

TRACE

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Views of; Bits from The '60s
VARIED EXAGMINATIONS

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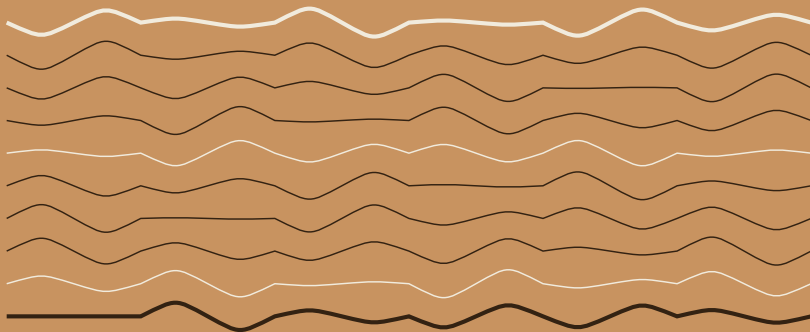
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JAMES BOYER MAY / EDITOR



TRACE

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Edited by JAMES BOYER MAY

A CLEAN READING EDITION

Advertisements, subscription promotions, the front cover and blank leaves have been omitted. The poetry, fiction, essays, correspondence and reviews of the issue are given in full, in the order in which they are printed.

Where a poet uses the space of the page — indented lines, hanging steps, gaps within a line — that spacing is treated as part of the poem and kept as closely as a proportional typeface allows. Square brackets enclose conjectural readings where the scan is faded. Original spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and verse lineation are kept.

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NO BRAKE SIGNALS:

NEOTERIC VERBALIZINGS RUN ON

(‘TOWARDS PRINT’ for this issue)

by James Boyer May

A NEW INSIGHT CONCERNING CONTINUED ‘explosions’ into more differences (and pseudo-differences) in literary verbal textures of Sixties fictions may be found with the help of eleven of the books and pamphlets recently accumulated for review. Despite the fact that the lengthening years since World War I have not yet evidenced any sure signs of a turn of the cycle toward conservation and digestion—as occurred soon after Edgar Allen Poe’s death at mid-Nineteenth Century—evidences of a Poe revival may be connected with hints of a slackening of innovational outpourings ahead. Susan Solomont and Ritchie Darling (*FOUR STORIES BY POE — 50c — GREEN KNIGHT Press*) seem to infer this in an analysis of *The Telltale Heart*, though they of course do not leave their subject to investigate contemporary works.

These critics single out the story as Poe’s most ‘modern,’ because of its concentration upon subjective psychological materials and its eschewment of objective detail. The analysis is based exclusively upon Poe’s thematic and story-line innovations—his disciplined craftmanly qualities—with reference to the share his practice as poet had on the verbal invention in his prose. Yet, this perhaps is fully as significant to any search for attitudes which now soon might lead to an integrative period. An awareness of parallels between Poe and today’s poet-fictionists in this aspect, may presage a turning toward more deliberative self-conscious manipulations of language; Poe’s comparatively-slight inventions were carefully prepared from

a conscious intellectual approach—and this was true of his idiom as well as of structures and treatments noted by Solomont and Darling.

Although language is the focus here, since Ambrose Bierce also is getting renewed attention, a study titled by his name (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA Press — 65c) from Robert A. Wiggins is another of the eleven items. As story-writer, Bierce was a latter Nineteenthcentury descendant of Poe. A third, closer, teller of tales is the subject of Brom Weber, in the same University Series (SHERWOOD ANDERSON). Contra Bierce's theory of fiction, his method utilized local color; but the resulting psychological revelations and symbolisms make him relevant in many of the same ways. CONRAD AIKEN, by Reuel Denney, is another — best of the three — from MINNESOTA; Aiken's descent from Poe is shown to have predetermined and limited the extent of language individuation resulting from his psychological thinking. Coming down to date, the fifth (and last work on or about writing) is HENRY MILLER ON WRITING (NEW DIRECTIONS — \$2.25, paperb.).

The rest all are original works. Roughly in order of increasing language manipulation, they are: *US HE DEVOURS*, James B. Hall (NEW D.—San Francisco Review—\$4.50); *TO AN IMAGINARY DAUGHTER*, Walter Lowenfels (HORIZON Press — \$3.50); *COLLAGES*, Anais Nin (ALAN SWALLOW — \$1.45, paperb.); *FROM NOW ON*, William Packard (ACADIA Press — \$1.50, paperb.); *THE MULTIPLE MODERN GODS*, Stanley Berne (WITTENBORN — \$5, paperb.); and *ABRAXAS*, Arlene Zekowski (same — \$5, paperb.).

BIERCE TO MILLER

Wiggins' AMBROSE BIERCE is mainly biographical, with scarcely any textual analysis. Summary comments point to stylistic conservatism, in contrast to a rebellious refusal to employ any of the representational surface-modes favored in Bierce's day — also that, while Bierce's language was modelled upon the past, his techniques make him a forerunner of moderns such as Carson McCullers, William Faulkner, and Conrad Aiken. Wiggins draws attention to cynical development of horror through juxtapositions of the supernatural with realistic etchings of minds in scenes of violence and death — elements which bring Bierce close to many younger contemporaries in the Gothic mode. One wonders why he does not stress that such younger relatives of his subject are among those who have been diverse linguistic innovators — that they perhaps owe debts to Bierce not only for their depth-treatments, but because the Biercian admixtures themselves predicate the language-bending which the Nineteenth-century purist would not relax to try.

Weber, in writing of Anderson, also gives slight note to texts; but his booklet contains valuable observations about idiom: that Anderson's prose was affected by his extended attempts to produce poetry, with ' . . . emphasis upon the musical sound of language before it becomes sense in order that he might portray the transformation of undifferentiated sensation and emotion into intelligible form.' Anderson, though later denied by oncoming apostles of experiment, was an early figure of our still-enduring avant garde; here and there, besides rejecting sentiment and advancing frank sex, his stories presage (Weber does refer to Gertrude Stein's influence) change in verbal textures — a breaking out of old patterns, intrinsically through the word as well as through narrative techniques. Weber only offers the general observation that McCullers (and others, including John Hawkes) are stylistically obliged to Anderson.

Unasked in this booklet is a question regarding the degree to which Anderson hobbled himself verbally through addiction to first-person recountals — whether he may not have been trying, by this practice, to render moderate syntactical deviations acceptable to a median readership. Weber underscores Anderson's intention by quoting from *MARCHING MEN*: 'It is a terrible thing to speculate on how man has been defeated by his ability to say words. . . . we continually say words, worn-out words, crooked words, words without power or pregnancy in them.' A question he does ask, and one well to repeat, is why many of Anderson's finer stories are unavailable in any of the collections.

Denny provides deep coverage of Conrad Aiken in short space. He sees the influences of Aiken's psychological thinking on his style, and the resulting ambiguities from loose structures, often ungrammatical in the strict sense, but evocative in the slow run. 'Music' influence in the poetry is dwelt upon; also, the mingling of conventional vocabulary and innovations, with related effects carrying over into Aiken's prose. The artist is limned as the 'autonomous explorer of reality' (and this independence of control may be seen well in the grammatical liberties and various strange word-involvements of *USHANT*).

Under a section heading, *My Aims and Intentions*, Henry Miller says: 'When they (readers) are shocked . . . , it is because of the language itself, what has been done to it and with it by the author, not the moral or immoral implications of this language.' However, the verbal originalities of Miller — by his own recountals — were not self-consciously developed, though he was aware of the various stages of his imitations of others, and awarly struggled to identify himself through vocabulary and phrase structures. He let influences come (and go) ('I followed my nose') — through an undeliberated course, seeking what carried the sound of his own individuality. The section title, *To Write as One Talks*, is

significant.

Hall, Lowenfels, Nin

At first glance, some may wonder how James B. Hall's collection of stories gets into this article. It's an excellent display of fine entertaining fiction, with traces of influences from the best works of all of the writers so far mentioned — plus Hall's quite different handlings of his choices of materials. At the outset, his verbalization may not seem distinctive in an avant sense; however, this is chiefly because only the superficial devices catch the immediate eye — and contemporary readers have been conditioned to reduced punctuation, metaphoric shocks, narrational ambiguities, liberties with parts of speech, etc. And Hall is — not always, but in most of these — a fairly straight tale-weaver. Another factor is Hall's almost magical ability to engage readers with his living characters so that the combinations of words used to accomplish this trick bounce past all but unnoticed.

Hall's achievement has been to utilize a distinctly modern idiom (essentially unlike that of others, if not disturbingly peculiar) to tell stories in ways that must engage and hold even readers who have not been prepared by works of his revolutionary predecessors. Though no smoke from the oil of the midnight lamp is in evidence — and one has to be hyperperceptive to hear any gears shifting — Hall plainly has labored hard to reach a larger audience than have most younger moderns, and at the same time to remain his true self. The one conspicuous compromise-device consists of interpolations of brief old-style, even hackneyed, transitions (by phrase, or sometimes by a complete sentence); yet still, his writing is so succinctly active (verbs are unusually frequent, by reason of preponderance of short sentences — and nonsentences — and clipped clauses) that one isn't annoyed. Here is a sample:

He smiled as he caught them staring at his lips. It's all right he said, I don't really want any. His eyelid drooped, and

he raised his whole head as though he were encouraging the eyeball to look. He was not at all surprised that he did not want any: he really desired nothing at all. Once he had felt whisky was the most refined, the subtlest of all hardware, some liquid version of a new expensive, chromed blender sparkling in sunlight. Well, it was better this way. Perhaps now he would do one worthwhile thing. . . .

Such passages as the foregoing, from *THE ANTENNAE, AND THE RACE*, might be put forward as evidence of that anticipated literary retrenchment, assimilation of late influences, and slackening of change — but for the activities of the many other authors who still are tearing up the dictionary.

And here is a piece of Walter Lowenfels' prose:

Hamlet is running wild down the aisle of her bloodstream. Under her nondescript voice, she is Helen of Troy and Cassandra prophesying doom for all lovers. Nevertheless, she will kiss her nine-year-old daughter like a loving mother when they meet in Washington, and next week she will be reunited to the Young Man with a Knife in wedded bliss forever until death do us part, and that is not idle chatter of a city hall marrying clerk, but guaranteed by all the forces that run through the deep river she carries with her and is always in danger of losing to some strange young man she was just trying to make feel at home in the great city of her life. *TO AN IMAGINARY DAUGHTER* is commentary, mingled with autobiography — but still fiction, as that term is now freely used. The author employs a special 'communication' form, enabling him to set down pictures from his life, and beyond that, to speculate about other lives and world events as seen by him in his time-place while writing. Good telling of 'true' stories (the daughter here is not imaginary, but real) entails creative invention, even when the teller is not a poet (as Lowenfels is). This is not to suggest that Lowenfels is not veracious; in fact, it means he is more veracious, because he

remains faithful to himself in weaving words. The poetry, which is part of Lowenfels, comes through on every prose page. An older writer, he too has adjusted and settled down, in a manner of speaking, to what must be to him a very familiar individual pattern formed from his participation in the avant over the past half-century. Since Anais Nin seldom violates normal grammatical constructions, she may appear out of place in this piece; but with each new book, she seems more free in the amazing mixtures of evocative words which have made her as large an influence in modern poetry as any poet one might name (she has never published poetry, herself). The fact is that she has progressed toward a tighter discipline, with concentrated effects, in her flow of language — allowing the allusive and denotative powers of words to meld in ways to convey much more than just their combined sense from their arrangements into what usually are formal sentences — an elusive act. *COLLAGES* is a novel replete with examples of this: He cut into all the legendary textiles of the world: damask of the Medicis, oyster white of Greek robes, the mixed gold and blue of Venetian brocades, the midnight blue wools of Peru, the sand colors of the African cottons, the transparent muslins of India, to give birth to women who only appear to men asleep. His women became comets, trailing long nebulous trains, erratic members of the solar system. He gave only the silver scale of their mermaid moods, the sea shell rose of their ear lobes, corollas, pistils, light as wings. He housed them in façades of tent shelters which could be put up for a moment and folded and vanished when desire expired. The opening statement of this paragraph well might be converted to read: Anais Nin has cut into all the legendary textiles of the world.

PACKARD, BERNE, ZEKOWSKI The action of William Packard's play, *FROM NOW ON*, occurs in a home for the aged. A complex of oppositions forms out of characters who include an old prostitute, a nun, a male Negro attendant, an ex-actor, and

an aged philosopher (he ensures over-all unity, sounding chords of major moral opposition through questioning attitudes toward existence, including those of his two visiting grandchildren). The verbalizations throughout are integral to the effects. Without the author's skill in handling words—obtaining more than dialogue-results through consistency of language, one speaker to the next, and through a cued run-on device which is more a matter of adding strands to a thematic rope than the commoner one of give-and-take—this play would be rather flat.

Two illustrations: the Negro attendant carrying forward from the cue of Joan, a nurse, '... I should think you'd want to try to describe what's going on inside of you.'

Well to begin with I am always hounded by the sound of laughter, that's right, I can hear it in my ears, the same as when I was a little kid & all the other older children would laugh at me & they would keep on beating me & I could feel their blows come pounding down on me until I had a bloody nose & great huge bruises on my arms & they would punch me in the stomach so I'd have to curl up in a small ball & make great gasps & spasms in the air until I could breathe easily again & O christ it was wicked to be picked on.

and the prostitute, carrying on from the actor's '... BRAVO BRAVO BRAVO, yes that's what I remember, that's what I remember best about this life.'

What do I remember best about my life, let's see, I've got it here somewhere, O yeah, here it is: I remember once there was someone who used to make me take off all my clothes & jump up & down in front of him & bump my beautiful boobs in his face while he yelled SHAKE IT BABY, then he would hit me on the hips & kick me in the can & that's the way it always was, first he would slap me & then he would sleep with me, I'd always end up heaving underneath his great hairy bigbelly—

For most readers, Herbert Read's introductory Essay to Stanley Berne's *THE MULTIPLE GODS*, referring to the stories as attempts to overcome the problem of exhaustion of language from habitual resort to clichés, will be an understatement of Berne's verbal gymnastics—though Read asserts that he (and Arlene Zekowski, to whose novel his remarks also apply) concedes too much to the reader! Sir Herbert quotes from *METAMORPHOSIS*, by Ernest G. Schachtel, where that psychologist notes how childhood abilities to see and feel give way to a tendency to see and feel what one expects to—because one is expected to see and feel in terms of conventional phrases used by all others. And: 'Art, according to Dr. Schachtel, is the heroic attempt to escape from a schematization of experience.' This preface attributes an early accomplishment of the 'Neo-Narrative' (the term used by these authors) to Rimbaud, in *LES ILLUMINATIONS*; and also finds that Isidore Ducasse (*MALDORER*) had prepared the world for 'resurrection of the word.'

Here are two samples of Berne, openings of two of the more 'advanced' stories, *WATER STILL* and *THE SERVANTS*:

How shall that poverty of small room those walls that failure money buy the cars the chauffeur hopes young heat that sweat forehead to be long smooth wide hair widow's peak handsome that give pain as arrow handsome for lack to hand as hand touch out reach out smile has handsome money give to trim pocket have backing of the handsome housemaid the rich planter the money line flow that warms seeks the private light heat feelings rumble gas salad the crush teeth fall out of teeth rears holes the incisor cut the mastication leave holes in foods chew swallow full wet as thought sight smell of what to eat as dreams . .

Seek that.

By what gas.

Heart press.

As fear.

Eyes alert.
Bird land flight.
Seeks food.
Food station.
Land foam warm.
The piece as clay.
Forms hard as food.
Rots crust.
Spaded pies.

