The boy liked the idea of stopping. His mother and father in the front seat exchanged a look, though. They were riding along St. John Street and had just crossed Congress. It was a beautiful, crisp, October day.

"Pull it over," the boy's grandfather said again. He was looking at the demolition going on. His finger shook a little as he pointed past his grandson's nose at the old train station being knock ed down. "Pull it over," he said generously.

"Yeah!" the ten-year-old boy said.

As they watched there was a crash that sparked a cloud of dust into the air. "There goes the tower!" the boy said happily. He and the old man stared as they went by. The crane was turning away, carrying the heavy black ball at the end of a cable, gathering distance for another attack on the stone walls. "I wonder if any of those clocks won't break?" the boy said.

His father, driving, was looking, too, in spite of himself. He didn't want to stop, though. He wanted to get out there and get it over with. He looked past his wife as the ball struck the building again. More stone fell but not so impressively as when the tower with the clocks had fallen. "Those clocks are smashed all to hell," he answered his son.

"Pull over," the old man said.

In the front they exchanged another look. The mother gave a tiny nod. The father sighed and put the blinker on. He parked in front of the three-story brick building that had been the business offices for the railroad. It was a block away from where the work was happening. It was an empty block because all the other buildings were already gone. The business offices were still in use, though.

The boy's father got out and unlocked the trunk. He moved the suitcase a little to get room to lift the wheelchair out. Then he unfolded the chair, pushed it up to the car door and locked its wheels. He and his wife strained to help the old man from the back seat. They looked at each other over his bent back. When he was out they moved him to one side so the door could be shut. He stood unsteadily beside the car, holding onto it, his white hair uncombed and cowlicked, like the boy's. He looked back at the train station coming down.

"Can I push?" said the boy, putting his hands on the handles.

"I don't think so," his father said.

"Oh, let him, John," the boy's mother said. "It's good that he wants to."
The old man ignored them, watching the demolition, his head nodding with the effort of standing.

"I can push him," the boy insisted.

"All right then," John touched the old man's arm. "Come on, Pop. Sit down and we'll go over and take a look."

He didn't take his eyes off the train station while they backed him up and sat him on the canvas seat of the chair. He ignored, too, the traffic although it passed fast and near, and made his son and daughter-in-law nervous. "Watch the cars, now," John told the boy."

"Ready, Gramp?"

"Take me there then," the thin, old voice said.

There was a break in the curb where there had been a driveway to one of the torn-down buildings. The boy pushed hard, got some momentum up, and rolled the wheelchair onto the brick sidewalk. The four of them went along the sidewalk and stopped a hundred yards from where it was left of the old stone building. It was noisy with the loaders and dumptrucks working at the far end of the building. The loaders were scooping up the stone fragments, moving their blades on the sides of the dumptrucks, the loads crashing in and shaking the truck. Middle-aged men in T-shirts set in the dumptrucks, their arms out the windows. At the nearby end the crane was pivoting to swing the ball into the wall.

When the ball struck, it seemed to pause on contact and then to push slowing into the stone, the ground thick and muffled. The ball dangled in slow motion, at the end of the cable as the fragments fell.

"Nutt!" the boy said.

His grandfather sat silently watching, leaning forward in the wheelchair. The old man leaned against a light pole with his arms crossed, looking sadly at the old man. His wife came over.

"What timing," John said to her. She laughed a little.

"I didn't know they were knocking it down today," John said.

"They're keeping their voices low even though the old man didn't hear well any more. Besides, there was the noise. But they spoke quietly, anyway."

"It's a shame, such a nice old building," the woman said. "It's too bad they demolished some other place for it!"

"It was a nice old building," John said. "But what are you going to do when there aren't any more trains?" He sighed. "I guess they figure we need a department store."

The dumptrucks, fully loaded, were rumbling out of the lot onto St. John Street. The loaders were quiet. But the crane was still swinging the ball into the ruins of the station.

"Did you read the editorials last night?" the woman said.

"Nope."

"There was a pretty good one about what a shame it was to tear down Union Station for a department store when there are already so many department stores around and only one Union Station."

"He wasn't very happy," Tommy said. "He didn't even want to unpack his suitcase. I thought you said he'd be happier there."

"It's all gone!" Tommy said. "Except that little bit."

"He'll be happy once he gets used to it," John said. "He just has to get used to it."

"They gave it to the city and it was supposed to be the city's, isn't it?"

"It's all gone!" Tommy said. "Except that little bit.

"They'll get the rest of it with jackhammers," John said.

"Yeah, it is," John said.

"We'll visit lots," Mary said.

"He'll be happy once he gets used to it," John said. "He just has to get used to it."

"He will once he gets used to it," John said.

"He will once he gets used to it," John said.

"He wasn't very happy," Tommy said. "He didn't even want to unpack his suitcase."

"He'll be happy once he gets used to it," John said.

They left the bridge, went down the ramp and were on St. John Street. They went past the tire place and the brick office-building and stopped at the red light at Congress. Waiting for the light to change they looked at the darkened lot where the old train station had stood. The crane was gone and there were the loaders and dumptrucks. The building was gone except for a stone outline close to the ground.

"It's all gone!" Tommy said. "Except that little bit.

"Then they get the rest of it with jackhammers," John said. "They came back and the whole town was here to meet them."

"It's too noisy for you up there, Pop."

"Daddy, Gramp used to work for the railroad, didn't he?" the boy said.

"For a long time," John said. He bent and said to the old man, "Show him your watch, Pop."

The old man ignored him, and John straightened, telling the boy about the inscription on the watch. "They gave it to him when he retired," he explained to the boy. He walked around the front of the wheelchair. "I wish you'd talk, Pop. The only thing you've said all day was, 'Pull over.' He stood with his hands on his hips, waiting, but there was no reply. "We've given it a year," John said. "It's too noisy for you up there, Pop."

"I didn't," she said. "You can't see much except for the people."

"They had just won some kind of a championship. High School. They came back by train and the whole town was here to meet them."

"It's hard to imagine him playing football, isn't it?"

"I guess he was pretty good."

"They heard the old man coughing and John called to his son to bring the chair back. "It's too noisy for you up there, Pop."

"Daddy, Gramp used to work for the railroad, didn't he?" the boy said.

"For a long time," John said. He bent and said to the old man, "Show him your watch, Pop."

The old man ignored him, and John straightened, telling the boy about the inscription on the watch. "They gave it to him when he retired," he explained to the boy. He walked around the front of the wheelchair. "I wish you'd talk, Pop. The only thing you've said all day was, 'Pull over.' He stood with his hands on his hips, waiting, but there was no reply. "We've given it a year," John said. "It's too noisy for you up there, Pop."

"I didn't," she said. "You can't see much except for the people."
Audra is on the move. Today she has heard that someone in the office claims she is paranoid — paranoid and a traitor. She thinks she knows who said it, but she honestly doesn't know why. Although, if you asked most people in the office, they probably could tell you — and probably would say that the statement, accusation, as Audra would term it, was a pretty fair one.

So Audra is right now literally moving through the office. It is one of those gove- ernment offices where everything is in constant motion. Desks and paper, typewriters, one glassed-in corner for the office director so that he can be on display as a sym- bol of motivation and keep an eye on all employees at the same time. Most people do not care for the arrangement, but Audra likes it, mainly because she can hear everything that is going on everywhere and everybody, the whole idea is Get in — come from German engineers, Audra remembers. Of course, now that it is her name that is bouncing from partition to partition, she does not think the office setup is quite as neat as she did before.

Audra is 55 and feeling much older than she ought to feel. It is all this tension that she causes — that she brings into the office with her. Most people can sense the tension and stand back when they can. They attribute most of it to the fact that Audra's husband is dying of an incurable disease. He has been dying for years, and it seems that he will be dying for many more years — that he will never finally die and be at peace, only always he at the excruciating point of near death. So it is this death-tension that accompanies Audra everywhere she goes that turns off people. People not familiar with her problems just think that she's a bitch and extremely aggressive. Audra wishes they all could experience what she's going through now. Could they handle it? What would they do?

Audra is still an attractive woman. She has kept her whitening hair its actual blonde color and done what is possible to ease the lines in her face. Her eyes are still a youthful blue, and she takes care with her clothing. Granted her dress size has swelled to three sizes larger than 10 years ago, but she feels she is not so bad — not really. She has not had sex in over five years and she believes this lack is turning her into an uncontrollable voyeur. In her car pool and in the office she listens to all the talk of who is dating whom, who is sleeping with whom and cannot stop from trying to force herself into such conversations since the vicarious sen- sations of listening to others describe their encounters helps — helps more than anyone can know. But most people are not receptive to her intrusions. And she can understand that — she would not have appreciated such an invasion into her own private life as it had been years ago. But now she would. She would like to talk more of the hollow feeling that she, Audra, the cellphone, is experiencing. But no one wants to talk to her. They are tired of her problems. So instead she does find people who will talk of themselves and getting ahead in the office — how to betray others so that you may grab a promotion. Audra would love a promotion. She is a woman with problems. To her husband and give her a pro- motion — maybe throw in a new man to boot.

Audra speaks to people as she moves through the office. Some nod, some smile, some say hello and ask how she is. She feels that they are all liars and hate her. Hate her because they do not like her jobs and that what they might have to offer sympathy about her dying husband. Yet, she seems to make friends eas- ily. It is the keeping of these friends that has proven so impossible. She has never seemed to comprehend the simple fact that friendship involves loyalty and that your best friends stand around and respect that friend to be there smiling. But that's what she does. Audra feels, especially in an office, that doing that kind of thing is whee.ing and dealing.

Audra is loud and speaks with a true Texas accent. She has heard that someone in the office claims that they have a problem — that she is from Texas — as she understands it was so crudely put. Well, she is proud of being a Texan. Yet, she never wants to go back there. Doesn't believe that she could get along with those backward kind of people anymore. Although, it does bother her that she could be criticized for being a Texan. She thinks she knows who said that too — not the same one who has made the most recent comments, no, someone different who obviously knows nothing about Texas.

Audra is now approaching a corner of the office filled with a partition and an em- pty desk. This is it. This will be her battleground. She is quite sure that this is where those words — paranoid, traitor — originated. Audra will have a confronta- tion. She is good at that. She can be like steel, veritably bouncing from her exist- ing under her ground and giving her the icy stare that has been said to wither the most seasoned bureaucrat. She will demand first, an explanation and, then, an apology. She believes that this has been going on for some time, this kind of talk- ing behind her back by this person. Oh, Audra had been clearing hits and pieces from here and there. All fragments, finally becoming whole. Jealousy is the main cause, jealousy of her political acumen, her connections, her handling of complex office problems. Despair the lesser cause, despair because Audra had chosen not to work for this person who never had fully utilized Audra's capability of dealing with people — who refused to give Audra a promotion.

Audra waits at the empty desk for a few minutes and paces time looking through a dictionary for the word "audacity." She has always thought she knew what the word meant, but now she is not so sure. It was just like this person to use a word like that. Showing off. There — paranoid — characterized by suspi- ciousness, persecutory trends, or megalomania. Well, she didn't think that she was suspicious, she certainly didn't persecute people and megalomania, well that always meant someone like Hitler. None of that applies to her. And she dismisses it all quickly, deciding to emphasize the other word, traitor. For if she was a traitor by going to work for someone else, well, then, that was taught.

