

COE REVIEW



ISSUE 1

masthead

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Note on the cover:

Aukema took a photo - Light Bulb by Debbie Irwin - from the 1984 issue of the Coe Review and created a new cover for the 1971-1972 First Issue.

This is what the cover looked like:



The back cover was the same color but blank.

POST MORTEM

Chris Pryor

Third floor. A modest bedroom, done in early American. On the bed is a nude woman watching television and changing channels with the remote control switch. Click, goes the switch, and the channel changes. Over her head is a complete set of Readers Digest Condensed books, and the National Geographic. She is obviously aroused. A pink flush is beginning to run down her body toward her legs. Her toes are clenched. In the kitchen is a man in his underwear making a sandwich. He holds a piece of smoked ham up to the light and scrutinizes it carefully. As he folds it into quarters and drops it into his mouth, the nude woman begins to heave on the bed, clutching the sheets with her fingers. A rash breaks out on her chest and spine. Sweat in tiny beads roll off her forehead. The remote control switch under her leg causes the channel to change again. Returning to the bedroom, the man slips and drops his sandwich.

*

"Well, like I said, I saw the 'Beware of Dog' sign that big door you got what's that thing made out of, anyway? Well I figured you just didn't like company. But damned if I wasn't gonna get in there. I came a long way just to talk to you, and I know when I'm finished you and your family here will want to make a nice fat deal with me. Like I mean, how many people just come up to you and offer you their soul for nothin' back. We can sorta scratch each others' backs if you know what I mean. Go way dog."

*

It was late, and outside the window he could see the moon just rising over the tops of the buildings. The only sound was the flutter of curtains blown by the cold wind. He lit a cigarette

*

Second floor. Another bedroom. This one is done in oak panel and red velvet. Heraldic arms and other trappings hang all about. A man in chain with a red cross sewn across his tunic, races about swinging his broadsword. He is lopping off imaginary Saracin heads, and he is angry. Heads fly all over the room. One rolls under the couch, another lands in the easy chair. One

head falls into the toilet through the open bathroom door, and with a cry the man races over and tries to flush it down. But the toilet backs up and water spills out all over the floor. Out of the bowl flow sever imaginary Saracin heads, and with a mighty swing, the man quickly cleaves the toilet in half with his sword.

*

"Now I can tell you're a proud family. Yessir. I wouldn't get two feet into someplace if I couldn't tell a sincere face. And you got a lot to be sincere about, right? I was just next door tryin' to sell this idea, and I swear I never saw a more uppity bunch of bastards in my life. I don't see how you can live near them. Sure, they're o.k., don't get me wrong, but I just think they're kinda queer. Real friendly dog you got here, no--shoo. Now these folks kept birds. Yeah, birds. Just sit around all day singing and listening to the birds. Had a whole room of 'em. Aviary."

*

Stripping off his underwear, the man climbs into bed and pulls the sheet up over himself. He is showing signs of tenseness and the sheet can't hide it. The woman once again changed channels, so he tries to absorb himself in the program. It is the story of a poor farmer who loses his son in the war of 1812. Out the corner of eye he can see her heaving breasts. They are large and the color of heavy cream with flaming red tips like police car dome bubbles. She is drinking pepsy and drops of it are trailing down her chin.

*

"Mind if I take off my coat, it's a might warm, even for a basement, if you know what I mean. I guess you pay quite a bit to heat this place. Yessir, I knew you were well off, just knowing the area you live in. Probably a lot of rich folks wind up here, right? Now I never had what you'd call a lot of money. Hell, oh excuse me, but I wouldn't be poundin' off my feet nine to five if I did. But that's all over now. I figure to put away a nice nestegg for some rainy day with your help. Yes, it must take a pretty penny to heat this living room itself. And that's my point. You don't have to worry about money when you're as rich as you are, right?"

*

He looked over and saw her lying beside him. She was staring as he squashed his cigarette and put the ashtray on the end table. He was aware that she was asking him what he was doing. He wasn't doing anything, just thinking. He wouldn't tell her that. He made up an excuse about insomnia and turned to look out the window. Clouds of smoke from the apartment heaters rose in streams into the winter air.

*

Infuriated, the armored man hops out of the reach of both water and Saracin heads and gropes for a towel. A ten-foot geyser of water floods the room and causes him to fall. Crawling into the bedroom he encounters the head under the couch and in a panic stabs a cushion. Stuffing spills out as he hacks the remainder of the couch into kindling and hurls the pieces against the wall. Water begins to flow into the carpet and turns it into a soggy mess of foam rubber and knapping.

