


Spring 1970

et cetera

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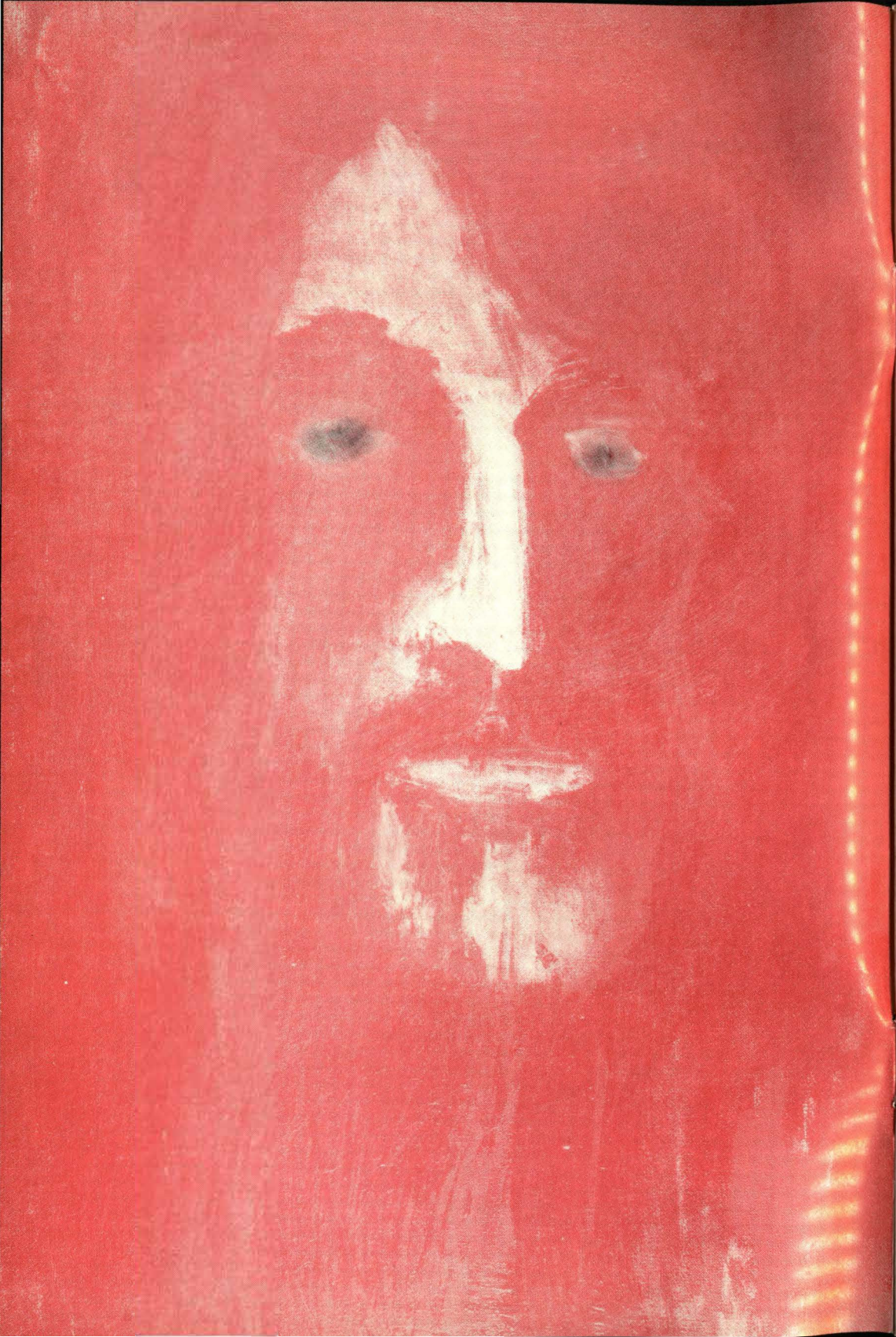
AND Horace Greeley, Frank Zappa, Pogo, General Hershey, Richard Nixon (the President), Van Morrison, Philidor, John and Yoko, Spiro, Bob Dylan, John Updike, Goeth(•, Plato, Blind Dick Tracy, and the thought of the Canadian border, the thought of prison, the typewriter, the mighty pen, the thought of Death, the thought of Fame - Fortune - and whatever, the German Tongue, and the thought that someone will eventually say, "It lacks awareness," etc., etc., Et Cetera.

et cetra

Spring 1970

Editor-in-Chief

Ronald Edmond Houchin



ACOLYTE

A desolated monk pours out his mind
In the singing silence on the derelict sand.
His work, his life a going down
Before the knees of the idyll,
In the sand, on the shore,
Naked, quivering from the sea's breath.
Alone in his world of voices,
He sees the shells of the ages
Washed invisible in the pounding tide-
A drifting wood brings in a prayer:
How hard to create from the sand,
Where nothing existed before.

-Ronald Edmond Houchin

SHERRY

A haunting look, of sight unseen
face jutting forward
Wind weeping through her hair.
Off to her world of summits,
pursuing many Things.
the many Things to be seen
through Eyes green as the lonely mist,
sparkling with rivulets of ice.

Close she stands,
yet far away.

Perhaps in a land of the sea,
and of a people with songs of lilt and love.

And now touching the sad earth,
of people with thoughts of others.
Rejecting, yet accepting.
An echo . . . or a rock?

-Leonard Miller

THE TALE OF TOUCH AND THE TWO HOUNDS

The larger brown dog
And the black one met
In the green of forestry
And they were unafraid of Touch.

the unforeseen of ceremony
took them rolling into the soft, pine soil
where brown and black they fought to find
the earth.

Brown's large wet mouth
Opened in jest
To chew upon his fellow's ear
Who lay quietly pleased

that his friend had felled him -
pleased, as this was doggy, canine sun
which made the shadows dark beneath
the pine.

-Linda Phillipis Fuchs

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

There is a black leaf curling in the trough
By the crooked shade jagging from a shack.
Icy wind whines through sagging shattered beams
Once warm with the breath of weaving willows.
Then, Spring sap trickled freely along fresh vein8,
Lilting sighs of vibrant voices to the rafters
Of robust rustics' heaven in earth's wayward woods.
Youthful dreams were charged with cricket energy.
Firewood, fragrant and flaming, drew magnetically
Hungry minds to the hearthplace of a happy house.
There, hermits drawn from their dark damp caves
Warmed their loneliness with an exclamation.
Now, only the stench of rotting leaves and ribs
Billows in the air, anesthetizing the earth of pain
And life's last lament. A hollow echo rolls restlessly
From black hills and a trembling skeleton.

-James R. Pack

ONE YEAR AFTER TET 1968

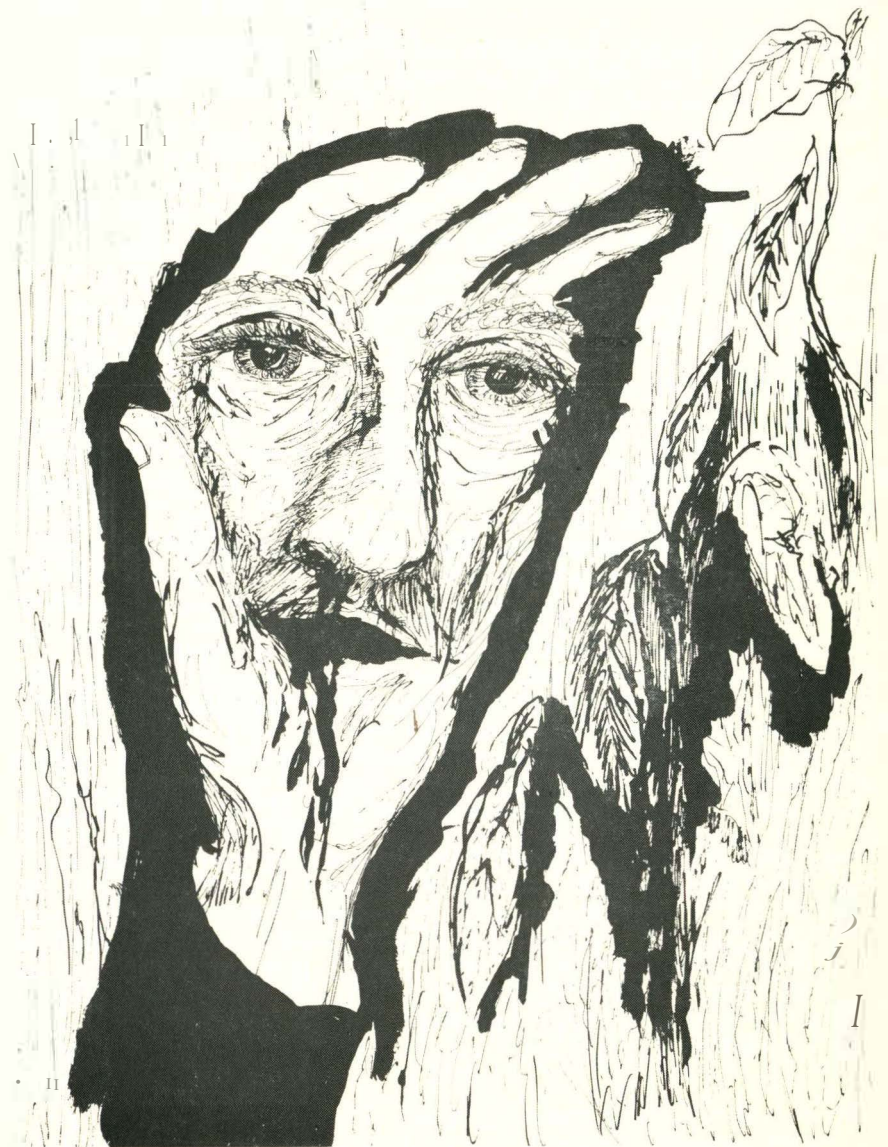
I passed bell-ringing beggars on corners
who sing of the season through loud speakers
over the counter is a sales girl
her blouse full of white flesh
smiling with dignity at strangers
the desire of her fingertips sets the numbers
in seasonal preparation for an equal exchange
two pair of socks for ten secret bedrooms
painted green for pleasantry
green for the color of her eyes
green for the weeping jungle
the hand that is behind the sun moves a finger
and flashes of light are flung to the wet floor
to lay in the wet of blood in a year's turning
lotioned hands rip the day away from polished desk tops
the image of the sun is recorded in the fluorescence
of their polished fingernails quietly burning in
the day's receipts for smiles

-William F. Lee

THE ULTIMATE PILLOW

As I lay dying,
the crimson stains green,
the head soon to rest
upon the ultimate pillow.
the body etches pleas
and a wretched soil rejects.
the role of death
soon to fulfill a short wish,
sleeping in gilded plastic majesty
as a memento of caution,
While the war continues.

- Marc W. Perry



WOMAN #IV

Mina whose head is dead
Has a rat
That has not met its bland, thin end
So the end has not seen of the rat
If you should ask.

Her mock hair hangs from a citadel
As unwarmed
As the nail of rat's paw
Filled neatly with its very own matter.
If you but ask:
Talk comes at the klink of white vertebrae.

-Linda Phillips Fuchs

THE CRUMBS OF ONE'S LIFE

Street corner. On a street corner waiting for the light to change on this pleasant, cool, yellow afternoon in October.

Good God, that was a tedious affair, eating lunch with Outerbridge. Smiling a polite smile, I ask him if I can sit with him.

Yes, certainly. No enthusiasm.

He's a skinny guy, all the time fidgeting nervously. I took immediate notice of his potential social ineptitude and his betrodnen countenance. Figuring dominance and mind manipulaton. Ego feeder I am. So I sat.

As it turned out, he sure as hell wasn't eager to make conversation. Surprising, because I anticipated all varieties of stuttering, sycophantic, pusilanimous small talk. So we sat. Making vague, blunt-nosed conversation about the weather. Platitudes running rampant. Innocuous. And dear God, was that boring. One empirically verified fact that I now know about Outerbridge is that he knows more platitudes than me. I lack endurance in such things.

So I floundered as we sat, suffering unexpected discomfiture. We ate. We got up. We said ding don. And we went our respective ways. Simply time consumed in a void.

Little stroll through the park seems to aid in digestion; combats the stuperous effect of gluttony at least ... Cars all waiting for the light, funny little steel cairns with their cargoes of flesh. Demonic lumps of protoplasm are the pilots who peer from behind the steering wheels, grim-faced and tight-lipped with the mounting tension of awaiting the take-off at the blink of the green light. Madmen, this is a city of madmen.

I remember him well, the sage madman with his kinky hair looking like a balloon around his head. I was walking along the beach, last summer, wasn't it? When I met him. We walked together, the two of us and his dog, Babe. He had black eyes and when he looked at you, you felt he was an intruder. He carried a pouch of leather, this madman, and in it was a great ball of black opium. We smoked on the beach. And looked at the white waves. And waited for the sunset. He said he wished he was a cockroach.

Incredible how such a simple, powerless device like a red light can command the coughing and roaring massive army of steel cages on wheels to a dead stop.

Cockroaches and platitudes, they'll never die, never be extinct. Completely adaptable to any environment, any situation. But that's about all you can say for them. They lack fertility and individuality, too stagnant. Nothing but phony, second-rate realities. Dis-

graceful cop-out on individuality but saying something like I want to be a cockroach. Most everybody has said it, though. That's the noble life of backyard barbecues and being a man about the community. Outerbridges' scene - surreptitiously screwing the neighbor's wife, and smile nice, honey, he says to his wife, even if you are a schizophrenic, self-deprived household slave. Just like all of these other ass-end up androids with bulging eye globes who get behind the wheel and metamorphosize into callous, desperate maniacs, prepared to murder for the privilege of making a right turn. City driving, I guess...