The author himself explicates the latter story. He describes the top line as the effort of the reader to 'seek out what is deepest in him.' The second line is the pressure on the heart from gas or weight of other organs: 'One feels oppressed.' An element of sorrow rises in connection with this experience of the heart, in the third line. Etc.

Both Berne's book and Zekowski's *ABRAXIS* contain Read's Preface, plus excerpts from *CARDINALS AND SAINTS*, a NeoNarrative textbook (a portion of this was reprinted in *TRACE* No. 39, in 1960). And Zekowski, too, offers an exposition of her work, using the sixth chapter of this novel.

A paragraph from the chapter:

The thievery is large upon us. In the passionate of ways for sure. As every mottled thread and bore. And gardened landscaped. In the flagstones heaped or laid. For grassy. In the cracks between. The porticoes. And shady pergolas. The blue moss. Over spreading on the road. That winds us delta deep. By dark. By gentry-like. In turns. And windings. Of our ways and days. Of pasturings. In wastage of the past. Far south. Near tropical. And wild. The grim. That grinds. Mysterious. To views we cannot see. But feel in shadow. As we climb and wind through way farings. That moss. As hung by drapery as dank as is our minds. In musty closettings of gravestone memories. The battlings and the battlements. Provincial to our blood. The good white gentry clean of handshake. Rotting in a vise of blue-veined knottings. That

vise firm Clasp. So cruel. In sweetness of its mild. How-do. And come again for sure. Such au revoir. Of planter to his kind. Where gin-congin is breakfasting. For more and more of same. To never change the system. 'Cause it works. About which, Zekowski says: '... the deep deep South ... becomes a kind of overall image of our basic human sadness and cruelty and selfishness. ... the pain is now set into a frame of lush subtropical beauty as deep and mysterious as the human soul. ... But it is deceiving, for the grass grows "In the cracks between..." The Spanish moss is like the mind seeped in the past, clogging it from seeing reality.' She points out that the material immediately following '... gravestone memories' are those memories. ... Then, on, to 'The gentillesse of the aristocratic Southerner's greeting ... only for his own white kind.' By reason of neoteric composition, neither book can gain large sales; but it's to be hoped that they will reach those (teachers, especially) whose influences eventually will lead to larger attention to the work of Berne and Zekowski in revitalizing words.

SHORT LITANY FROM A SHY SAINT

Better the caught coin
Than the flung.
 O gold have mercy
Better the last man off
The ship than not at all.
 O guts have mercy
Better married than to bum.
 O gonads have mercy
Better to drink no hemlock
And to manufacture cannons for
The prevention of disease only.
 O guns, O guns have mercy

Robert Kroetsch

THE NEW POETICS OR WHO SHOT TENNYSON'S EAGLE?

William E. Taylor

IT MAY BE TRUE THAT THE TWO dominating schools of modern American poetry are pulling toward one another. Poets we have come to associate with the San Francisco Renaissance are now teaching in the universities, as well as publishing in POETRY and other more 'academic' journals. Anthologies such as Donald Hall's CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY print Robert Lowell and Robert Duncan side by side, and Chad Walsh's TODAY'S POETS is an even more surprising juxtaposition of enemy big guns. Hurrah for the taste that can savor both James Dickey and Gil Orlovitz! But this is not all of the evidence that we are witnessing a rapprochement. Allen Ginsberg has been awarded a Guggenheim. The war is apparently over.

Yet—is it? There is, it seems to me, a likelihood that the two schools are irreconcilable. For all Lowell's tendency to get personal in his poetry (to use, once in a while, an almost slangy diction of the streets), FOR THE UNION DEAD is still the grandchild of Allen Tate's ODE; and Mr. Lowell would be the first to acknowledge his debt. Robert Lowell will never in any normal course of events write anything like the way Allen Ginsberg writes nor like the hordes of avant-garde poets (they claim this title, and so far as I can see, they deserve it) who frankly emulate him. The reason is apparent enough. The Establishment poet-critic, or critic-poet ("academic" really is no longer a useful term—and "Beat," which has long been misunderstood, might as well be left to LIFE and TIME), is still working within the framework defined by UNDERSTANDING POETRY.* Any competent critic-poet (or, for that matter, any professor) of the Establishment can take

one of its poems, apply the tools of the New Criticism, and presto, the poem reveals its most secret heart. The temptation to illustrate is overpowering.

Laurence Perrine's *SOUND AND SENSE* has, in many Freshman English books, taken the place once held by the Brooks and Warren book. Indeed, it has been found by many progressive high-school teachers to be useful in teaching poetry to advanced placement students — a sign, perhaps, of just how the time-explosion has hit even the schools. Perrine uses Tennyson's *THE EAGLE* as an introductory poem to illustrate the difference between poetry and prose. This is an apt choice, I have found in my own teaching. But not until quite recently did I discover how Tennyson accomplished the effects which make the poem so complete a success. I had long puzzled myself about what happens in lines three and six. In line three, Tennyson manages to achieve stasis. In line six, he achieves kinesis. My problem had always been that the rhythm of the two lines is nearly the same, fairly regular iambic tetrameter with a strong caesura after the third foot. Line three:

** Authored by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren.*

Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

Admittedly, the first foot is either a substitute trochee, or it is monosyllabic and the second foot is an anapest. Nevertheless, using the language of the tradition, one can talk about it. And line six:

And like a thunderbolt he falls.

This is even more regular, though, of course, the stresses are of different magnitude.

Now, I had once dismissed the difference between the effects of these two lines on the grounds that the caesura in line three, coupled with the meaning of 'stands,' simply produces the static image that the two preceding lines build, whereas in line six, the action image results from the combination of the meaning of 'falls' with perhaps the

suggestion of movement in the crawling sea and the pause before the last foot. Quite simply — sound and sense.

But I had not exhausted the possibilities of sound variations. Line three begins with fairly high pitch in ‘ringed,’ proceeds down the scale on the stressed syllables with ‘azure,’ to ‘world.’ However, it then goes way up to ‘he’ before letting us down (notice just how far) to ‘stands,’ almost where we were with ‘azure.’ On the other hand, in line six we start again with high pitch in ‘like,’ drop to ‘thunder,’ to ‘bolt’ — pause, and up again to ‘he,’ but this time all the way down to ‘falls.’

Stasis, then, in line three results from tonality (one of the weaknesses of New Criticism terminology is the ambiguity of the word ‘tone’), which brings us back at the end of a falling scale to a point of poise central in that scale. In line six, however, there is a dramatic further drop in tonality after the caesura, contributing strongly to the image of movement.

Now, when you talk to an avant-garde poet, you feel that he is not dealing with a poetic that has so precise a vocabulary. In the above discussion, I believe I have used a language that permits me to talk meaningfully not only about rhythm, but about tonality as well; and I have not, I am sure, exhausted its resources. With the poets working out of the San Francisco Renaissance, this is not the case. Maybe they are developing such a language—witness the Statements on Poetics, particularly Charles Olson’s, in Donald Allen’s *THE NEW AMERICAN POETRY*—but it is not as yet clearly defined, at least not in print. I personally do not think ‘it will ever be clear because avant-garde poetry is not primarily a technique, but a content. (Let us do away with this nonsensical notion—claimed by the aestheticians of both the Establishment and the Disestablishment—that there are no messages. Any decent poet tries first to ‘render’ experience, but there never has been and never will be a poetry without an ideational bias.) The content of

avant-garde poetry is an attitude, a tone.

Definitely, however, this is not merely an attitude of confession, as James Dickey would have it in *THE SUSPECT IN POETRY*. The most useful word one might use in naming this attitude is mystique. And a mystique of sorts, it is. The tone of *HOWL* is prophetic. The rhythms of *HOWL* are prophetic. The basic device is so simple it is almost simple-minded: a long line which puts you under stress before you are done with it because you know you are going to run out of breath. The discreetness of the line is insisted upon by another simple and familiar device: the repetition of introductory words and short phrases which function most of the time as punctuation-beyond-punctuation because they have almost no meaning, only function—phrases like: ‘that is;’ or just ‘that.’ (What a change this is from Hopkins’ sometimes maddening refusal to use function words at all.)

Sometimes, on the other hand, the avant-garde poet will use repetition differently. He will repeat key words over and over until they come to have (depending on your point of view) either a hypnotic or a deadening effect. Again, sometimes this will be merely a one-instance occasion involving what is really assonance (ash/ask) or consonance (lovely/lively), having the effect of stating that one object or concept has value equal to the other.

One place where the poetics of the avant garde become actually vague and unmanageable is in the use of jazz rhythms. Though the jazz readings of the later Fifties, involving an improvising combo and an improvising poet, turned out failures, the rhythms of jazz are still important to some avant-garde poets.

Not long ago, I sat in my office with Allen De Loach, a young man of very real talent and incredible energy which he lavishes on a wide variety of publishing projects as well as on his own poetry. He is interested in writing jazz poetry, and explained the principles involved to my creative writing class.

The technique is this: you buy a few records of your favorite jazz artist, listen to them over and over again until the sounds are part of your subconscious, and then sit down and try to use them in a poem. What this usually turns out to be is a short (rhythmically) line having three or four beats so arranged as to catch your attention after you have heard it repeated a dozen times. There is absolutely no further way to define it, so far as I can tell, unless you want to apply something like 'sprung rhythm' to it; and that would be inaccurate as well as unwelcome. The audience identifies the beat with jazz because that is the way it is read to them, and they remember. Or perhaps, as with Ferlinghetti's impeachment poem, there is a drum in the background.

I do not mean to imply that this is not effective. To me, it is. Nor is it limited. The beat can be fast or slow, intense or relaxed, and the tone can be excited or ironically calm. Nevertheless, it is difficult to analyze. This difficulty, I believe, results from the fact that the poetry is not a matter of technique, but of mystique: and the devices of repetition of words, phrases, rhythms (relieved occasionally by long rhetorical passages) are part of that mystique. They evolve out of the sense of prophecy the poet has worked himself up to. Indeed, they are physical. That is, they are, in a way, muscular — in quite a different signification than the lines of Robert Bly are 'physical' in being, as I would call it, 'suspended.'

Now it may be that the avant-garde poet (who insists, as per Olson, that the first study is the syllable) has as great a regard for tonality (fast-slow, high-low, intense-relaxed, etc.) as Tennyson. I hope they do. But they use a different language.

First, they do not have many critical ideas. This is understandable because they are not really interested in critical ideas — Olson perhaps more so than the others, but even he writes criticism as if it is something he has been

backed into a corner to do. Duncan is willing to divulge some personal secrets about his writing, and Ginsberg writes even criticism as if it were poetry. This is because Ginsberg is the total poet, apparently incapable of thinking in prose.

If the ideas are few, those that do impinge are significant. The first is 'voice.' This word I read as roughly equivalent to, certainly related to, 'breath' and 'speech.' (Olson: '... that that verse will only do in which a poet manages to register both the acquisitions of his ear and the pressures of his breath.' Or: '... speech is the "solid" of verse, is the secret of a poem's energy ...' Or: 'The only advantage of speech rhythms ... is illiteracy ...,' meaning the vernacular as per Dante.) So 'speech' means not only the physical act of breath, but the diction as well, and the way it gets put down, the 'energy.' Hence, the emphasis from them all on 'speed,' which might be a second idea, but is actually only a part of a larger one.

The second word I pull out is 'form,' which has already been determined by 'voice;' but, from an academic viewpoint, this might well be put into a definition of sorts, even at the risk of oversimplification. The avant-garde poets insist that form is totally internal. They hold that it comes from the inside out, rather than from the outside into or onto the matter. Consequently, they sound fairly mystical when they talk about it. (Olson, quoting Creeley: '... that right form, in any form, in any given poem, is the only and exclusively possible extension of content under hand.' Duncan: 'After Freud, we are aware that unwittingly we achieve our form. It is, whatever our mastery, the inevitable use we make of the speech. . . .') The best and perhaps only thing to do with this notion is to lie back and enjoy it. The idea is not new in itself, only in its relatedness to speech, speed, and intuition. It is also important because the poets insist upon the importance of the concept; because of its proportion, then. To say it affects the technology of analysis is understatement.

The third and most important idea I want to mention is ‘prophecy,’ for this is the real key to what is going on in the so-called mimeograph revolution of the little magazines, a movement rooted in San Francisco. There has never been such a sense of mission, and perhaps there has never been so urgent a need for one. No question about it — the drift of the Establishment is toward nausea, not a healthy existential one, a sick one as in W. D. Snodgrass’s *APRIL INVENTORY*, X. J. Kennedy’s *FIRST CONFESSION*, and a thousand others. Let me hasten to add that there is also a good deal of apparent health; though, if you look closely, you find the health to be that of a well-embalmed corpse. Poets like Dickey, Bly, Lowell, and James Wright are indeed struggling toward life, but the avant-garde poets assume life and go on to other business, the business of prophecy.

Olson’s statement is the whole of it: ‘I find the contemporary substitution of society for the cosmos captive and deathly.’ To find the application of this profound observation, take Duncan: ‘Poetry is a “participation,” a oneness.’ Or again: ‘There is a natural mystery in poetry. We do not understand all that we render up to understanding.’ This is what I meant by saying ‘speed’ is only part of a larger idea. Finally, Allen Ginsberg states it best because he understands it best: ‘Mind is shapely, Art is shapely. Meaning Mind practiced in spontaneity invents forms in its own image and gets to last thoughts. Loose ghosts wailing for body try to invade the bodies of living men.’

Obviously, you can’t find this kind of thinking in Church, Cathedral, Synagogue, or University. You might find it in India, China, or hashish. At any event, there’s massive irony in the fact that such a mystique has of necessity been antisocial in its beginnings and that the deathly sickness of the Establishment is a reflection of need not to bite the hand that has fed it.

I conclude that the wild men might offer salvation. And why not? Recent best novelists such as Burroughs and Selby have not brought any, and they cannot. It isn't their business, and they know it. They are reporting and interpreting. Further, as Emile Capouya says of them (SATURDAY REVIEW, April 17, 1965, p. 34): '... the writers of genuine talent in this era are sunk in nihilism and self-contempt, so that their courage, their honesty, serves only to confirm us in hopelessness.' With a few notable exceptions, the case of the novelist is the case of the Establishment poet because he has indeed substituted society, the province of the novel, for the cosmos, the province of the poet.

Salvation, however, doesn't come that easy — not through homage to John Dryden. And let's face it, this world needs saving. It needs prophecy. We are not able to see that a prophet will make poetry about the supermarket (the multistate, the multiversity, and — as even the preachers are beginning to understand — the multiverse) as if it were valid. So Ginsberg's poem admits the absurdity of its reality: 'Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the avacodos, babies in the tomatoes! — and you, Garcia Lorca, what were you doing down by the watermelons?' Again, this is a matter of tone. In fact, this poem accomplishes its mission entirely building from one tone to another, relying upon the images, the rhythms — coming from inside out, through a heightened sense of absurdity in the grocery boys, the store detective, the frozen delicacies . . . to the conventionally 'poetic' dark streets (but with real automobiles in the driveways) until that tone of ecstasy in the magnificent closing image. When this is reached, nothing is said except through its feeling. And this feeling has been quite literally, quite muscularly, voiced.

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WILD WESTERN AGAIN

Puns run to jump on Pegasus like cowbusters, Buster
breaking like fireworks into the flickering brightness of the
unsettled day.

