Special thanks to the Huntington Art Galleries for permission to use the photographs in this issue. The pieces are selections from the Jay C. Leff Collection of Ancient Middle American Art.
ACROBAT EFFIGY FROM JAR

Many of the subjects which were to recur throughout Modern American Art made their appearance in pre-classic times. Acrobats are such a subject, and it has been suggested that their presence enlivened the ceremonies related to rain, the earth, agriculture, and crops. This acrobat, whose one leg formed a spout, was once part of a jar.

ACROBAT EFFIGY

Not the pink toes of Mary Magdelene in the sand
Not Wallace Stevens eating honey cakes
Not Buckminster Fuller lecturing on tomorrow
Out of the dark caves
Of Mexico
Out of the crate packed with white straw
You float
Into The Huntington Galleries
My daughter Kathleen calls you "Dwoll"
Jim calls you "Juggler"
I do not know yet what to call you
Ann photographs you in black and white

I did not make you
My long lost cousin
From the wrong side of the tracks with one arm
And a strange name
That rhymes with Frito
Made You
The Night
Jesus
Walked on salt water
And taught us
The darkness of caves is a love
To be hated
And that all acts
Are
Good as honey
Or
Evil like the future
ACROBAT EFFIGY (Continued)

Which is why my cousin
Made you
Acrobat Pot
With one foot hole
For
Corn Liquor Tequila and Beer
To flow
And flow
And flow and flow

I will call you
AIRPLANE
Which keeps falling out of the sky
In Wayne County

I will call you
SHOTGUN
Which keeps sending an eternal spray
Of Small Shot
Through my Brother Tom's heart
All the way to the floor

I will call you
DACHAU
Where small thin men keep dropping
Bars of soap
Onto a dust-covered floor
Which is why my wusin
made you

Acrobat Pot
With one foot a hole
For the past to flow
Out of the dark caves of the mind
Out of the crate packed with brown rope
Into another darkness
Into Us
Saving Us
Until we finally land on the ground
Telling us
Walk On
and look up at the stars
Walk on into water

Jim Henson

POST

The dead letter office
Is for you
Everything

You are in charge
Of the letters to god

You keep them under G
In chronological order
The earliest dating back to 1776

It occurs to you one day
That god does not have a birthday

You write a letter to the postmaster general
Proposing an arbitrary elate
It is returned to your office

You write to congressmen
Senators
Finally to the president
They are all returned
Unopened

In desperation
You write directly to god
When you receive the letter
It is too much for you
THE ORDEAL
When the girl I love
Falls each month
Into the absorbent bandages
Of her gender
And takes to bed
For the same cosmic
Number of days
It took to create the heavens
I lash her securely
Upon request
To the mahogany corners
Of her dowery
When the moon rises
And lies like a wet stone
In the underside of the prairie
I move out among the dry bones of cattle,
Her oily blood
Smeared across my hands and face,
Bandaged in the red scraps of her wardrobe,
All masculine odour effaced
Even my eyes are covered
As if from a serious operation
At last I move out on foot
In the direction I know
From experience to be due east
On what I imagine
To be the fourth day
I sense that I am
Nearing the mountains
I remove my blindfold
And strip away my bandages
I clean myself in the cold shallows
Of a familiar river
Once more I move out into the prairie
By the sixth day
I have almost lost my track
Instinct will be enough
On the seventh day
The breeze shifts
And I am sure of home
Sure my instinct is right

THINGS
Things, no matter what they are,
Can get out of control.
I can no more explain this
Than I can explain the Democratic Convention of 1884.
Or the sound in my wife's back
As she accepts my natural urgency.
Suppose, as I write this
There is a knock at the door,
Or the telephone rings.
Then what?
And if a white dog
Intercepts the postman at noon,
Snatches the envelope with this poem in it
Before it can reach the desk of the New Yorker?
Think what could happen
If the dog with the letter in his mouth
Blundered into a gray cadillac
And the driver pried the thing from the dog's jaw,
Then for spite used typing correction fluid
And mailed the poem with his name,
With the blood and took marks on it.
If it was accepted
How could I afford a lawyer?
Think of the poems that are lost this way.
These things happen.
Even now, a dog with a poem in his mouth
Is stealing across the lawn,
Planning to bury it probably.
These thing can happen I tell you.
They arrive like the weather
Or the mail, unannounced,
In innocent enough shapes,
And before you know it
You are telling your story to a stranger,
Finding out how hopeless it is
To explain such things.
THE DENIAL