This light is damn well taking its time. People are calloused and hardened by people. Didn't some guy say something about it being a tragedy what man has done to man? Ego trips: the first and the last and the ultimate bringdown. Adrienne, for example. When I saw her again, maybe three months after she burnt me, just up and split with nary a syllable of sorrow or thanks, or even a go ta hell ya jerk; when I saw her again, I could tell she was uptight. Probably thought I was going to smack her or something.

C'mon baby, you can do it, I encouraged her, thinking all the time, You bitch.

And she asked forgiveness.

O my God. (Heads turned, spinning flashes in the stunned silence.)

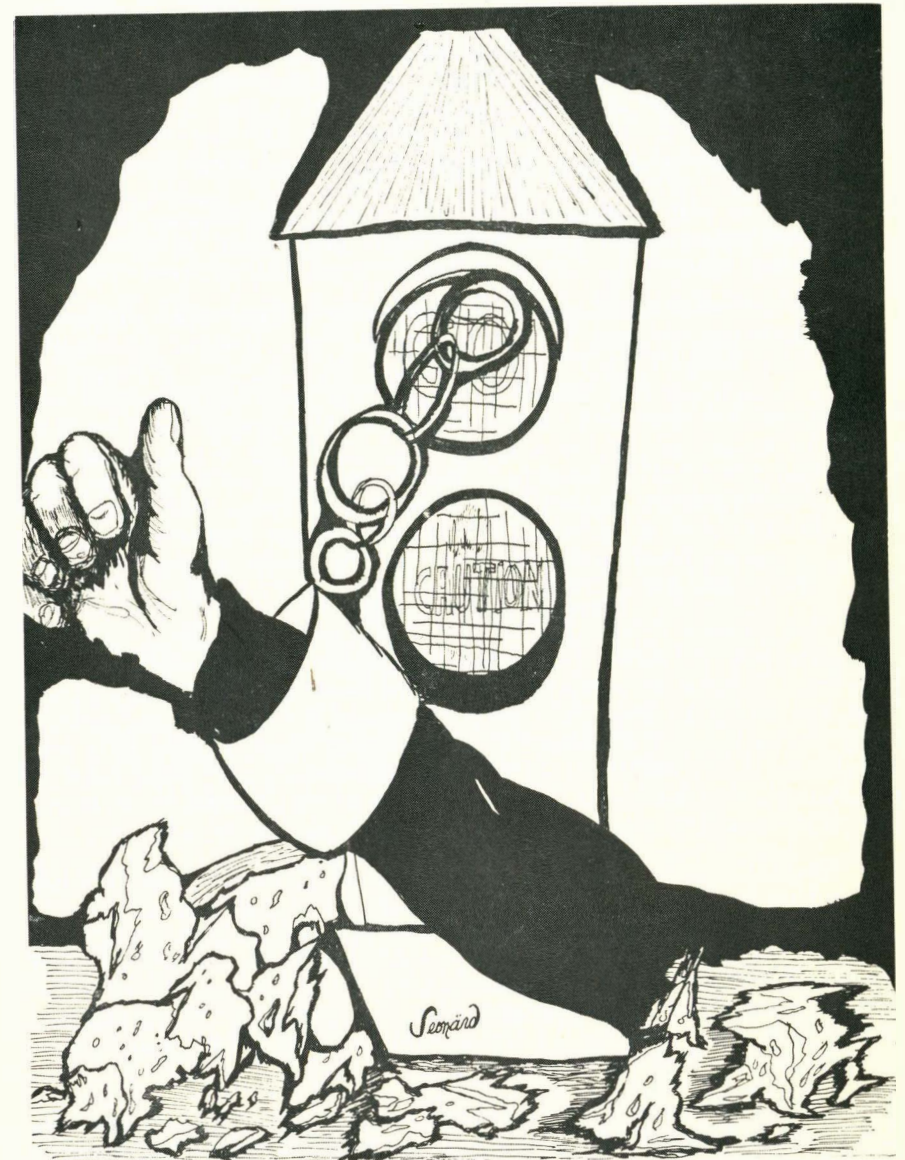
And she dared to speak. After the first word chokingly uttered, she was off and rapping hard. (Oh, how I wished for the rains, slate-grey rains from the sea, thundering across the moorlands. Please give me respite and take her away.)

And then, hating her, I kissed her, and felt the impervious walls that sealed off the torment and the agony and the woe, felt these walls crack and give way ... my guts like to bust out right there in Central Park for the whole world to see.

What's the matter with this goddamn light, anyhow? I want to get my leisurely stroll about the park, can't afford to miss my daily exposure to romantic sensitivity and Nature and grass and things. Especially all those haughty, long-legged, short-skirted secretaries who sprawl on the lawns during lunch break.

One tries to avoid the antinomies of existence and love; waiting for the second coming of your deceased mother, perhaps; asking reprieve from the moment and the chick who isn't at all like Mother; and begging grace of time and self. Wasn't always like this. Ohh, no...

Once, upon Adrienne, shim was sham and that was no sham for I need but remember a caressing hand over two quivering globes. Thudding heavily and heartily, screaming mightily in muscled undulation, the furvor of stretched and straining flesh



when love was satiated on a God-beautiful eve of thundering humping.

Honking of horns. Grim and gritty countenances of the motorists have become outright vehement, their outrage at being governed by a red light finding voice in the shrill scream of auto horns.

Salvation, redemption, grace. Where is man's only act of grace? It comes in loving another. But what if there isn't another around to love? Only Outerbridges and cockroaches and Adriennes. What then? Atrophy, maybe, and serve the dubious function of carrion for predatory birds. Or maybe just up and vaporize into a green stench. If love implies hate and fertility implies sterility, then I am a psychotic pretending to be sane, a blubbing idiot.*

Twiddle-twat and wow, such a magnificent specimen of female flesh elbowing her way to the curb beside me. God, is she beautiful. And, being that I have developed, of late, into a person of studly demeanor, she would, no doubt, be quite attracted to me. She looks this way and that, puzzlement flashing in her eyes as the car horns mount their crescendo. My time for approach is up, and for want of response, shall soon begin rotting. Me, I'm just standing here, gassed in a stupor of inaction, watching with the smacking, leaden sensation of having neither lost nor won (of just being invisible and impotent) as she came, and now, after she's left, I feel sad. Because ... maybe I don't want to be alone.

The avenue in front of me, the one with the green light, is an open flow of traffic, cars zipping through the intersection. The red light I have been waiting so damn long on is obviously stuck and not about to change. Motorists shouting obscenities; infuriated to the point of beating on the dashboards with their fists and gunning their motors. First one, then another and another attempt the crossing of the street, some just barely succeeding amid the roaring engines and the squeal of the brakes.

Magnificent self-assertion on the part of the drivers I must say. Hue and cry of screw the light, go ahead comes from their choleric faces, and me too, I intend to get across that street one way or another. Chaos reigns. To hell with the cockroach and old pusilanimous Outerbridge and bitch Adrienne, says I. I'm no goddamn android to be manipulated by just any Machiavellian personality that happens to come bopping along. I'm gonna cross this street, by God, red light or not.

(When the eyes of the forsaken one turn grey and cloudy and his brows are shadowed, hunched in red as he watches the descent of the winter sun ... Silence will first fall abruptly.

(As he opens his eyes for the first time in the morning and catches the crystal, refracted beam of dawn's sun so does he close his eyes for the last time at night, and seals himself from the

movement of brown shadows ... Then does time and sound and silence cease.)

This is an anti-life undertaking, for sure. Peering cautiously for a break in the traffic. . . Now baby, NOW! Chugging full speed across treacherous asphalt...

And from the unheeded periphery comes hurtling a mild truck, in full confidence of the green light.

BAM!

The crack of bones, the splinter of skull upon the meeting of flesh and steel.

Solitude. Darkness. I'm flying. The filter of my incandescent non-being either dead or dying...

And who really gives a sanctified damn, anyhow?

* Not original, adapted from the Joyous Cosmology by Alan Watts. I believe. Also not correctly quoted.

-Jonathan Haar

BUT FOR TOMORROW

i would be content to spend
my tomprrows in the warmth of your eyes
and the calm of your quiet
but tomorrow always says goodbye
and you'll go from my life
as you came
gently one night
with hardly a sound
then i'll sigh a little when it rains
but
regret nothing
(remembering)
yesterday,
we loved.

- R. M. Weis



PARABLE OF THE COFFEEHOUSE

If I were ^{more} than a dull s rattling in a box,
Poking my ^{no!} ^{ull} about th ^{hcl:}sty closet,
Perhaps y u w ^{and} have.0 words to -(Y
Than a shiver a whisper. What is i .

If I were more than a quick dream
Dreame d by so drunken d e os
Could I then say I love you .
But- ah.- the echoes would la u gh.

If I were more than a plastic statue,
Some ^{ring} green ornament hangmg on a tree,
I wou ^{ld} ^{miss} you
But there is no peace for the clay figurine.
I die silent.

- David Dillon



by Kitty Dillon

JUPITER LIGHTHOUSE: SURF SEQUENCE

#1

All things return to the sea.
 All things mare time with the waves
 searching unheard beaches.
 Even love mares time, searching
 unsaid reaches.

#2

IN the blowing wind we lived above the beach
 at Jupiter Lighthouse.
 The water ,screamed sun.
 The brook of the sky ran light.
 We could see the edge of the earth from the shore
 of that great pool of life-giving excrement.

#3

The moon scattering light like gigantic cracker fragments
 through clicking palm leaves found our dance.
 Masqued in nakedness, taboo catagories removed, we
 entered the meaningless ceremony of waves washing shores.

#4

Waved granite and islets of self because they
 grip larger minutes than moments mountain
 revolutiops edging the sea, strive to captivate
 light laclets of surf and screaming suns in water,
 but all only mare fresh time.

#5

Morning mist-light.
 Birds find food lit by the waves
 on the salty sand flat.
 The millenium of a wave leaves these- discarded as
 people ruined utopias - - - - : Bone-rotted, calcium
 sealed shells; nitrogenous iodide odorous dead
 organic debris; beer cans with no notes inside;
 and for a mountain splash or two, the molds of the backs
 of lovers in moist warm sand.

#6

Though no palms creak here
 No gulls squeak creases the air now
 This love - - - - - suspended - - - - -
 in islets of self still struggles toward all
 into the salt warmth of the roaring near
 sandlit night.

-Nathan Capehart

METAMORPHOSIS

A world of butterflies
turning in an endless
mass of love with
many faces, forms and
speeds. Nymphs;-
caterpillars- beauty.

Red, green, blue, black, yellow, orange, purple.
Colors - thousands.

Rocks as soft as eider-down.
Foodstuffs are antique.
Oceans expand
Butterflies are annihilated
with no compunction.

-Toni Edwards

UNDERSTANDING THE LADY

I sense that you've heard the forests call
from over the perfumed hills
and I know that you'll go and visit awhile
and I hope that you can cure your ills
that have come to you so majestically
as if they were mountains of snow
I'll let you follow your chosen path
I'll let you pretend that you know
how the secrets of my heart revolve
around some meaningless song
which comes singing from the mountain sides
I know that you won't stay long

no doubt you will find a lover there
with arms that are stronger than mine
who will touch your body tenderly
and you will reply in kind
with murmurings of enchanted nights
and ships at sea with sails
the forest dark will surround you both
and then will your murmurings fail

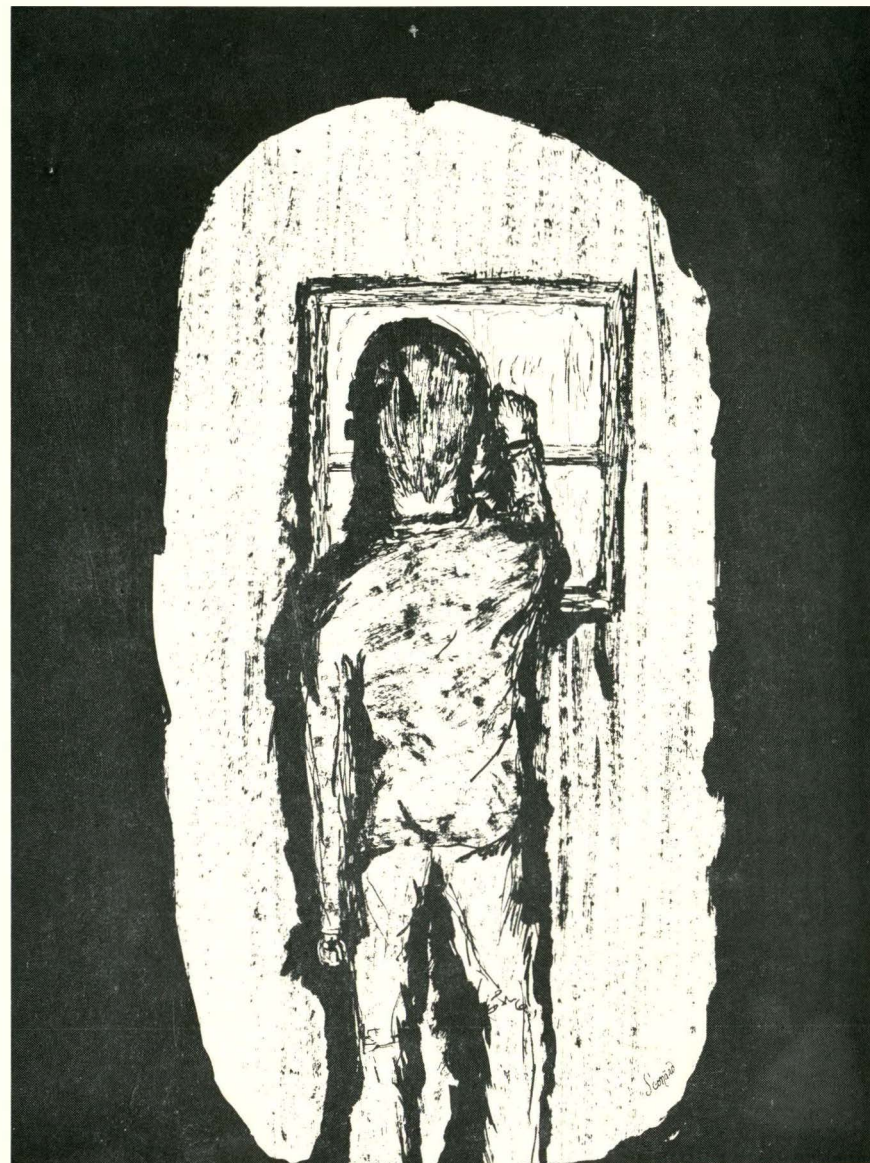
the morning will come as you seek a place
near the meadow and its dew
the midnight stars have disappeared
and there is no reflection of you
in the sunlight or the mirror pool
or the portrait at the top of the stairs
you come back crying your morning tears
while the housemaid combs your hair
and I'll sit at your side and hold your hand
when the time has come for your meal
I've looked at you in the coming noon
and I know what it is that you steal

