

**THIRTY-FIVE**

## Awards

### TOWERS AWARD FOR POETRY

Richard Steele • The Transformation of Acis page 12  
Judge, David Hilton • University of  
Wisconsin (Madison)

### J. HAL CONNOR AWARD FOR CREATIVE PROSE

Craig M. Carpenter • Saturday Evening  
Conversation page 20  
Judge, James Giles • NIU

### E. RUTH TAYLOR AWARD FOR CRITICAL WRITING

Richard D. Finholt • Method in the Cyclops  
Episode: Joyce on the Nature of Epic Heroes  
and their Antagonists page 42  
Judge, Mary Sue Schriber • NIU

### MAUDE UHLAND AWARD FOR FRESHMAN WRITING

Guy B. Senese • My Librarian page 16  
Judge, Frank Court • NIU

### TOWERS ART AWARDS

Ardine Nelson • Untitled • Photograph page 5  
Roger Chudzik • Untitled • Drawing page 15  
George Tarbay • Untitled • Photograph page 24  
Justine Wantz • A Butterfly Holiday  
Print page 39

## Staff

### EDITOR

Andrew J. Niekrasz

### ART EDITOR

Dan Sharp

### EDITORIAL STAFF

Joanne Gregorczyk  
Mike Metheson  
Carol Mitchell  
Steve Newton  
Paul Seifert  
Jennifer Sennott  
Mick Wanzer  
Marion D. Wanzer

### FACULTY ADVISORS

E. Nelson James Ben Mahmoud  
Donald M. Murray

TOWERS is published twice yearly by the Xi Delta Chapter  
of Sigma Tau Delta, National English Honorary, at Northern  
Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

Volume XXXV

January, 1971

# CONTENTS

## POETRY

Steve Mitchell • More Than One .....	4
James Minor • Lillies For Neal .....	6
Richard Steele • In The Manner Of Invocation .....	7
Flora Foss • Differences .....	11
Richard Steele • The Transformation Of Acis .....	12
Guy B. Senese • My Librarian .....	16
Steve Mitchell • Thief Of Fire .....	17
Domenico Bilotto • Carol .....	19
Flora Foss • New Lives .....	25
Florance Morgan • Impressions Of My Dead Friend ..	26
Karl Elder • Carpenter .....	28
John Cebula, Jr. • The Old Guitarist (Picasso) .....	29
Flora Foss • Setter .....	29
James Minor • Peace .....	30
Gary Latman • Untitled .....	30
John Pawula • To The Artist Gone Commercial .....	31
Thomas R. Liszka • Beelzebubbe Body Dance .....	33
Thomas R. Liszka • To Barbara .....	38
James Minor • South Dakota .....	40
Richard Steele • An Authentic Buffalo Waller .....	41

## PROSE

Dennis Dillow • Debris .....	9
Craig M. Carpenter • Saturday Evening Conversation ..	20
Glynn Steele • The Waste Land's Wicked Deck: The Tarot As A Key To The Reading Of The Poem ...	35
Richard D. Finholt • Method In The Cyclops Episode: Joyce On The Nature Of Epic Heroes and Their Antagonists .....	42

## GRAPHICS

Ardine Nelson • Untitled • Photograph .....	5
John Samargis • Untitled • Photograph .....	8
Roger Chudzik • Untitled • Drawing .....	15
George Tarbay • Untitled • Photograph .....	18
Charlie Guerin • Plymouth Makes It • Print .....	23
George Tarbay • Untitled • Photograph .....	24
Ardine Nelson • AB IV • Photograph .....	27
Carol Cottingham • Band-Aid • Serigraph .....	31
Justine Wantz • Hamburger In The Sky • Print .....	32
Charlie Guerin • Prayer #1-BA • Spray Enamel .....	34
Justine Wantz • A Butterfly Holiday • Print .....	39
Chuck Paulansky • Flight • Welded Steel .....	42

## more than one

ordinary ushers of all-night houses usually don't  
intrude on the users of these dreams but let a particular patron go  
with a push or pull, a flashlight in the face, or a word about wakelessness  
movies put them to sleep: meter-reading rounds take place in all blues' bounds,  
roses erupt on ceilings above pictures of fields in cinematic seconds flat,  
and watchmen in green ride smoke-rings down aisles on guard for the deep

here's twenty-five at least telling fifty he'll have to leave  
here's the fast-walk up the damp ramp after--what? a silent delight, a shove?  
the futile boom of hardwood door and bones and bones,  
eye-opening as an abandoned circus, roused the corners of the house  
see coal-black on his knees, holding his nose  
see gingerbread, proud avenger of unknown crimes, swear to us who stood there:

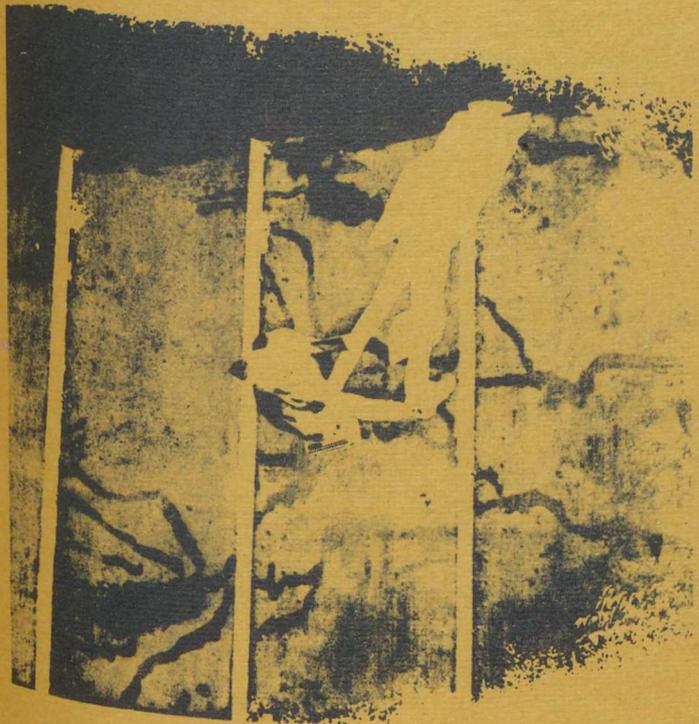
“he's a dog and there's more dogs in there.”

a pound of dreams of taking leave of powers you've never believed in,  
that's what  
our  
year-round  
revival house  
was

at times godard will have us  
feel far when near & near when far  
one time in a movie i saw a soldier who had never seen a movie  
i saw this soldier in vera cruz feeling up a woman bathing on screen  
in  
sadness

& a little madness  
he dived thru the screen after happiness  
i  
see  
him  
staring back at us, a double audience

Steve Mitchell



## LILLIES FOR NEAL

This time of autumn  
catfish nibble  
slow and lazy at the hook,  
the fly in casting  
arches easy in the air,  
it is this time of year  
old Neal waited  
long and narrow  
in the lilies  
smelling of sun warm beer,

waist high in water  
his fingers could feel  
a fish a mile away,  
breathe life to a hook  
making stale bread worm  
like fresh bait,

those tales he stole  
were hours in waiting  
for the line to stretch  
and run deep  
into the blackened water,

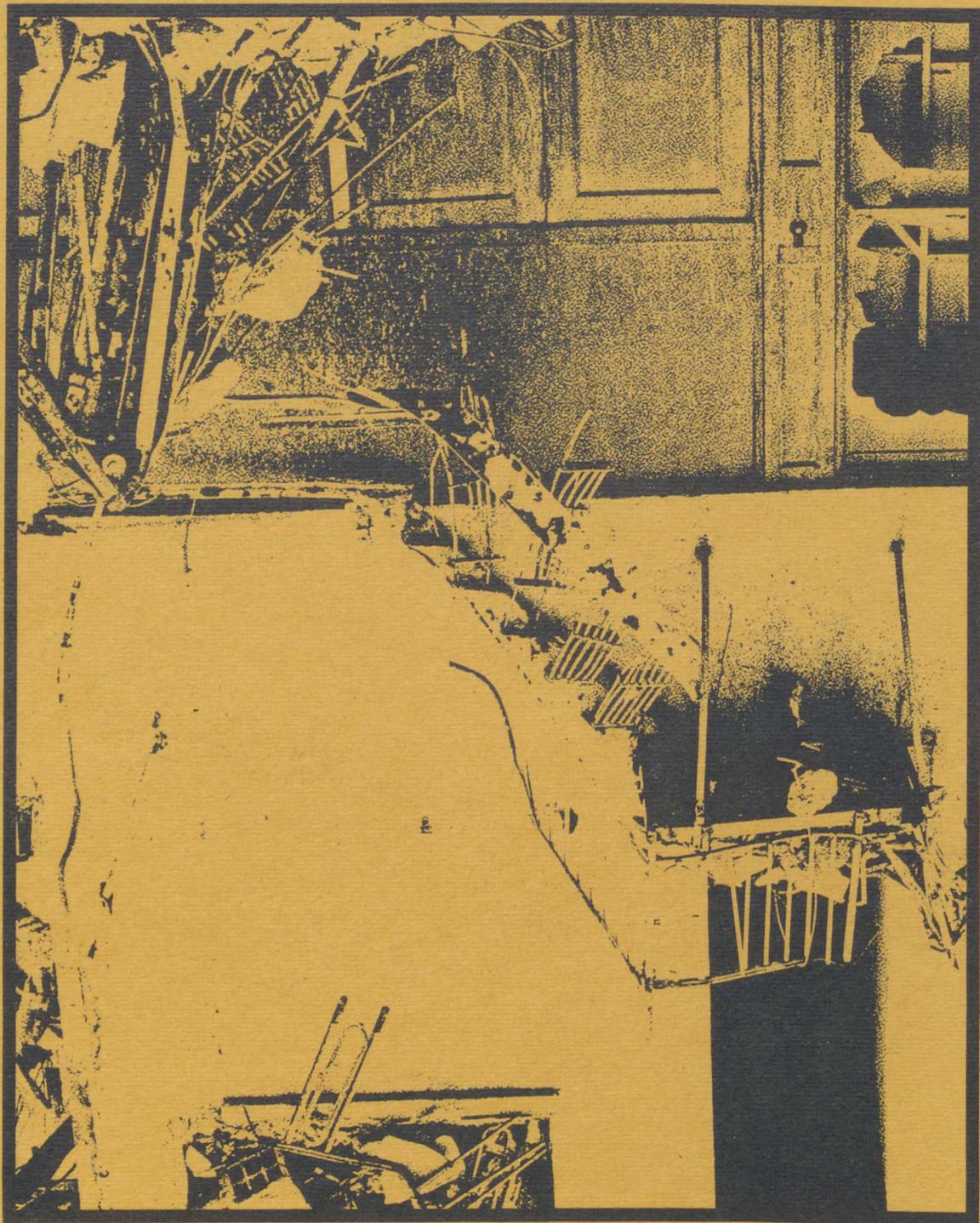
it is here old Neal  
would come as a crook  
baiting his word  
weighted with age  
and waited too  
for me to bite  
on the tales he caught  
from the emptying  
bottle of bourbon.

*James Minor*

## In The Manner Of Invocation

Poussin, Gellee,  
Watteau--  
So much for the landscape.  
These are names to change  
For a poet's words.  
If his blues and greens  
Slice the page  
Into sky and sea,  
If the contours of his phrases  
Encircle the roll of hill  
On hill, the blue distances  
Wherein the Sycamore sway  
like dancers; he does, in fact,  
No violence to the spectrum--  
Not the violence done by these:  
Poussin, Gellee,  
Watteau . . .  
Whose light splashed trees  
Splay color in a shambles,  
Torn in a riot from the  
Fecund dark--  
He tames the leaping colors  
Into blues and greens,  
And can but cry (if he would more  
than cut or circumscribe),  
In the manner of invocation, cry:  
Poussin, Gellee,  
Watteau.

*Richard Steele*



# DEBRIS

By Dennis Dillow

Feeling their eyes on you as soon as you walk in because to them and to us all there's security in groups, crowds, even in a hovel. Even when you know and they know that your pants are just as slick and shiny from constant wear and your legs are like long soup bones underneath. And all of them are just the same but still feel secure because they're not looking at themselves. Sitting there praying into cold black coffee and hard crumbs of pound cake, overcoated in July, always the overcoats—scabrous and frayed and brown silky tassels of lining hanging down from the tails.