It is morning;
He awakes,
Then she, curled
Into the arm of his sleep.
The curtains are drawn
Against the day - the day
Spilling into the bed,
Dressing her limp hair,
Undressing the details
That he knows of her.
It is not like anything
Ever before.
Today, like yesterday,
Like tomorrow,
Will test them.
The day wears on.
The sheets that cover them
Grow thin,
Worn by the light,
Polished on it's white back.
Small ragged holed appear
That grow larger
Each day.
Still they do not move.
They do not open their eyes.
They remember the room
As it was when they were married.
They do not see the mirror
Grow opaque
As the reflection of their lives
Is bleached clean.
He does not know
That the moths
Have eaten away the elbows
Of his sweaters.
She does not know
That the tangled hair
In her brush beside the bed
Is no longer the shade
That she remembers.
It is not like anything
Ever before.

THE DENIAL (Continued)

The days press against
Their combined refusal.
Against the thin, wined sheets
Until parts of their bodies
Begin to show through,
Until they lie naked.
And still they do not stir.
They do not open their eyes.
They are no longer
Aproe of the days
Their bleached skins
Become their only covers.
They forget the room,
Their marriage,
Why they have lain so long.
They forget one another.
The days come as before,
Back to back.
The light scrubs their gentle skins
Until their bones
Begin to poke through.
They begin to awaken
For a second time,
They open their eyes.
The day spills in
And dances onto the back
Of their skulls,
Testing them.
AFTER FRANK O’HARA

The voices
That came to my father
Miraculously, from across
An entire continent,
As he lay each night
In the flickering gas circuitry
Of blush lamps.
Are gone forever.
They are irreparably lost for me.

I can only imagine
The long silent voices
Of names like Pepper Young
Fibber McGee, The Green Hornet,
And yes, The Shadow,
Whose moonlit baritone
Hovered like a wave
About gilded mahogany receivers,
Charging the air of parlors
And darkened bedrooms
With the static drama
Of a blue electrical storm.

They are all lost.
No longer are the air waves
Graced with Les Brown’s
Cool muffled horn
And the warm clear tenor
Of the Ames Brothers.

Ted Weems and Elmo Tanner,
Whose whistling eclipsed even the birds,
No longer beam out across the states
To ply our hearts.

And Ben Bernie has long since
Ceased to bid us:
Au Revoir, a fond cheerio,
A bit of the tweet tweet,
God bless you, and
Pleasant dreams.
Yowzah, Yowzah, Yowzah.

For Diane Wakoski

HER
You become accustomed
To the nylon clouds
That stretch from the lavatory
To the metal spaces of shower rod

You think nothing of her
Dishwater reflection
Beside you each morning
Like the silence of your razor

The ritual of bra and panties
Comes to you each evening
Like the six o’clock news
Served up with the stale odour
Of old cooking grease

Sometimes you find it hard
To look at her
Her mossy hair
Somewhere between the two of you
Like the thin film of grease and tobacco smoke
Sleeping on the glass of your picture window

When she looks at you
Her face breaking like a heart shaped
Valentine sucker that has been licked
And thrown in a drawer for years

You find it necessary
To throw up your arms
And run out of doors
Screaming strait-jacket, strait-jacket
John Hirokowsky was just short of being tall. He had an I.Q. of 98.6, a constant body temperature of 97.6, and an ulcer which bordered on painful. At forty-nine he had established himself as a produce manager in a grocery store which was considered a supermarket by virtue of its three check-out stands, and its uniformly aproned work crew consisting of the owner, his wife, their two sons, who were studying business administration by mail, and an assortment of cheerful checkers who wore pink lace handkerchief boutonnieres anchored to their breast pockets with a smiley button. Because John had worked on his father's farm (before the old man had subdivided it into lost restricted to mobile homes of $10,000 and over) he had a real feel for the produce business. He also had a feel for each of the checkers on their first day behind the registers, which continued in a more or less fatherly fashion until the girl ascertained he was not related to the owner, at which time, she would either plainly tell him to lay off, or, if a customer were present, give him a subtle elbow jab in the vicinity of his ulcer.