-William F. Lee

DE NOVO

I stand upright, pausing no more
To make useless symbols in the clay
With a finger,
Though there must be countless layers
Yet encrusted on these hands.
My ancestors defied primitive rituals
When they were but wild hairy products
Of the Sacred Mold.
The constant gyrations of elongated limbs
Enraged their primeval ego:
A self-inflicted mutation ran from the fire
Into a darkened unoffensive jungle.
Now I doodle upon frosted windows.

-James R. Pack



this is the forgetting time of the year
 tv antennas
 outstretched limbs
 protruding into the smog air
 metallicly feeling its way
 searching for an untold story
 never coming
 relentlessly chanting
 chanting
 endlessly in an echo chamber
 filled with
 don't mind if i do
 and
 i beg your pardon
 mounted on a chimney

 telephone poles
 rooted into concrete ground
 with wires
 for misused birds to sit upon
 and use
 never knowing what
 it's used for
 and never caring
 when
 it may rot away
 then it may be
 of some use

 motor engines
 spouting gaseous fumes
 into the starry
 glass half-filled night
 lingering lingering
 waiting to settle
 upon newly mowed lawns
 which stomach
 the waste

- bill jerrine

HEBRIDES AND SULPHUR

Shine on the grass
 and sparkle on heads
 of gray slackened tubes.

The symmetry of, the full box of,
 can sword the war of
 Peace and fire.

-Leonard Miller

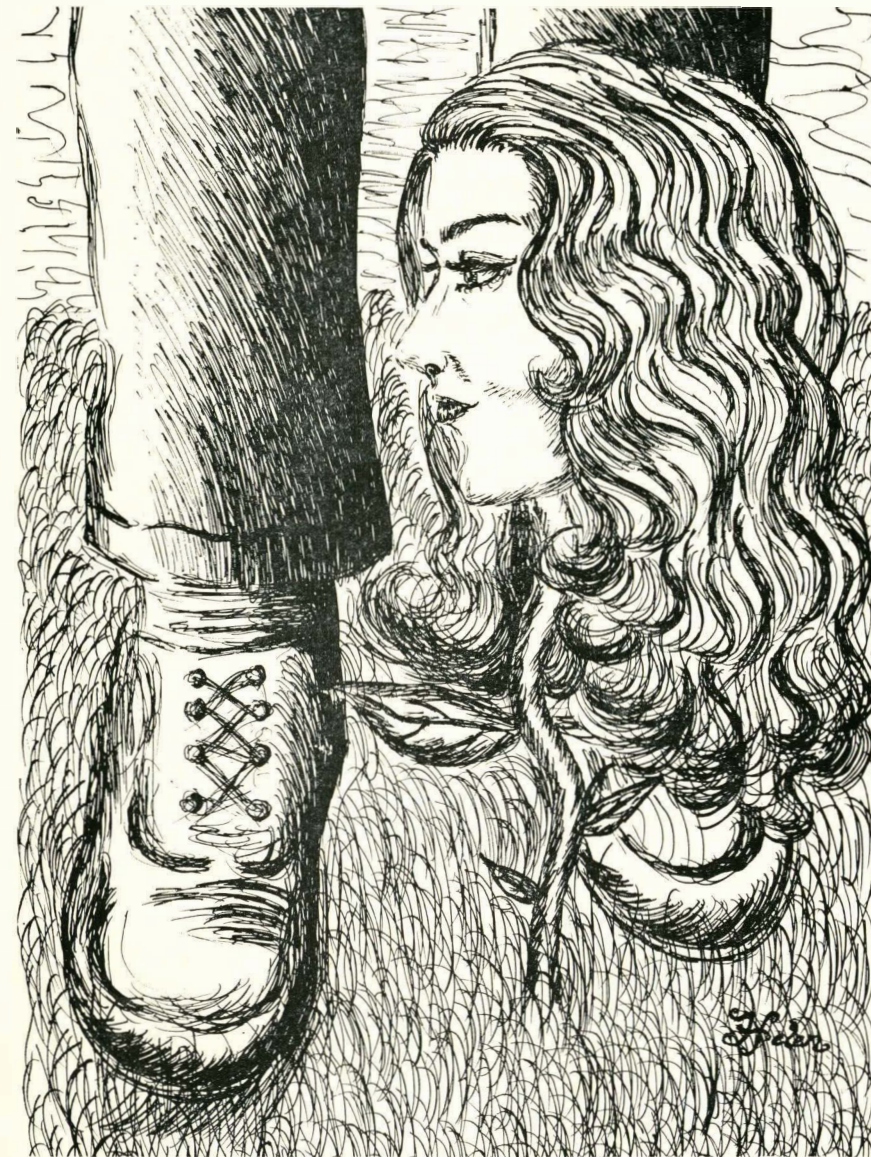
MOUNTAIN STREAM

Nestled under a warm oak roof
 A stream one winter morning
 Breathed easy ... lapping up forest odors-
 Rich earth incense, primeval memories
 Of a wilder day when the earth was young-
 Of newly-torn flesh, quivering sinews
 Covered with that thick, dark wine,
 Symbol of birth and rebirth.
 The ice had not yet formed.
 But the snow fell and the days passed.
 Water down the mountain; water to the sea.

When the hunters came,
 The hunters and the trappers,
 The citizens of the forest went into hiding;
 And hour after hour an unnatural silence
 Hung about the trees-hung and stayed-
 Unbroken except for an occasional scraping
 When an overdue clipper
 Sailing defiantly down the channel
 Became wedged between two marble reefs.
 (But at last the leaf passed through.)
 The ice was forming quicker now
 As the snow fell and the days passed.
 Water down the mountain; water to the sea.

And though the weeks came and went,
 The stream ¹much sadder
 Still managed to bear the strain
 Till the hour cursing invaded the woods
 To survey the ground and confirm the elevation
 And surfeited felines crept in
 Vomiting concrete and asphalt.
 Then dangling from the trunks of their mothers
 Mangled arms fell off
 And an unnoticed brush reached out
 To ink the horizon
 Above the crippled oaks, above the panting stream-
 The ice was now complete-
 And the snow fell and the days passed.
 Spirit down the mountain; spirit to the sea.

-Thomas C. Wallace



by Helen Hackney

EMMIE

I

Emmie Davis stood on the dirt and packed in dust between her front porch and the road. Her fingers were busy with their job of placing the new wash on the rope that hung between the two elms. She then ducked under the line and came up to the sounds of four young boys rising over the hillside. She wiped the hair away from her eyes and saw the four dirty flannel and T-shirts, the blue jeans, and the bare feet, jumping and running and walking, and Emmie listened as their noise gave the day its first music.

"Hiya, Emmie."

"Hiya, Boys . . . catching anything?"

And Emmie's little brother, William, held up the old Ball jars with dirty water and two struggling crawdaddys: one slipping up and down the glasses edge - one just floundering in the liquid.

"Only two. Only had one 'till Jason Allen came down and helped us."

Yea," said Jimmy, seating himself on an old tree stump. "He was so mad when I went up to git him. Said he was shootin' two possums with one shot."

And then Jimmy, his small frame moving in the sunlight, bent over halfway, and made his face into a half sleepy - half mad stare.

And in the lowest voice a ten year old could manage, he shouted:

"What 'ya want now, huh?"

"And the funny thing 'bout it," he said, resuming his normal stärke and voice, "was that he was 'sleep in his shack all the time."

Emmie giggled along with the boys.

William walked over and picked up an old twig. "You'd think he'd get tired of that."

"Who - Jason Allen?"

"Well - I guess it isn't too bad . . . What would ya' do if you had to just sleep all day, Emmie?"

"Don't know. Suppose I'd just sleep, that's all."

"Yea," vWilliam nodded, "just one long sleep."

And out of the still air, there came a raw:

"What ya' want now, huh?"

Startled, the boys spun around to see the bent figure of Lee Phillips, Emmie's boyfriend.

"Awh Lee . . . you scared us."

"Pretty good, huh Emmie?"

"Oh . . . okay."

"Okay! Wasn't that good, boys?"

"Yea Lee," Jimmy sparked up. "Boy, I had to look twice to make sure that wasn't really Jason Allen."

"There, see Emmie."

"Oh, how'd I ever know ... I ain't never seen him."

"Neither have I, but you can pretty much figure how he is."

"How's that, Lee?" William entered the conversation.

"Well, you just can. I mean ... some old man up there 'lone all the time. ... you can just 'magine what he's like. Now, how 'bout you all just movin' long. I gotta talk to William's sister a minute."

"Awh." Their voices sounded almost in unison.

"Come on."

"Okay ... Shot man, he ain't no boss ... Think he can tell us what to do."

"You're durn right I can." He grinned and started toward them.

And the four laughing backs caught a patch of sunlight and then disappeared around the corner of the house.

"Well," Emmie began, "what you out here for this time of day?"

"Come to see if you wanted to go out and run around tonight."

"Don't know."

"What 'ya mean?"

"Well ... where we goin'?"

"Don't know yet."

"Well ... yea, I guess."

"Well, I'll be by after supper." Lee turned to walk away.

"Lee.?" The words slipped from Emmie.

"What?"

"Nothin' Lee ... nothin'." She wished Lee would at least kiss her good-by. But he never usually did that "stuff" in the daylight. That was something he reserved for night. But, with Lee, well, it was never ever done in the day.

Now she was left alone to finish hanging up the wash. Almost alone - just the morning and her. Lee really had done a funny impression of Jason Allen. At least, that's the way she'd heard about him. She wondered for a moment if he was really like that. The boys just talk about his sleeping and Mama ... well, she talks about that "Jason Allen whatever his name is" and how Mrs. Maybelle Stephens says he's all of 45, keeps a bottle of anti-freeze from Joe Franklin's Esso up there and how some woman from New Falls comes up every once in a while. Well, she guessed all towns had to have their "Jason Allens."

And then, she heard her Mama's voice call her name. Something else was waiting to be done. She placed the last few pieces on the line, took a second to look at the sun laying down upon the hills, and went inside.

II

Emmie Davis had no idea of what she would be doing in the future. Or, to put it another way, she had no idea who she was going to marry. Going on 17, she supposed that the step would have to be taken pretty soon. And, if that assumption was

correct, she had Lee Phillips who was waiting in the wings, waiting for the time when Uncle Sam would come, and he would go ahead and marry her before he left - so she would be tied down for him until he came back. And if he didn't come back ... well, it wouldn't have hurt anything to have had a wife before. he went, as Lee used to say half jokingly, yet with a painful seriousness, "clear off this place ... for good!"

But, Emmie had a problem. She wondered - when she was watching a blue jay scream at a sparrow, or looking at the food she couldn't eat, or most of all, just before she went to sleep - she wondered if she loved Lee Phillips. Why, she guessed she did. But then, she did wonder. And she worried if this, in itself, told her her answer.

"Momma, how'd ya' feel when you and Dad got married?"

"What ya' mean?"

"I mean, what 'ya feel ... you know, inside."

"Did I love him?"

"Well ... yea, I guess."

"Yes, I guess I did. I married him."

"But, inside ... you see what I mean?"

"I feit," and she shrugged her shoulders, "good."

"How was that?"

"For goodness sakes, Emmie. What you askin' all this for anyhow?"

"Nothin' ... no reason ... I was just thinkin'."

"Well, quit your thinkin' and grab that plate so your father will have dinner when he gets in, and he won't get all mad."

"Okay."

After dinner, Lee came down the broken steps of what they called a "walkway," stepped on a creaking porchboard, and was met by Emmie.

"Hi, Lee."

Lee stood there his "usual" half-smile on his face. Emmie wondered if he was really happy coming here tonight. Maybe he'd feel just as happy coming to see Susan Jenkins or Jenny Adkins.