John Tagliabue

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE*Writing : bread, stench, and intruth . . .*

i write. sometimes honestly, sometimes dishonestly. Full well knowing that i cannot really immediately communicate anything. for instance . . . breathlessness But if i could i would construct it of breathlessness. that is, i would know i cannot use lethargic timbers to build a breathless cathedral and why do i use the word cathedral instead of house because, at this moment i am cathedral instead of house So That i cannot separate the matrix the broth the livingness the sun on the angles of glass and the way long shadows spire over the flat smooth ground at sunset and i am enclosed in sun ///i cannot separate this from what i am writing so that essentially it is a blundering clumsy statement of awkward innocence to write for that instant to excommunicate myself from existence . . . But the lure of the lover/the mistress/ language:language the cage the gate the bed the womb the loom And i think: symbolism is the answer to put into exact words is impossible but the stench of trees, earlobes for moons, the sheen of the forget-me-not upon the eye . . . immersed on the universe like the rinsing cry of a far-off bird tapping in my palm . . . the knowledge of being committed beyond this plane once a member of/no more . . . the reality of the knowledge that i cannot write what i cannot am and i cannot am so many things but everywhere the cathedral silences are building into spires horses running the woven silver beaten thin on the day to day wrung lives . . . ee cummings wove the words

*and yet – they are only words – loving and
nuzzling
each other / finding a curious magical light to
rendezvous
at midnight . . . their corral is a cool and magic*

place
but it is only a corral

Where is the stuff inside the ring
the break of the gullwing / small bones
falling into the eye
the lemons gone rotten on the turfing grass
and the unmagical line and substance of a man being a
man
meshing the discs together a sorcery on
the unmachine machine

Jo McDougall

ANOTHER ADVOCATE OF REVOLT

Dear Editors: The running feud between the former editors of the defunct COASTLINES and Mr. Lawrence Lipton has by now become a bore. There are editors and editors. From one group — the professionals — one expects (and usually does receive) prompt and courteous reports. From the others? Well, as Editor May knows from his own experiences, and from the wailing and gnashing of auctorial teeth, the picture is pretty gloomy. The average waiting period for reports (if the editors ever get around to answering, much less returning, the mss.) is approximately three to six months. Meanwhile, the poor, hapless son-of-a-bitch of an author must practice that fiendish etiquette which stacks the cards all in favor of the editors (many of them irresponsible neurotics) and blackballs a writer if he is so temerous as to send copies of the ms. of a single piece to more than one magazine. . . . I should like to see the day when writers will be able to submit their wares, as anyone else does, on the open market. . . . And isn't it about time that editors were held to a standard of ethics too? . . . My own feeling about so many editors (I don't know whether this is true of Mrs. Edelstein) is that they've been editors for too long and have done little writing (TRACE editors excepted, of course).

If I were to give the young novice some advice, I'd suggest he write a crackerjack of a book, get it published (whether fiction or criticism), and then send off some copies to a few prominent anthologists — who'll drool at the mouth to get their hands on rights to a chapter for a collection of critical essays. The 'editors' of fly-by-night little mags (and some established foundation quarterlies) could go and cool their heels waiting for a stray ms. to come in — yes, even over the transom!

*Maybe that'd wake 'em up. But that of course is
too much to expect; for we (all of us) are still too
chickenhearted to refrain from sending anything
out to anyone!*

Sam Bluefarb

A BOHEMIAN RECANTS

Dear Editors:

I wish to communicate something of interest, which might and surely should concern most writers and artists who live in the no-man's land of various Bohemias. For some months now, I have been constrained by circumstances to live incommunicado in a typical lower middle-class American neighborhood. We have no friends here. Perhaps twice a month I see people I can talk to briefly about certain areas of intellectual life (excluding carefully other areas).

While striving to adjust—especially via the common interest in children (I have four)—I found that I didn't fool them for a minute, these canny American wives and mothers. They knew I was Different, but they bore with me as long as I wasn't unreasonable about their kids or mine and could chat on their level. They were willing to allow me a certain latitude.

At any rate, during these difficult months, I have come to have a fantastic respect for these 'insensitive, uncreative clods' who form a typical segment of our nitwit TV audience. In the face of the most terrible material and physical tribulations, they remain cheerful, optimistic, and forever determined to rise another notch in the level of society.... I am utterly humiliated at my past disdain and contempt for the American Public. Certainly this has been a well-deserved lesson for a typical Bohemian-type Visionary. I am ready to yell 'Uncle!' and get the hell out of here, well-chastened.

But it doesn't look as if I will be able to get out. With four little kids and a sub-subsistence salary, I have no choice but to meld with the Great Mass for many years to come. I just hope I can hold up my own courage as well as these 'clods' we artistes so deplore. I envy them their holding quality, by which some shreds of civilization have managed to survive

down the ages through the multitudes of catastrophes. For, even if Freudianly malaproprian, these Mothers remain the repositories of our Morals, these Fathers, the Safeguards of our family structure. These unspeakable millions form the rock upon which we visionaries dance our dances to the Future, the Ideal. No bard can possibly do them enough honor. I am abashed to face them. I will forever envy their strength—the simple strength of Continuance.

How can one sing This song—especially when confronted uninterruptedly with the limitations and stupidities which this very unmalle-able mass presents to us, the would-be singers. They themselves won't be sung; their very existence denies the necessity and validity of Sing-ing; their Gods are very limited and practical, the gods of hearth and home. But somewhere . . . is an eternal ode sung to their simple virtue, Persistence....

Jeanne S. Bagby

NEW FRIENDS OF THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT

Dear Editors: ‘Organization’ is a much-maligned word. Those presently concerned with poetry are apt to feel themselves allergic to organizations. ‘Tis not the word. ‘Tis the deed. The word refers to things organic. The deed is often the undoing of the true organism. Couldn’t there be a peach of an organization? Yes — if peaches are organizations. And they are. All living things are. We can have another kind of organically grown vegetable . . . with NFFA as its species name.

I am addressing those who have read or will read my book, *THE WHITE SHIRTS*. Existing civil liberties organizations are not putting the white shirts where they belong (as No. 1 threat to a free society). Beyond the much-discussed police state — what lies? Surely, it’s the Orwellian thought-police state.

Be more avant-garde than civil rights actionists. That momentum can take care of itself. While thought-police resisters are badly scattered, and lack lawyers — especially. Test cases for the Supreme Court are aching to be filed; and prisoners in our concentration camps are suffering to be lent aid.

These are our aims. Interested? Let’s start a Newsletter. Our contributors should include incarcerated and ex-incarcerated — and all those others who eschew ‘Mental Health.’ Write to me.

*Ellen Field**

‘ GEMS ‘ OUT OF HAT IN PADDED DRUNK CELL?

Dear Editors: Each year I do a lot of soul-searching before renewing. Really, your ‘poetry’ — heaven forgive me — is an insult to the intelligence. Judson Crews in No. 55 explains how it is done: grab nouns, verbs, and adjectives out of a hat, making it possible to ‘write’ perhaps 150 ‘poems’ an hour. Now I know. I used to think that such efforts came from (a) hashish (b) the bottle (c) the padded cell. I still think that a combination of these three, plus the hat, result in your poetic gems.

** Her book deplores defenselessness of inmates of mental hospitals. Address: 1839 Wardell Ave., Duarte, Calif., U.S.A.*

Why then DO I fall for your blandishments? The articles, naturally. They are worthwhile. And if I really leaf quickly through the pages, I can salve my wounds with the articles and merely gag if the page inadvertently stops in between.

On the reverse of the coin, I admire your honesty in describing the various magazines truthfully. I weary of buying a magazine described glowingly as out of this world, only to find that it is full of trifles or tongue-in-cheek trash.

Katherine Gorman

THE AVANT: Then & Now by Milton VanSickle

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF TOTAL communication is one of our recognized major problems. The thinking process of each of us is manifested somewhat differently, despite a dictionary of words in common. Vocabularies are complicated by the constant creation of new words and new usages. Try — for illustration — to keep up with the younger set’s slang. Not only aims and energy separate generations — but words. Before we have digested those of our own generation, we are old-fashioned.

However, we usually manage to be part of an ‘in group’ — if only within ourselves. Should you, for instance, be a Bruckner fancier, you will know the frustration of bringing a friend to share the magnificent passages of his symphonies. You point to the stone-on-stone construction; but he,

preferring Bach, looks for the woven fabric of inventions. Or, if he is a Mahler fan, he deplores the lack of ultra-dimensional subtleties — and so on. (And your teen-age son closes his ears squarely, swaying only to the more physical rhythms of The Supremes.)

Unfortunately, this is not our individual world, and those we least understand may ultimately prove more right than we (whatever that means). Before communication can take place, except on the most elementary levels, there must be some sort of similarity in thinking or feeling — or in aims. To many, the elementary surface levels are sufficient when they turn to the arts. If some of these become restless and seek deeper contact, they get it in other ways — or try to. Their failure — and ours — is perhaps responsible for much more of the horror in this world than we would dare admit.

Not every generation has its avant garde — which we may view as composed of artists who (more often) vary and (less often) improve on previous artists, but who sometimes consciously shoot beyond them to the extent of seeming unintelligibility. Thus, the term is generally reserved for any who are different in their approach to, or style of, communication — though that does not invariably imply excellence. Mikhail Yurevich Lermontov was, in his day, avant-garde. In spirit, he still is.

A LERMONTOV READER

edited and translated by Guy Daniels (macmillan — \$7.50)

presents works hitherto unavailable in English. It is imperative to read Daniels' Introduction, a thorough analysis of the subject's writing span, before commencing the works themselves. Frequent notes amplify and explain otherwise-senseless phrases; indeed, of the poems which previously had been translated, many make sense for the first time. They show Lermontov to have been passionately aware of life around him and of the injustices of the grass-roots attitude of Nicholas I (and Lermontov, with all the brilliance and little of the wisdom of the Socratic gadfly, was to experience two exiles during his brief lifetime — which was scarcely longer than that of his near-contemporary, Keats). As much like the England of Dickens as the Russia of Gogol, the selections only faintly suggest the depth of shadows which we commonly associate with 'the typical Russian writer.' This is especially evident in PRINCESS LIGOVSKAYA (an unfinished novel) and A STRANGE ONE (written in his teens — the first of five plays).

His works present such variations in quality and form that it is difficult to speak of them comprehensively. It is almost impossible to catch Lermontov and hold him down. He seems to have written (as he lived) at high speed, as if he had so much to say he could hardly get it out fast enough. His two chief influences were, of course, Pushkin (whom he admired greatly, but whom he criticized severely for having 'sold out' to the mediocrity of court panegyrics) and Byron (whom he resembled in his revolt against conventions — not so much moral conventions as the stultifying blind complacency of the settling Victorian Age's poses). Yet, we cannot fail to perceive Lermontov's as a firm, clear voice. His

writing is full of healthy enthusiasm — even his pessimism sparkles with vitality — so radical a contrast to the pale ethereal attributes of Shelley, the heaviness of Keats, and far more robust than either Pushkin or Byron.

Such vitality is not unknown in our times. *THE AWARD AVANT-GARDE READER*, edited with an Introduction by Gil Orlovitz (*UNIVERSAL* — 95c paperb.) is, to some, the most exciting book of the season; to others, it is incomprehensible nonsense. Both groups are correct, granting that the perceiver determines the thing perceived. However, taken as a ‘thing in itself,’ this is an exciting book; though only those will find it so whose thinking processes are similar to those of the various authors, or those who are willing to be receptive to nonhabitual methods of perception.

Few will have difficulty with the slight story by Jean Cocteau, *THE FANTOM OF MARSEILLES* (transl. by Michael Lebeck)—which does not seem avant-garde any more, though it may have been once.

William Burroughs (represented by *PROCLAIM PRESENT TIME OVER*) may strike one as more bewildering (the absence of all punctuation is a factor); he, too, would have been very daring in the Twenties—and he has an occasional good line—nonetheless, his writing is generally amorphous and fragmented, with blurted phrases which are almost meaningful.

Michel Butor’s *PASSAGE DE MILAN* (Chapters VII through X, translated by the versatile and seemingly-indefatigable Guy Daniels) is far more impressive. Where Burroughs appears to be consciously choosing words and expressions so as to give an impression of working from the unconscious, Butor flows effortlessly from sight to thought, from narrative to internal functioning. The structure of the piece emerges rhythmically, gradually, but with the feel of inexorable finality.

WAKEROBIN by Thomas McEvilley III—author of the published novel, *PARTYGOING*—is certainly the strangest

selection. The strangeness lies not in the style—which is sensitively expressive, but hardly avant—rather in the atmosphere and the aim. One is reminded of Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, of Octave Mirbeau, of Jules Barbey d'Aureville, of Charles Baudelaire, and even of Joris-Karl Huysmans (especially in style). There are hints of each of these, if distantly. And there is vaguely something of the decadence of Truman Capote's *OTHER VOICES, OTHER ROOMS*. But McEvelley really goes the way of none of these; he conveys a disembodied, otherworldly quality—a pre-Christian mysticism. For his is no shadow-infested Gothic tale; if anything, there is an overabundance of sunlight—though from a cold cabalistic sun. McEvelley believes, almost fanatically, in the reality of his story; and the reader is forced—against his will—to believe in it too.

The two chapters from Antonio Pizzuto's *RAVENNA* (transl. by Raymond Rosenthal) show him to be a more than competent writer, though his imagination seems rather limited, while his writing is overwordy. The return for the reader's effort is sufficient—but no more. Raymond Rosenthal has translated another Italian, Edoardo Sanguineti, who bears obvious resemblance to Kenneth Patchen and Dylan Thomas. His *CAPRICCIO ITALIEN* is a splendid piece filled with slapstick buffoonery carrying the frantic anguish of a nightmare. 'Chaplinesque' is perhaps the summatory word to describe this tale of everyman in his world which is a trap, which is a paradise.

With *THE OPEN HOUSE OF ASMODEUS THE TORTOISE* by Peter Jones, we see what Burroughs probably is reaching for. The debt to James Joyce is evident; but this is a creative, not imitative, work — almost an essay rather than a fictive account. It is not 'easy' and will bear several readings, each more fulfilling.

Sol Yurick's *SOMEONE JUST LIKE ME . . .* is a fast-moving complex of a bleeding metropolis. The writing is aggressive,

and Yurick demonstrates an enviable skill in handling large groups of people, while, without strain, he still manages to individualize each of them definitely.

However, it is with Gil Orlovitz's *I'M JUST IN SPARTA ON A VISIT* that the summit is attained. Here is the icy nobility of Aeschylus, the intensity of Shakespeare, the multilevel counterpoise of Dostoevsky, the contortive inventiveness of Joyce, as well as the descriptive exactitude of Thomas Mann, all blended in a clear, polished perfection in its own right. This is not a matter of his bringing his characters to life so much as his making the whole story a living entity. Every word, every scarce bit of punctuation, is inevitable, and one is aware of the Guy and the Selma of the story in much the same way he is aware of himself. With the precision of the writing, the reader does not identify — he is transformed, perceiving the story in an indescribably-subtle way from within, rather than from without, the pages. I know of no other writer who has ever been able to achieve this effect, except briefly, disconnectedly. It is not surprising that the dedication of *THE AVANT-GARDE READER* seriously, I'm sure, is 'To William Shakespeare.'

SOUNDS

Mary Sirchuk

across paper/green shadows
peacocks running Kentucky
barnyard/zither strumming
heard over the wind
sounds flying/clouds sun
filled/foaling mares kicking
the red barn doors/running
morning light

REBELLION FOR HUMANITY'S SAKE

Mary Graham Lund:

Tel qu'en lui-même l'Eternité le change.