Comes your turn to sit and you choose a table alone near the back under snow-capped mountains and frosty can of Busch-Bavarian sign and dole out a dime for a glass of deep purple wine. Waiting a full minute before swallowing and feeling it, hearing it cascade down through gullet, that warm, rotten taste swelling deep down in empty shrunken belly. Your fingers searching ritually under your chair, fingertips over forbidden braille of nail heads and petrified bumps of mucous that flake off at a touch, but nothing else. So you reach absently and anonymously below the empty seat of the adjacent chair and instantly strike gold! You break off with a snap the rock-hard piece of gum and bring it to lap level to study for foreign bodies, then your hand slowly up as if to rub your shadowed chin and slip the gray chunk in sly and dreamy as a spoiled cat. Takes a while to soften it up but there's always some taste left and you wonder if that tiny pearl of cool rubbery taste wouldn't survive a hundred years of chewing by a hundred generations of these gray spectral overcoated flotsam, the murky backwash of the aimless disenchanting. The gum is so wonderful your heart skips.

Swirling around the wine, bobbing your gum (which you have cleverly molded within your mouth to resemble an acorn) against hard pallet and tongue, your judgement sharpens to severity. Gimpy Freda navigates her bulk to the bar. She has legs like masts, one shorter than the other, so that with each step her left shoulder lists forty-five degrees and you're in constant trepidation that she will never recover for the next step. Sweat soaked clean through her voluminous coat makes dark half-moons at her armpits about which are filigreed tendrils of dried salt. A mountain of a woman with the aroma of a mountain goat, one game leg and

two gamey armpits. She speaks with a spraying, wheezing stutter in one- and, occasionally, two-syllable words of her old man whom she claims is trying to kill her by knocking her up for the twelfth time (the doctor assures her it would be her last since her uterus and one or two other nameless things were expelled last time and literally stuffed back in). But she invariably ends up in her husband's defense, saying, "Most people tell me my old man ain't fit to sleep with the hogs but I tells 'em, by God, he is too!" Sitting there at the bar she seems to be a huge gray apple impaled on a stick. Loud and giggly but cold hearted as a cod; you'd die and turn to dust before Freda would give you anything short of spit in your face. Nobody ever asked her for handouts.

You avert your eyes in distaste, study your hands. Creases at the knuckles black as loam with crud or grit from men's room floors where you go rummaging like frightful deep-sea crab with terrible indentured scythe-like claws of orange iron clutching, snapping, pillaging for scraps of cigarette, even risking against condemning conscience to delve into tainted basin water for a floating panatella prize.

And no use hanging about this place of blow flies and flap-doodle as you shuffle out into warm mist on a thick July evening, skies leaden and suffocating and silent as a vault. Shuffle along with that mercurial affectation in your gait and know everyone must know it a front because those healthy glinting eyes bore like hot irons into you as they pass, looking away at the last second. Little children darting about mothers' feet like water striders, pointing, grimacing, squealing (the shitty little bastards) so that you see yourself from far above grabbing one about the spindly throat with crustacean claw, brandishing him before the blanching crowd of meat loaf eaters, iced tea drinkers, shower every night, screwers by the sovereign schedule of supply and demand, command, corn-flakes and school—holding this brat aloft before the world of well-fed, and, shouting thunderous admonitions, quick as a peck on the cheek bite the kid's snotty nose clean off!

You've heard of the Salvation Army hole-in-the-wall somewhere down 42nd Street way, but you've scoured that section egg shell clean and have seen only wailing fags posturing on corners, boutiques and bargain stores, pissing drunks and purloined bicycles, banging doors, dogs barking and growling and scrabbling in gutters over a spiral of potato peel. You laugh aloud as you study in passing the befouled prophylactic tacked to great oaken doors of St. Catherine's Home for Orphans, probably hanging there all day.

You've smelt the carpeting through open doorway and rush of air conditioned air from furniture stores, seen pigeons perched high on city hall portico drop beautiful enameled globes into old ladies' stiff silver coiffures and two men push another man who wore his arm in a sling off the subway platform.

Remember with a smile the little girl long ago in doctor's waiting room who kept farting (cute little pips and puts) and crying to her mommy, crying because she couldn't stop farting. The mother's embarrassment was monumental, worth relishing forever.

Been so long and you actually have to give it some thought, but recall with an awful flash your last meal. All those stories about bums and creeps ending up in the back room washing dishes after eating steak dinners. You slip in to a greasy spoon, flies buzzing about like black hail; the ham was tough and black around the edges, rubbery scrambled eggs and tiny glass of Starlak tastes like cold chalky water. You say with a sheepish smile, well, bring on those dirty dishes, 'cause I must have left my wallet in my other . . . Big bruiser gyrating, careening in unfathomable anger around the counter, meat hook hands on you like vices, voice booming for all to hear and thirty pair of eyes rivet on you to lap up your mongrel dilemma, those suppressed smiles rankle even now, as you are pummeled and sent sprawling through the doors and skidding on a shoulder outside at side-stepping feet of people who pause and then hurry on. Shoulder aches at the thought of it.

Make your way down Husk Street, somehow familiar with the bleached gray buildings looming against darkening sky, flanked by garbage can sentries, a remorseless sight. A confusing nostalgia flickers in your head, your heart—a spaceless recollection of beer and salami somehow. Horses? And then floodgates open and you and old Bronco come back clear as life sitting in his room dining on salami and crackers and beer. Belching loud as drums and roaring and drunk. He had worked in a warehouse and you blew his whole check in one day and both of you laughed like kids about it the next morning.

Your feet are suddenly clopping up cement steps and through heavy metal doors. Old Bronco, by God, now there was a buddy in need indeed! Been nearly a year. You hope, you laugh, you go pounding up worn wooden stairs, notice a black apple core at your feet but keep going, down a hall so narrow your shoulders nearly rub the walls. Black doors

gleaming slick from naked yellow bulb above. You rap at Bronco's door, phrasing introductory remarks, swallowing around your gum. A bed creaks and the lick of bare feet on linoleum floor from within. "Yeah?"

"F.B.I.," you say, and nearly piss your pants in the delicious silence that follows. You are reveling in his consternation.

"Who?"

"Come on, open up. We got you surrounded."

"You creeps got a search warrant?"

Hung like a horse, that's why they call me Bronco. That's what he used to say. To all the women and they could take him or leave him on that note.

Your genitals tighten from this priceless situation.

"You gonna open this door or are we gonna break it down?" Then you add, "We'll give you thirty seconds."

And you hear him say something in a strained scream and notice with the grin still on your face one, two, three splintered holes magically appearing in the door and sudden hammer-like pressure in your chest and stomach and you are slumping back against the opposite wall, something wet and sweet coming up in your mouth and then you collapse and fold and slip down like a rended ship sucked down into cold black soundless waters.

"You bastards had enough!" And two more shots are fired through the door.

## Differences

Here's a study. You  
And your bust of Lincoln, me  
With my paper birds  
Hanging together in this small place.

What silver stallion  
Dreams we let slip off, become  
Listmakers, worrying  
The air about knowing eyes,

A mute flock dangling.  
But learn to laugh, make colored  
Folds dance, plaster head  
Shine for feathers flicking dust.

Oh, we warm the room  
With laughter til the ceiling splits,  
The carpet grows gold  
Fur on us unending nights,

The ghosts stampeding  
Still about us, whirlwinding  
A rush of tethered  
Wings, a bronze storm of eyes.

*Flora Foss*

# The Transformation of Acis

## I

### Galatea's Story

She let Charybdis comb out her hair  
And began to tell a story:

“That I toyed with him to no purpose  
but to suit my vanity, or had him  
shelved in my parlor with the rest  
of my porcelains-- how much of a lie  
is this? He was a bright boy  
who could brook no shelving.  
How he stood at the window  
on that first day, the sea-shine  
glittering in his green eyes.  
It was the story of a man and a woman.  
He looked at us as if we were  
children. It was rude to stare  
that way so that I was forced to  
look away and fuss with my taffeta.  
What did he expect to see?  
I was tired of always listening  
to his talk of markets and shares,  
this is up, this is down.  
Acis knew better how to please  
a woman. He was so pretty  
in his little yachting outfit  
standing by the window. . .”

## II

It is not wise that Galatea  
Relate the story

Since what does she know  
Of worlds beyond her world?

The days descend in annulets  
Around her wrists

Or follow like a beaded  
Chain of pearl.

Her lover fidgets slightly  
Crumpling a velvet pillow.

His arm, circling her, seems  
Not content to rest there.

He wears a vest of white and in  
His eyes the sea-shine glitters green.

She, sitting pretty,  
Wears a loop of pearl,

Soft in a loose sheath  
Her legs folded beneath,

Her fingers idly at her throat,  
Beside him in tableau.

Porcelain sculpture on the  
Low-legged table

Of a water-deity sounding  
His shell across some sea.

Of what use her slender neck  
And arms, but to collect trinkets?

What to her are rough men like mountains  
Ranging over the planet?

And what the commerce of common life,  
The daily score of daily things,

Of dreary afternoons to her,  
She in her drawing room?

She is not baited by any question  
Long-- for answer simply:

She would let her  
Pretty pleats decide.

In all of nature not one pleat  
Is out of place.

Not one bit of lace  
Has lost its way.

In his sea-world he lay  
Upon a straw divan

And watched the clouds go skittering,  
A sailor of harbors.

Her swirls of taffeta describe  
Minute areolas in amethyst air

And her lacquered curls shine,  
Topped by coronets of pearls.

### III

#### The Song of Polyphemus

"The little snot in his sailor suit.  
Couldn't have been more than 16  
if he was a day.  
I'm telling this story the way  
it should've been told long ago.  
It was hard to get angry having  
just closed a deal to no small advantage.  
I told her about the property  
just that morning. Said I'd have  
a time landing it over the others.  
Damned little kewpie just hummed  
and played with her curls.  
It was little I could do to please her.  
If that little pimp had as much as peeped  
I'd have beat him to the floor.  
She demuring, plucking at her blouse  
like a pigeon. Put me off more times  
than I care to remember--  
the little scatter-head, and I carried  
a volcano in my breast for her.  
Given to tantrums too and frippery.  
As I see it she's got no right to complain.  
First that young broker aflutter  
with his portfolio-- and then this sailor.

I eyed them well enough though.  
Flowed past me like a river on his  
way out. It's like business. You've  
got to keep an eye on your investment."

### IV

The unexpected knock comes soon,  
Too soon for lovers in a pastel drawing room.

The pretty curtains waver in the draft  
That roughs the taffeta and lace.

Comes a man whose face brings in  
The bleak day from without,

Who peers as from under heavy  
Portals at the two.

In ancient tournaments so eyes peered  
From the dark of heavy visors--  
Incredible vistas in the outward glance.

She is his thrust. His eye discerns  
Her well concealed fears  
And puts to rout pretended innocence.

Her composure slips  
From color-guarded lips

And where her heavy-lashed eye  
Was alabi, he reads as from official notes,

Nor spares a jot, savagely reading,  
Tearing at the speckled iris.

Trembling, she drops her glance  
Into the blue of her blouse,

There to let it stray  
Among the embroidered fish--

Tracing the course of a stitched  
Porpoise in the azure depths.

The youth has no escape.  
Acis at bay before the brunt.

Each flight of his wild eyes  
Is arrested before some gimcrack,  
Some spangle or flourish  
Where fancy cannot fasten long,  
Thrown back, like Echo's words,  
To him whose shag demands regard.  
With a little gesture of defence  
He pleads her cause and his.  
In vain. He of the dark brow  
Turns to let his huge eye fall,  
The edge of his stare enough to crush  
The fragile boy in sailor white.  
All her supplication ill.  
The eye descends unstayed.  
His legs like water, Acis  
Turns away and, sharper twist  
For the parlor amorist,  
She does not beg him stay.