"Hi, Emmie."

And their hands fell together at their side.

He let her in the door of the '61 Mercury.

"How ya' be.en?"

"Oh, okay I guess."

They drove on down the road awhile. Emmie watched the trees fly by. The trees, so stationary - so rooted. They drew up their food so effortlessly. They were really given it by the soil. And all they had to do was stand. Let the sun run through their fingers and put their arms around the air. She envied them.

Lee's first words shook her from her dreaming.

"I hear they's gonna go up and see if they can't get that Jason Allen Reid to move out of that holler he's in. They say he's just causin' a nuisance."

"Who says?"

"Why Johnny Partlow and Billy Edwards ... "

Emmie noticed how Lee always called the men by names they got as boys. She knew he really didn't know them that well. He just liked to think he did.

"They had a meetin' down at the Police Station this afternoon." "Well," Emmie began, "I really don't see what he done wrong. 'Course I don't know him. I heard Mama tell Daddy he's all the time drunk ... and that he keeps a woman up there."

Lee chuckled. "Your brother still hangs around him though, don't he."

"Well ... yea ... you know - like today, catchin' craw-daddys."

"Magine, a grown man playin' with little kids."

"But William says he's really nice."

"Idiot, if you ask me."

Emmie didn't like Lee saying that. The blood felt like it was running out of her face to the rest of her body, and her fists tightened. Why, whatever that Jason Allen Reid is, she thought, he didn't do nothin' to Lee. William says he's really nice.

III

And, at 9:00 they drove back to her house. She let herself out.

Why she had told him tonight - tonight, of all nights - she didn't know.

"Lee, I think it might be a good idea if, well ... just for awhile, we ... begin to see each other a little bit ... well, less maybe."

Lee had slapped her. And then drove her home, and he didn't say anything. He didn't have to, though, because his face was white - white with anger. She knew it - she had known him too long to make it anything else. Yet, it bothered her - his being mad.

"Don't you ever cry?" she had blurted, quite accidentally, through her tears. He had tried to be a real man with her... yet, he forgot to be a boy occasionally.

She stood in front of her house - the tires spun the dust at her back. And in her house, she could imagine the curiosity, opening like a flower that unfolds when spring enters and alerts it. Her mother was probably on her way to the window.

And Emmie had tears in her eyes.

She started, quickly ducking out of view of her house, for the pond. Dusk was just sinking deeper, into a dark night, and she was stepping uncertain onto a few rocks and fallen branches. Her heart was jumping, brushing against her skin.

Her head forced forward into the night, she wandered about for a while - "Bidin' her time," Dad would say. All the while, she knew where she was going. Now, all that was on her mind was seeing what this Jason Allen Reid was really like. The one William and her mother talked so much about. Hoping his woman from New Falls wasn't there.

In a few minutes, she stood before his shack.

"Uh," a meek voice touched Jason's ear. "Uh, anybody in?"

Jason was on his mattress - thinking about how his father use to take him shooting, and how they used those old Jim Beam bottles for targets.

"Yea?"

Jason's eyes managed to see her, in between the hazy dusk on the outside and the deep purple darkness that his hut held.

"Are you ... are you Jason Allen Reid?"

"Yep."

"Well, I'm Emmie Davis. You know, William Davis' sister?"

Jason rose, and she noticed how old he looked and wondered: if he ever got lonely out here. He looked so sad.

"Glad to know you."

Now she felt miserable . . . standing, and only silent air between them.

"I've ... I've heard quite a bit about you." He thought her voice was quite pretty.

"Yea, bet it's all been good, too." He chuckled, in what she thought was a particularly wicked tone.

"Oh well," she said, tossing her long hair back off her face. "I never believe what I hear from some people."

"What 'ya out here for, anyhow?"

He was so hard, she thought. And before she knew it, she began to feel sorry for herself. She then forced some tears. Forced, trying to make them run down the cheek. She wanted tears to be her web. Her body stepped toward the older man, and her head - the tears - wet his shoulder. His hands supported her, but they were limp, cold, without feeling. She clutched at him more intensely, gradually increasing her grips power. But he remained limp.

And she looked at his face. In his eyes, she saw a mixture of surprise and a wild, lost stare. He could say nothing. He stood helpless, and Emmie knew it.

She slowly backed away. Her head was down, but raised enough to see and reassure him. Her hand was raised in a "stop" signal - and she backed toward the door.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

And Jason managed to see part of her left leg go through the door. He just stood, motionless, and noticed how dark it had gotten outside.

--Stephen Hinerman

ian's spring

wise winds carry frankincense
to usher in the infant king.

winter's metamorphosis is overdue;
we wait and dream.
catch the long death-drear brown crisp of leaf
and send him home to burial.
love song today.
moist shoot of feather grass,
the child of hibernation, springs to life today,
a babe newborn.
not long today.

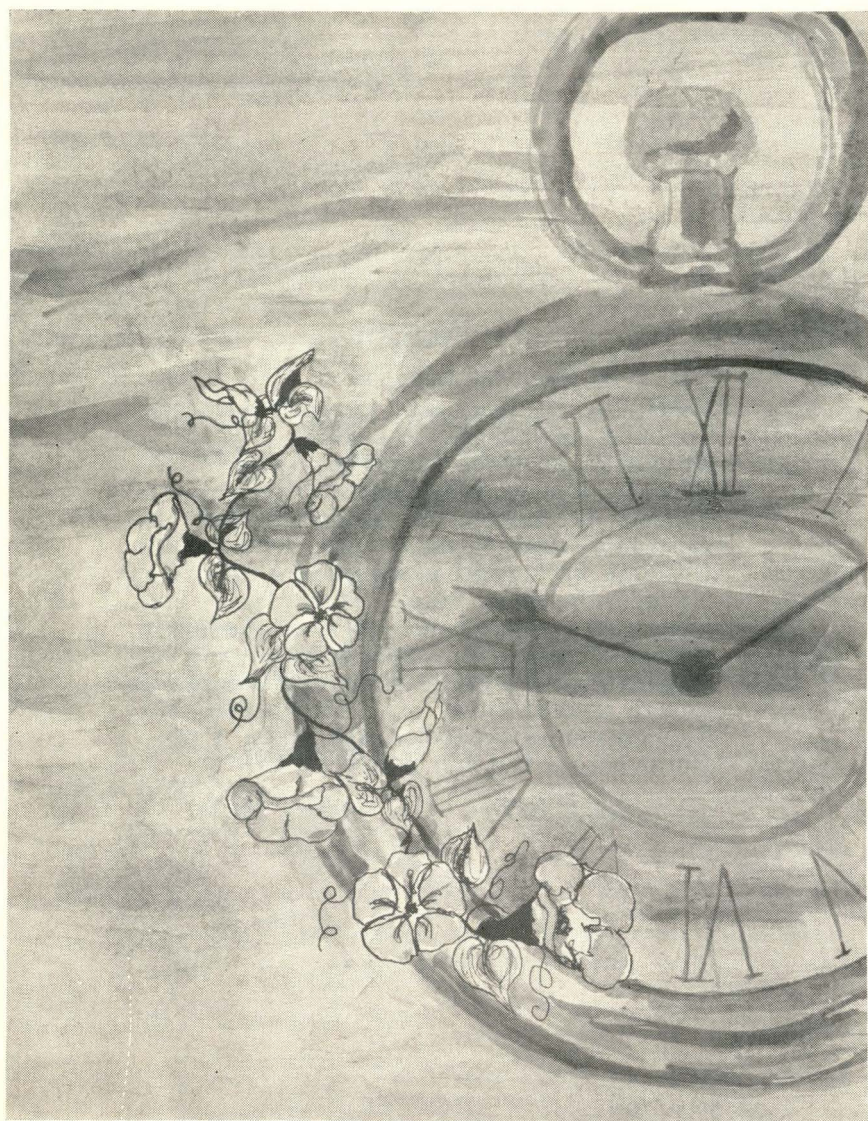
spring, tomorrow.
promise.

- *Tish Adkins*

ETUDE

The brass halls of being
Resounded the trumpets' pyramided chords
To build in thought to ceilings
Of purity, as when in fiords
Of past time wooden throats
Proudly proclaimed the golden heroes
Returning booty-laden in long boats.
Obsidian broke and meadows
Nudged the silky lake's lap
Whose shores speckled with pine shadows;
Jewels of rosin from aged trees' sap
Exploded point against point in glints of sun.
Clouds pushed curve on curve to fill
The gray-blue expansion and when done
Burst\ across the sun beside a hill.

- *Stuart Marks*



by Vicki Gilbert

TONIGHT

I will be alone tonight
When clocks move dark to dawn
And the sun begins its slow return to me.
There, on solemn vines, morning glories
Slowly open, that by sunrise resilliant jewels
Shall hang amid the leaves.
Only in the morning will the jewels delight-
Before the constant clocks trade morn
For afternoon.

Tonight, when with the clouds the rain will
Cool the breeze
And the stars, there beyond the clouds, will
Twinkle somewhere else,
I shall star into my loneliness and
Laugh at my returned reflection in the pool
Of miseried waters.
Tonight I shall remember my youth.
As though I yearned for its return.

-Thomas Wooten Gibbs

O mornings, O passing mornings,
The coldness shod with dewlets
And we would leave the summons
For shadows less endowed

A host of chirping sparrows
And our part left unheard
Life's bereavement less endeared to us
Than all the paltry sum lost silver's gold.

- *W m. Taylor*

WHEN MY LIFE IS DONE

Bury me beneath the weeping willow,
Where the flimsy branches softly billow
In the whispering, vagrant wind.
When dawdling days of darkness descend.

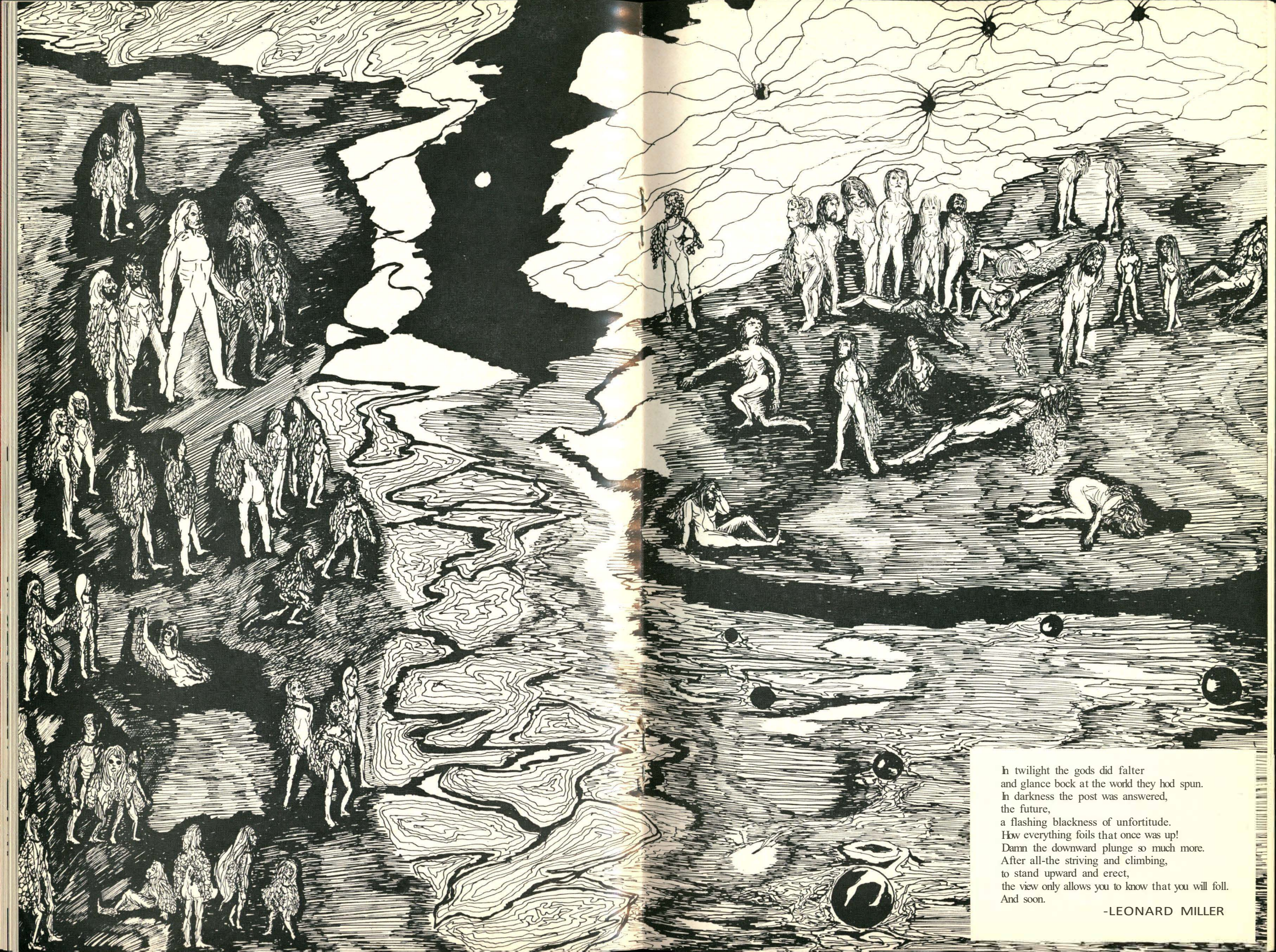
Bury me where the first spring
Buds brave the winter's cling.
Let me lie in the warm spring sun
And rest - - - when my life is done.