John cleaned out the produce display cooler, as he did every Monday morning, gathering up the loose onion skins, dried up and withered green beans, and puckered, vegetable oil greased cucumbers, which had not sold the previous week in spite of John's fawning, flattering salesmanship which gave the older ladies a pre-menopausal glow and the young ones the willies. When the case was clean and emptied, John pushed the grocery cart to the back room which always smelled of rotten potatoes and was covered with a flooring of corn husks and celery tops, to haul out the fresh yellow, green and red produce. His work was interrupted occasionally by a voice on the intercom, "John, front please," and he would amble to the front to help carry out cartons of Coke and Dr. Pepper, five pound rolls of Eatwell Bologna and cases of canned milk, and boxes of pinto beans and macaroni on which the food stamp trade thrived and the owner depended.

John finished arranging the fruits and vegetables, alternating the pale green lettuce with a row of plastic-protected ruby tomatoes to
give, so the pamphlet on how to sell produce stipulated, "a color interest to the case and thus attract the attention of Mrs. Homemaker." At exactly 12:05 he bough a can of Sp. m., which was on special, and fixed a sand which he ate alone while seated on a bundle of p.a. per bag in the back room. When he finished he wrapped the remainder of the meat in a long an of put it in a bread in a p.a. per bag on which he wrote J-O-H-N in enormous Magic Marker letters, and hid it in a corner in the walk-in cooler.

At 1:45 he strolled to the employee's lounge and oversized closet where contained a coffee machine, two chrome kitchen chairs, and a time clock. Taking his time card out of the wooden rack, he slipped it under the p.a. tent machine and pulled the lever down. Removing a is only suit, a J.C. Penny brown worsted, from a rack on the back of the door, he went into the rest room to change so that he could go to his ex-wife's funeral.

As he pulled up in front of Beasley's Funeral Home, he noticed the cherry arbreuse, or orange and green stales in glass windows, which were supposed to depict scenes from the Last Supper but reminded Joan of his produce rack. Joan thought old Jewell would have liked being used out of this world with the assistant of Morton Beasley, who, advertised so poignantly and pointedly that at least one in the southern town believed that they could not get to Heaven by any other route.

Joan was ushered to the front of the chapel and seated beside Jewell's first husband, a puffed-up elderly farmer who had not both ered putting a jacket over his bib over his, and whose nervous squirming and scratch of the left small children of newly plowed earth on the pure, white wooden rep by Lees. Joan thought briefly of a skiing scene, but was not interested in the funerai expenses but changed his mind. After all, Jewell had not cost him much in the five years they had been married, and since she had listed the old farmer as next of kin at the hospital, where she had died of uterine cancer, he would be paying plenty when he got the hospital bill.

The chapel was nearly empty except for Jewell's second cousin, whose three sticky-fingered boys were trying to pull the velvet buttons off the tufted Louis XIV giltted chairs. Also present were two sniffing women whose hands were so-washed to the point of being new, and who worked at the city mission, began the service which was long prayer and short eulogy due to the fact that the had known Jewell, and had been unable to see her, could find little to commend her for. Joan thought that the should have represented the preacher so that he could at least mention that Jewell had been clean, hard working, and the best fishing partner that a man could ask for.

The funeral cortège consisted of the Beasley family, the ahouse, and Joan's twin Volkswagens. Because Joan knew that Jewell liked music, the carried his car as close to the grave as he could and turned up the volume on the radio while Hay and Snow started the burlington with 'Oh the Wings of Snow White Dove' and the Tennyson. Whiteshy ended it with 'D-I-V-O-R-C-E' which Joan found fitting, the preacher judging outrageous, and Morton Beasley thought his hysterically funny. After the graveside services were over the undertaker approached Joan, and when placed the comforting arm and Johns said, "I have the funeral for the jewels into which it is bad. With it is face pulled m a his profession. 'I know bow urt you are, but life must go on.'"

Before Beasley could continue his spiel, Joan said, "Not interested."

"Surely you want your wife to have a high quality, weather resists marker "

"Nope."

"You must he ve some sentimental atachment for your late loved one, unless, of course, you are holding a grudge against an округ of... ah... the divorce."