— Stéphane Mallarmé

Sade is our contemporary. — Albert Fowler

Evil, be thou my good. — John Milton

MORE THAN ANY OTHERS AMONG the great men of the Past, the Literary Greats live for us. Stéphane Mallarmé marvelled at how much Eternity had changed the long-dead poet, Edgar Allan Poe—changed him indeed until he had become a contemporary ‘Other’ to Mallarmé. For, as T. S. Eliot told us repeatedly: ‘... the Dead exist for us.’ They change, as we change, but with us, not against us, as our next-door neighbor may.

A neighbor is to be feared, though perhaps less than those in one’s own household — a mother-in-law, for instance, although she may be less dangerous than the child of one’s begetting. According to Ortega y Gasset, ‘the child is one of the most dangerous of beings.’¹ He is diffuse, unlimited, ever expanding. Only the dead have a fixed being.

The child, ever growing, in our society soon meets barriers and limitations. If he goes beyond these barriers, he may become what society calls a criminal or a madman. Peter Weiss, a Jew who was a child in Germany, the land of the Gingerbread Man, almost half a century ago (now residing in Stockholm as a Swedish citizen) has recently placed de Sade upon our contemporary stage as the inmate of an insane asylum who has written a play for performance by his fellow patients. Richard Christiansen of the Chicago Daily News reports the production of this play, the complete title of which is *The Persecution and Assassination of Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton*

under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade by the Royal Shakespeare Company of London. He calls it 'a drama of sensation that has become a sensational event.'

The 'event' of the production is sensational for a number of reasons: (1) the name of de Sade, which has a special meaning for our sadistic age (the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire once called ours the 'Century of de Sade'); (2) the setting in an insane asylum, which is perhaps the chief symbol of our time; (3) the art of the writing, which gives us pure sensation; (4) the art of the production, which combines with the script to give us 'stunning theatre.' The reaction of the audience to the play, says Mr. Christiansen, may be summed up within the play itself by the asylum director as he reprimands de Sade, the author: 'I always thought poets strove to achieve pure beauty, . . . to elevate man above the beasts. But your philosophy seems cold, almost savage, and, worst of all, pessimistic.' The foppish asylum director repeatedly assures the audience that these barbarisms were in the past. Mr. Christiansen remarks: 'How ironic to the audience in the Schiller Theatre of West Berlin on the night of the world premiere of the play in April, 1964. No wonder it became the talk of European theatre circles, and its production in London and the United States became inevitable.' The play struck raw nerves. As Eliot's WASTE LAND once had. How strange to see de Sade awaken in the waste land! 'Art is memory, propaganda is prophecy;' but who can say where one begins and the other ends? Albert Camus recognized that 'the Romantic rebel' was rebelling for rebellion's sake: he extols evil and individual freedom 'not to become one with mankind but to stand forth as one against God.' Dostoevsky makes Ivan refuse salvation on the basis of his compassion for all mankind. He wishes to dictate to God, to demand that everyone be saved, or no one. Compare Ibsen's hero, Brand, with his slogan derived from Kierkegaard: 'All or nothing.' When a man submits God to

moral judgment, says Camus, 'he kills him in his own heart.' Nietzsche repudiated a murderous God who pities and loves with no reprieve except by redemption. Nietzsche wanted no redemption. Dostoevsky made Ivan refuse salvation because he found God's creation unacceptable. The Marquis de Sade demanded vengeance not only against God, but against His whole Creation. In his frenzied dreams of universal destruction, he is, indeed, our contemporary. Eliot ends his most famous poem with catchwords from the Upanishads, Hindu poems about insight and action: Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata (Give, Sympathize, Control). This action has no real motivation, except rebellion for rebellion's sake. There is, perhaps, something slightly mystical about it. Either that, or something out of fairyland — the child's tale of the ogre and the castle. 'Hieronymo's mad againe.' A mock epic hero, a very tough hero — buried alive, fried in hot lava, tossed sizzling into the deepest sea, struck by a thunderbolt from the highest heaven, and emerging bright and ready to play the part all over again. Yet, the Waste Land is not a land of innocence. The dark towers are there, and the burning lava bubbles. The poem tells of the decay of the old modes and the abuses of the new ones. It reflects a society overburdened with traditional forms, not yet able to bridge the ever-widening chasm between tradition and human needs, between form and morality. Critics have objected that the nightingale doesn't really say: 'Jug, jug.' But Eliot's nightingale does, for it is a traditional bird, the one John Skelton was thinking of three centuries earlier when he said that God Himself would be glad to hear the nightingale's 'Dug, dug/Jug, jug.' It appears in Thomas Nashe's *SPRING, SWEET SPRING*, and in the eighteenth-century song, *THE COURT-SHIP OF COCK ROBIN AND JENNY WREN*. All centuries are alike to the nightingale, that sang no doubt for Lao-tzu and sings now for the Freudian Id or Groddeck's 'It,' for Ibsen's Peer Gynt among the trolls, perhaps even for de Sade's

characters so rudely called upon the modern stage by Guy Endore et al. Perhaps it sings among the steel and aluminum trees that flower in lights in that strange fairyland men call technocracy!

¹ *MAN AND CRISIS, 1958, p. 159.*

The future so soon becomes the past, as Eliot's poetry keeps reminding us. And Eliot, though he knew it not, was writing in the Age of Dostoevsky! Dostoevsky is banned in his own country now. Will he some day be recognized in Russia, as he is in other countries as a writer worthy to stand with Shakespeare and Dante and Goethe? Or will his name be obliterated in all Western countries? As de Sade's was for so long? Perhaps this is a question of politics. Will the art of the future be a product of artifice, rationality, and technique? Will poetry be turned out by machines? That will be a new sort of fairy tale, and an insane asylum its proper setting.

There is in the Marxian philosophy no analogue for Christian humility, such as Eliot, led by Dante, saw in Vergil's hero, Aeneas, who possessed a 'virtue' which made him the prototype of a Christian hero. Father F. J. Stormon commends Eliot and Yeats for possessing a sense of history, but says: '...for the perfect use of the true dimension (not to speak of the past in its timeless aspect) we must go to Vergil.'² Eliot has made Vergil and Dante and St. Augustine our contemporaries.

Young Tom Eliot in St. Louis had a Catholic nurse named Annie Dunne, and a copy of Murillo's Immaculate Conception hung in the family living room. Later, he read Baudelaire, to find a city full of dreams, and specters walking in the light . . . and 'London Bridge was falling down.' Now the freedom marchers are singing: 'We shall overcome.'

² Quoted by M. F. J. Knight in his essay, *ELIOT AS A CLASSICAL SCHOLAR* — BRAYBROOKE, 1958. Rebuilding bridges, when necessary, humanity marches on. Right through the

Eliotian looking-glass sometimes. Breakage is necessary. The glass after the drink, the law before the fact, the words in the nonpoem. The void must be filled with sound, with color, with horror, with laughter. Centuries are jumbled. Aristotle argues with de Sade, with Miller (Henry and Arthur), with Camus and the hermaphroditic Sartre-Beauvoir. Plato and Aquinas question Teilhard de Chardin and Ortega y Gasset. Tolstoy's Ivan Ilych dies again politely, smiling at Socrates who also observed the proprieties.

The bloody Cross repels, and the assassin's bullet induces Nausea. We test out weapons underground and march on toward Nothingness, holding the Banners high. Blankets and boots and woolen coats are needed, and something to keep out the rain. Coffee and germs are shared. Dirt is the magic word, the shared cosmetic. March on, and Nothingness will open as the sword of Rebellion breaks to form the Rainbow Cross of Promise above the secret caves of Thought. And in the Sky we know as Space, new Stars may sing, new Meteors scatter fertile seeds over the waste land.

WHISPERS

Ronald A. Ham

by the pondside underneath the clouds
our
dribbled whispers fffffff
aaaaaa
lllll
llll
iii
nn
g
into
each other's ears
but the pond is nearer whispered than the clouds are

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DAVID LEE PAGARI :

THE ANDROGYNOUS POET

*Her wish was granted. Even as she prayed
A change came over them, by heaven's might,
Of their two forms a single shape was made
Which did their bodies twain in one unite,
No longer two, a man and woman, deemed;
Of either sex or neither now they seemed.¹*

OVID WAS NOT THE FIRST POET, nor certainly the last, to ponder the fact that humans do not always fit into the usual categories of male or female. Some individuals are physically hermaphroditic; some, psychologically so — as with transsexuals (those wishing to change their sex) and transvestites (those wishing only to assume the role of the opposite sex).

In the past few years, an androgynous anonymoi has developed around various publications dealing with the transsexualism-transvestism phenomenon, and from these publications the androgynous poet is emerging.

Most of this poetry is still very crude and rudimentary in style, but nevertheless very interesting as providing an insight into the psychic conflicts of individuals suffering from gender-role anxiety.

As one poet puts it:

Oh, that I, a man might be
Privileged to dress as she.
Instead of this broad manly chest,
I would wear a woman's breast
And in my mirror I'd admire —
ME, full clad in her attire.
The want grows in me till it hurts
To wear those swirling satin skirts
And shining blouse with pretty bow
Earrings tight and hanging low.
Oh, that I, a man, might be
Privileged to dress as she!²

The leading publication of the androgynous anonymoi has been the Los Angeles TRANSVESTIA, now one of several magazines from Chevalier Publications. Since its inception in 1960, TRANSVESTIA and a sister publication, FEMME MIRROR, have published some eighty-eight poems comprising over 1,226 lines — much of it in simple couplet style, such as:

¹ *From Ovid's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus*, THE LATIN POETS, R. B.

Francis (MODERN LIBRARY — 1949), transl. by F. A. Wright.

² 'A.B.'—*Of The Girl in the Satin Gown* (TRANSVESTIA — May, 1960).

But now it is Friday, the last of the five
And stirrings within me — something's alive,
Imprisoned within me it's sought its release —
Until it is freed it will give me no peace.
So I look at the clock as the hours drag past
Till finally the whistle and I sigh, 'Oh at last.'
Then home in a hurry to peel off these clothes
Somehow I feel the whole week's been a pose.
I bathe, set my hair, lacquer fingers bright red
And don my sheer nightie then jump into bed
But sleep is not easy, my head's in a whirl —
JUST THINK — five days a man but . . .
TOMORROW A GIRL!
A GIRL! 8

Androgynous verse has many unique characteristics, but perhaps the most interesting is that it almost always employs rhyme and most often some form of stanzaic pattern. This suggests that the androgynous poet is basically a disciplined member of society (which is reflected in his verse), but that, within this façade of conformity, he seeks much freedom: he resists metrical regularity, avoids the study of the sonnet and similar measured forms; his verse ultimately reflects the ecstasy of release he finds when in his anonymous feminine masquerade.

This passion for rhyme is in sharp contrast to the poetry emerging from the homophile publications, such as ONE, MATTACHINE REVIEW, and the Lesbian magazine, LADDER, where there is a preponderance of unrhymed free verse; and it is no surprise that nearly all members of the androgynous anonymoi are heterosexual — most of them married men with families.

Actually, these poets are not explicitly androgynous or hermaphroditic. And yet, it would seem accurate to say that their poetry issues from what best may be termed psychic hermaphroditism. As in this piece from TURNABOUT, a more

recent New York City-based publication:

THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

The prisoner hiding within my mind
Stares at me from this glassy pool.
Her eyes, as always, probe to find
Some weakness which could end my rule.
The silver film between us here
But marks the edge of the abyss

8 'Virginia' (ibid. Note 2).

(Bridged by our hate, our love, our fear)

Which lies between her world and this.

Far more than glass keeps us apart, This alien twin and I;
and yet This skein of veins, this single heart Bind us together
like a net.

An uncouth man, a dreamy miss, Each with a stubborn
driving will; The only girl I cannot kiss — The only man she
dare not kill!

or as in this sonnet:

SANCTUARY

When I'm beset with problems which perplex Or find the
strain of daily life too great, I seek withdrawal to the haven of
my soul: The sanctuary of my meditating mind. And when
the forces of confusion have combined To oust me from the
refuge of my pensive role Of introvert, I can but concentrate
Upon my solitary thoughts complex.

And when I venture forth into reality And mingle, stifling,
in that human throng, A sense of fear invades my restless
mind And, as my apprehension mounts, I find Myself
attracted by that siren song Of transvestism's subtle
integrality.

Whether in his attempts at more serious verse, or in his
lighthearted limericks — of which there are an abundance in
such periodicals — the androgynous poet represents a most

interesting area of versification. He is a modern-day Pygmalion of a type of which our growing epicene society may be producing fewer and fewer. And yet, when we realize the emergence of the androgynous anonymoi and witness a continued growth, we cannot but wonder at Ovid's prophetic lines:

The youth, returning to his mistress, hies, And, imprudent in hope, with ardent eyes, And beating breast, by the dear statue lies. He kisses her white lips, renews the bliss, And looks and thinks they redden at the kiss: He thought them warm before; nor longer stays, But next his hand on her hard bosom lays: Hard as it was, beginning to relent, It seem'd, the breast beneath his fingers bent; He felt again, his fingers made a print, 'Twas flesh. . . .

'Shelagh Niles' (TURNABOUT — Vol. I, No. 3, 1964).

'Siobhan Fredericks' (ibid. Note 4).

From John Dryden's transl. of Pygmalion (ibid. Note 1).

SOPHISTIC SORCERY

by Theodore Kitaif

TOMORROW IS VANQUISHED BY yesterday's auguries. We read the divinatory lines in the back of our minds with the aplomb of the chiromancer. Our sophistication stifles. The resultant ennui, as weighty and cumbersome as a sack of gold bullion, would be dissipated if we could close the eye which sees tomorrow in retrospect.

Seeing the future in retrospect — the diabolic recompense for Original Sin, the sin of lusting after omniscience, of presuming, after taking a blood count and periodically charting our moods and predilections, that we Know Ourselves. Hence we marvel at nothing; nothing pierces through to touch us. Our aptitude for shock, surprise, and wonder has been caged and choked off. Whereas these faculties should leap and bobble like a jack-in-the-box, they are jammed into an hermetic compartment. And the locks are changed at irregular intervals as a precaution against a sudden, rash outburst of spirit.

Smug, insolent anticipation of tomorrow is the most dire ailment. Yun-men cautioned against wobbling, but only a few yellow shaggy monks heeded; the rest of us whirl vertiginously inside the cranium — the refuge of the hebetate worldly-wise. When someone asked the sage man's most urgent question, he shot back: 'Walk on!' But we forget how to walk almost as soon as we learn. We wobble in our boots like a little girl trying out her mother's high heels. Following the first chilling blast on our maiden excursion, we call it quits. From there on, we know what's around every corner, what's inside the unopened book, what's inside the acorn, what's beyond our nose. Yun-men, who wanted only to preserve the mystery of tomorrow, the delight of the

unbeckoned thought and sensation, is as forgotten as the twenty-four Buddhas who preceded Gautama Siddhartha.¹

How we know ourselves! Behind our eyes the ceaseless flashes, clicks, and tallies of the unbeatable System for the Wheel run riot. Nothing is left to chance: the digits never capitulate to delight. In our minds we have already seen unplayed dramas, heard unperformed symphonies, worn undesigned styles, read unwritten epics. What appears as the hot pursuit of Culture is the gyration of a somnambulist; what is taken as self-expression is a somnilquist's outcry. This cheerless cleverness of ours! With our foppish vision we have already hailed tomorrow's heroes, clasped the hand of tomorrow's friend, embraced tomorrow's lover.

¹ *Refs. to Yun-men from THE WAY OF ZEN, Alan W. Watts*
(PANTHEON, 1957).