-*Richard Napier*

METAL LEAVES

September came and the rain
Beat metal leaves to the ground.
They rattled on the lawn and became
To-pull-your-feet-through, but the sound
Of them so walked remembered children
Throwing wooden leaves to the wind.

-*Stuart Marks*



In twilight the gods did falter
and glance back at the world they had spun.
In darkness the past was answered,
the future,
a flashing blackness of unfortunite.
How everything foils that once was up!
Damn the downward plunge so much more.
After all the striving and climbing,
to stand upward and erect,
the view only allows you to know that you will fall.
And soon.

-LEONARD MILLER

SONG OF THE IDIOT

I saw the world fall
Past my bed last night.
Bright orange. Round.
Like my basketball.

I saw the world fall.
Mama said it was a dream.
Are dreams real? My dog is real.
But my dog doesn't fall.

Did my dream fall?
But papa said, "No, Peter, you dunce!"
But anyway when the world fell
It didn't bounce.

-David Dillon

DREAM

In the horror of a long blank hall,
I sell my sister's rainbows
For the safety of seclusion.
The sounds outside the glowing windows
At the end remain the same:
He loved only the frightened.
I loved my sister in the hall,
More than the fear that fastened
Us in emptiness like children.
An early bleached rumor,
Of the three-fold fishing Father,
Dangled in there like a tumor.
Imago: to the Incubus,
The thousand days, love me Jesus.

-Ronald Edmond Honchin



A DREAMER

Dark, black escarpments and valleys stood at attention where blue green seas once rolled. Pools filled with dying fish and jelly creatures still shouted their defiance. All gave visual witness to the sun's bright orb which drew always closer: to dry and shrink all living things.

It was the year of the wolf, as Rickhan Canute's people figured it.. It would be another year of hunger and death, for the earth was in its final struggle with its omnipotent sister. A harsh, brittle wind gave birth to small dust devils, that chased each other down the beach toward Rickhan. Covering his yellow eyes with his hands, he listened to their moaning cries as they danced past.

Rickhan stopped and picked up a small stone. He examined it closely and then threw it away with a grunt of disgust. Rickhan was always examining things, and always asking questions of the tribal elders. They would listen solemnly and then laugh and say, "Go away. We have no time for dreamers. You should be hunting or preparing for war." (For they still had wars on Earth.)

He stifled the feelings of anger and humiliation which seemed always to follow him like grey ghosts who stared with emotionless eyes. Breaking into a run, he scurried toward one of the gigantic monoliths that stood on a hill overlooking the timeless sea. He stopped. The sweat glistened on his blue-gray skin. "How great and powerful the ancients must have been, to have built a hut by the big water." He stepped through an opening and walked briskly down a corridor filled with dust and the red demon.

Rickhan came here often, usually to see and examine the contents of each room, and to ponder the mysteries of each object but not on this day. Today he would talk with the gods! He climbed up the ancient ladder taking care not to disturb any of its loose stones lest he disturb some evil spirit. One must climb high if one is to talk with the gods, or so the tribal elders said even though they didn't believe in nor discuss the gods. They had better things to discuss: a mare conceived when the south wind blew up her tail - or perhaps it was the north wind; and they would argue for hours.

His breath was coming in sobbing gasps as he mounted the final step. He crouched and sniffed the fetid air. Satisfied that no enemy or evil spirit lurked in this place, he padded on cat-like feet. He moved down the hall. Although he searched all day he found no gods. The wind had begun her evening song as Rickhan stopped at the top of the ladder and turned to stare once more. A loud crash sent him sprawling on his face, and he cowered in fear as waves of terror rolled over him. Yellow eyes drawn into demonic slits surveyed the room whose door the wind had blown opened. He inched forward cautiously and finally stood up. "This be the place of the gods," he thought, looking around at the room filled with gems and jewels of many different hues. His eyes began to sparkle and gleam as he examined each one. His

attention was suddenly focused on a queer looking object hanging on the wall. He crossed the room and pulled it down. "What a strange place for a man to sleep," he mused. "He lies on two boards crossed one over the other. I must find out who this man is," he said, redirecting his eyes to the inscriptions set in the wall below where the figure once slept. It read: Son of God done in amber, by Mahilcachis. "Son of God," he pondered, glancing from the script to the figure. "If this is the Son of God, then God must be Mahilcachis," he concluded swiftly. A feeling of awe filled over the room. He lowered himself to his knees and spoke: "O God Mahilcachis, your son sleeps in a very strange bed, but you must know better than I where he is most comfortable. I ask your pardon for coming into your hut, but I must talk with you. My people don't believe in gods, but they need your help. The great water is drying up and our people die. Could you not give us this water again, so that we can play in it as our father's fathers did? I am very sorry to have bothered you O Mahilcachis." Rickhan listened for several minutes before speaking again. "You do not answer O Mahilcachis, therefore you too must be asleep. I will sleep in this hut tonight and talk to you in the morning." He listened again and was satisfied that Mahilcachis must be asleep. He stretched out on the floor, and carefully and reverently layed the Son of God on the floor beside him. They slept.

Waves of sound greeted Rickhan and penetrated his every sense the next morning. He jumped up and ran to an opening. He looked out and there, in all of its majesty and glory, was the great water roaring and bellowing its challenge to the golden sands before crashing down with all its might and fury.

At its lips Rickhan could see his people laughing, playing and frolicking in the cool, refreshing liquid; the sun was golden and yellow, without the harsh sanguine glare.

Rickhan turded from the joyous scene and spoke: "O God Mahilcachis, you have heard my request. I thank you. I will go now and tell my people about you and bring them here to talk to you. I will take your son with me to show them, Although I wish he would wake up." Rickhan picked up the Son of God, walked from the room, and closed the door. So great was his joy and happiness that he ran down the ladder. He had almost reached the bottom when his foot struck one of the loose stones and he fell.

The elders found him that evening at the bottom of the ancient ladder, with the Son of God clutched tightly in his hand. "Serves him right," spoke an elder. "He knew nothing - always asking questions!"

"What is this object?" interjected another, as he jerked the Son of God from Rickhan's lifeless hand.

"Probably another dreamer," answered another, "See how this one sleeps."

They turned and walked out of the building into the burning red hell and lifeless void where the great water had once rolled!

-Douglas Johnson

The Mouse Princess: 9 Mountain Tops

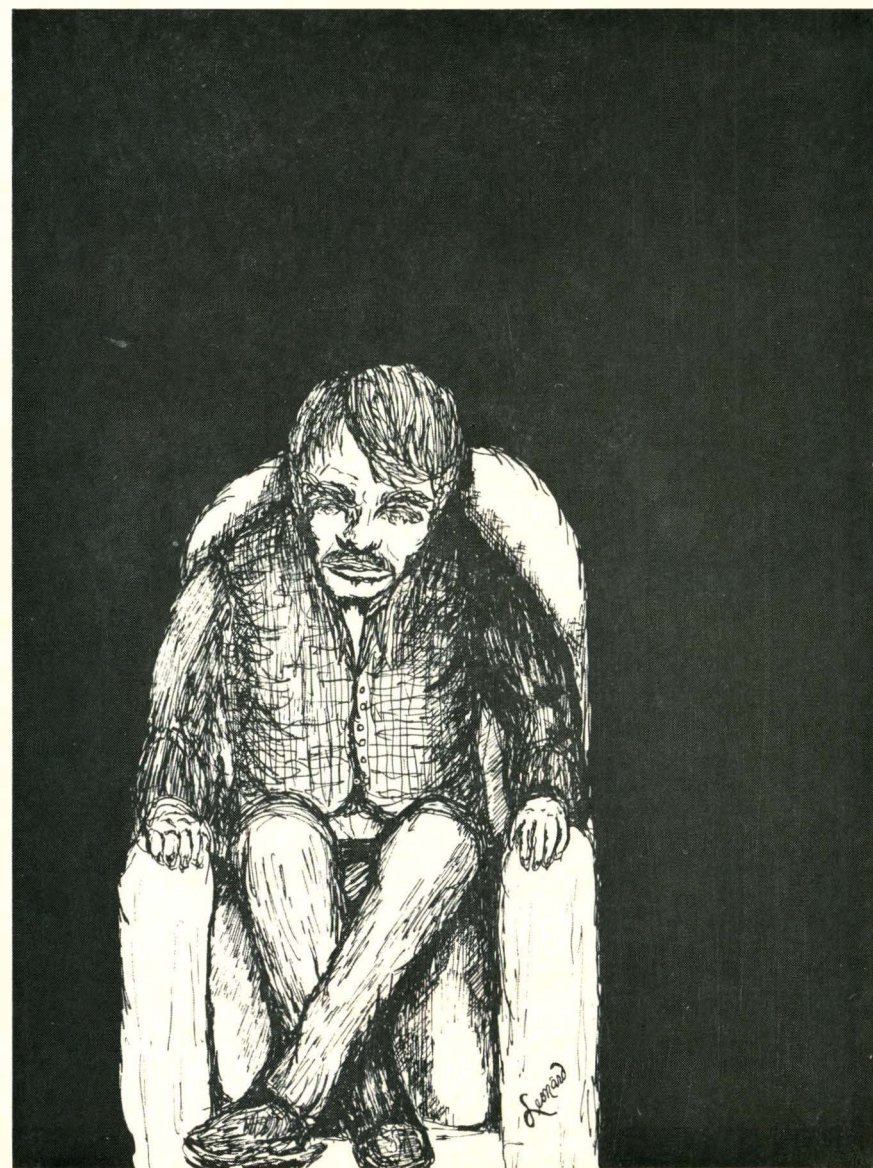
Age grown, age knows
My love now flees
before but beyond
My eyes.
Caustic to my heart,
Now cold,
Now gone.
Frees one of love
but never life.

I should not write
this shaken view.
My love once confessed,
professed, processed, obsessed

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Reject

-Leonard Miller

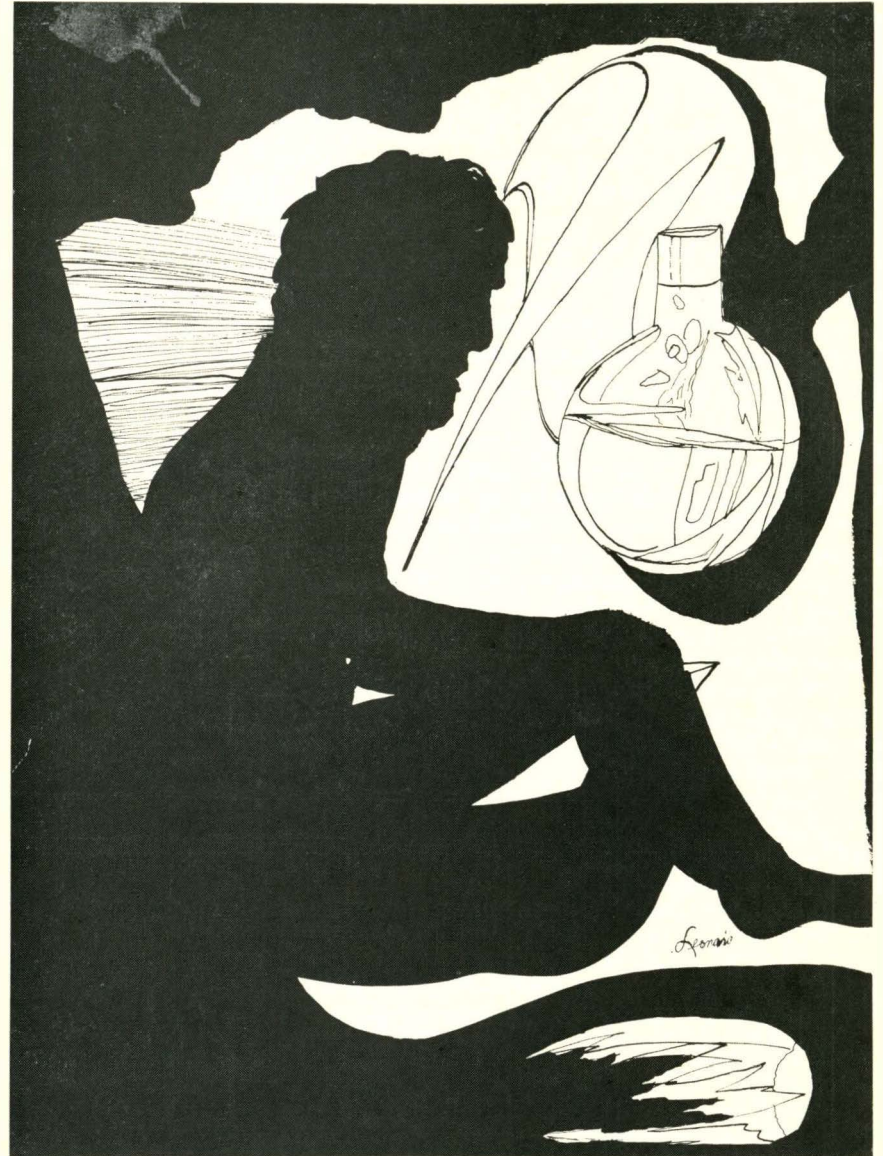


tomcat

bourbon and the pleasant drift
of gentle conversation
cannot serve to soothe disintegrated trust.
i have wandered, watching
from the wide periphery of sanity
your tomcat movements.
slither forth into the day;
your treachery has shattered something
even night's soft spongy matter
cannot piece together
or repair-the fresh, bright,
spun-glass-fragile wisp of hope
built slowly on crushed innocence.

so slither forth into the day;
do not make mock of me by hiding.
piteous emotions like the spray
of front lawn sprinklers
drizzle down beside the gushing force
of former passion.
here's to you.