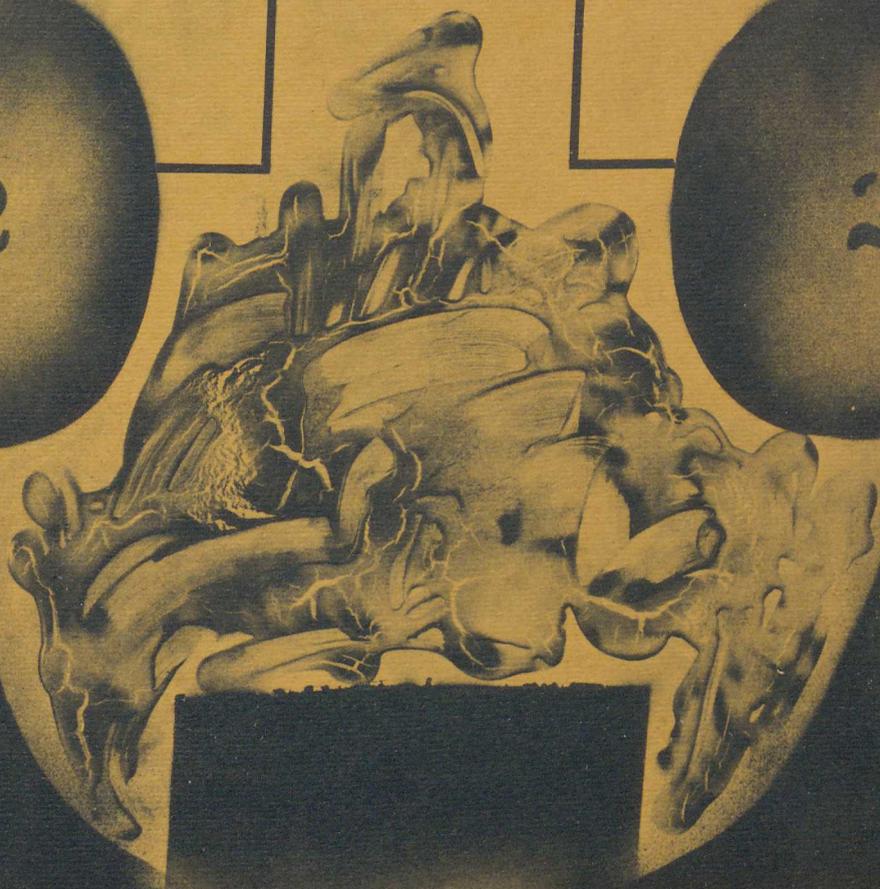
V

The Transformation of Acis

"I was never more before than after.  
It is well for me that all is changed.  
I met her and her indifferent lace  
in that same parlor. Had come from  
yachting. Only playing with the sea.  
Bright blue banners running, blue  
for a fair day and plenty of sunshine.  
I sat on the wicker deck chair or at  
the helm, tinkering with the line  
like a boy. And later in my deck whites  
standing among her little statues  
and from the pink window taking in  
the prospect of the bay, talked of  
squalls and hard crossings like a  
seasoned mariner.

Here's and experience I won't forget.  
It's like the deep belly-swell  
of the ocean lifting you up only to  
dash you with a wall of water  
like a boulder. What did he mean,  
I wonder: 'Some of us don't learn,  
even the hard way. . . ' meant for me?  
She's well forgot in any case.  
Give me the briskness of the sea;  
I've had enough of parlors.  
Hardest course I've had to steer,  
through that parlor, past his stare.  
Best forgot. I think I'll spend  
some time at the races. Pick up  
a new suit--blue-green--a matching cape.  
Now that would be quite a transformation  
for Acis, wouldn't you say?"

*Richard Steele*



## MY LIBRARIAN

I have run to my  
Librarian to  
Diagnose my head.  
We speak across some  
Case of cards. I dread  
My skull leaks - Open Head.

I had felt so proud  
In the past few weeks,  
A snorty thickness  
Of complacency  
Good but frightful I-  
Deas - my skull leaks!

"Probably from outside in"  
Guesses my librarian.  
Who knows the arts of medicine  
From but some of many books.

As I lightly lean over  
Her card file, The Only mover  
Of her. I see veneer  
Reflect my forehead holes.

Saint August Saint Thomas Christ!  
Did you ever get the holes?!  
Can they be cured today - now?!  
Christ you did. Will You  
can you

Oh! Forgive my outburst! Beg your grace!  
My backsmall hurts; The space  
On bent head - between her fingers - the space  
Which if drawn up past the steep  
Quickbrick but - DOMED,  
Roof, is so empty and so cold.  
Perhaps I just will live and go  
To old with my holes then - Stop!

All with a skull crust of fine flakey  
Philosophy, my youth be  
That unbaked complacency,  
Happy - ahead, full, thick, dough.

I fear I leak much  
For her eyes are wet  
Fear? - Germs to catch  
Which could raise a tooquick crust?

She's run away. Don't touch yet, please  
Or that might be all.  
Leave it be me who makes it fall.  
Let it be I who makes me fall.

And when my lips have touched the gall  
It's only then when you may feel it all.

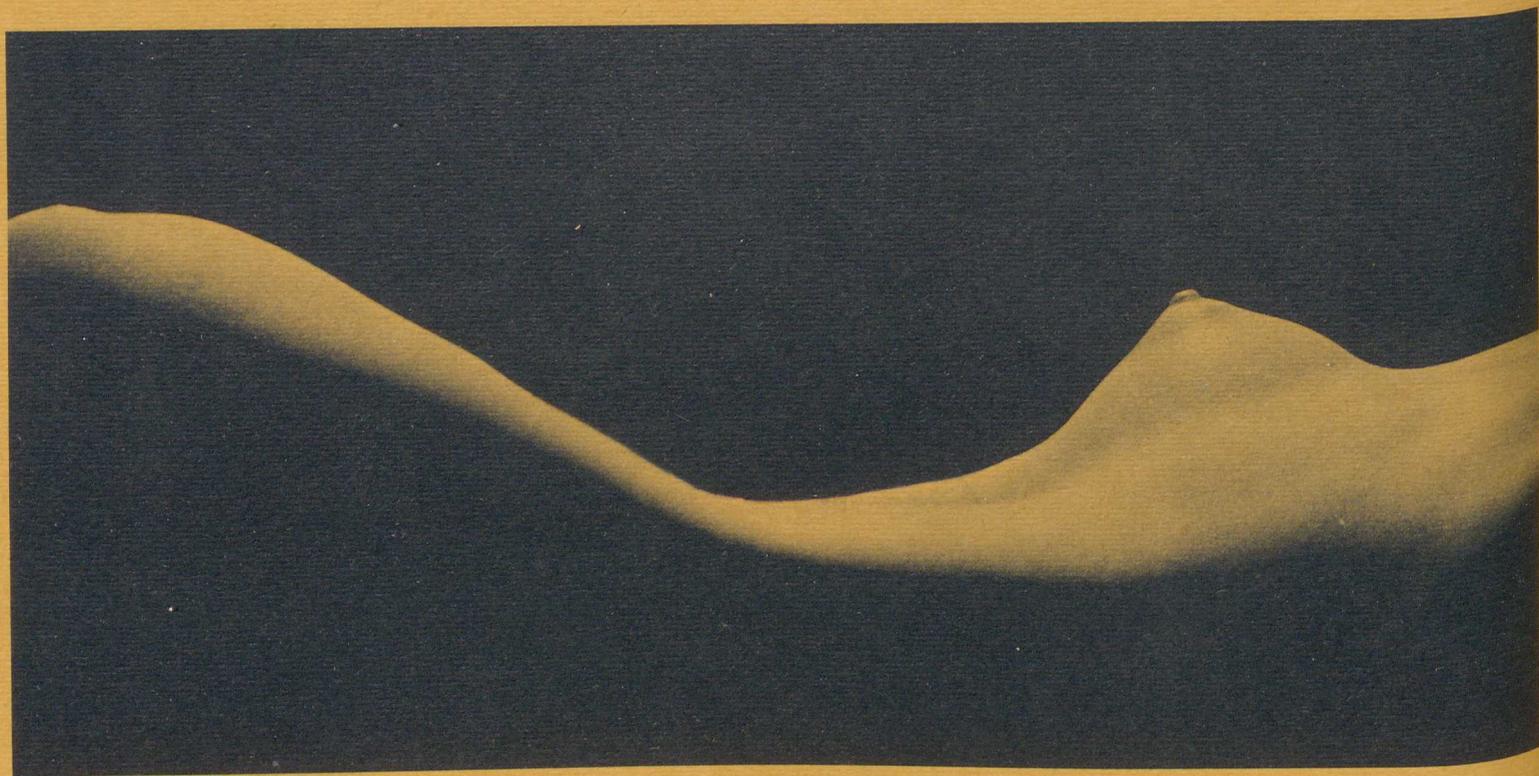
Guy B. Senese

## thief of fire

sun, voleur de feu, you are a giant with a spiro I. Q.  
whose amorous motions are some kind of stompings  
whose protective gestures gouge eyes of--well, who do you love?  
fall, sun, fall--into the ocean with you, once and for all!

sun, thy kingdom cowers, coos for you  
and the sounds,  
too weak to fill your vast abyss of light,  
are swallowed up in it  
like the gray birds which, rising for a time from the black mass of trees,  
drop back for eons into the leaves  
like unnaturally falling stones,  
being stunned by the viscous impact of you, o sun  
sun, you are a white dance pleased with thick talk  
about freedom  
i know some salt who say that you love them  
that's some way to show it by kicking her brains out.

*Steve Mitchell*



## Carol

### I

If you are not careful at night,  
the walking-back, autumn leaves  
become stars in their own right --  
the moon is an owl's eye,  
open and perched to leap  
and peck  
at your heart  
that knows  
the ready, ready, ready  
pace of the Kishwakee  
red tower light  
winking bloodshot . . .

### II

When I held your hand  
you smiled: "I'm cold blooded."  
And I wanted yellow birches  
and green birches in the shine  
of a leaf far away ---  
later, your hand was warm,  
the dorm door squeaked shut,  
the cold swoossh of poplars  
in me, I tried loosing you  
in white breaths going up,  
the Alka-seltzer moon sang  
"love is a Venus-fly-trap . . ."  
but poplars came  
at my first communion  
when dry-mouthed, Mama-Mia host,  
I could have sworn the bishop  
walked off with the wine

*Domenico Bilotto*

# SATURDAY EVENING CONVERSATION

By Craig M. Carpenter

Mrs. Baie emerged from the bathroom off the kitchen. She was growing more nervous and did not want the Mr. to notice. She kept to the kitchen, trying to busy herself with dinner preparations. Movement was limited by the squat old Kelvinator, the gas blackened Range, the dinette set, exposed sink, and protruding linoleum counter top. She loosened a cigarette from her pack, but, after hesitating, carefully replaced it, unlit.

A lady of 47 years, a motherless housewife of 29, and a joint tenant of the apartment for 10, her appearance was neither tidy nor unkempt—rather comfortably in between in her incessant housedress of pastel. Just under 5 foot 6 inches in her slippers, her figure sagged just over the weight of clearly definable and separate body proportions.

Over a brown A & P bag she peeled potatoes, glancing askance at her Mr., the dilettante of the audio-visual broadcast world, presently a prisoner within the misshapen, overstuffed, ham-puke pink chair which owned a front corner of the living room. Glassed over eyes glowed vacantly out at the 20" screen encased in the huge cabinet of white birch veneer. A bright day was a full two hours from over, but the living room sat shrouded in a grey diffuse glow. The Mr. always watched the Saturday Matinee with drapes drawn to reduce the glare. Actually he favored sports over movies on weekends, but it was late March, that hellish period between big-ten basketball and the Cubs, when only PGA semi-final rounds were available for Saturday afternoon viewing. The Mr. would rather turn off the set than watch a golf tournament.

A year his wife's elder, he sat 10 lbs. more overweight than her, but the Mr. as of yet retained amazingly solid muscle tone. His face was arranged in slabs and his general appearance could be best termed as ruggedly ugly. His clothes, open collared flannel shirts and wash and wear work slacks, were as functional as his wife's housedresses. He felt secure enough in matters of style to own a pair of hard-soled mocassins which he wore constantly within the apartment. The Baies' changed underpants everyday: the Mr. his circus-T-shirts and the Mrs. her bras every two days. The Mr.'s position on the

General Electric motor line was dusty, and piece-work caused him to sweat; he liked a vacuumed home and fresh underwear.

The Mrs. had hoped to present her question before the movie, during *The American Sportsman*, but the Mr. had bumped his beer off the ash tray stand, onto the gray, irised rug, activating a lyrical line of oaths which countered the exhilarating effect of the caraboo kill and also prevented the Mrs. from speaking up. At 3:00 she was again thwarted when he became enraged with the T.V. guide for falsely listing the Saturday Matinee as "Snakepit", one of his favorites, when indeed, "They Died With Their Boots On" was the week's true offering. But now it was 4:00. She cleared her throat through her nose.