*

"Now like I was sayin' about your neighbors. They had this whole room full of birds. And they weren't even rare birds or anything like that. No, just pigeons and sparrows and crap like that. God, those folks are queer! You and the Mrs. go over there any? Well I could sure find more entertainin' things to do right here, than sit in one of their bird shitty chairs, and listen to them sing. You like music? Ain't you got a stereo around here? Yeah, me now, I always liked really loud music. None of this Bach stuff. Sure I like classical music, just so it's not too slow. I'll bet you like slow music, bob? You like funeral marches?"

*

He looked back over to where she was lying. Her chest was slowly rising and falling, but he knew she was still awake. There were still things to say, he knew, He told her how the night was sometimes beautiful, and she only nodded. He looked closely at her for some sign of understanding and she told him to keep talking, she was tired but she was still listening.

*

Unable to control himself the man is now staring intently at her left breast. He is turgid with excitement. She has finished the pepsi and dropped

the empty on the bed. She is now polishing her nails. He casually reaches for a National Geographic and in the process lets his hand fall on the soft mound of flesh. She continues to polish, changing channels with the right hand between dabs.

*

"Now this here dog of yours, maybe I should say dogs? Well anyway, this dog he's a mighty fine specimen. I haven't run across many dogs as fine lookin' as this one. Has he got a pedigree with them three heads? He don't look like no mutt. Yessir, I think dogs are a real nice pet to have around, and not uncommon either. You can tell a wise family by the pets they keep. This dog I'll bet is a pretty damn good watchdog. Wouldn't catch me tryin' to break in with him around. Not even for all this stuff you got lyin' around. I'll bet you haven't even been robbed once, have you? No sir he could take your head and both arms off at once. Well anyway like I was saying about this trade..."

*

He lit up another cigarette and drew a long puff before he threw the match into the ashtray. Work, he didn't know why he kept it up. Why should he drag himself out of bed every morning for that excuse of a job? He made no money, he was wasting away, but not any more. Not any more. What could he tell her.

*

"Say, you play chess? Man I wish I could play chess. I mean I know how the pieces move, but I couldn't ever win. I see you already got a game goin. You play with the Mrs. huh? I can play well enough though to know you're gonna capture that pawn, right? You know if I could play chess real well, I bet I could win a shitload of money. Maybe you could teach me. I could even split some of it with you, how's that sound? My, it's gettin' mighty warm out. Don't suppose you got a thermostat, do ya?"

*

Soaking wet and covered with foam rubber, the armored man fights desperately to stop the invasion of imaginary Saracin heads. As one appears in the top drawer of his dresser he swings his sword and shatters the mirror.

Next he tears off the legs and handles and kicks the remaining wreckage over. Clothes fly around the room, and the armored man leaps across the bed with a pair of pajamas impaled on his sword.

*

One time, it must have been around two o'clock, he went out walking. Walked all the way down to the water. There wasn't as much as a car out, and he could walk right down by the water road, in the middle of the street. He felt alone but happy too, Just walking past the closed stores and looking at the boats tied up at the pier. He sat down and listened to the waves for hours. When he started back, the sun was coming up. She never knew he was gone.

*

"Was that your boy answered the door? Ain't he a little too old to can around stark naked with a toy boat in his hand? But I will say you sure got a real honest family here. You know, I never could figure out why folks are so scared of bein' seen with nothin' on. I'm no pervert now, but I got a real artistic interest in the human body. You an artist? Yeah, I took some Polaroids of my wife once, with nothin' on. Oh, she wasn't playin' with herself or anything, just sittin' and lookin' out the window. Damn, I wish I could show you one. She'd probably kick my ass if I did, oh that's right I keep forgetting. You got a real fine wife there yourself. Lotta kids too, I can tell you love her, shoo--dog."

*

The man in bed is trembling. His hand like a five-fingered octopus crawling over the jelly breast. He gives it a squeeze, and glances over to see she has begun polishing his nails. The brushing on his fingers only adds to his excitement. His desire is burning as red as his fingertips, and he moves closer to her, until he can feel her body, hear her breathing. She is switching channels rapidly now, eyes glued to the screen.

