in their general attitude. They are fun-loving, yet serious, and seem to look more at the big picture as opposed to just themselves.

Dr. Germaine Brée — Kenan Professor of the Humanities

In order to answer this question with some degree of pertinency, I must put it within a context, however loosely.

I.

1. The "sixties" cover a ten-year period; the "eighties" have scarcely begun. In 1960 when I went to the University of Wisconsin one would not have foreseen what the next ten years would be in terms of student attitudes. The mood changed over those years. Between 1980 and 1990 student moods will surely change.

2. The students of the sixties tended to interpret the serious problems that they confronted with courage—Civil Rights and the Viet Nam war—in terms of World War II. Dissidents, they cast themselves in the heroic role of Resisters, with the "Establishment" cast in the antagonistic role of the Nazis. The students of the last few years seem, fortunately, to have left behind that misleading rhetoric.

3. In consequence of my own experience, I believe that however tortuous its paths and questionable its ways, the Western tradition of representative government and change via legislation—even in a period of unprecedented change—is still the least costly manner of dealing with our problems—national and international—however inadequate it may appear. Violence may be inevitable, but I am dubious as to its value. That is where I bring some reservations to my deep sympathy for the students of the sixties.

4. I am not on the same campus today as in the sixties; the comparison therefore is perhaps not really pertinent.

II.

1. The students at Wake Forest in the seven years I have been here seem to me increasingly more "culture-bound" or even "campus-bound" in their interests. This may be because they are far less ready to indulge in inflammatory rhetoric. On the other hand I miss the intellectual ferment of the sixties. The Wisconsin students were passionately involved in all aspects of their studies, passionately curious, avid readers and questioners. The energy they generated was not limited to the more spectacular aspects of their involvements, but infused the classroom hours with significance. The violent classroom disruptions—which I do not consider particularly commendable—were the least challenging part of the student movement. Whatever is happening today in the intellectual development of the students strikes me as a private affair. The students in the sixties were tremendously generous, outgoing, gregarious and, on the whole, incredibly idealistic. They believed that their generation would restore the United States to the way of life defined by the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. They were implacable rationalizers from theoretical givens and seemed rather unaware that per-

fect societies do not blossom forth from perfect theoretical arguments and flawless principles.

2. The intellectual background of the students today seems to me narrower; but there is a kind of reversal in approach. The students of the sixties were studiously non-conformist in their attitude to what they called the establishment, but often conformist in their non-conformisms and dogmatisms. To anyone at all conversant with the realities behind the words, the use of code words such as "guerrilla warfare" and "underground press" was bewildering. Today the behavior of the students, at least outwardly, conforms to the norms of their society, but the cultural interests of the students are perhaps more individualized. Less arrogant, they also often seem less generous. They look to their own professional security in a country that, perhaps unnecessarily, cultivates and exploits a rhetoric of uncertainty. Less arrogant, they are less inclined to question; more inclined to invest in the status quo, however problematic.

3. I understand from a great many reports that it is the present high school population which shows signs of being disruptive, but not in the same way as students in the sixties: drugs, alcoholism, shoplifting, teen-age pregnancies, illiteracy, withdrawal into the so-called "counter-culture." This may affect student attitudes in the coming years. Who knows?

But all in all, American students are still more open, more eager to learn, less alienated than their peers in many other countries. There is a great reservoir of intelligent concern for the future, of honesty and talent among them. The question then is what will they do with it? Endeavor to continue to create a style of life for themselves that they can respect or go along with the stereotypes of the day?

Ms. Dorothy Casey - Assistant Professor of Physical Education

I find the students less rebellious. The students today are more cooperative and eager to achieve. Feel students today have a better self-image as well as self-discipline.

Thomas T. Taylor — Associate Professor of Accountancy

The student entering the Eighties can be characterized as being more career-minded and to a significant extent, more materialistic than those of, say, the Sixties. These differences seem to include a greater concern about the student's own affairs and less concern about general social problems. While there were serious unsettling events which influenced the student of the Sixties, the student of the Eighties surely is not free of apprehension about his future. Troublesome issues like the problems of energy and inflation place substantial uncertainties in his picture. Indications are that these and other serious problems will worsen during the Eighties. If this is so, the disparity between hopeful expectations on the part of the student and the realities of the Eighties could lead to another period of general disillusionment. The profile of the student of the Eighties, then, may well undergo a major alteration over the next decade.

Dr. David K. Evans - Associate Professor of Anthropology

Students today are both careful and anxious. They demand more and, as time goes on, I believe as a whole they deliver more than students did back in the late 60's. They seem worried, anxious, not quite as comfortable with the world as were the students of the mid-70's. My one gripe remains, however, that W.F. students, as a whole, are so unaware of the world at large—both past and present. One almost always finds it a waste of time to refer to an event that happened 20 years ago and likewise to something currently in the news. Do we work them that hard? I doubt it. They are simply cut off from a great deal of reality and the fault may be ours.

Dr. David Brailow — Visiting Assistant Professor of English

Since the question assumes that one can "characterize" a typical student of any era, I will accept the fiction, but I do not believe in it. The students I teach appear to be less aware of or interested in political issues, in what we somewhat pompously called the important issues: civil rights, American intervention abroad, the emptiness of capitalist values. Certainly the students I teach are generally more conservative politically and morally than I was as a student. They seem to accept more readily the values of their parents, without thinking of questioning them seriously. But when I force them to think, they can be as able and interested as were my own classmates. I also remember that in the late Sixties the academic climate was so pervaded by the spirit of revolt, of dissatisfaction with American social and political values, with the educational system, with government, that it took greater moral courage to resist than to assent to the rebellious mode of thought. In a way, to be a radical on a college campus at that time was to be as orthodox as the preppe at Wake Forest in 1980. The real difference, I believe, is that the questioning, the doubting, the challenging of the status quo forced many of us to grow up faster intellectually, though the ultimate failure of the student movement to effect permanent political or social change resulted in first a bitter cynicism and then a resigned withdrawal from the intense involvement with the world outside our immediate social spheres. The students of the Eighties seem already resigned to an acceptance of things as they are (if you will excuse my vagueness) but I can feel no moral superiority to them, because nothing we do as a faculty, in fact nothing they encounter at the university, is calculated to shake that acceptance. There will be, or there always have been, the few who are changed, who read the books that tell them to reject, to struggle, to rage, and who have the fire in them to do those things. There were just as few in the Sixties, really, but because of the war, we all seemed to catch fire for a time. I'm afraid that the heroic, radical "student of the Sixties" and the unconscious, preppe "student of the Eighties" are both myths, like all myths made of some truths and much over-generalization.

Monday

Morning
First class freshness.
Clear words, sharp features.
Colors never clash
But maintain firm lines:
Individuality enforced.
A weekend
Can do this?

Ask
me
later.

afternoon
tired relief
softens and rounds edges
masses of faces, yet
a smooth blend
silent celebration
one day
is enough

Responsibility

Now is then.
The time
I
Pushed
Far into the future
Has slyly,
Quietly,
Crept back.

I shove harder
But
Nothing gives.
So
Under the strain
I must
Think
Plan.

Serious thoughts
Come
Slowly
As
Distraction prevails:
My sole decision
Is to
Ditch adulthood.

— Carol A. Leuchtenberger



Alexander Ginzburg:

The Voice of Dissent

by Erin E. Campbell



Lynn MacGregor

Alexander Ginzburg does not display the gravity or moroseness of one who has spent nine of his 44 years in Soviet prison camps. His unassuming manner is so beguiling that we wonder how this one individual could have evoked the consternation of a country as huge as the Soviet Union, how this single dissident could have brought world attention to the cause of human rights in that country.

On April 27, 1979, Alexander Ginzburg and four other political prisoners were released from prison in the Soviet Union in exchange for two convicted spies. Since that time, Mr. Ginzburg, who no longer lives in the Soviet Union, has devoted his energy to speaking out for human rights and to helping his fellow dissidents still in that country.

Last September Mr. Ginzburg visited Wake Forest University where he delivered a lecture on the struggle for human rights in the U.S.S.R. During this stay, he granted an interview to *The Student*. Although he does read and speak some English, Mr. Ginzburg communicated through his interpreter, Harris Coulter, who translated and occasionally annotated his responses.

Ginzburg initiated his open dissident activities in the late 1950s when he began publishing *Syntax*, a *samizdat* ("self-publishing") literary journal featuring the uncensored works of Soviet poets. These *samizdat* publications were typed

and bound manually, then distributed to friends who would, in turn, produce and distribute new copies. Although a poet himself, Ginzburg, as editor of *Syntax*, never published any of his own works. "You understand," he explains, "in Russia everybody writes poetry up to the age of about 17, and I was no exception. I haven't written any poetry since I was 17 years old, and I never printed any of my own."

While casting off poetic aspirations, Ginzburg directed his literary abilities to journalism. Here he gradually found himself molding his stories to fit the Soviet standard for publishable material before the censors did it for him. Eventually, however, Ginzburg rejected such compliance.

"I felt I was being spiritually damaged by this whole situation and eventually undermined and hurt, and I just got sick and tired of the whole business."

"It was not so much a question of wanting to write about something which I couldn't write about. There are areas which are secret and which are prohibited for journalists to get into, and I didn't do that. But it was a question of the approach I took to describing whatever it was that I was working on. There's a human approach, and then there's a propagandistic approach. I try to take the human approach."

Ginzburg did attempt nevertheless to report commonplace incidents which still were prohibited from being printed.

"For instance," he reflects, "I started a series of articles on juvenile delinquency. I managed to have one of them published. But with the second article I began to encounter difficulties because I got involved in the problem of the abuse of drugs by the young people, which is a forbidden area in Soviet propaganda. The official line is that there is no drug problem in the U.S.S.R."

Ginzburg discovered that about thirty percent of all young Soviets—those in the 14 to 18 age bracket—released from juvenile detention centers found themselves back in the courts again because of drug-related crimes.

"Another aspect of this problem," he continues, "was that in these juvenile detention centers... where people spend some years as the result of minor crimes and violations, there's rampant

homosexuality because these are unisex [facilities]. There's a tremendous amount of homosexuality in these colonies, but homosexuality is a crime under Soviet law... so this also couldn't be written about."

When describing the Soviet youths as a whole, however, Ginzburg divides them into three general groups. One faction of the young population, he says, is characterized by cynicism. This group has "lost all belief that it ever had in any Communist ideals and is following the path of the search for material goods... and this group, in a sense, also is looking to the West to some extent because it is a source of material wealth and of material values."

"The government against which we are struggling was born in violence and by violence," he says. "The whole meaning, the whole sense of our struggle against this government insists on a rejection of violence. Otherwise, we become no better than they are."

Another segment of youths is seeking spiritual regeneration in Soviet society, and it is actively searching for values through religion. When discussing their work toward this end, Coulter recapitulates and explains Ginzburg's thoughts, "One method... [is] the Christian seminar which is held in Moscow and other major cities... People get together to try and discuss the possibility of a spiritual regeneration of Soviet life through Christianity. Many of the members of this group passed through a kind of hippie stage before they have got to the stage of searching for Christian values... And in that way, it has resembled much of what has happened in the United States, because in this country also we had this hippie/drug period in the 1960s, and now we're having a period where young people are actually... getting involved in all sorts of religious movements and abandoning the hippie and drugs period that we had before." The leading figure of this movement in the Soviet Union, however, had been incarcerated for a

year, then rearrested and sentenced to another term of six years. "The leaders of this movement, many of them, have been arrested."

The majority of Soviet youths, though, belong to a third group—"the ones who simply don't think about anything at all. They just do what they are told. They're just... your basic Soviet young student who doesn't give much thought to anything at all."

Of these three movements, it is in the second, the group striving for spiritual values, that Ginzburg sees the most growth and development. "That group is getting bigger."

Ginzburg sees the dissident movement in the Soviet Union growing as well, and he believes that eventually it will successfully achieve its goal of attaining human rights and political freedom. Still, he qualifies this view, "Well, things are not going to alter anyway in the U.S.S.R. until the people have succeeded in freeing themselves. They have to cast off their own bonds themselves... I mean ultimately politically; although, that can't be on the agenda today. They don't have the power to do that right now."

He does not leave us on this note of futility, though; Ginzburg offers a solution to the Soviet stalemate. "Several models have been proposed, and none of them seem to me satisfactory, but one that might be possible is the creation of parallel structures... similar to what the Poles have done—namely, creating the parallel system of trade unions parallel to the official system. Thus, not only in the trade union movement, but in other areas as well. Such parallel structures could be set up. For example, some efforts have been made now to set up a parallel system of schools. These are very minor efforts, and they haven't gotten very far, but the effort is still being made. So the point is to deprive the state of a monopoly. In other words, to create an alternative and develop it... so you have a mature, real alternative open to people."

Although Ginzburg cannot say when or how these alternatives may be implemented in the Soviet Union, he strongly asserts that they would not be founded through the use of violence.

"The government against which we

are struggling was born in violence and by violence," he says. "The whole meaning, the whole sense of our struggle against this government insists on a rejection of violence. Otherwise, we become no better than they are."

"The Poles utilized violence in their uprising in 1956 and 1970, and they were suppressed by violence, by the use of force, by arms. This last summer they rigorously refused to resort to violence, and they achieved what they were striving for."

The success of the Polish workers' strike this year was, in part, due to the unity of the intellectuals and the workers. Ginzburg sees the beginnings of a similar coalition appearing in the Soviet Union today. Despite the suppression of dissident intellectuals there, Ginzburg maintains that they nevertheless have the capabilities to bring about reform. His solution is simple: "First of all, the intellectuals get the idea of doing it, and then they figure out ways of doing it."

"It's hard for me to judge this whole movement," he continues, "because I don't know where to locate myself in it. I got a university education sort of accidentally. Later I earned my living mainly as a manual laborer in the Soviet Union, especially after my first term in prison when I couldn't get work other than manual work."

Ginzburg relates, with a few explanatory remarks from Coulter, that this predicament is not so unusual in the Soviet Union, "A lot of young people, for instance, who might be expelled from universities—for whatever reason—or even ones who can't make it into universities and have to get jobs, aren't getting higher education. They go to work. That doesn't mean they become stupid; they're still intelligent. They work; they study; they become intellectuals themselves, even though they're working out there at the bench. There's not that rigid a division between intellectuals on one hand and workers on the other. There were plenty of intellectuals in the United States in the nineteenth century who didn't have university education."

While in the Soviet Union, Ginzburg studied independently, and one of the areas he researched was the United States. He, then, was not surprised or disillusioned when he came here later,



Lynne MacGregor

for the material he read in the Soviet Union proved to be highly accurate. Regarding the representation of the United States in the Soviet Union, he says, "You have to make a distinction between the Soviet mass media and what is published by research institutes in the U.S.S.R. The mass media present one picture of life in the United States, but there are various research institutes devoted to investigating aspects of life in foreign countries, including the United States. These institutes publish various short studies, or relatively short studies, of aspects of life in the United States and other countries which are highly accurate. . . . These are done for future diplomats and people like that who are going to be working abroad and have to have an accurate picture of life in these foreign countries. They, of course, reflect only a very narrow area of life in the U.S. or whatever country, but they're accurate."

Now that Ginzburg is no longer in the Soviet Union, he is still actively promot-

ing human rights. He is working here and abroad for Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's fund to aid Soviet prisoners and their families. He also publishes *samizdat* material which is brought out of the Soviet Union.

In addition to these activities, Mr. Ginzburg has supported the formation of two museums of contemporary Soviet dissident art forms (that is, "nonofficially approved art"). During his tour at the university, he spoke with President Scales about the possibility of organizing an exhibit of some of this art work at Wake Forest. "Scales," said Ginzburg, "seemed quite receptive to the idea."

Alexander Ginzburg, though now living in the West, continues relentlessly in his efforts to draw world attention to those denied human rights in the Soviet Union. Through his work, he is able to make known those whose existence is obscured, to give voice to those whose words are muted.



Esther Hill

THAT HOUSE

the first night

i

parting strands of
bordello beads;
into the chamber after
the crickets
stop singing.

les ports français,
pierced by chills
from the inside;
The seal is broken.
on the far side of the room
a dangling phone wire
points at me
and laughs.

ii

dial-a-prayer
echoes across the
blind man's apron
and returns through
the stair well window.

a tiny black 'n' white
plays tent revival
until 3 a.m.
and the hip high bed spring
makes me curse.
Flenching, blood soaked orbs
reflecting lights
from the street
(my cover is blown)
sucking sleep through
a twice pierced straw.

Sounds, snagging in the night;
footsteps down the hallway.
running to the window, the phone . . .
stumping my toe on Victoria's floor lamp.

A paper winged moth
flying pattern
against the tight-cloth shade
I watch black silhouettes of trees
as they rise before a fading Venus.

— Tom Albritton



Have a Nice Day

by George Minot

It was a glorious day and I was thrilled to be alive. The sun was shining, the air quality index was a comfortable eleven, my Cordoba was running smoothly in cruise control, and the sweet sound of Debby Boone flowed from my cassette deck—life was such a blessing! Lucky is the man who can appreciate this wonderful life on earth. I had much to be thankful for: my own computer corporation, a beautiful wife, two adorable kids, and a wonderful house in the suburbs of our nation's capital.

"Thank you!" I yelled. "Oh, thank you, God, for letting me live my life to the fullest!"

I sang joyfully along with Debby and steered the Cordoba toward my home in McLean. The traffic on the beltway was light when I saw a young girl about fifty yards ahead waving her thumb desperately at the few passing cars. I had never picked up a hitchhiker before, but the Bible says to help our neighbor, and if the prodigal son can help a beat-up Jew on the road, I could certainly pick up a girl who needed a ride. Besides, I just like to help people in need. And I would probably do it even if the Bible did not have prodigal son stories. It's my nature. My philosophy in life is this: Do unto others what you would want them to do to you. I'll tell you one thing, if everyone followed my philosophy, the world would be a lot better off.

I slowed the car, pulled it off the highway and stopped ten feet past the girl. As I leaned over and unlocked the door, the girl suddenly jerked it open, leaving me sprawled across the seat. She quickly jumped into the car and promptly sat on my face.

"Oh, I'm sorry," the girl said. She leaped up as if she had just sat on a tack. She hit her head on the roof and plopped back down into my fine Corinthian leather. Luckily, my face was no longer in the seat; my extraordinary quickness saved me from a second indignity.

"I'm terribly sorry," the girl said. "I just wasn't looking when I sat down." She sat erect in the leather, looking straight ahead.

"That's quite all right," I said rather irritably—after all, she had bent my sunglasses so that one of the lenses covered my eyebrow. But I have an even temperament, so I did not get upset. "Those things happen. Now, where are you going? I'm driving into McLean, but I would be more than happy to drop you off anywhere near there." I had successfully overcome my annoyance and was now my normal cheerful self.

"Any McLean bus stop would be fine," the girl said. "I need to catch a bus into town."

"Okie dokie, a bus stop it is."

I eased the Cordoba back onto the beltway. I stepped on the accelerator, and the car quickly reached sixty.

"This is certainly a nice car," the girl remarked.

"Yes, I've been pleased with it. I couldn't decide between this car or a Volvo sedan, but the Chrysler salesman assured me that the Cordoba was the car of the Eighties. I always like to keep up with the times. Plus, I wanted to buy an American car. I think all of us need to do our part in stimulating our faltering economy. Don't you think so?"

"I'm all for stimulation."

I glanced over at the girl. She was still uncomfortably erect, staring straight ahead. She was not a particularly beautiful girl—her hair was a bit shaggy, and she had a rather plain, nondescript face—but she was one of God's children and that was enough for me.

"Isn't it a nice day," I said, sighing contentedly. "It's on a day like today that I am just glad to be alive. I have so much to thank God for. My wife and I usually walk around the neighborhood on a day like today, smiling and telling everyone to have a nice day."

The girl grunted. "Do you know the word nice comes from the Latin *nescius*, which means 'ignorant,' not knowing? You are walking around the neighborhood telling everyone to have an ignorant day." I looked at the girl again. She was still staring straight ahead. I already regretted picking her up. She had destroyed my Foster Grants, and now she was being rude. Young people thought they were so smart. What was the world coming to if you couldn't tell someone to have a nice day without worrying what the words meant in Latin? But I counted to ten and regained my composure. Jesus never lost his temper and neither did I. I always tried to follow the perfect example of Christ.

"No, I did not know the Latin meaning for nice," I said sweetly. "Thank you for enlightening me. I never took Latin in school. It is a fascinating language, though, don't you think? I watched 'I, Claudius' on the television and thought it was marvelous. I usually don't watch t.v., but there are just some shows that demand attention. I am open to any medium that can expand my knowledge one iota. And how about you, are you still challenging your mind in school?"

"No."

loving Jesus?

"No, I don't know pal Jesus and I don't *ever* want to know pal Jesus."

"But you must understand. . ."

"I don't want a candy-coated Christ, can't you see that? Please, I don't want to argue anymore." She was sitting in my fine Corinthian leather, looking straight ahead.

I could not think of anything else to say; the poor girl was obviously in deep trouble. The radio buzzed and I turned the dial to break the tension.

"Good morning. This is the WSAD Psychic. You're on the air."

"Hello, Sally?"

"Yes, dear, you're on the air."

"Oh, yeah, thank you. I was wondering if you have a feeling about my love life. I am twenty-five, single, and a bit concerned right now. I have been dating a man for three days and we have yet to consummate our relationship. Is it something I said? Does he find me unattractive? I would just die if he found me unattractive, especially after all the money I spent sprucing myself up and up. Can you help me?"

I sat back in my seat. This show always fascinated me. Sometimes, Sally was amazingly helpful. Of course, I never take it seriously, but it is still interesting. I used to call all the time before I turned to the Lord.

"Hmmm. . . let me feel you through the air waves for a moment," Sally said. "Yes, yes. I sense the problem. You are bound by the chains of moral convention. You refuse to give in to William because you lack the freedom to express yourself as a woman. Let yourself go—don't wear a bra on the next date."

"His name isn't William."

"What?"

"His name isn't William—it's Dick."

"Doc?"

"No, Dick."

"Oh, yeah, certainly. Dick. Anyway, don't wear a bra next time, honey. You can have great consummations without bras. It always works for me."

"But I don't wear a bra. None fit. I think I lack confidence. Can you heal me through the air waves like you did to that woman yesterday?"

"Sure. You have the faith. Put your hands on the radio."

The girl groaned. I looked over and she had her head in her hands. I listened as Sally the Psychic continued.

"Now, honey, place both hands on the radio and close your eyes. I will give you confidence. Hands on? What do you feel?"

"Warmth. I feel a warm radio—it's been on for two hours."

"Warmth? Good, good. What else do you feel?"

"Oh, I feel the hardness of the knob—the AM-FM knob."

"Excellent, excellent. Now, think psychic as I engage my powers. . ."

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes! Oohh! I feel your power! It's surging through me—I can't stand it!" The girl moaned for about a minute. "Oh, what an experience!" she said finally. "I feel cleansed, and I feel the confidence to express myself. Oh, I wish Dick were here now—I'm ready! Thank you, Sally. Oh,

thank you!"

"Yes, honey, you are in for a loving relationship. You have the confidence, thanks to me and the power. I hope and pray both of you choose to fulfill your karmas. You should grow tremendously in the next year."

"You really think so?"

"Trust me. Trust me. I am here because I am an excellent psychic. I truly sense a good experience for you. Give my love to Doc."

"Dick."

"Yeah, him too. And have a nice day."

I shut the radio off. I could feel and sense the girl's eyes on me.

"How in the hell can you listen to that shit?" She stared at me incredulously.

"Well, I will admit Sally is a little extreme," I said calmly, "but God gives everyone certain talents, and I think Sally is using her talent to help other people. Did you hear how good she made that twenty-five year old feel? She is really helping people. Besides, our computer statistics tell us—I own a computer company, by the way—that most people need some kind of help; therefore, I appreciate Sally encouraging and helping the human race."

"You own a computer company?" the girl asked dully.

"Yes, Howard Johnson's Computers."

"Howard Johnson's Computers? You have to be kidding. I thought HoJo's sold ice cream and clam tails and specialized in lousy motels by the big highways." The girl giggled softly. It was the first time I had seen her smile. I was not amused, however, because I was tired of people making fun of my company's name. I counted to twenty.

"Yes, my name is Howard Johnson," I said with clenched teeth. "We don't sell clams; we sell computers. We are very successful." I had regained my calm nature. The peace of Jesus is truly amazing. "I also think it is a privilege to have the same name as a great American. Howard Johnson is an American success story and we all could do a lot worse than follow his example. He started with a small store, so did I. He worked hard, so did I. He made a lot of money, so did I. In fact, he has always been my model. My wife and I always stay in his motels when we are traveling around the country. Of course, we don't travel as much anymore now that my wife is working. She is so excited with her job. She sells real estate, you know."

"I was afraid of that." The girl had stopped giggling.

"Yes, she just loves it. She became involved with it two years ago, and she is just having a ball."

"I'll bet she has a. . ."

"Yes, it's really very interesting. You can meet all kinds of people selling real estate. Most of them are very nice. My wife particularly enjoys talking to the people, especially the minorities."

The traffic on the beltway was becoming heavier as we crossed the Virginia state line. I disengaged the cruise control and started weaving through the jumble of Pontiacs, Volvos, and Cadillacs. We were nearing the McLean exit. The girl was still sitting stiffly as if she were waiting for something.

"Where would you like to get off in McLean? There are a lot of bus stops."

"The first one we come to will be fine. They all go into Washington." The girl shifted in the leather.

"Do you live in DC?"

"Yes, my job is in the city."

"What do you do?"

"I'm involved in social work," the girl said.

I was surprised and impressed. "Social work? That's great! I'm proud of you. There is a desperate need for dedicated people to work with their fellow human beings. You must be very unselfish to work in the ghettos of the city—you don't see young people with that kind of unselfishness anymore. The work must be enormously satisfying for you. What kind of people do you work with?"

"I work with men most of the time."

"How fascinating! Alcoholics? Or just poor men?"

"We deal with many different types of men in our offices," the girl said. "Some of them are depressed, some are neurotic, most of them are bored. We don't get too many poor people."

"Is it some kind of counseling service?" I was now interested in this brilliant girl.

"You could say that." She said, looking down at her feet.

"Excellent! A counseling service right in the middle of the city. You must help a lot of people. You know, I think Jesus smiles on people who help each other. Like I always say, do unto others what you would have them do to you. Hey, where is your office? I might stop in one day and say hello."

"14th Street."

"Wow, you really are working in the tough part of the city. I'll bet you get a lot of sick men in that part of town."

"We do, but I think we would get more sick men if we opened an office in the suburbs. We're always busy, even though our help is rather expensive."

"Don't you provide free service? A counselor needs to be affordable."

"No, we're never free. We charge about \$90 a session."

The girl looked over at me. She smiled. "Do drop in one night, Howard. You've been so nice to give me a ride and tell me about Christ. Come down any night, and I'll give you a discount on a blow-job. I would really like to suck the sweet Jesus out of you."

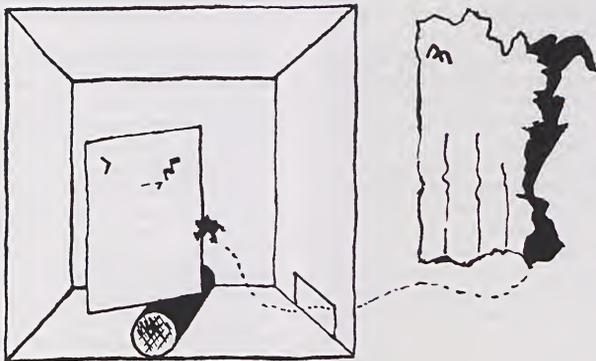
"Well, I'll be damned! I've been carting around a lousy whore!" I jammed on the brakes and pulled off to the side of the road. "Get out of my car, you scumbag. I'm not going to chauffeur around a prostitute. Social worker, my...! Get out! You hear me? Get out!"

She opened the door and slid out of the seat. She closed the door and leaned into the car. She looked at me and grinned.

"The Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel—O foolish hypocrite. And Howard, have a *real* nice day."

I sprayed the woman with gravel as I floored the Cordoba back to the beltway. I accelerated around a curve and she was gone. She was the scum of the earth, that's what she was—telling me the Kingdom of God was at hand. What did *she* know about God? I couldn't believe it, a whore telling *me* to repent. And telling *me* to believe in the Gospel. At least I believed in God, and in the Beautiful Savior. *I* was the one who was saved, not her. She had nerve calling me a hypocrite—*me!* I couldn't believe it. I wasn't a foolish hypocrite, I wasn't...

I saw the McLean exit as I passed it, and it would be another four miles in this traffic before the next miserable turn-off. Sometimes the beltway can drive you crazy. The sun came out from behind a cloud and hit my face. It felt hot, and I was almost blinded. I reached for my sunglasses, but I remembered the whore had broken them. What a lousy day. I punched the button, but the cruise control would not work. The road seemed to stretch endlessly ahead. Where was that crummy exit?



When I first considered jogging, the singularity of competition and the serenity of running alone appealed to my solitary nature. Little did I know that my anticipated and expected tranquility would soon be infringed upon by various people, animals, and machines. . .

Day one of my fitness program entailed rising in time to run before my first class. After crawling out of bed and putting in my contact lenses, I was now ready to array myself in the runner's uniform: lightweight, breathable shirt, short shorts,

provided a haven for passionate, yet indiscreet, lovers. The path grew more dense and secluded with each stumble, and as I rounded the bend, I encountered two entwined lovers parked on a bench. Hearing my scuffling steps, they quickly regained their composure; this was done through the retracting of hands, shifting of legs, retracting of lips, and attempting feebly to regain an upright position. With a smirk on my face, I trod by. However, as I haughtily plodded past the embarrassed couple, my foot inopportunistly caught a half-surfaced

The "Joy" of Jogging

by *Dennis G. Manning*

and, most importantly, amply cushioned, feather-weight running shoes. Now fully outfitted and completely awake, I engaged in a number of convulsive and ludicrous positions which are cleverly termed "stretching exercises." Having endured such derisive remarks as, "Look, it's the mating dance of the North African yak," and "I didn't know Bruce the hermaphroditic contortionist was in town," I was then mentally and physically prepared to tackle the three mile loop around Reynolda Gardens.

When I walked outside, I was bathed in the light of the early morning sun, and the refreshing smell of organic fertilizer and newly cropped tobacco filled the air. Before me loomed the seemingly insurmountable barrier of the Davis House field, but after a few deep gasps, I took to my flight. And what a flight it was! The first strides were like those of a gazelle: ethereal, fluid, certain. Halfway across the field I regained my footing and some semblance of pride as I tried in vain to surreptitiously wipe clean my grass- and blood-stained knees. All the time, though, my legs were pumping in rhythmic, piston-like fashion, propelling me to the entrance of the gardens. I gained the portal to the loop and, concurrently, an incredibly painful stomach cramp; nevertheless, I surged onward.

As a man who is able to judiciously control his passions, I was unaware that the serene atmosphere of the gardens

stump, and, with all limbs extended, I entered a swan dive, landing face first at the feet of the now howling and cackling lovers. Undaunted, I picked myself up, extended a salutation, and continued on my course.

Halfway through the loop, my body throbbed a resounding plea to quit, while my mind overruled and barked commands to continue. I reached the open field and parking area across from Graylyn Estate and noticed two blinking school buses and their respective legions of critters loosely assembled in single-file rows. From their size and deportment, I surmised that they were seven- and eight-year-olds. Approaching the buses, I saw pointing fingers and heard high-pitched laughs and squeals. Much to my chagrin, the lone supervisor of this obnoxious horde was an elderly woman studying a map of the gardens. In the meantime, the little ones pulled each other's hair, exchanged "cooties," and produced a cacophony which endangered my sense of mental stability. I increased my pace in order to rid myself of these tiny terrors. To my dismay, I suddenly realized that I was being followed by perhaps as many as fifty taunting, jumping, skipping, and running children. This mockery continued for about one hundred yards until the distant yelping of the supervisor could be discerned amidst the throng of varmints. Admittedly, I was a little flustered, for they, apparently, did not appreciate my fluid running style. The brats taunted me



Joe Petrone

with such caustic remarks as, "Hey, you look like a giraffe," and "I didn't know ostriches could crawl!" Children can be unbearably frank and cruel.

After my "Close Encounter With the Third Grade," I realized that I had nearly completed my three-mile trek. My lead-filled legs ached; my ribcage was racked with painful cramps; and my lungs could not take in enough oxygen to alleviate any of these symptoms. As I approached the garden exit, I heard the yelping and barking of dogs. Sure enough, galloping out of the underbrush were two ferocious and hungry-looking dogs, and, unfortunately, they were making a bee-line directly for me. The dogs quickly shortened the gap between them and myself, so I immediately came to a much-needed stop. I stood perfectly still as the dogs sniffed and examined their prey. The larger and hungrier-looking of the two lunged at me, planted his front paws on my thighs, and clamped his teeth into my short shorts. I spasmodically tried to free myself from the killer jaws, but his grip tightened and his teeth showed fiercely through the seams of my even

shorter shorts. As I wrangled wildly with the dog, I heard the rumbling of a school bus and the excited laughter of children. I looked up as the bus drove by, and the youngsters' uncontrolled laughter turned my face to a glaring red. Finally, my disgustingly short shorts gave way, and the dog padded off with his prize: a large portion of my pride and a piece of tattered material in his mouth.