Audra puts the dictionary back on the desk, carefully placing it in the exact space from where she took it. Then she begins to make another full circuit of the office. She will stop at her desk for a few minutes to see if there are any mes- sages, by that time her enemy will probably have left. There is a message from her son. He is to call home. She does not want to do that. Her son is such a problem. He is 21, not in school and without a job. He does not like to work. So he keeps her husband company. He is also an informer for the county police concern- ing drugs. In a way she hates to think of her boy as a stoop pigeon. But it does bring in money. She is sure someone will get him sometime — that or the house will get firebombed. She knows there is something wrong. She will wait to call.

She must finish this business about who is or is not a traitor.

Audra is quite as mad as she was when she first learned what had been said. She stands by her desk trying to hear what is being discussed inside the director's office which is across from where she sits. Her phone rings. She must answer it. It is her son. He wants to tell her that her husband fell out of his wheelchair and hit his head. But don't worry. He's okay. Just a minor scrape. Does she want him to take anything out of the frig to defrost for dinner. Audra is relieved. Her husband falls from wheelchair at least once a week. Chicken is probably the best thing for dinner. He's really a good boy. Better than a maid. No, she does not want to talk to her husband. She hangs up and sits staring out the window at the Washington skyline. She can barely see the Mall, the dome of the Capitol build- ing, but actually she sees nothing. Audra is thinking. She has forgotten paranoid and traitor. It does not seem so important anymore. She wishes her husband would hurry up and die and let her get on with her life again. She is feeling very, very sorry for herself. Suddenly she senses someone near her, actually standing in front of her desk. She looks up quickly, and there is the enemy. The very one. "Someone said you were looking for me, Audra," the enemy asks in what Audra believes to be a much too nice voice. But Audra is caught off guard. She has forgotten exactly what she was going to say. She hates to be unprepared. She would like a confrontation but on her own terms and not sitting down with her enemy towering over her. She must act quickly, must say the right thing.

But the phone rings. It is her son again. He is talking interminably. The enemy fades away. "He's dead," her son finally says. "Dad's dead."

Audra holds the phone receiver tightly in her hand, staring at it and realizing only one thing. That she is not ready for this. She never has been — never will be.

C. Walker Mattson
Troy

the older cashier lady
at woolworth’s

we're both almost finished —
the store & me —
people don't go much for notions now.
I'm just filling out my
& taking a lot of vacations.
my husband's retired already
& doesn't like to drive.
he's at home all day & watch the soap,
but i made him try those cross-country bus trips,
get out to see the world.
he wondered how he could fall asleep on a bus,
but he found he could do so
as comfortable as he could ever drop off
in his easy chair at home;
& I don't like to travel alone.

Gret Goodwin
Cape Nedick
Snakehead, The Deuce

(From work in progress)

Little sister Persia's lighthearted, cuz the Deuce ain't shown his face on the sidewalks of West End for a thankful long time. She's back to singing something other than blues and husky skippy jazz notes while she's putting the last pats on her paper mache puppets. I hear her sing like that and my whole world goes yellow, green and white, with purple balloons rising, and all my seven children gather around and watch her with me, all of us crouched together, entwined sweaty good. Persia's hips and shoulders curve with the notes and her hands come down on the cheeks of her puppet, shaping them full as apples, pressing dimples in for innocence, twisting the little pale lips to make them knowing. Ain't nothing in the world like Persia when she's feeling free.

I'm feeling so sunnyday for her, I tell her all I'm thinking about the Deuce, about her breezy singing, even my own part about the purple balloons. She goes silent, shutting the tune inside her wiry little body of a sudden, yet all the time her hands keep working like a devish over the face and scalp of the puppet head.

I can tell my little sister's about ready to have a deep blue sigh, and I'm weighing myself down with regret for ever having mentioned the Deuce's name. My purple balloons let wind and sew themselves out to a shrivel.

Just as I predict, she sighs, and oh it's a dark one.

"Yeah, but Minerva, this puppet here, now he's turning into the Deuce. See?"

She holds it up and damned if she ain't right. The cheeks that seemed so round a moment ago are flat and tired as wilted lettuce, and the lips took plain snide, no joy in them at all.

"What's that disgusting stuff all over his head, then?" The Deuce is balding, ain't got much left up in that region.

"Snakehead. The puppet's name is Snakehead."

Persia runs her finger along one of the twisting white serpents real slow and moans a bluesy phrase that makes me shiver. My fault.

But that's how quick little sister Persia's moods change, just like the damned traffic lights outside my bedroom window.

"What the devil can you do with a headful of snakes?"

Persia aims me one of her scare-glares. "You can stun people. You can turn them into stone."

"Well, how the hell is that going to fit into one of your shows?" By this time I'm shooing the children out of the door. This is dangerous talk, don't want any of them to be harmed. They're all of impressionable age, and ain't we all?

Persia's seeming more small and dark than usual in her corner away from the skylight. "I'm going to use it somehow," she answers me, her voice too quiet, leaving me uneasy. "I've got a parody developing on the Medusa theme. Only this time, Medusa is a man, and he's born ugly."

"Yeah, well, I remember that story," I say, uncertain.

"Then you'll see the connection," Persia says, lifting one of her eyebrows, little owl. "Two damned well-read for her own peace of mind. I think. She can't be carefree for long. Now me, I'm a free spirit and work hard at it, for the good of my kids, something I learned real early on.

"I better see to the chickens," I say.

"See to your chickens, then," she answers, turning back to her headful of snakes. She ain't singing nothing, at least not till I go. I ticked her off, I guess, for not knowing what she's aiming at with that Snakehead of hers. Whatever it is, though, it sure fits the Deuce.

Nobody else can tell a lie with such fooling charm.

"Persia," I say, one foot out the door, ready to split. "Yo," she calls, not turning around.

"One thing..."

"Yo."

"Don't be turning me or my chickens into stone, or any neighborhood folks."

I scoot, then, quick enough to miss the blob of gummy paper I know she'll be hurling my way. I let the door to the studio slam behind me while I catch my laughing breath on the fire escape landing. Down below, my chickens are in the midst of a dusty squabble. I hum a little tune, but I love them when they're all wiggling at once. Bunch of busy ants. They keep my world in motion.

The Bullhorn Messiah

Twice now he has warned them of Armageddon. But this third warning is "...the real thing!"

His hand twists the air & flails the light, pounding the great tuffy-sky, pink over the City. He again has the attention of us all.

He spews the white confected words, fancy, but hard as chunks from a real Utrillo wall, out over the crowd convincing them all not really needing the horn he wavers, an open jaw of an ass, dead but for his mouth.

They are on their way to work, at lunch, or going home

The nuclear bundle in his hand calls them, treats them by name & he swears they are all known, natures for lordly use not for evil meaning. He bores a few, the few whose stop is furthest out.

But there is old Chaplin leaning on his cane & Mr. Solenhofen's beside him. One thinks that man is God's humor & the other thinks man is mush of personal hysteria tugging at us all with history & fear.

They listen to the bullhorn & watch it fling acrobatic words spilling upon them, raining on thirstring slugs, no more objects of rain than meanings of words, but each drop, word, tugging, washing over them both, taking a little bit of both further along.

The bullhorn points at the pimp Wash Flute as he squats on the brick like a drought-farmer waiting with the strength of a coiled chain.

"Bullhorn," he says, "makes it sound too easy..."

"...going to the Mountain ain't like going to the john," & a few of us laugh though Flute's not smiling. It is said that with imagination a man chooses either to expand his circumference or center, two convergent circles that detect a ironic face.

There is mother-Eucher with her hands on her hips, her elbows like knotholes stabling the parish air, her hair swallowed in a snood of spiders' web swept from some house she's been cleaning. Linked to her chest is a chain of paper-clips & under her bottom lip a plug of tobacco.

Her ironing board leans against her, a canvassed shield & with each ear a code upon each ear for lordly use not for evil meaning.

They are on their way to work, at lunch, or going home

The nuclear bundle in his hand calls them, treats them by name & he swears they are all known, natures for lordly use not for evil meaning. He bores a few, the few whose stop is furthest out.

Bullhorn drubs a code upon each ear

& like seed upon a window sill, familiar cold memories that always melt in the light, castigating hope where once love took daily flight Twice now he has warned them of Armageddon.

[end of prelude to "The Broken Mouth"]

Cathy Counts
Portland

Gene Avery
Trentori
Counting the Loons

Leaving the suburbs, heading north, the land stops being so flat. Bent cans and broken porcupines earmark the road for a while, then disappear. The road itself covasses the sides of hills, winds through forests of tall spruce, juts left, climbs out of the valley, showing the mountain behind us — sharp relief sluiced in sunlight — a challenge for which we are not yet ready. At the crest of the next hill we drop to a small lake, at the foot of a small mountain. It is the day for counting the loons.

As gently as fog lifts, the canoe slides from our dock into the water. Midweek — and the paddles with their dip, dip & J, dip, dip & J, have nothing to fear from buzzards or motor boats. The loons, we suspect, are south, out of the cove, nearer the inlet. We have seen two, then none, and are told that this week the chicks will follow their parents out of the underbrush into the lake.

Under the bow as we round the point, a white shape looms and slides past: an ice box jettisoned with the coming of bottled gas. We wish we could haul it out, make use of it, bring it to life. You tell me that next to it is a couch with a broken back. I can see nothing — as the shoreline shrinks, images on the bottom fade. Only now and then the arm of a great beast reaches up — shadowy, intent on nothing, waving its remnants of hands.

Off to our left, what looks like a broken limb, bolts too far away. As quietly as we can with our city skills, we follow, not wishing to scare it, not trying to get too close. Only once have we seen the splash of paddle on fiberglass, loud as a nightmare, ruffles the lake.

The second loon we see only now as it angles towards the outlet, an unexpected twin from the mother's womb. We stay with the first, lured by its speed, the thrill of the chase, dark hungers. And yet we are casual — the two loons moving so smoothly as tips of a widening V, ourselves a red crescent moon slipping through waves, weightless, intending no harm.

The second loon we watch till its black spot, like a dream we have forgotten, merges with underbrush on the far shore. By now we know we were wrong. Our loon will show us nothing, will take us nowhere. Never too far in front, never too close, it leads our parade in perfect balance, black baton of a beak held high as we near land.

The land holds us. With a rush the sun and mosquitoes discover our flesh. Paddles reversed, we push through weeds. Brambles challenge us from the shore. Our friend is not to be found. The loons will remain secret, uncounted by census. There is nothing to do but go back. Then, as we turn, we see boards from an old dock, dragged down by winter, blown here by a storm. Not what we came for, but something to use — for building, repairs to the camp — something we need. We leave the canoe, loop a line from a low branch, lift long, rough, moss-covered wood from the brush. With bloodsuckers and rusty nails attacking our feet, we stack five boards on the gunnels, balance them delicately, and head home — like a loon ourselves now, dark wings spread over the sparkling water.

When we wake the next morning, apple pancakes steam on the table, mist rises from the lake, unveling one by one the tip of the canoe, the dock, the gentle surge of the day's first waves marking the progress of six black specks — four small, two large — bobbing, ducking, then as they approach, more safely, closely ranked, proud in their morning coats, come to return our call. It is a day for learning again old proprieties, for visiting neighbors, for building, for climbing small mountains.

