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Volume XXX

May, 1968

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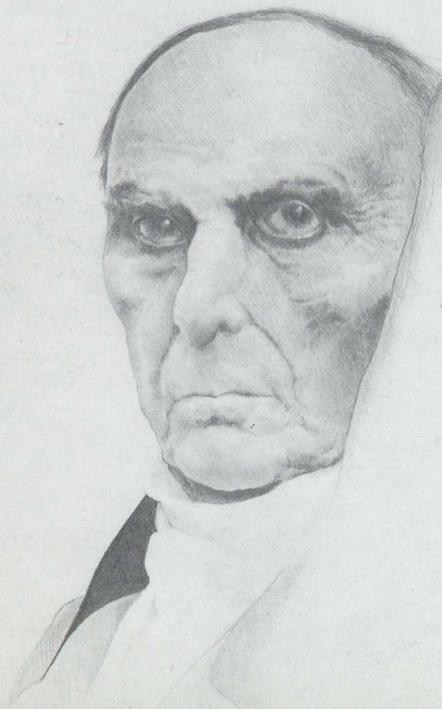
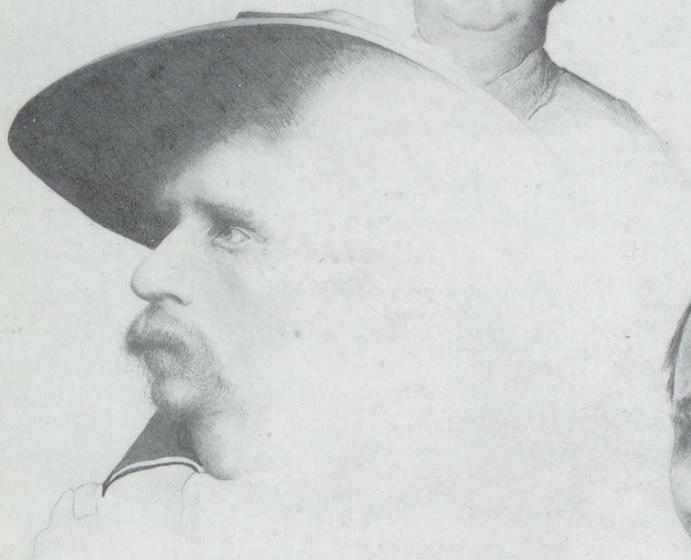
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DEKALB, OCTOBER 1967

I mail a letter
To an unwilling Pfc.
And turn home,
Hating the rain
And what he has.
Four red lights halt
A white sports car
And an old man
Cautious-offers
An untaken ride.

Humane?
I only had a block to walk.

Charles Childs

PROTECTRESS

One kept a cat in her coat,
Stepped in a brook. Near there we met,
Her track unclear across the field;
And certainly, dew can dim the point
Of an utterance. I cursed the girl
In the clearing, my mouth a waterfall
Or a shining sac around her.
She nodded, her hands were dulled
With rain. Probably for all that mud,
And fine and plastered hair,
And chewing sap,
She left by the most worn path,
Slapping drops from every leaf
She crossed; turned back beckoning,
The dry cat leaped from her breast,
Skittered through the splashes,
and went mad.

Ed Manual

WATER-SPIDER

The water-spider glides
the frictionless plane
of no-touching, beneath
wind and above water,
in the space where the
widthless knife first
sliced the void, sending
ripples of form into
new directions.

David Klemm

Joe Bauers

FIFTH GRADE

Four Snapshots of Cully

I

Lunches and hands in hands on the way to school and children singing, too, on the way to school, and Emily among the allegators in the creek on her old man's farm, and that the last farm, the father said, in Haberville, my boy. But what did the old man know, there must be other farms, other streets in Haberville, said Cully to Joe. *She turned and he saw her yellow through the hole in the tire swing.* What's your name? said the voice through the hole in the tire swing, and you're Cully who? said the voice, and of course there are allegators, and right there on her old man's farm, too. Later, at supper, Hebron spoke of the auto insurance he was selling, and Cully dabbled at his plate, thinking *But I can't see the allegators, Emily.*

And he dreamed of her, running near the creek in her yellow.

II

First there will be the plot. Then the alkaselzer and the plum, he said. And it will work like this. The plot will be when I sneak downstairs and steal two of my old man's cigarettes tonight. I'll wear my gym shoes and sneak and no one will hear. And the alkaselzer will be when I get sick. *Why will you get sick?* asked Emily. Because I've never smoked before and people always get sick the first time, said Cully. *And the plum?* asked Emily. The plum will be to eat the taste away so nobody will know, said Cully. And he looked to Emily and said, *You can have one of the cigarettes.*

III

He walked along the lawns toward home, tired of grammar. You're old man's full a bananas, said the tree hut. So's yours, said Joe, and then to Cully—

You're gonna flunk.

Am not.

Yes yar.

Nom not.

Miss Finch don't like you.

Sister Clarissa does.

So?

So she likes me.

But Miss Finch don't.

Miss Finch can go to hell.

There were days in the evenings right there in his bed when he could pick peacocks from branches of little trees and cherries from their stems. His mother would speak of Eternity, clutching her Holy Book, and his brother would wash cars in the neighborhood and cut lawns, too, to make spending money. He would seek out Joe, the best friend, but sometimes even he would get on his nerves—

Two clearies for a ball bearing.

Two clearies and a cat's eyes and its a deal.

I'll think it over.

Chicken.

All right then, two Mantles for a Berra.

Ya, but you got three Mantles anyway.

So?

So you should give me one, if you're really my friend.

Well, that's my business.

He watched the tiny dot of Joe disappear up the road. Joe lived over a rise and every day he would

just disappear. He watched the tiny dot of Joe go away, and then the whole scene converged on him.

First the dog:

Darting between two parked cars and not caring, the dog squeaking, leaping up in fright at the speeding Ford, a coupe and a black one, and the dog, not caring, and caroming off the bumper and rolling off the road, at the sidewalk, circling around Cully and circling around and the caved-in side and the dog foaming and circling and finally, not caring, lying right there at Cully's feet, dying.

And then the car.

The car returning, and he remembered from murder mysteries, *to the scene of the crime*, slowing and stopping, the head from the window (*a girl's*) and it said Give you a lift? or it said Hey, give you a lift? and the dog foaming but still, and not caring, and his head dipping to clear the roof and slipping into the back seat, and the head turning and grinning (*a girl's*) and saying Poochie hurt Honey? or saying Your poochie hurt Honey? and then the sudden realization, *three heads, (they had ducked their heads, he thought)* and the other two heads (boys) laughing and then, glancing over the seat and looking closely, and seeing *These people don't have any clothes on!* (he had assumed bathing suits, he thought) and the girl beginning a conversation, and the other two heads, boys, laughing.

And then the conversation.

You know where we been Honey? the head (*the girl's*) turning from the wheel, and the other two heads (*boys*), laughing and saying Man you should see Alice do her bit, buddy, and laughing and Alice saying, Well, Honey, we did it in the trees and hang-

ing upside down and right under the mulberry bushes, and you know where we been, Honey? we been in City Park, that's where, and the other two heads, completely insane with laughter, and the one boy reaching down the front of Alice and with a sudden motion Alice squeals, and one of the boy heads says, Man Alice, why don't you give the kid a little? and suddenly the car stops and Alice climbing over the seat *with no clothes on!* thought Cully, and Cully saying, I think this is where I get out, or saying, I think this is where I live. And shoving his way out the door, all three heads laughing.

IV

Did you bring them? asked Emily. Well not exactly. I mean not today. I mean my old man stayed up real late so I couldn't. And then he turned toward Emily in her yellow and said, *I think I see an allegator, Emily.* She laughed and they let their hands float in the stream.

All up and down the shore of the creek it lasted all day. They would pitch stones and pick dandelions, and always let their hands float in the stream of the creek. She giggled and it was a better time than before. They splashed at each other and then let their hands float in the stream.

And neither of them was afraid of the allegators.



Clark

today all the
people
gathered to
watch
the death
dance
of a child
as she
shed her
life, and
spurts of
love
for the
conformity
of adulthood.

Peggy Brockman

Found Near the Porch Swing While Whiskey,
the Night, and I Let the Late Show Run
Through Us

Sidewalk puddles float streetlights,
And darker away neighbor company leaves
Dodging histrionics.

A plane chases its lights out of Rockford,
As a poem gags me,
And I throw it up;

"I have outrun a third of my years,
And sit liquored wondering,
Can I really race the rest?"

Charles Childs

ANATOMY OF A POEM

I am
the poem.

I have rhythm
beyond drum-beats.

Imagery: the
smoothness of bald tires
on dry, black asphalt.

Devoid of feeling,
dissect me.

Sliced into slashes,
curves of iambs;
Will I only
then satisfy
you?

Or symbolism;
golden noise that
fades quickly,
loud only at first.

Like a frog swimming
beneath the surface,
beauty strokes
quietly
through subtle blades.

But clamped upon,
torn from the water,
legs and arms pinned
back to wax,
belly-opened to
gray entrails:

No poem,
only flesh.

Robert Gundelach

RAUL

"Life," the letter related, "sometimes doesn't amount to more than a piss-hole in a snow-bank." Raul crumpled the paper, squeezing the letter smaller and smaller into a ball, rolling it until the ball was soggy with sweat, then tossed it across the room. Bouncing off two corner walls, it missed, and rolled stopping on a crack in the floor. "Fu**," he muttered, tracing with his eyes the cracks in the thick, chipped layers of paint on his wall, the wall next to his bed. He rolled off the gray sheets, implanting his feet on the floor, on the front page of *The New York Times*. Twenty-four, and living by borrowing from his ole man, he thought. His ole man was always T-shirted and mowing the lawn or leaning over the back fence on Saturday afternoons, with a beer can in hand. And there were all the other men in T-shirts, and all the other people with houses and two cars and lawns that were mowed every Saturday afternoon; except in the winter, when all the men came over and watched the football games or basketball games, and drank beer, and talked about the game, or the car they wanted to buy next year, as soon as spring came. But Raul was in New York, lower Manhattan, Delancey Street and thirty bucks a month.

Other pages covered the floor, randomly loose, torn, and folded. Pictures and articles of last week's disasters. Raul wondered if he would ever be in the newspaper, whether he would ever be front-paged; but then decided that he lacked even the ambition to be violent.

Raul was in his underwear. He got on his hands and knees, and began reaching under the bed, looking for his socks. Groping like a blind man, stretch-

ing under the bed, he began looking for his black socks among the dust and old newspapers. But they weren't there. "Maybe," he thought, "I never had any socks." But then he remembered that, long ago, he had had socks. He remembered walking around in his socks when he was four years old, walking the suburban sidewalk in his socks until he wore holes in them, and the toes became loose and floppy. Then his mother would slap him, and force Raul to put his shoes on. She would tie the shoes in knots, so that even Raul, no matter how hard he tried, could not pull them off. But then his father would cut the laces before bedtime, saying that wearing shoes in bed would ruin the sheets. Raul remembered the socks, too. They always had ugly red stripes encircling his ankles. The socks had no elastic tops, and seemed to crawl into his flat-bottomed shoes as he walked. No matter how hard he yanked and tugged his socks, they always disappeared into the back of his shoes. Lost forever, until his father had cut the laces.