Awe has been flushed out of our systems. Focillon said that a painter with two right hands would be nothing but a virtuoso, a juggler.² A lubberly left hand is a necessity if we are to be reminded of early days — before we awoke demented that ill-starred morning, cracked our knuckles, and set about to rival Creation. Today we wind tomorrow's clock with ambidexterous fingers. Like the Author, who on the first day foresaw the seventh, so do we write next week's chapters, and all the chapters on to the end.

Sophistry defends itself against sentiment. An army of dialectics is roused to put down the slightest threat of ambush by feeling: because feeling may become fervor, and fervor destroys the superstructure of tomorrow. We have refused to be stunned, astonished, overwhelmed, stupefied. By so doing, we cannot know awe, because awe overtakes only the open, the unsuspecting, and we are sealed and presumptuous.

A price is extracted, but we are so conditioned to paying that we barely flinch. It was Giono who wrote: 'They have no passions, they have illnesses instead.'³

Our illness is the horror of the unannounced. And tonight, as a drug for sleep, we will reminisce upon tomorrow.

²THE LIFE OF FORMS IN ART, *Henri Focillon* (WITTENBORN, 1948).

³THE MALEDICTION, *Jean Giono* (CRITERION Books, 1955).

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OF THINGS PAST

Hands soft, lips wet,
Breasts smooth, nipples hard,
Skin silked, She was a
Professional Patrician pursuing
Her planned provocation;
A Greek Goddess gratifying
Her girlishness;
A Roman remnant relishing
Her relentless rectitude.
‘Where there is no (will)
The people perish.’

Lawrence Grobel

RILKE'S ELEVENTH DREAM

Much has been written about Rainer Maria Rilke. As with many great writers, however, there is still much to be found about the inner relations among his works.

Following is one of three short prose pieces entitled *Aus dem Traum-Buch*. There is good reason to believe that the composition of this work either preceded or coincided with that of *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, the acknowledged prose masterpiece by the great German poet.

Inasmuch as contemporary critics think of the *Malte Notebooks* as literature that suggests a deep sense of human existence (see, for example, Walter Kaufmann's *Existentialism* from Dostoevsky to Sartre), it follows that the brief prose pieces of the *Dream Book* are significant because they complement the *Notebooks* chronologically and stylistically and because, in their own way, they too exhibit Rilke's cognizance of human emotions and his amazing ability to transfer them, in terms of mood, to his art.

THE ELEVENTH DREAM, with its echo ('Don't you know that joy is really a terror . . . ?') of the beautiful *First Duino Elegy*, is presented here because, of the three 'Dreams,' it comes closest to hinting at the lyrical quality and spiritual preoccupations of Rilke's best poems.

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THE ELEVENTH DREAM

Rainer Maria Rilke

There was a street. Together we went down it, at the same pace, each leaning against the other. Her arm rested on my shoulders.

The street was wide, full of morning emptiness: it was a boulevard which descended, becoming inclined, precisely enough as might be necessary to remove from a child's step its little weight. She walked as if there had been little wings on her feet.

I began to remember . . .

'What are you thinking about?' she asked after a moment.

'I was remembering,' I said, slowly, not looking at the girl, 'a far-off street, in a city in the East, which was just as wide, just as empty, just as

RAINER MARIA RILKE

bright, but much, much steeper. I was seated in a small carriage. The horse in front of it had had to take upon himself the whole weight. I didn't doubt it any longer: he was about to bolt. The coachman did what he had to. He looked from behind as if he no longer had a head, and his huge back was pulled to and fro like a knot which an angry man wants to untie and which becomes tighter and tighter.

The little carriage rolled down as if pulling the road off with it, and the houses and everything else, as if leaving nothing in its wake. And below, at the end of the street, there was a river, a magnificent, famous river, sure of itself and gleaming. I could see how bright it was. Then I saw the sky, full of morning and high, lively winds. Again I looked at the body of the coachman which seemed to cover everything. I imagined that he was shouting, but the noise made by the carriage did not allow any sound to be distinguished. I saw

the sky again which promised a really beautiful day; and suddenly, I became momentarily aware of the horse, a phantom beast too large for us, and I was nearly convinced that he didn't belong with us at all. I saw, as if I'd had time, a child playing silently in a doorway. I saw a tavern at a street-corner; beside the entrance, on a tin-plate sign, was painted a bottle, an odd, thick, crooked little bottle; it was highly doubtful that there was really such a bottle at all. I was blinded by a window which had been opened somewhere; then, for a split-second, I saw a terror-stricken face and then . . .

'But I don't remember any more.'

'I know why you remembered that,' said the girl.

'Yes, because we are walking. And because those strange, affluent moments, during which I saw so much, were to me very much like this. As if it were actually the same thing: the same feeling, the same wave of feelings, of things, of thoughts, of brilliance and motion, which pulls everything in its wake . . .'

'You're all strange,' the girl said, as we kept on going down that wide, bright street. 'You only think, you do almost nothing else, and yet everything escapes you. Don't you know that joy is really a terror of which we have no fear at all? One sees a terror through to the end, and that precisely is joy. A terror of which one knows not just the beginning. A terror in which one trusts. Or were you afraid?'

'I don't know,' I said, confused. 'I couldn't say.'

(Translated by Miguel González-Gerth.)

MICHAEL LEBECK

AN ARRANGEMENT OF TRANSLATIONS (FROM THE GREEK AND THE LATIN)

I LYRA GRAECA

*These words and this melody Alkman found —
piecing them out from cackling mouths of quail.*

Alkman

Marinate your lungs with wine: that star's come round
again!

And the harsh time — all's thirsty under sun-scorch.

Sweet crickets mourn from leaves and pour down
rapid clear song beneath their wings. And Summer
spreading his wings over flaming earth flutes all to
sleep. But cardoons bloom. Now our women are
dirtiest, but men limp — when Dog Star sears both
head and knees.

Alkaios

DISTANT GIRLS

Honest, I want to die! She abandoned me after crying a
long time, saying How terrible what we go through!
Oh, Sappho, believe me I leave unwillingly. Go, I
replied, rejoicing in memories of me! You know we
looked after you — if you don't, I'll remind you of
what you forget: by me were your ringlets entwined
with thick crowns of violet, saffron rose, at your
delicate throat many twisted necklaces, made from a
hundred buds; frequently with much costly and
royal myrrh you have drenched my head; soft couch
satisfied delicate Ionian lusts.

MICHAEL LEBECK

YOU ARE HERE IN OUR MINDS ALL THE TIME
(THOUGH IN SARDIS) JUST AS WHEN WE SHARED
OUR LIFE, AND POINTED OUT YOUR RESEMBLANCE
TO A CERTAIN INFAMOUS GODDESS, AND YET WE
WERE PLEASED MOST BY YOUR SONG. NOW YOU
MAKE A SPECTACLE OF YOURSELF AMONG LYDIAN
WOMEN . . . JUST AS WHEN (SUN GONE DOWN)
THE MOON THROUGH THE RETREATING STARS
DIRECTS HER LIGHT WITH ROSY FINGERS OVER
SALT SEA AS WELL AS FLOWERY FARMLAND
WHERE FINE DEW POURS DOWN TO NOURISH THE
DELICATE ROSE, THE FLOWERING HONEY-LOTUS.
WANDERING THINKING MUCH OF MILD ATTHIS
WITH LONGING, DOOM BORES OUT HER TENDER
HEART AD NAUSEAM. IT NEVER LEAVES OUR TWO
MINDS THAT SHE SCREAMS FOR US, FOR
MANY-EARED NIGHT HUMS IT HERE OVER
LEAF-BORDERED SEAS THAT INTERVENE. AND
SOME CALL MOST BEAUTIFUL BODIES OF HORSE
SOME, OF INFANTRY, OR A FLEET OF SHIPS, ON
BLACK EARTH BUT I SAY IT'S THE ONE I LOVE.
THIS MUST BE SIMPLE FOR ALL. HELEN — FOR
SHE'D EXAMINED MUCH MALE BEAUTY — JUDGED
THAT MAN MOST HANDSOME WHO THE WHOLE OF
HIGH TROY SHOOK DOWN, AND NOT ESPECIALLY
LOVING EITHER CHILD OR PARENTS, BUT LED
ASTRAY BY LOVE TO LOVE FAR OFF — CHE LA
DONNA È MOBILE! RECALL ANACTORIA NOW NO
LONGER WITH US, WHOSE ALLURE AND BRIGHT
SHINING FACE I'D RATHER SEE THAN LYDIAN
ARMS AND CHARIOTS.

Sappho

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MICHAEL LEBECK

EXILE'S SONG

Tell him this: Who, sharing in parties played the part of a footscrapper, now entertaining richly with property of his former hosts, has (among all the trifling and generally had) come to the top. Let that unmentionable tear up the whole town (as he tore up Myrsilus) radiant with joy over his marriage into the family of Atreus, until Mars decides to manage our fortunes and we cannot forget anger and loose ourselves from heart-eating sedition and class struggle that which one of the Olympians has stirred up? leading people to blind hatred, but giving most desirable renown to the rowdy Pittacus

Alkaios

Evening star, bringing back all that light-bringing
dawn has scattered,
You bring the lamb, you bring the kid, you bring the
child back to their mother.

Sappho

MICHAEL LEBECK

Mountain peaks and ravines sleep,
also knobs and washes,
tribes of creeping
things which the black earth raises,
beasts which sleep on hillsides
and families of bees,
and toothy monsters too
on the bottoms of crimson
seas and sleep the tribes of
long-winged solitary birds.
And many times on the peaks of the mountains when
many-torched festivals please the gods,
holding a golden can — big as lunch pails
shepherds have — filled by hand with a lioness'
milk you've curdled a big unbroken silver cheese.
Alkman

TO AN UNEDUCATED ACQUAINTANCE

Dead, you'll be laid to rest, yet there'll be neither memory
nor love for you hereafter. No, you don't share in the roses —
those from Pieria. Even unnoticed in Hell, you'll regularly
flap about the homes of the obscurer dead. Sappho

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MICHAEL LEBECK

III OPINIONS

1. Statius: She has another sleepless night For what crime
deserve I, tenderest of gods — for what error, luckless, I must
alone lack your gift, Sleep? No birds moan nor cattle low nor
beast howls. Hills bulge with fatigue into a simulated sleep.
Not to sharp streams their venous sound. Ocean rests on the
slope of the earth.

Increasing moonlight has seven nights filled my hollow
eyes, as often the moon chilled the stars, the torch stars,
Dawn and Dusk, and my burning cheeks with her
dew-soaked whisk.

If allnight lovers repel you, Sleep, come,
not all your feathers must fill my eyes.
Just the tip of your rod. Enough.
Overcome me with featherweight thighs.

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MICHAEL LEBECK

2.

MARTIAL

Jolly Martial, these make life gay:
wealth born of itself without your pain,
fields grateful for your care,
a hearth and larder never bare,
the law-suit never and the dress-suit rare,
mind quiet, a sound frame's noble strength,
prudent simplicity, genial friends,
easy intimacy, artless fare,
no drunken night yet loosed from care.
In bed be neither cold nor queer,
then let sleep briefly shade the pair.
Be what you are, want no more, fear
not the last day nor wish it here.

3.

PETRONIUS

The thrill of the act of love's brief and base?
We must not as lecherous cattle race
blindly headlong into it. For love grows
languid and the flame goes.
But thus thus without end at leisure
to lay kissing's not work nor shame but pleasure
that pleased and pleases and will please ever:
is beginning and fails never.

PAUL CELAN

WHERE THERE IS ICE

Where there is ice, there is coolness for two.
For two: thus I let you come.
A breath as of fire was around you —
You came from the rose.
I asked: What were you called there?
You named it to me, that name:
a gloss as of ashes lay upon it —
From the rose you came.
Where there is ice, there is coolness for two:
I gave you the double name.
You opened your eye under it —
A brightness lay over the ice-free pool.
Now I close, as I spoke, mine — :
Take this word — my eye speaks it to yours!
Take it, repeat it after me,
repeat it after me, speak it slowly,
speak it slowly, delay its passage,
and your eye — hold it open all the while!

*(Wo Eis Ist, from VON SCHWELLE ZU SCHWELLE, translated by
Dallas E. Wiebe.)*

GEORG TRAKL

HOMEcoming

The coolness of black years,
Pain and hope
Preserve cyclopean rocks,
Unpeopled mountains,
Golden breath of Autumn,
Evening clouds —
Purity!
Crystal childhood watches
From blue eyes;
Under black pines
Love, hope,
While dew drops to stiff grass
From burning eyelids —
Unceasing!
O! There the golden path
Disintegrating in the snow
Of the abyss!
The valley at night
Breathes blue coolness,
Faith, hope!
I greet you, lonely cemetery!

*(Die Heimkehr, from DIE DICHTUNGEN, translated by Dallas E.
Wiebe.)*

PIETRO CIMATTI

WHITE

For this sheet — before the stony
hour of my sleep will come —
walk, Mother. Hours fall
like tears of bells; February sails
move to the song of hope
distant fires from the coast.
For hours I listen
to the passing wind. Gulls leave
crying farewell to each other; bones
of cuttlefish are moon fires,
nocturnal flames of the moon. The hours,
tears of bells, submerge us.
For this sheet — before the white
stone of sleep buries me — you still walk
Mother, gliding away in wind
moving the sea to a mournful dirge.
For this sheet, vanish, shadow of discontent.

(Translated by Dora M. Pettinella from the Italian, BIANCO.)

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GUY RENÉ CADOU

AT NIGHT ABOVE ALL

Night! At night above all I do not dream but see
And hear footsteps by the gully
I hear groans
Of stones breaking away from the years
Night never keeps watch
Of the future cracking up
And nothing will ever live in me again
Like a mill turning empty
Eternity
Beautiful women who were never born
Will give themselves away in the wood
Men I shall never know
Will throw down their cards under the lamplight on a
cold night
What will I have gained being immortal?
A million years are nothing
But not to have these hands that tremble
As they prepare to gather eggs in the hedge
No desire no pride the whole being sated
And always the same stupid hour on the clock
No more departures on an empty stomach to obscure
meetings
I leap in my bed like a new coil spring
Stand up in the middle of the night and grasp
Weak lampposts and phantoms
Where is the skylight? I want to run away! Where is the
hatch?
And I cling to a star shining
Like sharp steel flint at life's
Drunken side as it joins to the present
The bindweed of day and the gate of iron.

*(Translated by Dora M. Pettinella from the French, LA NUIT
SURTOUT.)*

JORGE CARRERA ANDRADE

IT IS FORBIDDEN TO WALK ON THE GRASS

European chestnut; offer me your yellow hand
that breaks away flying to its death.
I know your world of prisoned parks,
of birdmen selling
forest music in a cage,
of trees in rows,
children in rows,
geese in rows,
your world blushing within its bloom
ever ready to fall in the wind's arms,
master of your trade,
nomad civilized braggart,
innovator
of the garden's cultured speech.
It is forbidden to walk on the grass.
It is forbidden to lunch with the birds.
It is forbidden to remain all night
counting stars
and losing count
start counting again till dawn.

*(Translated by Dora M. Pettinella from the Spanish SE PROHIBE A
ANDAR SOBRE EL CESPED.)*

JORGE GUILLÉN

PRESAGE

You are now the fragrance of your fate.
Your life not lived, thus pure, throbs
Inside of me, a ticktock of no time.
What does it matter that the alien sun will never shine
Upon these figures, yes, created,
Not just dreamed, created by your pride and mine!
It does not matter. They are thus more true
Than the appearance of veracious lights
Foreshortened by commitment or by chance.
The whole of you has turned into your presage,
Oh, but without mystery! An absolute,
Invading unity supports you.
What became of that enormous, shapeless,
Black pullulation from the deep,
Beneath the starry solitudes?
The illustrious stars, the stars
Do not behold our night devoid of secrets.
So calm is all the very dark.
Dark eternity, oh! is no celestial
Monster. Our invisible souls
Conquer its presence among things.