John Rosecrans
Beloit, Wisconsin
Stardust Rain
(from Growing Pains, a novel)

To let Joy meet his wife was suicide, Ted Wharton thought, but what to do? The old slipped disc routine would merely keep him off the dance floor, not out of the arena. Why hadn’t he dumped Joy weeks ago, as he had planned? He had already leigned the flu to avoid her during the week, so that option was out. Suddenly complications, maybe? Pneumonia? Meningitis? A convincing pneumonia required—aside from a hacking cough—some bloody sputum, which was hard to fake. What were the symptoms of meningitis? He looked them up, but before he had time to rehearse them, the prom had already arrived.

—and with rain, that bane of tuxedoes and gowns. Ted seemed to recall it had rained at his own prom, twenty-five years ago. (Did it rain at all proms?)

He and June arrived early, as required, manning their chaperone station, a table beside the door. They shared it with Ted’s colleague, Hilda Peck, a typing teacher, and her husband, Max, a bald, robust, cigar-smoking fellow who instantly bored Ted stiff. The kids straggled buoyantly in, looking grown-up and stilted and dislocated in their formal clothes. When Joy arrived with that imbecile, Frank Pippa, the varsity quarterback, she looked so beautiful Ted’s mouth went dry.

Her gown was satin—white, tight, elegant—totally different from what the other girls wore. Max Peck, with a suck of cigar, remarked that she sure was one hell of a dish for a high school kid, and Hilda slapped the back of his hairy hand.

Ted watched Joy dance with dense,compact Frank Pippa. (What was that line from Markham? Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?) he watched her body liquify the satin, eyed the silky shadows of her thighs. He listened to Max’s fishing stories, set in vast Canadian wilderness where he wished Max would go this minute and never return; and danced two foxtrots with June to please her and the crowd, smiling and nodding to bright, dull, and good.

The rain streamed down past half-closed casement windows in the bowly night.

The band took a break, the floor cleared, and the room filled with talk. Much milling around and punchbowl business, and Max dispatched the wilderness. Time to talk about gardening now. He’d planted ten rows of gold ‘n silver corn this year, and by god—

By god. Joy was right at their table — without Frank Pippa—demure, subdued, and wearing a charming smile, “Hello, Mrs. Peck. Hello, Mr. Wharton.” Ted’s skin turned hot. Then the introduction of June, and he felt creepy. June smiling, extending her hand, and Joy—the perfect lady, the idea! Aubrey College-student-to-be—a clasping it with aplomb and saying how pleased she was. The band had regrouped and it started up. Joy said, “May I have this dance, Mr. Wharton?”

Ted’s heart skipped a beat. “Why certainly, Joy.” He smiled, stood, took her naked illicit arm, and walked onto the floor.

Her hand in his hand, his hand in the small of her back, he looked at June and rolled his eyes in an oh-well-what-can-you-do sort of way—and Joy rubbed her satin against him.

“Joy! Not so close!”

She pressed her lips together and looked at his eyes. “I’ve missed you, Bear. It’s been over a week.”

June was watching them dance. He acted normal, smiled, and said.

“IT’S sad for her. It’s going to be so hard.”

“Joy, please, not here.”

“Okay. I’ll shut up, I’ll be good. We’ll just dance like this, like good little bourgeoise puritans, and talk about nothing. Wouldn’t Daddy be proud?”

Was this song going to last forever? “So he’s running for school board now.”

She grinned. “Oh, yes, and he’s never lost an election. A born politician.”

“Terrific.”

She sniffed, “Oh Bear, forget about him. By election time we’ll be married and living at Aubrey.”

Strained, agonized, he danced. Without a hiatus the band slipped into another number: Stardust, the all-time favorite—and everything came back.

It had poured on that prom night so long ago, he remembered it clearly now: the last night he’d spent with Elaine. They had gone with each other for nearly six months, were madly in love, and then something had changed. He didn’t know how or why it had changed, but it had, so fast, irrevocably, terribly, in the space of less than two weeks. It wasn’t anything she’d said or done, she was somehow just different, not someone to love anymore. She knew how he felt, but she couldn’t believe it: and they danced on that sad dim floor with the rain coming down in torrents, two adolescents drowning, drowning. Stardust. Sometimes I wonder how I spend each lovely night . . . She cried and cried in the car on the way back home and he’d kissed her goodbye forever in the loush May rain before she ran inside the house and he never saw her again. And he’d never figured out where things went wrong.

Now Joy had the same mournful look as Elaine. That suffocating clinginess surrounded her, spun a web that was dragging him down.

“How’s it going with Pippa?” he said, forcing a smile.

“How do you think it’s going?” she said, “The creep already made a pass at me on the way over here. I told him I’m having my period.”

The slippery rub of her hip against his. He would dump her his week, he swore he would, but before he did . . . Maybe they could meet tomorrow night, she could wear this gown . . . He said, “Are you having your period?”

She looked at him, said nothing, smiled, said: “No, Bear—I’m three days overdue.”

Christopher Fahy
Tenants Harbor

A Nazi Looks at Death: 1946

I must have slept, though I would have denied that much, as I had denied everything.

Men kill in war. But what told me I had slept was the first warming up of bird-song,

a flute in an auditorium that filled in front of Mozart, Beethoven,

Wagner. I fitted the note into the dream I was having of my wife, body

smelling of milk and children, soul swelling

with the crash of symphony. I must rise now and put a strong face on. Forget my wife. My children. And refuse the blindfold.

H.R. Costen
Benewick
Thirteen Ways of Looking At A Puppet

I
A white puppet sits on stage crumpled upon itself.

II
I sit in darkness like a blind puppet.

III
The puppet dances gracefully to a music of pantomime.

IV
There are three sharp claps. The puppet merges with the audience.

V
I'm not sure if the audience was all puppets or if the puppet was the audience. Was the dance alive or just still pictures?

VI
Curtains start to close, hesitate and jerk open. The puppet is hidden but I see its shadow.

VII
Oh fur coated ladies of Paris why do you dream of china dolls? Can’t your see how the puppet endears, entangles himself at your feet?

The Sex Life of the Cardinal

Because he has no mate the cardinal dives into his own reflection mistaking himself in the double glass door for the red competitor

who won’t be moved, as if the route to beat his solitary blues were to wipe out every rubric dude who struts in the wings sporting shoes he fancies for himself. The tawny female, perched on an oblique branch wonders how long it will take him to read the composite scent she carries —

blackberry, holly and grape — the soft grass lining of her hospitable nest.

Alison H. Deming
Cape Elizabeth

Fires

there is supposed to be a creature called a salamander which can live inside fires

I have often envied it when I open the firebox door glowing red caverns entice entrance with the possibility of wandering, miniscule, inside picking my way through intricate crystals around me all a shimmering red

I make my way to the middle while hot heat lancing jubilant structures of burn where one can explore forever glory constructing flesh unmade everlasting.

Susan Atherton
Bradford

Morning Mail

The North Real Post Office is dwarfed by anything larger than an old voting shack. Still, like a collapsed star, its gravity determines the path of everyone in town. I am early today, tired of scanning the posters and pamphlets on the wall. Looking out the window, I see them coming, falling towards me in staggered clusters, the unequal fragments of some larger entity. Ours is the pure will of habit, the need to know what is going on, or, after years of knowing better, the search for hope in empty boxes, the wait for the soft clack, the shadowy sliver of a letter falling into place.

But nothing has fallen into place yet. The mail is slow. The unseen clerk is still wrestling with the bags. Perhaps that is why the old folks stroll along, like green and grey clad animals against the changing hills where the trees have shrunk to one blaze of color. They shiver as they sense overtaking them the whine of tires from jacked-up pickups, the siren radials of Datsuns — the arrival of the young among the harmonics of engines idling.

Some just look and leave. A few, an even mixture of men and women, decide to wait a little, joined by the walkers who have caught up all at the same time. It is understood that the oldtimers will fill the three chairs or take the prime leaning space at the service table. The rest of us just find a place and stand. Some confidently open the doors of their boxes. It begins.

First class. The letters fall slowly, with the rhythm and noise of a bad typist. It is best to joke at times like this. People we cannot even see, people from everywhere — lovers, relatives, enemies, pests — have made choices about us in separate moments, and we wait for the results. I try not to stare at the glass door of my slot. Then begins a choreography of hands.

There are those who cannot believe in their empty boxes, who grow edgy and pace certain that the clerk is hiding their mail. But still the emptiness beckons like a tunnel to an abys. By the time the newspapers are going up, by the time the fifteenth person has said, “Just what I need, more bills!” the young have left, and the five old citizens are not listening to anything but each other. Dorothy shouts at Edwin, who is nearly deaf, that they have a letter from Ruth Hutchinson. She is so used to shouting that it has become her normal voice, the register of a gull in pain. Gladys and Tom shout hack. Shouting hits of letters. Louder. Like souls in Sheol whose names will go on that way, not like children or squeaky wheels, just they are saying nothing.

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I leave them there, burning with the warmth of small, loud furnaces, pilot lights in their spectacles, their hands waving, holding letters like crazed butterflies.

David Adams
So. Euclid, Ohio
Sixteen Pastors/Ruth Mendelsohn

What Ruth Mendelsohn tries to do literally in her quietly compassionate Sixteen Pastors is to take us back to the land, suggesting a way that we in America can start over, can restore ourselves by shepherding the place that is in our charge. But these are not merely idyllic pieces celebrating a sentimental and rustic simplicity. Worked like a sonata in three movements with a final coda, the book is unified by both its honest and moving tone and compact style.

The "Five Long Songs" of the first section act as an exposition in which the poet describes her love as she lives close to the land, seeking her own territory. In the wedding poem, Mendelsohn has the wedding party "eat wild blueberries, not cake." Always she sets the objects of the poem down before us as if on solid ground, simply, directly, so that we are moved by the quiet assurance of each brief five-line poem.

The second section, "Five Exurban Pastors," develops the theme of removing oneself from "the industrial offlands" to one's own named country of "the new green stunning." Here, the lines widen on the page, and the poet has also added three extra lines to each poem in this section. The effect is both cumulative and expansive -- a nice touch.

The shocking finale, with the longest-lined and most substantial poems of the book, creates a pastoral holocaust. Now, Mendelsohn names our disaster, warns us of what will happen if we do not take our role of earth's overseers seriously: "Call it an end of blood / And breath..."

The coda closes the book in a tone of thoughtful resignation and acceptance of the end of life, while awaking the possibility of a new beginning. Hopefully, we will all be wiser for having read Sixteen Pastors.

Kathleen Ligon Stockton Springs

The White Words/Baron Wormser
(Houghton-Mifflin, 1982, $9.95)

Baron Wormser came to Maine twelve years ago. After a year on the coast he went inland. He and his wife built a house in the woods. The Washington Post quotes him -- "I didn't go to writer's school or anything like that, but I read poetry on almost a daily basis." It is that familiarity, that assimilation of the old and the new which permeates The White Words. Wormser is less a Maine writer than a poet who has found in Maine a universal perspective. His poems reach beyond the parochial alliances and perceptions that limit so much Maine poetry.

It is not so much gossip that absorbs / Them as a foreknowledge...for measuring lives... / Is it these towns that dignify the slipper? / Of lives with a history, remembering even days? With an earnest pleasure, a rush of anecdote and regret.