Raul was under the bed now, groping among the papers, inhaling the dust. He stood up. "Hell," he thought, "no socks." He went suddenly dizzy to the sink, coughed dust, and vomited wine and deluxe pizza into the sink. The sink was across from his bed, hanging on the wall solidly enough to support Raul, who was now leaning on it, choking. Raul turned the faucet, swirling purple pieces of half-digested food into the drain. He stopped choking, turned the water off, wiped off his mouth, and got dressed. The drain was clogged. Raul walked out, locking the door. "No socks," he thought, hoping his feet wouldn't be rubbed raw by his gym shoes.

Three flights of stairs. Five turns, forty-two steps. And every floor a different smell, but the smell was

always pungent, always the same for that floor. He had always counted the steps as he climbed and descended, and always, on every floor, inhaled deeply. Someday, he thought, I will count the bars in the railing. Someday, he thought, I will count the white squares in the hallway floor, the tiny porcelain squares separated by thick, black lines. As he went slowly down the stairs, clutching the rail and turning at the flights of stairs, he wondered whether he should count the squares covered by ancient chewing gum.

Raul knew that the Wright brothers had invented gum. He had once read about how the Wright brothers would put sugar and flavoring in tar, and chew it. Everyone chewed tar, the book had said, but the Wright brothers were smart, and put sugar in the tar. He wondered whether the sweet tar had rotted their teeth, and whether their cavities had bothered them when they had flown; but Raul couldn't decide, for he was now squinting at the sun on the sidewalk, and trying to remember where he should go. He thought of getting something to eat that would clean up his glass stomach, or coat it, or stop any dripping little men.

He walked into a bar. It was dark, and Raul tripped over a stool, and fell on the grimy floor. He stood up, and could only find the doorway. He walked out on the street. Traffic was heavy on the sidewalk. Old mustached women were fatly shuffling their feet along. Their shoes were flattened from the pressure of carrying years of fat. They were all dragging two-wheeled shopping carts behind them, with one hand. The other hand hung loosely from a massive arm, an arm larger than Raul had ever seen; even in the weightlifter magazines Raul had once admired; gazing for hours at greasy men with knobby bodies and

large jaws, Raul hadn't seen arms as large as the women had. The women all seemed to have Kellogg's corn flakes balanced on top of the brown paper bags in the carts. Underneath, Raul knew, was a cheap bottle of wine, or a special bottle of whiskey to make life tolerable. The liquor was hidden as though it never existed. Raul felt sorry for the old fat women in faded dresses who existed because of wine.

Walking into an open front restaurant, he perched on a stool, spun once around, and pressed his gum under the counter. It was called a restaurant only because people bought and ate food there; otherwise it was more of a neighborhood feeding center, a place to sit down. A huge glass door was opened in summer, but during the winter a smaller door let people in, keeping the cold out. But now July meant the huge glass door was open, and the flies and people crowded the counter during their lunch hours. At eleven a.m., though, Raul was alone. Only the Puerto Rican who manned the counter, Raul, an old man asleep with his head on the table in a corner booth, and the flies were there.

Raul spoke. "Hamburger, cupa coffee."

"Evry thing?"

"No. Forget the bun."

The Puerto Rican's brows came together, for he had only been working a week, and wasn't sure how to serve a hamburger without a bun, or how much to charge Raul. He mechanically threw a frozen hamburger patty on the grill, and it burst sizzling. He tossed a fork in front of Raul, who was making circles with his finger in water on the counter, and sympathizing with the slaughtered steer. Raul slid off the stool, and awkwardly walked into the sun. Bend-

ing over, he began vomiting on the curb, but nothing came except a wrenching in his throat, and flashes of pain across his stomach. He stood up straight, making less of a shadow on the sidewalk. The sun was at noon, and the old ladies were beginning to get huge circles under their massive arms, and walked by Raul, pretending to not notice Raul or even have cheap wine under their corn-flakes.

He turned and walked back into the restaurant. Flies were in the water on the counter. The old man in the corner was awake, sitting up and eating a hamburger with a fork, cutting the patty into tri-angled pieces and dipping them in a pool of ketchup on his plate. There was no one behind the counter. Raul walked out, back through the huge entrance, back to his apartment.

He counted the stairs as he climbed to the fourth floor. Unlocking the door, he felt the thick heat, the smell from morning. He walked across the newspapers and raised a window. In the alley children were fighting, yelling in Spanish. He walked to the sink. It was covered with bits of dried pizza. He picked up the ball of paper, forcing it uncrumpled. He read the last line, "Life, sometimes, doesn't amount to more than a piss-hole in a snow-bank." Raul crumpled the letter in a ball, walked to the window, and tossed it to the alley. The letter bounced twice, but the children didn't see it. It was a hot July day. No snow, he thought.

Robert Gundelach



MOMENTS

I

The clouded sky was like a wrinkled cloth tonight—
Unfolded on the table . . .
And the gliding hand of night,
Like a Negro waiter,
Smooths it for the morning.

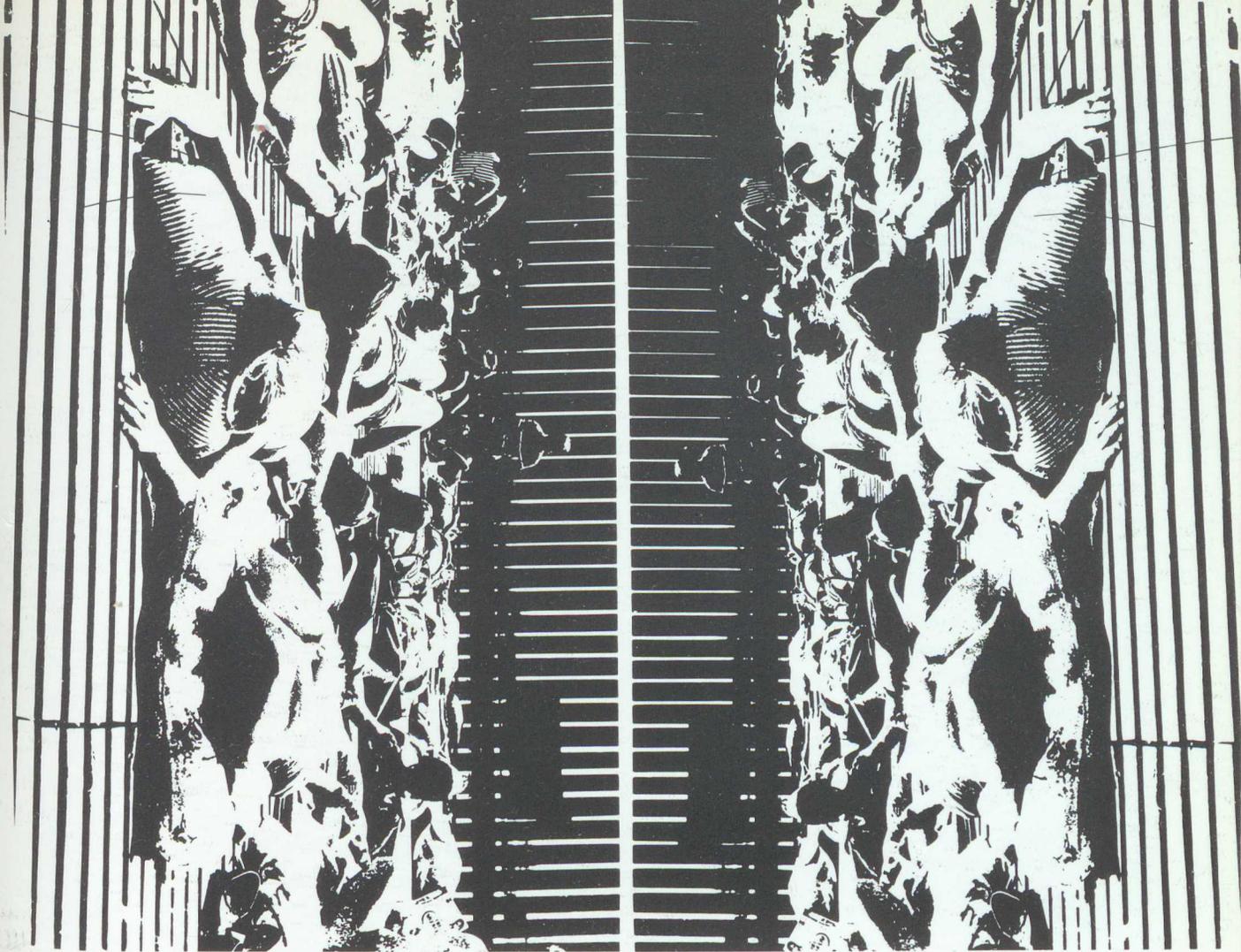
II

Cherry sun—
Dropping to earth
Splashing the sky with deep red
And staining the heavens
With the glow of your warmth.
Ghost flames leaping at the sky
Far off on the horizon
Melting together the earth and heavens.

III

The moon made a spider last night—
The spindly fingers of a barren tree
Cast upon the snow—
Black
Creeping across the silvery white.
And its web—
The tiny bootprints
Children had danced in the snow this afternoon.

Gary Holland



CONVERSATION TOWARD LEANING

Tunes for two generations

The Hand and the wrist

In the quick of the room.

The hand on the hair on the matted chest.

"I'll have a glass of beer, my dear."

No longer do men in tottered airplanes

Lean from open cockpits

Dead, or about to die.

We hear of it from somewhere else.

The droning voice from old radios

Is gone now.

We specialize to relax,

While the ships strewn along Hawaiian shores

That linger in the memories of our uncles

Are only artifacts

From some vague time before.

The stiff and skinny mamas,

Stoney ladies in Sears catalogues,

Climbed in my pajamas

Before I was twelve or knew better.

My mother brought me black-jack gum

While riding on the "L" to Granny's,

And there were Negro women

With hefty busts

And wet-circled underarms.

For years he lost

Himself in the loose

Girls of Rantoole,

My father who seemed

Always shunning some

Average discomfort.

We sit across a table

And the ballgame trails from

The radio on the porch.

I know my history.

Once in nineteen forty-four

He had a place in his groin for me.

Lately in urgent sleep I try

But can seldom remember him

As a young man.

Fingers to the eyes rubbing the light

From a lamp flicked on.

A cigarette dangled in the sleepy afternoon.

Abrasive, brutal:

A woman in the room.

Cozy in the barnyards or parks

Across America, ladies yawning

Push baby strollers

Through villages that breathe

Like sleepy girls on apple-picking mornings.

None have to rehearse.

It is a strange complacency, when people think

They have fallen in love.

In the old days, my father said,

People believed in Herbert Hoover.

They believed and believed.

They fell in love.

It was a shame, he said,

They had no one else

With whom to fall in love.

First cousins who French kiss—

Oh to be scolded like that again,

When Auntie caught us in the back seat.

Later, neighboring it with a neighbor's wife:

If you hear the door, Sweetie,

Don't hold your breath.