Joan did not know whether or not he had a grudge against Jewell never having given it a ny though, but he was beginning to develop one toward Beasley: consequently, he got in his Volkswagen, drove back to the store, punched back in noting, and out of the times? it she could make it up later and not lose a ny pay, pinched on his "Joan M. Cover" tag, and went back to work.

After work, Joan parked his car under the elm tree in front of the moss green farmhouse which was filled with his pants. To the sides and rear of the house were thirty-six mobile homes, mounted on perlament foundations, each with a colorful aluminum awning on which Joan had received a ten cent commission from the entprsrng salesmen who had told them the awning would mdividually hide their trailers.

Joan's mother was lifting supper a shen has father sat down to eat meat of corn served from the cob (the dad, of course), fried potatoes, and garden salad with b.e. on bits and hot gres dressing. No one spoke until the old man had wiped the last of the potato gravy from his plate with the heel of veal bread.

"Was teere my folks at the funeral, John?" asked the old woman, hoping for explicit details as to whom women so?bed be loudest, who he had to be revived with a monia, and whose side of the family grieved the harddest.

"Poor to middling turnout, Ma."

"How did Jewell look? Did she look peaceful or did she have that tormented look so many b.d women get at the end?"
"Don't know, Ma. The casket was closed," John saucerred his coffee, wishing he had insisted on the old woman going with him to the funeral so that he would not have to answer any more questions.

Because this had been the first funeral the old woman had ever deliberately missed, and regretting the decision sorely, she could not drop the subject. "I think it was mighty big of you to pay for the funeral like that, after the way she done you. Why, that tramp bed her head off, telling us she was a chamber maid down at that hotel."

The old man, who was only staying alive to have one last winning argument with his wife, snapped, "Lottie, you knew what she was when she came here, but after you seen how much work she could do for you, you just plain overlooked her faults."

The old woman got up and started scraping plates. "That hussy just used John, just stayed with him during the week, then scooted off to that den of iniquity every weekend to ... clean the rooms. And he done the right thing divorcing her."

Hoping to have a really satisfying quarrel, which if he were lucky would result in the old woman not speaking to him for a month, the old man fertilized the discussion with a little verbal Vigaro, "Your memory must be failing, Lottie. She divorced him. He was a fool to let her go. Why, he had the best marriage a man could ask for - a woman who was not around enough to get on his nerves with her jawling, and a ripe tomato, well trained to soothe a man if he did get edgy."

"It's a wonder she didn't give him the bad disease," the old woman said with a pout as if she were losing the battle.

John felt as if he were an old beagle hound about which they could say anything without hurting his feelings. He went out the back door as the old man said, "I bet he got more pleasure from her in the five years he had her than I ever got from you if fifty."

John picked up a plastic mesh bag from under the porch and searched along the wire fence across the gravel road for stray golf balls from the public course as he did every evening. When he had gathered up a bagfull, he sat down on the front porch to sort them into piles of just-like-new and good-enough-for practice which he would sell to the Procter and Gamble salesman who called at the store. John was also attempting to sort out his feelings regarding Jewell. An because he was not given to deep thinking, the only way he knew to figure out if he had been smart or foolish was to try and remember why he had married Jewell in the first place.

He could not recall the first time he had seen her; although he had been one of her regular customers for a long time. He did remember the night he proposed. All triggered out in a ballerina length red-net-over-taffeta prom dress, Jewell had sat down at a table with John, his cousin Roy, and Caleb Swan who worked for the health department. Roy had asked her where she had gotten the pretty dress and she had told him that she had gotten it at a rummage sale for seventy-five cents. That is when John decided to marry her. Getting up from the table, he motioned the other two men to follow him out of Jewell's earshot.

John had said, "Don't either of you think about touching Jewell again, because I'm going to marry her."

"Man you're crazy. Your Ma will kill you when she finds out where Jewell's been working. How come you want to marry her anyhow?"

"I'm tired of taking out different girls, spending three or four dollars on them, and then they won't even let you kiss them goodnight. They say, "Oh, don't. I been eating onions," or "Don't kiss me. I'm taking a cold and you might catch it." Now, I think I really love old Jewell and I'm tired of paying her seven-fifty every time."

John still could not understand why Roy and Caleb had laughed so hard, but even as a kid he had never been able to get the jokes on the bubble gum wrappers that the others thought were so funny. So he did not try to figure out the humor. Instead, he hurried back over to Jewell, and with no preamble, asked her to be his wife. Jewell, who was more than a little drunk, said, "Okay."