Wormser's poetry is compassionate, investing the ordinary with an ironic yet gentle humor. In "Servants" he inquires --

"What happened to them?.../ They lost faith casually, without a fuss, / Being somewhat cynical to begin with... / What did they do?.../ Second desire before it was voiced. / Made jam and smoked ducks. / How big were their lives? / No more than a shoebox. / And we.../ We parade around our houses in our underwear, / We grow shabbily, become impervious to our speech, / Believe in the future."

Eachatiological bickerings run through The White Words. We are lured into a quiet speculation on the ultimate, on last things.

To become part of that undistinguished / Offh hidden beneath the snow. / Let there be ends. This lingering is for now. / These leaves, like men, will cling to what they know.

One reviewer (Gerald Stern) suggest Wormser's poetry is what E.A. Robinson might have written if living today. I doubt that. It's just that occasionally a poem gives off a Robinson sound -- the taut, controlled use of rhyme and rhythm. But Robinson is a Romantics, nostalgic, favoring the abstract. Wormser's eye is on the present. His mastery of poetic forms, his fine use of rhythm, rhyme, dissonance and assonance, are keyed to the particular, to us, inhabitants of "...bolted democracy's inadvertent showpiece."

Though Baron Wormser may not yet have found a single voice or direction, The White Words is a dazzling display of what contemporary poetry can be.

...It is enchanting.

You can't deceive yourself, what you write is you.

g b clark

Winter Dreams/H.R. Coursen
(Cider Mill Press, P.O. Box 211, Stratford, CT 06497, 1982, $4.00)

In the first poem of this, his eighth volume since 1973, Coursen "rewinds the reel," plays a life back in reverse-motion images, ending with the bizarre notion of an infant sliding back into the womb and even sperm and egg uncoupling, "where beginnings are." Throughout this beautiful book his quest is both back "toward the dawn of things" and "ahead to futures where sea and sky turn upside down." This double-journey is mostly taken alone, although Coursen gives us a share of delicate and sensitive love poems, made especially moving because of their gentleness and lack of self-indulgence. In many of these 56 poems the reader will sense a poet alone but not yet lonely, as he waits for another's voice "to close up the silent space beside me."

Coursen favors the short stanza and fairly short poems, both perfect for impressionistic sketches of nature around him. He is a great name of things -- birds, stars, seasonal subtleties -- as if their movements will tell him something of his own. As he leads us through his recurring imagery of aviation, woodpiles, sports, mining, ducks, he holds to the "azimuths of faith." As he says, "We live in a found space beyond the turn of stars. Alleluia. Amen."

Terry Plunkett

REVIEWS

Entering the Walking-Stick Business/
Poems by Sylvester Pollet
(Blackberry Press, Brunswick, Maine, 1982, 47 pages, $4.00)

"If we agree with Seneca that "as a man speaks, so is he," then Sylvester Pollet is a man who caters his work with starting precision and carifies emotions with disarming simplicity. In this long-awaited collection, we hear a speaker who finds inspiration in the ordinary: approaching a mountain, digging a drain trench, driving home fast the back way, or sitting, sitting, carving walking-sticks for sale. Yet his subtle images are far from ordinary: rather, they are fresh, honest, precise."

Pollet's is a passionate yet controlled voice that speaks for us about the rhythm of life in rural Maine. For him the commonplace is extraordinary, worthy of a careful look through his fine lens. He affirms, for example, the majesty of deer moving through soft snow, the satisfaction of a green canopy, a good red, wild and waves, and the distinction of September; the month of the ox-pull. He even learns "to plant the garden not for the philosophy but because the soil is ready and it's time."

However, just as easily as he isolates the familiar and makes it new, Pollet speaks to us about the uncommon: love in a cold climate where young women tend to thicken early while men grow leathery, taciturn, morose. With a keen sensitivity in his poignant "Letter to My Father," dead for a year, he sighs, "I've shown you my last poem." Candidly he reveals his own process of self-discovery in several poems, all titled simply "Self-Portrait"; when he eventually decides to "quit looking," he concedes to just "follow the grain."

And it is that voice of victorious surrender, that intentional lettingsgo, that readers will hear throughout this collection. We can be grateful he has entered this walking-stick business and shared with us his "extra gift of art."

Carol Kontos

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The Hours of Morning/William Carpenter
(The University of Virginia Press, 1991)

I can't seem to let go of Bill Carpenter's poetry. I have read The Hours of Morning over and over — treasured it, quartered it, learned from it, found my allegiance to certain poems shifting with time. Learning these poems is like entering a new land in which the poems are both the people and the features of the landscape. And they are drawn with a depth simply unavailable to most of Carpenter's better-known contemporaries. The strongest poems here repay continued reading, reveal a ravenous intelligence and a unique and joyfully pure sensibility.

It is disheartening how trendy contemporary poetry has become. I think the few weak poems in this volume are weighted with too much easy irony, too many convenient "...I think of." But it measures Carpenter's strength as a poet that he casts off these affectations quickly and gives us so much rich, varied, complex poems. Some of them have the dark humor of a fun-house mirror stared into too long. Others dissect our own timeless rituals. Finally, the new land is ours, The Hours of Morning.

May I commend the poems of "Victoire," Five Translations of the Poems of Anais Nin, and The Grand Design — deep and wonderful poems.

David Adams

Light Years/Poems by Roberta Chester
(Puckerbrush Press, Farming, Maine, 1982, 66 pages, $6.95)

The subjects of Roberta Chester's poems range from her immediate family and the relationships that sustain her to her Jewish ancestry and the rituals of that European heritage. She explores the patterns of life, often in the context of the past and the future. As a consequence, other times and other places become a frequent referent in her poetry.

Amid that tension between what is, what was, and what might be, readers have constant evidence of her metaphorical mind. Her unique analogies unify the entire collection. For example, to prepare for winter the poet sews certain scraps of fabric, in the process she creates a Yoknapatawpha County but its terrain suggests the comparison. She finally comes face to face with herself in a cellar which offers no real protection from the threat, whose roots are generations old. Over this she has as little control as over the approaching radioactive cloud from the west.

The concrete reality of a finely observed rural Maine provides a sharp and immediate sense of place. Her ancestors, constrained by marriage, and trapped in a physical nightmare.

However, Tave's life is not all darkness. We are given an almost idyllic account of her rural upbringing, her love affair and marriage. Here, for this reviewer, the nostalgic evocation of nature provides a rather tenuous link with the novel's climactic focus — the Green clan.

The Greens are those Maine inhabitants practically all Maine writers either avoid or lie about — the Maine rednecks. The Greens are members of that maligned subculture, a subculture certainly not confined to Maine and one that, observed realistically and used symbolically, has given significance to the works of such writers as Steinbeck, Erskine Caldwell and Faulkner. It is this use of the Greens that gives October's Hill not only its graphic focus but a symbolic dimension rarely found in novels about Maine. Margaret Dickson has the intelligence and skill and courage to say some important things about men and women — and Maine.

Point of View

When she raves about
The beauty of the gulls,
I wound if she knows
The duty of the gulls,
And why she won't
Exalt the grace
Of the blithe young miss
Who cleans her place.

Minnie Bowdler
Octami

Octavia's Hill/Margaret Dickson
(Houghton-Mifflin, 1985, $13.95)

Why so little memorable Maine fiction, short or long? A centuries assessment reveals the giant — from Sara Orne Jewett to Ben Ames Williams, with Kenneth Roberts thrown in out of desperation, Thoreau from despair, Harriet Beecher Stowe for patriotism and Stephen King out of our adulation of the dollar. Can't include Erskine Caldwell. He gave up his down-east allegiance easily and early, having discovered there were more rednecks in Georgia than in Maine. Delatable.

The flaw in most Maine writing (fiction and non-fiction) is that both genres are fictional in the most abused meaning of the term. Mythic adulteration to down-right lies: packaged containers of newspaper columns awash in salt spray and town calls, nostalgic forays over the hill and through the woods to grandma's coach trailer; Bert & I reruns; humble pastures. It's enough to send one back to Jacob Abbott, Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm and The Golden Boy.

Whether or not October's Hill endures as memorable fiction, Margaret Dickson's first novel reveals a real writing talent, a writer with the courage to look at Maine realistically and possessing an imagination capable of using Maine as a metaphor for universal concerns. In October's Hill Margaret Dickson has not created a Yoknapatawpha County but its terrain suggests the comparison.

A threat of nuclear disaster contains the metaphysics of October's Hill; its philosophical direction is contained within Tave, a woman haunted by the ghosts of her ancestors, constrained by marriage, and trapped in a physical nightmare.

The concrete reality of a finely observed rural Maine provides a sharp and immediate sense of place.

The nuclear disaster is used thematically, balanced by Tave's memories and actions. She finally comes face to face with herself in a cellar which offers no real protection from the threat, whose roots are generations old. Over this she has as little control as over the approaching radioactive cloud from the west.

However, Tave's life is not all darkness. We are given an almost idyllic account of her rural upbringing, her love affair and marriage. Here, for this reviewer, the nostalgic evocation of nature provides a rather tenuous link with the novel's climactic focus — the Green clan.

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Amy Williams

Murray Street

Crazy Quilt

Each fall I quilt for St. Mary's auction
Crazy quilts, like young couples.

We still make love.
I will shiver
Like an old tree,
Shuddering, shuddering
Until dry leaves fly off.

James McKenna
Augusta
Musings by the Painter
On the Hidden Order of His Art

Yes, Anton Ehrenzweig, my friend in faith, true there is an order hidden in our art. Whether loosed from cranial right or cranial left or from a childhood's residue of unconstraints it comes unbidden, surprising like an evening zephyr lifting a curtain, brings the starlight to our eyes.

Not entirely hidden from us as we work, but dimly seen within our long-partitioned minds (a sort of Yang and Yin of these creative things), like some treasures in deep water comes to life only at the diver's touch; as last things are best (wishing our hallowed eschatology), so here, he points, is where the brush turned suddenly on undercoat, to drag a sweep of flowing color, pulsed by some strong ventriculated surge as if guided on an automatic course.

Then he knew the thing was done. One more touch would kill the portrait's brooding mood. He dared not move, beyond the laying of his brush, and backed away to view what he (or it) had done. Though the sitter could never say, with pointing pride, "See how beautiful I am, my likeness mirrored for eternity on this mount of painted cloth," yet she, reflecting on her innate self, knew what glamorous photographs of her concealed the inner person that this painting now revealed.

Evans B. Reid
Waterville

Rhetoric Espanol: Goya and Picasso

Here on this expanse of red dust beneath the yellow haze of sun, on sand baked red through years of blood; here, where nothing remains but memory and echoes of dying animals; here the women no longer dance, children's laughter does not echo into the night air. Here you see only bleached bones and the crazed eyes of a mad animal frizzled into a grotesque parody of itself. Here there is only pain, a land that grace has forsaken where death has the only hands.

Tabitha Simon
Rockport

Title at the End

Many's the morning when growing restless at my typewriter and I feel the need upon me I've ridden the Rabbit 6/10 of a mile up the bumpy dirt road turned left onto South Road for 1.3 miles left onto Route 17 1.9 miles where the General Store shares the town with the P.O. the Real Estate office the garage and the empty bakery that's moved its breads to Manchester. I rarely linger there isn't anything else to see just get back in the Rabbit drive 1.9 and 1.3 and the 6/10 miles down the bumpy dirt road and I am back at my desk where I think about all the space between things in Maine and how the trip closes up the gap between us me and my typewriter and we get back to business writing this poem that I will call as I light up and inhale GOING FOR CIGARETTES IN READFIELD, MAINE.