*Fleeing away to take relief, and giggling,
I carve, while splashing on the cold bark:
Here's for a cleaner, quicker death.*

*Quitting high school,
(Austin High, Chicago, 1932)*

*My father followed course
With a prodigy
Or a horse;
It's a buck, it's a buck.*

*The man to the news vendor elicits
A certain grin, and, thinking,
I have paid him off again.
A master of confidence,
A certain set of the chin, and,
Thinking, I have paid him off again.*

*The fingers slip down.
"Should I turn my head,
It's only Ma?"*

*A woman in the sudden room.
The quickness and rubbing fingers
Rubbing the light from a lamp flicked on.
And the woman,
Brutal and abrasive.*

*The evening barks out
And a sob echoes back.
There is a peculiar
Dullness in the air.
We have nothing left but ambivalence,
No longer is fear the worst
Of all our fears.
We sit, drink and contemplate
Our fingers up each other's thighs,
Dance to the pathetic voice and sing along
With the one and only Billy Shears.*

*She, the taut girl in the bar,
Resents my disrespect for her ritual.
You are my childless mother, I say.
Let's share a bed for old time's sake.*

*Offended, she turns away,
Like the wind that rattles at my window,
But refuses to break through.*

*When my mother died
He found another person
To live with.
And that was that.*

*How come, Pa, you can't remember
The tousled hair of picnics
And grass clippings piled high,
Your short-winded breaths and mine
Leaning into a pile
We pitched into a dying fire.
Your desk was head-high then,
Often I'd crouch beneath and pretend
Not to be there. Without a word
We both understood.*

*Now there are only
The Bowling Alleys of Tuesday nights
And Camel cigarettes that stained
His hands for years.
There are no novels or lovers left.
When he's restless now
He takes a nap.*

*I, foolish enough,
Seek no perfection or place,
But only whistle down early-morning avenues,
And remain almost always
On the make.
Meanwhile he heaves in afternoon sleep,*

Waiting it out.

Across town and comfortable I wait for
Nothing; turn only toward
Heaven, a house in some vague woods,
And hum a tune for for the tune's sake.

And that, I say, will be that.

The band and the wrist

In the quick of the room.

The band on the hair on the matted chest.

"I'll have a glass of beer, my dear."

Joe Bauers



Silent city streets,
where we met the morning
and where we left each other
watching the sun arise
and stretch its arms wide
hugging the cold concrete lines
of Michigan Avenue and roundabout
then loop and bind sky and scrapers
while within the giant's entrails
Jonahs slept—
we first creeping out, sole overseers
of still walls and walks
enwrap in the sun's love knot
and we
traveling into the afternoon
far from silent city streets

Olivia Diamond

SOMEONE OFTEN ONLY SEEN (for L.H.)

If we talk, don't motion away
your lamentable growth in me:
you cannot.

Nor the need to hold off your smile
at night, impossible, I hold
it the while.

Friend, this cannot be as it ought:
your briefness is age—wiser, bold
in this town.

Ed Manual



"Entreat me not. . . ."

—Book of Ruth—I, xvi-xviii

Dedicated to the one who left
And all the ones who leave ones
In places where two had been.

I.

We are gathered here today . . .
An electromagnetic crane lift
Looming over a rusty heap
Of barely breathing steel;
Dormant, dangling, sound asleep,
The crane's hook in the air.

Smashing, clanging, jangling,
A cussin' cabbie sounds out a Caddy;
A tailgate jumps a two-ton truck
When screaming, stubborn brakes
Lock rubber and blacktop stuck;
Sheet metal spirals to freedom
In flexic defiance to cut and
Unravelling coils while the stunned
By-standing cop car glares—
The snooty stoplight, that just
Won't care, stays uninvolved
And lives its own life
And goes on the same
And turns its eye away
And pretends nothing happened
And refuses to see
Beyond its own glasses.
Red-yellow-green
Red Yellow
Green . . . (ad infinitum, ad nauseam) . . .

II.

We gather here to witness,
Do you human receive this human
Forsaking none yet cherishing one?
To honor, love, and respect
In song, tear, and sickness?
And do you human receive this human. . . .

With the flip of the red handled switch
Ejaculates a rousing crane and
Iron cable struggles and slides
On the eyes of an intricate pulley.
A fifty-six Chevy kicks in
The butt of a Rambler roaring
With belligerent tones; then a
Work-worn Nash, now semi-retired,
Never pulls out of the coma
When piled up by a Plymouth
We all know died too young.

III.

Crankety-rub, clankety-rub!
The wheels spin round
With a sputtering sound
And a chain clanks down,
The crane smashes on and
The hook hits ground.

Now drink of the cup you humans . . .

Tense metal muscles strain
Hauling the hook to the
Top of the crane and the
Hook leaps up with a soul
In its teeth in the person
Of a battered barrel,
Hanging by its twisted rim.
Let no blow put asunder—

Though a Harley mangle a stop sign
After skidding 'cross some gravel.

IV.

The calendar corrodes
A barrel and a hook
Beneath some stuff like
Disjoint fenders and such.

I now pronounce you . . .

Now someone throw rice,
And someone tell me why
Rust shines brighter
Than red-yellow-green,
But stoplights never die.

Marilyn Blüztstein

RAINY DAY

A pressing wind slapping
A handful of despondent
drops on
A mood in complement.
A moment not staid
. . . I remember . . .
How did I decide
To enjoy
(to the fullest)
An unplanned completeness?
Next time
I will remember.

Carol Mulligan

DERRICK

This introspection is tedious
The intensity of the drill
Hits a rockbed of impenetrability.
The well yields several barrels
Of fuel—the petrol that propels me
Pell mell into my every paradox.
Only organic—humus and compost;
Interacting, dissolving into an ooze
Through ages and deeds
Back into the last uterine heartbeat
When first this metamorphosis
And decomposition began.
Explanation ends here for me
And what remains is to be.

Olivia Diamond

Mondays, Wednesdays, And Junes In The Park

Old men sit cozy by the past
On park benches,
And collate pensions
And prohibition days.
Their stories, aged across checker boards,
And flavored with chewing tobacco,
Take the place of now,
And their shadows,
Forgotten in the grass,
Reflect tendered proof of life.
They wait, married to death,
Distracting each other from the consummation.

Charles Childs



AND AGE COMES

Wrinkles:
cracked
like dry
mud flats.

The summer heat
brings tadpoles,
screaming with
glimmering tails,
sucking them
voiceless
into the last,
crowded pool
of July.

Grandma.
She hovers mornings,
buzzard-like
over coffee,
gazing down columns
she picks through names.

Memories flash,
in her eyes
friends cry.

Robert Gundelach

ANOTHER DAY IN THE WEST

i see the east and her
o that magnificent line that surrounds me
taking shape in a slanted shadow going home,
o the east somewhere waiting for the rooster
and she gets a crack of dawn.

Dale Royalty

LEX GRAVITATIS

Avis ut se levat
A terra calida
Nonne flamma volat
A mergulo in aer?
Cor tum ne sit grave
Propter legem rotae.

Nam avis, flamma, cor
Die terram ad omne
Casurum est certe licet
Pluman, pulvem, poema
Variis a novis
Praetereundum esse.

Et verba dicunt;
(And the words mean)

THE LAW OF GRAVITY

Just as the bird rises
From the warm earth,
Does not the flame fly
From the wick into the air?
May the heart not be weighted
By the law of the wheel.

For bird, flame, and heart
Must each one fall one day,
And surely it is right that each
As feather, dust, or poem
Will be passed over—
Passed over by the new.

Marilyn Blitzstein

PLAIN JANE

They'll never know quite why. They'll all read the obit and go on wondering how society failed. Brains, grace, and—well let us say—a pleasing face.

It was dark out, misty, foggy; any old melancholy adjective will do. She walked out in front of a car. Horn, brakes, a skid. Then sirens. Students are too pressured they'll say. They gave her everything, they say, Jane's parents, that is. No, not the material things. Jane's parents were progressive; they gave her understanding. And they still don't know quite how they failed. (No kidding, they really tried. You couldn't ask for more.)

"Up on the roof, up on the roof." Always floating, rising, expanding to bounce out loaded ashtrays and emptied dixie cups, fall off defaced tables, and roll across the soggy floor. There was music everywhere, that described Jane's place. It was not a place. It was an aggregate of sounds, indeed entirely sounds because there was no light. Occasional slurs of glowing cigarettes, some feeble French-Quarterlike lanterns on the walls, some transitory butanes and matches but there was no real light in that no-place place, a myriad of sounds.

The glory that was Greece and—need I quote—the grandeur that was Rome, the glory that was Hamlet and the grandeur that was Eliot lived in that place, that no-place. And the glory and grandeur that was a polished floor or fresh baked sweet rolls lived there too. Anything that touches man touched Jane.

With the universal matters and truths taken for granted as truthfully so or regrettably so, we discussed the mundane. She considered my little pro-

posal, floated up to my face, and kissed me. Then she drifted away.

Jane had just stepped from out of her no-place when the car was coming. It was a night that could almost have had rain.

They used to call Jane an odd one. Her eyes would be fixed on you but you'd know she'd not really listened. Then she'd be staring at everything all over the room, you'd be wondering why you ever bothered to take her out, and then she would answer you. She could understand neither your passions nor your mortalities nor your gods, but when you saw a tear fall down, you knew that she had tried.

Jane's place was no place, the one I just described. The night she died, she simply hadn't seen that car.

TRAGEDY AT SHEDD AQUARIUM

Well known in advance to the Aquarium Director, a Humboldt penguin laid a large egg last Tuesday. Reports read that Mother Melissa and father Tiny (so dubbed at the Harvard School of Animal Husbandry) were doing well, the egg said to be well-proportioned considering its unnatural habitat.

For twenty days the celebrated couple dutifully sat behind glass for brats on field trips and daily observations of the proud Director; until late that evening with nobody to see, Melissa stepped on her egg.

Heartsick at the sight, the Director went without lunch in memory of the unfortunate baby: "He never had a chance."

Tiny was unavailable for comment.

David Klemm

Doris and Archie, Flicking and Hiding
In The Ashtray Of My Mind: Four Dreams

I. *Doris In The Tavern, Five Kids At Home*

She sat drunk and 35 at 2 A.M.,
I was 21.
Two unobserved six packs
Led us to the red house.
She said, "Be patient,"
And stupored-off our clothes
(Shimmin' and jimmin' Zeke calls it,
And Segurndy girls know what he means.)
Naked, uncovered and near late
For Archie's funeral,
The sun woke me laughing in the window.

II. *The Empty Parlor*

Relatives chatted gum in elsewhere
And Archie gazed,
As if in his fishing pickup,
Groping in his whiskey hole.
I sat alone,
My gum under the worn chair.
Archie, I think, found Doris
With his whiskey.

III. *Archie, Unnoticed At His Funeral*

An incurious church
Held uneasy elders,
Remiss mourners,
And a realestate cleric
Determined to peddle heaven,
But I could not buy.
I felt like a nigger, and heaven
Doesn't have open housing.

IV. *The Cemetery, Where Archie Ran Away*
We followed Archie

Up the too-green hill,
And while others forgot him
In cement and flowers,
I yearned for the dead birch
Where Doris and Archie
Drank and read my uncompleted poems.

Charles Childs

Mike Jennings

'RAPPING'

Across a table in the Hiawatha Diner sat a wrinkled Nun on the aisle and her suited traveling companion at the window. Window led off each volley of the conversation; the advantages and disadvantages of growing your own garden, the school holidays in Wisconsin versus Minnesota; then the Nun returned with maxims designed especially to cast no shadows of thought into the air. Nodding aggressively, the school teacher at the window then slammed, "I agree, I agree!" to end the round.

The wheels beat regularly as the coach swayed and the teacher began swallowing her coffee. They swung into a comparison and contrast of coffee and tea, highlighted by the Nun's demure denial of ever having touched the stuff and window's guileless acknowledgement of the habits.

As the rain-green trees passed the window the pair continued. The teacher surrounded the Nun with common worldliness. The latter stopped returning and listened intently to, "Now it's cheaper to fly, but I like the train. . . ." Smoking a cigarette held near the crotch of her fingers, the teacher became more confident and dogmatic, exclaiming as she gestured with her knife. The Nun became more eager for the forbidden world. The teacher paid the bill and escorted the Nun out of the diner.