Needless to say, my first day of running was indeed an adventurous one. Since then, I have developed some helpful hints which have benefitted me and may prove advantageous to prospective joggers: first, always warm-up or stretch where you cannot be seen—this is to avoid being mistaken for a deviant or contortionist. Second, never run through a quiet and secluded place that seems conducive to spring fever and the indiscreet display of affection. Third, avoid large packs of grammar school children, for they can decrease confidence and increase humility. Finally, after analyzing these suggestions and recounting my first eventful day of jogging, I have concluded that I would be a fool to ever run again.



Privacy,
Patience,
and the Poet:

Robert Hedin

by Kenneth Prichard and James Gurley

As a poet develops and realizes his personal boundaries, a sense of place and continuity of imagery must become central to his poetry if he is to establish and maintain himself as an artist. Robert Hedin has found a sense of belonging in the Pacific Northwest. Born in Redwing, Minnesota, Hedin grew up with the presence of the Mississippi River and the East while, at the same time, feeling the mystical expanse of the West as a backdrop for his imagination. He attended Luther College in Iowa, majoring in English and religion, and after graduation decided to pursue a career in creative writing. His choices in writing workshops were two-fold: he could go south to Arkansas or north to Alaska. Naturally, he preferred the frontier-like environment of Alaska because "all the myths were alive in Alaska." The regional diversity there exposes the full extent of man's limitations and his interactions with the elements.

In his first book, *Snow Country*, a collection of early poems, three images dominate the text: the cold, the dark, and the snow. For Hedin, these primal elements mesh with the mystical forces

that are as central to Alaska as the Mississippi River was to his childhood. In the book, he explores with "quiet patience" the eccentricities of the territory and its native American myths. In doing so, he realizes a synthesis of convention and imagination. In the title poem, the extinct, snow-covered volcano Verstovia is the locus. Hedin treats the mountain and its coldness as a source of pure myth. The peak becomes similar to the elephant graveyard where all creatures must go to die and be metamorphosed:

This must be where the ravens
turn to geese,
The weasels to wolves, where
the rabbits turn to owls.

Yet the poem also offers another, less concrete, interpretation. In order to create, the poet needs to explore the mysteries of the snow fields where his perceptions are altered. The last line, however, provides an irony, as the poet questions the significance of his observations: "I wonder if I should turn, tap and even wake you."

Similar to the title poem, "Strawberry Picking" introduces the natural and agrarian concerns of the poet. Hedin

likens the peasants' bowing earthward to a religious act. This exemplifies his feelings about the sacredness of earth and the creatures who receive its manna:

O how Brueghel would love the
way we stoop
How we pick directly from these
plants
And cradle only the most inflated ones

For the poet, this interaction is a sacrament that leads him to comprehend and transform his environment.

Hedin's second book, *At the Home-Altar*, differs thematically and structurally. Here his experience broadens as he includes his years in France, and as he moves away from the Alaskan starkness. The tone and language become more crafted, and Hedin gains control of rhythms and imagery. In "Houdini," he makes his own statement about the process of writing. Hedin feels that "writing a poem is like listening to the tumblers and waiting for the combination to click." When the safe has been cracked and the central images unlocked, the whole poem blows open. The images of breath and rain tie the book together and

become as elemental as the cold and dark were to *Snow Country*.

HOUDINI

There is a river under this poem.
It flows blue and icy
And carries these lines down the
page.
Somewhere beneath its surface
Lying chained to the silt
Tricky Harry holds his breath
And slowly files
His fingernails into moons.
He wonders who still waits at the
dock
If the breasts of those young girls
Have developed since he sank.
He thinks of his parents
Of listening to the tumblers
Of his mother's womb
Of escaping upward out of puberty
Out of the pupils in his father's eyes
And those hot Wisconsin fields.
He dreams of escaping from this
poem
Of cracking the combinations
To his own body
And those warm young safes
Of every girl on the dock.
(cont.)

In "Houdini," the struggle of the escape artist is analogous to the process a poet must go through to release the chains binding his imagination. The poet grapples with his own environment to free himself of those limitations and to find what is universal. "Houdini" also makes the reader aware of the intense privacy the poet seeks in writing. As Houdini breaks the surface, he finds no audience, which suggests for the poet as well as for Houdini, that there never was any audience except himself. Hedin finds in this poem and in others that his imagination comes to his rescue. The ability of the poet to control that "rescue" comes from a meditative patience that allows a deeper understanding of his work.

THE SNOW COUNTRY

Up on Verstovia the snow country is silent tonight.
I can see it from our window,
A white sea whose tide flattens over the darkness.
This is where the animals must go—
The old foxes, the bears too slow to catch
The fall run of salmon, even the salmon themselves—
All brought together in the snow country of Verstovia.
This must be where the ravens turn to geese,
The weasels to wolves, where the rabbits turn to owls.
I wonder if birds even nest on that floating sea,
What hunters have forgotten their trails and sunk out of sight.
I wonder if the snow country is green underneath,
If there are forests and paths
And cabins with wood-burning stoves.
Or does it move down silently gyrating forever,
Glistening with the bones of animals and trappers,
Eggs that are cold and turning to stones.
I wonder if I should turn, tap and even wake you.

HOUDINI (cont.)

Jiggling his chains
Harry scares a carp that circles
And nibbles at his feet.
He feels the blue rush of the current
Sweeping across his body
Stripping his chains of their rust
Until each link softens
And glows like a tiny eel.
And Tricky Harry decides to ascend.
He slips with the water through his
chains
And moving upward
Climbing over and over his own air
bubbles
He waves to the fish
To his chains glittering
And squirming in the silt.
He pauses to pick a bouquet
Of seaweed for the young girls on
the dock.
Rising he bursts the surface of this
poem.
He listens for shouts.
He hears only the night
And a buoy sloshing in the blue.

Hedin draws a fine line between imitation and influence, where the former tends to stifle a poet. He has found positive influences, however, in writers like Al

Purdy, Philip Levine, Kenneth Rexroth, and Margaret Atwood. Hedin tries to detach himself from what he reads, wary of any conscious imitation. Their influence has thus become internalized and falls in line with whatever influences make a poetic voice.

As for his aspirations at Wake Forest, Hedin believes in creating a more communal atmosphere among writers, where serious discussions on craft and poetics can evolve. To this end, Hedin remains a very open and receptive poet, always willing to help writers interested in developing their potential. A limited edition of his poem "On the Day of Bulls" has recently been issued, and he is currently working on another book, tentatively titled *Sheltering Dirt*. In addition, Hedin is compiling an anthology of contemporary Alaskan literature. This summer he plans to attend the Yaddo Writing Community in upstate New York.

NOTES:

"Snow Country" and "Strawberry Picking" were taken from *Snow Country*, © 1975. Robert Hedin, Copper Canyon Press.

"Houdini" was taken from *At the Home-Altar*, © 1978. Robert Hedin, Copper Canyon Press.



I hear the strains
of bedsprings waking,
the sticky sleepness as linoleum
sags.
the farmer and
i, barefooted chills neath
cotton sleep-stained limbs
eat our breakfast of champions;
it is good morning america.
pregnant buddhas,
the squash meditate on crumbs of dew
and toast,
the 'maters like plump red whores
sit on the faces of homegrown crates;
we'll eat them for lunch.

TO Richard
Bran
Emily Dickinson

— Nancy E. Rivers

For Neil Simon and His Don Juans

It seems I asked you to send me a book.
I found a letter staring at me
from its hunch on the stair.
Quite friendly, the warm hands that held
your letter, my shoulders, as I read.
No plants sighing, no coffee rippling
on the morning newspaper,
as I read from you a small scent of tea.
The doors stand open, like spring nights, to run in,
as I pass your typewriter, my letter,
old keys, half a sandwich
and a sock,
pass the tired pepper,
left from a shared dinner.
Moving, you want me to read your new address,
forward your pillow and a picture of me
in an old suitcase, postmarked:
‘Be there in time.’

How late the letter was,
how quaint to hear from you.
By the time, by the way,
the children, the dirty walls, the narrow words,
and the crisp book you forgot to send me.

— Mary Hague

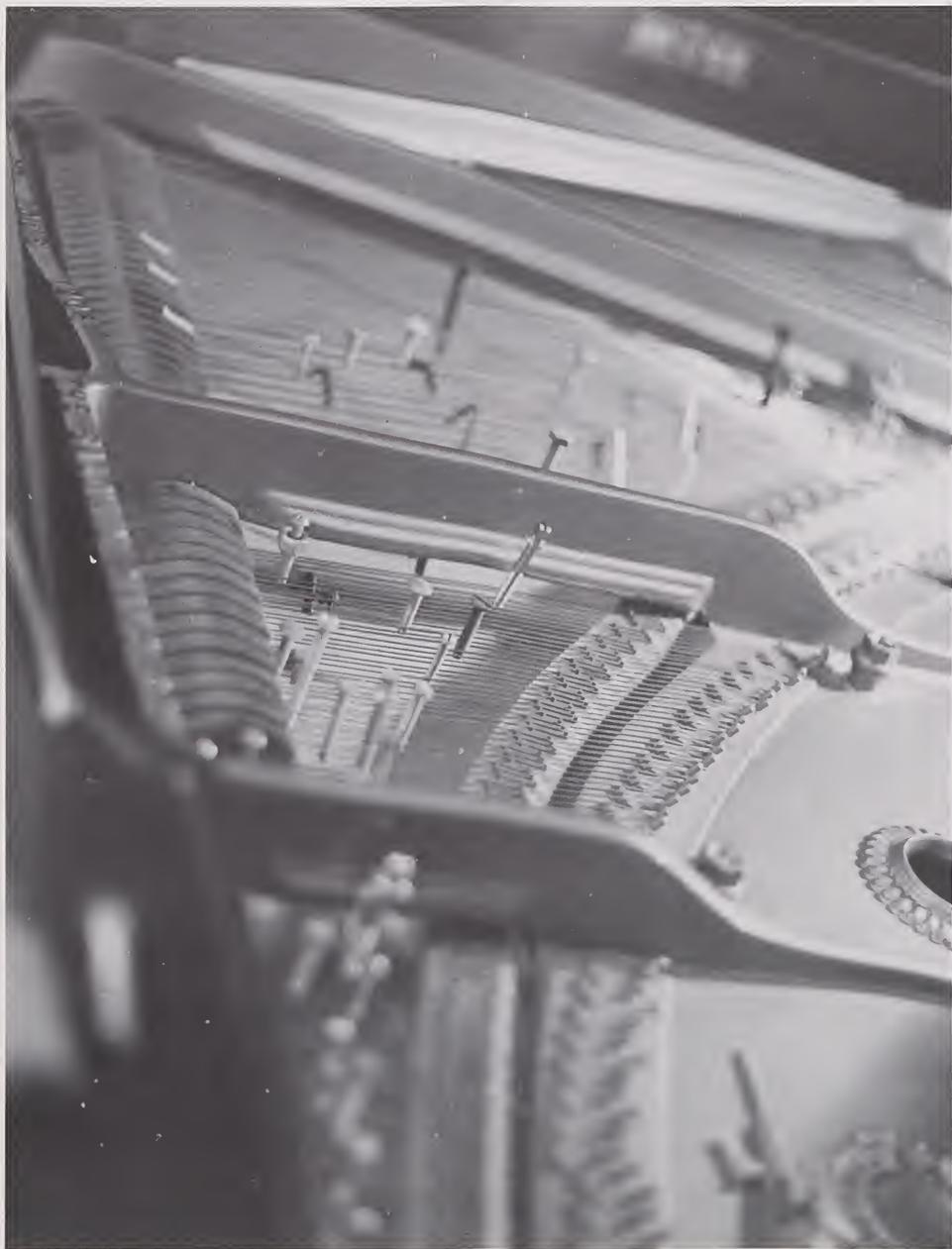
Punk Poem:



pencil lead good. pencil lead corrupts, cor
rupts, disrupts we don't use lead use ink instead
black skin blue, bruise green, puke yellow,
tongue pink
any hue will do
skin moves, and changes, and grows. it grows and
stretches wrinkles into hands become
a mouth. hands are mouths legs are eyes.
broken boy cries a cracked mirr
or shatters
days shatter, batter, clatter, smack flatter, boy now
latter,
nothing really matters.
a period ends, a word falls onto blankness, life is a sin of
being alive is
dying into
life

an elegy to lead #2

— Nancy E. Rivers



Vicki Golden

The Sound of Music?

John Cage's first invention for the piano

by Elisabeth Stephens

Is it high?
Is it low?
Is it in the middle?
Is it soft?
Is it loud?
Are there two?
Are there more than two?
Is it a piano?
Why isn't it?
Was it an airplane?
Is it a noise?
Is it music?¹

One of the most provocative metaphysical questions of the twentieth century simply came into being at a bad time. In the year 1938, international political tensions, major scientific discoveries, and domestic economic crises effectively obscured the reality-probing and convention-challenging taking place in the world of American music. Thus it was that contemporary composers first posed to an unresponsive public their startling query, "When is a piano not a piano?"

And just as the very existence of this quandary remains largely unsuspected even today, presumably so does the fact that musicians have come to agree upon its answer: a piano is *not* a piano when it is a prepared piano. Transformed then into "an instrument having convincingly its own special characteristics, not even suggesting those of a piano,"² a prepared piano nevertheless looks precisely

like any other piano and is played in the same manner. An enigmatic and intriguing resolution? The actual explanation of a piano's amazing transmutation to preparedness is disappointingly devoid of ritual incantations and requires only a casual acquaintance with principles of physical science. On the surface, in fact, it is a rather unglamorous matter of nuts and bolts.

Since the family piano's periodic swallowing of pens and pencils presents an excellent excuse for removing its outer panels and exploring piano anatomy, the mechanics of a standard piano are fairly common knowledge to the modern mind. Depressing a key on the keyboard causes a small, felt-covered hammer within to strike tightly strung steel wires, the vibrations of which produce a sound immediately recognizable as—the sound of a piano. No other vibrating body possesses exactly the same timbre (that is, quality of sound) as the piano wire, and thus any other sound, even if it has the same pitch, can be distinguished from a piano note.

Those pencil-swallowing pianos can further teach the basic principle underlying the prepared piano, actually a principle of physical common sense. When other objects, stray pencils, for example, vibrate sympathetically with the piano's struck strings, they emit sounds of their own that alter the musical sound produced. Deliberate placement of foreign objects—most often, screws and bolts—

among the strings of a grand piano therefore changes it into the twentieth-century invention known as the "prepared piano," an instrument of vastly altered timbral qualities and extraordinary musical potential.

Dissatisfaction with the traditional sounds of the piano forced the *avant-garde* American composer John Cage to invent the prepared piano in 1938. While composing accompaniment for a modern dance called *Bacchanal*, Cage decided that drumbeats were essential to the exotic, African-sounding music he wanted to write. Yet because there was space only for a piano in the auditorium where the dance would be performed, his composition was limited to that instrument. In a moment of mingled, creative inspiration and prosaic practicality, Cage fetched a pie plate from the kitchen, set it upon the strings of his grand piano and discovered with delight that the resulting muffled, percussive sounds suited his composition perfectly. A tendency on the part of the pie plate to jump about and shift position while vibrating impaired the precision of its muting effect, but with a little more experimentation along the same lines, Cage settled upon screws and bolts inserted between its strings as the most effective mutes for his piano.³ *Bacchanal* (wild, torrential, low-pitched rhythms subsiding into a pacing figure of gong-like resonances) thus became Cage's first composition for his new instrument, the prepared piano.

Subsequent compositions by Cage and others have elaborated considerably on his original preparation. Performers on the prepared piano carry the essentials of their instrument around in compartmentalized storage boxes—usually, boxes originally designed for fishing tackle or sewing supplies—whose contents are foraged from the local hardware store and the kitchen junk drawer. In a typical piano preparing kit, small screwdrivers and tweezers nest amidst strips of rubber, felt, and insulated wiring; shiny heaps of wood screws, machine screws, cap screws and stove bolts, neatly sorted by size, sit close by matching piles of flat washers, lock washers and hex nuts; a handful of multi-colored golf tees, several rubber canning rings and fifty cents worth of loose change might complete the inventory.

While a glance at this assortment of items leaves no doubt as to the experimental nature of piano preparing, it can only arouse curiosity as to the possible sounds produced by each preparation. Fortunately, this jumble of preparations can be resolved into several categories, based on the composition of the preparation and its general effect upon the piano's sound.

Hard, metallic preparations produce what one pianist calls "bright" timbres.⁴ The bolts and screws of Cage's *Bacchanal* remain the most frequently used devices of preparation. Inserted snugly between two strings and held in place by their threads, their ringing metal resonates with a rich and mellow bell tone. The category of metal preparations also includes coins and steel strips, which alter the piano's timbre to approximately that of the metallic percussion instruments, especially bells, gongs and cymbals. Like all other preparations, the metallic ones tend to decrease the piano's natural resonance so that its sounds do not project as clearly and die away much more quickly. In addition, a pianist can change the pitch of a note with a bolt or screw by placing it on a string where it will cause harmonics (vibrations of fractional lengths of the string) to sound; he might also increase the weight of a bolt with nuts and use this heavier preparation to lower a string's pitch.

From golf tees to hand-carved bamboo wedges, wooden mutes make somewhat duller, more percussive sounds than metal ones, sounds that vary with the hardness of the wood from thumps to gongs. Interweaving felt, rubber or soft plastic among the strings produces even more deadened tones which can only be described as variously-pitched "thunks."

By far the most interesting preparations, however, are those consisting of loose objects, such as washers and safety pins, wire strips and coins. Singly, or in a multiplicity of combinations, they sound in a medley of rattles, buzzes, jingles and clicks. When combined with other preparations, these loose ones result in marvelous conglomerate sounds, named *gamuts* by Cage; for instance, several washers suspended from a spring screwed into a between-the-strings

wooden mute produces, when the appropriate key is played, a low thump accompanied by delicate rattling.

Yet another technique of piano preparation employs the *una corda* pedal (first one on the left, piano players) to effectively double the number of different sounds available from a prepared piano. Most notes on the piano sound from the hammers' striking of three identically-pitched strings simultaneously. Thus, if a preparation is placed between two of the three strings, the resulting sound of the note combines the vibrations of two muted strings with one "straight" string. Depressing the *una corda* pedal shifts the row of hammers to one side so that, instead of striking all three strings, they cause only two to sound. If this action eliminates the unprepared string from the cumulative sound, a note of entirely different timbre results.

These various preparing methods are specified, with more or less detail from the composer, in a table of preparations prefacing the composition. Thickly illustrated with mysterious symbols representing particular muting devices, such a table tells what preparation is to be used, to which note it is assigned, and where on the string it should be placed. Because individual pianos differ greatly, especially in the length of their strings, no two pianos can be prepared exactly alike. The pianist might spend hours preparing his piano for a single perform-

ance, for even given a table of preparations, he must ultimately make his own judgments on details ranging from the exact size of mutes to their precise placement on the instrument. As Cage came, therefore, to realize about the performance of his own compositions, "Instead of the possibility of repetition, we are faced. . . with the unique qualities and characteristics of each occasion."⁵

This excitement with the unique and unrepeatable typifies Cage's musical career—the career that produced *4'33"* (a composition which consists solely of whatever sounds occur in the audience while a performer sits at his piano in silence for several minutes) and *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* (a composition for twelve radios). The prepared piano is clearly, then, not the only bizarre creation to come forth from Cage's amazing mind; regardless of the musical validity of his other works, however, the prepared piano is significantly more than simply a novel idea. *Sonatas and Interludes*, Cage's composition which sums up his ideas for the prepared piano, proves that however untraditional and strange the instrument may seem, it is indeed capable of making beautiful musical sense. Several of the pieces of this long composition are defined by intricate rhythms, confined to a narrow range of pitch and timbre, while others among them seek to show off every facet of this "large and varied percussion orchestra. . . of infinite



Vicki Goldstein



Vicki Colburn

nuance"⁶: the performer's hands scurry from one end of the keyboard to another in a cheerful and rhythmic cascade of thumps, gongs, klunks and rattles. Yet it is in the dreamier pieces of the composition, those in which Cage makes especial use of the mellow and bell-like sounds of metal preparations, that the full musical potential of this instrument finally emerges. Of his intention in this composition, Cage wrote that it is "an attempt to express in music the 'permanent emotions' of Indian tradition: the heroic, the erotic, the wondrous, the mirthful, sorrow, fear, anger, the odious and their common tendency toward tranquility."⁷ Mysteriously and hauntingly Eastern in sound, these sections of *Sonatas and Interludes* truly reveal the capacity for emotional expressivity inherent in the prepared piano; these passages transcend the strangeness of altered piano sounds not just to dazzle, but to enchant the listener.

As Cage once reflected:

Wherever we are, what we hear is mostly noise. . . . When we listen to it, we find it fascinating. The sound of a truck at fifty miles an hour. Static between the stations. Rain. We want to capture and control these sounds, to use them not as sound effects, but as musical instruments.⁸

At one level, then, the sounds of the prepared piano are merely strange noises, and the piano itself an unfamiliar and improbable musical instrument of which one might jokingly say, "At least nobody would ever know if you played a wrong note on it."⁹ In the hands of a composer such as Cage, however, the instrument becomes part of a redefinition of music—music not merely understood as traditional melody and harmony fitted into conventional structures, but music experienced as emotionally evocative patterns of sound and silence. Philosophers may debate freely about exactly when a piano is a piano, but about Cage and the prepared piano there can be no questions. This, indeed, is music.

Language being a vehicle all too inadequate for the expression of musical experience, the following recordings—all available in the Wake Forest music library—are recommended to anyone with a spark of interest in the prepared piano.

American Contemporary: New Piano Music
David and Lois Burge, pianists
Composers Recording, Inc. CRI 345

John Cage—Music for Keyboard, 1935-1948
Jeanne Kirstein, Prepared piano, piano and toy piano
Columbia Records M25 819

Sound Forms for Piano: Experimental Music by
Henry Cowell, John Cage,
Ben Johnston, Conlon Nanarrow
Robert Miller, pianist
New World Recordings NW 203

NOTES

¹John Cage, "Composition as Process," *Silences* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 49.

²John Cage, *Preface to Amores*, 1943.

³John Cage, Foreword to Richard Bunker, *The Well-Prepared Piano*, (Colorado Springs: The Colorado College Music Press, 1973), p. ii.

⁴Richard Bunker, *The Well-Prepared Piano*, p. 9.

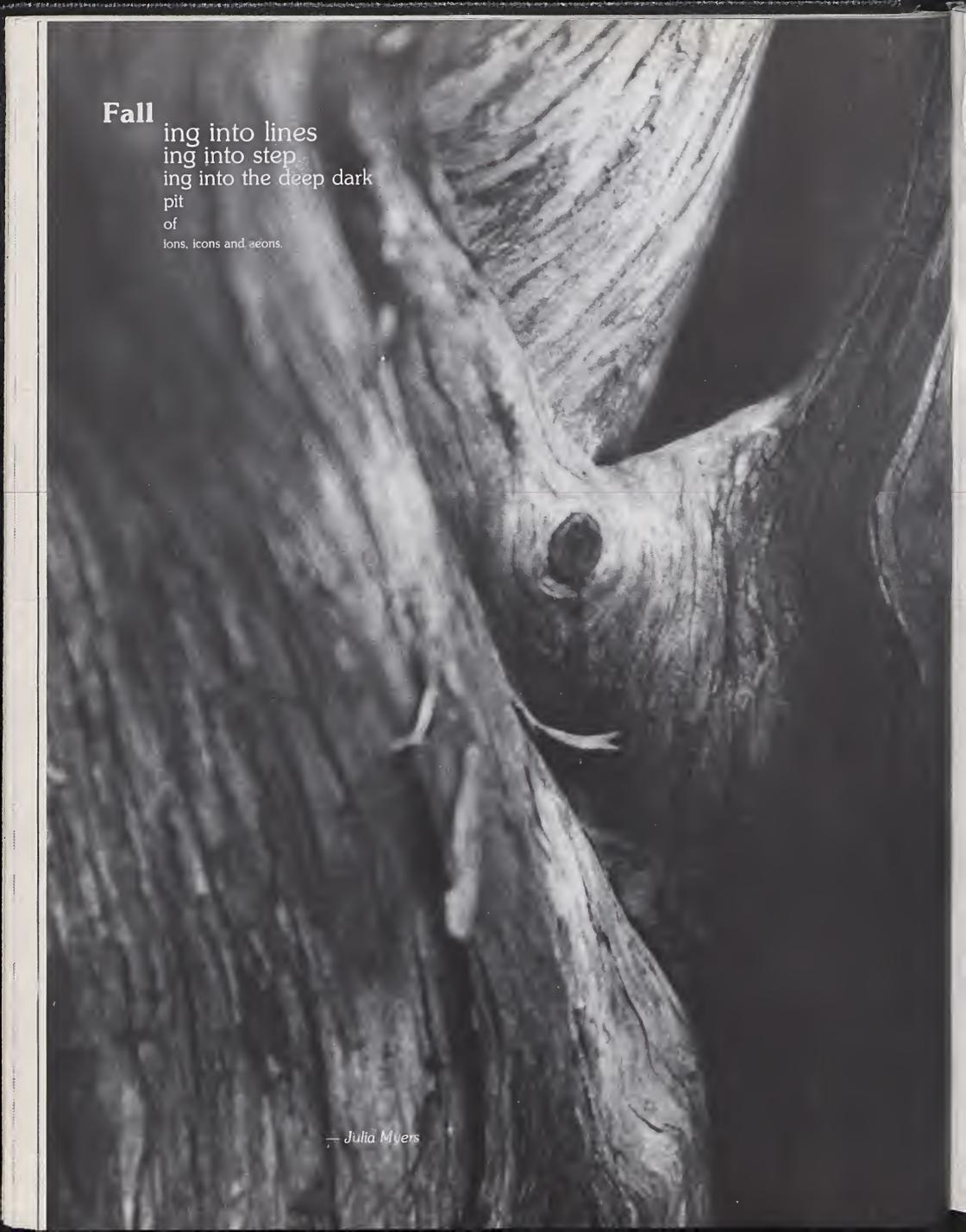
⁵John Cage, Foreword to *The Well-Prepared Piano*, p.ii.

⁶Richard Bunker, *The Well-Prepared Piano*, p.2.

⁷John Cage, "Compositions," *John Cage* (New York: Henmar Press, Inc., 1962), p.17.

⁸John Cage, "The Future of Music: Credo," a speech quoted by Charles Hamm in notes to *Sound Forms for Piano*, New World Recordings NW 203.

⁹Remark overheard at a prepared piano recital, September 26, 1980.



Fall ing into lines
ing into step
ing into the deep dark
pit
of
ions, icons and aeons.

— Julia Myers

Trees

New pages more blood
time ticks, echoes
heart reaching
but the fall is almost over
Baring limbs now, slowly falling, drifting
to become naked
outstretched silhouettes to the hunter moon
standing open, bare, to the wind
visible
freed
Is that any way to prepare for the cold?

(The wind won't move you quite as much as the ice & snow
laying heavy on your weight/wait).

— Laura Veach Boies



Sam Page

Lines on Other Lines

I am sure
I could have said
"these words are mine"

but I've no right to them,
having let them fall
like evening through
a bordered pane
and scatter what was before —
namely, nothing.
But now light.

The shadow was better.
Those words are irresponsible —
illuminating blue,
with flickering light,
even remote corners.

as if, through some picture tube,
some light weaved past twilight
into the rightfully hidden.

I don't know these words —
spangled,
baubled,
pigmented,
False,

formed as a system, endless,
an outline crystallizing
into infinity
and blearing
as energy
powders out.

They have not
listened to me.
They say nothing
I have said.
They do nothing

to the new blackness,
that has grown,
in me.

— anonymous.



The man moves about, his gray stiff uniform following the square contours of his body in crisp, straight wrinkles. He goes to the window; peering out, he can see the lines of people streaming up and down the street and the cars pulling forward in short, jerky movements.

Time for work. The man now advances towards the door, quickly glancing over his room one last time. Everything is in order, the shelves dusted, the books arranged, perfectly neat. He pulls the door quietly shut behind him.

Forty-nine long rows of low tables, with a different man or woman in front of each one. Suddenly the monotonous sound of perpetually moving machines alters and a brief scream pierces the heavy air. Somebody has lost a finger—routine. But the unusual arc of yellow sparks arrests the man's actions. He follows the sinuous curve with his eyes, even attempting to caress the burning particles as they drift to the ground. The vision remains implanted in his mind long after the sparks have dissolved into dust and lie inanimate upon the smooth floor. Slowly the man reels in his wandering imagination and returns to his work.

That night, the man wanders about his small studio, absent-mindedly brushing up against shelves and chairs, so they all lie slightly disarranged. He appears to be working on some idea. His features twitch and jump; muttering a few incoherent words from time to time, he occasionally pauses to peer out from behind the closed persiennes. His erratic walk finally slows, and with a faint smile he reaches in one of his precise drawers and pulls out a beautifully smooth, rectangular sheet of paper.

CUBISM

Taking it in one hand, his fingers softly tighten. The paper shatters, ripples, curves under the insistent pressure. He deliberately performs the same operation on another sheet, and taking up some glue, fastens the two together. Now his gestures are smoother, the rigidity gone as the pace increases, as the structure grows.

by *Heather Maclean*

Slow dragging steps, but still with a persistent regularity: an old man, his whiskers swinging to and fro to the beat of his gait, comes down the stairs. His uniform, proudly pressed just minutes ago, is dull with age, but retains an aura of dignity. The concierge pauses in front of the man's apartment, surprised; a ray of light snakes under the door, accompanied by a withered; crackling sound, totally unfamiliar in these surroundings. "Everything O.K. in there?"

The man, startled, does not respond. He sits stupidly, without motion, like a wild rabbit caught in the glare of oncoming headlights. The old night watch waits a minute, shifting his weight from foot to foot. He tries to open the door, but it only rattles, fastened from the inside. Still another minute, then the guard moves off towards the next set of stairs.

The man, hearing the guard's footsteps deepen as they recede, returns to his almost completed work.

The ball lies on the floor, its creator's magnetism still inhabiting it, but slowly escaping. There is one knock at the door, and a key is inserted in the lock. Four members of the Committee of Law and Order enter the room. The man barely acknowledges them and, with a fluid movement, rises from the floor.

The door shuts behind them with a finality that crushes him. His shoulders droop, his head bends slightly. Only twenty-five steps down to the outside flow of consciousness. Even as he approaches, the sharp click of thousands of boots on the hard pavement assaults his ears in harsh bolts of sound.

His soft pattering as he approaches the stern gray prison drowns out every click that might ever have existed.

EVOLUTION

(This is couched in symbol-matrixes that will allow it to pass your cultural-reality censor undigested and hopefully leaving it whole for your genetic intelligence)

We read the papers and so are Brownianly directed.
Ah, inflation, the crisis in the Middle World.
What tragedy, What horror.

Some amongst us have vision, may one say perspective?
Ah, energy-in-form, pattern of being manifest.
What acuteness, What watchfulness.

We must, for it is authorized, increase, inCREASE!!
Look, I have attained, all know ME to be good.
What magnificence, What excellence.

Some, mere poorly-indoctrinated vagabonds, just exist.
Look at these lilies of the valley.
What acceptance, What adjustment.

We fear, for infidels encroach on perfect orderliness.
Here now don't touch/think/say that!
What impudence, What heresy.

Some, a scattered few, chance upon the holes in the fabric.
Hmmm, i wonder what's out there?
What curiosity, What awe-full-ness.

We must fight, for the negation of entropy is eternal.
Hold firm men, keep the disease back!
What evil, What foulness.

Some amongst us lose step, all know them to be lost.
Say, maybe there's another way!
What daring, What " " .

NO, NO, NO!
But why, good friend?
("Look, Daddy, one's circuits are over-loading! . . .
. . . But, Daddy?" "Yes, daughter?" "Why does the robot look
so much like a dinosaur?")

— Dan Castell



The Comeuppance

by Erin E. Campbell

CHARACTERS

WILBUR GROUNDSTEAD
ARNOLD NEVERNO
GEORGE BINDING
BUDDY BINGLEY
THELMA BINGLEY, *his wife*
MALCOLM RIGHTWAY
MARY ROBERTS RIGHTWAY, *his wife*
MISS AUDREY SIMPSON

All the characters, except BUDDY BINGLEY, are standing on the stage which is set completely in white. There are no props. All the characters wear white T-shirts, white painter's pants, white socks, and white tennis shoes. At the front of the stage, set apart from the others, WILBUR GROUNDSTEAD sits facing the audience. He is painting at an easel, but the audience cannot see the canvas front. He is wearing paint-spattered denim overalls, but no shirt or shoes.

As the characters loiter, BUDDY BINGLEY slowly enters from the left. He is approached by ARNOLD NEVERNO.

ARNOLD. Buddy Bingley! So you've finally made it. Come here and let me shake your hand!

BUDDY. Gee, thanks. But who are you, and how do you know me?

ARNOLD (*still shaking his hand*). Arnold. Arnold Neverno. We've been waiting for you. Besides, we all know each other here.

GEORGE (*approaching the two and carrying a clipboard and a pen*). Excuse me. I'm George Binding. I'm in charge of records here. You are Mr. Buddy Bingley, are you not?

BUDDY. Yeah. Yeah, I am. Geeze, you guys know everybody, but everybody.

GEORGE (*in matter-of-fact tone*). There are no secrets here, Mr. Bingley. (*He riffles through the papers in his clipboard.*)

BUDDY. This is just how I figured it would be. Only ain't this supposed to be pretty swanky? You know—wings, halos, gold streets, lots o' hupla, all that. I mean—don't get me wrong—this ain't bad, but, well, you know.