That same night they had driven to Russell, Kentucky and had gotten married. Jewell stayed with him at the house for two weeks and then returned to work. After five days, John went back down to fetch her home. Their life developed a pattern where Jewell stayed down at the Biltmore Hotel Friday night to Monday morning when John would arrive, complaining that it took over seventy-eight cents worth of gas to pick her up in the car and asking how much she had earned that week.

Caleb Swan pulled up in front of John's house along with Roy and the two women who had been at the funeral. John went out to the car and stuck his head in the window on the driver's side.

"What are you all doing out this way?"

"These two gals said that they wanted to see where old Jewell was buried and we came by to see if you'd show where.

The mourners, who had been drinking all afternoon, sometimes forgot the sadness of the pilgrimage to the Chapel Hill Church at Greenbottom and would burst into laughter as the bottle was passed among them in the car. Because John's ulcer had been hurting all day, and because he had not had to pay for the liquor, he took a swig from time to time. By the time they pulled up to the grave, the sentimental visit had taken on all the aspects of a wake.

One of the women, Lucille, dressed in a fishnet see-thru blouse with her ample upper half encased in a long line bra stood by the grave and bawled, "What are you all doing out this way?"

"These two gals said that they wanted to see where old Jewell was buried and we came by to see if you'd show where they laid her."

The mourners, who had been drinking all afternoon, sometimes forgot the sadness of the pilgrimage to the Chapel Hill Church at Greenbottom and would burst into laughter as the bottle was passed among them in the car. Because John's ulcer had been hurting all day, and because he had not had to pay for the liquor, he took a swig from time to time. By the time they pulled up to the grave, the sentimental visit had taken on all the aspects of a wake.
customers and she felt sure she could get one wholesale, which made John feel happier than he had all day. By this time he had decided that his father had been right - John was the luckiest man alive with Jewell for a wife. He was on the borderline of offering to pay his share in the purchase of a marker when the conversation shifted.

Lucille said, "We all thought Jewell had some money stashed away in her room because she had so many good customers. But we looked and couldn't find a dime."

Roy said, "She couldn't have had no money, charging only three dollars. She really wasn't much of a business woman."

Caleb Swan laughed, "Hell, I was getting it for nothing. All I had to do was get her a free penicillin shot down to the Health Department once in a while."

The next afternoon John was arrested on a charge of assault and battery issued by the Justice of the Peace on behalf of the Proctor and Gamble salesman, who still could not understand why John had gotten so mad when he told him he did not want to buy any more golf balls from him because he had found a place where he could get new ones wholesale.
customers and she felt sure she could get one wholesale, which made
John feel happier than he had all day. By this time he had decided that
his father had been right - John was the luckiest man alive with
Jewell for a wife. He was on the borderline of offering to pay his share
in the purchase of a marker when the conversation shifted.

Lucille said, "We all thought Jewell had some money stashed
away in her room because she had so many good customers. But we
looked and couldn't find a dime."

Roy said, "She couldn't have had no money, charging only three
dollars. She really wasn't much of a business woman."

Caleb Swan laughed, "Hell, I was getting it for nothing. All I had
to do was get her a free penicillin shot down to the Health Department
once in a while."

The next afternoon John was arrested on a charge of assault and
battery issued by the Justice of the Peace on behalf of the Proctor and
Gamble salesman, who still could not understand why John had gotten
so mad when he told him he did not want to buy any more golf balls
from him because he had found a place where he could get new ones
wholesale.
Phil Bartram

FIRST PRIZE

DATE

I walk in a mausoleum of trees. Insects run cold bare feet over my white figurine bones. My tracks are words, words nobody will hear.

I have discovered coldness. It is a card index of another life swiping like a winter's wind down from the high country, charging on invisible legs, coming like so much madness, coming to smother the candle I carry on my tongue, sealing me inside this corridor of trees, bedding me in a field of stars, beneath red and white rainbows.
POEM

I wish there was something that I could say anything
to make things different between us. Perhaps I did suck the air
from your lungs, or rage like a madman. But it's your
fault. You were always there carrying some mystical potion in
your eyes and in the lines of your smile, forever there like a
mirage. And perhaps I don't know you, I was just chasing a
first impression that's frozen in my mind like a dry leaf in lake ice
Now I regret that you refused to understand me, and always regretting that
I will forever remain bitter on your teeth and tongue.