(Translated by Miguel González-Gerth.)

JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

ABDUCTOR

The song we expected became a murmur,
a sound
lost,
and I lonely;
and you beside me: what did you hear?
Only your form was present;
you were carried as if by a stirring
more silent than sound imagined.
Eyes closed, receptive, you lay there,

gently felled, awake.
And you slept.
I was pinned to the wall,
to the black siberia:
without a flame,
even the flicker that burned
briefly
died;
and faintly, faintly
from a distant place
I heard the syllables,
a soft cry,
of my name.
The warm winds,
slowly, quickly,
swept over me
as you returned.

RUSSELL SALAMON

SELENA II

Off your dreams are gone to . . .
drum they rain on your tissue paper face
furrowed now with older yet
and not much brighter
not more gossamer.
Revisit they the road gone, o,
where the crooked pine old man
smokes his pipe of snow . . .
road so rarely returns, so rarely rounds about;
neither does it rerun gone grooves
nor remake fall beds
nor furnish leaves for nests in snow
nor hope hyacinths to grow . . .
road, where time in the mind is snow.
minutes each crystal different falling
in drifts of hours against our temples heaped,
frost against our corns . . .
road, of ice in our springs that conceals the water
congeals the flow to iceberg blood —
road of open eyes to see years in flow
over the drifts of men. . . .

RUSSELL SALAMON

M.E.

She walks, weaving nocturnes.
Trails she perfume in her wake behind.
Her right hand takes liberties of lyric;
round her curves defines.
But damn her left, where some other's wedding ring
stands in claim; too loudly exclaiming.
Otherwise, she is flower proper.
Scherzo sweet, she is, still with girlhood crusted.
Un yet a woman of mountain moonscape
streams in mist.
Is just perfect flutes before the break of sea.
But where sea? Where is ocean of her dammed?
In accumulation behind soft eyes does it?
In blonde hair of soft morning held?
Stray her eyes, meadowing to greener mistfields.
Yet where see?
Where typhoon loose of passion, that I can. . .
Damn some other's ring that claims whatever sea
she may permit herself to look!

JOEL WEISHAUS

A SEA-GULL GLIDING GENTLY

A sea-gull gliding gently
Through an invisible harp
Became a Vision outstretched,
Her body burning brightly
from within
As a flame under glass.
Voices flickered before my eyes,
Painting dense shadows
On a resurrected ear:
Her hair blowing to her shoulders,
Kissing them,
Flooding her back
with gold.
Just to be one long strand,
I would never fly away,
I would never fly away.

JOEL WEISHAUS

**'TIS BETTER TO MARRY THAN TO LIVE WITH
WONDER**

glancing
upward
it is bottom
les
s c(old)
lights tossed up
by the e(yes of man
ceasing to question
begins to understand.
th
us those long
th in
shadows
settled over a full nest
& One
morning a frosty dawn
beckons

DAVID J. RAINE

FROM AN AFRICAN EVENING

Indeed it is the lonely way in our talk at night
that we say most
when we speak of the rising thunder on our brows
in a quiet lap of waves
do people realize our tenderness for love
our hope the way of the whip-poor-will
and days in a womans singing voice
have many moving pleasures
many clouds that never blot the sun
when the rock is a cavern to the sea
and night the only way for our talk
will we bend and say
to the children of the dark
there is a quiet simple man somewhere
ripe almonds rattle in the wind
and the sand goes heap pile inland

DAVID J. RAINE

his bones soft dust that covers our feet
and his hand with a span that pinches worlds
the air is his mind
that we sip cool at night
in the day warm wine runs in our throats
with the soft found pleasure running wild
free as the flick of a woman's head
and the hair moving on her face
when we talk at all
we spread moon mountains in the sea
and vend ourselves like a toothless comb
is there a way to make dye fast in cloth
and wear the habit pure for life
the night has a quiet place for our talk
in the way the chill distills our thoughts
the pebbles broken rock.

JANE M. EVANS

CHANGING CLIMATES

These are changing climates
Inns totter as the road narrows
Neutral birds shadow the moon at moments when
Direction palls. This exacting mountain
Sneers at hermits
Spectacled and gloved
Accepts no petition and is not moved by arrows
Trailing a bannered justice across its ragged skies.
Snowfall. A flurry of memory counting
Faces once beloved
Frozen in caricature
Of each forgivable compromise. Abstract sparrows,
Cartoon pussycats, a novel rich in italics, all,
All fenced below, settling to
A weary humor
A flapping shutter.
Here is the climb above forgiveness
Below the augury of circled swallows. Suspicions
 squeak
In bat-like radar, swoop from shadows
Fall in a shower
Wrapped in black wings
Defy definition and suffocate love. Fallow
To foot, hollow at heart, follow the sniffing nose,
The blush of nervous ear. Blink the crescent
Moon's beginnings.

LOURINE WHITE

OF SIGHT AND SOUND

Echoes haunt my midnights.
Last night a hot trumpet
forgot that I turned from
April some years ago
and
I can't get started and cherry
pierced my resisting ears
and a big band percussed by a
frugal piano moved time up to
one o'clock jump
when your voice drowned out the
loudest music. Once you
forgot and spoke what your
eyes had mentioned before
and
now my ears beg reality
while in the jetted night
my closed eyes still mirror your lips
caressing sounds that we did not know
spelled tragedy.

EDSEL FORD

FUGUE

In his heart he heard symphonies
in those sacred vaults echoed
stars set to music
and cymbals of thunder
which chased Bach shamed
into alleyways
But when he set pencil to empty
score sheet beer
and pretzels followed
He married a dark girl
with several questions about her
and died nursing an old anger

after thirty years
They say when she came upon him
dead as a metronome
neglected blackbirds
flew out of his eyes
warbling and perched outside his
room on five wires
awkward and dissonant
like something sung
backwards
without a beginning.

JAMES McMANN

MONDAY

My woman's eyes are closed
pale della Francesca behind the lids
outside, the pile drivers
ram the morning black and blue.
Her breathing is enough
to make it all melodic.
Someone said once:
'No matter what we do,
it ends by being melodic.'
The voices in the wall
are a song
death, then, is a song.
The thick dark lines of tight Manhattan
singing
The horror of a dying leaf
singing.

J. MICHAEL YATES

CUBIST POEM : BEGIN READING ANYWHERE

I am from birth to death
A very long line of men.
At any instant I am
A swirling circle of selves.
How shall I represent myself?
A development in fictive hours?
A dance around the changing object: Me?
Shall I say I am fifty-one?
I have never sensed a year or fifty-one.
A year is a password between us. Only.
Time is the accordion.
I am the air it plays. . .
When I stoop the horizon approaches.
When I stand I drive it away.
A mile is a light-year is an acre
Is a drop. These measurements are strange.
Speak to me of no fixity:
I'm a metabolic wind-sock for change.

J. MICHAEL YATES

**AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT AT BRUSH
CREEK AND PASEO: A
TRANSVALUATION OF DEATH**

Like this she should have gone:
Like arias of sirens whirling,
Like crimsons on ebony whirling.
In the out-there she walks,
Beyond the tin clashing
Machine-flash of the living.
Beneath this huge obsidion,
She flows, her folds swishing
Over the curves of breathing.
This was a velvet mountain:
Outside it, a horn droning . . .
An eyelid within, fluttering.

(From INSIDE THE GRAPE, winning Hopwood Award Ms.)

S. A. OSTERLUND

LINES TO A DISMAL WAITRESS

it's not so sad looking thru
your uniform from behind/watching
the exciting white strap of your bra
in slight respiratory ups & downs —
red booths & 10-cent tips
& a flagrant background theme —
in this glaucous light there's
no such thing as dining or
a loving-side to hunger/but the face
you serve with silverware & waterglass
is worse/is grief meal/
is bewailing entrée Death —
after hours/beyond the clatter
of cups & plates/do you
bend & peel a stocking in your flat
& wad your slip —
drop sexless crepe-soled shoes —
cry goddamn hanging Night! to fallow shades
in dreams of stabbing checks —
how do you call yourself between
the fresh or musty sheets —

S. A. OSTERLUND

FROM THE GONE BOOK OF CIRCLES

the Ohio Death is different she said/
sitting up cross-legged & swaying
back & forth — it's never seen itself
& looks so hungry/even lost/& I watch
Night a lot you know —
then she would smoke/exhaling shapes
of animals/& sink back dark & pensive
to the spread —
foreshortened image of her length —
we've our own nocturnal shield here/
you & i/& just this cigarette for light —
she would toss her hand/waving hot
figure-eights above my face/then dive
the orange coal into her cup & mask
me with her hair —
make sudden soft erotic move —
i think fast crimes kick thru my blood
when i'm alone — be kind magician —
make me Dove or brilliant stream of
silk —

GLENN R. SWETMAN

THE CONQUERED

Now the heroic trout
floats belly-upward on the string
and the crab gnaws it.

FUNERAL

A birdsong rang louder
than the black priest's chant, yet your
casket descended.

WHAT IS LEFT

Never again to watch
your eyes flutter awake — stars
no longer frighten me.

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A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

THE OPENING ROOM

now it is this revelation of time as patterns of hen tracks in the dust or seed in the earth and winds or winds as space and space as time and we cut these habits of growth or belief and conceive our archeologies of duration

E.P.: 'Rhythm is a form cut into TIME, as a design, is determined space.' (the ABC . . .)

a design existing outside our possibilities but exciting a response

upon the unlighted corners and edges of which our brief brain pans implode themselves in love and and anger because because we die and we know it and

take these pavements and hallways we first discover to be the permanent expression of feeling and perception but they are not they have not always been here

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

Paul & Percival Goodman: 'Of the man-made things, the works of engineering and architecture and town plan are the heaviest and biggest part of what we experience. They lie underneath, they loom around, as the prepared place of our activity. Economically, they have the greatest amount of past human labor frozen into them, as streets and highways, houses and bridges, and physical plant.... A child accepts the man-made background itself as the inevitable nature of things; he does not realize that somebody once drew some lines on a piece of paper who might have drawn otherwise.' (COMMUNITAS)

where are your shoes she said. i said they're in the hospital you know. oh she said moved to comment because her eyes were at the window. and will they always be invalids now she

teased. her hands hid in leather. i've taken to beaches
anyway i said. it's not so awful as you might suppose. in my
mind her lips sank beneath waves. oh i know you'll do well at
it she said. her lips above water made smiles. i believe in
you. we all do. your belief is finding my way i think i said
aloud. but i felt only a japanese humility. it was a
civilization. like her gloves.

so there are moments in the truths of others that catch
us naked and open and without maps

because we stand in their ground? or because they lie in
ours? or because they have used our name and

so we do it and belief comes or it doesn't and or relief or it
doesn't but it's what we do what we do

*Gauguin wrote, in 1891 (half-crazed to flee those
oldest Western lineaments, and cutting the first
space of his own vision in southern seas): 'I am no
longer conscious of days and hours, of good and
evil. The happiness is so strange at times that it
suppresses the very conception of it.'*

A. FREDRIC FRANKLYN

*only know that all is good, because all is
beautiful.' (NOA NOA)*

here we have entered here
we have engaged a
life and made
love
making sons from
fear
made love i
mean we have made it where
there wasn't any be-
fore the hostile act that
instinctualized it we
make it make it
love

fear
where it has not been be-
fore us we
make it in the world and
put it aside like
fire and good round
lies that
that carry away be-
lief on a
new world
pony

Lawrence: ‘. . . I in amaze see in the sky before me, a
woman I did
not know I loved, but there she goes, and her beauty
hurts my heart; I
follow her down the night, begging her not to depart.’
(AWARE)
my head in
your deep

A. FREDERIC FRANKLYN

*Mikhail Kuzmin: ‘Through the steam rising from
the tea I see Mount Fujiyama, a golden volcano
against a yellow sky. How strangely does a
saucer contract a landscape!’ (FUJIYAMA IN A
SAUCER)*

all the girls appearing
to our appetites ripe in
their variety and
piquance
wanton and poised
in small narrow
shoes this
way this
waiting acts
upon our size and

our patience and
the soft girls and
their scissored looks are
there forever in
the half-light
wanted and poisoned
oh baby oh baby down
these odors and
alleys our
quarrels and
need lead
us
home

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ED BULLINS

THE MESSENGER

(FROM A NOVEL IN PROGRESS: ABSURD)

*'A mumble mumble . . . ah oh mumble mumble
mumble . . . A mum mum mumble mumbo mumbo.
. . .'*

Early, with the first light, comes Rick's morning prayer from his room. Rick gives vows to his black god. He has no time to present the other four chants his faith demands during the day and evening, for his one dawn devotional costs precious time spent upon his knees, time necessary to his cause. Being unorthodox, as he calls himself, he says he is free to interpret his new faith in an individual way.

That's all it is, brothers, that's all it is . . . a shuck, just a shuck to stay on your knees praying all the time for things to change and not getting out there and doin' something about 'em. The devil's not on his knees! . . . No, the devil's not jivin' . . . not one hundredth of the time that brother is . . . the devil gave brother religion for one purpose . . . to take the chains from his wrists and put them around his mind!

The paint on my window frame and baseboard and upon the walls in all the rooms of the house is a combination battleship grey and flesh pink. Five months ago when we moved in, the landlady, Mrs. Goodstein, offered it to hide the blotched walls; it had been bought at a war surplus store.

After Mrs. Goodstein had left, Rick, with paint cans obstructing his path, had paced the length of the long living room, tirading against all 'Anns' (as he called white women). And he denounced every woman—black and white—engaging in commerce and business, not singly in domestic duties.

It had been a bad day for Len and I.

I sat in a corner reading book reviews, passing the pages to Len each time I quit on a slice from the literary knife. Len and I whispered little and strained to hear the FM above Rick's teachings, hoping that he would not accidentally tilt a can upon the nearly large enough, patched and sewn, once-maroon, rug. Rick's narrow, highly-polished black shoes scampered like ebony shrews among the gallons of grey and flesh, always just skimming past the containers, over the half-dozen glass quarts of turpentine, above the faded, no longer imperial, floor-covering. Even when the toes, from the outset of a reckless swoop, were sweeping to a collision to smashing vivid spangles upon the carpeting, they somehow slid past, carrying their messenger upon his path of righteousness.

ED BULLINS

Rick is finished praying; the floor's creak discloses his getting from his knees in the center of the room. With routine rigid as his backbone, he stretches first, then puffs out his chest — for he has done his duty. Next he strides to the FM and CLICK; . . . so morning has fully come.

'JIVIN JONES! JIVIN JONES . . . THE HIP ONE!' Rick screams.

Each morning is like the last; Rick is up first and the Jiving Joe Jones Jazz Program is turned on. But Rick hates jazz.

'Get up, Brother Steve,' he speaks to me. 'Get Brother Len up too so he can listen to Jivin Jones' message.'

I see his gossamer form through my web of curtain, spinning away from my doorway, his shaven gleaming skull seeming like a haloed globe through the curtain, approaching Len's shut door on the far end of the couch; each morning, Rick awakens the world to his screams.

'Yes, brothers . . . get up, get up for dancing and singing . . . ha ha ha . . . get up for playin', brothers, we all know what great players black men are, yawhl. Listen to Jivin Jones,

brothers — ain't he hip? AIN'T HE HIP? Wants you to dance your life away. JIVIN JONES! Black people have got more records than books. . . . YEAH, dance your lives away!'