ARNOLD. Don't worry about a thing, Buddy. That all comes later. We have to wait for everyone to get here first.

BUDDY. Whew! For a second there, I was afraid . . .

GEORGE (*still looking through his papers*). We almost have it. Let us see here. Binger. Bingleless. Binger. Ah. Bingley, Buddy (*puts a check next to the name*).

BUDDY. Well, at least I see I'm not the first one here.

ARNOLD. *Au contraire*, my friend. I even suspect you just might be the very last.

GEORGE. I wish that were so, Mr. Neverno. But I'm afraid we have just one more to go.

ARNOLD. What? But I thought surely Buddy here was our final arrival.

GEORGE. No. Our records indicate that there is a Mr. Wilbur Groundstead who is still unaccounted for. But just as soon as he arrives, we can . . .

THELMA (*hurrying towards BUDDY*). Well, I'll be! Buddy! So you finally made it. Let me have a look at you. I just don't know how long it's been since I seen you last, but I been a-waitin' for you. So here you are. I'll be.

BUDDY. You didn't really think I wasn't comin' did you, Thelma?

THELMA. Well, I don't kn—

BUDDY. Say, where's the kids? I'm dyin' to see 'em again.

THELMA. I don't know where they are. They're around here somewhere. They haven't changed a bit. You'd think they'd be acting like little angels since that wreck we were in, but they're still the same. I told 'em, "You just wait 'til your father gets here." Well, here you are at last.

BUDDY. I'll find 'em soon enough. After all, we've got all the time in the world now. Now all we have to do is wait for . . .

ARNOLD (*to GEORGE*). Wilbur Groundstead, you say?

GEORGE. That's right, Mr. Neverno. According to our records, he was expected to be here before this. My goodness, I simply can't imagine how we could have overlooked this. Something must be done to get things in order. If we don't, everything will be disrupted. I mean, certainly, we couldn't have that.

ARNOLD. I'll tell you what, George. I'll check into the matter. I'll go see him. Find out what the problem is. Probably just a misunderstanding. But don't worry. Everything will work out just fine.

GEORGE. I believe I really ought to accompany you, Mr. Neverno.

ARNOLD. There's no need to trouble yourself, George. You're a busy man, and you certainly don't need any more burdens of responsibility. (*To MISS AUDREY SIMPSON who has just tiptoed near the two*) Isn't that right, Miss Simpson?

AUDREY (*startled*). What? Me? Well, I'm certain you would know better than I, Mr. Neverno.

GEORGE. But it is official business, and I am in charge of records, as you well know, Miss Simpson.

AUDREY. Yes. Yes, that is true too, Mr. Binding.

ARNOLD. You do have a point there, George, but I can still probably manage alone. I know things have been pretty hectic, and I don't want you to overdo it. What do you think, Miss Simpson?

AUDREY. Certainly, Mr. Binding should not overdo it. Goodness knows what might happen to him.

GEORGE. Surely you don't want to travel all that way alone, do you, Mr. Neverno? Should he travel alone, Miss Simpson?

AUDREY. Well, no, it's not always a good idea to travel alone.

ARNOLD. I see your point. Come along, George. I think your idea is splendid.

GEORGE. Splendid.

AUDREY (*somewhat loudly*). Splendid. (*Putting her hand over her mouth*) Oh, dear. Excuse me. I didn't mean to impose.

ARNOLD NEVERNO and GEORGE BINDING walk to where WILBUR GROUNDSTEAD is sitting. He is painting, but he stops when the two approach him.

WILBUR. Howdy! It's been a long while since I've seen anybody in these parts. I'm . . .

ARNOLD. Wilbur Groundstead, let me shake your hand.

WILBUR extends his hand to ARNOLD, but notices the paint covering it, then retracts it.

WILBUR. I'd like to, but I'd hate to get your clean clothes all messy with my paint. Since you know me, who are you?

ARNOLD. I'm the Late Arnold Neverno and this is the Late George Binding. We're here to find out why . . .

GEORGE. You are late, Mr. Groundstead. Very late.

WILBUR. Whoa there, fellas. I thought you're the ones who are late.

GEORGE. You don't understand. You are late in becoming the Late Mr. Groundstead. According to our records. . .

ARNOLD. What we mean, Wilbur, is that you're not supposed to be here.

WILBUR. Then where am I supposed to be if not here?

ARNOLD. Come on there, Wilbur, you know.

WILBUR. All I know is here I am, and here is the place for me. Who told you I'm not supposed to be here anyway?

GEORGE. The records, Mr. Groundstead, the records.

As you can see, everyone has a check by his name—except for you.

WILBUR. Ah, heck. If that's all that's bothering you, here's one (*with paintbrush places a check next to his name*).

GEORGE. Mr. Groundstead! This will not do. First we need to have you. Then we make a check—and in black, not in green.

ARNOLD. Easy there, George. Wilbur simply doesn't understand yet. (*Turning to WILBUR*) Think of the others. Come for their sakes. Surely, you must realize we can't get the show on the road until everybody has come.

WILBUR. Who told you that?

ARNOLD. You still don't understand. Everyone knows. Even if no one tells you, you just know, that's all.

WILBUR. Sure I understand, Arnold, just like you understand. No one told me I'm supposed to be here, but I know that I'm supposed to be here. So, you see, we all understand.

GEORGE. Mr. Groundstead, you do not understand. We are trying to tell you . . .

WILBUR. I hate to be impolite, but my paint here seems to be getting dry, so I'd better get back to my picture (*sits down*). If you'd like, why don't you two have a seat and tell me about whatever it is I'm late for.

GEORGE. No, thank you, Mr. Groundstead. We never sit.

WILBUR (*not looking up from the canvas as he works*). Never?

GEORGE. Never, Mr. Groundstead. Now, Mr. Neverno, I believe our mission is not transpiring as it ought. Perhaps, we should devise some alternative.

ARNOLD. I think you're right, George. We may as well

go back in the meantime. (*Turning to WILBUR*) We'll see you later, Wilbur.

WILBUR (*still painting*). Sure. Glad to have you. Stop by anytime.

ARNOLD NEVERNO and GEORGE BINDING walk back to the others. When they return, they are approached by BUDDY BINGLEY.

BUDDY. So'd you two find that guy, William Somebody-or-other?

GEORGE. Wilbur. Wilbur Groundstead. Yes, we found him, Mr. Bingley.

BUDDY. Hey, that's terrific! Now we can. . .

ARNOLD. Not "terrific" just yet, Buddy. He won't come.

BUDDY. What? (*A few who are near him glance at him from the corners of their eyes.*) You mean we're going to have to hold up everthing until he decides to come?

GEORGE. I'm afraid that sums it up.

ARNOLD. Unless, of course, we can talk some sense into him, and get him to come.

BUDDY. Well, ain't that just great, brother! You'd think he'd at least know enough to care about everybody else. I mean, this is for everybody's good. (*Yelling to the others*) Ain't that right everybody? Aren't we all here to finally get what's comin' to us at last?

Everyone clusters around the trio.

THELMA. I don't know what you're so upset for, Buddy. After all, it is the end of the world, isn't it?

BUDDY. I know it is, sweetheart. But when you work so long, spend your whole life doing what you're supposed to do, you just don't want it to get loused up.

MALCOLM. I say, what's all this?

ARNOLD. Just a little change in plans, that's all, Malcol.

MARY. Is it serious?

ARNOLD. I don't think so. Would you like to explain, George?

GEORGE. Mr. Bingley here was supposed to have been the last one to arrive. However, due to some oversight—I swear to you all, I simply don't see how it could have occurred. I paid strict attention to keeping these records in proper order. I worked at them day and night, night and day. I did everything according to schedule, and keeping everything in exact order is no simple matter, believe you me. Yet, somehow in the records. . .

ARNOLD. We're missing one person.

MALCOLM. As they say, you can't win them all. By the way, who is it?

GEORGE. A certain Wilbur Groundstead.

MARY. Wilbur?!

MALCOLM (*to MARY*). My dear, you know this Mr. Groundstead?

MARY. Well, he was an acquaintance of mine. Many years ago, you understand. Why, I suppose I'd hardly even know him anymore.

MALCOLM. I should say so.

AUDREY. I should say. . . (*They all turn toward her.*) Oh, excuse me, I only meant that I should think perhaps we

might—that is if it would be agreeable to everyone—try to persuade somehow this Mr. Groundstead to join us. But whatever you think is best.

ARNOLD. That's just what we had in mind. Any suggestions?

THELMA. We could try something, but I don't know. MALCOLM. We'll come up with something. As they say, necessity is the mother of invention.

BUDDY. Why don't a group of us just go, catch him, and bring him here before he even has a chance to do anything about it?

GEORGE. I'm afraid we simply do not operate in such a fashion here, Mr. Bingley.

ARNOLD. You said you knew him, Mary. I'm sure you could charm him here. Nothing beyond the bounds of honor, of course. Nevertheless, I do think you're the most persuasive means we have.

MARY. I really don't think that's the best approach, perhaps not a good one at all. Frankly, I think Buddy Bingley's suggestion would be better. Why don't we use it instead?

GEORGE. In all probability, Mrs. Rightway, you would be our best chance.

THELMA. It seems like it might work, but I don't know.

MALCOLM. Give it a try, darling. After all, what do you stand to lose?

MARY. It just doesn't seem feasible; that's all. I mean, what would I even say to him?

MALCOLM. You'll think of something, Mary. You're always so clever.

AUDREY. Excuse me, but I think perhaps we might try it.

ARNOLD. Go on, Mary.

BUDDY. Go on.

THELMA. Go on.

AUDREY. Go on.

ALL. Go on. Go on. Go on. Go on.

They suddenly cease, and everyone stares at her. With halting steps, MARY ROBERTS RIGHTWAY walks over to WILBUR GROUNDSTEAD who is still painting. He does not notice her, so she watches him work for a short while. Finally, she clears her throat to get his attention.

WILBUR. Welcome back, Mr. . . . (*turns around and stops painting when he sees her*). Mary? Mary Roberts?

MARY. Yes, Wilbur, it's me, but I'm Mary Roberts Rightway now.

WILBUR. That's right; I forgot. (*Standing up*) Here, sit down.

MARY. No thank you. I. . .

WILBUR. I see. You don't sit either (*sets his pallet and brush on the chair*). What brings you here after all this while, Mary?

MARY (*with traces of irritation*). You know quite well what I'm here for.

WILBUR. Well, then, please tell me what I know quite well.

MARY. There you go again, Wilbur Groundstead! Always being so insistently innocent and naive, pretending you don't understand.

WILBUR. Poor Mary. Still creating cyclones by swinging at the air. Even after all these years, you're still the same Mary I loved so well—even in my youth.

MARY. Oh, and I can tell you haven't changed in the least, Wilbur. I knew that before I even had to come here.

WILBUR. "Had" to come?

MARY. Yes, Wilbur, *had* to come. You're still just as mulish and contrary as usual. You couldn't come like everybody else. Oh no, not you, Wilbur Groundstead! You have everything in confusion now. Are you satisfied?

WILBUR. But, Mary, I didn't do a thing. Besides, I told those two spic-and-spans this morning that they could go right along with their plans. It won't hurt my feelings if I'm left out.

MARY. Can't you see how ridiculous you're being? No, I suppose not; you never could. Remember when we went to the prom? Afterwards everybody went to Rosanne Procter's—Rosanne Procter, the richest girl in town no less—and they had cases and cases of champagne. Everyone talked about it for the rest of the summer. What did we do, Wilbur? We went to High's Meadow to watch an eclipse of the moon!

WILBUR. I never forced you to go, Mary. Besides, remember how happy we were together watching the sunrise later?

MARY. But that's not the point!

WILBUR. Then what is the point?

MARY. The point is I never would have married Malcolm if you would have at least tried to be a little more like everyone else. You knew how much I wanted you, but you let me go. You let me go!

WILBUR. Now, Mary, it was your decision to do what you did.

MARY. I only decided to marry Malcolm instead because you insisted on always being so unreasonable. And now look at what you're doing. While everyone else is waiting, you're just sitting around painting.

WILBUR. Do you like my painting, Mary? It's not quite done yet, but almost. It's almost an exact replica, except I did change it a little.

MARY. (*briefly glancing at the painting, then without any feeling in her voice*). Nice.

WILBUR. Well, I like it at least. What I particularly like are the flowing lines and. . .

MARY. Are you going to stand here and talk about painting while we're waiting for the world to end?

WILBUR. The world won't end, Mary, I won't let it. Why don't you stay with me, and we'll both not let it end?

MARY. You don't understand, do you Wilbur? You never have, and you never will. I'm sorry for you; I really am, because there's nothing I can do for you.

She returns to the others, and WILBUR resumes painting.

MARY (*to the others who are all watching her*). I'm sorry. He won't come. I'm sorry. I tried. I'm sorry, sorry, sorry. . . (*continues repeating "sorry" in a monotone*).*

MALCOLM. Don't be sorry, darling. You did the best you could. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink, as they say, they say, they say. . . (*continues repeating "they say"*).

ARNOLD. I say, we'll find a way out of it yet. We could try, could try, could try. . . (*continues repeating "could try"*).

THELMA. We might try something else, but I don't know, don't know, don't know. . . (*continues repeating "don't know"*).

GEORGE. I just know there must be some reason for any error in the records, records, records. . . (*continues repeating "records"*).

AUDREY. Perhaps, the records—oh dear, I've interrupted. Please do excuse, excuse, excuse. . . (*continues repeating "excuse"*).

BUDDY. There's no excuse for not coming! Anyone who acts like that can go to hell!

On the word "hell," all characters suddenly stop talking and remain totally still. WILBUR lays down his brush and pallet, grasps the painting with both hands, and raises it above his head.

WILBUR. It's done!

He slowly turns around until his back is to the audience which now sees the front of the canvas. The painting is of a robed figure with his long white hair and beard flowing. He is reaching down to an unclothed man poised on the ground. Their hands are firmly clasped together.

* Each consecutive character talks louder to be heard above the crescendo of the others who are repeating their phrases in unison while staring straight ahead with blank faces and motionless bodies.

Seen from the entrance way, "Continuum" seems to extend interminably, dark, with flickerings of light from its maze of panels. Underneath a bright, hypnotic photo of the starry cosmos, Kenneth Weaver is quoted: "Nearly all the atoms in your body and in the earth were once part of a star that exploded and disintegrated . . . and probably those same atoms were once the debris of still an earlier star." The exhibit's designers poetically suggest the implications of this perception of mankind: man is "swimming in the energies of the universe," and he extends throughout the universe even in the sense of his physical being. "Continuum" displays man's attempts to synthesize empirical evidence with metaphysical thought. The purpose of the exhibit is not to provide answers, but rather to provoke questions.

A picture of a mystical Sphynx stares out from the panel opposite the Weaver quotation. According to an inscription, the Sphynx, as a representation of the Egyptian belief in immortality, always faces the rising sun. Painted beside the Sphynx, the boy-god Horus, who guards the doors of the temples, kneels with his tanned finger held to his lips. In accordance with high Egyptian respect for scientific inquiry, Horus keeps the new truths found through science secret from all but the most morally responsible men. Next to this panel stands a painting on wood reproduced from *The Book of the Dead*, or as the Egyptians called it, *The Book of Coming Forth to Light*. The painting depicts strange creatures with animal-like heads who weigh a man's heart on balances before allowing the man to proceed to heaven, which they called Aalu. A quotation from the book reads, "I rest in the other world with those who are at the side of the Lord of Eternity. I am like the stars who know not weariness. I am upon the boat of millions of years."

The visitor enters a new world when he sails forth to the adjacent cluster of panels. Short, complex quotations in white against black summarize scientists' conceptions of immortality. A frazzled Einstein stares intensely, wary of our accepted knowledge of physical reality. Space is not really three-dimensional, he tells us, and the ancient Greeks, who preconceived the atom, were not incor-

rect in their assumption that consciousness, as well as matter, exists in some kind of indestructible material form.

The Greeks' belief in immortality and their linking of matter and consciousness were integral parts of their culture and perception of the universe. Greek philosophers' ideas form a long list on a nearby panel. Thales writes, "All things are full of soul." A Pythagorean quotation reasons, "The human soul is immortal, for it resembles the heavenly stars, and (like them) is involved in perpetual motion." Some later philosophers disagree with these ideas, and their rebuttals are written under their portraits. Auguste Comte refutes this belief in the immortal soul as "childish." Thomas Hobbes declares that there is "no room" for the non-material. This cluster of panels also sketches out the relationship between matter and mind as reflected in scientific thought of the present day. American physicist Dr. Evan Harris Walker hypothesizes, "Consciousness may be associated with all quantum mechanical processes." Scientists' quotations stand out against a background of symmetrical geometric designs.

In the far corner, a hologram — a three dimensional "moving" film image — depicts a tormented woman who is contemplating suicide. As her image turns, she clutches her head and buries her face, over and over. The hologram creates the anxiety of a suicidal state and suggests its implications. Dr. Raymond A. Moody, a leading researcher of clinical death, claims that suicide would never resolve her turmoil. From his studies of persons who have attempted suicide, he concludes, "All these people agree on one point; they felt their suicide attempts solved nothing . . . they were involved in exactly the same problem." Just as our religions have condemned suicide, recent studies suggest that it could never be a viable option, a true escape from the

Continuum

by Jackie Werth

"Continuum—The Immortality Principle" will be on display at the Nature Science Museum in Winston-Salem until December 21. Designed by Kay Croissant and Catherine Dees, "Continuum" opened at the California Museum of Science and Industry in April, 1978, where it was so successful that it was held over for four months after it was scheduled to close.

difficulties man confronts in his present reality. Dr. Pascal Kaplan notes, "The suffering which is the consequence of suicide is said to be much more severe than any amount of discomfort or suffering which could result from working through the most difficult life-situations . . ."

On another panel, the interrelation between past and present concepts of immortality is graphically demonstrated. White spirals and a depiction of the motion of the atom are juxtaposed with the dancing Hindu god Shiva, who symbolizes the ever-circular motion of our existence, the infinite transformation from one life to another. A mind-spinning, deep red spiral graphically complements a hypothesis of the fourth dimension. Professor Hans Driech, of the University of Leipzig, questions whether our origin is from "outside the space-time framework." When we die, could we not return to an existence outside this framework? On another panel, a diagram of a man intersected by a multitude of different planes illustrates Dr. William A. Tiller's conjecture that there are even more than four dimensions. Dr. Tiller hypothesizes a unity of these different dimensions at an ultimate "level of the universe."

Among these presentations of con-

troversial research, the heading "Reincarnation" stands out in bold lettering. Dr. Ian Stevenson, a psychiatrist who has written two books on the subject, studies children who seem to have detailed memories of past lifetimes. Richard A. Kalish and David K. Reynolds studied people of the greater Los Angeles area in their research on post-death contact. Of the people surveyed, forty-four percent claimed to have felt the presence of a person after he had died. Although the survey's conclusion serves only as a preface to more research, it propagates new respect for the subjective personal encounter with this phenomenon: "Greater attention should be paid to the factor of valid personal reality in such research."

In a corner, a solid wood mold rides a pedestal like a piece of abstract art. An explanatory note asks, "Am I solid, strong, hard, dense?" and invites visitors to touch and feel the wood. But, the note continues, "if you took all the space out of all my atoms, there would be very little 'solid' me left." Man is also matter, and matter is primarily indestructible energy, able to expand throughout the universe. Semyon Kirlian, a Russian pioneer in high frequency photography, developed

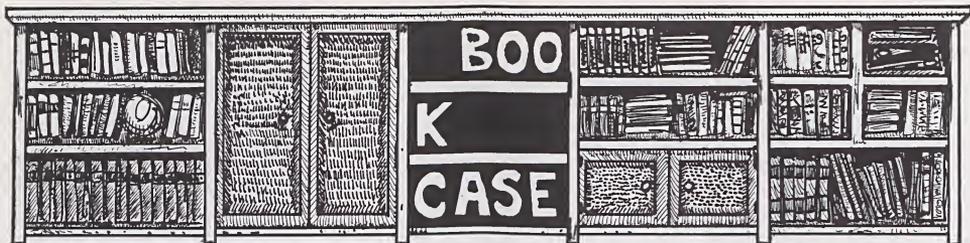
a camera which captures the energy of matter on film. In a vivid red reproduction of a Kirlian photograph, traces of energy emissions from a leaf are clearly visible. Even when parts of the leaf are cut off, the emissions persist. These energy emissions seem to offer an explanation for the medical phenomenon of the "phantom limb," in which a "person who has lost an arm or a leg will 'feel' the missing limb for a long time after." Could this phenomenon be the result of the "persistence of the energy field, despite the loss of the physical limb?" With the discovery of these energy emissions, the artistic tradition of representing holy figures with shimmering halos of light about their heads seems almost prescient. Kirlian research has even discovered that the emissions are intensified when a person is in prayer. Dr. Richard Gowinski's photograph of a dead man's fingertips reveals threads of bright, white energy fanning outward.

The luminescence from lighted photographs of suns forms a dynamic background for Dr. Raymond A. Moody's summary of his interviews with people who, after having been declared dead, have "returned" to life. Dr. Moody claims that the responses are strikingly

similar: first, the person feels "peaceful and quiet"; then, he finds himself in a "tunnel of concentric circles." He leaves his body and "observes the physical body from above it. . . Spiritual beings or guides meet him and reveal to him his whole past life for review and reflection." The testimonies agree that the spiritual being is "interested in love." Dr. Moody reports that among the interviewees, "Not one person fears death now. . . All felt that the important thing in life was to be loving and not care so much for the small self."

Near the exit, on a photomural of the setting sun reflected in the ocean, quotations from scientists, philosophers, and religious leaders express the theme of "Continuum": Lao Tzu writes, "There is reality prior to heaven and earth"; Carl Jung declares, "Nobody can say where man ends." On an adjacent panel entitled, "We Are Told of the Tunnel," a tiny bird flies fearlessly toward a bright sun. The eye is pulled toward the center of the sun as if toward the understanding of immortality. As Lawrence Le Shan writes, "There is knowledge that time and space are illusions of the senses, and that one is boundaryless in the Continuum."





**DAYS OF POWER, NIGHTS OF FEAR:
A NOVEL OF WASHINGTON**

By Bynum Shaw

276 pp. New York:

St. Martin's Press. \$10.95

By now, most Americans have been saturated with stories of Washington from every angle imaginable. On television and at the news stand—from hustling journalists and from unemployed hustlers—Capitol Hill dirt has entertained the curious majority for over a decade.

For those who have become exhausted by this flood of governmental gossip, Bynum Shaw has written a refreshing Washington novel that re-defines the genre, maintaining the political flair for the insatiable die-hards.

Days of Power, Nights of Fear takes the reader back to a time of prosperity and paranoia in America. During the post World War II period, when Russia makes the shift from ally to enemy and acquires the American capabilities for nuclear warfare, the average U. S. citizen is certain that the only good "pinko" is a dead "pinko."

This novel follows the relationship of two characters from World War II Pacific beaches to the United States Senate. Possessed by an uncontrollable lust for power, "war hero" Sam Bradford leads his former Marine Corps buddy, Harry Dodge, into nurturing a political cancer.

Harry manages Sam's victorious campaign for the Senate seat. As Senator Bradford's re-election campaign against Communist infiltration becomes a personal psychosis, he harshly abuses and destroys the lives of his closest friends in the process of solidifying his position and increasing his power.

The reader sees the action through the eyes of Harry Dodge. From this viewpoint, one can clearly feel the impact that Sam has on his friend's personal life. Shaw is supreme in his life-like sketches of Harry, his wife Patricia, and his "friend" Meg. The author poignantly portrays the private life of the young Washington couple fighting for survival against the personal and psychological demands of Sam Bradford. Shaw also makes the reader feel the love and sensuality between Harry and Patricia and the pain of having to support a political career grounded in deceit, selfishness, and cruelty.

Having been a reporter during the days of McCarthyism, Shaw uses firsthand historical knowledge to write a convincing fictional account of the impact and consequences of a

political façade.

Days of Power, Nights of Fear transcends the time and place of the stereotype Washington novel. Its message is universal, and its characters are everywhere.

—Tom Albritton

WHY BROWNLEE LEFT

By Paul Muldoon

98 pp. Winston-Salem, N. C.:

Wake Forest University Press. \$4.95

In *Why Brownlee Left* Paul Muldoon plays the movie-goer's poet. The diction of film, the cliché of film, even the imagery of film jumps from Muldoon's verse. But it is the ironic assertion of the uncinemematic, undramatic and seemingly irrelevant detail which remain with the reader.

Phrases like "So long as there's an 'if' in California" and "Back to the back of beyond" demonstrate Muldoon's ability to make the reader think he should have heard the lines before. In many cases, lines are rightfully familiar. For example, "tomorrow is another day," "splendour in the grass," and "put your best foot forward," all taken from Muldoon's volume, should be recognizable. In more traditional poetry these clichés might detract from the quality of the verse, but in *Why Brownlee Left*, Muldoon restores their meaning.

Nearly every poem in Muldoon's book involves a clichéd movie situation. In "Something of a Departure," Muldoon writes:

*Would you be an angel
And let me rest,
This last time
Near that plum-colored beauty spot
Just below your right buttock?*

Here, the particularism of the last two lines slap the reader. Suddenly the first three heavy lines—suggesting more by implication than by direct reference—are ironic in prefacing so strange a request. The entire situation attains a level of absurdity and the cliché seems to be rendered meaningless. But Muldoon continues. . . . In the last three stanzas, the speaker tells his lover that these particulars are *all* they can experience. The speaker restores the sincerity of those seemingly melodramatic first three lines by expressing the need to accept the moment and not something grander and less realistic.

The conflict between romanticized movie notions of "what should or could be" and particular notions of "what is"

possess Muldoon elsewhere in *Why Brownlee Left*. In "Palm Sunday" the speaker says:

*I was wondering if you'd bring me through
To a world where everything stands
For itself, and carries
Just as much weight as me on you.*

And in "Early Warning" he remembers:

*We would swing there on a fraying rope
Lay siege to the treehouse
Draw up our treaties*

.....
We would depend on more than we could see.

Muldoon recognizes the romance of possibility. In "History" the protagonist crawls through a window to get to a room where the people say MacNeice wrote "snow" on a blackboard. In the title poem an Irish farmer becomes famous by disappearing and, implicitly, by giving others a mystery to mull over.

*By noon Brownlee was famous;
They had found all abandoned, with
The last rig unbroken, his pair of black
Horses, like man and wife,
Shifting their weight from foot to
Foot, and gazing into the future.*

Brownlee might have slipped into a pond a quarter mile from his field and drowned. People assume something more meaningful though—something more like movies, more cliché.

By continually coupling absurd detail with romantic possibility, Muldoon raises questions about the way people form thoughts. Another character in Muldoon's volume finds an unusual description:

*Will Hunter, so gifted
He could peel an orange
In a single, fluent gesture.*

Muldoon defies the cliché of description by giving the reader something unexpected as the criterion for human value. Muldoon makes the reader question the basis for all such judgments.

As *Why Brownlee Left* progresses, Muldoon begins to create his own possibilities, his own alternatives to the cliché. Still in the idiom of film, but with greater potency, the grave-side speaker of "the Princess and the Pea" states:

*Far down, something niggles. The stir
Of someone still alive.
Then a cry, far down. It is your own.*

The greatest example of the poet's speculations are contained in the long poem "Immram" which completes the volume:

*We counted thirty-odd of those brown-eyed girls
Who ought to be in pictures,
Bronzed, bleached, bare-breasted,
Bare-arsed to a man
All sitting, cross-legged, in a circle
At the feet of this life-guard out of Big Sur.*

The format of "Immram" is taken from a Raymond Chandler detective novel, but the details are taken from an imagination which successfully flees the expected and the cliché.

Muldoon's poetry, in final analysis, actually expands poetic potential by taking advantage of the reader's expectations of poetry's weight. Just as villagers dream possibilities for Brownlee, readers of poetry must dream possibilities for Muldoon. In response, Muldoon seemingly gives the reader no depth, no meaning—just pounds of clichés and movie situations. The movie dialogue is certainly what makes the book so enjoyable and easy to read, yet the simple conversational format is quickly forgotten. It is Muldoon's disruption of this format and the presentation of new images that haunt the reader, for in these disruptions lie the sustaining essence of *Why Brownlee Left*.

—David B. Marshall

ENTROPY

By Jeremy Rifkin

305 pp. New York:

Viking Press. \$11.95

"Each day we awake to a world that appears more confused and disordered than the one we left the night before," says Jeremy Rifkin in his best-seller *Entropy*. Yet this growing complexity is, at the same time, the basis for the unceasing atrophy of our planet.

Simply defined, entropy, the second law of thermodynamics, is the disintegration of the matter and energy of the universe to an ultimate state of inert uniformity. More explicitly, any attempt to alter matter which is quantitatively immutable, through the input of energy, will lead to more extensive displacement of order in the world.

Rifkin traces this decline, beginning with man's initial state in nature. The first primitive hunter-gatherer societies are said to be man's ideal state—man living in harmony with the land and not constantly altering and scarring the earth as we have witnessed in the last century.

Perhaps overemphasizing the evanescence of time, Rifkin brings us from the era of pre-history to the 17th century in only six paragraphs. In the period from about 1620 to 1700, the author singles out Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and Isaac Newton as "the architects of the mechanical world view." As William Blake foresaw 200 years ago in his satirical watercolor portraying Newton hunched over the globe carefully measuring it with a compass, Rifkin today sees and warns us of the dangers of purely technological perspective. The author forthrightly says that the input of Bacon, Descartes, and Newton led to the Industrial Age and to the belief that progress is made by reconstructing and reshaping matter. Rifkin, however, argues that this is the problem of appearance versus reality—what one terms synthesis of matter is actually a destruction of order.

Rifkin devotes the body of the book to outlining in detail the by-products of the mechanical world. Dealing mainly with the institutions and conventions of the current age, the author emphasizes the liabilities while overshadowing any benefits of existing society. Rifkin's dissection of society does, however, seem to be from the viewpoint of an extremist or alarmist.

Rifkin's final transition leads to the crux of the book: energy. Our blind reliance on nonrenewable energy sources is the

most immediate and perilous problem in our society today. Rifkin says, "the end of the age of nonrenewable energy, then, presages the end of the Industrial Age as well," and the only alternative is solar energy. Yet conversion to solar energy is the real task. If and when solar energy is fully developed, then the whole of society must undergo radical changes, and that, in Rifkin's theory, is what is so frightening to contemporary man.

"Thermodynamics [i.e. entropy] is the only physical theory of universal content which I am convinced, that within the framework of applicability of its basic concepts will never be overthrown," said Einstein. If so, radical changes are inevitable and the soothsaying Rifkin must be heeded.

—Dennis G. Manning

KINDERGARTEN

By Peter Rushforth

192 pp. New York:

Alfred A. Knopf. \$8.95

Kindergarten marks the debut of a new British novelist, Peter Rushforth. It is a book of sharp contrast—between darkness and light, joy and suffering, fairy tale and reality. It is a novel which addresses, through the eyes of children, the most brutal and terrifying of modern inhumanities, mass extermination, and vicious political terrorism.

The narrative opens upon Christmas Eve in a small British village as three children and their grandmother are preparing for their traditional family celebration of a German Christmas. They are a unique family, for the children are all precociously talented youngsters. Having been brought up in a deeply cultured family—their father is headmaster of the local academy and their mother is a well-known pianist—they share a knowledge of and talent for music, art, and literature which places them firmly in the tradition of humanistic learning and understanding. Their Christmas celebration revolves around a room filled with candles, a center of beautiful and warming light, while outside remain the forces of darkness and chaos. Yet we learn that this family has already been touched by the almost criminal insanity which seems to mark today's world. Their mother has been killed in a terrorist bombing of the Rome airport only three months before and now, during Christmas preparations, the children watch television while the same terrorist organization demands the release of the men who killed their mother. Holding hostage a school full of children, the terrorists threaten to kill one child each hour unless their demands are met.

The basic dichotomies of the novel are thus established through a close, loving, deeply-cultured family group placed in contrast to and conflict with the depravity and brutality of the outside world. The individual struggles against the collective, and the possibility of personal love contends against cold impersonal forces at work in the world. At one point Rushforth writes:

Whoever had a child, whoever had a mother or a father, whoever had a friend, whoever was capable of feeling love, or

forming a tie, of wishing to protect or care for another person, had a weakness that could be exploited, had a hostage in his life, someone he would give all he had in the world to protect from harm.

This central theme is developed further by the revelation during the night that the children's grandmother, who has come to live with them since their mother's death, is a Jewish artist who lost her entire family to the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Once an illustrator of children's books, she has not painted since that time. That memory and the scar it left have been too great. Now she must somehow find a way out of her own permanent pain and help her grandchildren to come to terms with theirs. Rushforth successfully ties these various pains and experiences into a whole which allows the children and their grandmother to come, in that one night, to an understanding of and a reconciliation with their own personal grief.

The novel, although short, is structurally complex. Interweaving fairy tales, history, and individual lives, Rushforth creates the book's ultimate synthesis. The novel actually begins and concludes with the story of Hansel and Gretel, children abandoned by their parents and imprisoned by a witch but who, through their intelligence and love for each other, survive. This fairy tale is accompanied by others, all of which concern the survival of innocents against some cruel fate inflicted by the evil in this world. This use of fairy tales effectively extends the scope of the novel beyond the strictly historical and personal. With the introduction of these myths, the reader is forced to realize that the basic themes of this modern novel are actually old and recurring themes in the imagination of man.