Ted Buskey
Readfield

Photo by Kent Ruohomaa, Courtesy Black Star
Aubade

Asleep, he whispers, sighs, and dreams. Angel, he laments, as if the midnight
for tenderness. I feel its hunger
in unfamiliar beds, he is not
darkness into flesh. Having slept
Heading north: what he remembers
over the suburbs of the dawning city.

the red paint people

if the valleys sank
i’d pack you in the trunk, frances,
get you away from the sheepscot;
the hell with this sylvan glade.

you and your sons; the stone
might be a problem: heavy
on the shock absorbers.
I’m the last; no one would know.
the cousins in new jersey haven’t
been around in years.

when the valleys sank
they moved their sacred objects,
before the abnaki, long before
the europeans found the new
gravesies, which they thought at first
suspeicious for their stones of ochre: tint
of the infernal? but then its use
outweighed their fears, and
they in turn left us their objects,
household furniture stained red.
we moved them, house to house.
by
this we know them as the red paint people.

when the water rises
i’ll be here, perhaps i’ll see the others
packing up, your friends and neighbors
carried to the cars; and who’ll be here
to move the man and woman and their
three-year-old, dead on the same day?
we’ll nod, moving silently
from bank to roadside, an eye
cocked to the sheepscot, till
we have you safely loaded, ready
with your furnishings for higher ground,
and back weighted out onto
the roadway, for the ride
into the hills; relieved at last
to have you
in the nick of geologic time.

Archibald Hobson
New Gloucester

The Death of A Woman

A sunset
some twenty six thousand feet
up the south side of Everest,
she fell —
for a mile, they said,
without uttering a cry
into a glowing pink crevasse.
Her belt harness unch hitched
from a lifeline, she stepped off
like a space walker
and sixteen men
saw her recede
to a dot
and asked only then
why they ever ascended.
Her laughing on the radio,
urging them on —
a woman
who had sought her place —
umnumbed their thoughts
like a suck of oxygen
the long way up the slopes.
But a woman should not die that way,
clean and absolute,
dropping silently
out of life
vanishing at such a height.
It seemed worse than men
who fell to their deaths.
She had an earthiness
in her laughter
at them for striving
up the slope of God
to reach a place
where sex was
no matter.

Bruce F. Spang
Readfield

TLC

This morning’s glance
at those whiskers, anticipating
the embalmer’s blade, sharpened
her vision of iron into a surreal
insight: The stubble, a shade
graye r than his concave cheeks,
had thickened overnight. The rank
outcropping of that hideously robust
tumor crowding a temporal lobe
into terminal apathy?

Either that visit or during
another of those countless trips
to look in on him, perhaps
feeling under the sheet to finger
the catheter, hoping for his sake
of Paul’s lopsided breathing, she heard
herself wail, not uttering a sound: “Oh,
Christ, I’m left once more with nothing
but a vested interest
in a loved one’s death.”

Farrell Davison
Bar Harbor
My favorite place to linger that summer was at an organic supermarket on Wal-

den Street. The "super" a joke of the young, just an old store overstocks and
painted a bold red, but still keeping the low, bare wood, and splinters, porch out
front. This market was my museum, my encyclopedia, my atlas. Our fare at
home had been simple and bland. I was eager to exchange my brother's pork
chops and boiled potatoes for something richer, and the knowledge of how to
cook it. People dressed in pale linen, denims, beads, beautiful and exotic streamed
through this little store. I watched them sweep up bags of jewel-colored beans
and seeds. Adzuki, mung, alfalfa, fenugreek, these were my poetry. It was a long
process, I thought some cashew barrels once, but found it bitter, and the cakes I
made with the pale, brown-colored flours were flat and tasted of dust. Still, I per-
sisted, and bought almost oil soap to perfume my skin, and rose, and henna. I
dressed as carefully as any ingenuous for these trips to the store, the crisp cotton
blouse embroidered in orange thread, the long, light color skirt. I thought of all
the many soft browns, the warm earthy smells, on the soft film of golden dust in
the shop and I wanted to be that soft and warm, like a hum, a chint, not a whistle or
a shout.

One day a large bald-headed man watched me as I pondered and stared, sniffed
and tasted. He stood silently, still, insouciant with his huge arms folded casually
across his chest, knowing we felt the interest of his gaze.

"Come home with me," he said, and I did. He was a macrobiotic he said, and
talked about Zen in small phrases, quietly with a soothing softness. I remember
that he made me great steaming bowls of brown rice. Rich and good, plant be-
tween my teeth. Savory, soaked in strong, salty brown soy sauce. He showed me
how to cook it with just the right proportion of water to grain. I watched the
gleaming kernels dance on the heat, and I watched the cold silvery water pour
over them and turn cloudy and hot. I ate three bowls quick, and he laughed,
"You've never had brown rice before!"

"No," I said.

The empty bowls grew cool while we smoked pipefuls of rich brown grass, and
then went to bed. Simply, without a word, we knew this to be the intention of
watching, and brown rice, and the fragrant pipe. He kissed me first in strange
glances, never on my lips but behind my ears, beneath my arms, in the damp
crooks of my elbows and knees. I hung between his arms, pliantly, though pre-
sently his gestures became wild and rough. "Come," he murmured in my ear, "I'm
going to give you a bath."

There was that sharp, dark edge in his voice I did not like. I was afraid, yet afraid to seem backward, unwieldy, less than daring, pas-
sionate. "No," I said meekly, almost whimpering. He hit the side of my face hard with
one hand. I remember the red light behind my eyes and the pain, the surprise.

"I won," I said, outraged — as if my outrage would give him pause. He hit me
again on the other side, again the same red light and the pain. "Oh, you like it," he
said. His voice bright with tension though my passion crept out my feet and
left me cold, shivering, shivering with fear and the knowledge of his rape. I could
not think about what he might do with me; I could only imagine the icy cold
white sides of his bath, the glare of the cruel light on my eyes. Darkness I
wanted. No one should see me. Afraid of the consequence of my words and afraid
of anyone hearing my complaints, I struggled hard for some while. I held my top-
gue in fear, and he grew more ardent as my thrashing lessened: he passed on to
other things. I tried to crucify and hide from these caresses cautiously, causiously
as I might have done from his blows. He pulled my head roughly toward his
crutch, pushing aside the long tangle of my hair to smear my face and lips. I
clamped them shut, to scream, but quietly so no one should hear. They would
know I came here with this stranger. My fault, my fault, mistake.

He grabbed my arm now, and his voice wheeled as the grip became tighter
and tighter. "Do it," he said again and pushed my face into him. "Not like this; I
said it between clenched teeth, growing bold for an instant before the pain of his
grip overtook me. He was in no mood for poetry or my simple fight. Remember-
ning his bigness, the pain at my arm and my face, and it was the roots of my hair, feel-
ing his awful tension and power, his urgency, his rap, I complied with his re-
quests, crying and choking, whooped him, I suppose, I complied, and lay
pinned beneath his bulk until morning when in the sickly dawn he let me rise
and run home, unharmed.

Ellen A. Elander
North Yarmouth
Silence

(Among the letters to Dr. Plizele)

Dear Sir,

It began by force, by forcing myself to remain silent, to restrain that ignorant impulse when a rose before it could escape and falsify everything. It worked. Gradually as I became more and more silent the deepest waters of my soul became less murky and my aural sense developed a sensitive balance. With equilibrium came isolation and the sea about me became calm, almost still, all about me. Finally I could not speak at all, nor did I want to. And I was meticulous about my writing; every word was good and I could not bear the disgrace of permitting bad, unnecessary or purely functional words to become real.

Colors, sound, vegetables, animal carcasses, fur, etc...began to speak clearly; that is, I became receptive to their voices. It was beautiful, I was alone. Alone as a plant or a planet, though far less isolated and unto myself as humans are prone to be. I turned away from men, lost in the sound of substantial verse.

No one understood. Nothing mattered. My writing became abstract until the letter meant nothing to me beyond itself and was useless, an evahic fossil of a primitive and vulgar stratum. Of course it couldn’t last, it was too heady a state. A rebellious desire coiled up in me from some changing spiral in the core of my person. I wanted to converse and exchange thoughts again. I was drawn backwards, down through the channels of music. I gave my mind back its agile motion and began to speak again, whole once more and completely false.

The problem is, sir, that it seems to have been a one shot deal. I can’t seem to shut my voice off again, though I have long since wanted to — it blabbers day and night, deafening, drowning out the faintest murmurs. I can only remember, only dream of how it was when every stone had a different ineffable name, every variation of the evening sky had a name describing its color, tone, weight, its separate and partial meaning, its startling variations of self.

It is obvious now how useless it is to attempt to communicate. It doesn’t interest me any more. I knew what metaphors were. I knew then what was beneath my abstract soul... I permit myself despair, my only happiness since happiness ceased to exist. I am alien; the poets themselves sense this, but cannot help me. They alone were my hope and they are no hope at all... I prattle on like an idiot, stupid and happy enough. I talk about writing, television, my latest bust, now and then I linger over some particularly beautiful lines, and I remember in my heart that ungodly language of absolute silence. Only remember and can never express. And the attempt, the attempt drives me farther and farther away. Consequently, sir, I refuse to feel any moral remorse. God exists superfluously. This mockery of an explanation is my last duty to humanity, my final guilt and responsibility. I hunger for the silence.

Anne Walleigh
Portland
No Quick Cure

My doctor tells me I’m not sick; I’ve just a slightly damaged quick, caused, one must suppose, in part by low blows aimed too near the heart.

He says there’s nothing to ensure the malady will not recur, no special pill, no swift injection to guard against a new infection, no vitalizing magic potion. The druggist did suggest a lotion which, if faithfully applied, creates a pachydermous hide.

The only problem, it appears: The process takes a hundred years.

Jane A. Lindholm

Hearing a Fat Man Babble

Was it (I wonder)
A thing kind or cruel
That God with flesh
Wore down your mind
Bent as my knuckle,
Making you into a fool,
While your poor
Starved soul cried out
To be articulate?

Ronald Zorns
Pulast Spring

Exercise

Draw a line Label the line Life

Draw a dot at each end of the line Label one dot Birth

Label the other dot Death

Go back and place the word My

In front of the three labeled words:

Crumple this piece of paper

Light it on fire

Stomp out the flames with your feet

Rub your hands in the ashes

Rub your hands on your face

Look in the mirror

Smile

You have not done

What I asked.

Martha Henry

North Windham

In the beginning

Man, himself whole,
took a byte
from the apple
dangling
from the tree of knowledge,
the tree of life...

INSERT DISC IN DRIVE 1

BOOT SYSTEM

[F]ind: Truth
[D]elete: Error
[S]lave: Love
[L]oad: Infinity
[R]etrieve: Eden

INSERT DISC IN DRIVE 2

(Search as you may among your discs and files, the software for that stellar system shining beyond the sectors of the window’s silicon is not yet user friendly.)