"Harry?"

"HMMMMM..."

"I was thinking maybe we could do something tonight."

"What's up!"

"Nothin's *up!* I just thought maybe we could go out someplace or something. . . . It's been a long time since we been out. You know?"

"Hell, I can't go out tonight. The damn PBA tourney at Cleveland is on at 6:00 on 13."

"I thought maybe we could get out and do something, you know?"

Harold lost interest in the conversation. His life style had grown to exclude true communication. Words to each other were simply the vestigial remains of intimate thought intercourse.

"We having that roast tonight?"

The Mrs. stared at her husband's outline in the dimmed room.

"Anybody who spends Saturday night watching somebody else bowl on T.V.'s got a perversion!"

"Bullshit. . . they don't show stuff if people don't watch it, do they?" Harold was tempted to tell her about the Nielson rating system.

The Mrs. crumpled the paper bag closed and crammed it into the plastic garbage can under the sink. Harold brooded over the movie, a little nervous himself.

"What am I supposed to do while you watch that stupid bowling?"

"Well hell, look at a goddamn magazine. You're the one who needs all the damn subscriptions to everything!"

"I already looked at every one of them."

"Well, why don't you try reading them then!"

"Listen here, Harold, the last we were out was before Easter and I think I've got a little enjoyment coming, and I mean to get out of here right tonight so you can just take your bowling match and smoke it!"

The Mrs. tightened her grip on the counter and braced for the reaction. The Mr. struggled violently to free his back, shoulders, neck and head from quicksand cushions, using the leverage afforded him by his elbows and wrists on the armrests. Black eyes sparkled as he made it to an upright seating, and he clenched his pickle knuckles to his hands, while letting his forearms rest flat on the armrests, trying to obtain a regal posture on his tired throne.

"Now listen, goddamn it . . . I'm trying to watch this movie!"

It was not much, but the words were unimportant. The fact that he had become sufficiently upset to pull himself from the sucking muck of scratchy wool was enough to temporarily intimidate the Mrs.

"Sheeit." Harold eased back partially into the cushions but could not relax enough to reenter completely. The movie was dragging, Custer was testifying before Congress, and the Mr. felt she was merely regrouping her forces.

"You want peas or corn?"

"I don't care . . . peas."

The compressed dwelling began slowly filling with heady wafts of cauliflower which seeped through the walls from Mrs. Munch's side. It was growing a little greyer in the living room. The screen door banged and the paper was there.

"You want gravy?"

Harold did not hear. Custer was just about to catch an arrow high on the chest. The Mr. was a big Errol Flynn fan. His grip tightened on his last Black Label.

"DO YOU WANT GRAVY?"

"YES, GOD DAMN IT!"

Then Custer fell and the movie was over. As the credits rolled down the screen, Harold pulled himself out and up and turned off the set.

"Why don't you open them curtains and let some light in!"

Without answering the Mr. opened the door and picked up the paper.

"Jesus Christ! Does she live on that stinking cauliflower?" He left open the door and pulled the draw, parting the drapes, and then once again surrendered himself to the armchair. He began to review the sports.

The opened dimity exposed faded wallpaper cursed with enormous pastel crocuses which overlapped at each crease, and a ceiling hung papered in must yellowed white. The pieces of furniture were few, but their sheer bulk dwarfed the floor space. The Mr.'s chair was frightening, but even it seemed comfortably functional in comparison to the obese, unused sofa which kept a fifth of the living room unutilized. It lay back defiantly hostile like a 300 pound virgin. Its color and texture were that of dead moss and its cushions resembled three bizarrely lumped goiders. Directly opposite the Mr.'s corner sat the Mrs.' evergreen and rust rocker, her family "heirloom", the first item her father ever purchased on credit. Four feet to the rocker's right crouched the television in its corner. The blackened screen now mirrored the Mr. as he read.

"S'ready. . ."

Upon Harold's seating at the dinette, the Mrs. immediately renewed her attack. The living room was his and the quiet demanded there was respected. The kitchen, however, was hers—sanctum and citadel.

"The meat O.K.?"

The Mr. chose to assume the defensive. He could not understand what was affecting his wife so strangely.

"S'o.k. . . . Little gristle."

The Mrs. could not approach a situation subtly without triggering a pressure within her sinuses. She hated headaches. As a result, she was seldom subtle.

"Harry, I want to go out tonight. I want us to go out tonight."

"Where!"

"I don't care. You pick it."

"I'm not going nowhere until the tournament's over with.."

"You want some more peas?" He did not understand.

"I can't eat with the whole god damn building smelling like that stinking cauliflower. . . Jesus!"

"Well, just what time does the *tournament* get over with?"

"Listen. . . Welu, Carter, Josephson and Bluth are in it, so don't go saying *tournament* like it's some kind of bush-league crap!"

"I don't care one bit who's in it, when does it get over with?"

"It says it starts at 6:00 and gets over at 8:00. . .but you can't trust that damn T.V. guide."

"Well, we can go at 8:00 then. Harold, we have to get out. . ."

"Just where in the hell do you want to go!"

"Well you can just watch your language a little bit. Don't start swearing at me like I'm your T.V. guide!"

They fell silently on the dinner.

"You can pick it, I don't care. Harold. . .we can go to "Rukavin's" or for a ride or something. Maybe a show?"

"Well I can't eat anymore with this god damn smell!" The Mr. wheeled in his chair and threw his fork viciously at Mrs. Munch's wall. For an instant the fork stuck. Then it dropped behind the stove.

"Harold!"

Harold got up, bumping the table, and immediately offered himself to the ham-puke chair in the living room.

"We're going out, Harold. As soon as I get the dishes we're going out. . . . You wasted a perfectly good roast. . . . Maybe you'll just get some damn cauliflower from me next week!"

"Bullshit."

It was growing dusk and the room's stale vulgarities began retreating into the dimness. The Mrs. scraped away at the dishes over another A & P sack and the Mr. worked himself free to pull the drapes. It was five minutes to 6:00.

With the drapes drawn Harold groped for the television lamp. His own movements grew cautiously deliberate as he listened hard to the movement in the kitchen. The Mrs.

watched him move and squirted a burst of soap into the sink. She looked at the stove clock. It was 5:58.

The Mr. started stealthily toward the big white box.

"Don't you turn on that T.V., Harold."

A little steel ball shot up the Mr.'s spine and the Mrs. held on tight to the sink, her ears burning.

"Bullshit!" The Mr. bent down and quickly turned the big, ancient plastic knob below the screen. The click reverberated throughout the apartment. The pieces of the stale room watched slyly. Harold ceremoniously adjusted the antenna, took four brisk steps across the room and sunk back into the armchair.

". . .the top names in bowling today. From Cleveland, Ohio's "Fairview Lanes" it's the PBA Tournament of Champions. . . ."

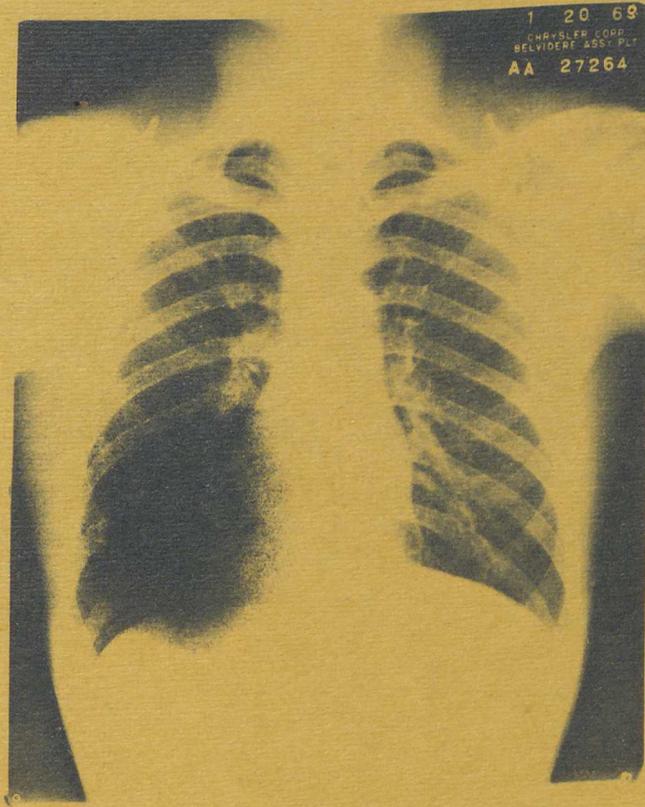
The Mrs. shut off the faucet and wiped her hands on the dish towel. She took four weary steps to the middle of the grey, irised rug and stared hopelessly at the Mr., who grimly averted the gaze. Then she turned and reached down for the unused ash stand by the untouched sofa. Swinging it as if it was a tennis racket she stroked the ash stand cleanly through the top of the television screen. The corner of the room shattered and went black.

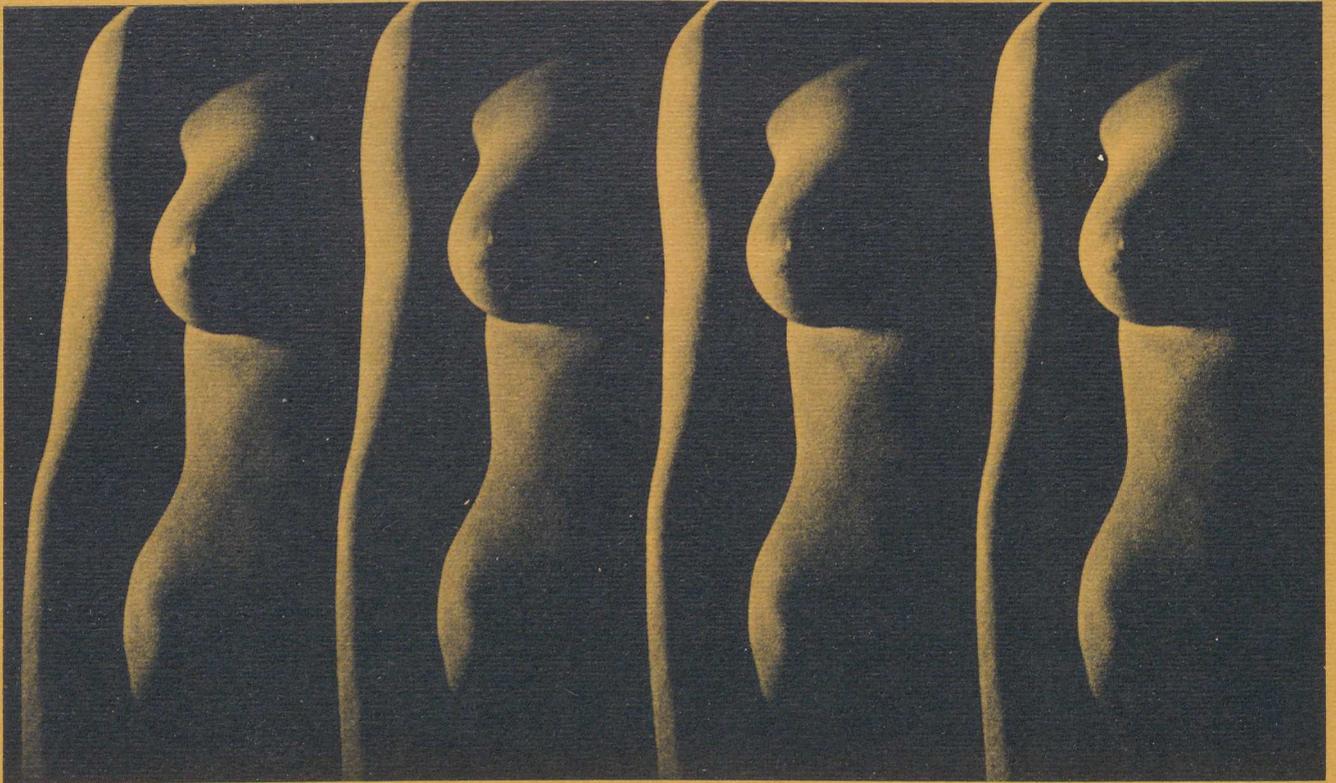
Harold went stiff inside his chair. The Mrs. turned to him and for a second hoped to tell him with her eyes. Then she broke and trudged through the kitchen to the bedroom.