VISIONS

She will come tonight, come as I lie in bed, sometime in the early
morning, but I will be awake. She will come silently through slits
of darkness. She will dance upon my chest, not like a Japanese masseuse
but like a dancehall girl in spurs. The spurs are polaroids of
our past. They are pasted on the inside of my eyelids. They bleed my mind
through the pores of my eyes. And I remember a November day. We sat
as sieves before the cold. Her hair was a veil across the pond of
her face. And the sun was born in her heart. Her eyes pumped light
through the walls of my skin. I was a shiny new penny. But now I will
be Manfred and she Astarte. My mind will beat my eyes, and she will come on seas
of wind, mist and gown blowing. I will repent but in vain.
DREAMING

6:55 am  Chicago ladled with rain  turning
from drowsiness  turning from a dream
turning into the flat Indiana countryside
below me  fading
the coldness of an early morning cobble-
street  deeper in the bones much
deeper than the winds off Lake Michigan
that at times rumble the giant maze like
an invading army  or a March funeral
and those streets smell of me as I smell
of them  forever  like a scar on the
upper brow  to be worn on the eyes of
others burdeningly  and I turning
again looking homeward toward the unadulterated
city somewhere within a fragile crystal
skull on display like a velvet coin
in a smooth white palm or perhaps a
down  or maybe it's the city that is
fragile and we are rolling  rolling
to the desired azimuth and there is a
different odour distinctive like that
that results from blood and burning brimstone
and saltpeter  and odour that clings to the

DREAMING (CONTINUED)
skin  to the seats  to the walls of the
airliner cabin like day old fish in chinatown  and thoughts of going down
engines coughing  dying
leaving just a vague trace of departure
a small black cloud  soon to be lost
in miles of other clouds  and I am
falling  hanging behind in those clouds
my heart  falling down a sheer wind
mountain  like a glacier  collecting bits of frozen water  uncontrollably there
is no handhold  no crack in the rocks
that fingernails can scratch  just an
appointment with a self-dug grave  becoming
the victim  not of an external death
but an internal one  but I won't
go down  can't not yet  somehow
if I must I will grow wings  a giant set
of brilliant rainbow wings  that will give
lift to my flesh  for
somehow  always I will be looking homeward
THE RIDE

Night has crushed the earth. I am held by vinyl upholstered hands.

The radio is my consciousness. It is interstate sixty-four. It is so many feet of broken strips as one in my eyes. It is Gurney, Petty, on the bank turn. It is a moment in my hand. There is no conception, no destination, no Pythagorean theorem.

DRUNK

People ask are you ill your mind is light your thoughts diaphragming as a spruce wine sapped drunk I answer no my body is flushed because my chest contains two hearts she has loaned me hers
Beacon New York flared orange and
Collapsed as the sun crept into the
Sha-Wan-Gunk Mountains

I came up here from Ossining
After three of two to five
With a message for Brew Mulqueen's
Wife

There across the Hudson a ferry
Captain rams and sinks Newburgh
It's welfare citizens spew out
To wash ashore at Monachie New Jersey

Shoulders hunched against the breeze
Along the Taconic State
Frail fabrics fire-fly's
With good-bye

She sat on a bar-stool
In what town
I don't remember

She had lived in
Kingston
South of Albany too

Talking of the
Bowery Dugout
She remembered how thick
The steaks were

Heading East toward Wooster
Everyone was high
Crashed through a guard rail
No one seemed to notice

One girl kept repeating
Like summer's oscine rain summoner
Let's fly let's fly

R-wright this way foulks
Cum see Jo Jo
Thu Dawg gaced bo-ay
Never be-fer gazed on
By-e hu-man ay-es

Born in Madagas-gire with
Neither blud new guts
Ner bran-es
Three-uh days after his-uh berth
He refus-dah his-uh mother's milk and-uh
Fe-dah in-stid up-on
Ce-gar butts and-uh poker chips

He ne-ther walks ner talks
But ca-rawls and-uh shrieks
With a howl-ling groan
Howl-el fer em Jo Jo
MOON ROSE'S

The moon flooded the land
washing the inhabitants with lunacy
and we kept on drinking,
sitting on top of the mountain.