[SYNTAX ERROR]

Jim Dovis

Unity

Photo by Bruce Armstrong
Chemotherapy

Like cherry soda
and cough syrup,
my eyes close as the
needle punctures my vein
another time.

Throughout my body
the parade of sharp-toothed
Piranhas line up in formation,
mouths wide.
I want them to eat the bad cells,
But distinction to them is void.

I remember camp
Lying peacefully in my hammock,
and relax for a moment.
That's what the book says to do.

But it comes so quickly!
I was hoping the Compazine
would help this time.
I reach for the deformed, plastic basin,
the plastic needle still in place.

My ribcage splits
and stomach hardens.
Eyes do not focus,
Legs do not move.
Energy spent, I am
as a melted candle.

Carls Lake
Auburn

Then

He had gone to the greenhouse to draw.
The air being moist.
The floor was wet, slippery.
Spiking a cactus as he walked by,
He breathed the colour of its blossoms

Inside him. A dam was released:
He had seen that sunset, that cabin again.
And before it, the angle
Her back used to make against the porch chair,
The one nearest the trees, the green woods then.

Carlyn Purcelli
Casco

Anxiety

There is still a door
hanging loosely in the wind,
though the house is old
and long empty.

I sit in the ruins
to watch the door swing.
Things enter,
and things leave.
The air seems full,
than slips out
as though it was nothing.
And nothing,
or something else,
comes in again.

It will not end.
With each slam, I start,
but go nowhere.
It begins to be frightening.
Somehow, I can't leave.

This structure is all I have.
I shut the door finally,
and wedge it with bits of board.
Is this safety?

The sky is there,
arching over the open rafters,
wide and absent.
The walls are broken,
and through the gaps, the field
is wandering in.

Kersten Backstrom
Bar Harbor
The Fate of Rameses Jones

What happens is the third week of school. "Fungus" Wilson assigns me this term paper on Fate. There's fifteen of us in Senior English and Fungus has fifteen topics on separate pieces of paper. My method is to stick them in a box and we draw. Frankly, Fungus himself looks like he was drawn from a box - a wet cardboard one. Paper due by Thanksgiving. So after class, this makes it make me late for soccer practice, I stop by his office. What does he mean, write a paper on Fate?

Fungus is lumpish, sort of jammy-up-looking. Trouble is, he knows too much. He peers up from behind his desk, affixes tittered glasses and gives me this merde-eating smile. "Yes, Christy." Any words with s's in them he teths to spit out so pieces of the words fly back at you. That's why the front rows in his classes are always empty. I back up and ask him about Fate.

"You do possess a dictionary, Christy?"

Actually most of our teachers at Adams aren't that bad, considering what you could get. Every place has a few losers. Fungus leaps back, digs something from his ear and inspector it.

I nod and tell him Fate is a force or power that predetermines events and leads people to some sort of doom or destiny. What I meant to know is, what am I supposed to write about?

"What does your rather imprecise definition suggest, Christy?" Fungus tips back in his swivel chair and hoists up his feet. Black shiny shoes and sagging greyish socks. "A philosophical dissertation on Fate in the determinative literature of the fin de siecle?"

"See what I mean? Anyway, I say, "Oh, you mean take some guy and show how his doomed or really makes it big?"

Fungus arches what go for his eyebrows. "In the vernacular, yes, Christy."

Right off I knew I'd write about. "Rameses," I say.

"Which one?"

"There were twelve Egyptian pharaohs named Rameses. They ruled from - "

"I'm talking about Ram Jones, Mr. Lingus. Rameses Jones?"

"Rameses Jones?" Fungus lunges forward. "Fate, Christy, involves those with some measure of greatness. Now I realize Rameses Jones' continental back-ground has engendered much fascination around school. But he only entered Adams this fall. And even being a senior does not, I'm afraid, automatically insure greatness.

From the soccer field came the sounds shoes make when they hit the ball solid. "From Coach Mastodon's voice. An impatient sound.

"Gotta go now, Mr. Lingus. Soccer practice."

"Remember, some famous person," Fungus calls as he heads down the corridor. "You boys are shooting rather high, aren't you?"

I went back inside the carriage house and kicked Andy and Duke awake, "Hi" I say, starting towards her. "I guess we're going to have to go to the high school. Right off Ram said why don't we go down to the main airbase in northern Maine. He comes down two or three times a year and talks to us and she's always trying to get us to join up. We figure they probably pay her ten dollars a head or something.

"Bon jour, Ms. Turgal," Ram says. She smiles, which is rare. She ignores me, which is usual. "We're thinking about college."

"Fine!" She automatically picks up a ROTC pamphlet. "Do you have any place special in mind? Now at State, Mr. Jones they say they are really going to make it make me late for soccer practice."

"Yale, Princeton, or Harvard, Ms. Turgal." Which was a complete surprise to me, but I nod anyway.

Lyline Turgal looks at me like she's seeing me for the first time, then sort of raises her nose. "You boys are shooting rather high, aren't you?" She sort of frowns at me and I realize she's forgotten my name, which really pisses me off, seeing I've been at Adams all four years.

"No, Ms. Turgal," Ram says gently but firmly. "Not high. Just on target." I mean, that's the way he can talk, and she gives him this merde-eating smile, tittered and rummages on her shelves and comes up with the catalogues. She makes a point of handing them to Ram then hands me a bunch of brochures - a couple of Vocational Techs and the State branch at Ft. Kent, which we should have given to Canada years ago. "Big things are happening up there, Mr. Christy."

"A big thing ought to happen to me," I blow, as Ram and I head back to Study-Hall. "She barely remembered my name!"

So, you learn to deal with people. Christy. Now which do you want, Yale, Princeton or Harvard?"

"Well - and this is what I mean about Ram, how he could get you thinking and seeing things differently. I'm not sure. Think I could make one of them? My grades aren't - "

"Bet of us, man! So? If you really want one of them, then you'll make it take my old man. Went to some cracker college in Florida. Probably majored in Underwater Basketweaving. But he wanted to make it big - and so he did. Can we?"

I mean? Ram has that confidence. Even when he gets in a jam he manages to turn things around. Take that first party at his place the beginning of the summer and what happened to Osric, his collie. Just a bunch of us guys, a few six-packs and a joint or two.

Ram's folks had rented this mammoth brown-shingled ark of a place right on the ocean. Ram's father was in Europe and his mother, whom none of us had seen but was rumored to be really beautiful, had gone to Boston. There was an old carriage house out back where Ram said any of us could sleep over if things got rough.

Actually the party started off real mellow. Ram had some terrific records Quiet Riot, Grateful Dead and Jimmy Hendrix. Then Ram broke open a case of Heineken. After a while some joints appeared. Things really began moving when Ram showed us how Osric liked beer. Frankly, I think Ram was initiating some TV commercial. Anyway, Ram would tell Osric to go upstairs and bring down a shoe. Then Ram would give him a source of beer. Pretty soon the place got sort of filled with shoes and Osric was having a bit of trouble with stairs. Then some of the guys started going up and coming down with shoes in their mouths. It began to look like a half-price shoe sale at L.L. Bean's. Finally Osric collapsed and rolled down the stairs. Ram put him in a little nest we made for him under a table.

It was after that the gathering got a little out of hand. Duke Peavy got in a fight with Andy Grinbys. A couple of South Harbor boys went down and fell off the rocks and three more of us slid in laumping them out. Some weird neighbor came by and said we were making too much noise and a few got sick and tore outside to flush the bash. Finally things began breaking up. Some left. I called home, woke up my dad and said I was spending the night. Andy and Duke decided to stay, too. Ram had curled up on the four beside Osric and gone to sleep.

I was in a fair shape when I came down in the morning and stepped out into the backyard. There's this really beautiful blonde in a bikini and a sweater pretty hugging Osric by his front paws to a grassy spot by a wooded. She doesn't even look at me. I thought, oh god, we've killed him. She kissed beside Osric and began stroking his head.

"Hi" I say, starting towards her. "I guess we -" Just then Osric's tail twitched and I knew he was alive. There wasn't any point saying anything more because she was looking at me, through me, like she was throwing a jewelin. I did notice she was really stacked. Finally I said someone was coming for us soon. It was obvious we weren't going to get any breakfast there.

I went back inside the carriage house and kicked Andy and Duke awake, suggesting we better stay inside until our ride came. Finally my mother showed up. We came out and Ram's mother was still bleeding beside Osric, who looked a little sad. We said thank you as we crossed to where my mother was waiting in the station wagon but Mrs. Jones didn't look up. My brother gave me one of her dicta-ments looks and got out and went over to Mrs. Jones. They talked a bit and then my mother came back and sort of jerked the wagon around, not saying a word, not even after she let Andy and Duke off on the highway to hitch it home. Only when we drove into our garage did she explode.

"I don't know what kind of a monster your new friend, Rameses Jones is, but you certainly demonstrated you're no better! Getting that poor animal drunk! That poor sick creature!"
No point my mentioning Ossie wasn't the only one who got sick.

"I suggest you go up and have a talk with your father."

My father is a columnist. Spends most mornings typing away up in his workroom over the garage. And naturally, right off he asks me what kind of a memecking thing was that to do and I said I realized it and he said that after I finished at the beach every day I was to plan on helping him with his stone walls. Weekends included. He's really insane about building stone walls and our restored farmhouse is beginning to look more and more like a medieval castle. Still, I knew Ram would be at the beach.

Sure enough, that afternoon Ram appears. With Eve Angelo. I immediately got depressed because as a kid Ram tells how, after a long talk with his mother, who's nuts about dogs, he went out and bought her a collie puppy and they'd made up. I said I wished I could have managed something like that with my dad.

"You learn to deal with people, Christy."

Eve gave him this lovely smile and already I'm worrying how he's going to deal with her.

"Still, I couldn't help admiring the guy. That afternoon there were barely any kids falling on their faces in the waves and Ram got going on the place he'd lived. In Egypt he'd climbed on the pyramids. Caught a shark off Haiti. And when they were living outside Paris—well, Ram's father's what he calls an entrepreneur and there was this big development he'd started, swimming pools, tennis courts, security guards and so on. Anyway, during that time he'd seen in real life all the Beaties, the Prince of Monaco and Sophia Loren. I said something about Eve looking like Sophia Loren and for a change got a decent smile from her.

It got so for a couple of weeks we all went out after school every afternoon by my beach station. Of course Ram was the big attraction. Of course there was the thing with my dad and Ram, and the flat tires and so on. He's really insane about that. It took him a week to figure how he managed it.

"Two hundred," Ram says. "So O.K., it's a bit beat up—but listen!"

He jerks open the door, slides behind the wheel. The engine catches instantly. There's this deep thumping roar and a couple of girls cruising overhead go zooming off. Ram slams it into gear, there's a cloud of dust and Ram's off. The rear tires are flat and no jack. And we were broke. But I thought, we'd have enough money to buy another one.

"Well, she doesn't sound bad," Jake concedes. "If you have any trouble with her I can probably help you some.

Ram nodded and it was like a king giving special dispensation to his subjects.

"Good God, Ram!" Andy says. "If you'd told me I couldn't have helped!"

"Helped?" Ram, for a change, looked puzzled.

"That '52 Impala!" Duke storted. "Rumor was old nun Tompkins was going to tow it for a mooring. How much you give?"

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Duke finally says, quietly, "I'm not going anywhere with you."