Sandra Hupp
INTAGLIO

The crowd from the boat was thinner today. The season was declining, the tourists a kind of calendar. They came in smelly, chattering, colorful tides during the yellow summer, clutching purses and guidebooks, carrying suitcases and rucksacks and souvenirs, lustre in their eyes, disappointment and delight not yet sorted. They spilled out twice a day onto the white-washed stones, met by tight-eyed blackrobed women renting tiny beds in their cool, cubistic houses; met by barefoot boys and summer beatniks, and French girls in their widelegged trousers and bare midriffs. They stayed a day or two or three, the tanned tourists, to swim the green cold sea, to buy fishermen's sweaters and shoulder bags, and to complain. They complained of the food, of the olive oil, of the resin-tasting wine. They came, and left, the island more colorful, more picturesque, more unique in the distance. As the summer was hurled about by August winds, they came in fewer numbers, swam less, drank more; by now summer was gone for most of them. So the crowd became a trickle; the island began to draw skirts of peace around its thighs; the resident foreigners came out of their houses again, to stroll the winding white streets, and greet one another with expressions of relief at the summer's demise.

There were not many today, but some had come, unrestricted by summer's end, prolonging a satisfactory trip, or just beginning, reaping off-season savings in money and frustration. They fluttered like weary birds to the cafe tables. It was still hot, but a pale breeze skittered across the sea to the brown mountains.

Rachel laid down the worn paper back book someone had lent her; her French was poor, and she could

read the book, which was in that language, and printed in small type besides, only because she had liked it well enough—in English—to read it twice, years before. But it had been months since she had gone to Athens for books and cosmetics, and all that the local shopkeepers had on hand were books like *The Greek Way* and *Bull from the Sea*, and one could digest only so much Renault mythology, so she was glad when someone found, bought, borrowed, stole or conjured something new to read. A few months back she had read *Peyton Place*, and after her years of snobbery (her husband would have died to see it in his house), she had been stunned to find that she enjoyed it, even *cared* about it. Students were always leaving books on the buses and beaches and cafe tables. In the past year she had read *The Fountainhead*, *The Plague*, *Sons and Lovers*, among others. She'd also read old magazines, guidebooks, and exchange tables. She was a compulsive reader—once she had had a minor accident (a few bruises and a crunched fender) because she had been reading a Burma-shave punchline and had pulled into the outside lane without looking back. She'd known by heart all the billboards on the drive to her mother's. She read the back of cereal boxes, and labels on cans, and unsolicited mail. Here, she'd read and re-read old letters, even though they were sad and cruel and upsetting, until they no longer came; then she'd begun a diary, but she didn't like the task of writing. After a dozen entries or so, a defeating pattern was formed; she would decide to read it from the beginning to date before adding anything, and by the time she got to the fresh unfilled pages, she would have decided to wait until later. She never got beyond the fifteenth entry, made months before.

She liked watching people, though. She didn't like

conversation very much, and discouraged it with curt answers to anyone who tried to talk with her, but she did like seeing and hearing people about her. It wasn't fair, really, was it, what her husband—her *ex-husband* (a tiny kernel of bitterness lay in her still)—had written, that she was silly and selfish to cut herself off from everyone like a fanatic old hermit? Why didn't she come back and act like a normal woman her age, and not a goddamned *bohemian*, anyway, and he was tired of her mother pestering him, and everyone silently accusing him of driving her away. What was *wrong* with her, for chrissake, didn't *everyone* get divorces these days, and still act civil, and not go off the goddamned deep end? She was twenty-eight years old, not a dumb *kid*, and she ought to get a job or do something *worthwhile*, it was a lousy reflection on *him*. But then he had not written in a very long time, nor had anyone, nor had she, and what was there to go home to?

At first she had merely postponed it, thinking to have a long vacation, with time to make an appraisal of herself, her defunct marriage, her future—everything that angry, hurt, confused people think about when they want to figure out the why and how of personal failure. She hadn't been running away from anything; she'd meant to go home in a month or so, but she liked it here, really liked it, and it was easy to stay. She'd made a few friends, and had a house, and a girl to do her laundry and cleaning, little that there was. This was all very familiar—the fishing boats off San Christoforu beach, the ship from Athens disgorging its stomach of tourists, the bitter thick coffee, even the French novel. The apartment in Chicago, with its stark modern furniture, its ugly paintings, that monument to her husband's tastes—that was foreign. This was home.

An American with a heavy red moustache joined his friends near her. He had gone to Athens to draw more money; he was going to stay until it ran out. He'd told Rachel about himself weeks before, though she had not asked. He was a lawyer from Mill Valley, across the bay from San Francisco, but that was so *patterned*, so *empty*, and even when he had lived in Sausalito, on a houseboat, it had seemed all wrong. He was with an English girl whom he had met in Spain, and they shared a house with another American, who seemed too young to have done anything yet. The younger man played a fair guitar and was learning Greek; his mother sent him money, not much, but he seemed to have enough for occasional trips—Rachel suspected he went to another island or to Turkey to pick up hashish—and there was always a girl with him, her eyes eager and apprehensive. She'd never liked boys like that when she was younger; she'd only gone out with young men who were marriageable, and she had been a virgin that night her husband fell upon her. Perhaps, she thought, she would have been better prepared if she hadn't been so rotten proper, perhaps she'd have known what to do when she was divorced. She would have liked to have known a boy like that—small and pretty, with brown arms and thick curly hair, who walked barefoot and was full of confidence. But she'd known only two men in her life—her husband, and a man in Sicily, the second month after her divorce. She'd gotten drunk with a Lever Brothers salesman from Hot Springs, and woke up the next morning in his hotel with little recollection of the night before, except for nauseous loathing of her lover, who, she vaguely remembered, had struck her across the buttocks with a curtain cord until she wept, and then made love to her as she lay on her stomach in an

ignominious stupor, aware only of her own whimpering, like a whining cur.

Even as the memory was disgusting, full of shame and distorted ugliness, she was amused—wryly, ironically, but sincerely amused. She had to put down her cup for the shaking in her hand. She had been like a teenager sneaking a forbidden drink that night in Sicily, waiting for euphoria to slide over her, and it had been such a failure.

The tarpaulin over her head rose gently in the swell of wind, and a slash of sharp sunlight bit into her eyes, checking the tremor that was approaching laughter in her body. The sunlight was hot on her naked arms, but as it struck her eyes, it seemed so brilliant as to be cold, and she raised both hands to protect her face and eyes from the brightness. It was as if the sun had seared through her face, into her brain; her essence was being consumed by cold fire, and the pain, sharp, incredibly intense, unlike her familiar migraines, was so terrible she felt she might scream. She moved her hands to stifle the low moan that escaped, taut with her anguish.

The Mill Valley lawyer saw it first, but his legs were up in another chair, with towels and books over them, so before he could shift position, the younger man was beside her, concern mingled with curiosity, and both somehow inappropriate in his unlined face.

"Really, I'm okay, it was nothing, please."

By the time he was there, useless, peering into her face, his questions still unvoiced, she was alright, though stunned.

"Say, listen, I could get an aspirin or something, can't I do something; you looked out of it there for a minute."

"No, no, it was just the light, I didn't mean to be so dramatic."

He was standing so close that when she tried to stand he blocked her way.

"Please," she muttered, and put her hands flat against his chest. He didn't move, and her hands seemed to be on fire; the pain had left a brilliance in her eyes, and as she raised her head to look at his face, she saw the surprise there, and was suddenly aware of her hunger and fright.

He moved aside, staring at her. She dropped her book, and had to stoop for it; she fumbled for drachma, and pulled on one loose sandal.

She backed away clumsily, striking an empty chair with the small of her back. Then she turned, wanting to run, instead walking deliberately past the lake of cafe tables, sticky and dark under the rolling canvases. She felt that everyone was looking at her, that she had done something shocking; her ears were buzzing so loudly she couldn't hear the polyglot chatter, nor the shouting from the boats, nor the sound of her sandals on the stones, though she knew that all those sounds were there.

It was only thirty yards to the square, but when she reached it she was exhausted. She sat awkwardly on a low stone, leaning against the wall. Four girls, young, silly, vain, pretty, were waiting in a cluster for *souvlaka*. The stand was no more than a closet in the stucco wall. A dark Greek woman was turning the little spits of crackling lamb, then putting the pieces in a thick doughy pancake brown from the grill, and adding diced parsley and onion and tomatoes and peppers, covering it all with a white cucumber paste.

The smoke, the smell and sound of the cooking, the chatter of the girls diverted Rachel. When she returned again to her disturbed thoughts she could not name them. She wondered about the headache; it

had come like that before, once or twice, in the past months, but it did not last—perhaps it was too much sun. She forgot her confused feelings about the boy; she had been around him now and then, she did not know why she had reacted like a school girl; it must have been the headache. He was so young, and sometimes rather fresh. He had a way of saying whatever he thought. Perhaps she feared what he thought of her. But that was silly. In North Shore society, working Wednesday afternoons at Children's Memorial, and Saturdays at Hull House, giving dinner parties for her husband's brilliant friends, fighting the madness of the Loop to search for "perfect little dresses,"—all that had been for what other people thought. Ultimately, of course, it had been for her husband, and in the end he had told her she was dulled like a worn machine, that she did not think for herself, and embarrassed him in front of his terribly bright friends. Then—oh then it had mattered what someone might have said to her. She had been painfully sensitive to everyone's criticism, and might burst into tears when the janitor scolded her for breaking the garbage disposal. But she did not have to be like that anymore; she was free. There was talk, even on a Greek island, but it could not hurt her. It did not matter what anyone thought of her. Indeed, she thought sadly, they might agree with her husband that she was merely dull. At least she was embarrassing no one, and she did not care what the young man might say to her. One day—she saw it like a peak on the horizon—one day, she might even be the one to say something terrible, or to do something shocking. It was a distant peak; she would not have known what to do.

A violent rattling and sputtering roared around the corner as the ancient island bus lumbered into the

square. About a dozen people clambered out of the bus, relief on their faces clearly as if they had said "thank God, I didn't think we could make it!" The bus was green, and its windows did not work. It had been built to hold thirty passengers; at the height of the season it held half as many again. After many hot jolting trips, Rachel had written in her diary that the best test of character was a seat on the bus—invariably the worst of one revealed itself. There was much shoving for seats, sharp words and glares, an occasional obscenity. The bus never lost its odor of stale cigarette smoke, perspiration and suntan oil. The thin dirty leather of the seats was worn or torn in places, and the bars in the seatbacks hideously uncomfortable. While in motion over the winding narrow rutted roads, the body was bounced and jolted within the narrow confines of proximate passengers, while the driver laughed and sang mournful Greek songs about the sea, and mother, and lost friends, and only sometimes about love. Another Greek, who played the guitar and taught folk dances to the tourists in a tiny night club, often rode the bus, standing by the door, facing the passengers. Like an aging Pan, he would lift his eyebrows and play the recorder—shrill, merry tunes which amused him and the driver immensely.

Rachel rose and walked toward the bus. The driver was eating a ripe fig, and the juice from the pulpy fruit dripped down his mouth. She sat by a window in the rear, closing her eyes in lethargic drowsiness, half-hearing the others climbing into the bus, the door slamming, the shouting of someone wanting in, the sputter and roar as the bus began its task.