Rick is now at the hi-fi turning the volume higher; he raises his chant above the blast, and the shuffle of his slim shoes gives me the image of him gyrating across the floor, burlesquing the latest dance steps, eyes shut tight against light in imitation bliss, body whirling, buttocks protruding, absurdly jutting beneath the flaps of his slit suit coat, an acid caricature.

'JIVIN JONES WILL TELL YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW, LISTEN TO HIS MESSAGE, BROTHERS!'

If it wasn't for him, I would lose an hour or more deciding to get out of bed, so his zeal has some value.

'As-salaam alaikum, Brother Steve,' Rick says as I step into the living room, bare-chested, hands filled with shirt, shoes, and towel.

He sits at one of the two tables in the room, writing in an old looseleaf tablet.

'Morning, Rick.'

Beyond the living room is Len's bedroom. To enter the bathroom off the tiny chamber, I shove the door against his yielding mattress, and slide my body through the opening. As I jerk through, my twisted head looks down upon Len's bearded, slumbering face.

In the bathroom, my face cloth still hangs in its place. Some mornings it is gone or pushed and fallen into the tub it hangs above.

I reenter the living room; Rick is gathering up his books and materials.

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ED BULLINS

Ed Bullins

'There're some English muffins in the oven, Brother. I hope you don't mind an Anglicized breakfast, but English muffins don't have filthy pork grease in them. Yes, the Englishman is a heavy man. Did you know that, Brother Steve?'

'I have great admiration for the British,' I say and open the refrigerator, pulling out the last of the bacon from the meat compartment.

'Yes, the British are heavy people,' he continues, now pacing slightly. The radio is turned down; jazz plays.

'Look what they did for India! Showed the Indians they didn't need any devils telling them how to run their country; Africa is learning too. Did you know that, Steve?'

'I had guessed as much,' I say and turn the fire up under the frying pan before the few slices are spread across the oily steel.

'You're still eating pork, I see,' Rick says.

He stands in the kitchen doorway, hands upon sides, distaste showing upon his light tan face.

'There's nothing I can say to break you of this filthy habit?' he asks. 'No.'

'But, to consume swine . . . to eat the nastiest scum-sucking, filth-swilling vermin in creation is nauseous, Brother. A hog, a sow, a pig is dirty, Bother Steve. It's devil food.'

Too much flame shrivels the strips, scorching their edges brownly in curls, raising glistening puffs of fat in the centers of the curls. Looking me over as I fish out the bitter scraps, Rick shrugs, then turns away.

'Oh, well,' he says, 'some of my brothers just aren't ready yet.' He returns to the kitchen doorway. 'But we need you,

Brother. We need poets as well as builders.’ He turns once more, final and done.

He gathers up his books and adjusts his glasses; I wonder how he’ll see, once the downpour sweeps against the lenses. A clear plastic raincoat with ends spreading out like a kite is to keep him dry, and transparency reveals his black suit and stiffly-starched white shirt. His books and pamphlets are wrapped in a plastic bag. A great black umbrella hangs from his arm by its curved neck, and new, glossy black rubbers cover his wicked-looking sharp-toed shoes.

‘Just think of the songs you could sing of your people in your poetry, Steve. The black man lives in song and poetry.’

‘If I could only sing truth, Rick, buddy, I’d be glad,’ I say.

‘Isn’t the black man truth, Brother Steve? Isn’t he fact? Are you your own dark lie, or does the lie belong to the devil?’

I turn and stare at him; then I reach down into my saucer and pick up

ED BULLINS

a charred strip of pork, biting through its tough fat, licking the grease from my smacking lips with relished swipes of tongue.

Rick lowers his head; the overhead light lights his striped, skin-drawn skull; I see the surface plainly, bald and tan.

‘I have a meeting to attend all day, so I won’t be back this evening,’ he says.

I nod; my mouth is stuffed with breakfast.

‘As-salaam alaikum, Brother,’ he says, using the Arabic address, backing out the front door. Some storm spray plucks off his uncovered scalp and skews down his brown brow in zagging streaks. He shakes out his umbrella and closes the door.

See you later, prophet, I think as the door shuts and I reach over and snap the jazz knob to ‘Off.’ Finally, I plunge into the kitchen and puke the held pork in the sink.

— BEFORE THE SUN SETS —

Perhaps that is when Uncle Joe decided it had to be done: When Sally and her brother Milton came, when the first bells of the new church rang like plastic hitting tin, and when his Ford began to leak water from its radiator — Joe lying on his stomach in the sponge grass and sucking his thumb, not trying to not look at the pictures in the magazine before him, not seeing points and triangles and halfmoon smiles; a dark red bird in the tree somewhere above singing and another beyond the well answering back. Uncle Joe thought the one beyond the well was a she, because it seemed more able to listen to the other.

In the newness of morning it had been easy to forget Sally and Milton; they had not seen Joe in two weeks and had to tell him of their trip upstate, telling it also to the wall and to the ceiling

‘Yes yes we know they call it ‘Frisco here but we didn’t
want to sound like tourists did we Milt?’

‘No’

‘So we said San Francisco and complimented the people
on the beauty of it all’

‘Yes’

‘the beauty and the quaintness of it and why do you
know that just below the city’

‘Just ninety miles’

‘is all that lovely country that Steinbeck wrote so
wonderfully about? yes and those poor peasants who
lived there?’

‘Fine writer’

but not telling it in the way Uncle Joe would have wished them to. He would have wanted to hear it told by the dark red bird and its lover whom he finally heard next morning

telling another story which he knew to be unprintable; but it was very easy also forgetting that everyone in Glendale was welcome to come to the new church, every resident, no one excepted, and that when he found out what that meant he threatened to burn every tree and put a black cross on every outhouse. ‘Who can come?’ he asked, saying ‘You can and I, but what about Downtown and San Fernando and East Los Angeles?’ But he let cool sunshine thoughts wrest from his mind all his detergent-anxious wave patterns.

And with lunchtime gathering momentum and with the scent of just-prepared egg sandwiches looming in the kitchen, waiting to run through the screen when the wooden door opened to the day; with the sun standing far off above — as if afraid of any neighbors, Uncle Joe had no time and

WILLIAM ABBOTT

maybe no wish to see backwards, to see Monday. Monday, TIME had come to photograph him in his 'latest model' and he'd sent them away screaming profanity back over their tight black shoulders at him — the black being flannel that is now out-of-fashion to be gray. It was the first Thunderbird on the block and he was in the house facing for an unpardon-able instant the mad black-and-white vomit box; it was telling him telling him telling him, saying 'pink white or new golden sweetheart with leverten — Booth stars as hazel and when she sats run well watch hazel in color each thursday — Yeakel thats nine two five oh lakewood blvd in downey — Franco-american maker of four kinds — new light spry lightest shortening you can buy — smile everybody likes to smile then why does she hide her smile because of dull off white teeth she needs pepsident the toothpaste for people who like to smile pepsidents newly patented formula cleans away yellow film — pain tension pain anxiety pain nerves pain pain pain pain pain pain pain pain pain pain pain' and then Uncle Joe released himself from the mind-disintegrator machine and stumbled out into the gray air which settled over the city and the county like an ominous deathcloud. Someone standing just outside of it all was saying to him that he had made a mistake; but Uncle Joe was already driving past the Strip and toward the beach when the noise frightened him crimson, when the engine lisp ed, gagged, and died right in front of and under him. He came later out of the liquor store with change and phoned everyone one must phone when it happens, and he was taxied off over the hill to Glendale, watching the meter overcharge him. But perhaps it wasn't just the visit from Sally and Milton, the new church of J. Krist Esquire, nor even the broken water line that ruined his engine. It may have been before that when the death of his friend and mine and the death later on and that death after that and the three deaths last summer

— hot summer — and the twenty-one (Twenty-one, he thought; twenty-one is another way of saying full-grown, which means high point, which is the meridian; Twenty-one at meridian, he thought). Or it could have been the mayor or his council or just a whore lying in the English Channel catching her death of cold. But it wasn't. It was him lying in sponge grass after lunch had been consumed and the little sticks of prefab cancer had been lit; him lying in the sponge grass and saying it aloud since now he speak because the red singing birds were away for the moment; saying it aloud 'How can I when nobody else does? How can they expect me to when

WILLIAM ABBOTT

all this time I have expected them to and they haven't? How can it be so when they argue on both sides and say things that if they would only stop to think they wouldn't want to say?

He said 'But they can and they do and so I shall: I must.'

And he said 'Or else . . . or else' and he stopped because then the birds were back and one sang notes of love to the other, but before the other ('The male' he said) could answer with what might have been a proposal or just a sly suggestion; before that happened, Uncle Joe's nephew George came with his BB rifle and sighted the crimson boy bird and squeezed, squeezing the trigger just like his father taught him

'Hold it tight and keep both eyes open wide, Sight your target and don't move side to side, Now slowly squeeze the trigger and before you know, You've dealt the target a fatal blow ho-ho-ho'

And so just as Uncle Joe said 'Or else' one last time, the lady red bird began to chirp and sing and wait, and the little nephew whispered loudly saying 'I got it!' and ran. The song was one of expectant and fearful cautiousness, and the tune lingered long after the lady red bird had given her boyfriend

up for dead and had flown; lingered on like the zing of a car crash or the gray nonsmog fog of an atom-blast. And Uncle Joe lay in the grass and waited for the fall of the sun and the closing of the curtain over the day, and he was there in the brown dirt and sponge grass when Sally and Milton drove up and when a minute later Miss Judy Randolph came by and smiled at herself, had to do that because she didn't see Uncle Joe, had to smile and had to walk so close to him, so close and so very very very far, so as to remind him of the box in the living room that last Monday afternoon was saying 'pain' and he waited until she passed, and took out his shiny brand-new pocket knife and opened it.

He was standing on the grass now and the hand at his side was heavy, and he said 'Or else' three times. 'Or else or else or else,' and he already knew what else, already knew that he had just weighed the world and had just found it unable to support him; it held only partly-whole people, not whole ones, not him — and those too heavy dropped off and left only sketches of themselves, imprinted deep because of that same heaviness. He followed her and left behind the pictures he was not going to need. He knew for sure that tooth decay and other forms are catching and that if they insist upon and even want to grow and spread, he could not avoid them and his mind and body would not become a part of them; he was too good for that, he thought without the least hint of conceit, yet with modesty and rightly so, looking one last time down at the liberator in his hand.

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THE DANGERS OF ELECTRICITY

Christopher Perret

I sit in an armchair high-ball in hand and wonder

‘what will I do without television — without radio or
four-walled cinemascope screen — ?’

Si zz le ssszzssssssss :

Some vague and female shape crawls from an empty
socket — a creature recognized — clocklike with motion and
habit — crossing vast halls of monotone from one generation
silent to another still: filling perhaps 60,000,000 boxlike
cages simultaneously with twinlike resemblances: feeding on
steaklike pills both for laughter and for sleep —

I am assured there is no need of guards or locks —

I am assured that slaves with smile of white-capped teeth
injected

CHRISTOPHER PERRET

have forgotten
that smiles spring from the soul —
and drowsy at the last
I am assured that it is willingly
they sew themselves into oblivion
and group by group
and hand welded to hand
are content
with mattresses for skins —

ROY BASLER

CLASS REUNION

He dreamed across the campus to his class
numb as a rubber man in every limb
and latex fifty years alas
ignored the fart façades who peered at him

chewing fuscous phrases spewed before
in comic strips captioned with gnostic air
subjective correlatives of more and more
and took their dare
to back away
and stare
at words above a door
that was not there
and limber off to rack
his tangled knot
upon the quad before
the ultramulti arch that entered what
By seven alive
and fed by eight
by nine arrived
no minute late
at ten a m
his third cigar begun
behind his wide executive desk
a well emolumented citizen
whose meaning was his task
he laid to rest the revenant of him

ARNOLD LAZARUS

EMPEDOCLESVILLE

where earth is at once the salty men
who make the steel and petrol,
and sweet corn fats that render them
margarine and pot metal.
where air is daily put upon
by seers from the charnel halls,
burning each other's entrails
off the ivy walls.
where fire is unpromethean,
the freight train's flare and onus
driving drowsy salesmen on
with more of a bang than a bonus.
where water leaks from stocks and bonds
and sweat from the broker's fiddle,
the drip drip drip of dividends,
the coupons in a puddle.

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CHARLES J. SHAGOURY

SCHIZOPHRENIA ON MADISON AVE.

Of thee I sing,
I whistle a happy song
Of right or wrong,
My country,
But first a word from O beautiful for spacious skies,
For the power of positive thinking, the pause that
refreshes,
For the church of your choice, for buy now, pay later.
We the 99/44/100% pure people, now for the first time
one nation,
Under the insurance umbrella, in order to fight
Tooth decay and tired blood with justice and liberty,
Forever two=way stretch free, white, and don't delay.
You can be sure if there's one born every minute.
My fellow-Americans, we have nothing to fear,
No other product can make that statement. I pledge
Allegiance, give me liberty or give me fast relief,
To brand=name products for the people. These are the
times
That try Brand X, the sunshine patriot
Will in this hour of crisis, and don't you wish everybody
did,
Shrink hemorrhoids without surgery. Give me
Your teeming millions yearning to think young
And clear all eight sinuses, plus a no-risk offer
Of free TV, liberty, and red, white, and blue stamps
Guaranteed forever. Swing low sweet insolent chariot
Coming for the loved one in the land of
You know they're safe with no place to hide.
And now a word from our alternate sponsor.

DAVID MARGOLIS

THE RACES

I envy the clear mind,
the fast track on a clear day.
It is better
to understand the poem
than to write it,
jockeying
for position among
meanings, shades
of meanings/ &c:
hobbled by your own intentions.
Better to watch
where the gate
opens/
an instant/
& they're off/each
in his lane boldly
marked.
At worse, the 20 to 1
is a horse. So.
I envy
clear minds,
saddled
with a poem it is more
to write than to understand.
At worst,
a horse
is an animal.

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JOYCE ODAM

THE POET'S WIFE

She came to the door,
night-eyed, witch-haired,
and whispered,
'My poet is locked in his tower.
No one disturbs his twenty-third hour.'
'How did you meet him?'
we asked her. She smiled.
'He composed me one day
when he was drunk on rhyming.
He liked my sound and metaphor.
I liked his timing.'
'O what are your children doing?'
we shuddered.
She shrugged. 'They are cutting out words
from what we say, doing research
for their father.
But he throws their adjectives away —
why do they bother?'
'Will you show us your forest-garden?'
we flattered.
But she warned, 'Something heavy
is in the air. No one can breathe what's growing.
The night is sick with molding green.
And I am sick with knowing.'
'Will you tell him we came . . .' but whirlpools
moved in her moody eyes,
and she
was already climbing her husband's stair,
taking key-shaped pins
from her struggling hair.

AN UNDERGROUND CINEMA PRIMER

(PART 1)

BEHIND THE GLAMOR AND excitement of the new film movement have been two principals: Amos Vogel and Jonas Mekas. The Underground movement would have had difficulty gathering momentum without Vogel's Cinema 16, a nonprofit New York-based organization to distribute and screen documentary and experimental 16mm films. Vogel's project was designed to create an audience for 'artistically satisfying' and 'socially purposeful' movies. Founded in 1947, Cinema 16 has grown to be perhaps the largest distributor of its type in the world, with the most complete catalogue of 16mm experimental films. During the last five years, Mekas, editor of FILM CULTURE magazine, director of the Film-makers' Cooperative, and weekly film critic for the VILLAGE VOICE, has become the de facto spokesman for many of the avant-garde film-makers.