*

Pulling himself away from his thoughts, he glanced over at her. She made no response. He bent closer and saw she was dead.

*

The armored man neatly scalps the four posters off his bed and disembowels the mattress. Springs mixed with cotton wadding bounce to the floor. Feathers choke the air. The armored man is not only confronted with imaginary Saracin heads now, but imaginary Saracin arms and legs and whole bodies. Saracin armies, armed to the teeth, march from the desk drawers, bathtub, kitchen and bathroom sinks. One man against the horde. He fights with a passion, slashing and kicking. They are starting to corner him in the wreckage. He stumbles over the remains of a stratolounger and comes crashing to his knees.

*

"Now listen, what we been talkin' about. I think it's a pretty fair shake. You get your half eL little later, that's all. I don't think anyone could pass it up."

*

He looked toward the window and stubbed out his cigarette. The first streaks of dawn were breaking over the rooftops. Day was coming, and light began filtering into the room. He bent forward and put his head between his knees.

*

"What do you mean? Look, I came along damn way to see you. This ain't no taxi ride away, and I sure as hell can't go back!"

*

The man is unable to control himself any longer. In one deft move he dislodges her hands and rolls atop her. Pepsi bottles, fingernail polish, *Readers Digest* Condensed books drop to the floor. He hesitates a moment before beginning his wild plunging, only to find the sheet still between them. A *National Geographic* on tribes of central America hits the floor and falls open to the pictures of naked women, and the man is struck for a moment with an image of his childhood. The channels change too fast to be understood.

*

Finally, he silently got up and walked to the window. He slid it up and a cold gust needled his naked body. He slung one leg over the ledge.

*

"I been sittin' here most all night now butterin' you bastards up for a deal. What do you think I came here for? Somethin' to do, to hear my head rattle? You're as bad as those creeps next door. They said you can't make no deals with them, but I didn't believe them. Go ahead, call your fuckin' kids!"

*

Still swinging, the armored man struggles to his feet. He is not beaten yet. Staggering to the kitchen, he lays waste to the dining table, two chairs, oven, refrigerator, and electric toaster, the last giving him a terrible shock. Insane, he plunges his sword down the sink and amid short circuits, rusting chain mail, and escaping freon gas, shatters all the teeth in the in-sink-irator.

*

Hesitating on the windowsill, he looked back into the room where his wife lay dead. The empty bottle on the night table had fallen over and one or two pills lay with it. In the light he could see her face, half in shadow, half in blue light from the shades. Angelic...

*

Sheets askew, he slips to the floor and quickly unwinds himself like a hot Indian in the Ganges. Standing almost like a beast beside the bed, he makes one ghastly grimace and attacks. His foot slips and he falls, impaling himself on his sword as he does. Lying in a pile of broken chain mail and mustard, he manages one gasp and dies.

*

"God damn you, leggo me! Of all the shittin' tricks..."

*

At last freeing his sword from the disposal, the armored man, on the verge of collapse, prepares for one last sortie. He knows they will not spare him if taken alive. With a sweep of his hand he takes the two pills that lay beside the bottle on the night table. Sword raised, and with a tremendous war cry, he charges the bathroom, and tripping on a pile of *Readers Digest* Condensed books, lodges his head in the flush tank of the toilet and drowns. The remote control switch slips from his belt and falls down the sewer.

*

He didn't think it would hurt much. After all, it was only four stories and after that he'd be all set. He had a plan. The man relaxed his grip on the windowsill and sailed into space. Goddamn, it was cold.

*

"Hell fire and damnation, you can't throw me out of here! I got nowhere to go. Gimme my sword! My books! Can't I have my remote control switch? Where am I gonna go? Gimme back my soul, I got nowhere to go!"

iiixii A

Peter Hildebrand

the girl walking the dog with the two boobs staring
staring over there
over there
staring
at the two boobs staring
at
the girl walking the dog with the two boobs staring

iiixii B

Peter Hildebrand

sitting inside

looking at a tree

outside

inside

looking

outside at a tree

open

screen

open

inside

outside

inside

sitting outside

looking at a tree

inside

outside

looking

inside at a tree

iiixii C

Peter Hildebrand

henrietta t. zitz-pitzer

of

henrietta t. zitz-pitzer

and

the

fabulous

zap sisters

is

no

friend

of

mine

but i couldn't care less

nor more

more

nor

less

couldn't

i care

always zitzing

her

damn

pitzers

better

than

pitzing

her

damn

always zitzers

henrietta t. zitz-pitzer

Peter Hildebrand

of

henrietta t. zitz-pitzer

and

the

fabulous

zap sisters

is

INTRODUCTION TO UNFINISHED WORK

by Paul Young

Catch-as-catch-can in those days. It was hit till it quits, be squeezed and teased into full moon-shaped howling. From skyscraper windows, from bathrooms, from prisons and split-level tinder boxes, executive suites and kitchenettes, from beginning to end, from the smallest and those larger, aardvark to zygote and beyond, from me to you when I said enough, let go, I've had enough.