Considering all the horror in this work, whether real or imagined, modern or historical, Rushforth's novel might naturally seem a depressing and painful one to read. Though it is in many ways a dark and brooding work, however, *Kindergarten* ends on a note of peace and promise. Just as Hansel and Gretel do escape from the witch, so do the children come to a larger peace with themselves and with what they now know of the nature of the world.

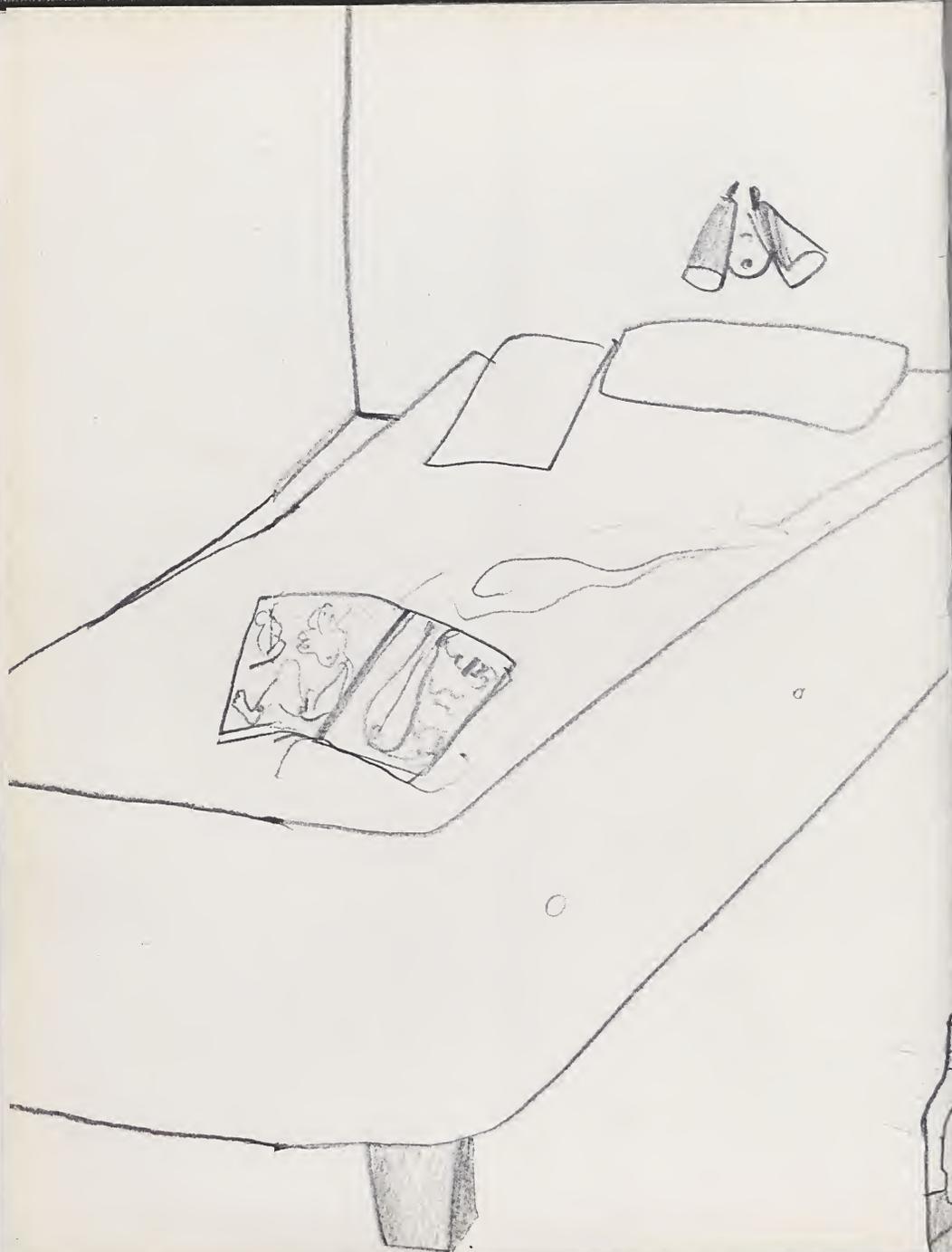
It is important that the novel is about children. Near the end, the grandmother Lilli, a woman who has lost so much, tells the children:

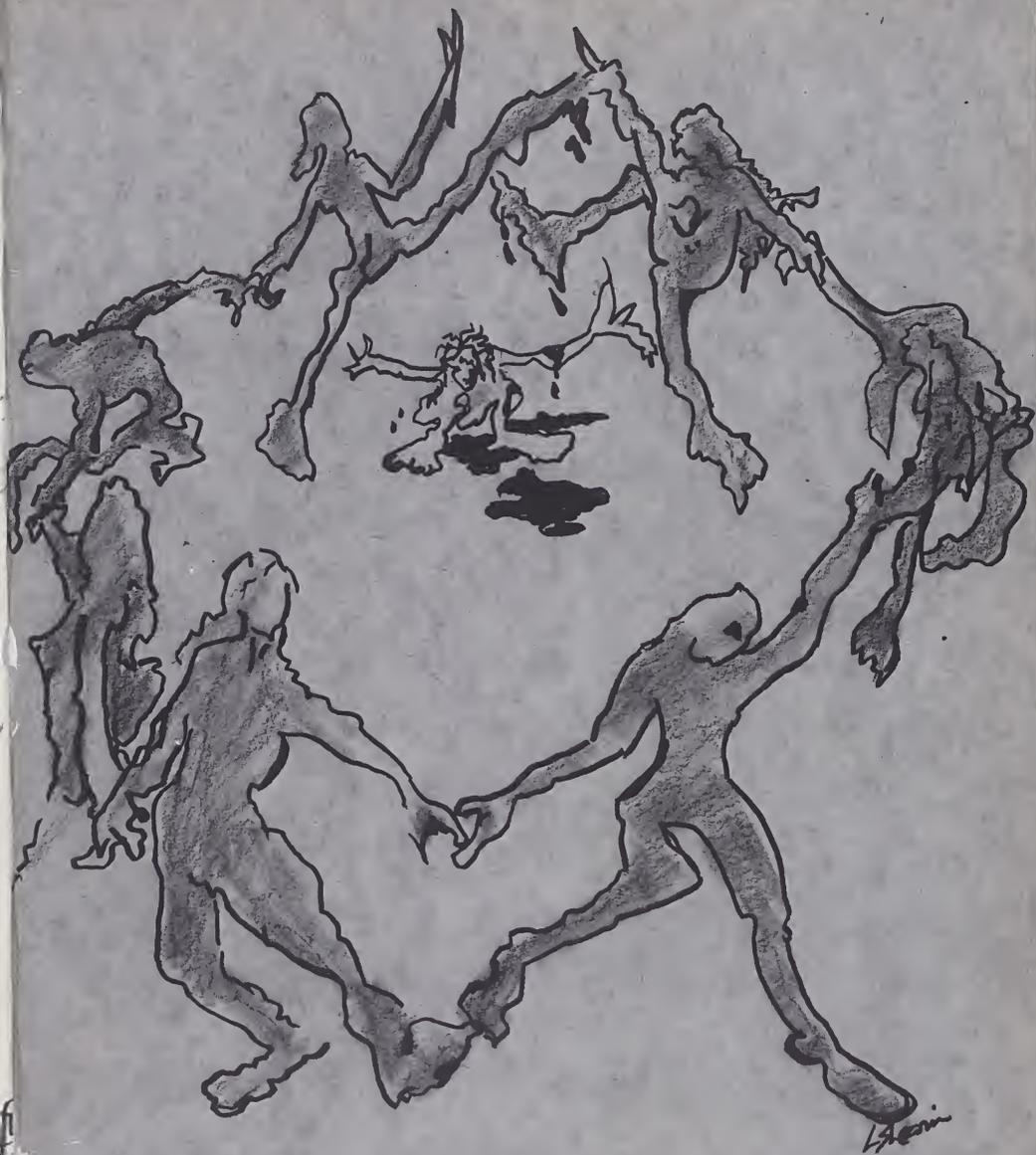
We are wandering, we are lost in the darkness, perhaps, in England, in Germany, over much of the world, but it is the children who will lead us out of this darkness, who will put an end to our wandering. With each child's birth, they say, the world begins again, and it is you who must use your life in trying to find a way, trying to light that darkness. This is what I truly believe.

Thus, if in *Kindergarten* Peter Rushforth gives us a stark and uncompromising view of the darkness in this world, he has also given us a picture of hope and love—quite possibly the only things worth holding onto in this increasingly brutal and inhumane world.

—John Hunter







L. Harris

The Student



The Student

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Her Space

She never danced
But when she spoke
Her words were like an innocence
Spilling from her mouth,
Full of space
To move in,
And the rhythm was there too,
Though they never were quite
Synchronized,
And it seemed that someone else
Was always
Moving to her rhythm
Or bringing into her space
Their own
For her to dance to,
But she never danced
Or even knew
She could.

—by *Beth Boone*



Maya Angelou:

Resolving the Past,

Embracing the Future

by Esther Hill

In 1931, two small children, ages three and four, were delivered like packages to their grandmother in Stamps, Arkansas. Tags around their wrists addressed "to whom it may concern" listed their names, address, and destination. After their parents' divorce, the children were shipped from Long Beach, California to the small southern town, where they soon blended into its quiet life. Maya Angelou vividly recalls that arrival in Stamps in her first autobiographical book, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*. Her life has carried her far beyond the Arkansas of her childhood. Ms. Angelou, now an internationally known writer, recently returned to Stamps with Bill Moyers as the subject of a television special. As part of the filming, Ms. Angelou also visited Winston-Salem where she sat in on a question and answer session with Wake Forest students. While here, she granted *The Student* this interview.

Student: In a *New York Times* article you said, "No man can know where he is going unless he knows exactly where he has been and exactly how he arrived at his present place." You were speaking of history, but would you say that in your life writing has been this defining process for you?

Angelou: Yes, it has. Sometimes I've been conscious of the learning, or relearning. Sometimes the process is so subtle that it's only maybe a year after I finish a book that I have a realization of this learning. Something happened that was quite strange on this trip with Bill Moyers. I remember Stamps, Arkansas, as tiny and closed-in, mean, with very little natural beauty, except the changing seasons. But all my life I have loved a softly rolling landscape, and

any time my husband started to build a fine house for me, he looked for that softly rolling landscape. I appreciate and admire the harshness of mountains and the sound of the sea, but my heart sings when I see the hills, whether it's in England, California, or Italy. It so pleases me that I've asked my husband and my son that should I become really ill, terminally ill, at any time, please get me out of the hospital and take me to some place where I can see the rolling hills. Two weeks ago, when I drove from Texicana into Stamps, there were the hills. I had grown up around them and had no remembrance of them. If anyone had ever told me before two weeks ago that there were rolling hills around Stamps, I would have said it's flat and tight and mean. So, in the process of this filming, I found out how I reached this particular preference for that particular topography. It was the first I ever saw and I must have liked it, but it's something I had totally forgotten. So now it will compound my loving of that look, that vision. So in subtle ways, writing these books helps me to find out where I'm coming from.

Student: In your writing there's a distinctive rhythm; how did you find this? Was it from the speech patterns you picked up from your family in Stamps? Or do you think it was an innate sense?

Angelou: I don't know. I listen for rhythm; I don't know why I do. But every situation has a rhythm or rhythms. Cocktail parties, for example. There are sultry flirtations in one corner which are legato, and intellectual arguments around a table which may be adagio. Old friends remembering an old, really sad story, this may be lento or grave.

I listen for them, no matter what I'm writing about. I listen for the most pronounced rhythm, and I think I find it. But first I write everything I know about the subject. And then I try to enchant myself into that particular situation I want to write about, just cover myself in it, and keep listening for the rhythm. Then, when I am satisfied with what I've done, I make the content clear. So the rhythm is first in my stories, in the poetry, always.

Student: In the interview for the Bill Moyers special, you spoke of your particular ritual when writing. Could you describe that?

Angelou: Well, I don't like to have any clothes touching me, so I wear voluminous things, some flannel gowns. Anyway, they don't intrude, they just hang about. I used to wear hats, then head ties for a number of years. I still have those, and sometimes I like to tie them nice and tight—I guess to keep my brains in. I work in longhand. I can't seem to work on a typewriter; the words don't look right. I just got a scrapbook which an old man in Arkansas presented to me on this trip. He said I did it when I was nine years old. It was marvelous. But the handwriting has not qualitatively changed since then. When I read one of the pieces, I thought, nor has my style of writing very much.

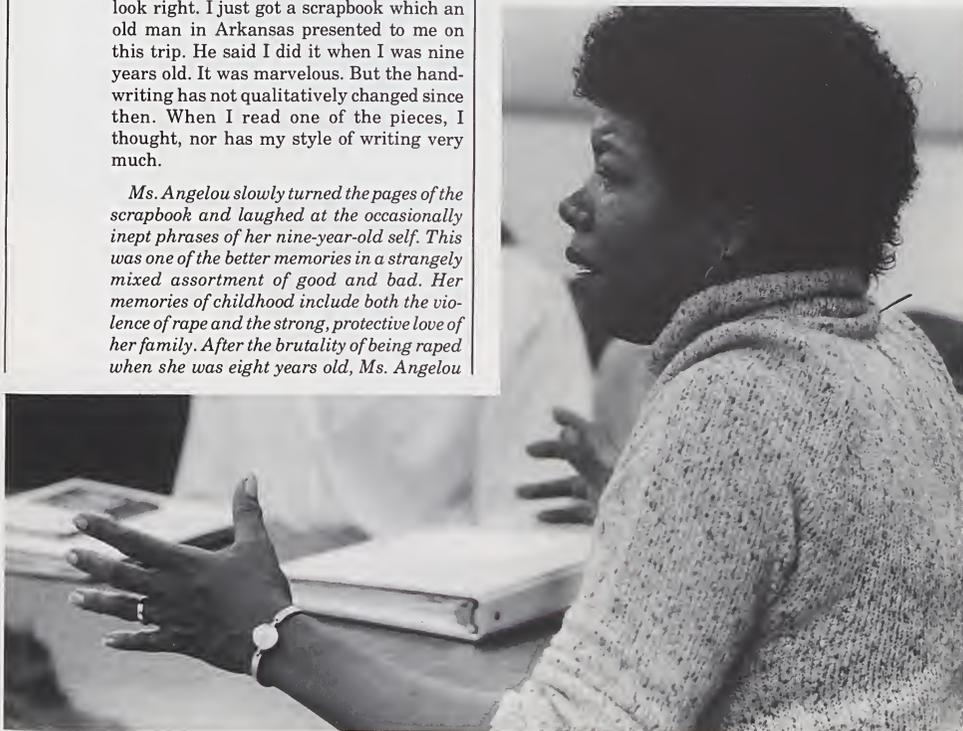
Ms. Angelou slowly turned the pages of the scrapbook and laughed at the occasionally inept phrases of her nine-year-old self. This was one of the better memories in a strangely mixed assortment of good and bad. Her memories of childhood include both the violence of rape and the strong, protective love of her family. After the brutality of being raped when she was eight years old, Ms. Angelou

withdrew into silence for a time, speaking only when necessary. Her family's love and acceptance, along with an increasing interest in reading literature and writing, helped her surmount this difficult period.

Student: So this was a type of journal?

Angelou: Yes, it was from the time I didn't talk. I was given a B-, and I understand why. Since the other students would talk to supplement their reports orally, mine had to be the best, with photographs and all sorts of things. But this certainly couldn't have been written past the time I was ten. [She reads:]

"Such jolting, rumbling, squeaking and creaking! Such ringing of cowbells as the cattle plodded along! And dust—dust so thick that your mouth was full of grit, your ears were—oh, very dirty, and your hair was powdered with the reddish Arkansas dust. The sun was hot and



William Ray

the sweat was streaming down your face streaking through the grime. But you were happy, for you were on a great adventure. You and your father and mother, brothers and sisters, and many of your neighbors were moving from your old home in the East. You were going to settle on some of the rich land in Arkansas. And you were going there not on a train of railroad cars—there weren't any—but in a train of covered wagons, pulled by strong oxen."

Student: That's very good.

Angelou: The actual script has not changed a lot, and I do like the way words look on a page.

Student: When did you actually begin to write?

Angelou: I started writing when I was about nine, because I wasn't able to talk. It was my way of keeping in touch, I guess. And I loved poetry, oh my dear, I just loved it. I must have been the most tiresome kind of child—you know, not talking, and weeping over poetry, which I half understood at that. I just think I must have been a nuisance! Grandmother was very good about it. And people in Stamps said that they'd walk into Grandmother's store, and if I was tending it, that I was always reading or writing. Sometimes they'd have to rap real hard on the glass counter, and then I would do their business. I wasn't purposely trying to ignore them.

Student: In an interview you said you think it is possible to lead a poetic life. Have you?

Angelou: I try. Leading a poetic life for me means being existential, to the extent that any human can be responsible. By this, I mean being immediate. I have set aside in this day an hour for you. All my equipment is here, everything I know, everything I dream, all my wishes, all my fears, my losses, defeats, are here and available to you. *That* to me is being immediate, and that is being poetic: to take responsibility for *each* moment. To accept no man-made or human-made barriers between human beings is poetic, to absolutely refuse to accept barriers because of history's tragedies or assaults, because of differences in languages or customs, age or race. Brick masons can lead poetic lives; clergymen, nurses, doctors, domestics can. I try to also

write poetry, which adds to it. To be aware of the imminence of death as one lives with a great love for life is to be poetic. Not to be so in love with life that you will live it at any cost, but to love it, not to be in love with it.

Student: And laugh a lot?

Angelou: Absolutely. Laugh a lot, absolutely. External events, colleagues, associates, friends, and hostile forces will bring enough to cry about. So as often as possible laugh, and hug somebody.

Student: Who are your heroes? You said once, "Everyone lives in relation to their heroes."

Angelou: And she-roses!

Student: Yes, she-roses.

Angelou: There are so many, some living and some dead. I admire courageous people who have the courage to live and to laugh and be tender. People who have the courage to control the element in all of us which is destructive, which strives for utter chaos. We all have that demon in us. I admire people who have the courage to struggle daily to control that demon. Certainly the world may deserve it, but a person does not have the right to let it loose. I admire those who don't take themselves too seriously—who don't go around as if they put glue on the back of their hands and pasted them to their forehead. [*She places her hand on her forehead in an attitude of mock despair.*] I've never trusted those ones. Serious people want to survive, and realize that in order to do so they have to have some humor in their lives, some warmth in their lives, and some giving. I can't name any particular heroes.

Student: Have you ever played the dinner party game? If you could invite any three people from any age, past or present, whom would you invite?

Angelou: Again, that's hard. I can't do it with just three. I'd just throw away the dinner party: I wouldn't have it. I could fill a table. . .

Student: Who are some people you might invite? I'm curious.

Angelou: Well, my grandmother, for her gentle strength and perseverance. My mother for perseverance and wit and loyalty. Paul Lawrence Dunbar for poetry, along with Joseph Johnson, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Shakespeare. I would invite Frederick Douglas for his grandiose grandeur and magnificent generosity. The only living

Chapter XVII
Pioneer Days in Arkansas

Such jolting, rumbling, squeaking and creaking!
Such ringings of cow bells as the cattle loaded along,
and dust - about as thick that your mouth was a path
of grit your nose was - A. Very dirty, and your hair was
powdered with the reddish Arkansas dust. The sun
was hot and the sweat was streaming down your face
streaming through the grime. But you were happy, for you
were on a great adventure. You and your father and
mother, in the sand sistles, and many of your neighbors
were moving from your old home in the East. You were
going to settle on some of the rich ^{land} Arkansas. And you
were going there not on a train of railroad cars - The west
was - but in a train of low bed wagons pulled by a long
Oxen.

person I would have is my mother. For all the other living people I'd just have to have a ballroom. There are so many marvelous, powerful people. James Baldwin would have to be there, Dolly McPherson, my husband . . . the list goes on and on.

Student: What would you say has been your most fulfilling work? This could include not only your work as a writer, but also your work in theater, film, and public service.

Angelou: Well, my writing. I think *Gather Together In My Name* was the most painful and hardest writing, and I think the best one. It was a hard story to tell dramatically without melodrama. Some of the poetry, some music. But the writing, that's where I'm gratified. Other things which I do please me and I'm grateful for them, grateful to have the chance to do them and that they turn out alright. But in my heart, I'm gratified most by the writing.

Student: How do you choose the next work? You

have something to say and . . .

Angelou: Sometimes work chooses you. You don't know it at the time maybe. If something bears on my mind, I may write a poem. Then if it still bears on my mind, I'll look around and see if I want to do an article for a newspaper or a magazine. And if it *still* bears on my mind, I might have to write a short story. At present I'm not thinking of doing anything since I finished my book yesterday.

Student: Congratulations.

Angelou: Thank you. I'm not going to do anything, I say this, for months, maybe years. I'll probably be working in two weeks.

*Ms. Angelou's fourth autobiographical book, **The Heart of a Woman**, published by Random House, will be available in October, 1981. Bill Moyers's television special on Ms. Angelou will appear on the Public Broadcast System in the fall.*



Martha Clarke

Doing 40 past Earl's

Doing 40 past Earl's general store
as Rt. 114 turns left
into North Andover, with suburban lawns
closing together, and the manure faintly
mixing with mower fumes and fresh grass,
I enter the free world with Enuf gas
to get me anywhere, esp.
the library, where between the stacks
lust rises from a photograph
(and passes with each curious stare);
but waiting at the light
past the lake whose name
my memory forgets—here, prop planes
circle before they land,
while Pintos and station wagons
gas up and fade into light
as I daydream them
outside a boarded-up ARCO.

On my way three lights past
the Merrimack Valley Inn
and my vision glared by dusk-sun—
in silence, between
the DJ's voice and some song,
I watch kids huddle in cars
by the Dairy Queen,
passing joints and beers with laughs
at Screamin' Bob's song intro:
over into Andover, the song ends—
and fades to a commercial
for Clearasil; I pull
into the lot behind the library,
alone, with my books
strewn on the car-floor. Voyeurizing
up the side street,
with quick glances thru windows,
I pass unnoticed and so
hide myself before the leaves
fall, and their flight
buries me in papers.

—by James Gurley



Salvation

by Jenny Brantley

To begin with, I had a huge hang-over and riding Trailways was definitely not a cure. But there I was, trying to keep my eyes as closed as possible to keep the blood from running out. I had to sit near the back, just over the wheels. I braced myself for a bumpy ride, grateful only for the fact that no one was sitting with me.

My gratitude, however, was short-lived. A worn old man stumbled down the aisle, looking as bad as I felt. Of course, he staggered into the seat beside me and shoved a cardboard box labelled "Florida oranges" in the rack above my head. I caught a glimpse of yellowed T-shirts and faded khaki pants. As if that weren't enough, he reeked of Mad Dog 20-20 (or was it Richard's Wild Irish Rose?), and the aura of the gutter smothered me.

I gave him the ugliest look I could muster and felt the indignation change to horror as he smiled, lit an unfiltered Camel, and blew the smoke directly into my face. Oh God, I prayed, don't let me barf, knowing, however, that I deserved the discomfort, if for no other reason than to have drunk so much cheap draft.

"Mind if I sit here, honey?" he asked

"Well, I guess not. You look pretty settled in already," I replied hotly, hoping to end the conversation there.

He got up and stumbled to the bathroom, taking a brown paper bag. I leaned my head against the window as the bus rumbled off and my teeth chattered.

I felt like hell. Not only because the residue of last night's "party" burned in my throat, but because the whole screwy world seemed to be bearing down on my shoulders. It's pretty amazing sometimes how a person can have such illusions of grandeur by thinking that the world is setting out its cold traps just for him. Well, that's the way I was that day. I was so involved in me—me—me. It's *my* fault, *I* can change, *I* can't change, what am *I* going to do—these were just a few of my thoughts. And now, here was this wino, this creepy old man, who was going to share *my* seat and *my* life all the way from Winston-Salem to Raleigh. It was only a couple of hours, but shit, I didn't need him or his smell of ignorance and poverty.

I had my own troubles. Voices bounced around inside my head like the lights from a spinning prism. Anger and fear were my media through which to view the world. I knew that the voices inside my head would begin to get louder and louder, thickening the isolation.

I needed communion with another, to discover what was sacred and, in that knowledge, to realize that I wasn't entirely secluded. The answers I needed weren't to be found inside but I didn't really know where else to look. The realization of loneliness is frightening.

The old man was back in a couple of minutes and sat down, bouncing off my shoulder. I glanced over and caught a glimpse of a shiny drop of pale red dribble down his chin. Oh damn, I thought, he's going to drink the whole time. What a worthless case!

He began to mumble something about his wife and kids. I just closed my eyes and ears and braced myself for a long ride.

"Yep, haven't seen my wife and kids for a couple of years. Just been bummin' around the country. My wife, she was the purtiest little thing. I reckon she couldn't stand my ole carefree ways. She left me and . . ."

I looked over at the man with his Brillo pad face and said, "Listen, mister, I really don't want to hear about you, your wife and kids, or your dog either."

He just looked at me, baring yellowed teeth, which were broken and haphazard, and laughed. He just waved his gnarled hands, with their nicotine stained fingers in the air, and laughed.

"I reckon you don't," he said.

I was sort of annoyed by his laughter, and I opened a book and pretended to read. I finally fell asleep, and when I woke up, he had apparently made several more trips to the bathroom. He was swaying slightly in his seat and bumping my arm.

"You ever been in a mental hospital?"

"No," I sighed, realizing that he was going to talk whatever I wanted to listen or not.

"I've been in 'em lots of times." Oh great, I thought, a wino and a kook, too. "Tried to dry me out, I reckon. I can tell you the exact pattern of that damned speckled linoleum, the same in every hospital. Hides the dirt and blood pretty good. There was one fella I knew that just sat and beat on his leg. Whap, whap, whap, all day long. I always wondered how come they could give him all them drugs and never let him have one sip of wine.

Might've helped."

"Get serious," I said. "Those doctors know what they're doing."

"Maybe so. But I sure felt like hell 'til I got out and got me a pint." He laughed and turned up the bottle right there in the seat. I supposed he was too wasted to go to the bathroom. I watched the red flow down the neck of the bottle.

"One time, I was in the looney bin and they loaded up a bunch of us to take us to see this doctor at another hospital. It was a blue van with State Mental Hospital wrote right on the side. When we'd ride by, everybody'd just stare and point, so we started making faces. Oh boy, it was hell to watch them folks look away and shake their heads."

"Yeah, I bet so," I said sarcastically. "You ever thought about quitting drinking?"

"Oh, hell yes! I've quit lots of times, but there wasn't much else to do. I'd get a job sweepin' floors some place. Didn't know nobody so this here bottle would be my buddy. And then, I'd feel like movin' on. Bet that's pretty hard for you to believe."

"Nope, I believe you." And why shouldn't I have believed him? People always tell each other the truth on the bus. It's just another moving face in the line of many. Chances are you'll never see each other again. Why not tell somebody what a drunken bum you are? I didn't care, and he was just passing time. The minutes flitted by like the trees outside and left as much remembrance as the changing reflection on the glass. Remember me, remember me, the tires sang on the pavement. I looked over at the man and wondered who remembered him.

"Yep, I even been in jail. Spent nights in there off and on. Was a warm place to stay and they feed you. The food's pretty bad, but it'll do. The first time, I felt pretty scared when they closed them doors, but the next day they just let you leave after they give you a talkin' to."

"Oh, yeah?" I said.

"Yeah, after a while, it gets to be a home away from home because you forget what home is. You just make your home wherever you can. Sometimes it's in bus stations, sometimes it's in a mission where they let you stay one night for free."

His eyes got a blurry far-away look that penetrated my cold indifference, and, to be honest, I felt pretty bad. I turned and watched the trees whiz by. I looked down into the cars and saw faces of people—people moving, smoking, frowning, laughing, and always going. And then I looked into the glass and saw myself. Where are you going? With each unvoiced word, I felt myself closer to home. And what is home? It's a place to dream about when you're away, a place with good food and love and laughter. But somehow, I kept forgetting that once I was there, the dream faded and it was a place I still loved, yet didn't quite belong.

To complete the secular trinity of the world and myself, I glanced over at the old man and thought, what do

you dream about? Is it the good stiff drink that has yellowed the whites of your eyes, the warmth of the Salvation Army jacket with holes in the sleeve, or the pity and indifference in the nurse's eye as you sell a pint of your blood on some dirty street corner in East Winston to buy a pint of Jesus' blood? Are you saved yet, huh, are you saved? The Fast Fare sells salvation and the Salvation Army gives away coats.

"Hey mister," I said, nudging him out of his reverie. "What ya thinking about?"

"Well, honey, I was thinking 'bout smokin', drinkin', and ridin' the god damn bus. Been ridin' most every day for the last three weeks, sleepin' in the bus stations and eatin' grilled cheese sandwiches. Hellva life, ain't it? Wadda you do for a livin'?"

Well, I could have told him I sleep in a warm bed, smoke Vantage Menthol, and drink Moolsons. I could have said I live with people who are going to be doctors, lawyers, and CPA's. But I didn't; maybe I was ashamed because he was so unashamed.

"I'm in college," I said simply.

"Well how 'bout that? Don't know much 'bout schoolin'. I never got past the fifth grade. I always wondered what I could've done with my life if I'd known more than how to sweep or what's the cheapest wine to drink."

"Why didn't you go to school anymore?" I said, trying desperately to break past the reflection I had seen in the glass.

"Well, I reckon it's an old story," he began, smiling and grateful to have a listener. "My daddy was a pore old farmer, and he needed me to help at home. So, I quit school and grew tobacco. When I was sixteen, I thought I'd see the world and I ran away. Well, I've seen the world, all right. I've seen it in people's trash cans and in the gutters. I reckon I just like the world I've seen in my wine bottle better. Except when I see the bottom," he laughed hastily, trying to cover his pain.

I smiled back, not out of happiness but because he probably knew more than I ever would.

I looked out the window again and began to see recognizable landmarks. A wave of familiarity flushed over my body as it always did when I neared home. This time, however, it was a little different. I watched the angry sunset of winter, tinted by the glass. Somehow, the sun seemed to be fighting desperately against the cold, cruel night. The sun was losing, and the evidence of its loss flowed hotly along the horizon. In a few minutes, the night would wipe up the flow of blood and replace it with a cold, victorious blue.

I thought about the old man and looked over at him. His stubbly face with the worn lines of alcohol didn't seem so repulsive. He wasn't exactly the sun, but he sure as hell was fighting a losing battle against an indifferent world. I didn't admire his tactics, but I saw in him a fortitude that I missed in myself.

Maybe some people find salvation in the church; others may find it on a bus in the words of a tired old

man. But salvation is always, always to be found in the blood—the blood that races hot and heavy, pounding in the veins, even in the veins of a drunk old man. And one day, salvation bursts forth and sprinkles the world with terror at its frailty.

"Hey mister," I said. "Thanks a lot."

"Well, you're welcome, honey," he replied, looking at me quizzically, yet feeling the bond. I'm sure he felt it; he had to.

The bus pulled up to my destination and I said, "Well, I guess this is where we get off."

"Yep," he replied. "I guess so. It shore has been nice talkin' to you. Most folks don't really want to listen. Gets mighty lonesome sometimes, just talkin' to yourself." He leaned over gallantly and kissed my hand. Then he staggered down the aisle with his box and a fresh pint. I kicked the empty bottle and it rattled noisily under my feet.

I waited for my luggage and walked to the parking lot to find my ride home. As I neared the door, I heard a screech of tires and horns blowing. Walking outside, I

saw a large crowd gathering and a stopped car in the middle of the busy street. The driver was looking down and yelling, "God damn drunks! Wasn't my fault, did you see? It wasn't my fault. He just staggered out in front of me!"

I walked over, knowing what I would see. There he was, lying crumpled in the street. His bottle was broken and the wine mixed with his blood as it flowed down the pavement. Forgive them for they know not what they do. The red on the lumpy asphalt made me feel giddy. I leaned over him as the police officer felt for a pulse. Finding none, he asked if anyone knew him. I realized suddenly that I didn't even know his name.

I bent over as near to his body as I could and whispered silently, "Old man, I'll remember you." Vague murmurs of the Holy Spirit in Sunday school passed through my ears, whispering the echo, "The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you, and is in you." I turned and ran as I saw my sister waving in the parking lot.