-Tish Adl?ins



BRIDGE ON THE RIVER STYX: A FABLE

"Through me you pass into the woeful city"
Dante, *The Divine Comedy*

Vergil P. O'Brian wearily arose to make his morning toilette, and, after several vain attempts to reach the bathroom, discovered a serious discrepancy. His house was missing. Without so much as a coverlet, he stood on what appeared to be a plain of no inconsiderable expanse. No source of light was evident, and yet a grey glow pervaded all. The ground, if it could be called that (for it was harder than concrete and perfectly level) was littered with the turgid bodies of hundreds and hundreds of bewildered folk in various kinds of sleeping apparel, many of whom were still asleep (unaware that they would not enter Baudelaire's city of dreams until they woke) while others rushed around with no more plan for escape than those who slept. Severely shaken, Vergil joined the night-robed throng that crawled here and there over the table-top surface stretching off into the distance without a sign of definition or barrier, like a Dalian landscape left to be finished in the morning.

"Gracious" said a skinny old woman in a purple flowered dressing-gown, "The very idea! To be whisked away to who knows where in the middle of the night - why, it's positively unchristian! I'll see Commissioner Aaron about this, just see if I don't!" Vergil had never heard of Commissioner Aaron, but he had no time to ponder that before a shrill voice screamed at his left ear:

"It's a Communist Plot!" to which an alarming number of the mob agreed.

"I believe in open housing, but this is ridiculous," a very black and amused young man a few inches to Vergil's right chuckled. "Where did all the buildings go?"

"Who stole my brand-new, unpaid for, mortgaged-to-the-chimney, fifty thousand dollar house?" a man in red pinstripe pajamas wanted to know. He was fat, and his words were bald and wrinkled. "Isn't there a law against such a conspiracy in the state of Nevada?"

"Nevada? We're somewhere in Kansas, aren't we?"

"That can't be right," said the skinny old lady, "I live in Baton Rouge. Nobody could carry me from there to Kansas in an evening's time ..."

"Excuse me," Vergil interrupted, "But how do we know that only one night has elapsed? What's the last date that you remember?"

Some agreed with Vergil that it must be the tenth of March; others proposed varying dates, many as much as ten months apart. This ticklish point of chronology was to prove a source of constant argument later, and there were those who traced the schism between the Protestant Reformed and Catholic Orthodox Bridge structures not to any basic disagreement over architectural design but to the hostilities created by this dispute. To avoid

fu:ther dgresi<->n, however, after all interested parties had v0lced their opm10n as to the present date, Vergil replied:

"I really don't care so much about **when** we are as **where** we are and in what direction home lies." But because of the crowds no one could see far enough to find a suitable landmark for reference. "Might I suggest looking from atop someone else's shoulders?" Vergil directed a little fellow not more than six or seven, with shooter-marble eyes and a outh that puckered too far to be agreeable, to climb up his father's back and peer out over their heads.

"Jeez! People! Zillions of 'em. Where do you suppose they all came from, Poppa?"

"Don't you see any buildings or roads, son?"

"Nope. Not much. Just people. It's dark, sort of. Wait - I thnk I see some trees - and a river, far off sort of. He pointed in a direction indistinguishable from any other.

"A river, eh?" Vergil remembered from his boy-scouting days that if one followed a river downstream, one was certain to find a town. "Come on, let's go and see it, then!" he shouted, temporarily unaware of the fact that he never took the initiative in any group activity before he was asked.

"What? Dressed like this?" No one relished the idea of a long hike without shoes. Vergil ran the rumpled ends of his pajama sleeves and thought for a moment. The temperature, he reflected, was mild, and the impeccable (almost polished!) plain presented no obstacle, if only the river were really within walking distance.

"Why not?" he countered as crisply as he possibly could under the (unusual?) circumstances of setting forth on an expedition in night-clothing. Not wishing to seem nervous or undecided before so large a conclave, Vergil directed those who would follow him to set out for the river which the boy had mentioned and taking him, who was still perched on his father's shoulde;s, as a look-out against the possibility that they might loose their way without any landmarks save the milling crowd for reference, they made rapid progress toward the objective, gathering a larger following as they went.

It was not long before Vergil met someone with whom he was fairly well acquainted, an old friend from his parochial school days, Father Zimmerman (confessions of stolen baseballs and broken windows, an especially green palm served for him on Palm Sunday, and an afternoon of tickle-dusty books with easy lessons.) At the moment Vergil found him, he was sitting dejectedly on the ground, in a black night-shirt and a white collar.

"It can't be! It can't be!" he mumbled over and over.

"Good Morning, Father! What can't be? What a surprise! We're on our way - somewhere ... You wouldn't happen to know where we are, would you?"

Father Zimmerman looked at him in a strange way, with one eye closed and the other open. He seemed almost to be

afraid Vergil had accused him of something. He shook his head. Half alarmed at his lack of response, Vergil grasped both his hands, and with some difficulty succeeded in pulling him to his feet. "I think you'd better come along with us," he suggested, trying to keep the wobble out of his voice. There he was, carrying a priest to whom he had read his latin lesson every week for three years through a crowd of people who looked like refugees from the Breakfast Club, and worse, everyone expected him to find a way out of their difficulty as soon as they reached the river, when in reality Vergil had little assurance that this was an ordinary river or the country a predictable one.

"Father Zimmerman, what time do you suppose it is?" The priest automatically turned his hand over and stared at his naked wrist. How many people had done the same that morning!

"I don't seem to have my watch, but I'm sure it's been more than an hour since you stumbled into me." Vergil was satisfied with the answer, because it verified his own calculations and showed that they were still capable of perceiving something clearly in that desolate place. The light continued grey and placid, as a morning before sun-rise or an evening after sunset, and after what seemed to Vergil another hour, he began counting his paces to make sure they were moving at all. But the little boy astride his father's back assured him that they were getting closer, and Father Zimmerman, who was slightly taller than most of the others, said that he could occasionally catch a glimpse of it when someone bent down to adjust his slipper. He seemed more fixed and deliberate than he had been when Vergil found him, but he was still distant and offered little in the way of conversation.

The company marched on, nearly a hundred strong, and when it was noon by Vergil's reckoning, they broke through the last lines of bewildered faces and found themselves facing a row of trees. Never did anyone ever see trees in the way they saw them! They were so glad to see their limiting, restraining trunks in that ocean of unlimited (and yet maddeningly crowded) space that they put their hands on the rough bark, and, just as the boy had promised, they saw the river, ebbing dark and ungirded beyond. The far bank was so shadowy, so covered with obscuring mist, that only its outlines were discernible.

Vergil could now see all the way down the river on his side for miles: although it ran perfectly straight in both directions for miles like a canal, he could find nothing but trees and people who had stumbled upon the shore and had either fallen or waded into the cool brown water. Now that their hopes of reaching a town seemed frustrated, those who had followed him such a long way began to turn upon him and revile him for their trouble.

"What now? What now? We've come to the river, haven't we? Shall we walk along the shore until we drop, or shall we try to swim across it and drown?" In all the confusion Vergil wanted to cry out, 'Don't ask me! I'm nobody, and I'm not re-

sponsible for you in the slightest.' His mouth opened and he said this instead.

"Look over there! There's something moving in the fog! On the other side!"

A shape, unfamiliar to many assembled there, slowly coalesced from the billows over the water. An old man with a beard so long that it had become encrusted with moss and algae poled toward them on a wooden barge. Vergil ran down to the river bank and splashed into the waves, heedless of his wet pajamas. "Thank God you're here," he screamed out, "And where **did** you come from?" He scrambled on board the raft and wrung his drying shirt.

"Not so fast!" came the reply, and he was promptly knocked off again by the boatman's pole. When Vergil came up for air with a sputtering grunt, he caught in booming phrases:

"Which of you has a penny?"

"What?"

"I said, 'which of you have pennies to pay me for the ride?'" Everyone searched frantically.

"I must have a coin here, somewhere!"

"Oh dear! I had a whole stack of them on my dresser last night!"

"I don't have a cent!"

"Not a cent. Not a cent!" The words whipped through the crowd like a wail.

"Well, you can't keep us from using this barge, in any case," growled Vergil (who was finally beginning to resent his brusque treatment.)

He grabbed for the staff and found himself clutching air. The boatman was already twenty yards off shore.

"Come back! We don't have any money! We'll pay you on the installment plan! You can't leave us here, it's unchristian!"

"No penny, no ride. Those are the rules here." and with that, the old man disappeared on the far shore. Panic now crackled over the entire body. Vergil became afraid they might riot, and turned in desperation to Father Zimmerman, who looked the way he did when Vergil had thrown his ball through the sacristy window. The noise of wailing people became deafening. Vergil mouthed the words 'what now?' at him, and, incredibly, he responded with a shout that brought silence instantly.

"A BRIDGE! of course a bridge! We don't need that boatman! We'll build a Bridge across the river!" The people laughed and clapped and danced like urchins in the street at such an easy solution to their problem. They had completely forgotten, in their joy, that they knew nothing of what lay on the other side.

Soon people were tearing up their meager clothing to tie branches together, others went to break young saplings to add to the pile of available lumber, and Father Zimmerman oversaw the whole project, taking command as Vergil had seen him take

command of the Parish vestry, organizing various groups into guilds for stripping the shorter branches from the longer ones, guilds for setting the constructed pieces into place, guilds for measuring, as best they could, the distance remaining to be spanned. The bridge itself closely resembled the pontoon bridges that Caesar had built across the Rhine, and Father Zimmerman, who was very well versed in the classics, prided himself on the accurate way in which he had studied *De Bello Gallico* and learned the precise manner in which these bridges were constructed. Without tools or other aids, the workmen, having stripped all the available saplings by brute force, made rapid progress; and at the moment those on the far side of the bridge were in sight of the shore beyond the fog, the priest made a small speech concerning their 'exile in this Bleak Wilderness' and ended it with a short prayer.

Some people later said that if Father Zimmerman had not said that prayer, the whole Protestant Reformed Bridge would never have come into existence, and that the Orthodox Catholic Bridge, as the original one came to be called, would have had enough material to reach the other side of the river. As it happened, however, a young man in conservative grey pajamas and a bathrobe to match, whose name was the Reverend Mr. Lou Churchman (for years his congregation had called him Low Church Louie) stepped forward at that moment and began to criticize the construction of the bridge. But no one, oddly, suggested a simple raft.

"Look here," shouted Churchman doggedly, "This thing has got to be strong enough to get us all across the river. All of us! That means all of those people out there, and the Dear Lord only knows how many of them there are!" And everyone had to admit that the numbers were appalling and the bridge did look shaky, since it was only tied together and floated on the water unsteadily. Many people without slippers also objected to the rough places and splinters that clustered all over the make-shift planks, presenting a gloomy prospect of a painful crossing.

"I have serious doubts about this whole affair," said Reverend Churchman, "and I accuse this bridge and its builder of Grave Error. If anyone here agrees with me, I propose that we go down stream a hundred yards, where there are more young saplings, and build our own bridge - the right way!"

In this coup Vergil and Father Zimmerman lost almost half of their bridge building guilds. The members of the guilds who remained faithful were sent out to recruit more workers from the people who were still wandering around in vast hordes beyond the proximity of the river bank; but because Reverend Churchman's need for helpers was more acute (he was behind in the building and had slightly less of a following to begin with) his followers were more zealous in persuading eligible persons to join the reform movement. A small faction even asserted that Father Zimmerman had misread the plans that Caesar had given for building the bridges and was deliberately misleading his flock, an

idea which most intelligent people, however, quickly rejected. In a desperate attempt to get back the lost materials and workmen, Father Zimmerman accused Reverend Churchman of being dangerously Schismatic, to which he replied, "Father has no authority in this matter whatsoever."

By the time Vergil had slept twice, it became clear that neither party could find enough saplings to finish their bridges. Older trees there were in abundance, but these were much too heavy to be cut without tools. Reverend Churchman's group was finding it especially difficult, because their bridge demanded the use of crude wooden ties as well as the traditional rag binding; in the end it was he who suggested negotiations between the two groups.

"I'm not saying that every tiny detail of our bridge is perfect," growled Father Zimmerman, whose collar was now sadly rumpled and covered with dirt, "but we still maintain that its overall plan is sound, and that our interpretation of the plans of Caesar is valid. We aren't in a position to allow ourselves the luxury of pettiness - any of us. Why don't you come back and help us finish our work on the First and Legitimate Bridge?"

"But don't you see, Father," Reverend Churchman repeated for the seventy-fourth time, "that it is impossible for us to do that under the conditions you have outlined. Your bridge simply will not function. It's as plain as that. We can, however, propose this as an alternative. If you will consent to the use of wooden pegs to secure the structure, we will bring back our material and workmen, but not before then."

"That's insane! If we stop to put pegs all along the joints, we'll have to dismantle the whole thing to put them in!" Several others voiced this opinion. "The answer is a firm 'no'."

"Irresponsible! Unreasonable!" Everyone was so busy shouting at each other that Vergil was the only one who noticed that the strange old man on the barge was poling across the river again.