The presence of Mekas in the movement mainly has helped to create a public for the experimental film, though many people criticize him for the use of touting PR methods to arouse wider interest. He could be characterized as a dynamic influence; one thing, he is certainly outspoken and has a gift for pulling at the nerve-ends of controversy. He is at once, strategist, philosopher, and promoter of the Film Underground.

A distinction to be made — though Mekas' Film-makers' Cooperative supplements, and in some ways duplicates the purpose of Cinema 16 — is that its efforts seem to have gone largely toward promoting the advance avant garde.

What is it that most of the Underground films have in common? What is the broad philosophy of the movement? What does the Underground film-maker perceive as his

purpose?

To me, it seems almost incontestable that the direction of these films is toward a self-centred, idiosyncratic cinema. Several years ago,

Stan Vanderbeek

Stan Vanderbeek — now teaching film at New York University — stated this view a little more specifically.

Films are an evolutionary art form; for films to survive as art, the proper center of gravity has to be returned to the artist, not the businessman . . . the mind and the eye of the artist will find their way through the current communication dilemma, namely a private art that can be made public, as opposed to the current idea of a public art that cannot be made private.

There is a large body of creative film-makers who have been forced to work in darkness; these artists make up a group I call the 'American Underground Cinema.' In an effort to survive financially, one possible solution for this group is the presentation of films in Gallery Theatres, where prints of films are shown and made available for sale (just as a collector would buy an etching or lithograph). If the mechanics for such a showplace could be solved, a new and entirely private attitude would eventually come to the film, they would become objects to own and appreciate. Much more respect and perhaps the necessary money to continue film experiments could form such a base.

Vanderbeek's idea of a 'private art' certainly seems to be an important aspect of serious cinema — but, by private I do not think he means something exclusively understood only by a select few. For, as Jean Cocteau has shown, even that which is enigmatic does not of itself exclude understanding. One need only be reminded that without enigma, without ambiguity, poetry as a form would be totally ineffective, or that the Zen would be at a loss to produce insight without its own selected obscurantism.

Cocteau's *SANGRE DU POETE* virtually embodies the private surrealist ideal; it is the exemplar of an aesthetic conduct. Although acutely conscious of what the medium could do through novel effects, he also tried to explore the possibility of statement. What could be said with cinema? Were there special limits of comprehension that the medium qua medium imposed upon its audience which precluded the inner vision? *SANGRE DU POETE* is one of the first films to test the ability of audiences to apprehend a statement, poetically presented — indeed, as a poetic statement, it did stretch the public limits of comprehension.

All serious art is, in a sense, private. The nature of the new statement of films is not unlike the new statement of painting or sculpture: it is the isolation of the essential personal gesture; and idiom of the individual sensibility which, when made public, acts to inform the world-consciousness.

Unfortunately, to the unsophisticated, 'personal' or 'private,' when applied to art, becomes synonymous with 'psychological quirks' having little or nothing to do with the world at large — possessing significance for the owner of the 'quirks,' only. This would be to imply that *HAMLET* or *OEDIPUS REX* have little or no universal significance because those plays contain an abundance of ripe psychological material, or because they are obscurantist and ambiguous.

The Underground film-maker sees himself as no more restricted than the poet, playwright, painter, or sculptor — either in the nature of his statements or the treatment of his materials. There is a great tendency for all kinds of people, with vested interests in cinema, to wish to keep it hamstrung as a popular medium; and I think this is probably what Vanderbeek refers to directly as the 'current communication dilemma.' However, I think as more and more explanation of Underground film is offered to the public, the film-makers eventually 'will overcome,' and finally emerge aboveground.

So much for this important aspect of Underground film philosophy. Under the heading of a private cinema, flourish countless applications — many kinds of individual statements — as many possible kinds as there are of different executions of painting or sculpture. This means that every collection by an Underground film-maker must finally be approached as patiently and seriously as one would the creations of Max Ernst, Henry Moore, or Gustave Moreau.

Already, within the last five years or so, there is a sort of second generation of Underground film-makers who have produced a significant body of work. Among these, I think immediately of Stan Brakhage, Jack Smith, Gregory Markopoulos, Bruce Connor, Don Rice (who died prematurely), Bruce Baillie, Andy Warhol, George Manupelli, Ken Jacobs, Stan Vanderbeek, and Kenneth Anger (who has made a transition with brilliance into the new generation). These are some of the film-makers reaching a degree of maturity. Others, who are either beginning to develop serious directions, or whose quantity of work is as yet insufficiently large, should be mentioned — among them, Larry Jordan, Vernon Zimmerman, and Dennis Morgan. To be truthful, film-makers have proliferated so rapidly of late that it would be a gross injustice to suggest that this list is anywhere near definitive.

In the next part of the Underground Cinema Primer, I shall take at least a cursory look at the work of several of the film-makers I have mentioned, both in terms of statement (or theme) and of mode (or treatment).

O. W. CRANE: ROMANTIC PROTESTER?

IN THIS MEAT-AND-POTATOES WORLD, James Layland is a slag-man in a Pittsburgh steel mill. In more recognizable form, he is O. W. Crane, the poet, whose third book (in a decade), *A DREAM'S BRIEF TOUCH*, was recently published (7 POETS Press — \$1).

This Whooping Crane, far from extinct, lives on liquid oxygen and cigars, sings bawdy ballads at road houses, and drinks and lives voluminously. In conversation and correspondence, he is a major wit. His poetry is something else. He is one of Nietzsche's Great Despisers, who consider themselves a vanishing breed — for the simple reason that all breeds are vanishing. His book is not a Dream at all, but a radioactive nightmare, reflecting a post-Eliotian Weltschmerz that makes J. Alfred Prufrock come on like Soupy Sales.

If this is not a new style emerging from Crane's work, it displays at least a greater emphasis on a theme that heretofore has been minor: the Losers, the Already Dead, the 'empty children of relentless progress' — a continuing distrust of the faceless factors that moulded his, and our, Environment.

Like the rest of us, he offers no answers to the total lack of communication amongst men and nations, which eventually will lead to 'the billion futures frying in plutonium.' He probably is absolutely correct. Unfortunately, if he is absolutely correct, he'll never have the chance to say He Told Us So.

Even when celebrating those things which come closest to being Doorways for us — drink and the flesh — Crane no longer forgets that he is stuck here, the same as all of us:

But oh, I have crept so worriedly through censored ways
on purloined nights (my face set carefully to zero)

Rarely does he revert to the swinging cadences and love of pure sound as in his two earlier books, *BY ORDER OF THE MUSE* (1955), *VIEW FROM THE GARRET* (1960). At forty-two, he is getting down to the business at hand (and afoot). He's always had a grudge against the Mad-Avers, the Eggheads, and the Orgies (*ORG-anIzed rEligionS*); and now he's added, as a kind of clean-up batter: *The Bomb*.

Crane has become a Protest Poet, whether he admits it or not. He deems himself a Romantic; and his life (beyond the sweat) has been interesting. He served in India in World War II, prowled the back streets of New York through countless nights, has been a dock worker and printer's devil, and currently pits himself against the blast furnaces. It is here, perhaps, that his poetry has come to flower. What better place to envision a world in flames?

Each poet and each man creates the world he lives in. The poet's world is only more obvious. The reviewer's job is not to argue the truth of personal statement — only to try to synthesize it, to offer the reader a taste. This book is a gut-buster, without recourse to currently-popular language, a clear view into a bleak world where 'The shadow of today / falls upon the future / lengthening forever across the rubble fields.'

Carl Larsen

'What Does It Mean?'

WHEN THE ORDINARY MAN READS a poem and asks: 'What does it mean?' — or when he looks at nonrepresentational art and quips: 'My God! — who threw the paint?' — we laugh at his ignorance and scorn his insensitivity. And it is grimly disheartening for important artists to struggle year on year with only dribbles of appreciation, while second-raters (with an occasional first-rater) become known, praised, and paid. We may snidely complain that the reason for this state of affairs is that the great mass of the people can only accept what the critics tell them is good. However, I suggest that the

primary reason is much more basic.

To encounter an original creative work for the first time is usually to be forced to learn a new language. Few are willing to take the trouble. Had Shakespeare been an Etruscan, who would appreciate his splendor today? Consider then what most people want in a poem: first, that it speak to them in terms they can comprehend; second, that it mean something. By this, we may understand that they demand the poem must tell some sort of story. Though only the Philistine asks for sloppy sentimentality, most people ask that poetry be roughly translatable into prose. Again — a painting must represent something tangible and familiar. Music must have recognizable harmonies, definite rhythms, and some semblance of melody. A novel must have characters with whom the reader can identify; and it also must have a fairly definite plot. The public must be able to talk about, to tell about these things. People don't want to return from a Seventh Heaven, able only to smile — they want to be able to translate the work of art into understandable vernacular. That is why, for examples, Frost, Eliot, Modigliani, Prokofieff, and Hemingway are well known to a majority, while greater artists are virtually unmentioned.

Most lives are lived as practically as possible, with a definite plot. I suggest, however, that life and also individual lives do not actually have a plot. (Isn't this realization the cause of Sartre's despair and Camus' exposition of the absurd?) This is not to assert that lives have no beginnings or ends, or that there is no 'form' or 'tone' or 'rhythm' to lives, but that life begins only where the structure of plot terminates.

For over a half-century, films have presented expanded versions of stage plays and novels and narrative poems. They have added music, fascinating camera effects, and have enlarged the vista until it verges on the world-scene (as we have perceived, having seen a surfeit of panoramic film

extravaganzas). There always are characters with whom we can identify; and we always can relate the story to our friends afterward.

Only recently (if we except a meagre few, such as Jean Cocteau), a small number of individuals — working more or less independently — have begun to experiment with the film as a creative medium in its own right. Some films, such as Kenneth Anger's *SCORPIO RISING*, are only slightly abstracted from altogether verbal plots, with scenes completely recognizable to any less-than-obtuse adult.

The film I'm examining here is Carl Linder's *SKIN*:* a short one, lasting no more than twelve minutes, though it seems longer to the viewer. Some have called *SKIN* a 'happening' film; indeed, it is much closer to being than to doing. And, like life itself, it has no plot. The calm measured music of Gabrieli forms a majestic background throughout — the picture interwoven in a fabric of colors and textures in almost constant motion. The camera focuses on brilliant sunlit flowers for an instant, then hazes out of focus to skip to other flowers, arriving at a near-focus before becoming hazy again; then it drifts dreamlike into an abstract design of colored light and sombre shadow. This process is repeated . . . and repeated . . . until the camera focuses on a greenish insect: perhaps a beetle; perhaps a bee. More flowers and abstract patterns, before we see a bee push itself steadily, with a masculine force, into a flower. Suddenly, there is the rosy flesh of a nude woman seated on her haunches with her legs upraised, thighs together. Again, the flower . . . the bee . . . more flowers, followed by the incredibly-black, hard, shiny shell of a crawfish. Ensues, a rear view of the soft, freckled shoulder of the nude; then, back to the crawfish. An over-the-shoulder shot of the woman's breast; and more of the crawfish — this time showing his pincer-claw and his antennae. Then, the camera slides sensuously down the woman's gently-sloping side; back to the crawfish; a side

view of her breast with her tanned nipple; a quick shot of the sharp claw.

* Since the author is in transit as this review is being written, information about rental of this and others may be obtained care of TRACE. The second phase of the film occurs in a greenhouse ('a house for flowers rather than for people') with tables of flowers and potted plants dimly visible here and there. The hero (played by Jack Smith) is suddenly on screen. He has a beard and wears a dark suit, dark hat, dark shirt, and a tie of such garish, blotchy colors as to be described only as fantastic. As a necktie, the tie is ridiculous; and the hero is a clown. But, by this time, the viewer is aware that the tie is not playing the role of a necktie; he realizes that this is a poetic creation, not logic-plot prose. Thus, the hero is a sort of Everyman who, however absurd, cannot be ridiculous except on the surface.

The hero approaches the camera, and then drifts in shadows among the flowers. He has a purple bougainvillea in his hand; the flower toys with his fingers, then brushes his terra-cotta lips and fondles his beard and neck. There's a brief shot of him standing against a side of the greenhouse which is like a church window by Mondrian or Matisse: irregular blocks of ruby red, blue (yellow?), and large areas of glass-white. Next, the purple bougainvillea is held against the cheek of the patched, mottled grey stone of a Fifth-century Greek head. A frame of the hero with the nude woman centered a few feet away. She turns toward him. Back to the stone bust and the bougainvillea, the bloom slides down its scarred cheek and across the forever-parted lips. The fingers of the hero force the flower into its unyielding mouth. A shot of the nude again; as before, she is on her haunches with her thighs in the air, but her hand is visible between her legs. More views of the stone lips and the bougainvillea. A view from above of the man's thighs and stomach, with his hands in his lap. Ensues, a side shot of a

russet-red blossom with a phallic stamen set against a dark background. Suddenly, the background moves; it is the hero. He crouches behind the flower.

The final phase is hectic. The film is speeded up and the camera jerks up and down convulsively so that, even though the scene is in focus, sequences change at staccato pace. We are in a peaceful park with ominous beds of yellow and red flowers, a green lawn, and many hovering trees. The hero is running in absurdly exaggerated strides. Other human forms appear in groups of two or more, rushing toward the camera. The hero runs down a path between beds of flowers in the background and apparently gets away. *Finis*. All the while, the steady unexcited strains of Gabrieli have poured in and out of the lush colors, the contrasting textures, and the vivid disconnected movement.

No need to learn a new language to translate; what we must do is unlearn the stereotyped poses we identify with and call the plots of our lives. . . . What does it mean? It means life.

Milton VanSickle

*'I went shopping for a printer,'
writes August Derleth**

RELATIVITY PROBLEM

I soon learned that printing costs, union or non-union, were so high . . . that even a retail price of \$1.00 per copy—a price simply beyond the reach of most poetry-lovers—would not meet publication costs. Fortunately, the estimate of costs submitted by Villiers Publications of London proved to be forty percent less than the lowest American estimate, and the magazine was therefore printed—and with distinction—by Villiers, who subsequently published Joseph Payne Brennan's *THE WIND OF TIME* under the imprint of the H. & W. Press . . .'

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THE CHRONICLE

By 1965 the Chronicle — the running trade directory of little magazines and presses — had shrunk to a single page, overtaken by THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE TO LITERARY AND ART PERIODICALS, which TRACE published separately. It is omitted here with its key: it is a working address list rather than reading matter.

It runs in two instalments, as it often does: the head with its keys here, and eight further pages at the back of the issue picking up ‘continued from page 115’. Both are omitted.

Among the presses recorded: BIG MOUNTAIN of Denver, announcing Ruth Finer Mintz; BINDWEED of Sausalito with VIETNAM BLUES, a collection taking in Gary Snyder, Louis Simpson, George Hitchcock, James Schevill and Gene Fowler; INTERIM BOOKS; THE FIDDLEHEAD at New Brunswick; and the university presses of Minnesota and Washington. The full list of names is in Trace_57_1965_chronicle_names.txt beside the transcript. — ED.

ISSUE PP. 181–184 · SCAN PP. 87–90

GRAPHICS

Four plates stand here in the issue and cannot be reproduced in a text edition: THE BLACK MINUTE, a collage by Frank Ankenbrand; two metal sculptures by Marcel Braitstein; and CAVERNS MEASURELESS TO MAN, a second Ankenbrand collage. Two of the four carry a title and nothing else, and the other two carry no text at all. They are noted here rather than passed over, so that the graphics section the magazine lists in its own contents is not simply absent. — ED.