Martha Clarke

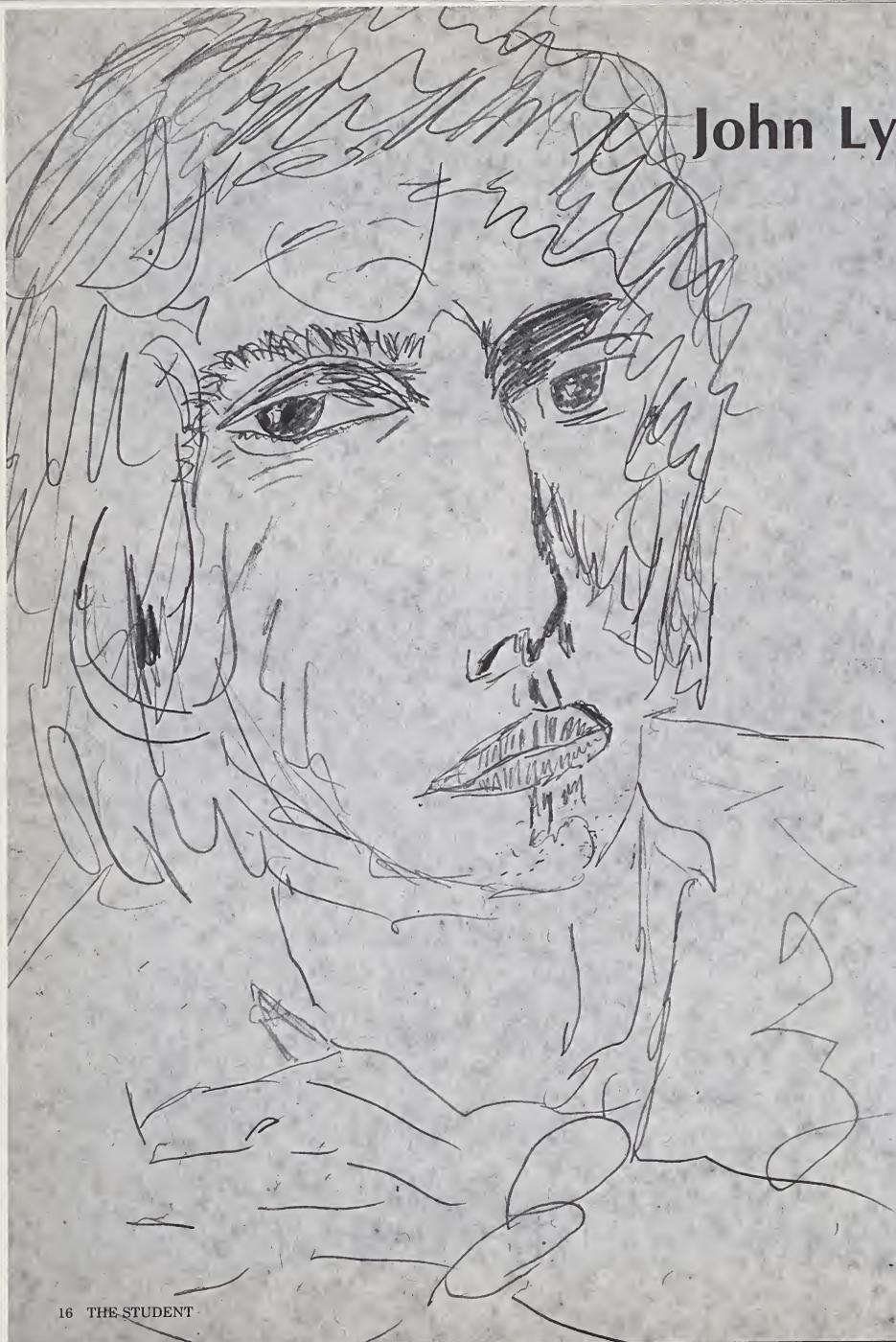


Mr. Wooten Speaks on His Youth After Chemotherapy

Nineteen eighteen
ten years old
working
on the
baby-
line
folding
cigarette
cartons then
building dwellings
off twenty-fifth street
and come Christmas Eve
nineteen twenty-eight
getting a job in front of
Sears on Trade Street playing Santa Claus
because the first one carried
liquor in his suit for pad
but the children were
amazed at how young,
generous you were
having
nothing
to give
at
20,
and it
was rough in
nineteen thirty-three
building miniature golf
courses in five states
telling Mom the good life
never
quite
ends—

—by Kenneth Prichard

John Lydon:



An Open Invitation

by Steve Dixon

There's a lot more to John Lydon (formerly known as Johnny Rotten) than the persona he has chosen to show the public. Safety pins, spiked hair, and an angry, snide leer tend to be the only things that most people associate with him. However, the former leader of the British punk movement and The Sex Pistols, and now head of the "anti-band" Public Image Ltd., Lydon is an inspiring example of a man committed to doing things his way. Like it or not.

Initially, Lydon was like any other disillusioned young man in London. Bored with school, he decided to drop out. Tired of the poverty in which he lived, he resorted to rebellion—violent rebellion. For amusement, he and his friends would terrorize the rich, apathetic people of Kings Road, a wealthy section of London. Lydon once stated, "We hated them; they were all so spineless." He and his friends saw these people, who unquestioningly accepted their place in society, as being responsible for the abject state of urban London. These people ran a business-like society which stifled the poor and caused class tension. Lydon's typical response to this situation thus led to typical results: problems with the law and brutality on the streets. Had it continued, Lydon admits, he would probably be in jail or an institution.

Luckily for Lydon, he became associated with Steve Jones, Glen Matlock, and Paul Cook. Like Lydon, they too were young and disillusioned with their lives in London. First meeting in Malcolm McLaren's trend-setting, anti-fashion clothes shop, SEX, in late 1975, they formed the band that became known as The Sex Pistols. Unlike the majority of those people who sympathized with Lydon and the other members of the Pistols, he found a constructive outlet for his hostility. He found music.

Lydon and the other Pistols saw the state of popular music in much

the same way that they saw the state of their society: stale, sedated, and corporate-controlled. Abandoning the aimless, and ultimately meaningless, violence which constituted their original reaction, Lydon, who then became known as "Johnny Rotten," and the rest of The Sex Pistols saw the opportunity to constructively challenge the commercial music world that they hated by taking a nonillusionist stance in their own music. Rather than treating music as a money-making business and becoming a supergroup, they recognized the importance of direct audience communication. The members of the Pistols were from the same stock as their audience: both were young and dissatisfied. Consequently, instead of pretending that difficulties did not exist, Rotten wrote songs that threw the problems right into the faces of the audience, daring them to respond.

The Sex Pistols were an example to be followed. Rotten wanted a reaction—any kind of reaction. Why sit back and accept something if you don't like it? The Sex Pistols took this idea as a base and then worked from there. They represented an attack: on music, on society, on all the things that they saw as wrong. As a result, they became the leaders of the snowballing punk movement in Britain.

At first, it seemed that Johnny Rotten and The Sex Pistols would really be able to generate the reaction that they hoped for. As time went on, however, it became more and more evident that Rotten was the only member of the band that truly believed in what he was doing. Although the band's popularity grew throughout 1976 and 1977 (with the banned singles "God Save The Queen" and "Anarchy in The U.K.," both reaching number one in Britain), Rotten saw the group becoming alarmingly similar to those groups

that had originally inspired the Pistols' defiant stance. The Sex Pistols were becoming a business deal, a money making venture. On the heels of an American tour filled with visa problems and controversy, and observing the ultimate collapse of what he deemed The Pistols' purpose, Johnny Rotten quit the band. In the wake of what followed, the move was not surprising. As The Sex Pistols floundered, they enlisted the services of Ronnie Biggs (a semi-legendary rip-off artist) and proceeded to cash in on their infamous name, proving Rotten's motivation for leaving the band to be well-founded.

Since he left the Sex Pistols, John Lydon has had to live in the shadow of his past, though he has lost virtually all of the visibility and notoriety which he once had with the band. However, he refuses to be limited by his past. In fact, he seems hardly to notice it now. To Lydon, the past is just that—the past. So, why repeat yourself? Lydon is not the same person, the Johnny Rotten that he was when he was with the Pistols. His music is no longer the rough, abrasive beat of punk; it is discordant "anti-music" with Public Image Ltd. His lyrics have moved away from sweeping political and social statements toward poetic, personal ideas. And that is what Lydon has always stood for—change, both in himself and in the things he sees around him. Change, however, only on his own terms. Despite the twists and turns in his career, Lydon has remained true to his original ideas. He is still searching for that final act of musical rebellion that will have a lasting effect, bringing about that final reaction that will make people like himself unnecessary. Until that time, Lydon will continue to search for the ultimate statement.

And that's what John Lydon has always been about: a statement—a warning of how things have become and an open invitation to do something about it.



Meteor Bay

Go to Reedy creek
on any star-stone night
by dirt roads
chipped and scarred
like possum bones
below ground
water
where the hairy tongues of sassafras root
beat breaths of
wind.

Out of the moon's teeth
the green eyes of marsh gas
watch —
Close in the Oak's silence
the fluted ears of lichen
listen —
high in the luminous pollen
a flying squirrel dips and
smells the
green needles of pine —
ticks suck blood
from a fur
cup.

Squat beside the meteor bay
eastern ponds still leak red,
while wild dogs fall
from a cavernous
moon, howling at the
salamanders spitting fire.
Beneath the tar water
incandescent flecks
of star-grain
glow
like the fire of a fox's skull.
You watch the loon's skeleton radiate in the
black reeds,
you become a beast.

—by Kenneth Prichard

Reflections of a Student Turned Soldier

James Dubinsky (class of '77) graduated from Wake Forest with a B.A. in English, and he is currently a first lieutenant in the United States Army. The following is a poem and accompanying letter which he sent to The Student.

Spirit Beheld

"...you could bury
your shadow here."

—James Dickey

There is freedom in darkness:
Memory, shadows and freedom.

Colors blend with the night
Running into the sand like dyes
from plants that women crush.
Eyes rarely lifted cannot forget
there were no boundaries once.

There is memory in darkness,
hearing not the sound of the hawk
hearing not the fleeing rabbit
Only the mad laughter—
the hard rope cutting the air—
the pounding of hooves, of hearts.

There are shadows in darkness,
of the rope and the legs
as they buckle and fall.
Hot dry air, piercing nostrils
straining to match the beating heart.
Shadows of calloused hands tightening.

There is freedom in darkness,
as those few jump
and fly . . .
Only to land to the sound
of the hard rope and mad
laughter crying in the wind.

The night wind carries sounds of darkness:
Memory, shadows and darkness.

—James M. Dubinsky

This is a poem I have recently written . . . Why do I send it—what is it about?

Once I naively believed that you could not capture a spirit. My last few years in the Army have altered that point of view. Here you find it the rule rather than the exception. I am surprised that I did not readily recognize this or appreciate its significance, but as is often the case—that which once was taken for granted and is so much a part of one's life does not disseminate quickly.

As I look back on my years at Wake my fondest memory, besides the partying, is the feeling I have that freedom was something there that was accessible and constantly pursued—freedom of speech, of thought and of spirit. I now realize that this does not exist everywhere. Dr. Phillips [professor of English at Wake Forest] once lectured me on the "spark" that is labeled as the soul. I like to believe that it separates us not only from the inert matter of the world but from each other. I constantly am attempting to hold onto that spark—that intangible entity that allows me to remember . . . for that reason alone—to maintain my "spark" I am sending this to you.

Sincerely,

James M. Dubinsky



Kelvin Sattler

Never Mind the Thong Sandals

by Alex Tangalos

The national outpouring of relief and happiness upon the return of our beloved 52 evoked similar feelings in me, but my thoughts were tinged with bitterness too. Amidst the celebrating was a quiet reminder of days past when the public did not respond with the same enthusiasm. Barely noticed on the nightly news were a few Vietnam veterans marching and wondering why they had not received a hero's welcome on their return. After all, they had fought in a tragic war and had friends who had given their lives in a war the public never wanted and, for the most part, were not even viewed as equal citizens once back in the United States. You may not care about them, but let me take this time to indulge myself and also to remind you of those days when the vets came back home, so that the same response will not have the chance to occur again.

We go back, then, to begin our story with a letter the returning veterans should have had to show us:

Dear Sirs,

This is to inform you that on the ____ day of _____, a certain de-Americanized, demoralized, dehydrated, mud-bound, water-soaked and slightly crazy individual known as _____ is ready once more to take his place as a human being with freedom and justice for all, and to engage in life, liberty, and the somewhat delayed pursuit of happiness. He has just left the little village known as "Sewer City" among the military ranks, securely nestled among the jungles and rice paddies of Nhatrang, which is located in the north central part of a semi-tropical country in the Far East known as The Republic of Vietnam.

In making your joyous preparations to welcome him back into respectable society, you must make allowances for the crude environment in which he has suffered for the past _____ months. In a word, he may be somewhat Asiatic, suffering from one or more stages of Viet Cong-itis, or from too much BaMuiBaBiere and Rot Gut Beer. So here are a few words of advice:

1) Show no alarm if he prefers to walk around in thong sandals with a towel wrapped around him, if he slyly offers to sell cigarettes to the postman, or if he insists that everyone sit squat-legged on the floor and eat his soup with chopsticks. Pay no attention when he stirs soy sauce into his potatoes, or mixes raw snails into his rice in the hope of making it taste better.

2) For the first few months be especially youthful when he is in the presence of women, particularly young and beautiful ones. The few American girls that he may have seen overseas were either thirteen years old or

married to personnel who outranked him. Therefore, his first reaction upon meeting an attractive and round-eyed female may be to stare momentarily. Take advantage of this momentary state of shock and move the young lady out of his reach. But be quick! After months of seeing beautiful women wooed by the men in the movies he thinks that he is the master of the art himself and will waste no time once his wits are back about him.

3) Be tolerant when he tries to buy everything at less than half the asking price, accuses the grocer of being a thief, and refuses to enter any establishment that doesn't have steel mesh screens over the doors and windows. Do not argue with him when he asks for sulphur to put in his bath water, or a mosquito net for his bed.

4) Abstain from saying: Powdered eggs, dehydrated potatoes, fried rice, fresh milk, ice cream and "Phuc Et," which means "ambush." Also, by no means should you ask him: Does it rain over there? For he may get violent.

5) Act as if nothing has happened if he should relieve himself in the gutter while shopping downtown.

6) He is strictly forbidden to watch "F-Troop" or "M*A*S*H" because this may cause him to go into a permanent state of shock. Any souvenirs he may bring back home such as M 14 S shotguns, carbines, machine guns, crossbows or Saigon barmaids should be confiscated for a period of not less than 90 days.

7) Make sure that none of the local brats light off firecrackers, or play with cap guns or GI Joe dolls in his presence. These could cause abnormal reactions to little old ladies, children under five, and anything in between he might find frightening.

8) If he offers you 200VN to go chop-chop, humor him and go along, but don't ask him questions such as: You buy me one more drink? You want to play cards? You have American cigarette? Or You go PX and buy for me lipstick and hairspray?

9) If it starts raining and he takes off his clothes, grabs a bar of soap and a towel, and runs outdoors, just ignore him; it should only be a short time until he remembers the purpose of the indoor showers, as he is used to finding them only in the hotels of Saigon.

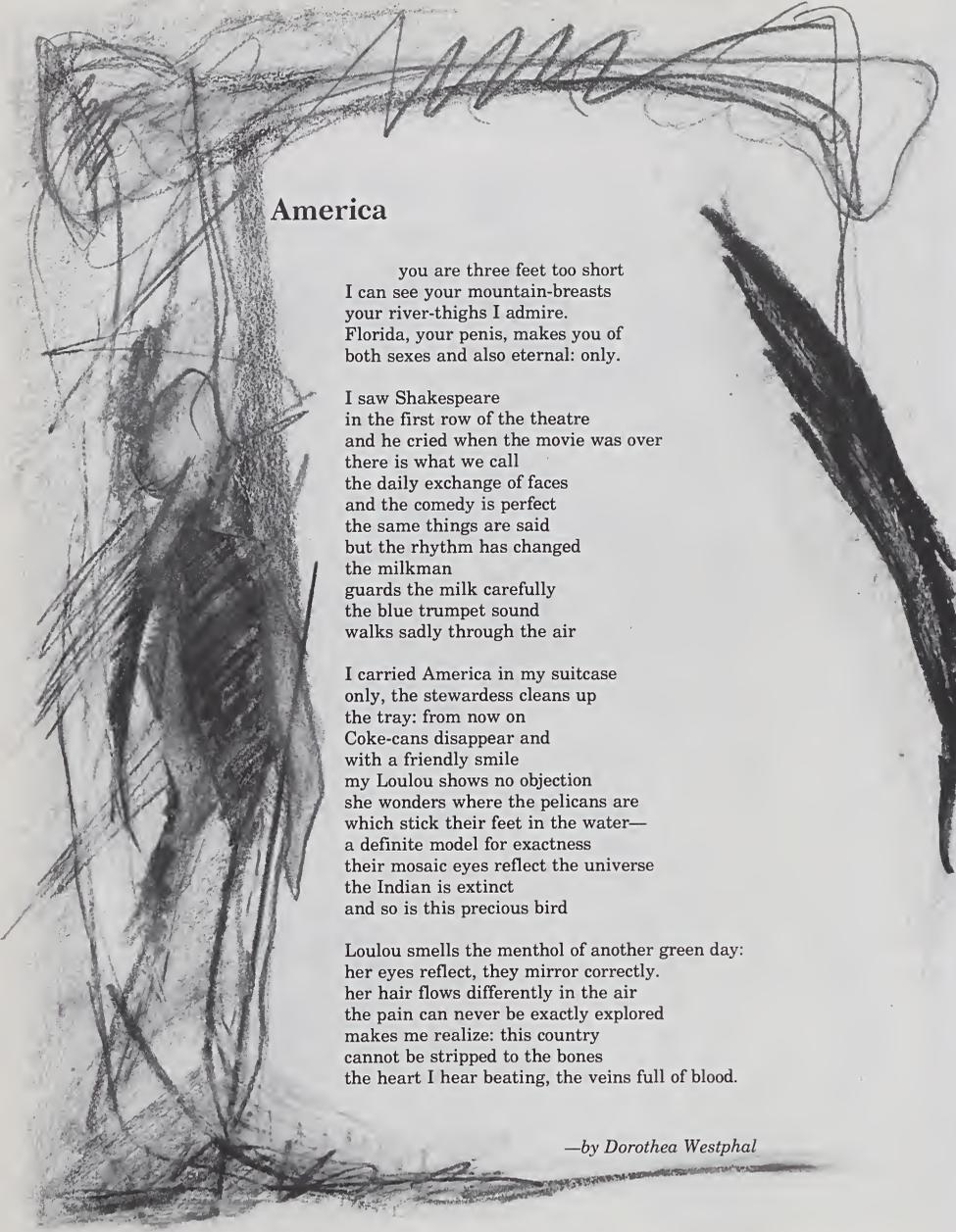
This man has survived the worst the Far East has to offer: mud, rain, heat, lonesomeness, and monsoons, not to mention a liberal sprinkling of typhoons. And remember, beneath his rough and water-soaked exterior, there exists a heart, sweet and pure, though a little wet. Treasure this, for it is the only thing of any value that he has left; the only thing he couldn't sell on the black market. He is your _____; he may look a little strange

and act somewhat different from what you remember, but this is to be expected after _____ months in water-soaked, mud-plastered, tea-sipping Vietnam. Just go along with him and he will get over it, eventually. Treat him with kindness, tolerance and occasionally a fifth of good whiskey, and you will be able to rehabilitate this hollow shell of a man you once knew.

If any problems arise that you cannot handle, please call the Vietnamese Police in Nhatrang (collect of course). It won't do any good, but they like to use the telephone; it makes them feel important.

His Mark





America

you are three feet too short
I can see your mountain-breasts
your river-thighs I admire.
Florida, your penis, makes you of
both sexes and also eternal: only.

I saw Shakespeare
in the first row of the theatre
and he cried when the movie was over
there is what we call
the daily exchange of faces
and the comedy is perfect
the same things are said
but the rhythm has changed
the milkman
guards the milk carefully
the blue trumpet sound
walks sadly through the air

I carried America in my suitcase
only, the stewardess cleans up
the tray: from now on
Coke-cans disappear and
with a friendly smile
my Loulou shows no objection
she wonders where the pelicans are
which stick their feet in the water—
a definite model for exactness
their mosaic eyes reflect the universe
the Indian is extinct
and so is this precious bird

Loulou smells the menthol of another green day:
her eyes reflect, they mirror correctly.
her hair flows differently in the air
the pain can never be exactly explored
makes me realize: this country
cannot be stripped to the bones
the heart I hear beating, the veins full of blood.

—by Dorothea Westphal

Scalpel please:

Censors Put Education

Under the Knife

by Edward Allen

The long-smoldering conflict between conservatives and liberals on the issue of censorship is flaring up with renewed heat. The conflagration is engulfing education as well as literature. Sex education, literature, films, magazines, dictionaries, textbooks, and the teachers themselves are increasingly subject to the censorial scrutiny of groups as diverse as the National Educator's Association and the Moral Majority. Three issues emerge as causes for the struggle that teachers, students, parents, and now judges and courts are waging. These issues are the conflicting theories of education that lie at the heart of the censorship issue, the contrasting views of control over education, and the differing interpretations of the First Amendment. On the one side, those more inclined to censor view education as the integration of young people into a society with increasingly more homogeneous values and morals. On the other side, liberals express the idea that education's purpose is to develop the individual in a heterogeneous society. A resurgence of the idea of education as integration has accompanied the shift to conservatism across the country.

Censorship in the libraries and

classrooms is spreading from coast to coast in many forms, and is not restricted to any one type of school. "Censorship in the schools is on the increase," said Judith Krug of the American Library Association in an interview in *Ms.* magazine.¹ There were more attempts to ban materials from school libraries in 1979 than in the last twenty-five years.² According to the figures of Edward B. Jenkinson, professor of English education at Indiana University, who has monitored censorship for the past ten years, two hundred cases of censorship were reported to the American Library Association in 1976.³ In 1980, that figure grew by one-half to 300 reported cases. For every case reported, fifty cases pass unreported, Jenkinson contends.⁴

The various forms that censorship takes are responsible in part for the difficulty of identifying and measuring censorship. Censorship is not merely a regulatory act on the part of some district school board. Blotting out questionable words or phrases, checking out books indefinitely from a library, destroying books, placing materials on reserve and restricted access, making certain types of reading material unapproved for certain grade levels; all these are methods of

censorship. Censorship is also beginning to work its way into legislation. Conservative groups have made state legislatures the targets for electoral campaigns bent on increasing the number of legislators favoring types of censorship, and have petitioned for laws supporting stringent standards of morality in educational materials. In Indiana, the legislature recently tabled Bill #177 which proposed that Indiana textbooks teach high standards of morality including honesty, respect for parents and those in authority, and absolute values of right and wrong.⁵ The bill implies that textbooks which do not explicitly reveal these values will be inadmissible as teaching materials, regardless of quality or content. More and more, too, state legislatures are under pressure to waive state educational requirements to allow jurisdiction over the selection of educational materials to revert to individual communities.

The groups that become involved in censoring educational materials are as diverse as the materials censored and the manner of censoring them. At one end of the censorship spectrum are groups which claim some sort of verifiable absolute morality. At the other end are

groups, like the NEA, the National Organization of Women, and the Council of Interracial Books for Children, which concern themselves with eliminating stereotypes and biases in educational literature. Private individuals, like Mel and Norma Sabler who founded Educational Research Analysts, have formed watchdog organizations to monitor the content of educational materials. The most prominent organization behind the revival and growth of censorship is the Moral Majority. This conservative religious organization's goal is to place the schools under the moral controls of local communities in order to reinforce the values that are taught at home. The Moral Majority projects a state by state, city by city, school by school effort to accomplish this end.

At every level of attempted censorship, liberals and libertarians are planning a counter-attack in accordance with a humanistic conception of literature and education. Extreme liberals defend "full and untrammelled freedom for the printed page,"¹⁶ while others suggest that there are some obvious cases of obscenity that are inadmissible for a child's reading. An extremely liberal position is more easily held, because a moderately liberal position bears the responsibility of establishing the point at which realism becomes filth with no redeeming value. Thus, from a disagreement about words and phrases, the struggle moves immediately to the identification of the ideas expressed in those words and in the work as a whole. The result of this leap is that the issue of censorship almost automatically becomes a conflict between differing points of view.

John Stuart Mill, in his essay "On Liberty," has expressed a point of view which modern liberals have readily adopted. First, to deny "a hearing to an opinion because they are sure it is false is the same thing as assuming that their certainty is an absolute certainty."¹⁷ Second, any opinion, though false, may contain a part of the truth, a truth that is only available through exposure to that

opinion.⁸ It is through the conflict of ideas that a character is forged capable of true conviction in moral and social standards. So argue supporters of academic freedom, like Jenkinson: "We should expose them (children) to as many ideas as we possibly can so they will have a strong foundation on which to hold their own ideas."⁹

Paradoxically, liberty is also at the core of the conservative point of view—the liberty to avoid exposing children to literature which conflicts with the set of values taught by the family. The family and the development of a set of community values are set against state control of educational literature. Conservatives decry the anti-Christian and anti-family points of view in some educational literature. The issue becomes one of the control of education, with conservatives believing that the control over a child's education belongs to the parents. Even the liberal Jenkinson admits the validity of this claim. The process that starts with a parental complaint, moves to a committee of teachers and parents who read a book thoroughly, and ends with the restriction of that book, "is a part of the democratic process."¹⁰

The courts have decided in varying ways on the three issues of conflicting points of view, control, and the right to the freedom of speech. The courts have generally ruled in favor of liberals on the issue of accepting different points of view, in favor of conservatives in giving more control to the parents and school in determining children's education, and have handed down contradictory decisions on the matter of the interpretation of the First Amendment. In some of these cases, the courts have specifically refused to allow their decisions to be used as precedents for other cases, further complicating the legal battle.

On the issue of points of view, the courts have recorded verdicts favorable to academic freedom. The courts have consistently ruled that points of view are not matters for censorship, but that obscene words are, thus attempting to separate the whole from the parts. The courts approve

the local school board's prerogative to inculcate children with a community's values, but they also retain the power to ascertain when the board is supporting its own view, and when it is censoring another view. The case of *Pico vs. the Board of Education of Island Trees, New York*, is an example of the attitude of the courts. Justice Charles P. Sifton of the U.S. District Court stated the majority opinion that the removal of nine books from the school library, including Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*, constituted "an unusual and irregular intervention in the school library's operation by persons not routinely concerned with its contents."¹¹ Alan Levin, who represented the plaintiff and the New York Civil Liberties Union, expressed the decision this way: "... while recognizing that the school's curriculum will inevitably be influenced by the values of the board and the community it represents, the court held that the board may not go so far as to eliminate books that express contrary values."¹² The defendant, the Island Trees school board, had argued that the books contained vulgarity that was unsuitable for children's reading. Although in this decision the court decided that at issue was the point of view expressed in the books, on the same day it upheld a Vermont ban of *Dog Day Afternoon* and *The Wanderers*, affirming the defendants' claim that the books contained vulgarity with no redeeming social value.¹³ In one day, the court's decisions illustrated the difficulty in defining the line between a useful point of view and meaningless vulgarity.

In the same case, Justice Jon O. Newman stated: "Teachers and students alike have a right to freedom from the pall of orthodoxy."¹⁴ In many cases of censorship, it is precisely the interpretation of the freedoms of the First Amendment that is the point of conflict. Do students have an implied right to hear as well as the teacher has to speak? Implied in this question, or rather behind it, is the question of whether or not

there are higher educational values than the teaching of morals. The case of Cyril Lang, a teacher at the Charles W. Woodward high school in Rockville, Maryland, illustrates the difficulty of interpretation and values. Lang, determined to challenge his students, taught Aristotle's *Poetics* and Machiavelli's *The Prince* in his literature class. The county had only approved the *Poetics* for senior honors students, not for tenth graders. Lang was suspended for insubordination, and planned to take his case to court, feeling that his responsibilities as a teacher took precedence over the strict guidelines established by the school board.¹⁵ The issue is therefore whether or not the school should serve as the forum for the free exchange of ideas or be subject to a subtly imposed orthodoxy. Underlying this question is the implication that if schools do not serve as forums for the free discussion of ideas, the rest of society is in trouble.

On the issue of educational control, school board decisions which have given more control to the parents and the student over education are un-

likely to be challenged in court. A recent case from North Iredell High School is illustrative. Charles Campbell, a member of the Moral Majority, objected to his daughter's having to read Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* for a college preparatory English class.¹⁶ After the book was temporarily confiscated, reissued, then confiscated for the second time, the school board made the book optional for the course and listed alternative assignments. Campbell read the book, and found some value in it, but he objected to his daughter's being forced to read the anti-Christian and anti-family sentiments that he thought the book expressed. At this point, the concern must be to establish a clear limit to the reasons for objecting to a book and for making it optional. Difficulty and dislike would not be reasonable objections. This case did not reach the courts, and this kind of settlement is unlikely to come under legal attack. As Justice Walter J. Cummings has stated: "Nothing in the Constitution permits the courts to interfere with local educational discretion until local authorities begin to substitute rigid and exclusive

indoctrination for the mere exercise of their prerogative to make pedagogic choices."¹⁷ The settlement reached in the Iredell reading case does not indicate exclusive indoctrination.

Ultimately, the constant educational litigation affects adversely the education of children. Teachers do not know what their roles are or what materials are "safe" to use. The texts themselves become bland and uninspired. Once a book is banned, too, its value as literature is tainted, because students approach its contents to find out why it was banned, not to discover its value in itself. Censorship cases tie up the courts and immobilize a school system until the case is resolved. Lastly, what of the disillusionment of the student when he discovers the irony of life—that it is not as he had thought it was, since the realistic side of his education was censored? Ironically, a student's feeling of betrayal by the system and his parents, nurtured by disillusionment, could lead to an undermining, even nihilistic approach to the very values that serve as the basis for censorship.

NOTES

¹L.C. Wohl, "Caution—These Pages May Be Banned in Your School," *Ms.* September 1980, p. 82.

²*Ibid.*

³Giovanna Breu, "A Worried Indiana Professor Says More and More U.S. Schools are Banning Books," *People*, September 1, 1980, p. 76.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵S. Dong, "More Groups Join Court Actions Against Warsaw, Indiana, Book Banning," *Publisher's Weekly*, May 30, 1980, p. 18.

⁶Paul S. Boyer, *Purity in Print*, New York: 1968, p. 274.

⁷John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," as reproduced in *Freedom and Culture: Literary Censorship in the 70's*, by Eleanor Widmer, Belmont, California: 1970, p. 12.

⁸Widmer, p. 15.

⁹Breu, p. 77.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Madalynn Reuter, "Appeals Court Orders Retrial of Island Trees School Case," *Pub-*

lisher's Weekly, October 17, 1980, p. 12.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Time*, "How to Protect Tender Minds," December 15, 1980, p. 77.

¹⁶*Winston-Salem Journal*, January 6, 1981, Section 2, p. 1.

¹⁷Emily Newhall and Eric Press, "The Right to Ban Books," *Newsweek*, November 10, 1980, p. 75.

George Garrett is a true story teller, with a love for the humorous and the anecdotal. Remaining free from what he calls "the boredom factor," he embraces almost every literary form—be it the long novel or witty social criticism in verse. The language of his poems is increasingly colloquial and his subject matter ranges from the classical to the topical.

Born in Orlando, Florida, Garrett received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in English from Princeton University. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, among them a Guggenheim Fellowship for fiction in 1974. Garrett is, by his own definition, a champion of young writers. He has participated in and directed writing workshops and seminars in many colleges. Far from his home in Maine, he is currently a visiting professor at Hollins College in Virginia.

George Garrett: Creating a Personal Renaissance:

by James Gurley and Esther Hill

Student: How did you begin writing? What encouragement did you get?

Garrett: I got lots of encouragement. But not any one thing. I wasn't thinking about being a writer, but there were writers in the family. I started when I was very young, and by the time I was getting out of high school I thought of it in my ignorance as a way of living. I thought it'd be easier. You don't know how hard it is. It's not your typical vocational choice.

Student: Well, did you go to college with that idea?

Garrett: Yeah, I had it in mind. I majored in English and maybe that was a mistake. I could've majored in history or something else. But I wanted to read all these books. One thing leads to another, and I can recall events that I now see were very encouraging.

Long before I published anything, Marianne Moore was asked to introduce and sponsor one of her favorite younger poets at the Museum of Modern Art. She selected me as if it was the most natural thing in the world. The others were all pretty well known, and I was the only one she knew. At the time she was very reclusive.

Student: How did you get to know her?

Garrett: I knew her from one of the few times she left her den and came out into the world.

She went to a gathering of college students at Holyoke College. My being there was a pure accident. I was walking down the hall at Princeton and a professor stopped me and said that they were supposed to send somebody up there, and asked would I go. I said, "What is Mt. Holyoke; where is it?" And he said, "It's a really nice girl's school." I said, "Oh, yes!" and quickly agreed to go. Marianne Moore was one of the judges. I got to talk to her. Evidently, at the time, she didn't get out much. She got to be much more open to the world later.

Because of going to the Museum of Modern Art, a whole series of accidents took place. Had it not happened, I might not be known, and that was enough of a taste to get me started. For quite a while that kind of certification was enough to keep anybody busy.

Student: Do you think publishing is really important for a young writer?

Garrett: I'm afraid it's more important than it should be. What a young writer starting out now seeks is some kind of signification that he's not totally crazy. I'm afraid that publishing is necessary to test the climate out of which your art emerges. A lot of people waste time and certainly waste energy. But there are always pressures in our society and literary pressure to publish as well. For the first time in American history there are some goodies for poets around 30. Not enough for all, just some. Those people elbowing others out of their way make me nervous sometimes. They get right in the same set-up. They want to get prizes and noticed whenever possible. So, when a young writer comes along up the academic ladder, publishing propels their means to promotion. It would be very severe temptation to put out too much stuff, you know.

Student: Do you think the academic life is probably the best environment?

Garrett: There are a lot of 'if's—if you like teaching. Many people don't, and I have very little sympathy for writers who get into teaching who don't like it to begin with. They tend to deal poorly with students and can also injure them unintentionally. Of course, probably the best thing in the world would be what very few writers in our time do, that is have another profession. A generation ago, there were people like William Carlos Williams, who was a doctor, and also Wallace Stevens, who was vice-president of an insurance company and a lawyer.

Student: Do you think there's any competition between the regular English teachers and writers?