Did anyone ever think at all
in those crimson days of Rose's?

Rubber wheeled gravel crunch
and the gunning of engines
always meant something new
for each and every young man driver.

the drive he displays is racing away.

His new baby doll, type 69-73
pretends to be afraid and she holds on:
Faster he goes tighter she holds
seat belts on the floor, it's a wreck,

she's a wreck
as his face contorts.
Both their faces scream lightly
when they feel their own precious liquids
mix.

warm. Moon Rose's

One day Eddie Johnson smoked a lot of cigarettes in his room whilst
he was typing some poems. You see, he was an unheard of poet and he
was trying to send his poem to magazines to get them published for-
money and for fame. Ed was 34 years old and lived with his parents
who didn't like for him to smoke much less all day in his room. When
Ed got tired he thought he'd have a cigarette to relax with but first he
thought he would clear the air so the old people wouldn't get on him.

He went downstairs to the pantry and found, among the cereal, beans,
brooms, flashlights, and other goodies that were stored in there, some
room deodorizer.

After eating a biscuit and drinking a glass of milk, which he liked to do
before smoking his relaxer, he turned to his room to lie down and
smoke. The room reeked with the different tobaccos he'd consumed
that day and was kinda bad he thought as he began spraying the
deodorizer in heavy mist layers all around the room. "That should do
it," he said, as he recapped the spray. Eddie lit up his cigarette which
ignited the heavy mist layers that were still letting all over the room
and caused Eddie's cigarette to fly from his mouth and onto a small
tag that was attached to his pillow which read "do not remove under
penalty of law."
WHEN YOU COME TO SEE ME

When you come to see me
I spend hours preparing (in preparation)

My skin jumps in anticipation
I try to calm myself in the shower
By washing away flakes of fear
And rubbing myself to another layer

When you come to see me
I don't know who I am

The clothes I wear
Disguise me as a circus promoter
Speaking in vulva soft tones
Inviting me inside.

When you come to see me
It's like a masquerade
You don't know who you'll see
Trying to fill you in

BABY STAR

Babys think we are commercials
They're always waitin for the real thing

you see we're all on TV
I'm watching you watch me cos

I'm on the inside
Looking through the other side
Seeing myself moving
Through the wilderness of days

Yes, I am well
But you've got to take my back off
To see my front

It's a hit, a lovely season
All the shows are running great
New hair, new shoes, and new blues
But babys still think we are commercials

LETTER TO PSYCHE

The yellow fingers extend
Past their nails.
Nicotine and Cheetos
Have stained them all morning.

Inside the room I lie
On the bed. Magazines cover my body
And notebooks filled with
True to life fantasies
Lay scattered about the floor
In the dust and tape recordings.

I am outside my body now,
Hovering, watching myself write
New inventions in which to live.

The recordings are the soundtrack
For an invisible life span
That is read in the wonderings of my body.

It is here in this shape
That I occupy earth,
I arise in this morning,
Not fitting but trying to adjust
The life span I'm in.
Harvey Grebb

VILLON GIVES A POETRY LECTURE
TO THE UDC IN ATLANTA

Ladies,
piss and bootblacks
are the only
fit subjects
for poetry.

(note) Mr. Grebb is reported to have conceived the idea for the above sketch at the same instant he completed the poem. The two are of course, (as any sensitive art lover can plainly see) complementary. Or, as Grebb himself so aptly put it: "Make me a King."

Mervin Cook

DELTA BAR

1
The old man huddles against the brick of the Delta Bar on ninth street, trying to keep out of the wind. Through watery, wind-strung eyes, he searches the streets for a man in a jacket or in a tie, to tell him he hasn't eaten all day. It's warm and dark in the delta bar.

2
Sweet Jane stands on the corner, knee boots, mini skirt against the pole. When it gets dark she moves inside the Delta Bar to hustle drunks and pick their pockets while they run their hands down her leg and tell her they love her.

3
Every morning, even in winter, he stands on the corner beside the college and watches, with a faraway look in his eyes, the school girls crossing the street. Every morning he sits in a corner beside the door in the Delta Bar and polishes glasses for a drink an hour and stares at Jane, sweet Jane, the girl of the bar.