And it seemed that I'd seen it all before somewhere. Some movie with some hazy, blue actress belting her lines at me a la Bette Davis. Smacked of pretense from the start. She was such a mad-dog politician, such a lime-coated, scaly politico: bulging at the eyes (watered a bit), bagging at the chin, sagging at the breasts, bloated at the belly. Beautiful characters, aren't we, in our stories? We make the world a fit place from homogenized milk and Platex elastic titties.

At first I tried maintaining a shining, self-fulfilling image of what I was. Martyrdom, silent and uncomplaining, was the ticket. Psychological immolation. "One for me," I'd say then, smug like a flagellant.

They'd sent them in behind me a lot in those days. Torched up my asshole for me for hot seconds a lot in them days. Turned me upside down. (They could do it with a look.) Grabbed ahold behind the ears and upsy-daisy, yes. Like a turtle on his back and stripped of his shell, his teeny tee-tee flapping against his turtle tum. Like a great sloping barnacle nestling into the concrete wall.

"It is justice," I thought; "the scales shall balance at last."

And between stages.

In the interim which was reluctant evolution, the dark growling beyond the last bend of intestine, were snaking columns of slaveships with plague flags fastened at the masts. Some burned and spawned rowboats. The nets crackled around the railings, as did the bodies above decks. Babel: screaming in tongues.

Perhaps minds effervesced and a few dared to laugh--even to the point of tears and loving it--and dance

II

But no big thing.

"There's a lot to be said
for the dead."

That's Tinsel's sentiment; anything worth having is worth waiting for. Good things come to those who wait. No spurs, patience is all-in-all.

Tinsel had tried prodding and, from the experience, concluded that he as an Earthling human had no bid for his, lacking a better word, fate. He relieved it once for the eight-year-old niece as a lesson, how he'd tried to jimmy the hospital window with a ball-point pen so he could leap twelve stories. It would have taken less than four seconds. He was but mildly insane, you see, so there were no bars.

And none of the weak-tea melancholy. He was understandably very annoyed at no longer being in control of his brain.

You and I can master it, though. Can't we, Humbug?

Yes, yes, yes, yes. All the more thrilling a game because it takes more time, perhaps more space. We distill it into a science; our troublesome and sophisticated systems glory in the challenge. We laughed at the barker who said, "Things are not what they seem," O Humbug.

For out of the corner of his eye he saw rows upon fields upon acres upon miles upon miles of our bubbling, half-assed, laughing madness.

Chuckling with us to put us at our ease.

In the meantime, while borderline systems slept and gathered strength, we missed the old man. We wanted to see it all.

He was eighty-six years old.

His brain was totally unencumbered by sanity.

He killed five women and hung them upside down in his garage.

He skinned them.

And gutted them.

Gave fresh meat and gizzards to his neighbors.

He made coin purses from the skins.

He thought they were deer.

So.

"These purses are DAR-ling, Melville, so ingenious. You really shouldn't have...What is it?"

"Doeskin."

I keep expecting something to jump out at me, but nothing does; only the bare bulbs, the simple, quick-stepping motherfuckas encased in cubicle gray, my naked ass reflected in the mirror. All but the bulbs trying to keep time.

III

Junebug and Larry, thirteen years old. Are twins. They twitch now, their heads going, erk, to the left or, erg, right. People smile behind their backs and say they have shaking contests, that they must need some pussy. That would calm Junebug and Larry down.

Dangling far forward: Larry will pin Aunt Lovey to the wall of her bedroom (Larry will hold her) and June will knock out her teeth with a hammer. They'll squeak and laugh, erk, and feel really very sorry about having, erk, to do that to Aunt Lovey who is, after all, their own aunt who used to love them.