The familiar ride to the beach, only six kilometers, took almost twenty minutes. It was somehow soothing for its familiarity. The road climbed the barren

hills circuitously, till the village lay below them like a cubistic painting. In the haze one could see the brown extremities of other islands; from Pireus, sailing through the islands, one was never out of sight of land until the final open sea between the Cyclades and Crete.

The earth was dry and rocky. The sides of the mountains were latticed with walls made from stones taken out of the cruel Greek soil. This time of year there was nothing but sun in the earth; only here and there could one see narrow melons miraculously resisting the heat and drought. It was difficult to believe the arid earth ever produced anything, but in the early spring the mountains had been green and alive.

The bus passed large stone circles where corn was threshed. At one turn a skinny Greek was high on the skeleton of a windmill, attaching a yellowed sail. A donkey-mounted peasant stopped below the windmill and shouted to the other, his hands cutting the brilliant light that seemed to suspend him and his beast between sky and earth. Beyond him the sun caught the dull red roof of one of the tiny fishermen's chapels, and as they turned out of sight, the peasant seemed to be floating in the red of the roof. This damned Greek light, Rachel thought. It plays mad tricks with the eyes. The erratic vehicle heaved itself over the crest of a hill, blaring its horn at a stray goat, and the beach came into sight. Someone in the bus gasped. Rachel leaned against the unopened window, and looked in renewed wonder at the long white curve of sand lying against the huge expanse of water, the crystal sea licking the beach in slow erotic waves.

She took off her shoes and tramped down the wet sand which bordered the waves. With each step, her

feet were sucked into the sand, making a popping sound. She walked the length of the arc, then tossed her shoulder bag and towel toward the rocks, and dove into the water.

She was not a swimmer. She had never liked Lake Michigan, it was too cold, and she came out of it feeling slightly dirty, as if she had cut through a layer of scum. Her husband had laughed at her; he was an expert swimmer and sailor, and boasted that Lake Michigan was the most beautiful of all the Great Lakes. The Aegean Sea had come as a surprise so great as to be serendipitous. In this water, she was miraculously buoyant. She could swim far from shore, as if toward the horizon, and when she tired, she could lie on it without effort or fear, or tread water slowly, while she saw through the water's remarkable clarity the rocks and fish below.

She spread her towel on the rocks, and lay back.

"You are always on the rocks, away from the others?"

"I don't like lying on the sand."

"It's a little dirty here, and the young people run about so carelessly."

She had not turned to see the man speaking. He was German, of course. That she knew. He spoke excellent English, almost accentless, but his very meticulousness of enunciation betrayed his nationality; only the Germans spoke the language with that precision. She knew, too, that he would be blonde, and marvelously tan, and that his chest would be smooth.

His shadow fell across her face.

"Look, I was just about to cross the rocks. There is a little place to get something to eat, and beaches much lovelier than this one. Will you come?"

Sometimes, when Rachel looked at a man, her body seemed to reach for him; she would feel nervous,

perhaps a little frightened. This man, the German, struck her coldly; he might have been a photograph. He stood so close she could see the pale tufts of reddish hair on his chest, but all she could think was that he looked like an aircraft designer in a German movie she had seen in London.

She stood easily, gathering her belongings without answering. He began to climb the rocks, less with agility than with the same practiced, confident precision that marked his speech. She followed, scratching her arms several times, concentrating on each progression. In a few moments they stood above the beach. Beyond lay a path over the rocks and hard earth. They followed the path, climbing over loose walls and passing a fisherman's chapel. It had not looked far from the rocks to the next beach, but it took a wearisome ten minutes to reach the white box building where tables were set up under a makeshift awning. She sat down gratefully in a chair. The German went inside. She could hear him speaking loudly, his demands a conglomerate of English, French and Greek.

"We'll have something to eat soon—I'm not certain what."

He poured two glasses of cold *retsina*, and drank his down.

Rachel sipped a little. The taste lingered on her palate, and seemed to grow stronger. Before her distaste for the drink overwhelmed her long-practiced manners (which dictated that she consume whatever she was offered, despite her own preferences), she drank it all quickly. She had not known she was tense till then, when the wine seemed to flood her head, and she felt wonderfully relaxed.

The German poured them another glass. He pointed toward the sea, across a rock field where a

skinny cow was chewing placidly.

"Over there the nudists bathe. You have not been there."

Rachel felt an incredible, young blush on her neck. She nodded.

"It is a lovely beach. It has the nicest reefs. I wish I had my snorkeling equipment with me; you must see it better some time. I go there often, to explore the reefs, but if you would rather, there is another beach, beyond those rocks. It is a hot climb, and very few bathers go."

"I think I would like to see it. There's something very splendid about an empty beach."

A wiry-limbed Greek brought eggs in olive oil, and okra, and a salad of *feta* tomatoes and olives. It was not late, but an unusual hunger came over her, and Rachel ate heartily, washing the peasant fare down with the wine, which looked like sauterne, and tasted of turpentine. She was conscious of a ripening of spirit, which she identified as optimism or anticipation, though in truth she had nothing to look forward to. She seemed to be dissolving, but joyously, as if she were becoming a part of the sharp Aegean light. As she listened to the German, who was talking about the schools of fish and the botanical life hidden in the purple of the reef, she grew eager for what might follow, though she could not project herself beyond this immediate buoyancy of spirit, which she attributed to the walk and the wine. She thought of the young people on the beach below, and the thought of their nudity made her conscious of her own body. She was slim, though her stomach was not so firm as it had once been, and she had hard, square buttocks. She would not be ashamed to be seen, and she thought she might swim nude as well, and resolved not to be embarrassed. A smile

spread her mouth back from her teeth as she thought of the German, and wondered how he had managed to misjudge her—to make someone bold and free-spirited of a woman only a year removed from a carpeted Chicago highrise. She wished she could see herself as he might; after eight years of futile marriage she had thought herself old, but she was young, as young as her luncheon companion, surely, and with her sundrenched hair, her firm brown legs, perhaps she looked even younger. What did it matter, she thought. She was glad she was not so stupid as she had been eight years ago, unhappily drifting through college, so relieved to be yanked out of it for marriage. She ate the *peponi* that the Greek brought, scooping all of the ripe orange flesh from the melon, savoring its cold succulence before swallowing. She ate all of it, down to the green rind, with a fierce pleasure. While the German paid for the meal, she surveyed its remnants—a plate of olive pits and cheese crumbs, the yellow smear of the eggs suspended in heavy oil.

"I enjoyed the lunch so much!" she exclaimed as they set out across the field. Indeed, it was as if it were the first meal she could remember, and she realized that she had eaten much more than he.

They followed the beach to the far rocks. A few young girls with brown slender bodies lay on the sand. There were more men, all very brown. None of them looked up as the pair passed.

It was a hard climb, over several rock walls, and through scratchy ground brush. Just as she felt that the annoyance of the heat and the climbing would spoil her mood, the German said "look," and she stopped.

The rocks dropped precariously steep to a perfect

arc of white sand. The water seemed still, as in a painting.

"It—it's gorgeous!" she cried. For the first time, the German took her hand and helped her down the rocks. The sun striking the sand dazzled her; she fumbled in her bag for dark glasses. The German let go her hand and ran to the water's edge. He took off his trunks and dove into the shallow rim of the inlet.

Rachel hesitated, then took off the top of her two-piece bathing suit, and gently let herself into the water. It seemed warmer in the alcove, and she swam out as far as the reef, where the German was treading water. As she came close to him, he touched the swell of one breast. She drew back, and then came toward him again. The water distorted his body. She could see his legs moving rhythmically.

"You do not need to be shy here," he said softly, almost reverently. His hand fell from her breast to her inner thigh. He put his mouth on hers.

With clean, hard strokes, she swam back to shore. When he returned, she was lying flat on her stomach. They lay in the sun, several yards of beach separating them. Before either had spoken, three figures appeared at the crest of the rocks. The German went into the water again. Rachel put on her bathing suit and began to comb her hair.

"Hi. Are you feeling better?"

It was the Mill Valley lawyer. Nearer her stood the younger man, and walking toward them was the lawyer's girlfriend. The light was so strong on the girl's face that it washed out the eyes and the color of her skin, but she had very sharp features, and wore an expression of bored impatience.

Rachel stroked her hair in long, deliberate movements.

"It was nothing. I'm fine. Thanks."

"You haven't been down on this beach before, have you?"

Rachel looked up to answer, and saw that the lawyer was carrying a green melon.

"No, someone—he—the man in the water—he showed me the way."

The girl grunted, and the lawyer said he'd be seeing Rachel, and walked away with the girl. The boy, who had said nothing, sat down beside her.

"You know the German?"

"Yes."

"Will you be with him tonight?"

Rachel turned on her side so that she could look at him.

"You're a student, aren't you?"

"Always. Let's not, though."

"Not what?"

"Not play that game."

"Game?"

"What-do-you-do. Where-are-you-from. That crap."

"I'm sorry. All I asked was if you were a student. Most of them have gone back to school."

"No school. Not for me. Now, anyway. Your name is Rachel, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"I'm not so young. I'm not stupid, anyway. I won't bore you or embarrass you."

"I don't know why you should. I didn't mean to infer that."

"You really ought to give me a fair chance. I mean, a few years doesn't make much difference. Not here. Or are you married?"

"I was. I'm divorced."

"Why?"

"I bored him."

"Come on."

"He bored me."

"Ok, ok. It's none of my business."

He rose and stretched out his arms.

"Isn't this the most beautiful of places?"

"Yes. I agree with you there."

"I brought a bag down here and slept the other night. It was like sleeping on the edge of the world. After the sun went down there was nothing but the darkness out there, and the sound of the water. I don't think you'd be boring."

"Your friends have disappeared."

"You didn't answer my question."

"I don't remember what you asked."

"Will you be with the German tonight?"

"I don't know."

"He's a pig."

"I don't know that." She remembered his hand on her leg.

"I'll see you at the cafe later. Come eat with us."

"I don't know."

"About eight. Wear that yellow shift I've seen you in. Yellow is my favorite color. And leave your husband at home."

"My husband? Look, Bernard—isn't that right?"

"Bernie."

"Ok, Bernie. My husband—my *ex-husband*—is six thousand miles from here."

"Well, bury the bones he left hanging around your neck. I feel like having an affair with an older woman!"

He jumped up, laughing happily. Before she could

say anything, or even think of anything to say, he had run down the beach out of shouting distance. He stopped and held up both hands so that his fingers made the number eight, and then he dove into the water and swam toward his friends.

When the German came out of the water, she said that she was tired, and thought she ought to get back.

The hike seemed tedious and terribly hot. She was grateful that the German did not try to talk. When they got to the first beach, she thanked him and ran for the bus which was honking furiously. On the way, she minded the horrible jolting and the heat; she wanted to take a long nap and wash her hair and read the French novel. Of course she would not meet the boy, Bernie, for supper.

The buckets in her bedroom were empty; there was no water to wash her hair. She went out into the garden to look for Eleni, but the girl was nowhere in sight. She picked as many grapes as she could carry, and took the bunches back into the house. She got a bowl down off the shelf and set it on the old table, with the grapes in it. She cut a thick slice of bread and a small hunk of *feta*, which was wrapped in paper on the table. There was a hard boiled egg left from the night before, and she peeled it. She thought she shouldn't be hungry, but the long afternoon shadows were lying across the stone floor, and she had walked hard in the afternoon. She started to sit down, and took a bite of the bread, but she changed her mind, and decided to get the water. She took two buckets into the yard, and moved the wooden planks off the mouth of the well. As she lowered the first bucket, she told herself, as she often did, that she was very lucky to have a house with a

garden and a vineyard, and most important, a well with sweet cold water.