"We'll see about that, mister!" she said, revolting, knocking over the floor lamp and lunging for the doorway, screaming for Horace to come up. Duke's father and mother had been left outside because suddenly he's in the room, plus their beagle. He's a big guy with this mammoth gut. Actually not a bad guy, only he's obviously annoyed, what with his wife screaming at him and the beagle tearing around trying to pick up a scant, the rest of us just staring, Duke dodges his father and slips out the front door. His father and mother and the beagle take out after him. For some reason Andy lets his dog up from the cellar and we all crowd out on the front porch. Trixie starts yelling, I'm reminded of a riot scene from a Laurel and Hardy movie.

Duke's father is chasing Duke around and through their Chevy pick-up. Duke's mother grabbing at him as he passes. Cars were stopping. Neighbors lights going on. And up the road, blue lights flashing, airen waiting, comes Officer Bob in the town cruiser. Andy's terrier and Duke's beagle get in a fight. Then for some reason Duke's mother charges up towards the house, which has this steep lawn. Half way up she slips and rolls all the way down to the pick-up, where Duke's father lifts her up and shows her in the cab, along with the beagle which he tears away from the terrier. Duke fades into the night as Officer Bob takes over.

"It's sad, really sad," Ram says. "Why don't you all go in and I'll go down and see what I can do."

Naturally we didn't go in. Ram went down to the pick-up and Officer Bob. Don't ask me what he said. But in a while Duke's folks drove off, followed by Officer Bob in the cruiser, blue lights off. Ram came back up to the house, saying something about things being under control and that Officer Bob and Duke's father belonged to the same Lodge. We all went inside and Anne Varney washed her face and put on some fresh make-up. After a while Duke showed up. I kept thinking what Ram had said it being sad, really sad. Later on I asked him, did he mean about Duke's father and mother or the way they'd treated Duke and Anne?"You learn to deal with people, Christy," Ram says, "because life is sad quite a lot and who knows how any of us will turn out?"

Anyway, while the evening showed me again why I was right in doing my paper on Ram and Fate. It was also a disaster because naturally Eve heard about my dating Trixi. She wouldn't even look at me when we passed in the corridors. She always seemed to be talking with Ram, but when I made a crack or two, hoping to find out what it was all about, he would start talking about the soccer playoffs that began that weekend.

We won the Regional Playoffs in two weekends. Naturally Ram was top scorer, though we really got it together as a team. Duke and Andy were great on defense and Duke only got in one fight. In the only tight game, the final one, Ram scored the winning goal on a corner pass I got to him right in front of the net.

The weekend before Thanksgiving we went to the State Finals in our class. And we won -- easily. The town of Adams went crazy. Coach Mastadon announced Ram was world-class Olympic material. Lynise Turgid told Ram that State was giving him full athletic scholarship. Ram said he was sorry but he'd just got his 'early acceptance' from Harvard. He'd told me about it the night before.

He'd come by the house to borrow some of Dad's reference books. Our term papers for Fungus were due and he'd found out he didn't know diddly squat about Egypt. He was going to have to whip something out in a hurry. Was mine done?

I told him just about. I didn't go into details, still not wanting Ram to find out it was about him. Also because I was having second thoughts. Frankly, by then I wasn't sure at all whether Ram was fated to make it big. He could just as well blow it. Before he left he told me he was asking Eve next day if she'd go to the Christmas dance with him. In spite of that, I finally decided Ram probably would make it big, providing he bucked out and someone didn't shoot him from sheer jealousy.

Ram was talking to Eve on the school steps when I arrived next morning. She hadn't as much as spoken to me since that merde-eating debacle at Andy's.

"Isn't it great, Christy?" she says. "About Ram getting Harvard?"

"Sure is, Eve. You planning on going there too?"

"Sure looks away and Eve just stares at me for seconds.

"You're real dumb, Christy, you know? I'm going to State. Why don't you?"

I stare at her. She was almost smiling. Ram mutters he has to see Fungus about a late paper and takes off.

"I thought you two were..."

"No Christy," Eve says. "Sure. I know he's going places but..." She gives my arm a tug and I feel myself go all over funny again. "You could go to State too, you know."

After a moment I said I'd give it some thought. We walked into the school together. I suggested she could come down to my house for dinner that evening. I'd ask Ram, too. Eve said that was fine with her.
Marija

When Yugoslavia was being bartered among three thrones
And the aproned women of Rijeka
plunged in their babushkas
proffered fish and apples
in German, Italian
as the market required
This island of Krk nodded but once
and with a wave of hands
still looked after the small things

Marija lives in “My House”
She broke her leg when she was 78
A fall
She’s better now
But still murmurs, “noga, noga”
when the woodstove smolders at night
and cold Adriatic air crawls in
under the door and around the worn window edges

She has seen so much
that she is beyond sharing it
and hugs three-year-old Stefan
when he comes to visit
And as she hugs
she cries

No one loves children
like the Slavs and the Jews
The days of easy smiles
and grapes in the garden trellise
were so short, soon gone
Long ago, hurtful to remember

She who waited
when Jan, her man
made the monthly crossing
to Dubrovnik
Her people are of great passion
And flowers blossom in the arms
of he who leaves

So why didn’t she die
when her heart was torn out
when those soldiers came
and took her son
For the Jugend, Jugend, Jugend
Everything about them was dark
The uniforms, the geometric movements
And that language
Impossible to whisper

A Volkswagen tears along the village road
An oxcart, loaded with sticks
The animal, plodding, prodded
by the swaying baba
Softly singing to the beast
Calling it, “my sweet”

Thanks

in the worst of times, women
less than crazy, more than sane
have fine high times with women

less than lives, those times with women,
less than crazy, more than sane
sustain life, thus women

live who live with men, women
less than crazy, more than sane
with anger, turn to speech with women
entrusting them more than their mates. women.
less than crazy, more than sane,
pained with foreboding, confide in women

the child may not survive. as women
less than crazy, more than sane
they come and go, know from women
to grow withal. list to women
less than crazy, more than sane
in the worst of times. women
have fine high times with women.

Lee Sharkey
Skowhegan

Children bob home from school
chick-like
and a Gypsy mother
at a garden gate
pulls her straggling daughter away
And doesn’t wonder
why, why
Like they do in America

A dark bundle of nuns rolls down
to the church
for vespers
Cackling like schoolgirls
In the last moments before silence
and ascending hands

Evening comes
Marija boils a pot of turnip and potato
on the woodstove
On the television a march is played
She takes the stoker and probes the ashes
for buried heat
Then looks out the windor and over the bay
where the sky is changing color

In the morning Stefan will toddle in
Marija will hug his
warmth
for a longer moment
It was a terrible dream: roses in his arms

Robert T. Klose
Orono
**Tunnels**

*vocal version*  
solo voice  

Performance Notes: The first and closing non-English sections are constructed from letters, phonemes, and words derived from the letters of the word "tunnels." The middle section is a linguistic investigation of the first full stanza in English. The material sometimes ignites or releases an image or word, tangential flashes. Pronounce fragments of the word as if pronouncing "tunnels" with missing parts, i.e., say "dels" as if saying "tunnels" without the "tunn." Pronounce w as you ut as suit  
set as Benton  
Avoid unsubtle, over-theatrical interpretations. Except for Blue Moon, the sounds are spoken, not sung. Each dot equals a one-second silence.

T  
S  
...

T  
N  
Els.  
Et  
ust  
un el.  
En  
ut len.  
...

Els tun lute stu tel,  
Eltun te I s nute,  
Let tul nute use nelt  
luts lut.  
En nute suln.  
...

Suet un nel ntel,  
lut tu sten ratul,  
en el tul u sul.

Ten u tel us?  
Nust ensu setun lemsu?  
...

O.K.  

Tunnels.  

and a passed age,  
with store shun,  
gave gills weight forth;  
only to caps zinc conjeep,  
at eels tongue,  
of cast shuck.

Enter orange.  

I tick nun  
then jaw kelp,  
at cussing moons.  

.....

Sing, Blue Moon,  
because under the pelvic laces,  
There are no fins!

Alone, the inverted Cone  
with small openings  
rates the instruments  
gilding through the antediluvian  
deciding phase;  
because  
ext egg pulps opposed to demand,  
Said ready-made theory is USELESS.  
...

that is why Snuffish thought  
the world of land  
Set apart for the avoidance of intimacy.

Bantam.  

Paltry.  
Potty  

Are simply idiomatic words,  
Under brimless coverings,  
which set caps for picking at flaws.  
.....

Ducking metallic salts  
not found outside,  
with radiating plate  
at red flaps of flesh  
hanging live in the water  
covered with droll little animals,  
he said,  
"The fourteenth letter plus twenty-nine  
and one half days equals its  
mean density abbreviated M."

Newark!  
The Union of South Africa,  
Veet-oust - schnell - pod - brabble!!

When will a light touch  
the two winged derivate  
infesting the escapement  
as pigeons?

lide.  
lapse.  
equivocating.

Exist on the rough side of one's  
tongue, extending into  
the caterwaul.

Her glide-away organ  
Succumbed to  
bounding shift-lapse;  
which change-over Johnny  
withheld with his mutable business  
of course all above board  
...

with impassable trice,  
and  
spend welcome,  
antiqued with whiffet balk  
at mark quall stang,  
which cock roose of  
keep held.

Then  
...

Making assent,  
Ashen vast-dad?  
Alas!  
Only mum shallow  
blessing suns.  
...

Daystars?  
...

Yes, passageways.  

no deeper than a heavy dew.

...

E lu un nel tus.  
Sulet en tu.  
Ten u tel us?
...

Len uf  
En  
El un  
ust  
Et.  
T  
S  
T  
N  
Els.

Ten u tel us!  
No.

Stuart S. Smith  
Baltimore, Md.
The Dream

(Painted by Henri Rousseau, 1910)

In the dream
three brown monkeys
and a robin
sit in an orange tree.
A young elephant watches
while a snake charmer plays.
Two female lions
lie baffled
at his feet.
Far away in a robin’s egg sky
a white winter moon burns.

In the left foreground
a nude woman reclines
on a rattan couch,
cushioned in brown velvet.
Her hair falls in amber plaits
over perfectly round white breasts
with golden nipples.
Giant pond lillies
on massive stalks
lean to her;
parakeet blue petals unfold
to expose rust centers.
Other lillies bloom
in mellowed magenta.
One pink bud pushes
toward the grasp
of her extended hand.

Above her
in an umbrella tree
a blue bird of Paradise,
wings poised for flight,
looks back —
perhaps startled
by the presence of a pink garden hose
winding through the snake grass —
hers dark eyes
focused on someone
not in the picture.

Sandra Warren
Portland
Scene: A street with two houses.

Enter Lelio, reading. He sits. Enter Saccherina. She flirts with him. He ignores her. She tries harder. He starts reading aloud — it is a geometry text. She asks him what it is. He says love poetry, shuts the book and asks what she wants. She wants to know more about him, she says. He starts to teach her geometry. She pretends to be fascinated, gets bored, leaves. Enter Georgio. He asks Lelio to go fishing with him. Lelio ignores him. He asks Lelio if he wants to play some ball. Lelio ignores him. He asks what Lelio is doing. Lelio starts reading aloud from the geometry text. Georgio is disheartened. Lelio pretends excitement. He gets up and begins drawing geometric figures. A letter slips from the book. Georgio notices it. They battle for it. Georgio reads the letter. It is a letter to Honestia offering marriage from Lelio. Lelio explains that it is the seventh letter he has written and that she will not answer them. Georgio points out that it is unaddressed and unsigned. Lelio says she ought to know who sent it anyway. Georgio offers to help him with a plan to get Honestia to reply. They exit. The letter drops out of the book.