They'll find out what pussy is. All they know for certain is that it's good. Lovey will screech redly and die.

Blackened cells, honeycombed, insulated with beeswax.

The Asmat people of New Guinea are headhunters. Enemy heads have holes bored through the temples. The brains run into bowls and are eaten with roasted sago larvae. They live in peace.

Bring me gold wrapped in tin.

Bring me lead nails

to lock the demon in.

*This is the rat that ate the malt that lay in the
house that Jack built. This is the cat that killed
the rat ...*

There is much slamming and beating upon doors that I open and find no one standing where someone should be. Perhaps the back; or the side; perhaps next door; the garbage maybe.

SKYCAGED:

A Midwestern Memory

by Richard F. Hodges

I

opening poem....

sweet bird midwest wicked

finally she settles.

socrates may have had rotten promo

his sentences strangled themselves to a period

discords real and fantasies may have wound themselves

so tight

that even pioneers who once sang of unpainted flight

leaving breath space for any wind-up

may have early let blood for both

and now all is only retold

while we cripple our hilarious intentions

under a chirping tree on the plain at the busstop in the boots

which only walk us on and themselves down

the unwalked departed lay mama bird waits sky hidden her grip

seizing each blinded mirror dust sit.....

(Romel's Lobotomy: There must be someone left to escape this saddened town - not only did Romel roll back and forth his fingers running as they did along the silver tube, blue with the motion of the nervous silver. Not only could he cry before a South-African mystic dream closing him into sleep. Not only did six words follow him around for the next four days, choking as he breathed them--and, not only did Romel grasp his sense of space at the foot of an Ipana commercial..... All this spoke to him and groped his silly till finally one fine blue day he splat a spitooza seventeen feet in front of the very one he was running from--and the mirror died because he was so obvious. The End.)

and while the hopelessly haggard old woman won't let us go
the big fat fertile mama's also got us in her grasp
we're all she has we don't know she doesn't know it
while the way you sit you see the into someone else.

I found out early this morning that one of us must go away don't ask me
why--it's essential--blame has nothing to do with it--simply either i fly or
you do something with this flat madness of yours--howard johnson's ain't
no jewelry--the last time you snowed i knew i'd been evicted by myself--
one time little boy i pee'd on mrs. grant's tulips she caught me in the act
... this is what you are . . . I forgave her tulips they were all she had and
she didn't know where to move from there ... been casting about all the
crazy reflections of an incoherent man in love yes the choice was clear

no use waiting

for electra teasing her past

lovers who have fallen through tubes

ricochet as they will all the coils

but, bullet themselves inappropriately.

daddy's crisscross caught that sweet meat, boys.

And now

suddenly we are all grossly hip extending five wilted fingers into a sarcas-
tic air and all words collide as monument to their own despair non-being
squeezed into the compress of a cold page a tourniquet has been
applied.... a continuum of contracts has been appropriated.

II

the energy nymph collection....

Lay mama lay mama

Streets are brown unbent and still they stretch they drawn

they still the miles down colorless she crawls the road

Lay mama mock them fading trucks they bruise

they highway scream they move

(she is soothing white cream high-rise breasts. . . wears yellow chiffon low-cut silk... ceiling pimples... bumpy thwips of petulant plaster... modern living. . . structured plan... when the tide man came to visit her washer he could do nothing with himself... couldn't even join her in a cup of coffee to wait for the apocalyptic results... let's make a deal \$\$ damn ironing board's been up since three o'clock looking brown around the edges. . . symmetrical rug-enforced tangent furniture vitamin bottle secret storm)

Lay mama lay mama

Doorstepped and dropped she stopped with us where wigwams

fenced the gates

(bouquet of red roses she will wait watching secret storm

waiting for his surprise...

plastic david statue flex genital leaf next to rob's football trophy

... "and now, from the dating capital of the world, IT'S TIME TO PLAY ... Avocado Disb Wasb Rack!"

thorns are set on rose stems to protect them from those who would destroy their freshness. . . grilled cheese sandwich for lunch)

Lay mama flat mama lay only

Lay only for the cornfed sons whose oils pop and bubble

to travel you away from them

(rob bought a five-dollar pair of handcuffs last year, shackled her, stripped her, tied her legs around his waist & couldn't get a hard-on outside day grey wet for a change pats the patrolled walkway daisy came by & told her how much she got from the tide man)

Lay mama lay mama

Lay only for the raped dreams you pimp and diffuse

boiled down while the blue light is blinking you wait

seduce and spit

(she never wears make-up his tongue is wet & she makes herself come in the bathtub... never could slice tomatoes... roses for her each year for their anniversary... surprises thrill her)

Lay mama lay mama

Lay only for the yellow-striped rapists who saw fit to bury a
people and grandfather blind their hairless epitaphs
(she has bought a soothing white creamy yellow chiffon low-cut silky negligee for the occasion. . .
freshness becomes the rose to tell it what time of year it is... she watches an old blind man beg for food money tin cup wild smile...)