Rachel set the buckets down, and then half-filled a basin, so that the water would not be so cold when she washed her hair. She returned to her food, eating it slowly in the lengthening shadows of the room. As she was tidying up the remains, the girl Eleni came back, her arms full of folded sheets and towels. She had gone down to the shore with the other girls, instead of washing in the long wooden tub in the garden. Rachel started to scold her—the sheets would be stiff—but Eleni was humming a gay tune, and she looked so bright and lovely, the harsh words dissolved in Rachel's throat. Eleni carried away the scraps and popped a grape into her mouth. She ate only the single grape, but with such delight. Rachel reached out, impulsively, to touch her hand. The girl looked at her in surprise, and then smiled as she turned to the shelves. Rachel had always thought the girl was very plain, with her square face and thick eyebrows, her stocky body and hairy arms. Now, suddenly, the girl seemed terribly alive and vibrant. Rachel stared at her as she moved about, light on her short legs, her song clear and pure in the room. For the first time, she saw that the girl was happy, and free—there were no nets of indecision and involvement cast for Eleni, there was only living, the joy and simplicity of it; she was not bewildered by what she did not understand, nor frustrated by what she did not know. In eating the one grape, Eleni had consumed the soul of the wine.

Rachel stood and walked over to the window, looking out on the coming dusk. She saw, for the first time, the *elements* of what she viewed—she understood that sky and earth and light existed as—as

primary substances—a bewildering, clamoring jumble of phrases swelled up in her mind; she remembered a course in college, when her professor had talked of Greek philosophy, and she knew—she could remember clearly—that someone—a school of someones—those thousands of years before—had looked at these same things, and seen it this same way, and conceived—what? She could not remember the lecture, nor even the face of the lecturer. She could not reach beyond what she could see to what she might realize, if only—if only. She knew that this was a moment of profound import to her, that it was the highest, perhaps the only, intellectual experience she might ever have, that a truth might open to her—but she knew, also, as the view fused again to garden and sunset, that she could not grasp what it was that bewildered her and was lost. And yet, as she looked at Eleni, *she knew that the girl understood.*

She did not wash her hair. The effort loomed insurmountable between her resolution and the task. She sent the girl home, and threw herself down on the hard bed. Above her the short curtains billowed in the evening wind, and the air smelled of salt and lemons.

As she lay there, she wished suddenly that there was something she might do. It had not occurred to her so strongly before; she had always been busy, somehow, and since she had come to the island it had seemed enough to swim, to walk, to take care of her grapes, and to watch the days sweep into the sea. Now, with intense longing, she wished that she could paint or write or even sing a song; yes, she would have been happy to sing a song with the sweet joy of the girl Eleni. She did not know if she could sing; she simply knew that she would not try; she would not have known how. She could not write, for it was

tedious, and anyway she had nothing to say. She knew nothing of painting, of pigments and perspective and texture. She closed her eyes, and buried her face in the pillow. She had willed herself to sleep, but fragments of light illuminated the room, and she was not sleepy. Usually in the evening, she liked to sit by the harbor, at a table at one of the little cafes, and have a *baklava* or the puffy *loukoumathes* which were sprinkled with cinnamon and dipped in honey. Yes, she thought, perhaps she would go down by the harbor, and sit for a while. She might see the Israeli girl who was writing a novel, or the English model who had come on vacation in May and had remained, or the pleasant young men from Texas who had been recently discharged from the service. She might even go to one of the small tavernas where the young men danced and argued politics into the late night.

She stripped and washed herself with a large natural sponge she had bought from a fisherman on the beach. She tied her hair into dogears, and in the cracked mirror she saw herself as a girl again, and a sliver of the noon's eager joy shot through her. She threw her bra and panties back into her chest, and drew over her head the pale yellow shift she had bought in Florence. She looked in the mirror again, and thought how she would like to have her ears pierced; she would have liked to wear long silver earrings that jangled as she walked.

She sat at a table near the one she had occupied in the morning, and she ordered a Nescafe. As she stirred it, she realized that she was waiting for the boy, Bernie, and she was immensely relieved when he pulled out a chair and sat down by her.

"Hey, your cheeks are pink. You got a little sunburn today."

She put her hands to her face. "I hadn't realized."

"I told Charlie and Sue we'd meet them around the corner, ok?"

"I'm not very hungry. I ate some bread and cheese earlier."

"Say, you're not going to be difficult, are you?"

Rachel felt very warm. She felt she should make a decision of some kind, but the day had gone beyond her, and she felt that she was being swept mindlessly toward some uncharted point. The boy took a drink from her glass. There was about him a buoyancy, an enthusiasm, a charm that seemed to carry her out of her introspection, toward a sense of expectancy. Her heart was thudding inside her breast.

She left money on the table for the coffee, and followed Bernie through the clutter of tables. They went around a corner, following the narrow stone alley past a sandal shop. The other couple was seated at a table in the whitewashed alley, eating tomatoes stuffed with rice. Bernie stood, clutching her hand, shifting from foot to foot, talking to his friend. He was wearing faded jeans and a white short-sleeved t-shirt, and was barefoot. He took a piece of bread from the table and ate it as he talked. Then he turned to Rachel.

"You're sure you're not hungry?"

"No, not at all."

"Come on, then." He took her hand again and led her down the alley toward the loud whirring of the electric plant. They went up a flight of stone stairs and into a dark house. Bernie lit an oil lamp and then a fat candle, and pulled out a hard-back chair for Rachel. He went into another room and came back with glasses and a bottle. They had not spoken.

"You want some water in this?"

"What is it?"

"Ouzo."

"Some water, please."

As he poured the water in, the clear ouzo turned milky. He gave her the glass.

"Cin cin."

"Skol."

Bernie sat on a rug on the floor, so that Rachel felt awkward, looking down at him at her feet.

"I want to take something back that I said today," he said.

"What's that?" She couldn't remember the conversation at the beach, only the knot it had left in her.

"About not asking any questions. I've been thinking about you, and I'm curious."

"About me?"

"Yes. Usually I make a big thing out of not being too nosy, because I don't like people bugging me with questions. But with you, well, I just have the feeling that if I don't ask questions—"

"—you won't find anything in me, present tense?"

"No, no, that's too harsh. It's just that, well, everybody who comes to a place like this, or the Costa Brava, or Tangiers, or wherever you land, they come looking for something. Maybe themselves, though that seems trite. I just wonder what it is you are looking for."

"I think you'll be disappointed. There's nothing mysterious or subtle or even very interesting about me."

"That's the second time today you've said that about yourself. Is that what your husband told you?"

"Oh no, let's wipe off that slate. I did just as you asked, and left poor Robert buried with his miserable scolding letters in a trunk at my house. So fair is fair, you can't go dredging him up. I will tell you

this, though, he was awfully bright, well, still is, I suppose, really bright. Economics professor, only he quit teaching and rented his brain out like a computer to all kinds of companies. I honestly can't tell you much about what he did, it was way over me."

"What did you do?"

"Oh, this and that. When we lived in the University area—do you know Chicago? Well, I tried to work with a welfare project on the south side, but I was horribly frightened by all those Negro children with their big eyes and shiny faces. I was absolutely useless. When we moved north I did better, I mean with charity work and that sort of thing."

"You didn't ever work?"

"O Lord, that was a crisis in my life. I decided I would like to work, and God I discovered there wasn't a thing I could do. I finally took a typing course and found a job with a trade magazine, but Robert said it was embarrassing for him. At the time I was very angry, but after I thought it over I could see his point. I mean, if I could have been an executive, or an interior decorator, in fashion or something, it might have been okay, but there I was typing away for eighty dollars a week. So I gave that up, and went back to reading Winnie the Pooh to sick children."

"So why did you come to Greece?"

Rachel took a long drink. Bernie mixed another, with less water, as she talked.

"I never intended to come to Greece, actually. I mean, I just went on a grand tour of consolation with my mother, and when she went back I decided to stay a while. I was so damned tired when I got here, I thought it might be a good idea to stay a month and just rest. And then somebody told me about the

house that I have now, and one thing led to another, and I stayed, that's all. God, I haven't talked so much since those Pooh stories. Is it you or the ouzo?"

The smile he gave her in reply was so quick, so bright, it seemed to reach out and touch her.

"I feel like a holy man in a shrine, sitting up here above you, giving out oracles and things. Am I mixing up Indian sayings with Greek religion?"

"Something like that. What's the rest of that saying?"

"About the holy man, you mean?"

"Yes. Isn't it 'the holy man never leaves the shrine'?"

"Yes, that's it. But I'm not a holy man, or holy woman, or whatever, and I wouldn't like it forever locked away."

"Come here." He reached out his hand for her. She slipped off her chair onto the thick pile of the goat rug. He stretched out on it, putting his chin in his hands, propping up with his elbows. She kicked off her sandals and did the same.

"What about you?"

"Oh, but I'm too young to have a past."

"You're not being fair. I've told you all about myself, now you must tell me about you."

"Nope, later. It's not important. You talking—that was important. If I started yakking, it would spoil things." He touched her hair, at the back, where it was parted. A shiver ran down her spine. He undid the ribbons so that the hair fell loose on her neck.

"Your hair is very nice."

"I meant to wash it today."

"Uh-oh. Don't apologize."

"Why?"

"That's rule number one. Don't apologize. Rule

number two is don't question what the other person wants. The important things are what you want."

"I don't think I understand."

"I mean, if you feel like something, if you feel good, then don't worry about whether it's all some dreadful scheme you've fallen into and start questioning motives. It's what you feel that really matters. I'm afraid women don't usually know that."

"Would that be what you call a line?"

"I don't know. That word went out of use years and years ago. I guess it could be, though, if I didn't mean it."

"But if I wonder if it's a line, then I am questioning what—no, why—you are making me feel like this. Right?"

"You have it pat."

"Bernie." Rachel sat up, folding her legs under her. "Bernie, what do you do here? Really, it's important for me to know."

"I—just—live."

Rachel felt like she had when she had looked at her maid Eleni in the afternoon. She knew that what he said was true. To him it explained everything. She did not understand, and she could not ask him to explain. When he pulled her down to him and began to kiss her, she knew that that too was part of what he had said, and that she should understand that as well, and yet she felt somehow that she was further from understanding than she had ever been. She knew, though, that it was important that she not question what would surely happen now. Perhaps he had said that, about not questioning other people's motives, because he could see that she always did. Or perhaps he said that to everyone. But she knew that if she questioned, she would destroy what was

happening, and she knew, with the pain of premature remorse, that it was wrong for her, and yet she knew that whatever might happen, she wanted it to happen, and she was glad. There, on the rug, she seemed to see light and fire all about her, the fat candle dripping hot wax, and the turquoise sea lit with bright noon sunshine, and the fierce burning in her eyes, and as he pulled the yellow shift over her head, and exclaimed aloud at her bare brown body, the fire and light burnt her eyes and she began to cry. The tears slid out of her eyes and fell on her neck and shoulders, but he did not seem to notice, for he was full of joyous vibrancy that passed into her body and died.