Garrett: Oh, sure. I think the competition is there. I mean I've always seen it. I think part of the problem lies in the regular teacher being a would-be writer also. I've never known anyone who would deny that. So, there's a kind of friction, but it needn't be there.

Student: We wanted to know how you translate your experiences into your writings.

Garrett: I know a lot of people who just write what happens to them in a slightly altered manner; it's like stuff you see in the *New Yorker*. I have written some things that happened to me in reality, but I don't worry about using elements of my own life. I'm old enough now to notice when I'm doing it, to see how I use certain things that have happened and where my interests are, why I've one aspect of a character more than another, and why these memories come back to me. I know what's being worked out, what elements of my life were in it. By and large, it's an ego thing. No matter how I write about the sixteenth century, it will be a book by a twentieth-century American.

Student: What sparked your interest in the Elizabethan period? I mean why do you write about it?

Garrett: Well, originally the drive for a book started because I was really interested in Sir Walter Raleigh's poetry, and when I first got into some of his books, in 1950, I discovered that there had been no biographies about him written in a few years. What I didn't know was that by the time people get around to writing new biographies, there are 50 other people all working on one man. I started out to write a straight biography, and ended up writing a new kind of novel—*Death of the Fox*, which came out in 1971, I believe. Meanwhile, the biographies came out, but I didn't lose interest in him as my subject, which is important for a writer.

I thought with this new book, *Elizabeth and James*, this is the true one. I did a lot of research; I didn't even use half of it. I thought I'd just whip out a quick, really short book. What I was going to do as a book is now just one little chapter of the manuscript.

Student: What was the idea?

Garrett: Well, the original idea was just an evocative, condensed book. A nice thing about 200 typed pages—the letters of Elizabeth and James. They both wrote each other a lot. First of all I found out that even to do what I intended I didn't begin to know enough to bring out the variety in them; it would take more research. Then the nature

of the book changed—it got much larger. The original idea, I think, was a poor one and also a vague one. I wanted to do something with the letters. It is now ten years later...

Student: What's the nature of the book?

Garrett: It's very large—difficult to describe. What's unusual about it, I guess, is that, with the exception of the 'real' people in history, some of them don't reappear in the book, unless in the distance. There are whole units that don't seem to relate. The relationships are different than in any novel I've seen. It's all a unit, but I think it is put together in unusual ways. I keep hoping that I'll find somebody that will say, 'Yes, it can work.' It's open-ended, and I

think it's probably a failure in that sense. There's no reason why it couldn't go on forever under the present scheme. But the forever's got to be contained within the book.

Student: Is that part of the problem you've had in finishing it?

Garrett: Yeah. Its very strength, if this is a strength, is a great weakness—like embracing a flaw, which I think writers have to do sometimes. If you understand the defect in what you're thinking or that you can't do what you originally started, then you can go ahead with the flawed nature in it and try to find the book's own identity. What I'm trying to say is that I don't think it's a bad book. I have tried to make it an interesting,



coherent experience, and it's not difficult to follow. I'm not trying to be obscure in describing it. What's obscure is the structure of it, which is a whole series of various characters that have nothing to do with each other. They just happen to be living at the same time. That's their relationship, dim as it may be. And then I started thinking... well, I don't want to duplicate what's already in *Death of the Fox*. So, in a sense that did stop the open-endedness—'Okay, I'm not going to repeat anything, so everything in here takes on a different slant than was in the other book,' I thought.

Student: When you were doing research for the book, did you read many Elizabethan writers?

Garrett: I wish I had had more time, but there is so much to be learned, especially lately. The past ten years has seen an explosion of information about the Elizabethan period. Reproductions of maps and all sorts of things just didn't exist except in obscure European museums and such. Now, partly due to computers, partly due to the new pictures of the period we formerly didn't have, ten dollars will buy you a lot of information.

Student: Do you think reading Elizabethan literature has affected your writing at all? Or are you able to keep it separate?

Garrett: I didn't want any to get into it, but it has. I wanted to give a sense of the times, though I didn't want to imitate those styles; it wouldn't work. There are many, many styles in that period, some so grammatically remote that it would be hard for us to even comprehend them.

Yes, it's had an influence, but the style I tried to work with had only two criteria: that it wouldn't be a flat-out imitation of anyone else's Elizabethan style, nor would it be the same as the style one finds today—different subject, different means. In fact, each of the chapters is in a different style from another character's point of view.

Student: Which had more influence, the Elizabethan or contemporary style?

Garrett: In terms of the prose style, there's enough variation in my grammatical habits that it

would be harder to let Elizabethan authors have the influence of a massive contemporary. You can get yourself completely buried in Faulkner; you can spend months trying not to write like him. Or Hemingway, someone with a prominent style and a very positive influence. There are such great writers of the Elizabethan period, but there's such a great distance you would always feel uneasy trying to write exactly like them. So you just pick out pieces of it. And that's all I've really done.

But there is a way in which their own writing did get in, and in fact, a couple of chapters use the real letters between Elizabeth and James. That's their words, I didn't mess around with them, except where it made absolutely no sense at all.

Student: You talked about Marianne Moore discovering you. What other influences did you have? Flannery O'Connor?

Garrett: Oh, did you see that in her letters!? She didn't have any influence on me. I loved her writing, but no, in fact, she didn't. That's why her letter to that other person was so funny. She asked if I were a decent writer, because someone said she wrote like George Garrett—whom she'd never seen. I thought Flannery O'Connor was some Irishman. The editors, when I would submit short stories, would say, 'Yeh, we'd like to have it, but it's too much like Flannery O'Connor.'

You're influenced by everything you read inevitably, but the most exciting writers to me were people like Hemingway, Hawthorne, Catherine Mansfield, and writers in the past like Dickens.

Student: Do you think that being in touch with the past is important to you as a writer?

Garrett: I think it's important for any writer in two ways. One, the more you know of the possibilities of your craft outside of the immediate, obvious choices the better. You have certain contemporary examples, but they're not inclusive. The more you know, the freer you are, because you've got more opportunities. So there's a practical advantage. I've traveled around the country, and I've met lots of student poets who surprise me with how very little poets they've read. They didn't know Hart Crane from the man in the moon. What they knew was Mark Strand and Charles Simic. They really

thought that that was the only way to make a poem. But if they ever do anything different, they'll have to stumble into it. They have no models on which to get inspired or take off from.

The second advantage is that in sticking too close to contemporary literature, you may get too immediately influenced. Whereas with things filtered through the past you can learn more with less distortion of your own voice. For example, Chaucer; there's never been anybody who's done more with different ways of telling a story than he has.

Student: You talked about a young writer developing his voice, how did you develop your own?

Garrett: Well, I don't really think one ever does. The voice thing means the same as style; that's what I don't like about it. It really means the sound that a musical group has—Steely Dan sounds different from Dire Straits. These guys could hand each other their music and produce the same sound. That's the commercial value to having a distinctive sound.

But there is a great tendency among young writers today to try to do the same thing. Magazine editors force this on you, and book publishers do also, because they have a certain idea about how you write. It's particularly bad if they like what you do. Then they say that's what you do well, so stick to it. Whereas you should try everything. They should trust you. It's clear that certain things are easier for a young writer to do and get response and recognition. But as far as your development as a person, you ought to really try and be as inclusive as possible.

So what I really think we're talking about in writing is just the same as in pop music. It would be hard for Phil Levine to drop his Spanish Civil War motif, 'cause he's got it running through so many things. So when he finally does, it's going to be a heavy experience. I would be surprised to find a nice, mushy love poem from him. It's probably gotten so bad in this way that he can't even conceive of writing anything but a Phil Levine poem.

Student: You write in different forms—prose, poetry, plays—do you think it is very helpful, the diversity?

Garrett: That'd be hard to say — whether it's very good. We all do as much as we can. I would like to think there's a boredom factor. I often wonder how certain writers, admirable people, manage to keep producing the same things without falling asleep at the typewriter. I also like the idea of being clumsy; you get that from learning new things in which you can take risks. If you don't do that, you constantly protect yourself. But no one likes to be clumsy and awkward.

Student: How about the opera you're working on... what is it?

Garrett: It's based on the Columbian Exhibition of 1893 in Chicago, which is my favorite World's Fair. It was the first time in America that they had a real, honest-to-God World's Fair. It's really a wacko picture of nineteenth-century America. The University of Michigan has already put aside money to perform it.

Student: What sort of styles do you see new writers coming up with?

Garrett: I'm not sure. I used to worry that the writing programs would breed some kind of uniformity. For a while it did, with what I call the Strand-Simic type of poem—things like 'It comes into your room in tennis shoes / But it won't help you make your bed'—that kind of standard quasi-surreal poetry. But the present bunch are not content to follow one kind of fashion. The most popular direction now is toward an anecdotal or larger narrative structure. One of my favorite poets, Brendan Galvin, said poetry has to be something you could conceivably imagine one human saying to another.

Currently at work on a second novel on the Elizabethan period, about the relationship between Queen Elizabeth and her nephew, Garrett remains fascinated by the period's literary styles and figures. In addition, his fifth book of poetry, *Luck's Shining Child*, has just been printed by Palaemon Press in Winston-Salem.



Thicket

Fifteen years ago
beside a shadow thicket of spring ash leaves
the sun creek—copperhead water
sucked my mother's voice
out of pierced eye
sight.

Her song wound downstream
a leaf-feather waking the stone hills
and I was alone in her pools
her sifting of mica
drinking from the creek's
brown breast.

Years ago now, the hiss of April rain calls me home to her.

—by *Kenneth Prichard*

The Pelican

To you
I am
Most expressive
Of the awkwardness within,
Stripped
Of liquid slick deception,
The polish of my exterior

Naked and unwrought
I stand
Like a pelican
Obtuse and queer
Unnerved
Looking askance
From behind bawdy stippled
Folds,
Hiding from an angry sky,

You never question
As you see the rawness
Exposed,
You are silent
or you speak and
Your dark and knowing gentle
Eyes hold
A softer sky,

It gathers up the pelican
In grace,
In flight.

—by Beth Boone



“And I say, ‘Give me a chance!’”

A Mime Tells His Story

— In Words

by Erin E. Campbell

He engages audiences by conjuring up images and characters in empty space. Though nothing is *actually* there, nevertheless they still see something. It is neither a hocuspocus set of tricks, nor a mere sleight of the hand. It is Ken Alcorn's mime, and, above all, it is entertaining.

Ken Alcorn can convey more in a set of gestures and physical movements than most can communicate in a multitude of words. Perhaps, he is most articulate when he is performing as a mime—acting out plots, ideas, and emotions without the use of words. Yet, as a relative newcomer to the professional stage, he, like many mimes, does not receive a great deal of public attention for his work. Thus, he must set aside his muted stage persona and speak out for himself and other members of this usually silent community.

“People don't know where to classify you in mime,” he says, his words given a quick casualness by his New Jersey accent. “‘Are you a dancer?’ ‘Are you in dance?’ ‘Or are you an act?’ ‘An actor?’ ‘Are you a novelty act?’ I don't know where to put them either. Just give me a chance; give me a stage.”

Ken Alcorn, who is 28 yet looks scarcely past his teens, graduated from the North Carolina School of the Arts in 1979 with a B.F.A. in drama. With his official residence in East Windsor, New Jersey, he performs his one-man repertoire primarily in the eastern United States while also working assorted jobs ranging from playing the piano in night clubs to waiting tables at hotels.

“I'm just starting out. This is my second year. Last year I did about 20 shows. This year I hope to do at least 40 to 50. I don't know if I'll make it, but that's what I'd like to do. See, I spend a lot of time trying to get the jobs. It's staggering the amount of money I've spent.”

Although he has also appeared in numerous dramas and musicals, Alcorn has chosen mime as his main performing medium. “I wanted to do things myself. It was an avenue that I excelled in . . . in school — or at least I thought I did. I like it; I like the expression; I feel at ease doing it. It's fun. I decided to go that way because it was all me. Any slack would be on my shoulders. I'd take all responsibility—for the show . . . for my

success.” Frequently shifting to the second person while discussing his career, Alcorn continues, “It's a real challenge. It's a real challenge to do everything and know that it all comes back to you. I get either the glory or the grief. It's really rough putting yourself on the line all the time, but I can't see a life hiding. I like to be on the line all the time knowing that you could fail just as quickly as you could succeed.”

Yet, to straddle the line successfully, a performer must balance his talent with a belief in himself and his abilities. With his blue eyes gazing steadily, Alcorn states, “I think I'm pretty good. I feel confident in that. I know inside that I have a good show, a good format. I think that I have a pleasing personality on stage, and I think that I can win over an audience. I don't mean to sound cocky or anything like that, but it's something that's real important. You have to have that confidence. If you don't think it's going to work, then it's not. If I was going to go on stage, and said, ‘This is going to be a real flop of a show,’ well it would be. So I could never go on stage saying, ‘Uh-oh . . .’”

"See, I don't try to be better than anybody. I don't think anybody can be better than anybody. I think it's important that I use as much of my own self, my own interests, and my own talents to portray and to bring what I have to offer to the audience."

What Alcorn does bring to his audiences is material entirely devised and written by himself. Discussing his sketches, he says, "You just imitate life and people. The material is just so easy to come up with: you just imitate life and people and situations and actions and reactions. It's easy to come up with things."



Stephanie Powell

"I've written all those [sketches]... it usually starts with one idea. It usually comes from one idea, then I expand upon that idea. Sometimes it will start with a character... if I have a funny thought—you know, a lot of times you come up with 'Hey, boy, wouldn't it be funny—?' And sometimes it's funnier to think about than it is to actually do it, and you find out through trial and error."

"There are things that other mimes do, that other actors do, and things like that, but I've tried to make those things my own. You have to take other people's material—everybody does—or ideas, and you make them your own ideas, your own interpretations... So people want to see the climbing of the rope and the ladder, and the walking, and things like that. They are things people really want to see. So you take your classical training and your classical mime."

"It's not a strict classical mime. In my program I call it a clown and mime show... I've incorporated a lot of things that I've learned." Even though his program does contain many traditional elements, not all his pieces are completely orthodox. Alcorn designs unique gadgets to create some of his characters. For example, in "Lowery Steinbald" he romps and struts across stage while fingering tunes on the keyboard (fashioned from a melodica) of a miniature grand piano which serves as the head for the unusual musical figure, Lowery Steinbald. In other pieces, Alcorn uses homemade masks, background music, musical instruments, assorted props, and occasionally some members of the audience.

When he draws a few from the audience into the limelight, "there are always different reactions. Some people will want to go on stage quickly. Some are so eager to get the other person up, and then you pick them, and they go crazy." Yet after literally hundreds of experiences with audience participation, Alcorn believes that generally "people react the same way. There are certain ways that people are going to react to certain situations. You just have to be open to whatever way they're going to react. If I had expectations of what other people were going to do and they didn't do it, then somebody's going to be disappointed. So I just don't go in with any expectations and just go and see what we can come up with."

"See, sometimes, if something happens once in a show, you can play off of that for the rest of the night, or periodically. That's why it's real important to be aware and not be rigid. No two shows are the same—they have the same structure—but there are different reactions. The audiences are different."

While Alcorn calls upon only a few spectators to join in, he expects the audience as a whole to participate—by thinking. "I don't like to just hand it on a silver platter. Let them think... Television puts everything right in front of you. Boom. It's right there—everything. You don't have to

move; you don't have to think. Mime and dance are the same in that way. You have to think. You have to use your imagination. It's not like I go out on stage and say, 'Here, now this is this, and this is this, and this is this, and this is this.' I just do it and let them figure it out."

"Now, hopefully, there's enough clarity in what I'm doing and enough technique that they can figure it out. That's where the artist comes in, or the technique of the artist, so that it isn't lost, so that every moment is taken and expressed."

Alcorn has the artistic talent and technique, yet he often finds it difficult finding an audience to share it with. Many of his viewers are college students, and he relates the usual difficulties he encounters trying to gain openings to perform at schools. "There are a lot of mimes around. And a lot of times you call a school, and they've booked someone else, and most colleges won't book more than once a year a mime. A lot of colleges say, 'Well, there's no interest in it.' You get a lot of 'Well, student apathy.' But what I find is that usually the apathy starts a little higher than that... and I say, 'Give me a chance!'"



Stephanie Powell

Ken Alcorn does not lament the lost opportunities, however. He realizes his limitations as a new artist and feels satisfied with his current achievements. "Personally," he says, "I feel I've had a lot of success." Just as he is hopeful about his own career, he maintains similar optimism for the art of mime as a whole. "Mime isn't only the classical sense of Marcel Marceau anymore; it's expanding. . . . I think it's growing, but I still think it's a limited thing."

"Why do people go to theatre to see the same plays? . . . Everything is live. Mime is a live art. You run through all your material and it gets old, but the spontaneity, the personal contact with the audience, it turns people on. No matter whether it's mime or whether it's theatre or whether it's a good vocalist. Everything seems better when it's live."

"I'd like to perpetuate it," he says,



Stephanie Powell (OG & B file)

reflecting upon his role within the larger world of mime. "I don't want to see it die. That's why I'm doing it, because I think it's a very lively art. It's fun. People enjoy it; they get a kick out of it—they really do."

"Everytime I do a good show. . . . I have opened the doors for other mimes to come. . . . It's opened the door for somebody else; it's opened people's eyes, and [they] say, 'Hey, this is great. This is really a neat form. Let's see some more!' And then

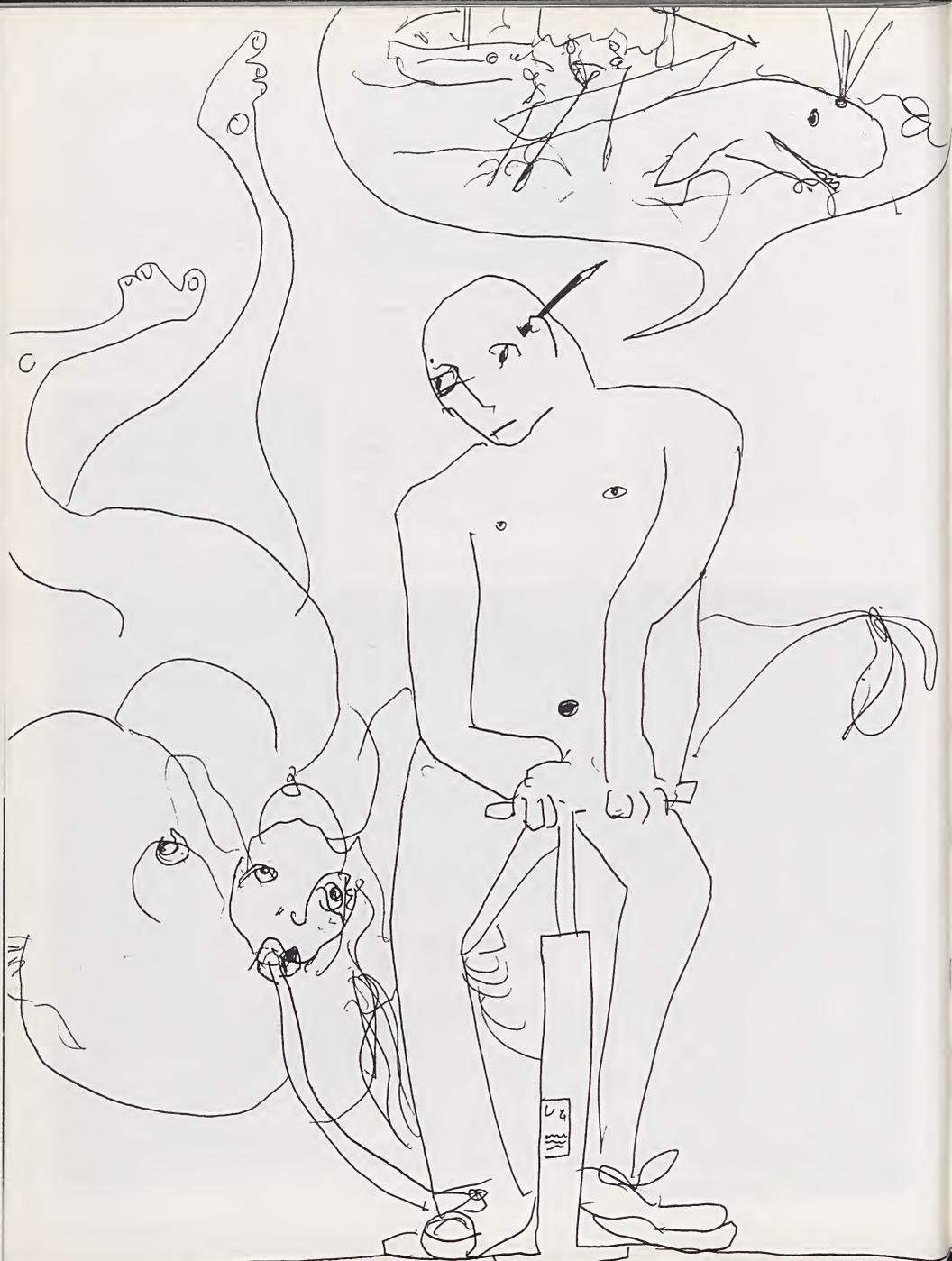
you have a knowledgeable audience. And that's one of my aims: to say, 'Hey, look! We're people too. We want you to know that we're an art form.'

"I try to incorporate almost everything—except my voice, and that's why I want to get back to theatre some time too. I figure this is what I want to do for now. I want to see where it takes me and how far I can go."

Ken Alcorn will likely "take all the responsibility" for where and how far he eventually does go. He is not anxious or impatient, though. What he does now he enjoys. What he will do tomorrow, well. . . .

"I don't want to be a quickly known star and gone the next day. I want to establish myself as an artist—multi-talented, multi-faceted, and maybe just an interesting person. . . . I want to make a difference in the world. I guess that's my basic purpose."





Drowning in the Suburbs

A boat lists in your sleep,
patched sails tense with each breeze,
and your family astern—
your wife on a chaise lounge
a Miller in her limp hand,
and John and Cal yelling down
from the mast like small seagulls—
you want to throw them overboard
like you do the bent nails,
the crooked railings,
the empty beer cans
cluttering the unfinished deck:
but you wake up, before
the storm warning flags surface,
before the music clicks on,
and the boat's shadow
floods across the floor.

You can hear your house settle deeper,
each creak reminding you how unseasoned wood
expands when the boat is docked
on stilts outside your door,
always half-done, a skeleton—
a prop rusting dull beside the garage,
the empty ark breathing each wind
like a grounded finback
that shades your dying lawn—
Somewhere back in your sleep
you have this nightmare
of scrambling like an idiot
through the rain, gathering tools,
the great stilts sinking in wet grass.
In this dream your boat
breaks up, and you wake, no alarm
no wife, no boat—only sand
and more sand, sawdust and a hangover.

—by James Gurley

New Colors

by Stephen Amidon

Constance Petty dropped a bag of groceries on the driveway. She juggled it awkwardly with her left hand before it hit the ground, but managed only to propel it down with greater force. The tomato sauce and bathroom disinfectant shattered instantly, littering her shoes and nylon stockings with their contents and bits of broken glass. The fresh fruit and canned goods, meanwhile, began to roll down the driveway to the street, gradually picking up speed as they moved away. But the driveway was warped with age, so that they curved off erratically and ended up in the wet snow beneath the shrubbery that lined the driveway. One can of green beans managed to make it to the street, rolling smoothly into a storm sewer. The paper towels and ground beef lay intact and indifferent by the front tire of her car.

"Shit," she said, her voice chopped by a faint British accent. Balancing the remaining bag against an up-lifted thigh, she removed the garage door opener from her purse and pressed it. The door jerked grudgingly, knocking off the thin lining of snow that edged it, and slowly ascended. Constance noticed that the right side of the garage was filled with a dark LTD. She bent over to pick up the salvageable groceries. The sight of her husband's car annoyed her very much. It was hardly noon: six p.m. was usually early for him.

She stamped her feet on the basement's concrete floor and placed the groceries atop a cluttered picnic table. Locating a broom, she walked slowly back out to the glistening driveway. She did not look forward to seeing Grey, regardless of any good news or one of his lame affectionate gestures. She just wasn't in the mood for a slight bonus or a thin, meaningless piece of silver jewelry. His presence constituted a rupture in her day, disturbing its quiet, even flow. Plans would have to change. She had wanted to clean the upstairs bathrooms and write some belated Christmas thank-you notes. Now, she'd have to prepare lunch at least, and perhaps amuse one of his flights of fancy. "Let's take a drive!" "Let's see a show." "Let's spend a few days at the cabin!" She leaned the broom carefully against the picnic table, retrieved the groceries and walked moodily up the steps.

She found him in his study. Having put away some groceries and checked for any packages or new appliances conspicuously ribboned and laid out, she cracked open the heavy oak door and peered into the

room. The darkness surprised her. The thick curtains were drawn tightly and a flickering desk lamp provided the only illumination. Grey sat back in a huge chair, behind an even larger desk, his eyes closed firmly, his hands suspended before his face, fingertips lightly touching as if he were holding a weightless orb. Some music played softly from a stereo implanted in the massive bookcase behind him. Constance frowned. A pose, for sure. But immediately she felt a bit guilty for the thought. People and prizes were always reminding her of his remarkable intellectual abilities, as well as his intense concentration. She had to keep herself from finding him foolish or melodramatic. She shifted in the doorway and let in some more light, trying to distract him. No use. Occasionally, he would bring his palms together, then apart, but remained otherwise motionless.

"Grey," Constance whispered sweetly. "Why are you home?"

He didn't respond.

"Grey," she said clearly.

He opened his eyes slowly and looked at her. His hands remained poised before his face, his torso pressed hard against the retractable seat-back. He squinted his eyes against the light. Constance waited a moment, watching the fluorescent desk lamp flicker irregularly across his hands and face. Then she frowned and began to walk back to the kitchen.

"He died."

Constance froze for an instant, terrified by the indeterminateness of that 'he.' She stopped tying the apron she had begun to fasten around her waist, letting it fall limply around her feet. Then she came back into the room, pushing the door all the way open and flicking on the overhead light.

"Who?" she asked, her voice panicky, slightly out of control.

"Cobb."

They looked at one another for a long time, each waiting for the other to speak.

"Who the hell is Cobb?" Constance asked finally, her annoyance tempered somewhat by relief in the name's unfamiliarity.

"A patient. You know."

"Oh yes, I'm sorry, Grey." She had not really thought about Cobb, or any of Grey's patients, in a long time. They were part of the small life she let him keep private from her. Long ago, they had all merged into one amorphous Patient, who was forever becoming ill, being cured or abruptly dying, somewhere just beyond the limits of her imagination and sympathy. Grey moved forward in his seat, his eyes now open wide, staring down at the spot on the desk he polished methodically with the fingers of his right hand. Constance hung in the doorway, uncertain. His mouth was half-opened in a tortured position, as if on the verge of a difficult sentence. Without looking up, Grey began to speak—monotonously, precisely, softly.

"It wasn't meant to be. You know? It wasn't there. When I'd touch him, I could feel that. I could feel that very clearly. He . . ."

Constance walked out of the room. She knew what he was going to say and hated it. The "mystical garbage," as she called it, with its incessant reference to a force called 'it' and the ultimate fixation of guilt upon some ineffable order of reality. And the morbidity. He never spoke of the ones who lived, just those who died. She began to put away the groceries, noticing with annoyance that the ice cream and frozen meats had already begun to defrost in the superheated air of the house. They never taste as good when they have to be refrozen, she thought.

"Constance!" Grey called sharply from the other room. She continued to pack the refrigerator. He called again. She put up the canned goods and folded the paper bag, filing it neatly beneath the kitchen sink.

"Our son has left school," he said, when she finally got around to coming into the room. Her attitude changed abruptly when she realized what he had said. The mocking indifference and annoyance were transfigured into anger and confusion.

"When?" she asked, moving closer to the desk. Grey looked at her now as he spoke.

"Yesterday. The day before. I'm not sure. The dean called a while ago, just as I was walking in the door."

"Which dean? Bill?"

"Tom Jaynes. Apologised and all, but said there was nothing he could do. Rules are rules. He says hello, by the way."

Constance stared at the books above her husband's head.

"Why? What did he do?"

"Nothing, apparently. I mean, they kicked him out precisely because he did. . . nothing."

Constance's gaze remained affixed above the shelves. Osteology . . . Cell . . . Journal of . . .

"When is he coming home?"

"This evening. The flight lands around 5:30. Do you want to go pick him up?"

"No, you go." She walked out of the room, picking up the apron from the linoleum floor. As she bent over, she paused to lightly brush the broken glass and dried tomato sauce from her stockings, careful not to rip the fragile nylon or the skin on the palm of her hand.

Dennis pulled sullenly at a tinfoil bag of peanuts, trying to tear off the top. It was futile. Time and time again, his fingers would slide off and snap noiselessly together. He knew that he could easily tear the bag open with his teeth, but the thought of tinfoil in his mouth deterred him. He threw the bag into the plastic cup, emptied of its Coke, and began to catalogue in his mind other unbearable sensations. The feel of cats. The sound of whistling. An unshaven face. And, of course, ears popping with a change in altitude. Ahead, the stew-

ardesses had begun to come slowly along the aisle with small dinner trays.

Dennis looked out the window, down at the cloudtops, and wished that the plane could remain airborne indefinitely. He had been childishly nervous during takeoff, but now he felt comfortable and safe—more safe than when the plane rested motionless at the airport. The thought of eventual descent adulterated the pureness of the height. For some reason, he thought back to when he was very young—six or seven perhaps. It was a time he had never thought back to, before now. In the summer, just after dinner, when the sun had sunk below the neighbors' shingled roofs and yet it was still perfectly light, he would go out to the backyard, where his father had created a small circle of rocks around a scraggly tree. The tree had long before died from neglect, but the rocks had remained undisturbed. Each night, Dennis would walk around the circle, again and again, balancing on the most precarious of the rocks, pretending that he was walking ever upward. Soon he would imagine himself above the rooftops, the clouds, the atmosphere, the planets, into a place where there were new colors. Or rather, he had always seemed to be on the brink of that realm: but his young mind could never come up with a single new color. Always old ones or combinations of them. It was of course an impossible task, and yet he would stand poised on a single rock for several minutes, eyes closed and arms spread for balance, concentrating stubbornly. Then he would walk around several more times—quickly, impatiently, killing more distance, as if that would help. He had continued at this task for two consecutive summers, quitting each time with the return to school. He smiled, picturing himself as he was then: the windbreaker, the too short pants and too short hair, the formless beauty of his face. Looking out the window, Dennis wondered if the rock formation was still intact, if the same stones still twisted beneath one's sneakers. Perhaps his father had planted a new tree.

"Chicken or steak?"

"What? Oh, it doesn't matter."

The stewardess looked confused and annoyed for a moment, then shrugged and gave Dennis a tray with an overcooked chicken breast and a number of other things in plastic wrappers. He looked at it blankly. He had eaten a large meal that afternoon, before leaving school. He put the tray on the empty seat beside him and listened to the voices in the cabin, to the subtle hum of pressurized air. Most of the people on the plane were businessmen, whose conversation consisted of strong, confident tones, the absurdly abbreviated names of corporations and men identified only by their last names: Cooper or Petrillo. In the seat directly before him, a young black woman sat completely motionless, clutching a book Dennis thought to be the Bible. The only sound he heard with any regularity was a strident voice swearing unabashedly up in the smoking section. Its author now stood up, and Dennis recognized him to be a

neighbor from home. He thought his name was Hal or something, but couldn't be certain. The man was short and stocky, with wide beefy hips but strikingly thin shoulders. His big hands were covered with hair, as was most of his neck and forehead. He wore a big gold ring on his right hand and a lime green leisure suit. He had beautiful wavy black hair, which he let grow a bit longer than most men his age. The plane rocked back and forth as he walked down the aisle, causing him to bump into just about every seat and step on several feet. He looked squarely at Dennis as he walked by, almost recognizing him, but averted his eyes just as Dennis began to mouth a 'hello.'

After the man passed on to the toilets, Dennis suddenly stood and went out into the aisle. He wanted to confront his neighbor, to talk with him. Several times, he had to make way for passengers, until the man walked toward him, whistling and zipping up his fly.

"Dennis?" he asked loudly, blinking his eyes.

"Yes. Hello, Mr. Hall." Dennis remembered the man's name as soon as he had been addressed by him. Joe Hall. They shook hands, Dennis expecting the older man to crush his. But instead, they shook hands limply, with a lightness that surprised both of them.

"Done with school?"

"Yes. Or rather, it's done with me."

They laughed. The plane pitched a little, causing them both to reach out for adjacent seats for support.

"Do you believe this goddamned turbulence? Scares the shit out of me."

Dennis looked past Joe and caught some eyes returning his gaze. It was Cathy, Joe's wife. She looked directly at Dennis, but it was an expressionless look: eyes unblinking and glossed over, mouth slightly open and indifferent, head motionless and slightly upturned. Dennis felt as if he were under the scrutiny of some electronic eye. He shifted nervously. She had obviously once been a beautiful woman, and was still very attractive—but not without some help. Her blond hair was stiff and carefully formed; her eyes heavy with make-up and several layers of clothing hid her exact shape. Dennis smiled and nodded politely, but she remained unmoved. Joe followed Dennis' gaze.

"Oh yeah, brought the little lady along. For her own good—she needed a vacation. Getting a bit restless. Had to nearly drag her the hell away from Baby Joe, though. You remember him, don't you? He's growing like a bastard!"

Dennis remembered the noisy, wet rat child from the community swimming pool.

"What were you doing up north?" Dennis was surprised at asking the question. He didn't care really, just wanted to keep the conversation going.