4
Charlie Carlton spends all his evenings on the far end stool at the Delta Bar. He tells me about his job on the river, and laughing, about Jane, and how she is. Every Saturday he goes to see her. He'd like to do it nightly. His wife thinks he makes seventy a week. Jane knows he makes ninety.
DESOLATION I
The road ended above the river,
where the bridge stood for years.
The other bank was choked with weeds,
obscured in the hazy air.
I threw my last glasses and heard them break
on the hidden highway on the deer,
and walked back, blinded,
through the ashes and dust.

Rhonda McIntyn

A SONG TO YOU, AND YOU, AND YOU

All night long
Records sang at ten amps
Relieving stuffed tigers.

At dawn the tea kettle
Was letting off steam
Whistling "Bad Morning."

By noon a wooden chair
Had decided to collect dust
And grabbed every particle it could.

At night the library
Read to them all
"Man's search for meaning ..."

CONDENSED AGAIN

In the psychiatric ward a doctor
Warned me my lover might evaporate
Into blankness again.

In the elevator
A man gave me weird looks
When I pressed 8th floor.
Will he push the emergency button?
He stands beside me
Frozen in the corner.

Yearning for retired football players
To fetch a band-aid or a tube of Ben Gay
To line his open purse.

I turn around
As we reach the second floor.
He hurries off.
PLAYING AT THE Y.M.C.A.

Playing basketball one night I found a dear
Staring from the edge of a table in the YMCA.
It is usually best to ignore stares into failure.
The town is small; to acknowledge her might cause a scandal.

At the final whistle I drug myself over to the water fountain
And stood by a woman, an observer, a consisten competitor.
She had relaxed already, almost warm.
I smiled her on. She was confident in spirit.

My eyes touching her experience brought me the reason
Her life was set. Her arms rested on her lap, waiting,
Loving, open never to be filled.
Beside the water fountain I hesitate.

The coach ahead of me reading statistics.
In the gyre everyone was shooting baskets.
I stood in the shadow of her warm body pleading gentleness.
I could see everyone in town watching.

I thought hard for us all my only swerving.
Then asked my coach for a ride home.

Steve Dye

IMPUISSANT

Sy, don't let it both ya, I know there will be plenty of dip for our chips. Money is no object. The weather, it's fine but I don't think they have chocolate ripple. I want you to know I got up this morning at 6 and by 7 there is 42. But I can't. Don't you understand? Jesus, you are so so.

I got your critique of my Gaudier-Brzeska impressions and don't they have any King Size? Larry Slime says that the reason the Lakers aren't winning is tape. Grocery stores are open all night in L. A. and with a coupon you can save a life. Listen, don't let it bother you. I hated the Kennedys too.

About your teeth, they hug the shoulders incessantly and there's no tape player. My dirty clothes cost me a bundle, but my income tax is almost here. Hell, no. I can give you 3 reasons.

Me, I'm fine; but this tumor irks me no end. I think I know where you can get a good deal on a dozen lead pencils. My brother works for peanuts and he's dead, anyway.

Call me when you arrive late for work. I'll call the dock.

saxophone,
Jim:

In spite of what you may think, it was good to hear from you again. I really hadn't realized that it had been so long. You write well and your breath, it appears to be sound. I still can't bring myself to call you tomorrow, even if your maiden name was Kennedy. No, my horn is not polished - it springs from the Chinese who had a word for it. Tang. As far as my studies go, I lost them in Tulsa.

The family is well. My youngest has a problem with her vagina. My son is dead ... rotten. I hate the boss and the table is off balance. I really don't know about Doritos. I do have a passion for celery and sex is off the hook. The wife and I were in bed last night until the operator cut us off. It's warm, but I think a parking space will be difficult to find.

Did you catch Hitler on the Cavett show today? Wistful, but I don't give a damn about the White Sox. My shoe strings got caught in my hot comb but we still have one Pepsi left. Say hello to that cybernetic wash tub you've been harping about. She did?

Well, say, I've got to bleed, so stick some glass in your soup, turn on the anti-freeze and pray. Thanks, I needed that.

South Philly,
"Πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον εστιν ἀνθρωπός, τῶν μεν ὄντων ὡς ἐστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν."

--- Πρωταγόρας