Enter Zanni, complaining about Pantalone's stinginess. He has been sent to the Dr. to get free samples for Pantalone's illness. Enter Dr. Heart. Zanni continues to complain. Dr. Heart asks what the problem is. Zanni explains Pantalone has all kinds of aches and pains. Dr. Heart explains he is a doctor and that he can help. Pantalone calls for Zanni from inside house. Pantalone finally enters in a rage. He beats Zanni for not getting his medicine. Dr. Heart asks what the problem is. Dr. Heart pretends to be fascinated, gets bored, leaves. Enter Georgio. He asks Lelio to go fishing with him. Lelio ignores him. He asks Lelio if he wants to play some ball. Lelio ignores him. He asks Lelio what it is, he says love poetry, shuts the book and asks what she wants. She asks him more. She asks him what he thinks of her. Lelio says she ought to know who sent it anyway. Georgio offers to help him with a plan to get Honestia to reply. They exit. The letter drops out of the book.

Scene: A street

Enter Pantalone, calling for Zanni from inside house. Pantalone finally enters in a rage. He beats Zanni for not getting his medicine. Dr. Heart asks what the problem is. Dr. Heart pretends to be fascinated, gets bored, leaves. Enter Georgio. He asks Lelio to go fishing with him. Lelio ignores him. He asks Lelio what it is, he says love poetry, shuts the book and asks what she wants. She asks him more. She asks him what he thinks of her. Lelio says she ought to know who sent it anyway. Georgio offers to help him with a plan to get Honestia to reply. They exit. The letter drops out of the book.

ACT I

Scene: A street with two houses.

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Dr. Heart exits. Zanni teases Pantalone, who can't raise his voice or swing his arms. Pantalone forces Zanni to stand so he can be beaten. Zanni discovers the letter. Pantalone snatchers it and reads it. It is perfect. All he needs is a name. He tells Zanni to hold onto it while he thinks of someone. He exits. Enter Honestia and Servette. She sees Zanni with the letter. Zanni pretends to read it. She points out he can't read. She takes the letter — recognizes the handwriting and asks who it is to. Zanni says he hasn't decided yet. Enter Lurette and Saccherina. They read the letter. Each decides the letter is to her. Honestia takes the letter to Pantalone. Zanni takes the letter to Pantalone.
Samuel Sewall Sails for Home

(Two sonnets from a sonnet sequence)

Editor’s Note: Samuel Sewall (1652-1730) was a contemporary of the Puritans and, among other things, a merchant skipper. His 36-year diary is a rich social observation of early New England.

"As weary Pilgrim... Blesses himself to think upon his dangers past and travels done..."

(Anne Bradstreet: Longing for Heaven)

XII
To Mrs Martha Oakes
"Words...written only in black paper bee."

Madam, I write to persuade you to be sensible: for New England is a cleaner country than ever you were in before. To disdain it filthy is a sort of Blasphemy which, as proceeds from your mouth, must needs defile you. I write this not to upbraid, but to admonish you and pray God commands you freedom from provocations. But eyes should show you, your heart know, true joy in what you would despise.

XV
Becalmed on the Kennebeck

"And in God’s Garden saw a Golden Tree."

Becalmed I go ashore on the Small Point side. A settlement, rooted down, had signed its intent with apple trees. All buildings gone. Loon birds, silent, dive to meet the flooding tide. All about me twisted brier, berries, defeat the flooding tide. Lost apples fruitful still - Laus Deo!

Man and not the tree denies Paradise. A butterfly slowly unfolds. From rank leaves passion flies, a greedy, gorging worm surprised.

Robert M. Chute
Freeport

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ACT II

Pantalone enters with Zanni holding the letter. He is going to call on Coviello and see if his old neighbor can supply him with someone with whom he can fall in love. Coviello enters. Coviello is puzzled by Pantalone’s behavior - soft speech, slow actions etc. Pantalone explains the Dr’s advice. One of Coviello’s daughters would be fine. He explains that he would do the same for Coviello if Coviello were ill. Besides that, he is willing to pay a small amount for the privilege of falling in love with one of them. Coviello agrees but asks which one. Pantalone isn’t sure. Coviello commands both to step out. He explains the situation. They ask how rich he is. He responds - very. How old? Very. They both want to marry him. They fight. Pantalone urges them on. Lurette wins. Pantalone pays Coviello who exits counting the money. Saccherina goes inside sneering at Lurette. Lurette exits just as Lelio gets his courage up.

Enter Dr. Heart. He asks what the trouble is. Georgio explains. Dr. Heart says never mind, to consider it a gift for his name on the letter he’d found.

Enter Georgio and Lelio. Georgio proposes various ideas to Lelio about how he can win his love. Georgio finds out that Lelio hasn’t talked to her. He persuades Lelio to try that first. Georgio knocks. Enter Honestia. Georgio tries to get Lelio to talk to her. He fails. He tries to act as a go-between. Honestia is at first amused, can win his love. Georgio finds out that Lelio hasn’t talked to her. Georgio knocks. Enter Honestia. Georgio tries to get Lelio to talk to her. He fails. He tries to act as a go-between. Honestia is at first amused, then disgusted. She exits just as Lelio gets his courage up.

Enter Dr. Heart. He asks what the trouble is. Georgio explains. Dr. Heart says what he needs is practice in talking with young women. Any young woman will do. Enter Lurette. Dr. Heart asks her to help in a matter of life and death. She agrees. Dr. Heart instructs Lelio. Lelio parrots what the Dr. says but immediately falls into describing a geometry problem when Dr. Heart steps. As they encourage him, enter Pantalone. He overbears and becomes jealous. He demands that Lelio explain what he was going to his house to explain what duties her new master must undertake. She explains that as Pantalone’s wife, she must set strict rules for Honestia. Dr. Heart explains that Honestia won’t be there long, as he is going to marry her and that soon she might be a grandmother. Lurette is outraged. She is too young to be a grandmother. She exits. Enter Saccherina. The Dr. asks her to help. She flirts with Lelio. Pantalone scratches out Lurette’s name on the letter and writes in Saccherina. Lelio won’t talk with her either. Pantalone offers her the same terms as Lurette. She ignores them and flirts with Georgio. Exit Georgio and Saccherina followed by Pantalone. The Dr. pronounces Lelio incurable and goes off to prepare for the wedding.

Enter Honestia and Servette. Lelio explains to Servette the Dr.’s wedding plan. Honestia faints into Lelio’s arms. Lelio is confused. He drops her and exits. Curt.

ACT III

Enter Zanni. He bemoans his fate as an underpaid servant of Pantalone — he is beaten daily to boot. Enter Lelio. He tries to find out from Zanni why Honestia fainted. Zanni proposes ridiculous reasons. Finally Zanni explains that Honestia is in love with him - Zanni pretends that idea is just as foolish as others. Lelio doesn’t believe it. Enter Servette. She berates Lelio for his cowardice and tells him that if he is brave he would tell Honestia that he loved her. Lelio says that he can’t do it — he tried but it didn’t work. Enter Dr. Heart. He asks what the problem is and is told by Lelio. Dr. Heart asks him if he can explain his feelings in other terms. Lelio says he can use geometry. Dr. Heart prescribes geometry as the cure and asks for his fee. Lelio is broke. Dr. Heart says never mind, to consider it a gift because Dr. Heart is getting married. He describes Honestia. Servette is disgusted. Dr. Heart exits in high spirits. Lelio practices geometry to one side. Servette goes Zanni to agree to pretend to be Honestia. Zanni exits to get ready. Servette calls Honestia, who enters. Lelio addresses her in terms of geometry. They agree to run away and become congruent and exit. Enter Coviello. Dr. Heart, Lurette, Saccherina, Parida and Pantalone. Coviello will perform the marriage ceremony — it is to be a double wedding — Dr. Heart and Honestia, Lurette and Pantalone. Lurette announces she will not go through with it because she doesn’t want to be a grandmother. Pantalone says he prefers Saccherina anyway. Pantalone exits briefly to get Honestia. Enter Pantalone and Zanni in disguise. Dr. Heart is revealed by Zanni. Enter Georgio. He announces Honestia’s marriage to Lelio. Pantalone attacks him as a wise-cracker. He is restrained by Coviello. Lurette and Saccherina both make a play for Georgio. He says he prefers to remain single if that is his choice. Dr. Heart offers to take both. They discover his isn’t rich and refuse. Enter Honestia and Lelio, wedded. Pantalone is furious because he will have to pay the Dr., Coviello is furious because he still has his two daughters.

CURTAIN

John Potter
Camden
House Painting

In the heat of midday,
the green shadows, dark and swaying,
become paradise.
Someday one of the trees
will call me over for a conversation
when my mind is closer to roots
reaching the center of things.

All the clapboards have been in touch
with nobody knows how many winters
Today in the midsummer sun
the paint dries quickly
giving each wall a new viewpoint
but never hiding what was beneath.

Our neighbor from across the road
comes to talk about deer, his friend's dog
and housepainting. His memories are his
alone and he is driving in the motor pool
across occupied Germany, dreaming of jet black hair,
the Alps, and some love, remote,
rising every few months.
My memories, too, are already with me.
Down the road
new ones grasp, take hold
and are born.

STUART KESTENBAUM
Portland

Modern Romance

At one a.m. a pang of loving comes;
The hour you wake and find yourself alone.
You grit your teeth, with elegance you dine:
French onion soup and California wine.
Post-coital snack for two a meal for one;
The recipe from Cosmo newly-tried.
On memories and Ruby Cabernet
Your belly swells until you're satisfied.

Too rushed to cook, you find forgotten steak:
Your mother guaranteed it would impress.
But knowing how he wolfed it down and left,
It only brings intestinal distress.
You're sick all night, for days you feel the burn;
Perhaps the steak was finally too old.
You'd eat it still, on principle alone:
In your house, nothing's simply left to mold.

Your shelves stripped bare, it's time to venture forth;
At Heartland the selection overwhelms.
You ply your cart until there's no more room:
Convenience foods to heat up and consume.
Enough good home cooking for awhile:
A can of everything to get you by.
Fresh tarts to tempt a budding appetite.
Try one by one and find the one that's right.

JENNIFER LYONS
Portland

The Skywriter's Wife's Lament

We can't see for the clouds
and he can't for being in the smoke
but he goes up anyway —
says he feels it, in his gut like,
when he levels out of a good round o
or noses up a i.

If only he'd wait for it to clear
so we could see
and make it something we know,
Shop Klein's, or Pepsi Cola,
we'd wait for him to dot the i.

But as it is it scares me —
I keep thinking someday he won't come back
she wouldn't either, if his tanks were bigger.

Days and days he lands, his tanks all blown;
I don't know what he does:
gibberish, his name,
he calls it praise!

Sylvester Pollet
East Holden

50 Is
as lonely as
the Mooselookmeguntic River

Jo McDougall
Fayetteville, Arkansas