"Had to check up on some of my businesses up there. Nursing homes, you know. Goddamned New York state commission has come up with so many laws since this Bergman thing I don't know my ass from a hole in the ground any more. I like the codes in the South better.

Straight and simple. You know where you stand. You can make a move without a hundred Jew lawyers on your back."

Dennis looked at the thick hair on Joe's neck, not quite sure how to respond. There was a tense moment of silence, where neither knew where the conversation should go, what the next step should be. A small bell sounded faintly above them, three times, and the "fasten seat belt" signs blinked on. Over the intercom, a voice softly chided the passengers back to their seats.

"Well, see you after landing!" Joe said, relieved. "Hey, you don't need a ride home, do you?"

"I think my mom will be at the airport."

They returned to their seats. As the plane cut through the thick mass of cloud, Dennis shuffled absently through a magazine. It was called "Voyage"—printed by the airline. In its middle was a map of the world, cut and distended by imaginary flightpaths traced out with yellow lines. Dennis followed several of them with his eyes—to Frankfurt, to Cairo, to Seoul. He thought back to earlier in the day, waiting for his flight. Bored with the smaller national terminal, he had walked across several parking lots to the International Departures terminal. He killed two hours there, seated in a corner, his feet balanced on his old suitcase. He watched the people about to fly from the country as they kept track of their children, checked their baggage and decided between smoking and non-smoking. There was a tense expectancy to their demeanor that fascinated Dennis. Their few moments in the terminal were busy with anticipation, while the lapse between the present and his flight was an annoying void. Once, a girl with a backpack and a ticket for Israel sat beside him, asking him where he was going and if he would like to get high. He was tempted, but just then a large tour group descended upon the Lufthansa desk. Several spoke loudly in German, while others staggered under pounds of souvenirs. Dennis thanked the girl, but no. Watching the tourists was preferable.

The landing gear locked into place with a strong noise. The plane was catching heavy turbulence as it approached the ground. Dennis clutched the arm-rest and stared fixedly at the wing. The black woman in front of him had now begun to read aloud from her Bible with a shrill monotony that ruined the plane's nervous silence. Dennis sat up as far as his seatbelt allowed him, looking at the little he could see of the young woman's face and Bible. The passage, he noticed, was from *Isaiah*. She read the same several verses again and again. Dennis didn't see how they could be appropriate. He was tempted to say something rude or kick her seat when, suddenly, the plane touched ground. The engines roared as the pilot reversed them to brake the plane, drowning out all of the noises in the cabin.

"What did you hit?"

"Five iron. Right into the front bunker. Chipped in from there."

"Amazing. So how much did you take him for?"

"Twenty five bucks. For that hole alone."

There must have been a mix-up. Almost half the people invited to the Petty's cocktail party had not arrived, although it was approaching ten o'clock. Constance had phoned the gatehouse of their private community several times, wondering if there hadn't been some error there. But the guard had informed her that the few cars that had come by he had let right through: except a carload of teenagers from the city. Grey had had enough bourbon so that it didn't matter, but Constance was worried. Perhaps too worried. Her behavior verged upon being hysterical. Each time she used the phone to check on the situation, a watchful silence fell over the kitchen and den. After awhile, however, Constance stopped worrying. Or people stopped paying attention. Those guests who had come—mostly neighbors—had been drinking heavily, as if to make up for the lack of people.

"Who?"

"Ciba-Geigy and a German firm."

"For tax purposes?"

"Fucking foreign interests are screwing our capital."

"It's the government and their tax system, you know."

Dennis leaned back from the kitchen table, staring at the small clusters of adults in the kitchen, grouped around conversations as if they were sources of heat. On the table were several large bottles of liquor, a magnum of untouched white wine and several plates of hors d'oeuvres. Most of the liquor was gone, but the food was relatively untouched. Dennis traced the formation of the food on each plate with his eyes—some piled high in pyramids, others spreading out in concentric circles. He reached down and chose a piece of luncheon meat rolled around cream cheese. But the toothpick had been placed awkwardly in the meat, so that the hors d'oeuvre unrolled and fell to the floor before Dennis could eat it. He began to bend over to retrieve it, but his head felt dizzy from the several drinks he had taken from the table. So he stood and kicked the food further beneath the table.

"I saw that!"

Dennis recognized Cathy from the plane. She looked more alive tonight than she had then—her gestures sharp, her eyes active and alive. She wore a low-cut dress, which revealed most of her breasts while carefully masking hips and stomach that had been rudely expanded by childbearing.

"Are you the bartender tonight?"

It was true. His parents had thought it a good idea to let their son serve drinks. The ladies all thought he looked cute, while the men ordered gin and tonics with a brisk, condescending confidentiality. Dennis had left most of them uncomfortable, responding only with a small smile and a perfectly mixed drink.

"What will it be?"

"Oh, Scotch and soda."

Cathy said something to him which he didn't catch.

She spoke quickly, slurring her words and giggling nervously after she had finished. Dennis smiled and nodded his head. As he handed her the drink, she grabbed his hand and held it for a moment. Then she took the glass and drank most of it down, not taking her eyes off of him. For an instant, Dennis saw again the same dull, captivating look he had seen on the plane. She took the glass from her lips.

"Would you like to do some yardwork around our house? With Joe travelling so much and all this hot weather, our grass will need cutting before long. Could you do it?"

"Sure," said Dennis, spreading out a small pool of water made by some melted ice with his fingers. "I'm not too busy these days. Just give me a call and let me know when."

Cathy nodded her head, not saying anything, and walked off to where her husband and some other people were arguing loudly about some topical matter. Dennis watched her for a while, as she stood on the perimeter of a conversation, watching the faces of those who spoke, remarking occasionally. She had married Joe in a moment of fearful lucidity, just after graduating from college. Her collegiate life had consisted of a series of feeble gestures—hanging at the fringes of several artsy groups. The art department, musical theatre, the French Club. She had found a niche of sorts in the poetry set, attending various readings and writing some of her own. Actually, she had slept with more "poets" than written poems, but never doubted her intentions. After graduating she had panicked—her groups had disbanded and things were expected of her. She was, however, useless. Except to Joe. He was ugly, but rich and older. They had met at a party given by her parents, and were soon married. Joe conducted the whole matter as if it were a business deal, while for Cathy it was just another thing that was happening to her. She never regretted marrying Joe, because that was one of the emotions she wouldn't let herself experience. Just a bit of nostalgia now and then. Sometimes at luncheons or cocktail parties, when talk became tipsily reminiscent, she'd declare something to the effect of "I used to write poetry": and the others would nod, as if that were some catch-phrase for a special depth, a special perception.

Dennis poured some vodka into a plastic cup and drank it quickly down. His mother was nervously dialing the phone again. He leaned back against the wall, blanking the talk and activity out of his mind. He concentrated instead on the small pool of liquor that rested beneath his tongue and around his lower teeth.

"Just ran away."

"She's only sixteen."

"Some black nigger of a pusher offered her a place to stay and . . ."

"California, is it?"

"Elisabeth is so worried she can't even eat. But there's nothing she can do, really."

"Not a damn thing."

Dennis screwed on the tops to empty bottles and gathered small piles of crumbs as he watched his parents at the sink across the kitchen. Steam rose up between them, eerily refracting the hundred-watt light of the kitchen. Grey stood in vest and shirtsleeves, Constance in stocking feet. The guests had left about thirty minutes ago, having stayed on until early morning. Occasionally, Constance would turn to Dennis and ask him to bring a new pile of dishes or run the vacuum cleaner.

The Pettys had met in England, both working at a research hospital outside of London. Grey had just returned from Japan, via India, where he had taken a year's sabbatical from his post as a surgeon in the states. It was a strange situation. He had gone well into what was undoubtedly to be a brilliant career in medicine, when he quietly disappeared from the scene. He had claimed, six years out of medical school, that he wanted to continue his "studies" in the Orient. At a meeting with some colleagues, he had remarked that he felt himself becoming too much like a scientist. No one knew what he had studied, but obviously it wasn't medicine: his brilliant career rapidly transformed into just a good one. The grants and praise still came, but somewhat less hysterically. It became evident after a while that his powers and potential as a surgeon had been overestimated.

Constance was working as a middle-level administrator when they met. She was to show him around, to orient him the month he spent in England. It was the sort of job that she was often assigned. Coming from a family of doctors, she was expected, one way or another, to end up in a hospital. Not having the brains for medical school or the stomach for nursing, she had chosen the only other route—administrative work. She hated it. Grey was a bit awkward and his conversation often bizarre, but he was wealthy and American. Constance decided that life as his wife would be far less boring than her present occupation. After a silent and formal romance, enthusiastically encouraged by her star-struck family, they were married and returned to the U.S. Dennis was born sometime after. He was their only child.

"Dennis, maybe we should talk now." His father placed a cup of coffee on the table across from Dennis and sat down. He was in the process of becoming sober before going to bed: hair messed, eyes red, gestures slow and careful. Constance remained at the sink.

"So what do you plan to do now?"

"Get a job," Constance answered immediately for him, her back still turned to them.

"Let him speak."

"I don't know. Maybe try school again."

"You haven't done too well the last few times."

"Yeah, I know."

"Maybe you should work for a while, before thinking about school again."

"O.K."

Constance turned around.

"You don't seem too concerned about any of this. Is it some kind of joke or game to you? You're screwing up your life and you don't even care."

Dennis looked away from her, not knowing what to say. They had said little to one another since his return. When he walked into the house after arriving back from the airport, he had expected to be happily assailed by their dog, a large Labrador. Puck. After a moment of waiting in the front hall, Dennis had called out for the dog. Grey, carrying the luggage, looked away uncomfortably.

"Where's Puck?"

His father didn't answer.

"Where's Puck?" Dennis asked his mother, who had emerged from her bedroom wearing a nightgown. She stopped and looked at Grey.

"Didn't you tell him?"

"Obviously not," he said quietly.

"He's dead, Dennis."

"When? How?"

"Some dumb redneck in a moving van ran him over."

"When?"

"A couple of months ago. Just after Christmas."

Dennis looked at both of his parents in turn. His father still stood by the door, holding the luggage, eyes cast down.

"You could use a haircut," his mother said flatly, after a long silence.

There was a long silence after her present outburst, too. Grey took a sip from his coffee. Dennis stared at the jars of spices lined evenly above the oven, at the steam floating above his father's cup. After looking sternly at both of them, Constance frowned and returned to the sink. She opened the faucet ferociously and began to push scraps of food into the garbage disposal.

"So, are you going to start looking for a job?" Grey asked gently.

"Yeah. Pretty soon."

Every once in a while, a stone or hard stick would shoot up sharply against his bare legs. Dennis wished that he weren't wearing cutoff jeans. Sweat ran down his legs from his crotch and lower back, collecting dirt and bits of grass among the curly hairs of his calves and thighs. He pushed the lawn mower up one of the several small hills in the Hall's backyard and stopped for a moment, resting. It was a large yard, treacherous with its gigantic swingset and indiscriminately placed shrubbery. Dennis amused himself by cutting out various geometrical shapes on the lawn with the mower. Running over things also helped alleviate the drudgery: food wrappers, insects, an occasional rubber toy. Several parts of the lawn were littered with scraps of paper or rubber.

The weather had changed radically in the two weeks since Dennis had flown home. Temperatures had been

very warm, causing lawns and gardens to start growing prematurely. He had done little since his return—halfheartedly looking for a job in the morning, watching t.v. with his mother in the afternoon, reading or driving to town at night. His friends were all away at school, so he went to town alone: going to a movie or a cheap restaurant, hanging around in a park or square; watching, always watching. Occasionally he'd stop and talk with some high schoolers, usually girls. Never for long, though. They were wary of him—his age, his intentions. He bought a bag of dope from some black kids one evening, but never got the chance to smoke any. He hid it away among some winter clothes and soon forgot about it.

Dennis finished the lawn and wheeled the lawn mower back into the garage. He knocked on the glass door leading to the house. Earlier that morning, he had spoken with Joe about the specifics of the job. Joe then left for New York. Cathy answered the door, still wearing a nightgown and slippers. Inside, Dennis could hear the thin voice from a radio and the sounds of the baby destroying its lunch.

"Come on in," Cathy said over her shoulder as she ran back to the baby. "I'll be with you in a minute."

"Well, I . . ." Dennis started softly, gesturing to his dirty legs and shoes.

"Baby Joe!" Cathy said, trying to wipe off the food he had somehow smeared on his forehead. He was ugly, like his father, and had a penchant for noise. Well over three years old, he had neither walked a step nor spoken a word in his life. Doctors were still running tests to determine if he had some sort of brain disorder. He slept approximately ten minutes out of each hour, snoring and drooling copiously all the while. He had huge features: large, grasping hands, fat neck and cheeks and a huge mouth, weighted with heavy lips, and a single massive tooth protruding from the right-center of his top gum. His father travelled constantly, yet loved the boy greatly. He had a habit of tossing the baby up in the air and catching him, calling out "Baby Joe-oe-oe!" Unfortunately, the child's uncontrollable drool would stain ceiling, wall and rug. Cathy would become angry and Joe would protest that he was just enjoying his son.

Cathy, still holding the soiled paper towel, walked back to Dennis, who remained halfway in the door.

"Come on in!"

Dennis gestured again to his legs.

"Oh," she said, "That's o.k."

Dennis walked into the kitchen.

"Here, let me," Cathy said suddenly, and knelt down in front of him. She took the paper towel and began to wipe the grass and sweat off Dennis' legs. She merely managed, however, to push it all around, adding some of Joe's food and spittle to the mess. Dennis stood still, not sure how to react.

"Oh, I'm just making it worse," she said, frustrated, and moved to get some clean paper towels.

"No, that's o.k." Dennis said loudly, holding up his hand.

"Are you sure?" Cathy asked, turning.

"Yeah. I was going to take a shower, anyway."

Cathy stared at him, half smiling.

"How much?" she asked.

"What?"

"How much for the lawn?"

"Oh. Ten bucks, I guess."

"Are you sure?" Cathy asked.

That night, Dennis fought with his parents again. About his plans for the future, his attitude toward the present. His mother became hysterical, and his father tried to be ominously quiet. Dennis left the house and walked through their community. Carefully planned, it was antiseptically beautiful and safe, with a barbed fence surrounding it as well as a highly trained security force staffing the entrance gate. It was an oppressively quiet area. During the day, everyone left: for the city, for the country club, for the Caribbean. At night, they congregated to fight the darkness and the silence. A system of clubs and organizations, almost as complex as the patterns of street and property, had been developed. Gourmet, bridge, tennis, travel. No one stayed for long, most moving out within two years.

Dennis cut through several backyards and side-streets, eventually stopping behind a large, barn shaped house to watch a family watch t.v. He sat up precariously on a wooden fence for about an hour, with a clear view through a sliding glass door into their living-room. The family—about eight of them—were spread over a large couch, two thick rugs and several beanbag chairs. They remained motionless, except for an occasional run to the kitchen or bathroom. When the show ended, the family dispersed, some returning to their bedrooms, one to the phone, two heading out in a small car. Dennis jumped down from the fence and headed away.

A few blocks down the road a cocktail party was breaking up, pouring into the street with a reflex of light and laughter. Dennis recognized several people as friends of his parents. He waited in the street and watched as couples wandered back to their cars, yelling happily over their shoulders, then turning to each other and commenting critically on the evening. Some argued sullenly about the others' lapses in behavior. An older couple realized that they had locked themselves out of their Volvo and stood looking at one another, baffled. Dennis turned and headed away, breaking into a gentle run as the cars from the party began to regularly pass him.

He didn't go into his house right away, but waited on the front porch, dozing in a giant wicker chair and enjoying the cool night air. Occasionally, Dennis could hear an interstate truck race by on the highway that connected their suburb with the city. He could see their lights from almost a mile away, as they picked up speed

down a gentle hill. Then, as they paralleled him, they became invisible below some houses and small hills. They reappeared about a quarter of a mile later, their tail lights rising in the darkness like signal flares. Twelve trucks passed before Dennis went quietly inside. He didn't go upstairs to his room, but went rather into the guest bedroom. He crossed through it to the bathroom. He flicked on the light, which blinded him momentarily. A small fan started simultaneously, picking up speed until it achieved a low, indistinguishable hum. Dennis looked around. The bathroom was immaculately clean. The wallpaper consisted of a series of glossy orange and yellow designs that vaguely resembled flowers. A framed picture, a watercolor landscape, hung opposite the toilet. Two perfect towels hung from the rack—white, initialed with bold "P's" surrounded by a brilliant cluster of silver leaves. Three intensely brilliant lightbulbs shone into every corner of the room, casting no shadows. A single flaw—dirt spot, water drop, fingerprint—would have been fatal to the room's cleanliness. There were none.

Dennis unbuttoned his shirt and dropped his pants. He examined his reflection in the large mirror above the sink. He lightly touched his broad fleshless shoulders and chest, which narrowed into compact hips giving his torso an exaggerated triangular shape. Dark, curly hair clustered in the middle of his chest and over his naval. Dennis turned on the faucet and caught some water in his hand, which he splashed on the mirror. He watched as it ran over his reflection, down onto the marble sink. He wetted his hand again and took some lather from a bar of perfumed green soap. Faintly, some cheap photographs, some movie sequences, replayed themselves in the back of his mind. Dennis closed his eyes and leaned back his head, very slowly, breathing a light sigh through his nose.

"Oh—Dennis. I wasn't expecting you."

Cathy was wearing a tennis outfit and a large brimmed hat. Her hair was pulled back tightly. She looked very young and lively.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Were you going out to play?"

"No, no. I just got back. I was just heating up some lunch for Baby Joe. Come on in."

Dennis felt relieved that she didn't ask him what he wanted. He couldn't have answered. It was a hot day. He was barefooted, wearing only track shorts and a tee shirt. He had set out without any goal in mind, but found himself before the Hall's house. So he had knocked.

"Do you want some lemonade?"

"Uh, no thanks."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, o.k."

She nodded to a seat at the kitchen table. Baby Joe stared silently at Dennis, a continuous strand of brown drool hanging from his mouth to a puddle on the kitchen table. Then he made some low, barking noises, coughed

twice and began to cry hysterically. Cathy set a glass of thin lemonade before Dennis and began to attend to the child. She was methodical—wiping his face, straightening him in his seat, speaking to him softly. The baby continued to bellow. Cathy reached out and slapped him lightly, but he hardly noticed, continuing to cry evenly. Then she closed her fist and brought it back, but stopped suddenly and smiled, nervously conscious of Dennis. He realized that she would have beaten the child had he not been sitting there.

"Let's go out into the other room," she said, still smiling nervously. Dennis followed her out into the living room, noticing that Baby Joe stopped crying when they left. They sat on a huge white couch. Cathy crossed a leg and turned toward him, an elbow propped on the couch's back.

"So what have you been doing these days?" she asked familiarly.

"Well, I . . ."

Before Dennis could say more, she had begun to kiss him. She placed one hand on his neck, while with the other she took Dennis' hand and placed on the side of her breast. Her lips pressed ferociously against his, hurting them. She pulled away.

"Quick, into the bedroom . . ." she whispered.

Later that afternoon, Dennis found himself awakening in a king-sized bed, alone. He looked around the room. It was just like any other adult bedroom he had seen—only the incidentals, the pictures, the color of the rug, the size of the closets, differed. He sat up and shook his head, which ached from sleeping out of schedule.

Cathy walked back into the room, wearing a long gown. Her hair hung limply down, her make-up smeared slightly around her eyes. A breast showed from her loosened gown, its large, pale nipple looking repulsive to Dennis in the bright late afternoon light. She sat on the edge of the bed.

"Joe was hungry," she said.

Dennis leaned over to kiss her.

"You'd better go," she said softly.

She watched him as he put on his clothes. Just as he made to leave, she grabbed his wrist to stop him.

"I'm pregnant, you know. Two months."

Dennis stared down at her, unsure how to respond.

"Does that bother you?" she asked.

"No."

"Are you sure?"

Dennis nodded, then walked out. As he passed through the kitchen he noticed Baby Joe asleep in his high chair, head hanging to the side, mouth open. He walked out into the street and started to jog home, stepping gingerly on the hot pavement. Ahead, a school bus stopped and discharged several small children. They stood together by the bus stop, laughing and teasing. Catching up with them, Dennis yelled out "Hey, you little shitheads" and grabbed a lunchbox from the smallest boy. They screamed with delighted laughter, chasing loudly after him. He danced just beyond their



for Steve and his string

Wm Clark

reach, over fences and lawns, as they tried to tackle him. Tiring, he let them catch him, whereupon they proceeded to make a human fleshpile on him. The children screamed with laughter as Dennis spun them on his shoulders or let them punch him in the stomach. One boy, however, had a hand stepped on and began to cry. They settled down and broke up, going their separate ways. Dennis walked with the injured boy for awhile, joking and jostling with him until his tears changed to a smile. Then he jogged home, to dinner and questions as to what he had done with his day.

Dennis didn't go back to Cathy. It wasn't as if he were taking a stand—he had no clear thoughts on the matter. He just chose avoiding her over seeing her. Life at home was becoming unbearable—every conversation would degenerate into an argument. Always the same argument. It changed only in intensity and insults employed. His mother was satisfied with taking potshots, but his father tried to talk with Dennis.

"Are you sad?" his father had asked him one night after dinner. The question took Dennis off guard. Numbly, he shook his head. He had never thought about whether he were happy or sad.

"I ask you that because I can remember several occasions when I felt incapable of continuing my life as I was leading it. My impotence would surprise me. These times were unproductive times for me, full of self-doubt and introspection. More than that, they were sad times. That's why I asked you if you were sad."

His father paused, as if expecting a new answer. Dennis remained silent.

"But I always, for some reason, got off my ass and tried something new. The most important example of this, of course, was my trip to the Orient. I learned a lot of important things there. About the nature of life, of the world. What could have been a disastrous error turned out very well. I gained some new understanding. You can do that too, Dennis. If you have the guts and drive. So college didn't work out. So what? There are lots of other things to do. Just try them. Take a chance!"

Dennis sat still until his father, asking him to think about it, excused him. Later that evening Dennis heard his parents arguing loudly in bed. He pushed off his covers and walked quietly down the hallway, stopping just outside their door. His father's monotonous voice sounded for a while, until Constance cut him off. She spoke quickly, her voice sounding more natural, more British, than he had ever heard it. He heard Cathy's name mentioned several times. The darkness seemed very close to him—the hallway very cold. He walked quickly back into his room and crawled under his blanket, surprised that he was, for the first time in a long while, afraid.

A few nights later, Dennis went over to the Hall's house. There was something he wanted to know, something he had to know. It had rained heavily all day, but

the night saw the weather clearing. He took the long way, walking the streets instead of the backyards. Consequently, he saw Joe's Cadillac parked in front of the house. He frowned. He was hoping Joe would be out of town. For a moment, he contemplated returning home. He hesitated a minute, then walked up the driveway and rang the doorbell. Cathy answered.

"Oh shit. What are you doing here?"

"I wanted to ask you something."

"I just told Joe," she said.

"That's what I wanted to ask. Why?"

She stared at him for a moment, with that same dull expression she had used before.

"Why?" she repeated, as if the word were nonsense, devoid of any meaning. Just then, Joe called ferociously from the kitchen. Cathy turned and ran in, leaving the door open. Dennis followed her. He wanted her to answer his question.

Joe was standing very close to Cathy, yelling something incoherent, when Dennis walked into the kitchen. When he saw him, Joe gave out a short yelp, then started forward menacingly. Dennis held up his hands instinctively.

"You fucking bastard!" he cried in a high-pitched voice. He tried to grab Dennis, but the larger boy swung easily away. Joe kept moving forward and tried to hit Dennis but missed completely, smashing his hand against the refrigerator door. Dennis hesitated an instant, then punched Joe evenly in the face, drawing blood from his upper lip. Baby Joe began to slobber and cry. Cathy stood in a corner, eyes wide, mouth half open. Joe stood tasting the blood in his mouth.

"You fucker!" He yelled, running from the room. Dennis who had been standing next to the baby, circled around the table, closer to Cathy.

"Get out!" she cried.

"Just tell me why you had to tell people," Dennis whispered quickly.

"He's going to get a gun! Get out!"

Dennis turned around in time to see Joe standing in the doorway, levelling a small revolver at him. Joe fired twice, both shots missing due to the untrained fury with which he rapped at the trigger. The first bullet lodged in the simulated wood paneling on the kitchen's wall. Dennis, cat-like, ducked and punched his way through the screen door, then ran across the backyard. Joe loudly cursed the gun, which had jammed, and looked sullenly after Dennis' silhouette—jerking, shrinking, framed by the sunset and moonlight. Cathy watched him, for a moment, then gave a muffled scream and raised her hand to her mouth, pressing her lips hard against her teeth. For Baby Joe had spilled his food: silver tray upsidetown on the floor, surrounded at the edges by creamed spinach and carrots. His spoon lay diagonally on his lap, staining his new pajamas. Spilled milk dripped slowly off the kitchen table, making a small puddle on the floor. Yes, Baby Joe had made a big mess. And rightly so.

Love and Education

No hope now man,
I sit and cry like
polyester and plastic all
down the sides of my stolen
stainless face—can't
you see me sighing
in the shadows, whispering
secrets your mother'd never
tell and hoping you'd come
close to understand my lisping
limping voice, paralleled to
some ancient underground which
pulled me out of my giant cloud
with such ferocious violent fury
that I think my psyche
was disturbed. And long
ago and far away I never
once doubted it at all.

—by M. David Jones



Declining

Muscles play in motion smooth
Unstrained,
Laughter spills from dark lips wet
Untamed,
Sheets lie in wrinkled still
Unstained,

You ask much of me and I decline
Unscathed,
Still laughter
Spills
And sheets
Lie
And muscles
Play,

The moment breathes a fading
Breath and dies,
Wrinkled still
And still unstained
Sheets lie.

—by Beth Boone



"It's your move.

"Hurry up! It's getting late. You know I hate long games. Why do you insist on punishing me like this?"

She sat back in her chair and heaved an impatient sigh.

"You don't want to do it anymore, do you? No more interest in the game? No more sense of power is more like it. I remember you hovering over the board for days on end. Chivalry. You were their God.

"They said morning mass to you. The knights killed and conquered, brought back their little petty prisoners to be displayed before your king and queen. 'Throw him to the Tower!'

"As they died off one at a time from starvation or rat distemper, you'd hear the bishop's rites over the decaying body and laugh to the tune of 'When the Saints Go Marching In,'—just like you do when you sweep the board, knocking my queen across the room, planting yourself, 'CHECKMATE!'

Chess

"Of course, you imagined all of your gallant knights running over to where the queen lay, there by the trunk of the end table, and hauling her off to your tower, balling her brains out, then sending out flyers to advertise your conquest.

"Your king would laugh—so much like you. You made him rich and powerful, and because you knew I'd never win, you told him he was immortal. Nothing to fear.

"Well, I guess you know now that no one stays on top forever. When people hate you enough, they do anything to wipe you out. Teach their knights to fly with winged horses. Pawns swarming like ants, stop at nothing for king's blood. When the king dies, so does his God. It starts all over again.

"Now go ahead! Damn it, haven't you decided yet! It gets more difficult, doesn't it. There's more at stake now. Try harder. Take less for granted."

She sat up in her chair, placing her head on the heels of her hands, forearms supported by her elbows propped up on the table. She grinned at him as if she were the ex-Virgin queen herself. Escaped from the tower, returned to her own turf, strengthened. Now holding her enemy by the same crotch that he had proudly unleashed on her years ago. Now she is God. His glazed eyes looked back at her as if to surrender helplessly.

She continued, "You never wanted to win as badly as I. You just kept doing it. It was nothing to you.

by Tom Albritton

"God how I hated that! Every night we sat (you planning your strategy all day I supposed) and you plowed right through my lines, destroying all that I had built for myself. I'll never understand how you broke my northern perimeter; by the time I had sent out the workers, newly pledged vassals, to clear the woods, you were already plundering in the royal chamber.

"Bastard! You loved it!

"And you smiled as you pulled out—redesigning my estate with your divine hand just so you could try it again and again.

"They did it for you—God—Hosannah in the highest! Three in One!

"You've lost your fire, huh? Don't want to play? Well, I should have imagined you'd be a poor loser. That's the way most Gods are. Well, if you're not going to play there's no sense in my wasting any more time. Here—"

She took her bishop and made a slashing diagonal across the board, wiping out most of his players, and planted the piece in the crown of his majesty. "CHECKMATE!"

She looked around for the captors scattered across the floor. Picked up two well-hung knights, a handful of submissive pawns, and a dark tower to keep them in. She then stuffed the bishop into her breast pocket, and out of divine mercy shoved the opposing king into the lap of her husband.

Exhausted and war-scarred, he slumped over the table, resting as if asleep. The only movement was from a small red pool pouring from the mortal wound across his neck. It spread through the checkerboard fields and forests of the fallen manor.



Past Huancayo

I.
Above Lima, past Huancayo
there's a corral beyond
the one at Shorty's ranch.

Richard poises his Leica
at the ribbon-festooned llama and alpaca
fifteen feet away—
(they say an alpaca can throw a nasty kick.)

a woman by the corner post
weaves at her inkle loom;
several men across the way laugh and slap
one another's backs of striped ponchos.

chicha washes mouths
of Inca and alpaca.

A reed flute's trills line the earthen pasture,
roof the grey above the corral,
beyond the festivities.

II.

The camera glistens in the thin
air.

a few more frames—the mountains
with stretched-out clouds;
a child fingerweaving her hand shut
with yellow and brown yarn
remnants from her mother's work;
the ribbons wind-blown
as rivulets away from the fenceposts,
across the alpacas' backs.

Richard replaces the lens cap,
crosses the corral.

III.

Two days later, after
several portraits of Richard
at the 16,000' railroad pass;
the roll is complete.

this man who can converse in infinitives,
who carries

in his manner a quiet trust,
takes the film with pesos to the Lima post office,
sets down his money, enough
to pay, to send, to home—por favor.

he leaves, his part finished; doesn't wait
for the stamps to form a collage on the envelopes;
doesn't see if the packets hit the out box.

instead, he turns, goes back
into the cold grey dryness—
La ciudad de los reyes.

IV.

The film never sees the processor's hands;
we never count the colors of the ribbons.

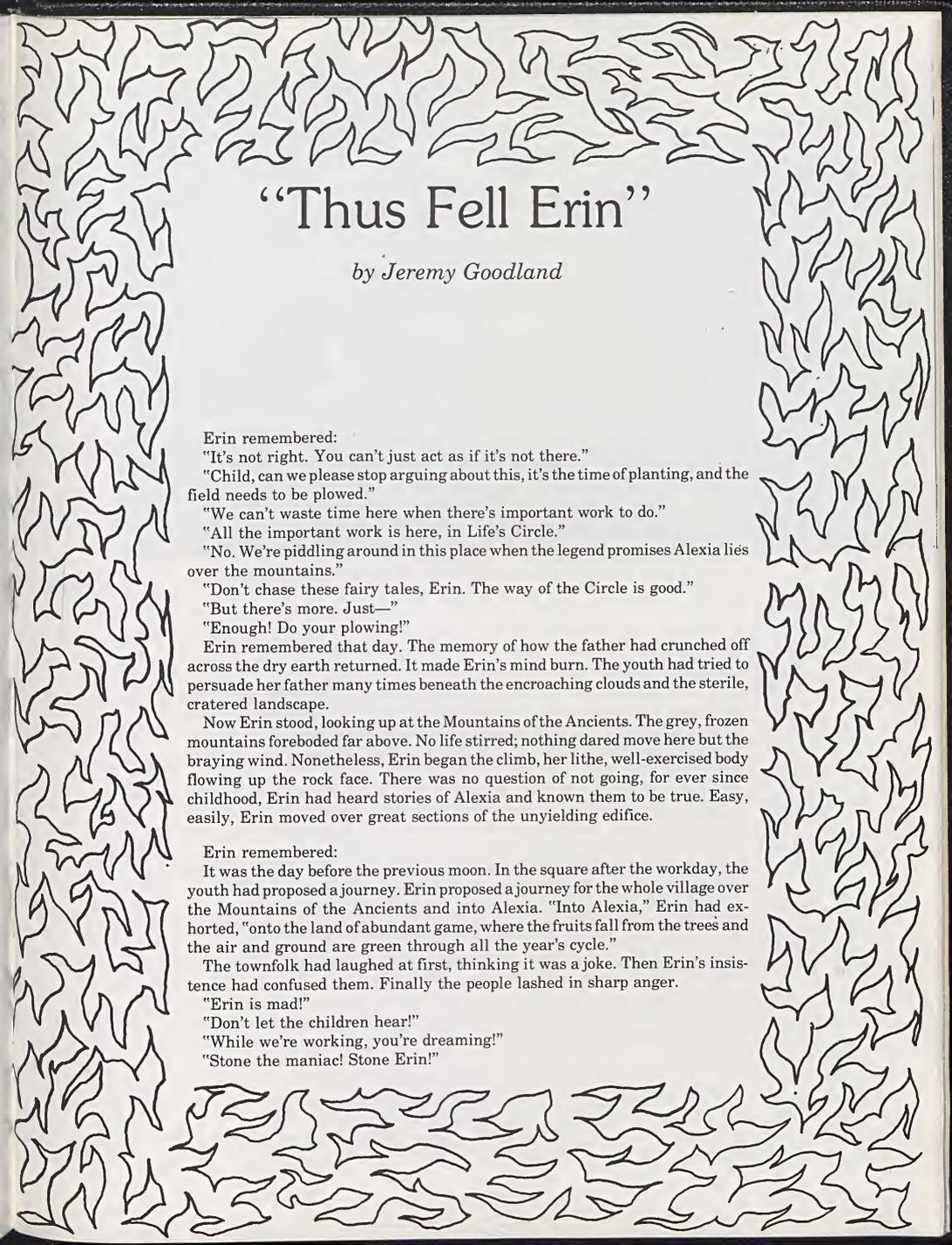
or smile back at the bemused llamas.
yet, Richard figures the visual
void with recollections—vignettes:
the bartering for huacos,
the women spin-dancing in their layers of wool skirts,
the weather-wrinkled Indian intent on a leaf of coca

Past Huancayo, above Lima.