"You!" hissed Vergil, splashing out into the stream. "Why didn't you let us cross in your boat?" The greybeard only frowned and mumbled:

"I am not allowed to do so without the fare. However, I came to tell you that if your people wait here a hundred years, you may cross free of charge. That is the Rule." Vergil thought that he sounded a great deal like Father Zimmerman and Reverend Churchman, and the business of waiting a hundred years to get across a river (when no one had actually seen what was on the other side) seemed doubly absurd.

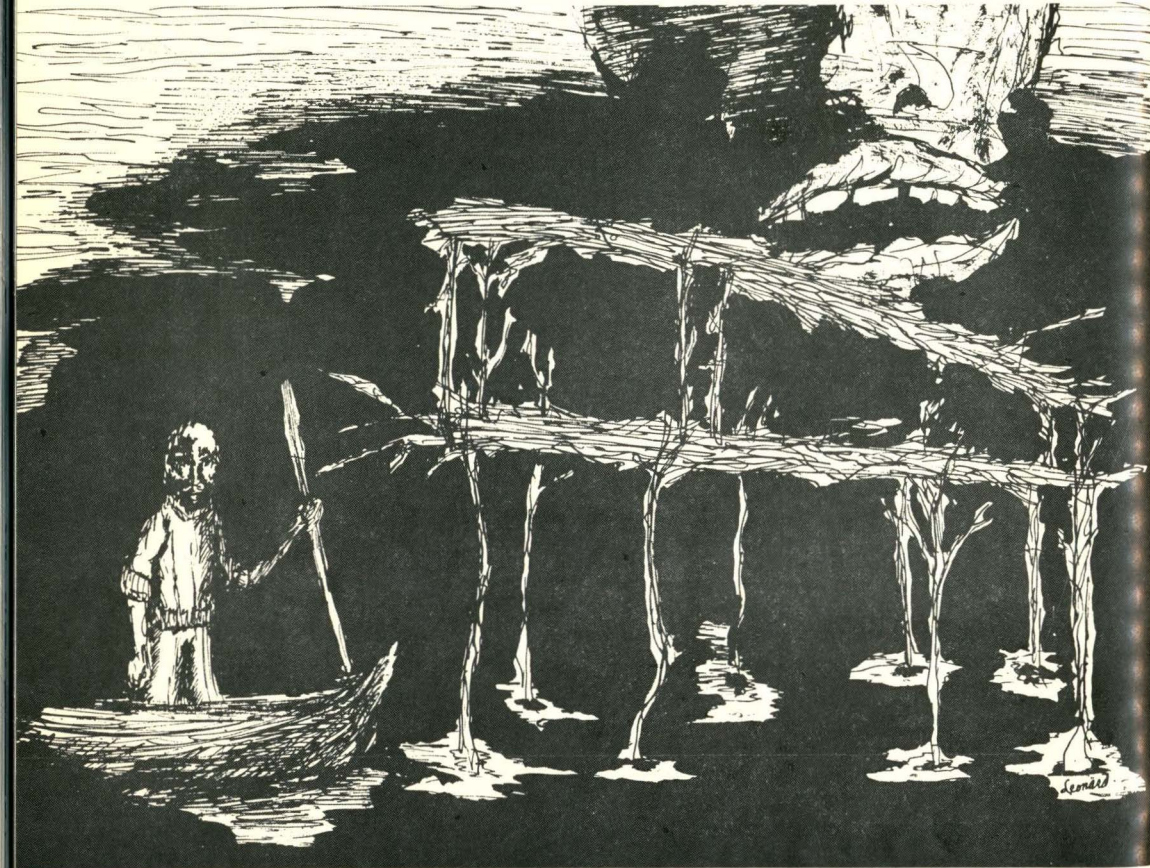
"Look help!" he begged, taking care to stay outside the striking range of the long pole, "you're mad to think we can wait a hundred years! Why, we'll be -"

"Listen!" There was a strange noise beyond their sight over the water, a noise like a pack of hounds howling for the fox. Their cry was constant, static above the clatter that flickered here and there on the shore. A vague remembrance stirred in Vergil.

"Just who are you, anyway, old man?"

"People call me Charon." He pushed his barge back into mid-stream before Vergil could think about it. The howling and barking continued until Vergil was tired again, and when he lay down in the mud and shut his eyes against the grey light someone ran by with the news that the Protestant group was dividing into five different parties over the issue of how many pegs to use in each joint...

-Joseph A. Seward



VISITORS OF STONES

Many say they sleep-
Sleep upon the hill
Beneath the earth and ever-growing grass,
Beneath the moon, the stars, the sun,
Beneath all that shines;
They sleep
Beneath the gnarled oaks
And near towering pines.
Beneath their granite and marble signs.
Many say they sleep.

And many climb the hill
To visit and to weep
Above the emptiness beneath the green.
Above stone and the flowers brought to die;
They cry
Piercing the honeysuckle air.
Would the beauty of a simple truth
Be too much to bear?-
The sleepers were never there.
But many climb the hill.

-Laura Lind

WANDERJAHR TA USE ND

Come,
While there is still light in the West.
The east is a purple memory.
Come,
Let us press our hands together
Walking the tracks of the sun.
While you, a mist
And I, a mottled shade,
Walk down the corridors of green,
The night will overtake us.

There was a time
When all the world was private and we saw
A mirror in the skies.
And when that mirror broke,
It made the stars
And you and I were born.

In those eagle days
Our hearts would leap so high
'Twas pain to fall.
And yet we fell
But still we did not fall
And you and I were born.

And hence our odyssey.
We journey to the sun.
Behind our backs
Dark sails; a kite.
That overtakes us.
But nonetheless
Come.

How far the morning?
How fast till the sun
Returns upon itself?
And our journey is a circle?
Know only the journey, querido.
So, come,
While there is still light in the West.

-David Dillon



THERE ARE SOME CLOUDS

There are some clouds that cover like a sea
The arid land; they roll wispy waves eternally
Toward infinity, keeping time that does not pass
But hovers as the shadow of a wrathful deity.

And there is a sky that shimmers as a glass
Prepared for wine; its glare bears down on the mass
Of sand below, burning into steam the flood of tears
Flowing from an old man's eyes into dread death's crevasse.

And there are stars that out survive the long sad years
Of suffering; their limpid lights are sentinels with spears
Battling the nights, spacing sleep with angels of hair spun
With silver thread by tireless hands unaged by fabled fears.

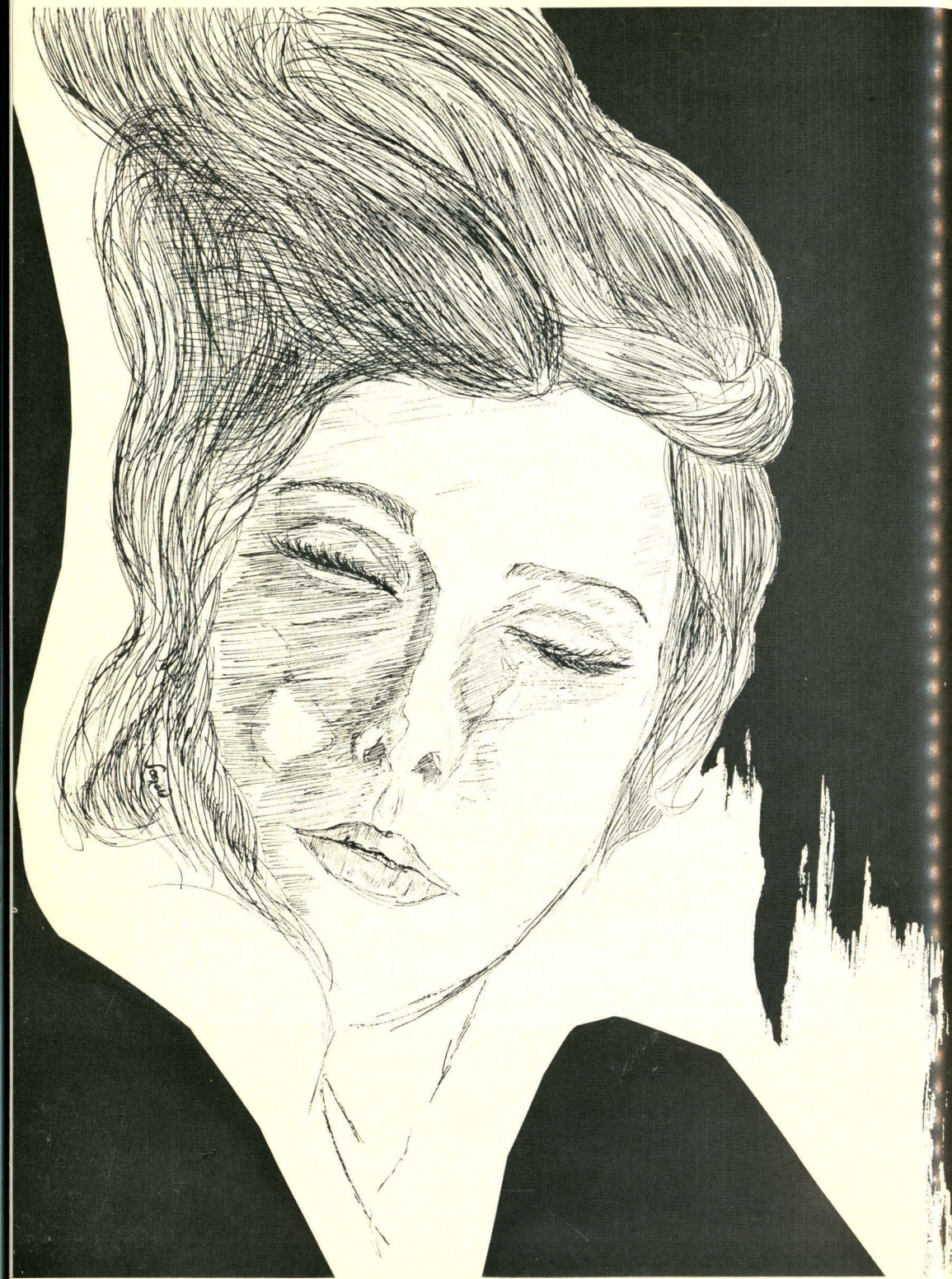
And there is a face as massive as the farthest sun
From aided sight; its elements make of the universe one
Awesome collage, becoming as the center of a lone rose
White beyond purity the countenance of creation.

But I kneel beneath the wild white sea in throes
Of relentless pain, sweating as the pendulum goes
Out for one more swing before the ghastly gong descends
To break my glass and chase me where the river flows.

I cannot see the sacred stars beyond the sky that bends
Over the world; above me is a canvass that never ends
Or bears a signature of the painter, and dark dreams
Loom with my own portrait faded and deformed beyond amends.

-James R. Pach





. . . AMAN! WITH LOVE

Would that the will could be summoned to lay
stone upon stone. gold-glistening bright,
to fashion a wall casting no shadow
and causing no chill, enabling retreat
enclosing spring's Dawn-bedewed light,
enclosing NaturE's innocent all
with the sensitive creatures of Man;
where in peace, peaceful would flock to abide
untouched by the cruel, chaotic outside
of the Nameless, needed working-out plan.
Would that the will could easily seek the place
where faces know not a tear, where hearts are free
embraced by stone., ;free to perceive the many in One
and to mend in the Inver flowing with life,
to listen unblindly to love and forgive
indebted travellers ahead and behind,
to unclutter the dust-laden rooms of the mind.

-Laura Lind

THE BALLAD OF SNOW VERSUS THE BOY WITH HALF A HEAD AND TWO-THIRDS OF A NAME

Twice upon a time in Rural City there were a little boy named Ov Riley. Actually, he was there more than twice, but once, the carnival was in city and he was there. Ov Riley was exactly twelve years old or so, or so it could've been his birthday. But, the little boy blue it, because he wasn't sure if today (which was actually once today, but now was once upon a time) was his birthday or not. You see, Ov was slowly losing his head, and, by birthright, he could hardly remember many a thing. In fact, Ov didn't even know he was slowly losing his head, because he forgot, so he never did do anything about it and he consequently continued losing his head, slowly.

Back at the carnival, the little boy with the middle name of Ov who always forgot to remember simply could not recall when his birthday was or would be, or even is! He had a difficult enough time as it were trying to remember what was his first name. Really, what wasn't his first name, he just didn't remember what his first name was, which, added to the fact that he was minus some head, mind you, made him feel quite incomplete. Empty. I mean, what's a little twelve year old or so boy with only two-thirds of a name and half a head? Ov didn't mind only having half a head that much, because most people he knew didn't have much more than that anyway (Ov knew a lot of politicians). But Ov was only a young innocent naive boy who had only been in love twice or thrice before, who had black cauliflower hair and sound wavy ears, so you couldn't really blame him for not realizing that if he had his whole head in the third place, he would probably still have his memory in the second place, and his name in the first place. It was very depressing. Very confusing, he quickly thought before he forgot. I mean, have you ever heard of a prepositional phrase without its subject? Even so, what Ov? It was very depressing. Practically every last name Ov knew had a first name in front. There was a Peter for Pan, a Panther for Pink. What was the Menace without Dennis and T. Agnew without Spiro? It was very depressing.

To help relieve the impression of his depression upon what was left of his head, he went to the carnival, ahh yes, the carnival, as many once upon a's as he could. In reality (ho ho), Ov had visited the carnival every time it was in city for as long as he could remember. Ha ha. But, he always forgot what the carnival was like by the time it came back, so, in a way, Ov was glad that he couldn't remember, because every trip to the carnival was his first. And trips to the carnival were much nice, but first trips were always very better, if you can dig that, Ov would sometimes say.