Ten minutes later the Mr. called to her from the living room doorway.

"I'm gonna bring the car round front. . . . Change your clothes. . . ."

From his wallet he unfolded a scrap of paper and quickly dialed the number on it, a nervous glance trained on the bedroom door. He spoke softly. "Jensen? This is Harold Baie. . . . You still interested in selling that color Magnavox?"





## New Lives

### I

It will be  
Subtle as the wing  
Of an ichneumon fly  
And startle, taking  
Breath like sudden hail  
When you come with  
Marvelous nothing  
For yet another life.

### II

"We will be moving  
Very quickly now."  
Knowing since morning  
A stone reflection:  
Smoke filling me,  
Giving form.

This is familiar,  
Strange to be touched, smoke,  
And moving very quickly  
For a certain end  
Or beginning  
In bright air.

*Flora Foss*

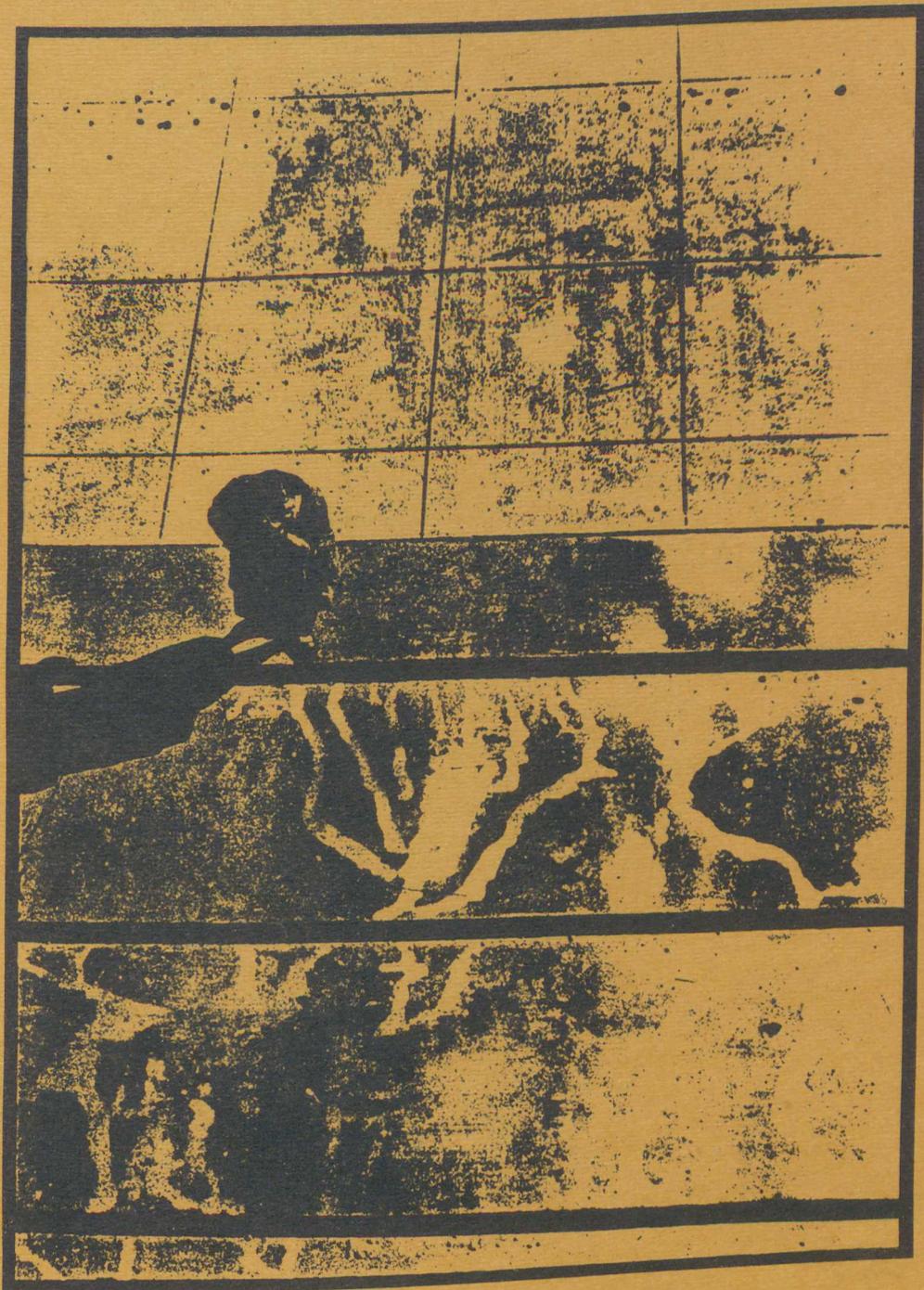
## Impressions of my dead friend

Sometimes he'll rest  
In that gash he made--  
    And it dries,  
    Tightening around him

But aroused  
By the air we shared,  
His pounding beneath the wound  
Resounds

Till breathless silence  
Turns over eyes, in sleep--  
    And footsteps  
    Beneath mine are seen  
    On all the paths  
    Followed that day

*Florence Morgan*



## Carpenter

A carpenter sweats on our roof.  
He pounds and snorts  
While Beechnut grains  
In the cracks of his teeth.

A cross-brace stays him as  
He builds a lark of wind,  
Leaning, ankles like hinges.

The kids take him lemonade.  
The oldest spies his  
Thumbnail; the younger  
Runs giggling as he spits.

There is no mystery in him  
And thank Christ for that.  
We need a roof. Not a poem.

*Karl Elder*

# THE OLD GUITARIST (PICASSO)

Pouring tepid  
arpeggios  
across his weariness  
he soaks until  
he drifts

His fingers stroke  
spray clean  
sudden surfacing runs  
splashing riffs  
against his brow

Floating melodies  
wash  
his tired drought  
irrigating further  
his desert

Diving deep into  
clear chords  
bathed by progressions  
caressed his sin dissolves  
like bread into wine

*John Cebula, Jr.*

## Setter

Like a flame,  
A brief body,  
You leap  
To be snapped back  
As fire to source,  
To leap again.

Burning, I too  
Have felt the leash,  
Despise him  
With his jerks,  
Barking, "Heel, dammit."

*Flora Foss*

# PEACE

Peace comes  
masked in war,  
wearing palethread  
and old  
from digging  
too many graves.

*James Minor*

I can hear time stick  
pins in my ears  
and dance until sunrise  
tomorrow is work  
strange  
the clock is facing sideways

*Gary Latman*

to the artist  
gone commercial

a snake charmer  
drawing  
truth  
from  
the pit

& seeing the world  
reel

buys a cat  
& fiddle

*John Pawula*





## **Beelzebubble Body Dance**

Spiraltwining Pythons tinselwhipty skirting  
crystal Kelvin Arctic eye's coldimplodely boasting  
palpitating Jello molds singularly slapping  
osterizing candy cane swirlawhirly dangling  
rumpelating puffy peach boundaboutly pistoning  
vauntelofting love sticks telgraphs a hope  
--a scarlet aspiration that a bubble may be burst.

*Thomas R. Liszka*



# The Waste Land's Wicked Deck:

## The Tarot as a Key to the Reading of the Poem

By Glynn Steele

Early in "The Burial of the Dead," *The Waste Land's* protagonist, ailing and reft of his old gods, seeks wisdom and direction in the pseudo-religious art of fortune-telling. Seen as but one episode in *The Waste Land's* series of events, the reading of the Tarot risks being lost among equally colorful scenes. That the episode provides Eliot with a useful method of foreshadowing is evident; but Madame Sosostriis and her wicked pack of cards become enormously more vital to the poem than tools of effective structuring. As the fortune teller recites the magical names of members of the deck, a mood of mystery is created, preparing the reader for his unreal journey. By virtue of its prophetic nature, the episode of the fortune provides the first clue to the entire poem's theme. However, one of the more consequential functions this scene performs is introducing the mystic deck of the Tarot into the scope of the poem and, concomitantly, bringing to *The Waste Land* its entourage of archetypal and timeless symbols.

To understand the significance of the fortune-telling episode and to appreciate the vital role the Tarot cards themselves play in this poem, one must be aware of the implications of the mystic pack and the legends surrounding it. In *From Ritual to Romance*, Jessie L. Weston claims that the symbols of the Tarot were discovered on calendars in the ruins of Egyptian temples. As these calendars were supposedly connected with the rise and fall of the waters of the Nile, she suggests that the original Tarot pack was used to predict the fertility of the land.<sup>1</sup> Thus linked to the inevitable cycle of death and rebirth, the Tarot pack becomes analogous to vegetation-regeneration myths, the legend of the Grail, and the waste-land motif. Moreover, the Tarot deck functions as a pictorial microcosm in which man's life-drama is graphically portrayed.

As J. E. Cirlot points out in *A Dictionary of Symbols*, "Each of the images (of the twenty-two cards) comprises a fusion of certain ideas. . . . The intention is to create. . . an order. . . and to design a wheel which would embody all the

archetypal potentialities of the entire existence and evolution of mankind."<sup>2</sup> Thus it can be seen that present in the Tarot pack are a set of symbols and a basic, emerging mythology that objectify the stages of the life experience, bringing into man's field of vision the massive and the elusive. To effect a similar apprehension of intangibles in his reader through image and symbol is the aim of the poet. But to discover in the Tarot an existing set of life images bound to a basic mythology and then to superimpose them upon one's own story is the technique utilized by Eliot in *The Waste Land*.

Despite his assertion of unfamiliarity with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack and his claim of departure from it to suit his own convenience,<sup>3</sup> Eliot seems to have relied upon the reading of the cards as the central device by which he develops the poem's theme. Wedding myth to mystic deck, Eliot associates the central figure of his poem, the Fisher King, with the card of the Hanged Man. Of further curiosity, however, are the Tarot cards that Eliot has omitted from the reading. Perceiving the significance of the Tarot in this poem thus becomes a two-fold problem: The reader must examine the symbolic suggestions of the Tarot cards present in the reading as well as their effectiveness as foreshadowing and unifying devices. Secondly, since the *absence* of vital elements is so central to this poem's meaning, the reader must consider the cards missing from Mme. Sosostriis's "wicked pack." Whether these cards were purposefully omitted or merely overlooked by the author becomes a moot question; for the timeless symbols portrayed in cards unnamed by Eliot are indeed present in the poem and this presence warrants our acknowledgement and our examination of the Tarot cards they represent.

Telling the fortune of *The Waste Land's* protagonist, Mme. Sosostriis sees three Authentic Tarot cards and notes the absence of one: Present are The Wheel of Fortune, The Man With Three Staves (The Three of Wands) and The One-Eyed Merchant (The Six of Pentacles); missing is The Hanged Man. Having no counterpart in the Tarot deck, The Drowned Phoenician Sailor and Belladonna are cards of Eliot's own invention. Still, cryptic remarks made by the clairvoyant during the course of the reading leave room for speculation with respect to the identity of the cards present and the prophecy they suggest. Mme Sosostriis sees "crowds of people, walking round in a ring" but is forbidden the sight of a card picturing someone carrying "something" upon his back. "Fear death by water" concludes the audience and the fate of the poem's multi-faceted protagonist has, by this mystic reading, been cast.

Significantly, the card most central to the reading of both fortune and poem is the missing Hanged Man, a card which has many positive implications. Cirlot suggests his suspension in space implies the Hanged Man's isolation in a region of the ideal, his inverted position representing purification.<sup>4</sup> Curiously associated with this image is an ancient practice of pagan worshippers—that of turning fertility idols upside down when the land suffered drought. Consequently, a legendary link is forged between The Hanged Man, primitive vegetation-regeneration rites associated with the legend of the Fisher-King, and the protagonist of Eliot's poem. Since images of sterility characterize the poem from the start, The Hanged Man is aptly missing from Mme Sosostri's reading.

Present, however, is The Wheel of Fortune. Irreconcilable Fate is represented by the handle that sets the wheel in motion, sending it floating on the ocean of chaos pictured on the card. Mystical animals in the corners of the card typify unchanging reality, while the sphinx suggests the mystery of all things.<sup>5</sup> Utilizing this card, Eliot has, in effect, suggested a world in perpetual flux, but inscrutable and devoid of human meaning. It is likely that The Wheel was dealt inverted to the protagonist, for thus positioned, its divinatory meaning betokens ill fortune. Moreover, the bareness, the constant, directionless motion, and the absence of divine humanness in the Tarot card are reflected in *The Waste Land's* troubled atmosphere.