When they were still again, he extinguished the light, and they shared a cigarette in darkness. She felt that she was playing a part, and she was afraid that he would know, but in the darkness she could see the white teeth in his smile, and feel his pleasure. When they finished the cigarette, they went out onto a tiny porch above the alley, and he splashed her with water from a bucket, and she yelled and jumped as the cold water hit her. Then she threw it on him, and they dried with a heavy towel. He took her back into the big room, and they got into his bed, which was very hard, and was covered with a coarse woven blanket. She thought perhaps he would talk to her, there in the big bed. She waited for him to speak, but before she had grown impatient, he was asleep, curled against her like a child, with his fists clenched loosely against his chest. She lay watching him for a while, until she heard the other couple coming up the stairs. She was embarrassed, but they passed through the room without lighting the lamp, and went into another room. She felt cold, and rubbed her arms to

stimulate the circulation. In a little while she got up and put the shift on again. Carrying her sandals in her hand, she walked over to the bed looking down on the boy's sleeping form.

She did not think he would want to sleep with her again, but she felt sure that he would smile and be friendly and speak when they met at the cafe or on the beach. He had not hurt her, and she did not care that he might not want her again. She had thought, as she lay on the rug, that when he made love to her she would look at him and see herself. He had said that everyone who came, came looking for something. She had not thought of it that way, but now she would, and that would probably spoil her happiness with the island. She went softly out of the room and down the steps, away from the roar of the generators. She went down to the harbor and stood staring at the water. Tomorrow she might see the German again. Or she might go to one of the other islands for a while. She might even go back to Athens, and from there, home. It did not really matter. It would be better if she did not think about it. She did not have to know what she would do. She was free to do as she pleased.

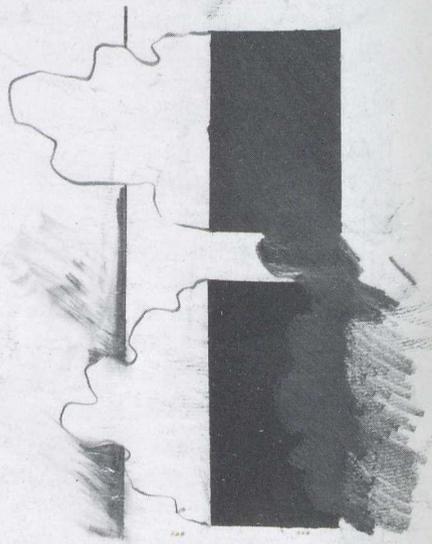
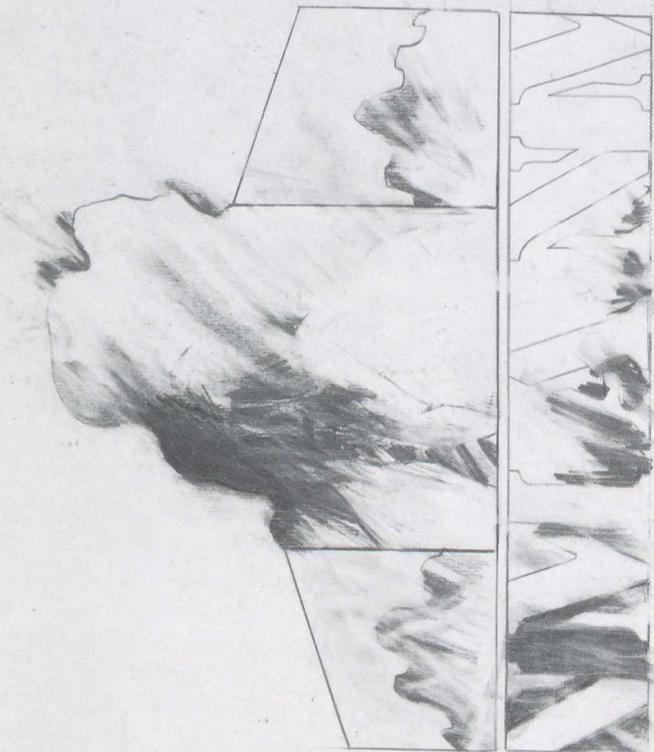
And yet, as she walked home, she knew that she would have to decide before she slept that night.



POEM FOR EASTER

He killed a rabbit,
wrapped a rag
around its punctured gut
and carried it
hung on a stick
around his poor white
neighborhood
to show the other kids
why they got nothing
for Easter.

Dick Armstrong



SINCE THAT

Less is more. One night we stood
In the way of the wind,
A puma scowled about our feet,
A way of his.
Cringed and grinning at the peaks,
He breathed his fear through his teeth;
The breath caught us up,
And rolled no further than that.
Yes, we too may scatter such whirls
In ether, stretched at the foot of air—

But I am hardly a drunken beast.
Then, too, he would stoop
Over a pit of a pond, and bawl
At the water-beast, gulping mist
Between phrases—we heard the sharp
Inhalation, then the long bleat.
And on and on like that.
Wind muttering downslope
Is one long cry;

One could not think and dream between it.
Inside, he is a scheduled rift,
A tube of ordered drafts;
Outside, a shifting clench, a seizure,
Flurry of the gage and catch, always
Hair on end. Between the shivering
Of the cat, we pulled a breeze about us,
And made a melody of gasps. The cat forgot
That all is storm: not his wheeze,
Not his natural stance. Since that
We jump the pumal fear, talk no more,
And are a window for the air.

Ed Manual



FOR JESSICA

when the music makes
the people dance.
the movement only moves.

i space nearly
silent still i

sit swaying slightly
making wind.
music maker movement.

for you to dance to
one step next to me.

Dale Royalty

TWO ASPECTS OF EVIL IN THE
THOUGHT OF ALBERT CAMUS

Anne Banks Lincoln

In his study *Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt*, John Cruickshank notes that Camus' symbol of the plague is "appropriate in the context of suffering but unsatisfactory before the act of wrongdoing. It covers human wretchedness but ignores human wickedness."¹ *La Peste* is a parable of man's duty in the face of the evil inherent in a hostile universe. Therefore, it is concerned with only one aspect of the problem, the aspect of evil as an external force oppressing man. *La Chute*, published eight years later, continues the discussion of the problem by exploring the evil that is inherent in man himself, symbolized in Christian thought by the concept of original sin, and thus giving Camus his title. This work is mainly concerned with the establishment of an equilibrium between good and evil within the human soul. Any disequilibrium between these two forces leads to human wickedness and ultimately to human wretchedness. This explains the wretched state of Jean-Baptiste Clamence.

In *La Peste* Camus conceives of evil in juxtaposition to good and this explains some of the flatness of his main characters, especially Rieux and Tarrou, who have not got enough evil in their makeup to be really human. But Camus must have seen that this was a simplified view of the human condition because in *La Chute* he turns to the mingling of good and evil within the individual. This is what gives Clamence his very human anxieties, despair and arrogance. Thus Camus explores the second aspect of evil in the universe, the aspect of evil as an internal force acting

within the individual. Since these two works explore the two aspects of evil, external and internal, they constitute a whole and should be read together. It is unfortunate that many critics feel that the pessimism of *La Chute* cancels the optimism of *La Peste* because the solution that Camus implies in the later work is a natural extension of the one offered in the earlier, but on an individual rather than a collective level. This solution implies a revolt against the absurd condition of man and can be applied to both aspects of evil.

Albert Maquet feels that each of the main characters in *La Peste* represents an aspect of Camus' thought.² Dr. Bernard Rieux, through whose eyes and mind most of the action of *La Peste* is revealed to us, is Camus' representation of the relative.³ In this way, Rieux represents revolt against death, the ruler of an absurd universe. The ambiguity inherent in the absurd is hinted at from the first. Rieux begins the narrative with an ironic yet sympathetic description of the town of Oran in which he refers to the sufferers as "We," but lapses into ironic phrases such as "our fellow citizens" when he describes their foolish behavior.

Rieux describes how the feelings of revolt welled up in him after watching a patient die while crying "Never!"⁴ He also represents the type of the true healer, having become one "by starting out with loving, in all humility, to do his duty correctly and honestly."⁵ Though he realizes that his struggle means only a never ending defeat, he refuses to give up even though his victories will never be lasting. (p. 118) As he continues this struggle his sympathy and understanding are increased. He sympathizes with Rambert's desire to escape back into happiness with

his mistress; he can share Grand's anguish at not being able to hurdle the barriers to communication with his wife; his sympathy and pity are so great finally that he partakes of the death agony of young Jacques Othon, trying through physical contact to transmit his health and energy to the child. (p. 194) But in spite of his almost involuntary dedication to his revolt he is not interested in either heroism or saintliness. His ideal is to be a man. (p. 231) Which, as Tarron implies, is a much harder job than aspiring to be a saint, with or without God.

Rieux's concern with alleviating human misery implies a corresponding concern for human happiness. In fact he tells Rambert that there is nothing shameful in preferring happiness and that "for nothing in the world is it worth turning one's back on what one loves." (p. 188) Yet that is exactly what he himself must do, separated as he is from his wife. This in turn is part of what makes him a true healer, his submersion of his ego in his concern for others. This suppression is what enables him to break through his isolation into solidarity.⁶ Although he knows that human happiness is relative, depending on the amount of human suffering that is alleviated, he also knows that, if he would be a man, he cannot withdraw from the struggle against the plague, symbolizing all things that cause human misery. While he may not completely forget himself in his concern for others he is able to transcend his self even though he knows that for him there will never be any peace, that all he has gained is a bitter knowledge of the transitoriness of his victories, since death will always triumph in the end, and a few memories. (p. 262)

Tarron represents for Camus the struggle against injustice, which is symbolized for Tarron by what he

calls "reasonable murder." He enters the struggle against the plague with an entirely different motivation, a negative one. His ambition is only to be "an innocent murderer." That is, if he cannot cease being a carrier of plague (symbolizing for Tarron the germ of violence within us all), the least he can do is carry it involuntarily and infect as few people as possible. (pp. 229-230) As he remarks to Rieux, his ambitions are indeed lesser than the doctor's. Rather than attempting to come to terms with his humanity, he tries to suppress it. He seeks only inner peace (impossible for man to achieve in an absurd world) and, concurrently, to become a saint without God, which implies suppression of one's humanity.⁷ This explains why Tarron considers the asthmatic old Spaniard, who leads a truly absurd existence doing nothing and therefore infecting no one, to be one of these "saints without God."