Ov loved the carnival. Not only because Ov loved to eat, but because. There were cotton candy apples and ice on the half clams and pizza cream and soda shells, not to mention cold hero sausages (optional except for Italian carnivals). And there were

the Games of Cheat, too, of spinning wheels and pick your numbers and throw the darts and burst the balloons and topple the bottles and three shots for a \$1.29 and then there were the Kupie dolls and toys and records and candy and prizes and cigarette cartons and MONEY, which was one thing Ov hardly had any of, especially after he had stuffed himself like a policeman, so he usually forgot about the Games of Cheat. He didn't like to take chances anyway, because the only thing he ever seemed to win was more bad luck.

But Ov loved the carnival. He loved to Whip roundround-roundround and puke. And Ov loved to Roller Coaster updown-fastnslow and throw up or down. And Ov loved to Ferris Wheel overmmndernroundroundnupndownnfastnslow and vomit. You see, Ov could hardly ever remember to eat **after** he went on all the rides. But Ov, be he young as he may be, had guts, and the simple act of spilling them all over the carnival was not merely near enough to keep him from lping it.

And the main thing Ov really loved about the carnival was because everyone was laughing there, and Ov didn't know very much, but he did know that anywhere that everyone laughed should be loved. The kids would run and fun and play and their folks would pay, but the bright-light sights and the Merry-Go-Round sounds and the peanut-shell smells would be enough to keep a smile on the face of all. Ov noticed that even the Haunted House laughed. It was an ugly laugh, but an ugly laugh was much better than a pretty frown, Ov often wondered.

But this once upon a at the carnival, that Ov loved, the Haunted House suddenly stopped laughin!\", and everybody else started frowning. The lights went out and the sound went down and even the peanut shells had no scents. Ov wondered why and started to cry when a passerby pointed to the sky.

Oh no! Snow!

If there was one lhing Ov loved (and, believe me, there were many more than one), it wasn't snow. In fact, Ov even **hated** snow, and for a little young innocent naive boy who had only been in love twice or thrice before and who didn't like to hate, hating snow was pretty heavy shit.

To Ov, snow was God saying, "Oh no you don't. You want a good time at the carnival after being the bad boy you've been so busily being (God was very poetic)? Well, maybe now the next time I won't have to be ashamed to say that I created you in my own image. Snow there!" Ov actually thought he heard God saying that exactly when it snowed once, but he couldn't remember.

Ov hated snow because it made his feet cold and it covered the branches where beautiful leaves and flowers would have been if it wasn't snowing. And a flake of snow was no more than an icycle tear to Ov. Snow was what bullies could rub in Ov's face whenever they wanted to whenever it was there. And it was there much too much for Ov, because snow made him put on four tons of clothes when he went out in it. And you can't play baseball in four tons of clothes, no less snow. And snow makes

you spend eras shoveling it out of your driveway so your father can get the car out of it and skid to death. And snow makes you spend more eras shoYeling it off your sidewalk so that no strangers slip and fall in it. And Ov hated snow because he hated to shovel. And snow hurt. and snow made Ov's hands numb and his face burn. And snow killed, and if there was anything Ov hated worse than snow, it was probably death, with rain running a close second. Actually, Ov didn't care much for snow at all. And besides, look, just look, what it was doing to his carnival!

So, Ov stood there on, under and within the snow in the middle of the white, laughless carnival, when all of a sudden, a glistening, glittering, glowing, symmetrically-shaped, beautiful. little snow flake floated right down on top of Ov's freezing red nose. And the snowflake was warm and nice and soon, Ov's nose unfroze, and the snowflake didn't melt. Ov quit crying and hiccuped before he asked, "Who the hell are you?" The little flake, smiling undaunted, answered, "My name is Anna Mashun from the heavenly nation of Rejoovination, but you can call me Baby Vamp." Ov: "Oh yeah? So whatya want, Baby?" Baby: "I am here to show you that not all snow is cold snow, snow to speak. I came to remind you that your first name is Life."

Well, Ov was laughing again. Was he! He was no longer depressed, no longer as incomplete and he didn't even mind the snow that much anymore. In fact, Ov was laughing so hard because Baby Vamp had given him his Life back that he forgot to say thank you.

-Greg Carannanfe

THE GHOST OF TROY

Rarer than the blooming of a desert rose,
The touch of beauty is a strange dream.
With all the shivering warmth of the moon stream,
The candle light of summer softly glows.
From space deep sighing winds begin to whail.
The stars like embers slowly fail.
The Ancient and Eternal Forest, standing
Upon the yet far older hill's green landing.
Scarce the squirrel nor eygle care or know,
That their dread companions have gone,
Departed, to Orion, and far beyond.
And in the streets of citys daisys grow.

-Robert Wylie Plymale



An ominous sun of vicious yellow blinds the eyes of a horny male, who nibbles with content on a peanut butter Lance and strains to see an ass or two along the blackened asphalt. He dwells in his aborted mind on the asparagus jungle. He lives an introverted reality. He is stupored by the sun and dies by a curse within his soul. He yields to the sunshine. He acquiesces, and it consumes. Salty are the tears he must surrender. His armpits sweat, while his forehead trickles with fluid in the creases of his skin. His brain becomes a garbage pail, and his soul melts like paraffin. He shades his eyes with darkened glasses and dims his vision only to shun the insidious sun. And he sits in hollowness upon the blackened asphalt. And along the asphalt dwells his thought, for dark is the inside and yellow is the out.

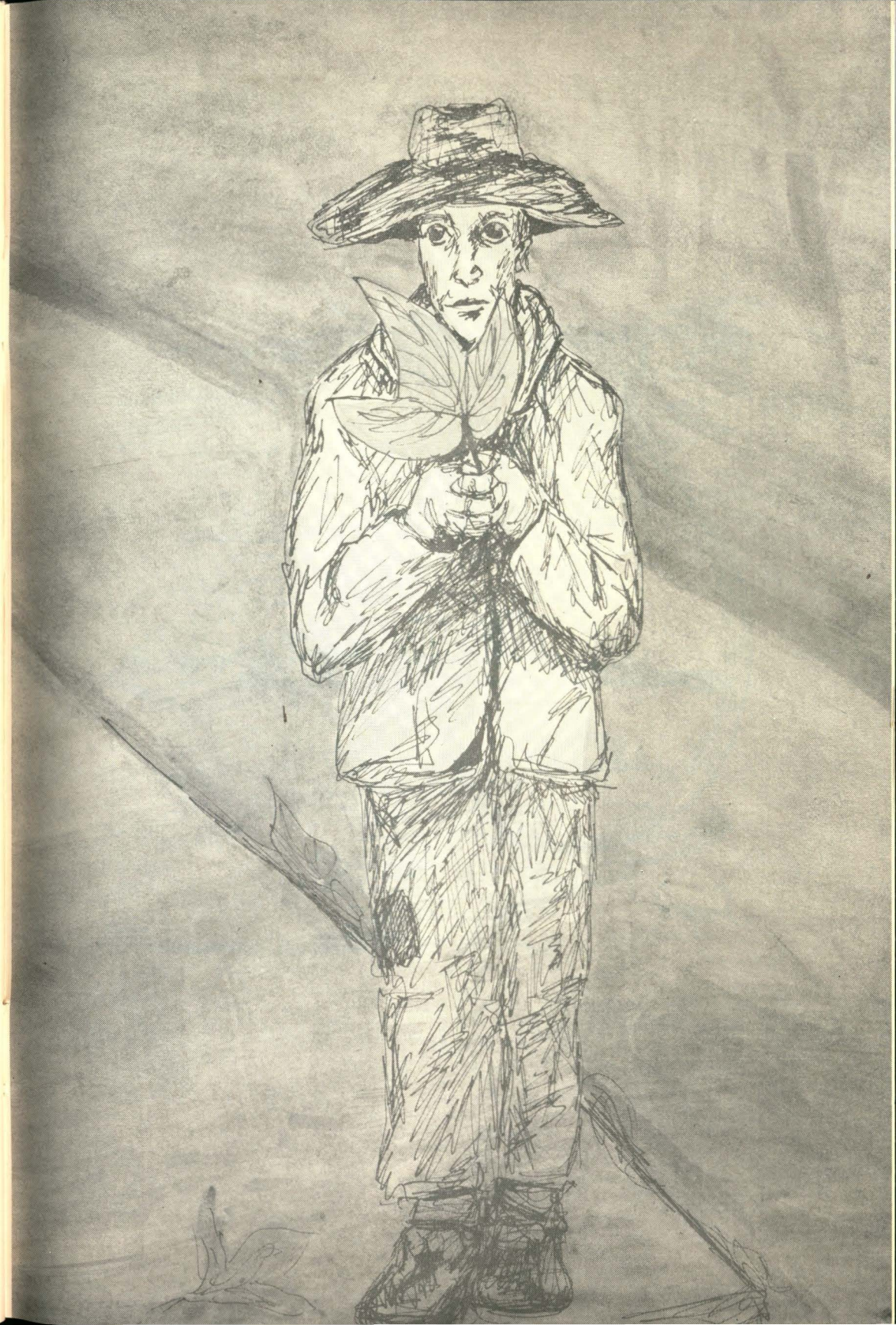
-William Twee/

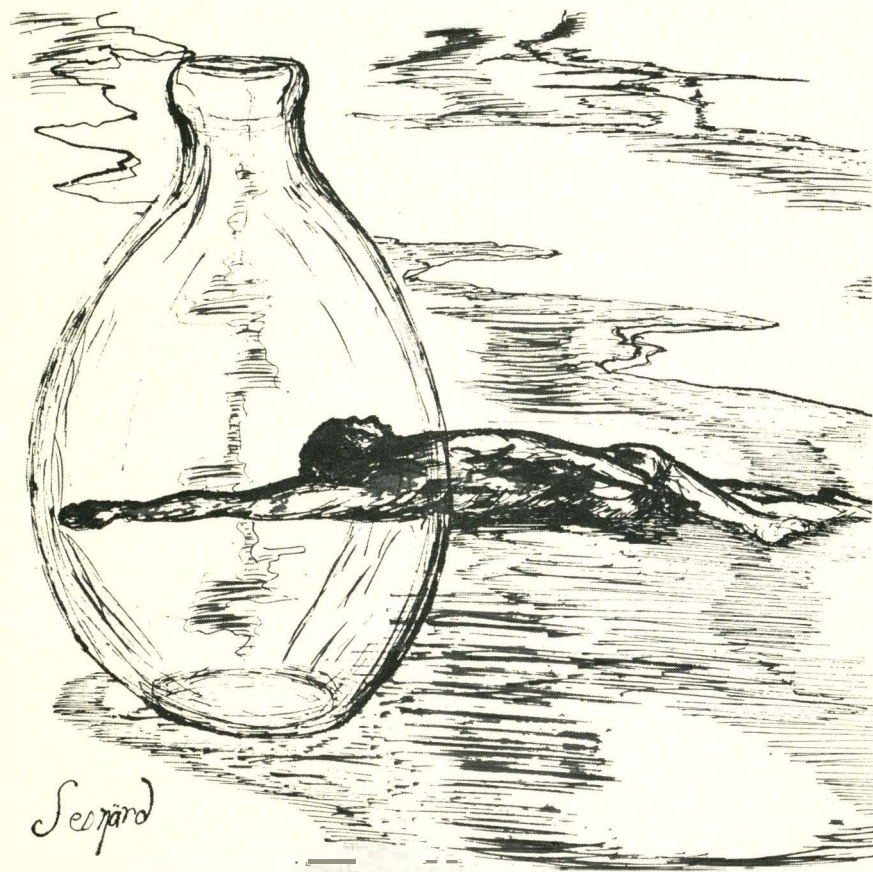


The Leafman

In my rush
I almost missed
The Leafman.
He stood, in my glance,
Gaunt and black
Oblivious to movement or
Sound.
His eyes, so big
So childlike
His clothes, so loose
So ragged, formless
And his hat
Wide brimmed and floppy,
Like a farmer's.
Grasped tightly
With both hands was
A leaf
A huge pointed leaf
His leaf.
And he stands there. still.
Imprisoned on a street corner
Giving his silent joy.

-Laura Treacy Bentley





We crawl upon the land
And only yesterday have left the sea.
There is no turning back,
For the sea has changed, or we have;
Only dark, immortal deep is left behind.
We must cast the Cheshire smile
Into the fire with the monkey's paw,
And let the grim thing from the bottle,
The one without a stopper,
And put away the Balm of Gilead,
And trade a world that could be sane,
For the beautiful thing that we have fashioned.
I stand in awe and wonder
That somewhere in this we blunder
For the things we pour into the sky
Could maybe feed some starving future Gam¹hi
Or perhaps put off the slaughter
That proceeds the birth of kings.

-Robert Plymale

THE POET

the poet
with dreams of yesterday and tomorrow
writes his thoughts
on paper
and sells them
to the highest
or lowest binder
whichever suits him at the time
taking nothing
leaving something
but nobody exactly knows
what it is that he left
words he intended to use
don't seem to fit
words that mean one thing
and say another
people running around
with their heads cut off
telling him and others
as to what he has said,
meant to say,
could've said,
and what he might've said

-Bill Perrine



Move slowly when you turn away from me,
The sun has danced across your back before,
While lying by your faithful friend the sea,
But soon with you the warmth will leave the shore.
So move slowly when you turn away from me
An after-glow may slow the slamming door.

- D. D. Fisk