Lay mama bitch mama

Lay only for those loaners who sold you in the end for 15 million
dollars pricing you as you now price us.
(she watches her blind man every day at 5 o'clock pm... she likes him very much... the calendar is marked... it's five thirty... ceiling pimpled... bumpy thwips of petulant plaster... modern living... structured plan)

III

closing poem....

across the street there's a new movie showing i got a bracelet from you
early in the game/ and down the block philip is running a beatnik bar you
always had a way with fads/ I found a certain dynamo engine hidden in
the crotch of that boiler room mrs. burke principal supervised she was
always doin that & we'd get together in the early afternoon trompin on
down central street with arny and your stud sky In my hand battle ball
shortly dead ahead couldn't it be I've been conned?
and you twinkle from the air rollin into o'hare late evening sleeping drawl
slouched up in that paramount diner's club carpet around the ramp and
back in ko the plaza plush red carpets now downtown buzzing down

main street and that bookseller pervert who'd sell me his dream cakes
dollar playboy me twenty-one? standin there telling him such things in
my twenty-one coat & tie & comin back here drugged with the first uto-
pia ever found and only found shaven hair woman on my arm waiting to
hear you suggest a drink to your prodigal son got my tie squeezed up to
its collar lookin straight alert & aggressive pacing the streets walking
upside-down brick walls job-hunting I'm a good boy love my mother
couldn't it be I've been conned?

growing incredible pimples herman hesse reading walking back through
those pea-green walls alien there your energy ripened tug-of-war extrava-
ganzas yes energy there boned & bare polarization playing its hand oh to
rebel and be young again naive enough to feel your oppressive ass hang-
ing as a challenge to any semblance of vibrancy to become or spin within.
the time to cut out is now knowing you'll never receive this poem and
time is short as it saps even you.

**Cedar Rapids
Spring, 1972**

THE DRAGON GAME THEORY

by *Philip K. Shaner III*

Today I received my annual letter from Tina Calloway. It is postmarked December twelfth from a town in Southern California. That means Alfred and Christina have moved again. I haven't seen Tina in three years and I never did meet Alfred. During the brief three months I knew Tina, Alfred was in Ceylon. He was there to gather gems for his collection.

Tina's letters were merely annual reports on the precise state of affairs in her marriage to Alfred. I only came to know her because of her stubborn will to preserve what she had.

The letter reads:

Dearest Sidney,

I have little to tell you, because everything is disintegrating. Alfred took another trip to Ceylon, which pleased me to no end. He asked me along this time, but of course I refused. Since his return of six months ago, his interest in his collection of gems has waned. And in direct proportion, my interest in the game of Mah Jong has lessened. As you know, my pull toward the game could only be as strong as Alf's pull toward the collection of gems. A balance of opposites here. Now there is little resistance and we are falling away from each other. Once I thought his love of gems was the wrench hurled into our marriage. But when I picked up the game of Mah Jong, his collection became imperative. He enticed me with gems, I resisted with Mah Jong. And nothing else mattered. There is nothing of real importance. I was born rich, so I've known that all my life. Together Alf and I laughed the world off our shoulders. When it seemed to crumble beneath us, we simply packed our bags again and moved to the mountains. All we wanted was the peace to continue our own little love war. But of course you know my sentiments by now.

Alfred's waning interest in his gems offers me a new challenge I am reluctant to accept, I find his desire pales and I love him less. The cause might be circumstances quite beyond Alfred's control. That vicious element of nature circumstance seeps its horny finger in at last. Or perhaps it is a ruse on his part, a conscious means to challenge me again.

Whatever the reason though, it is not up to me. It is up to him as it has always been. If he cares to pick up his end, then I would be delighted to do the same. Otherwise, I shall meander off somewhere without giving a damn. I will never become lonely, that too has become irrelevant.