The plague catches up with Tarron because his approach to life is negative and ultimately selfish. He is estranged from mankind because he has no hope for happiness in life. He has committed the error of putting an ideal above personal happiness and thus cannot find peace except in death, the ultimate estrangement.⁸ Furthermore, he has learned nothing from the plague; it has not taught him solidarity with the others, but has only reaffirmed his own convictions.⁹

As the hero of this chronicle, Rieux proposes the self-effacing government clerk, Joseph Grand. This reflects Rieux's passionate concern with human happiness. In making his nomination Rieux describes Grand as having "to his credit only a little goodness of heart and a seemingly absurd ideal. This will render to the truth its due, . . . and to heroism the sec-

ondary place that rightly falls to it, just after, never before, the noble claim of happiness." (p. 126) Grand's passionate search for happiness, exemplified by his tireless literary endeavors (representing the search for beauty), is what keeps his personal life intact throughout the plague. He fights the plague and is not dominated by its dehumanizing power.¹⁰ Besides this, he well qualifies as an existentialist hero in his cheerful willingness to do his duty, that is, to help his neighbor, without any of the soul-searching of the others. He demonstrates this first by preventing Cottard's suicide and then later by his indefatigable statistical work for the sanitary squads. He is simply doing what comes naturally, impelled by a sure and noble instinct to do what is necessary without any choice or renunciation and without disturbing the axis around which his "absurd, myopic world" revolves.¹¹ "Mediocre . . . his heart crushed, Joseph Grand, beloved child of Camus, steps out of the rank and file to bear witness in his suffering and in his obscure courage to a dignity that the superior characters maintain in a clear-sighted revolt."¹²

Like Grand, the journalist Rambert, who represents the struggle for happiness, fights the plague's dehumanizing forces by trying to regain his former happiness with his mistress in Paris. Although he comes to see that the only shame in being happy lies in being happy all alone and because of this decides to join the struggle against the plague, he is able to open a clandestine correspondence with his mistress and thus keep his personal life intact. However, in contrast to Grand, Rambert arrives at his decision to forego escape and remain and fight only as an intellectual choice and he is never sure that the choice was the right one. (p. 265)

The remaining two characters are the villains of the piece, so to speak. Villains, because they condone the plague, the true villain. Father Paneloux represents an absolute, which is Christian theology. At first he sees the plague as beneficial and justifiable, as the divine punishment of a citizenry who merit it. This sanction of the death penalty denies any place of importance to the relative factor of human happiness.¹³ But after watching the death agony of an innocent child, Fr. Paneloux begins to have doubts, exemplified by his curious statement that "*perhaps* [italics mine] we should love what we cannot understand." (p. 196) He resolves his doubts by formulating the doctrine of All or Nothing. Either we preserve our faith in God by willing everything that He does, whether or not we understand it, or we are forced to deny Him entirely. Fr. Paneloux chooses to make the Kierkegaardian "leap of faith" in order to keep his absolute intact. As a logical extension of this, he is forced to acquiesce in his own death, without recourse to any medical aid. But in spite of this fatalism in the face of God's will, he still feels it his duty to do all he can to relieve the victims' sufferings and this, willy-nilly, brings him into solidarity with the others. (p. 197)

Neither Fr. Paneloux nor Cottard, the other "villain" condone the plague out of any ill-will towards their fellow men. But Cottard, rather than join the fight against it, uses the plague to enrich himself through speculation on the black market. Most important, he sees the plague as an equalizer (in much the same way as Clamence in *La Chute* uses his religion of guilt) to restore his sense of belonging. Now that the plague has made everyone a fugitive, Cottard, a wanted criminal, no longer finds his burden of fear

so great. As Tarrou observes, the plague makes him "blossom out" and become friendly and voluble and even develop a degree of pity and love for the other "prisoners." (p. 174ff.) It is significant that when Rieux first goes to see Cottard he thinks he hears the squeals of dying rats, harbingers of the plague, even though none are to be seen. (p. 18) This is because the plague is an elixir of life to Cottard. As Tarrou sees, his real crime lies in drawing sustenance from something harmful to others: he isn't interested in hearts. (p. 251)

Another force in this narrative is the town of Oran itself. Rieux begins with an ironic description of "our fellow citizens" foibles, which could be applied to almost any group of men anywhere. But he also presents just enough physical description to give the story a sense of locale. The Oranais are trapped in the routine of getting and spending (p. 4) and the plot reproduces this feeling of monotony in its cycle of normality, plague, and return to normality.¹⁴ In addition to the monotony of life in Oran is its abysmal soullessness and ugliness. Tarrou decides to stay on there because it is a city of boredom, without passion, making it easier for him to suppress his humanity. All this describes as well the alienation of today's man, an alienation pointed up by the proximity of the sea and the mountains, symbols for Camus of happiness, of Eden. These symbols however are presently unattainable because of the quarantine in force during the plague. This frustrating nearness, yet inaccessibility of happiness, reflects Camus' view of the absurd confrontation between man, who yearns for happiness, and a hostile universe, which thwarts him at every turn.

Perhaps the major protagonist in this allegorical

novel of good and evil is the plague. Throughout the novel it is described in terms of "un fleau," implying a scourge or flail as well as an epidemic,¹⁵ which Rieux often imagines he hears whistling in the air over the town. As Tarrou is dying of plague, after it has abated in the rest of the town, Rieux seems to hear it whistling softly in the sick room, as if it were concentrating all its weakening force on that one man for a last stand before its final defeat. (pp. 257-58) In the end it goes as inexplicably as it came, apparently independent of all efforts to hasten its departure.

This brings us to the protagonist in *La Chute*, Jean-Baptiste Clamence, the false prophet "clamens in deserto," and Amsterdam, Dante's hell transferred to modern Europe, the setting for his "récit."

If Rieux represents the relative and productive rebellion against the absurd, then Clamence represents the absolute and a horribly abortive rebellion. For Camus, rebellion is an attempt to transform the world through a creative synthesizing of its present parts, not through negation; moral man harmonizes present parts, creates new syntheses and looks for balance.¹⁶ Clamence's rebellion is abortive in that he seeks to change man to conform to the world-view which he has formulated. Thus Clamence betrays man's natural strivings and hope for an alleviation of his misery. Clamence sees man's sufferings as his only human validity. This profoundly pessimistic view grows out of his own guilt feelings and the consequent anguish they confer on him.

Once Clamence has confronted the absurdity of the universe, once he realizes that his inner view of himself does not correspond to his outward actions, he loses all self-respect and peace of mind. He is unable

to accept the relativity of man's nature, which Camus characterized by stating, in his essay on capital punishment, that "man is not good; he is better or worse."¹⁷ Clamence cannot grasp this relativity in man's nature. He realizes that man is not innocent, and leaps to the conclusion that therefore he is guilty. He is unable to accept the duality that man is both innocent and guilty.

Having accepted the doctrine of absolute guilt, Clamence gives himself over to despair. Thomas Hanna¹⁸ characterizes him as Kierkegaard's man in despair, despairing over his despair rather than humbling himself before God. Instead of reacting heroically to his discovery of duplicity within himself, Clamence remains mired in poignancy, melancholy, and hopelessness. Hanna sees four basic contradictions in Camus' dialectic: slavery or freedom, forgiveness or judgment, solidarity or solitariness, innocence or guilt. In these contradictions are to be found the essential nature of Clamence's anxiety.¹⁹ Thus the role of judge-penitent is natural for him. Unable to attain forgiveness he settles for penance. Unable to be free he settles for universal entanglement. Unable to find solidarity he settles for complicity. Unable to feel innocence he mitigates his guilt by sharing it.²⁰ Stourzh characterizes Clamence's final fall, the fall beyond redemption, as the refusal of a second chance,²¹ by implication his inability to forgive either himself or others.²² This is a part of Clamence's absolute system of values, negating the worth of a second chance which is valid only in a relative system. It is also indicative of his despair, for although he longs for a second chance he is afraid to take the risk of again proving a coward. So he takes refuge behind the self-deception that it is too late. This also obviates his having to make another choice. The pitiable thing

about Clamence is that he realizes that his "solution is not the ideal" (p. 144) but he is too weak to face the true solution, "the holy innocence of those who forgive themselves," those who can "forget oneself for someone else." (p. 145)

The setting of this "récit" is naturally enough a hell on earth. Amsterdam, with its concentric canals and cold miasmatic air is a modern analogy to Dante's hell. Clamence who loves life and light chooses to reside in Amsterdam as a kind of self-mortification,²³ his own Purgatory. In fact, he dwells at length on the hellish aspect of the city, comparing the bar to the Tower of Babel, praising the Isle of Marken for the beauty of its "negative" landscape, the "nether" side *par excellence*,²⁴ "everlasting nothingness made visible," (p. 72) describing the Zuider Zee as a dead sea, without beginning or end. (p. 97) Finally, just as Virgil leads Dante through three rings of the ninth circle of hell before reaching the one reserved for the greatest traitors, Clamence leads us through three sections of Amsterdam before arriving at his own room, in which he suffers both the extreme heat and the extreme cold of Dante's hell.²⁵ Since he has betrayed his fellow men it is entirely appropriate for Clamence to portray Amsterdam as the ninth circle of hell. Furthermore, his slight madness is also appropriate, having always been considered the characteristic punishment of treachery.²⁶

With this exploration of the reactions of these men in the face of crisis, coupled with the meaning inherent in the two settings, a Camusian ethic can be determined. Far from negating the hope and optimism of *La Peste*, *La Chute* implies if not optimism, then at least the possibility of redemption. The symbol of this redemption, or grace in the Christian dogma that Camus rejects, is to be found in the doves

of the Holy Spirit which circle over Amsterdam unable to find a head on which to alight among the shop signs. But at least they are there looking for someone worthy of the redemption they carry, even if for poor Clamence what he thinks are doves turn out to be only snowflakes. Seen in this light, Clamence takes on something of the medieval "exemplum," his negative solution showing us what to avoid. In the first work, Camus offers us instead several positive solutions through actions of Rieux, Tarrou, Grand and Rambert.

The solution in both cases, however presented, is the same: to forget oneself for someone else. This implies a balance, or tension, achieved between good and evil within the human soul. By coming to terms with the inescapable mingling of good and evil in man, one is freed to attempt an alleviation of misery among one's fellow men. Human wickedness, by condoning violence in whatever form it takes and in whatever name it is committed, leads in the end to human wretchedness. By reaching an equilibrium between good and evil in the individual, the condition of humanity can be bettered. Real guilt lies in forgetting to be modest, in thinking that everything is possible for the individual.²⁷ As Tarrou observes, it is impossible to really think of anyone else. (p. 217) The best that can be hoped for is a balance between selfishness and selflessness. Clamence cannot accept this relativity. In a way Tarrou has come to terms with this duality; at least he accepts it, along with the others. That is why he is more of an existentialist hero than Clamence who cannot accept the relativity of innocence, but searches always for an absolute, be it good or evil. Rieux, Grand and Rambert grasp something of this relativity which enables them to continue facing life in an absurd universe. In them, Camus reaffirms his belief that the relative never perishes.²⁸

NOTES

1. John Cruikshank, *Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 177.
2. Albert Maquet, *The Invincible Summer*, translated by Herma Briffault (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1958), p. 86.
3. Carina Gadourek, *Les Innocents et les coupables: Essai d'exégèse de l'oeuvre d'Albert Camus* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1963), p. 126.
4. Albert Camus, *The Plague*, translated by Stuart Gilbert (New York: The Modern Library, 1958), p. 117. All subsequent citations are from this edition.
5. Maquet, p. 93.
6. Heinz Politzer, "Franz Kafka and Albert Camus: Parables for Our Time," *Chicago Review*, XIV (1960), p. 65.
7. Gadourek, p. 123.
8. Emily Zants, "Relationship of Judge and Priest in *La Peste*," *French Review*, XXXVII (1963-64), p. 421.
9. Maquet, p. 92.
10. Adele King, *Albert Camus* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), p. 74.
11. Maquet, p. 105.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
13. Zants, p. 420.
14. King, p. 65.
15. Politzer, p. 61.
16. David E. Denton, *The Philosophy of Albert Camus: A Critical Analysis* (Boston, Mass.: Prime Publishers, 1967), pp. 52-53.
17. As quoted by Gerald Stourzh, "The Unforgivable Sin: An Interpretation of The Fall," *Chicago Review*, XV (1961), No. 1, 52.
18. Thomas Hanna, *The Lyrical Existentialists* (New York: Atheneum, 1962), p. 249.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
21. Stourzh, p. 53.
22. Albert Camus, *The Fall*, translated by Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 131. All subsequent citations are from this edition.
23. King, p. 82.
24. Roger Quillot, "An Ambiguous World," *Camus: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Germaine Brée (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 161.
25. King, p. 91.
26. Stourzh, p. 49.
27. Gadourek, p. 131.
28. Cahiers, quoted by Gadourek, p. 126.