—by Susan Myers



Lynn Harton



“Thus Fell Erin”

by *Jeremy Goodland*

Erin remembered:

“It’s not right. You can’t just act as if it’s not there.”

“Child, can we please stop arguing about this, it’s the time of planting, and the field needs to be plowed.”

“We can’t waste time here when there’s important work to do.”

“All the important work is here, in Life’s Circle.”

“No. We’re piddling around in this place when the legend promises Alexia lies over the mountains.”

“Don’t chase these fairy tales, Erin. The way of the Circle is good.”

“But there’s more. Just—”

“Enough! Do your plowing!”

Erin remembered that day. The memory of how the father had crunched off across the dry earth returned. It made Erin’s mind burn. The youth had tried to persuade her father many times beneath the encroaching clouds and the sterile, cratered landscape.

Now Erin stood, looking up at the Mountains of the Ancients. The grey, frozen mountains foreboded far above. No life stirred; nothing dared move here but the braying wind. Nonetheless, Erin began the climb, her lithe, well-exercised body flowing up the rock face. There was no question of not going, for ever since childhood, Erin had heard stories of Alexia and known them to be true. Easy, easily, Erin moved over great sections of the unyielding edifice.

Erin remembered:

It was the day before the previous moon. In the square after the workday, the youth had proposed a journey. Erin proposed a journey for the whole village over the Mountains of the Ancients and into Alexia. “Into Alexia,” Erin had exhorted, “onto the land of abundant game, where the fruits fall from the trees and the air and ground are green through all the year’s cycle.”

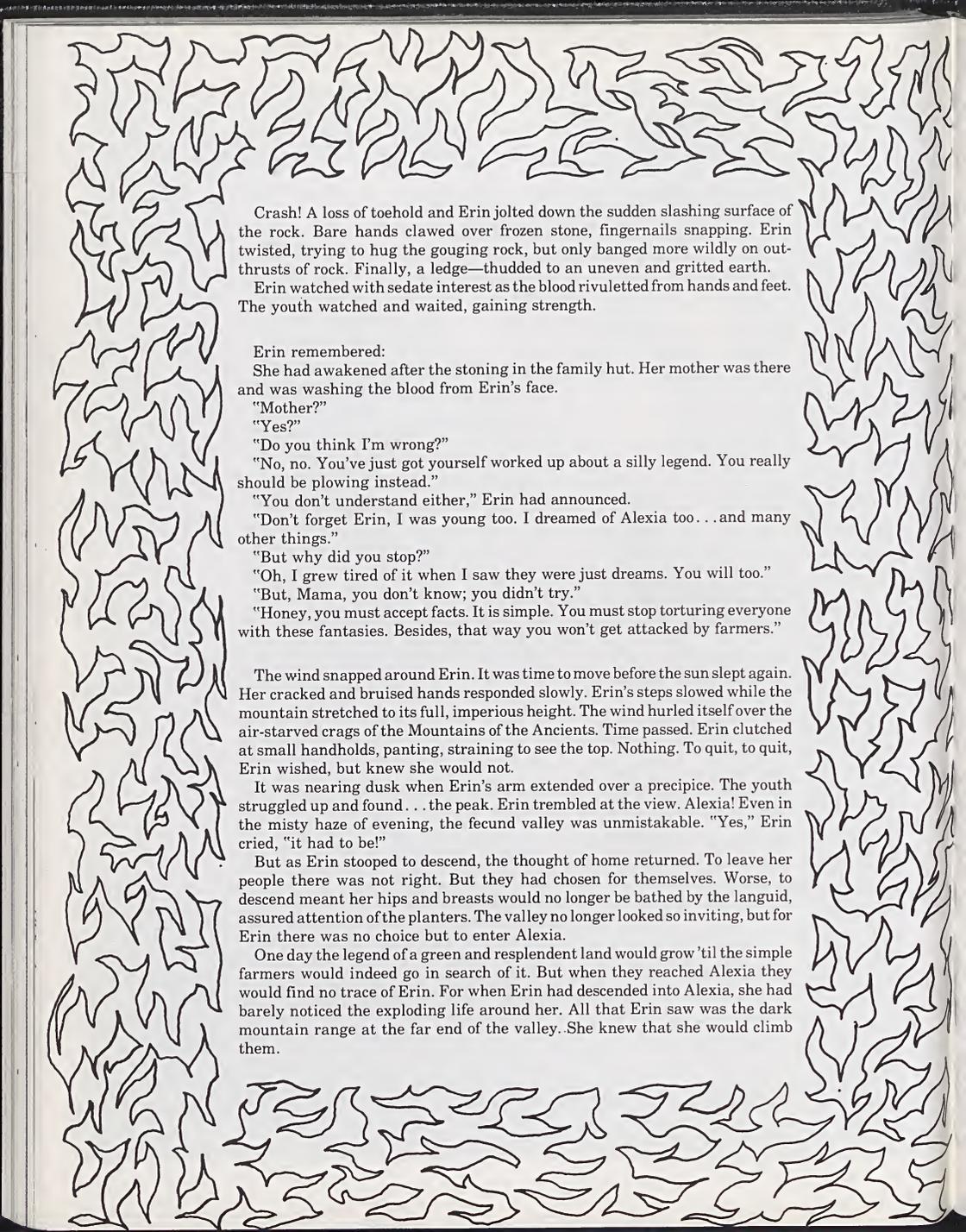
The townfolk had laughed at first, thinking it was a joke. Then Erin’s insistence had confused them. Finally the people lashed in sharp anger.

“Erin is mad!”

“Don’t let the children hear!”

“While we’re working, you’re dreaming!”

“Stone the maniac! Stone Erin!”



Crash! A loss of toehold and Erin jolted down the sudden slashing surface of the rock. Bare hands clawed over frozen stone, fingernails snapping. Erin twisted, trying to hug the gouging rock, but only banged more wildly on out-thrusts of rock. Finally, a ledge—thudded to an uneven and gritted earth.

Erin watched with sedate interest as the blood rivulleted from hands and feet. The youth watched and waited, gaining strength.

Erin remembered:

She had awakened after the stoning in the family hut. Her mother was there and was washing the blood from Erin's face.

"Mother?"

"Yes?"

"Do you think I'm wrong?"

"No, no. You've just got yourself worked up about a silly legend. You really should be plowing instead."

"You don't understand either," Erin had announced.

"Don't forget Erin, I was young too. I dreamed of Alexia too... and many other things."

"But why did you stop?"

"Oh, I grew tired of it when I saw they were just dreams. You will too."

"But, Mama, you don't know; you didn't try."

"Honey, you must accept facts. It is simple. You must stop torturing everyone with these fantasies. Besides, that way you won't get attacked by farmers."

The wind snapped around Erin. It was time to move before the sun slept again. Her cracked and bruised hands responded slowly. Erin's steps slowed while the mountain stretched to its full, imperious height. The wind hurled itself over the air-starved crags of the Mountains of the Ancients. Time passed. Erin clutched at small handholds, panting, straining to see the top. Nothing. To quit, to quit, Erin wished, but knew she would not.

It was nearing dusk when Erin's arm extended over a precipice. The youth struggled up and found... the peak. Erin trembled at the view. Alexia! Even in the misty haze of evening, the fecund valley was unmistakable. "Yes," Erin cried, "it had to be!"

But as Erin stooped to descend, the thought of home returned. To leave her people there was not right. But they had chosen for themselves. Worse, to descend meant her hips and breasts would no longer be bathed by the languid, assured attention of the planters. The valley no longer looked so inviting, but for Erin there was no choice but to enter Alexia.

One day the legend of a green and resplendent land would grow 'til the simple farmers would indeed go in search of it. But when they reached Alexia they would find no trace of Erin. For when Erin had descended into Alexia, she had barely noticed the exploding life around her. All that Erin saw was the dark mountain range at the far end of the valley. She knew that she would climb them.



Before the **Lobotomy**

Quick Fire

Cold burning battery wires meaning, when she, meaning

Oh, God

doesn't in parallel come to one, separation isn't God

Say it—

Nowhere can I hide, from them—

them there.

Alone

(twice)

Alone

Nooo, please—

It's too close, two close, to close

Can't you close it down?

I-I-I-I-you-you-I-I-I-I-eye-eye-eye-The EYE!

Will the tile scream

so

LOUDLY after?

Well, that is, I mean,

it's just that when—

Oh God, I can't go on, I can't
won't it stop, EVER?

Shhh, I can't, shhh . . . I can't.

Oh God I can't—

Not anymore.

—by Edmund Throgmorton

Richard Hugo: We All Have a Chance

On November 10, 1980, Richard Hugo gave a reading of his poetry at Wake Forest in the Ring Theatre to a responsive audience. The Student was granted an interview with him during which he discussed his experiences as a poet and teacher.

by Kenneth Prichard

Richard Hugo grew up during the Great Depression in White Center, a suburban community outside of Seattle, Washington. He has known poverty—not in the metaphysical sense. After World War II, when he served as a bombardier in Italy, Hugo returned to Seattle, where he tried to write a large war novel.

"I had tried to write in prose," he recounts, "yet it wasn't going very well. Being in Theodore Roethke's workshop sort of rekindled my passion for poetry. I decided that that was what I could probably do best. And it turned out that that was true; I was a much better poet than I was a fiction writer."

Indeed, Hugo was fortunate to have had the legendary Roethke as a teacher, but after Roethke's workshop, he did not embark on a career in creative writing. Instead, he worked at the Boeing Aircraft Company for 13 years and later attended the University of Washington where he received his M.A. degree in English. Out of graduate school and without a job, Hugo began to teach creative writing, "because," he explains, "I had to do something for a living. It turned out to be the only thing I ever did for a living that I took seriously. I take teaching very seriously."

Currently the director of the creative writing program at the University of Montana, Hugo also conducts poetry workshops at other universities and gives numerous readings when his schedule permits. He is considered not only one of the best teachers, but one of the best poets writing in America today, having written nine books of poetry, a collection of essays, and one novel.

Throughout his career Richard Hugo has continually refined his beliefs about creative writing and what it means to be a poet. Many of those beliefs are presented in a book of collected essays and lectures entitled *The Triggering Town*. The title essay deals with the phenomenon of the "triggering image," or the image from which the whole poem progresses. Poems have two subjects for Hugo: "The triggering subject that starts the poem and causes the poem and the generative subject which the poem comes to mean or say and which is generated or discovered during the actual writing of the poem." In Hugo's poetry that trigger image is often a town, yet Hugo insists that the poem must go beyond that initial subject. "I think a poem probably tells you more about the person who wrote it than about the initiating subject."

Hugo's poems certainly tell the reader as much about himself as the subjects he writes about. In the poem "Doing the House," from *White Center*, Hugo returns to the house where he lived for 25 years and speculates whether he would have become like the man who lived there had he bought the house:

*Clearly, they will tear it
down, one slate shingle
at a time and the man here
now, last
occupant, face the color of old
snow
will leave for the cold he is
certain of,
sweating more than last
night's bad wine.
He is the man I would have
become.¹*

Hugo, speaking of his experience in meeting the man, says, "He was very apologetic; he drank too much. He was a nice, very lonely man. And I don't think overly happy." It was his dedication to poetry that did not allow Hugo to become that man. The poet's imagination imbues order and meaning to experiences that otherwise would remain lost.

If readers allow themselves to become involved with the poem, then the events of the poem are perpetuated into their own imaginations. In "Degrees of Gray at Phillipsburg" Hugo addresses the reader: "You might come here Sunday on a whim / Say your life broke down. The last good kiss / you had was years ago." Hugo brings his audience directly into the poem then continues to narrate the poem through their eyes. This stylistic twist seems simple, but consider the risk the poet takes in engaging the unique experience of the reader to trigger his poem. Hugo suggests he sees as much through the readers' eyes as they are able to see through his. Phillipsburg becomes any small town one may visit on a Sunday.

Many poets claim they write poetry as a type of catharsis to alleviate the pain of their personal lives and as a means of accepting that pain. Hugo does not find his poetry correlative to pain in his own life. For, he feels that "there is no correlation between pain and the act of writing; that is to say, pain can get into a poem when the poet doesn't feel any particular pain when he's writing it." Thus, Hugo remains receptive to emotion which he knows may have preceded the poem by 20 years or that may be there at the time he is writing. But, he adds,

"There's very seldom a part relationship between the two; if the emotion is there, it lasts about 20 seconds."

For Hugo, writing is a very personal act; there are no tensions or competition between himself and other poets. He uses this analogy: "Poetry is not like a baseball league or a football conference; you can't compare poems the way you compare cars. Poems are kind of unique things—I mean they're not comparable... so, there is no competition; people who are competitive and bring competitive instincts into poetry suffer for it." Hugo believes poets should write for themselves and not for an "ideal" reader. If a poet can understand his own work, then he must assume that other people can as well. As Hugo notes, "You cannot run around the world giving literacy tests. You can't worry about what people can understand. If you do, you'll stop writing." He advises young writers not to become mired down by "the bawdy politics of poetry," rather, just write.

Hugo does not believe American society can produce any great poets of his generation, comparable to those of countries with homogeneous societies. The possibility for a single "great" poet no longer exists, because no one poet can speak for all members of a mixed society. The poet's stature in America has been lost. "That is," Hugo comments, "you can say Wallace Stevens was a great poet, but you can walk into any supermarket and find a whole bunch of people who haven't the faintest idea who he was. This is not really true in Ireland. I mean, you couldn't walk into any pub and find somebody who didn't know who Yeats was. The relation of the poet to the rest of the country is different here." America tends to produce writers who identify with the particular region of the country from which they draw their subject material. Hugo says further, "We tend to let ideas talk through things, rather than focusing on pure abstraction."

In a society such as America's, the poet's imagination must be able to adapt in order to deal with the mag-



nanimous changes occurring in the country. As poet Madeline DeFrees states, "It must be able to create unknowns out of knowns." Hugo adds to this, "Progress is a way of changing the knowns, so the imagination resents it. I think the wrong things change in America. I mean, what should change—the values, the human intercourse, and so forth—seems to lag behind the physical change we see. I come from the West, and I've seen a whole landscape systematically ruined by progress."

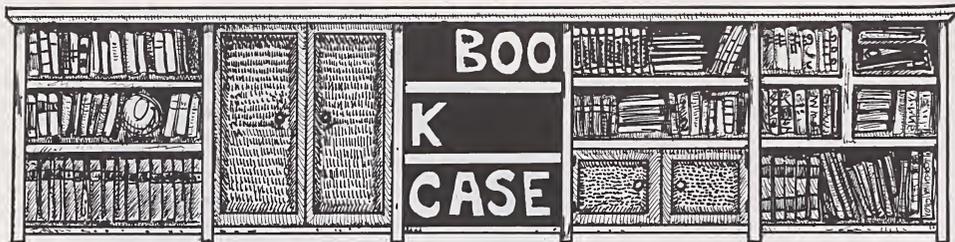
In his essay "A Statement of Belief" from *The Triggering Town*, Hugo writes, "All art is failure." Yet, as one reads his work, there seem to be moments when the poet uncovers the true nature of his experiences and transfers that semblance of truth to his readers. Art fails in that it cannot fully realize the expectations of

man or recreate the realities of nature. But the artist must still try at least to approach some attainment. "When you write a poem," Hugo warns, "you must be prepared to fail. It will never reach to ideal music you would like it to. There's always something a little human, and even a little grubby about it. Even a little shady, if you will."

One may then view art as the last frontier where man, through his own imagination, can continually define and refine his limitations, that is to say, his failures. Hugo's conviction of the importance of poetry in our life becomes evident when he comments, "Writing is a way of saying that you and the world have a chance."

NOTES:

¹Richard Hugo, *White Center*, (New York/London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1980), p. 4.



THIRD PARTIES

by Laura Cunningham

286 pp. New York:

Coward, McGann & Geoghegan

Inc. \$11.95

It has often been said that behind every good joke lurks a still greater truth. If this is in fact the case, Laura Cunningham's *Third Parties* may be cited as an example which is nothing short of stunning. With an unrelenting honesty to detail, she carefully chronicles man's natural inclination towards folly and vice, which is further frustrated by the economic pressures of our age. With an equally unwavering sense of the ridiculous, Ms. Cunningham fully exploits the entertainment value of the absurd. The result? A beautifully crafted piece of contemporary satire which is at once hilariously funny and disconcertingly accurate.

Third Parties is set in a community in which the divorce rate is rising as fast as the taxes, and the foundations of morality are crumbling even more rapidly than those of the monstrous Neo-Gothic Castles and French-style Chateaux which dominate the mountainside—a community which is, we realize, a not-too-distant kin of our own. This is Darton's Wood. Founded in 1880 as a robber baron's retreat, Darton's Wood is now, exactly a century later, being undermined by monetary erosion. Economic pressures, running like a fault through the foundation of Darton's Wood, present an ever-pervasive threat to this exclusive community.

This threat, and the strain inherent therein, takes its toll on the residents of the Wood, and the resulting game of musical estates and swap-mates is, although somewhat unsettling, something too amusing not to be enjoyed. The dozens of real estate brokers "working" the area (divorced women "fueled on vodka and insufficient alimony," uniformly wearing designer shoes and carrying imported purses) gleefully capitalize on the havoc descending upon a house "at the first hint of discord." This is indeed, and perhaps understandably, "a community which guards the reproductive value of its houses more zealously than its marriages."

Katcher and his wife Beth move to the Wood simply

because it is a pretty place to live. Katcher, a self-made man of Jewish descent and moderate means, is a "Woodser" neither by heritage nor descent. Seemingly immune to the economic and social ills which plague his neighbors, he is content with his tepid marriage and his indifferent existence. Content, that is, until the day Nadine Bluttal seduces him in a closet during a cocktail party.

Before he can even straighten his tie, Katcher finds himself an "unattached male prospect" with an assumable mortgage and a situation which is, in short, "typically Wood." Torn between the obsessive passion of Nadine Bluttal and the comfortable indifference of his frigid wife, and pursued by every sex-starved divorcée within an hour's drive, Katcher struggles with alternating despair and elation, trying to establish some control over himself and his newly discovered secret selves.

Katcher's personal tribulations are not the only source of conflict. *Third Parties* also deals with the more vast concerns of the community struggling to thwart any further decay of its structure. In the midst of such mundane daily occurrences as husband-wife shootouts (never fatal), equally unsuccessful suicide attempts, and widespread financial and mental collapse, the invasion of Urbanco—an insidious development firm with designs to transform the Wood into a technological conglomerate of assembly line houses and cliché shopping centers—and the threat of Stagmore One had gone all but unnoticed. Now, in the eleventh hour, Katcher realizes that it is up to him to prevent Stagmore One, a "megaenviron" of shopping malls and malignant prefab "clusters," from becoming a concrete reality.

But how does one stop these powerful men equipped with money, political power, and monotones perfected by years of droning tepid presentations? In the realization that it was precisely that barrage of conscience-numbing rhetoric which had given Urbanco its victory thus far, Katcher devises his only hope for saving Darton's Wood, which he has come to love "the way others love people." His strategy is simple. "Urbanco had bored the Wood away from the people. Now the people would bore it back," immobilizing the developers with a filibuster guaranteed to tranquilize. "Inertia had been the guiding force of Katcher's life;" here is an assignment he can handle.

But, win or lose, Katcher and his neighbors have yet to find a solution to the social and economic ills which plague them. Laura Cunningham does not promise us a better world. The vice and folly of mankind stubbornly persist. Freaks of nature threaten the next generation almost before it has begun as the blastocyst which will grow to be Katcher's heir misinterprets a genetic message, altered by excess caffeine, and begins, somewhat incorrectly, to grow. A sardonic twist, a bitter irony, perhaps, but the tone is not one of pessimism, for Laura Cunningham has taught us to laugh at the absurdity of our situation, recognizing its ridiculousness as an almost unbounded potential for entertainment.

—Martha Russell

DRAWING ON THE WALLS

by Jay Meek

81 pp. Pittsburgh:

Carnegie-Mellon University Press. \$9.95

Drawing On the Walls by Jay Meek is an exhibition of experience. While many poets are cultivating eccentric and obscure techniques and themes, Meek speaks about the larger but more basic range of experience—a human perspective which many poets scorn and at which even more poets fail.

If some of *Drawing On the Walls* is solipsistic, Meek is at least giving his readers just what he might give himself. Meek's remembrances, for instance, endow imagery and events with a strictly personal importance where certain things are significant simply because they have not been forgotten. In the first poem, "The Twice Born," Meek writes:

*But years ago—
the baled hay banked against an old farmhouse
in winter, and under the yardlight
a wagon of cabbages
with something vague and memorable beside it
like a yellow gazelle in the snow.*

The reader, sitting outside the poet's world, might not understand the importance of the pictures painted. But certainly the reader understands the importance of painting those pictures.

In other poems, Meek consciously "means" through revelation of the significance of individual observation. In "Perspectives of the Crossing," Meek asserts, "But isn't there for every person one transparent time when he might say, 'this is what I am.'" More explicitly in "And so Tomorrow the Failhoes," the poet links these times with a clarity of perception:

*And mustn't there be moments
of equal clarity when what one sees in a field
is what truly exists,
at which one begins to
feel something like dispassionate joy and
elevation.*

As these moments of lucidity represent the reasoning behind Meek's choice of imagery, they open the door for the reader's participation in the poet's world. They allow the reader an understanding of his mechanism of writing.

Yet, Meek's moments of clarity imply other moments of obscurity and voyages of uncertainty which the poet and the reader must make. In perhaps the best poem from the volume, "One Summer, Beside the River," Meek creates another of many scenes. In this poem, guests on a piazza drink champagne, eat "salmon on ice" and listen to a string trio or the sound of "croquet balls scattering on the lawn." In the midst of this static scene, however, a child weeps and the poet wonders:

*if a white steamer were to come, or perhaps
a swanboat
would the weeping girl go to meet it,
and the party on the piazza, and the players
at croquet
would they go down as it neared the dock,
and if so, where would it take them, what could
they see?*

Meek's view is not immutable even though it is occasionally startlingly clear, seemingly complete, and neatly finalized. His human tendency to venture out from complacency complements his sharp, almost inspired, perception as he draws the reader still further into his work.

Poems which carry the reader away make up the major part of the volume. And Meek illuminates many characters outside his own poetic voice while still burying his individualized view in each of these portraits. A good example of the variety of these roles and of the poet's technique is "The Resurrectionist:":

*What so you think of me who never
see my face and hear me only in caves
where the wind stops or beds as lamps
fail do you think I am never with you
no think of me as one trying for this
contact I am he who sends the letters
you never receive I am the caller who
awakens you and fades before you come.*

The beauty of such poems is that they include a way of observing that the reader can at least partially understand and, thus, are leaps of experience easily made and appreciated.

These dramatic poems are the drawings which Meek leaves on the wall. Meek's poem "Walls"—set in the form of a will, dated 1568, and attributed to Chidiock Tichborne—remarks on the limits of a prisoner's sight and yet consistently moves, despite itself, toward pleasure in the boundlessness of the possibility of observation. Similarly, another poem, "Letter to Hawthorne," engages the reader's sense of humor and carries him toward implausibility without dropping what Meek must see as the basic ingredient of existence—perception.

While later, longer poems in the volume may test the reader's attention, *Drawing On the Walls* is an excellent single volume of verse. Jay Meek's solipsism quickly melts as interest in the poet's perceptions yield to a deeper understanding of the poet and a deeper pleasure in his journeyings into humanity, for, as Meek says in "Twice Born,"

*I make my walls so marvellous and strange
roofs don't stop here at all.*

Though *Drawing On the Walls* is indeed strange, it is within the range of our imagination and thus avoids the eccentricity and boredom encountered in reading much of contemporary poetry.

—David B. Marshall

DISAPPEARANCES

by William York
335 pp. New York:
Atheneum. \$11.95

Disappearances is not a novel for those with weak stomachs or tender sensibilities. Written in the anonymity of first person (we never learn the narrator's name), the novel is the seventy-year-old narrator's memoir of his youthful journalistic beginnings in Paris during the early 1920s. The narrator comes to France at age eighteen with his gigolo father. Because of the nature of his father's profession, the boy is essentially left to his own devices, and he gleefully makes haste to rid himself of his American naïveté. His dwindling monetary resources force him to take a room in an exceptionally sordid neighborhood in Paris (deformed whores line the street) and to take a job with an alcoholic yellow journalist, translating and spicing up French news articles for British scandal sheets. The narrator is obsessed with the sensational trial of Henri Désiré Landru, "the Bluebeard of Gambais," who is accused of strangling and dismembering ten women and disposing of their remains in his wood stove. Landru's prey had been middle-aged, rather plain, friendless women to whom he had become engaged before buying them one-way train tickets to his secluded villa at Gambais. His obvious motive is financial gain, so the one incongruent "disappearance" with which he is charged is that of a young, beautiful, penniless girl. The main plot of the novel follows the narrator's fascinated coverage of the prosecution.

The narrator is equally obsessed with Fleur, a disturbed and disturbing prostitute with a dark secret. She eventually comes to live with the narrator, but she disappears periodically, presumably to practice her trade. Finally, she disappears forever. Apparently, Fleur mystifies Wiser as much as she does the narrator—at the end of the book, Wiser simply leaves her in the void into which he makes her disappear, evidently in an attempt to parallel the "disappearances" of the ten

women for whose murders Landru is on trial. The only illumination of Fleur's "secret" at which Wiser hints is implausible and unsatisfying.

Landru's trial is equally unsatisfying. The narrator summarizes Landru's case in the first chapter; the remainder of the story merely enlarges upon the grisly details, offering no surprises, and Landru is duly convicted and vividly guillotined. Wiser seems to admit in his last sentence his failure to come up with a satisfying solution to what seems to be a rather ill-defined mystery from the beginning. Landru's "mutilated body" is buried, the narrator tells us, "along with Landru's grim secret, and mine." After reading 335 pages, one understandably feels somewhat cheated.

Wiser's style, fortunately, is engaging and informal. He makes liberal, though natural and unpretentious, use of French, and his descriptions of France and of the French people are excellent and refreshingly realistic. Wiser tries to add realism to his fictional characters by mixing in many actual figures of the period (most notably Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, Picasso, Cocteau, and a transvestite homosexual called "Barbette"), a practice which provides for several amusing scenes. Wiser unfortunately concentrates his realism on a great deal of often gratuitous and almost clinically explicit sex and sickening gore. Wiser is a good storyteller—it is unfortunate that his story is so disappointing.

—Susan Rogers

CHASING DAD

by Candace Flynt
274 pp. New York:
Dial Press. \$9.95

Chasing Dad, Candace Flynt's first novel, is a startling, sometimes repulsive account of a family rent by adultery and alcohol.

Flynt, a native of Greensboro, follows in the tradition of Southern women writers such as Katherine Anne Porter, Flannery O'Connor, and Carson McCullers. However, she transcends this stereotype by preferring a more titillatingly realistic, if not avant-garde, analysis of relationships made tenuous by lack of emotion and compassion.

The protagonist in the novel is Merle Mitchell—a hard working, hard drinking, gritty and lascivious man. Merle is the nexus between the reader and the complicated, and occasionally cluttered, plot; he never leaves us. Although he may be absent from a scene, his forceful presence is always felt.

Merle's son Jay has the same ubiquitous quality. He is the hidden impetus behind the whirring emotional struggles which comprise the novel. After a brief opening passage, Jay commits suicide, yet he remains a continual element in the story. While Merle struggles to reconcile himself to the death of his son, he becomes

estranged from the other members of his family, decimated by his inability to communicate. At the novel's end, however, Merle accepts the fact that Jay is gone permanently, but nevertheless a family remains.

The plot of the novel is enhanced by the vivid imagery and poetic allegories so skillfully crafted by Flynt:

He pulled out the hammer, its oak handle worn to fit his [Merle's] hand, and held it cocked for action. He slipped it back and forth in the curl of his hand and watched his scars flex with the motion. He could be hammering tomorrow if he ever wanted to hammer again. Knocking bloody hell out of some cheap nails to build an oversized bank account. . . . He had the hands. They were huge, more huge than he'd ever noticed them being, like they'd grown just by his bragging on them. And strong like a wrestler's who could break your neck with the flick of his thumb.

With those few lines, Flynt vividly portrays Merle's imposing strength and spirit. However, the lucidity of some of her most brilliant imagery is clouded by a proclivity for blatant symbolism. Merle's injured hand, Jay's empty apartment, and the ominous pine tree from which Jay had hung himself are all symbols which are effective at first, but become hackneyed because of their continual resurgence. Ultimately, these symbols do become lost in a stimulating plot pervaded by colorful and rich language.

Chasing Dad is a successful attempt by Ms. Flynt to illustrate vividly the dangers inherent in the inability to communicate and express emotion. It is a novel of polarity: communication and failure to communicate; emotion and lack of emotion; compassion and the absence of compassion; love and the inability to express love. The novel penetrates the dark and nebulous area between these poles and leaves us at one end—not hopelessness—but a strong feeling of love, compassion and hope for a family that endured.

—Dennis Manning

SO THIS IS DEPRAVITY

by Russell Baker

325 pp. New York:

Congdon & Lattes, Inc. \$10.95

Russell Baker is a very civilized man fighting to preserve the basic precepts that do indeed maintain his civility. He is defending the city against the invading barbarians from without while trying to reform it from within. The enemies of civilization are everywhere: the nightly news which flashes death and suffering as if they were panty hose commercials; the holier-than-

thou "moral minions" who drink only white wine and jog; the faceless government man who "wears a business suit to work, with a conservative necktie in good taste" and spends his day devising programs for killing people. Baker spars them all, and everything else in range, in his collection of columns, *So This is Depravity and Other Observations*.

Baker, it seems, is very interested in depravity. Something of a Latin scholar and historian, he has read his Roman history well and analogies to that sad story keep cropping up in his observations on the current predicament into which civilization has managed to get itself.

Depravity, of course, is everywhere today. Most Americans, Baker states, have become lazy, pleasure-seeking, self-righteous brats. We are doing our damndest to live the American dream, but Baker sees us drowning in our own affluence. Take "Red Meat Decadence" for example:

After the war there was no tapering off. We had become a nation of beef-a-holics. By the 1950's, the smell of barbecued beef hung like smog over 100,000 American suburbs. A social crisis was no longer your relief check's failure to arrive before the rent was due, but the arrival of a steak cooked medium rare when you had ordered it rare.

All very funny, right? Wrong. Baker is serious. If Roman decadence could lead to the fall of civilization as they knew it, Red Meat Decadence can lead to the end of society as we know it.

This was not a crisis met with a gay smile on the lips, and a joke. Tension prevailed over the table. One was aware that his manhood had been challenged by the chef. Did one dare to threaten nuclear retaliation by demanding to see the manager? Would one lose face if. . .

This is Baker at his best. The sarcasm and irony are so sharp and quick that it has to be read several times in order to not miss the real point. You see, Baker understands the American dream—both sides of it, the good and the bad. He can poke fun at the most cherished of American ideas, as in this selection from a column written in the 1970s, "Verb (U.S.): Go-go."

"Go west," said Greeley. Go-getters with plenty of get-up and go got up and went for the pure love of going and getting, and because it was the one thing every American approved of, because every American, looking at go-getters getting up and going, felt wonderful about being part of a country that was on the go.

Yet he can also write in a very direct manner about the waste and inhumanity our life-style seems to spawn. For example, the way we gloss over the suffering of the "unlucky" in this land is a topic to which he often returns.

And, of course, life is unfair. There is no getting around it. It was unfair of those looters to behave as they did when the lights went out. Unfair to the merchants they destroyed. Unfair to New York City. Unfair to call attention to the grisly fact of what is out there behind the unemployment figures, the daily crime statistics, the welfare budget figures, the high school illiteracy scores, the illegitimate-birth statistics.

Or more directly:

Old people at the supermarket make you feel what's the use. Staring at 90-cent peanut butter. Taking down an orange, looking for its price, putting it back.

This is Russell Baker at his not-so-humorous, trying to save us from ourselves.

Whether sarcastic or serious, Russell Baker's work remains entertaining and thought-provoking. A large part of his talent lies in his incredible range, both in terms of subject and style, and that is what is so well displayed in this collection. Russell Baker is fighting for civilization—for all of us, and with his wit and style, we just might win.

—John Hunter

A Pug-Nosed Child

A pug-nosed child
looks out through ebony;
through glass,
paved with rainbow fingerprints,
dove-tail patches beneath each nostril;
thick sweat
pouring from the winter window,
crying under the pain
of keeping out the cold.

He sees the watchmaker
walk out of his tiny narrow shop,
cross the street,
drop two hide colored
pockets into the mail,
scamper back
shuffle-footed,
not slipping.

The watchmaker
warms beside an oil stove
until the eye-loop clears,
then hunches behind his bench—
he's quite large and
dwarfs his children.

The young boy runs to the
fire to warm his buttocks,
thinking about the
tan pockets
floating through air.

—by Tom Albritton