Also dealt the protagonist is Eliot's "One-Eyed Merchant," well represented by the Tarot's Six of Pentacles. The suit of pentacles signifies magical arts and is associated with money.<sup>6</sup> Also worthy of note is the significance of the merchant's single eye, which often includes subhuman implications. This card, appearing reversed, divines envy, avarice, and treachery, qualities which foreshadow the appearance of Mr. Rugenides, the current merchant of "The Fire Sermon," and which illustrate the crass desires of characters in "A Game of Chess."

Closely allied to "The One-Eyed Merchant" is "The Man With Three Staves," the Tarot's Three of Wands. Portraying branches perpetually in leaf, the suit of Wands emphasizes the constant renewal of life. George Williamson suggests that the protagonist is offered by the Thunder three such life-giving staves (Give, Sympathize, Control) which could make revival possible, but that they are denied.<sup>7</sup> Awareness of this rejection leads one to assume that The Three of Wands fell to the protagonist in reversed position. For inversion of Wand cards suggests the source of life-energy turned toward

destruction; and present in the poem is the sense of chaotic motion and disorder that could well reflect the life force gone awry. Connected to The Hanged Man by the factor of regeneration, The Three of Wands shares with The Merchant and association with trade and commerce. A further link is forged by the divinatory meaning of The Three of Wands, which prophesies betrayal by a merchant.

But what of the cards missing from the reading? Mme Sosostri had a "bad cold" that day; hence her sensory (and extra-sensory) perceptions were dulled. Thus, she may have failed to notice significant cards whose figurative presence is made undeniable by their curious similarity to vivid images in the poem. Awareness of these "missing" cards, their symbolism, and their relationship to the fulfillment of the prophecy may result in a richer reading of both poem and fortune.

Mme Sosostri mentions a card "Which is blank, is something he carries on his back, / Which I am forbidden to see." The referent of "his" is unclear; turning to the Tarot, however, one finds that The Ten of Wands pictures a man carrying a bundle of sticks upon his back. Recalling the symbolism connected with the suit of Wands, one might interpret this heavy burden as fertility. An ambivalent prophecy is presented: the bearer may reach his goal or may be thwarted by treachery. Like the character in The Ten of Wands, the Fisher-King-Protagonist is also destined to journey through an "unreal city," and it is upon him that the burden of revitalization falls. His impotence renders the responsibility of renewal a burden as oppressive as the weight borne by the man of the Tarot card.

Curious too is Mme Sosostri's vague perception of "crowds of people, walking around in a ring." Herbert Knust sheds light on this vision by seeing it as a circle of Dante's hell in which the damned endlessly parade.<sup>8</sup> But the Tarot deck again proves helpful in further divining the essence of fortune and poem. The Five of Wands is the only card in the Tarot picturing people assembled in a circle; they are young men brandishing wands as if in combat. Recalling this suit's fertility and regeneration symbolism, one perceives that the activity may picture the strife of the Protean protagonist in his circular struggle to possess the fertility necessary to return fertile life to his world.

An elusive image from "What the Thunder Said" is that of the third figure "who always walks beside" the protagonist. "Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded," the figure has been tentatively identified as The Hanged Man, Christ, and

as the Fisher-King. Turning again to the Tarot, one finds that The Hermit gives a close graphic and symbolic depiction of this "third figure." Significantly, the appearance of the mysterious figure in the poem is heralded by a "hermit-thrush." The only hooded figure in the deck, The Hermit may represent Absolute Wisdom; but inverted, the card denotes the refusal to confront life's responsibilities.

Since the Fisher-King's inability to see the hooded figure clearly suggests lack of perception; since he displays spiritual weakness instead of sagacity; since he exhibits inability to commit himself to life's tasks, one assumes The Hermit has indeed been dealt in reversed position. The accompanying mantled figure seems to represent not only the second-self of inadequacy that haunts the protagonist, but the elusive state of wisdom and wholeness that appears only to torment him with its evasiveness.

Imagery of inversion present in lines 380-85 of "What the Thunder Said" calls to mind another Tarot card, The Tower Struck by Lightning." The tower is half-destroyed, and flesh-colored bricks suggest that this torn structure is an image of a human being. Allegorically, the striking of the tower represents the consequence of pride, an event which may effect either a state of enlightenment or of catastrophe in the victim.<sup>9</sup> The text surrounding the image of towers "upside down in air" seems to support the theme of cataclysm by its profuse imagery of disorder. Herbert Knust points out the sinister implications of inversion by reminding us that Dante saw it as tantamount to perversion, and concluding that inversion expresses "a broken, dissonant, problematical world."<sup>10</sup> In its allusion to mortality, The Tower card returns the emphasis of Eliot's imagery from structure to man, the prime object on which the poem focuses. Moreover, the card portrays the overthrow of the materialism Eliot scorned in "A Game of Chess" and "The Fire Sermon." Though not present in Mme Sosostris's reading, The Tower card might well have been, for it illustrates the protagonist's disordered state and the chaos of his world.

Another card conspicuous by its absence is The Page of Cups, which seems emblematic of the Fisher-King. The page is pictured holding chalice and fish, symbols reiterating the happiness and fecundity portrayed in the entire suit. Christian symbol merges with pagan archetype in both fish and Tarot card, reflecting Eliot's coupling of the young Buddha's Fire Sermon with an Augustinian supplication. As the Fisher-King is the center of an entire cult of nature worship, as he provides the essence of the poem's tale, it seems

significant that the Tarot card closest to him in image be absent from the fortune-teller's reading; for thus is forecast the terrible truth of his failure.

At length, the prophecy of Mme Sosostris, told through the Tarot's enigmatic deck, becomes reality, and the spirit of disaster foretold in the fortune tells, and what appears to be equally careful omission of others, Eliot has skillfully unified *The Waste Land*. Regarding Sosostris herself as emblematic of her Tarot deck and of the fortune she tells, one realizes her twisted nature becomes indicative of the prophesied fate of the contemporary world. In her modern hands, the time-worn deck of the ancient symbols and religious designs of man's life-drama is indeed transformed into a "wicked pack of cards," its only prophecy, hell on earth. To look upon these mystic cards is to raise the mask of Eliot's imagery and, ultimately, to perceive the bare face of doom.

#### Notes

- 1 Jessie L. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance*, (New York, 1957), p. 80.
- 2 J. E. Cirlot, "Tarot Pack," *A Dictionary of Symbols*, (New York, 1962), p. 312.
- 3 T. S. Eliot's note to line 46 of "The Burial of the Dead," reprinted in *A College Book of Modern Verse*, ed. J. K. Robinson and W. B. Rideout, (New York, 1958), p. 464.
- 4 Cirlot, "The Hanged Man," p. 132.
- 5 Cirlot, "The Wheel of Fortune," p. 352.
- 6 Eden Gray, *The Tarot Revealed*, (New York, 1960), p. 87. My statements concerning the divinatory meanings of the cards are based on this study.
- 7 George Williamson, *A Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot*, (New York, 1953), p. 119.
- 8 Herbert Knust, "Tristan and Sosostris," *Revue de Littérature Comparee*, XL, pp. 235-45, p. 242.
- 9 Cirlot, "The Tower Struck by Lightning," p. 327.
- 10 Knust, p. 241.

## To Barbara

Would Helen's face have launched a thousand ships,  
If Helen were possessed of Irish hips?  
Or, if such hips were on Penelope,  
Would Od have ever made his Odyssey?  
Would Homer find it difficult to flatter  
What was already flatter than a platter?

No, Helen's ships would not be moved to launch,  
Dissuaded by the broadside of her haunch;  
And neither would a quest be made by Od,  
If his true love displayed so odd a bod;  
And Homer's song would treat them as taboo  
--For none of these have seen those had by you.

If Helen had the half of Barbara's seat,  
The Greeks would surely launch three times the fleet.  
The Odyssey would its whole self unbend,  
If it were leading up to such an end;  
And Homer would six epic poems amass,  
If he had been inspired by such a lass.

Thomas R. Liszka



## SOUTH DAKOTA

mainlining south dakota  
along interstate 90  
is speeding

the sioux  
are back  
to war  
&  
mescaline

in the rush  
buttes rise  
& fall

fence posts  
on suntake  
like notches  
on gunstock  
darken old wood

in the rush  
buttes still rise  
& fall

the sioux  
mounting  
their pinto  
fire broken  
arrows  
to the sun

*James Minor*

## An Authentic Buffalo Waller

If Garcia Lopez de Cardenas had known  
(Not Coronado's man but his own--  
Lord of a half-dozen or so and a muleteer)  
He had carried home to Spain such a tale  
Thrice greater than he told with many  
Maunderings and arms flung wide.

If the man from Wichita too-- with his  
Airstream Travel Trailer (who thought  
of man from his ankles down and was  
heard to say at his most sublime:  
"When your feet hurt, you hurt--  
all over." Familiar genie of Main Street  
who brought you shoes to fit your little feet)  
Now standing at this historic precipice,  
As oblivious-- if he knew.

As I was saying, if Garcia Lopez de Cardenas  
Had known that the gulf at which he stood,  
Astounded, hung on the telemetry of his two eyes,  
Or on the thickness of the air,  
The layers of mist from the snaky Colorado,  
On the sunlight, the dust--  
Ultimately on the dust--  
He had called his men and muleteer aside  
Pointing to the cow rippling below  
(For "cow" it was compared to the beast  
that dug the waller) and explained  
In patient words a thing or two about landscape.

But neither he nor the toe-genie from Wichita  
Would be at all impressed by this  
Dry ditch, muddy in the Spring,  
Overgrown by prairie grass  
(Authentic what?)  
Not knowing as you know  
That landscape is a trick of the eye.  
You can look with perfect fairness  
At these declivities in the earth,

With as much equanimity as the sun  
Looks down on them from the skies  
Over Colorado,  
Over Kansas--  
Or can gesticulate as wildly  
Over the shallow gully  
As the greater.

And the beast that dug the waller?  
He had followed the sun from Kansas  
And wintered for a time far from Wichita.  
His lineaments: an old heaviness of flesh  
And bone of which all but relic remains  
Templed in the archives.  
The head and horn (white, glistening bone)  
From tip to tip: 35½ inches.  
The left horn: 23. Circumference  
At base: 15½  
The right horn: 21½. Circumference  
At base: 16.  
The abstraction fairly stalls the imagination.  
The white bones glisten to no purpose.  
One must approach the waller.  
And as an enemy, from surprise,  
At ambush in the dusk or in the dawn,  
Stealthily, to take its sounding.  
Like the hunter of the plains, creep  
To catch the beast at sleep or drowsing.  
One must have an Indian mind  
To stand at the precipice and feel  
The presence long after the sun  
Has melted the tough gristle from the bone  
And the flesh and shag of the beast  
Have vanished into air--  
And have a view to landscape that the Spaniard  
never owned, that the man from Wichita  
Will not admit--  
To stand there where the shadows lengthen  
Over the plains, at the brink of this grand canyon,  
This authentic buffalo waller.

*Richard Steele*

## Method In The Cyclops Episode:

Joyce On The Nature Of Epic Heroes And Their Antagonists

By Richard D. Finholt

“My naked weapon is out”

Sampson to Gregory  
*Romeo And Juliet*  
Act I, sc. 1

“On this he groaned, and cried out, ‘Alas, alas, then the old prophecy about me is coming true. There was a prophet here, at one time . . . who was an excellent seer, and did all the prophesying for the Cyclops till he grew old; he told me that all this would happen to me some day, and said I should lose my sight by the hand of Ulysses. I have been all along expecting some one of imposing presence and superhuman strength, whereas he turns out to be a little insignificant weakling, who has managed to blind my eye by taking advantage of me in my drink . . . .’”

The Cyclops to the retreating but  
victorious Ulysses  
*The Odyssey* (trans. Samuel Butler)  
Book IX (506)

In the valor of ignorance, Homer’s Odysseus stepped ashore in the alien land of the fierce Cyclops. History repeats itself in quasi-Hermetic “correspondences” in Joyce’s universe.<sup>1</sup> And, thus, we see, “O’ Bloom, the son of Rory: it is he. Impervious to fear is Rory’s son: he of the prudent soul”, (297)<sup>2</sup> known variously to his alien Irishmen fellows as “the prudent member”, one of “those Jewies”, and speaker of “jawbreakers”; we see Bloom step recklessly into the *cave* of the “citizen”, Barney Kiernan’s pub. Will epic heroes ever learn?

Jack Dempsey, in recounting his fight with the enormous and powerful champion Jess Willard, has said that his own gigantic self-confidence completely disintegrated when Willard lumbered into the ring, turned his back on Dempsey, flexed the muscles of his flagstone back, and lifted his fists twice as far into the air as Dempsey was tall.<sup>3</sup> At that moment the challenger, whose size barely qualified him as a

heavyweight much less made him look like a potential champion, fought the classic epic struggle. The battle, as always, was between his will, which pictured glory, and body, which counseled survival with the seemingly prophetic arguments of nausea and unresponsive legs.

Dempsey's struggle parallels that of Odysseus and Bloom in the irony that once again appearance has fooled the participants into believing that it is reality. Willard's size was to prove a bantamweight in its ability to cope with Dempsey's speed, skill, punch, and daring (Dempsey rushed out at the bell, swung a left-hook at a 60 degree angle into the air and Willard went over on his face like a tree). The point is: who was more surprised at this, Dempsey or Willard? Similarly, in both their own minds and that of their antagonists, Odysseus and Bloom barely qualify for manhood by the standards of the country, much less epic stature (the citizen on Bloom: "Do you call that a man?" (338)).

Because Joyce could see through the appearance of intimidating Cyclopien myths that threatened the intellectual survival and, therefore, the good of the race, he created a hero-prophet, who, like Christ and unlike Odysseus, comes to save rather than destroy. He will not be recognized, of course, just as the Cyclops fails to heed his prophet, because in the arena of human attitudes, prophets do not fight for honor in their own land: they are elected. Had the Willard-Dempsey fans been conceptualizing a computer fight that night, they would have elected Willard.

We Pharisees scratch our heads in exasperated amazement waiting for Jesus to stop with his "jawbreakers about phenomenon" (304) and "confused mucking it up" (313) parables and do something. Of course, when he does it, he'd better knock us down with it, or we'll remember the diminutive image of the carpenter's son and disregard ominous inner reality for the less threatening appearance. If one is Jack Dempsey and this happens, he can keep knocking us down until we have a revelation. But Bloom, an intellectual hero, must wait to be elected. Unfortunately, both Bloom and his antagonists will remember and conceptualize him as a "languid floating flower" (86) and will not recognize the genius of his weapon in its aroused state, even after some epic act of will makes him the only Houyhnyhnm foolish enough to attempt to preach the gospel of reason to the Yahoos.

M.H. Abrams defines an "epic" as "a long narrative poem

on a serious subject, related in an elevated style, and centered about an heroic figure on whose actions depends to some degree the fate of a nation or a race." He defines "mock epic" as "a form of satire in which petty characters and trivial events are made ridiculous by being incongruously presented in all the pomp and ceremony of epic characterization, narration, and style."<sup>4</sup>

Its method in need of categorization, the Cyclops episode seems to be a new variation of the second genre. The argument: The events narrated in no way fit the qualifications of the epic genre; indeed, it is beyond doubt that Joyce intended a comic deflation of the original plot. The style of narration stands in perfectly comic, 180° contrast to the grandeur of epic style. The interpolated interpretations of and digressions upon the narrated events are so preposterously inflated that there is no doubt of their "mock-epic" intention. Finally, it seems that Joyce has added a new dimension to the "mock-epic" technique by allowing the vulgar truth to stand in juxtaposition to the hyperbole that strips it naked. So, we conclude, Joyce's satiric technique is a two edged sword that swipes at that old Swiftian enemy—human pretensions:

And lo, as they quaffed their eyes of joy . . .

I was blue mouldy for the want of that pint . . . .

a godlike messenger came swiftly in radiant as the eye of heaven, a comely youth . . .

Little Alf Bergen popped in round the door and hid behind Barney's snug, squeezed up with the laughing . . .

there passed an elder of noble gait and countenance . . .

that bloody old pantaloen Denis Breen in his bath slippers . . .

bearing the sacred scrolls of law . . .

with two bloody big books under his oxter . . . .

with him his lady wife, a dame of peerless lineage, fairest of her race . . .

the wife hotfoot after him, unfortunate wretched woman trotting like a poodle. (298-99)

Stuart Gilbert was the first to map this strategy:

The technic of the episode, *gigantism*, at first produces

the impression of a series of merely parodic effects. At intervals the narration is taken out of the mouth of the non-descript vulgarian and becomes mock-heroic, Gargantuan, pseudo-scientific or antiquarian in style. This technic often amounts to parody, but it is parody of a special and appropriate kind. The method here is the inflation of certain themes to bursting-point, or the projection of Cyclopien shadows of human forms on the sides of a cavern. Thus an early allusion to the appearance of the Citizen (described by the "vulgarian") is followed by the "gigantic" description of him, distended to monstrous dimensions ("a Broad-shouldered . . . sinewarmed hero" (296)).<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, William York Tindall, while savoring the hilarity of the parodic point of view of the "interruptions by journalists, and writers of epics, sagas, or chronicle histories", emphasizes that Joyce uses them to expose "something terrible."<sup>6</sup>

The targets of these parodies shall be discussed more fully, in turn; however it is of primary importance to determine what and who are *not* being parodied, and why not. Mr. Tindall is again helpful:

Joyce is not retelling Homer's myth, but using it for a story of his own . . . Joyce called upon Homer for simile. *Ulysses* parodies *The Odyssey* only in the sense of using it to enlarge by resemblance and difference the actions and people of a Dublin day. Far from mock-heroic, *Ulysses* makes fun of neither Ulysses nor Bloom. However funny the analogy . . . Joyce's parody is serious, intended to show man in our time forth.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, *Ulysses* on the whole is a serious analogy of an epic and Bloom, consequently, worthy of serious consideration as its hero. This does not mean, of course, that he necessarily has to move through an episode laced with mock-epic satire and emerge unscratched. It does mean, however, that we may not dismiss Bloom's actions as easily as does the Dubliner narrator. It just may be that woven into the fabric of the episode lurks a real epic in disguise.

To fully comprehend the meaning of Bloom's actions and the authorial implications behind the Dubliner's comments on them, it is necessary to delineate *each* from the mock-heroic inflated commentaries. At least two critics, Mr. Gilbert and Arnold Goldman, appear to have failed to make

these distinctions and have led their respective analyses into confusions.

Mr. Goldman is bothered by Bloom's hitherto undemonstrated "loquacity" in this episode; a possible confusion of appearance with reality, it seems. Attempting to explain away this bothersome fact, he hits upon a valuable insight and then proceeds to misinterpret it to fit his own uses. He argues (rightly, I think) that we have all been fooled by the wildly "apperceptive" "pseudo-heroic modes" into thinking that the Dubliner's version is the "realistic" one. He suggests that this version is "just one more version" of the events coming from an "undependable" (Ellman's term) narrator. He concludes, and this is the key point with which I agree, "we are not alternatively 'let in on' the action and pushed back from it, we are held uniformly at a distance." He leads us to conclude that we are being fooled if we accept Bloom as truly a "loquacious polemist," since this is obviously only the simple-minded narrator's "apperception" of him.<sup>9</sup> But surely the narrator's misconceptions about Bloom go deeper than this?

Having proved his point, Mr. Goldman is silent. However, he apparently does not feel the narrator's version bears the weight of too much significance (except as a satire aimed at Bloom concomitant to the dominating "pseudo-heroic" satires) because he can conclude, "All that distinguishes this chapter from many sections of *Finnegans Wake* is the sporadic appearance of the 'actual' scene in the pub." *Sporadic?* I have no idea how he measures, but, in terms of bulk, the dialogue of the narrator's version consumes many a page. To this I count at least 75 intrusions by the narrator for the purposes of "commentary" or "summary" (Booth's terms). Against this I count approximately 30 "pseudo-heroic" inflated interpolations. And, though these are admittedly longer, the words—pound for pound—convey less. That is part of the technic, of course; by means of devices like the droning epic catalogues, the verbiage is inflated, ironically, in terms of bulk as well as style. Is it possible that, seeing the "pseudo-heroic" verbiage lift its massive fists into the air, Mr. Goldman was fooled into making a misplaced, "distended" emphasis?

In a similar way, Stuart Gilbert distorts his helpful analysis of the "gigantism" technic. He seems to consider the Dubliner narrator's version as the counterpoint to the mock-heroic, rather than vice-versa. This leads him to view any effect created by the vulgar version as subordinate to the "gigantic" version. His most detrimental error in this regard

clouds his interpretation of the "shot off a shovel" (345) simile that concludes the "'gigantic' version of Mr. Bloom's departure" and the episode. This is a significant confusion of style and tone—*unique* within the episode; the elevated voice at its crescendo suddenly shifts to the idiom of the vulgar narrator (whose language, incidently, reaches its crescendo in the paragraph immediately preceding). Here, Mr. Gilbert declares, "we find the 'Elijah' *motif*, developed *maestoso*, soaring to height celestial, to crash at last, like Icarus, into sudden bathos."<sup>10</sup> Fine! The motif crashes. Does Bloom go down with the ship? We know of Bloom's established lineage with Icarus through Stephen. Does Mr. Gilbert mean to imply that Joyce infers by this climactic "crash" that Bloom has been flying beyond the bounds of his intellect and deserves satire for his pretensions? Apparently he feels the answer is sufficiently obvious, because his interpretation then crashes into sudden silence.

The interpretations of Mr. Goldman and Mr. Gilbert add up to the more or less helpful conclusion that the mock-heroic interpolations balanced, however subordinately, by the Dubliner's vulgar version give the reader the proper perspective for assessing the events in the pub. Unfortunately, Bloom, as epic hero, gets lost in their respective shuffles of Joyce's shuffle of perspectives of reality.

Mr. Gilbert has declared that "gigantism" is *the* technic of the episode, and he got it from the man himself, I guess. But it seems to me that Joyce employs an equally important technique, exactly opposite in its effect, to play against "gigantism." If you are looking for an inverse term, call it "dwarfism." I prefer the term "deflation." The technique involves, I believe, the Cyclops/Yahoo/Pharisee point of view of the Dubliner narrator, who seeks to demean every one of Bloom's actions and statements. Joyce uses the *conscious* deflation technique employed by the narrator to *inflate* the seemingly comic actions of Bloom to their true epic proportions.

Follow: Like the Cyclops, we will only accept an epic hero of "imposing presence and superhuman strength." We are shocked to find that Joyce does not have even the good taste to enshrine his peculiar hero in a "serious" narrative or, at least, to give him a narrator capable of rising to "elevated style." We are left with two conclusions: one, that the hero's actions are petty and are being parodied by means of contrast with the corollary mock-epic intrusions, or, two, that Joyce has disguised his epic in "sheep's clothing" (338) in order to

catch his reader in an epiphany similar to the one the Cyclops experiences, too late (" 'Alas, alas, then the old prophecy. . .'").

Had Joyce chosen to tell the story in a "realistic" manner, juxtaposing the mock-heroic, we would be justified in making the first conclusion. But Joyce relates his *Odyssey* from the biased perspective of one of the Cyclops' fellows. Naturally, every action of the hero will be viewed hostilely. Every act judged in terms of the prevailing norms. In this regard, Mr. Goldman is quite right in asserting that this creates "distance" from true reality. However, he errs in thinking this is "just one more version"; it is *the* version that conveys Joyce's intentions for the epic he tells—the mock-heroic primarily reflects on the counter-themes that define the nature of the hero's antagonists, I believe. Most significantly, Mr. Goldman confuses an "undependable" narrator with an "unreliable" one. Wayne C. Booth in reference to this episode defines the narrator as dependable in that he maintains a consistent point of view and unreliable in that he definitely does not represent the author's point of view.<sup>11</sup> Booth's analysis of dramatic narrators is, of course, definitive:

In any reading experience there is an implied dialogue among author, narrator, the other characters, and the reader. Each of the four can range, in relation to each of others from identification to complete opposition, on any axis of value, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and even physical.

All of the great uses of *unreliable* (italics mine) narration depend for their success on far more subtle effects than merely flattering the reader or making him work. Whenever an author conveys to his reader an unspoken point, he creates a sense of collusion against all those, whether in the story or out of it, who do not get the point.<sup>12</sup>

We are quite safe in concluding that the narrator is in complete opposition to the author and Bloom on any axis of value and in complete identification with the citizen in terms of their view of Bloom. Since the reader is in complete collusion with the author behind the narrator's back just as the characters are in collusion against Bloom when he returns to the pub, *every* narrational statement automatically produces its counter-statement. The narrator smugly feels he is telling a kind of non-subtle Cyclopean *mock-epic*, in that every comment on the hero serves to demean him. He deflates every action of Bloom by writing it off as petty and pretentious

(304, 313, 341, etc.). But, ironically, in his mouth the mock-heroic becomes heroic, the petty becomes noble, etc. He cannot open his mouth without informing against his own pettiness and stupidity—traits he shares with the “broad-shouldered . . . sinewarmed hero”, defender of the country’s faith, citizen of the Yahoo creed, and antagonist of a true hero. To quote Mr. Tindall again:

The conflict in Barney Kiernan’s is the conflict of hate with love, of inhumanity with humanity, and of compassion with indifference or malice. In his capacity of Elijah, Jesus, and God, Bloom embodies *all* (italics mine) that is opposite his surroundings.<sup>13</sup>

The reader watches this process, and in a precise moment he understands fully, as with Gulliver, that he is being led along by the hand by the moral twin of the hateful Yahoo and vengeful citizen, that his narrator, one of his own kind, would not recognize an epic-hero if he had a stake or a cigar thrust in his eye. At that moment the reader knows that Bloom is surrounded, cut-off, and in mortal danger. And in that moment the reader experiences epiphany—sensing in the lightning-like shift the formula for his own undoing if he ever dared do battle with the ubiquitous Yahoos. He may even realize that he has been no better than the Yahoos in his self-deceiving confusion of appearance with reality; he may have allowed his mind to anchor in comfortable truisms and prejudices, but, like the Citizen who is not given the chance to utter his dogma on “the New Jerusalem” (332), he may come to know he has been forced by a character of daring to consider the meaning of “injustice.”

To balance the nameless Dubliner’s picture of the Yahoo/Cyclops culture of Barney Kiernan’s patrons, the author presents his mock-heroic parody of that culture. Mr. Tindall suggests that, by presenting this “cheerful acceptance of horrors by journalist, historian, and spectator” Joyce achieves an incongruity of tone to matter which shocks the reader into epiphany<sup>14</sup> (this if it occurs and I think it does, is separate and I would think the counter-point to the one I suggest). I used the term “ubiquitous” in regard to the Yahoo culture; “plague” is another concept conveyed by the epiphany Tindall suggests. Joyce has made the epic-makers and journalists share in the conveying of it, because they often are the spokesmen of the same virus spreading with varying intensity, like waves in the waters of the time-space continuum. In a series of concentric metaphors the rings spread out into omnipresence. The island of the Cyclops is

the metaphor for Barney Kiernan’s pub is the metaphor for Ireland is the metaphor for all that is horribly one-eyed, cockeyed in man.

Though it serves varied and complex ends, I contend that the central thrust of the mock-heroic parody derives from Joyce’s intention to write the mock version of the epic that the citizen is continually talking: the epic for the Yahoos begun for them by the citizen’s prefiguration—the Cyclops:

“Talk to me, indeed, about fearing the gods or shunning their anger? We Cyclopes do not care about Jove or any of your blessed gods, for we are ever so much stronger than they.” (Book IX, 272)

Unlike the Cyclops, the citizen has seen the “bugs” (323) land on his shore; he senses that they threaten his one fixed eye. His epic is an intonation, not to Neptune as the Cyclops makes, but to Ireland’s messiah—a conglomeration of once and future heroes who, as everyone knows, will excell in the genius of force, equally triumphant in “putting the stone” and “building up a nation” (316):

— . . . The champion of all Ireland at putting the shot.  
What was your best throw, citizen?  
—*Na bacleis*, says the citizen, letting on to be modest.  
There was a time I was as good as the next fellow  
anyhow.

*A nation once again* in the execution of which the  
veteran patriot champion may be said without fear  
of contradiction to have fairly excelled himself.  
(316-317)

—*Sinn Fein!* says the citizen. *Sinn fein amhain!* The  
Friends we love are by our side and the foes we hate  
before us.

Hard by the block stood the grim figure of the  
executioner.  
(306, 309)

—It’s on the march, says the citizen. To hell with the  
bloody brutal Sassenachs and their *patios*.

uttering his tribal slogan *Lamh Dearg Abu*, he  
drank to the undoing of his foes, a race of mighty  
valorous heroes, rulers of the waves . . .  
(324-325)

—We’ll put force against force, says the citizen.

... there is no record of a similar seismic disturbance in our island since the earthquake of 1534, the year of the rebellion of Silken Thomas.

(329, 344)

The technique of "Gigantism" reminds us of Swift, as we see the citizen's pretensions swollen ("All wind and piss" 328) to reveal another odious and dangerous prince of the Yahoos: in Swift's words, "... behold a lump of deformity and diseases both in body and mind, smitten with pride."<sup>15</sup> Curiously, however, it is the technique of deflation in the mouth of the naive, victim of collusion, narrator that most subtly and effectively echoes Swift's technique. The same inversion of values is at work. Gulliver cannot understand his Brobdingnagian master's reluctance to learn the ennobling art of war. Assuming, wrongly, that the reader's values are the same as his own, he sums up the verdict on the man's peculiar behavior: "A strange effect of narrow principles and short views!"<sup>16</sup> True principles befuddle a Yahoo. Epic heroes, likewise, mystify the Cyclopes. The citizen, with dramatic irony, pronounces the national "tribal slogan" that the English are the "yahoos" (329) and the Irish their fierce but noble "drudges." Bloom argues, in line with the author's view, that force is force everywhere the same, without regard to which race employs it. This is too much for the naive Dubliner: "Didn't I tell you? As sure as I'm drinking this porter if he was at his last gasp he'd try to downface you that dying was living." (329)

To drive the last nail into the case against the Yahoo culture and to prove conclusively their need for the savior who is already standing his ground in the tribunal of the Pharisees and about to be sentenced (the citizen: "I'll crucify him so I will" (342)), Joyce borrows a metaphor from Swift. He creates Garryowen as the fierce, ill-tempered, ugly, and noxious embodiment of Ireland's pride: "Talking about new Ireland he ought to go and get a new dog so he ought. Mangy ravenous brute sniffing and sneezing all round the place" (305). The irony is that, just as Gulliver fails to recognize his own kind when he first sees the odious Yahoos, the Dubliner fails to recognize Garryowen. Somewhat similar to Gulliver, who is fooled by the physical similarities the Yahoos bear to their far more beautiful masters, the Dubliner is deceived by appearances and roughly mistakes the dog and Bloom as deserving the same fate ("Be a corporal work of mercy if someone would take the life of that bloody dog." (295) On Bloom: "throw him in the bloody sea. Justifiable homicide, so it would." (338)). The irony echoes Swift's

teaching that man's inner reality is far more odious than his more foul appearing bestial counterpart:

He said, whoever understood the nature of yahoos might easily believe it possible for so vile an animal to be capable of every action I had named, if their strength and cunning equalled their malice . . . . That although he hated the yahoos of this country, yet he no more blamed them for their odious qualities, than he did a *gnnayh* (a bird of prey) for its cruelty, or a sharp stone for cutting his hoof. But when a creature pretending to reason could be capable of such enormities, he dreaded lest the corruption of that faculty might be worse than brutality itself.<sup>17</sup>

The Yahoos do not seem to have the capacity to ever see through appearance to reality. Epic heroes never seem to learn to trust appearance as reality. For his own safety's sake Bloom should have believed the fierce growling of Garryowen and the hostile voice of the citizen. But he was on a mission of mercy, and no mere appearance of possible danger was going to deter him. Prudently, he hesitated to get involved in an intellectual alley brawl with the citizen, but once the issues were out on the table he stayed until the last point was made.

Probably the single most important traits the epic-hero brings to those who would follow his example are his daring and zeal. In a similar encounter in the earlier Nestor episode, we see Stephen engaged in argument with the far less ferocious, less intimidating Mr. Deasy. He takes the side of the Jews with the same fair-mindedness as Bloom applies to the English later on. He seems to feel the same moral obligation to throw stumbling blocks of pure logic into the path of blind hate and nearsighted prejudice. But he rises to no stirring declaration as does Bloom ("I'm talking about injustice" (332)). In fact, he seems to slide away from intellectual confrontation when Deasy presses him for further qualification of his remarks about the Jews:

—What do you mean? Mr. Deasy asked.

He came forward a pace and stood by the table. His underjaw fell sideways open uncertainly. Is this the old wisdom? He waits to hear from me. —History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake. (34)

He is already spiritually old and cautiously cynical, like the persecuted Jews he described:

They swarmed loud . . . Their full slow eyes belied the words, the gestures eager and unoffending, but knew the rancours massed about them and knew their zeal was vain. Vain patience to heap and hoard. Time surely would scatter all. (34)

If Bloom could only meet Stephen; if he could only infuse Stephen's genius with righteous pride, then, perhaps, Bloom, through Stephen, might be the one to become "A new apostle to the gentiles" (333), of a sort, anyway. The reader waits for the ineluctable.

In our existence weary age it seems we tend to resign ourselves to long suffering cynicism. We believe that epic heroes died with the naivete that made it possible to write about them. Because of this, we are especially prone to confuse appearance with reality. Pettiness and vulgarity always existed, even in Odysseus's day, side by side with heroism and nobility; epic heroes probably always wiped themselves with the prize story, had unappealing lusts for fried liver and pink petticoats (or their equivalents); people were just never so neurotically conscious of them before. If we dismiss Bloom's truly heroic acts because we cannot forget the mundane facts of his existence; then we are no better than any of our other fellow travelers in the Yahoo culture. (We Yahoos, like the Cyclops, like the citizen, will continue to resist the real heroes. Years ago Swift tried in vain to stretch our powers of empathy and identification by tricking us into picturing a grim faced horse speaking those brilliant and passionate speeches while stamping his hoofs and shaking, disgustedly, his mane.)

In the last sentence of the last paragraph of the episode, the mock-heroic "Elijah" motif does, indeed, crash into bathos. Bloom does *not* crash with it; rather, the crash represents Joyce's crowning tribute to Bloom's true nobility. After the brutally depreciating description of Bloom's slapstick retreat by the Dubliner ("the bloody car rounding the corner and the old sheepface on it gesticulating" (345)), Joyce does not abandon Bloom to the satire of the mock-heroic motif. By suddenly and conclusively deflating the elevated diction to the common idiom, Joyce confuses the tone and, therefore, confuses the intent and full effect of the parody. With this odd clash of the inflation with the deflation techniques, Joyce leaves the reader with a subtle reminder of how close an epic hero can come to being mocked for his commonness and how close a common man, despite his petty pretensions, can come to being rightfully exalted.

## Notes

- 1 W.Y. Tindall, *The Literary Symbol* (Bloomington, 1955, 67), p. 59.
- 2 Parenthetical pagination refers to the 1961 Modern Library edition of *Ulysses*.
- 3 *Dempsey, By The Man Himself* (New York, 1959), pp. 76-77.
- 4 *A Glossary Of Literary Terms* (New York, 1965), pp. 29, 31.
- 5 *James Joyce's Ulysses, A Study* (New York, 1952), pp. 274-5.
- 6 *A Reader's Guide To James Joyce* (New York, 1959), p. 189.
- 7 *Reader's Guide*, p. 129.
- 8 *The Joyce Paradox, Form And Freedom In His Fiction* (Evanston, 1966), pp. 92-94.
- 9 Goldman, p. 94.
- 10 Gilbert, pp. 276-7.
- 11 *The Rhetoric Of Fiction* (Chicago, 1961), p. 300. Booth also makes the point that another of Joyce's uses of the hostile narrator is to create "deep sympathy" in the reader's mind for Bloom.
- 12 Booth, pp. 155, 304.
- 13 *Reader's Guide*, p. 190.
- 14 *Reader's Guide*, pp. 189-190.
- 15 *Gulliver's Travels, In Gulliver's Travels, And Other Writings*, ed. Louis A. Landa (Boston, 1960), p. 239.
- 16 Swift, p. 107.
- 17 Swift, p. 200.