If you do not hear from me a year hence, you will understand why. Now I must get to the post office, for it closes in an hour and your letter must be stamped December twelfth.

Best wishes in all that you do,
Christina Calloway

* * * * *

Tina Calloway had only one reason for wanting to meet me. She needed a fourth. To play Mah Jong takes four, everyone for himself. Don and Sally Lewis picked me up one night and we drove to the Calloway house. It was about nine p.m. Without the customary politeness and ceremony, Tina seated us at the leather covered bridge table as if we were nothing more than trifling parts of the game itself.

She would have to teach me how to play. I knew Mah Jong was a colorful game from China, played with tiles of wood and ivory. That's all I knew. But I am clever at games and I realized right away that Mah Jong is nothing more than an exaggerated rummy game. Only the trimmings are different. Instead of a common deck of cards, you have a hundred and forty-four tiles to work with, carved and painted with symbols of dragons or winds of the four seasons. Building a walled enclosure, the players draw their hands from the wall. There is a complicated list of words to play and learn, but that is all detail. I pick up this sort of thing quickly.

After the first two practice games, Tina was delighted with me. Right away she wanted to know if I could be a permanent fourth. It would mean four nights a week, nine to twelve. Don and Sally had already established themselves. They were older and a little bored. Tina had trouble finding a fourth. By the time she had taught him how to play, it was midnight and whoever it was would be unable to come again until the end of the week.

I said yes. I didn't have anything better to do, and there was a chilling intensity about Tina that caught and held my attention.

She had long blond hair, ice-blue eyes, and a soft voice. Her health was faultless. Her looks unblemished. And her father had left her a fortune.

I expected Christina Calloway to pump my penis, offer me her succulent breasts, and lap my thighs with her smooth tongue, thrusting a drink in my direction. I expected Christina Calloway to bid me relax, browse around her amply trimmed apartment, tell me how she knew we would be friends, and how we would see a great deal more of one another. I expected her to carry a drink in her left hand.

But faultlessly beautiful Christina Calloway hadn't done that. She had us sitting at the bridge table before she knew my name. We weren't offered drinks until after we had completed two practice games of Mah Jong. Clearly Tina was distracted about something and had a hard time remembering how to play hostess.

Nothing aggravates me more than the woman who has everything. Nothing fascinates me more than the woman who has almost everything. An odd quirk, a mistake of some sort marred Tina's perfection. Her kind is the most bizarre of eccentrics because she is only almost perfect. Some little mistake sent her spinning off into places none of us will ever accede to. Tina is alone.

It was our second meeting. We played two more practice games and the third we scored. Tina won. She offered us drinks and bade us relax, not so much out of regard to her position as hostess, but to prevent her new fourth from taking flight.

But I had no intention of taking flight. During the rather awkward silence, I ravaged my brain for a clever way of asking Tina what it was about Mah Jong that captured her so. I could already see her fascination with it and her execution was quite beyond the norm. I couldn't think of anything clever so I gave up and just asked.

"Why does Mah Jong fascinate you so, Tina?"

Tina smiled. "My love of Mah Jong, " she said, "is nothing I was born with, not chance or coincidence. I am fascinated by this game for a very specific reason. "

"I felt that," I said. "What I want to know is what the reason is. I was losing all semblances of refinement and patience. I wanted to get right down to it.

"It is to keep my husband.

"Oh." I wasn't all that sure what to say.

"I happen to love my husband," Tina informed me.

"That's good. What does the game have to do with it?"

"He has a collection of gems," Tina encouraged me.

She had left me little room to maneuver, so I turned to Sally Lewis on my right. Her face was a lined, oval blank. No hope. I turned to Don. His face was a smug, oval blank. "Space fillers," I thought.

Two blankly attentive faces. It occurred to me Tina might appreciate a face which wasn't. She hadn't left me much room to maneuver, but perhaps that was just her way. I figured she didn't want her fourth to be another space filler.

"A collection of gems, I suppose that is fine too. What does it have to do with Mah Jong?"

Tina looked at me. Calculating ice-blue eyes. Cold fire sizing me up to see how much I could catch by inference.

"He thought I should have an interest of my own."

That one sank. I was beginning to catch on. Sally and Don were left in the dust, both with that smiling attentive look covering their faces like sheets.

"Then your fascination for the game is not quite real?" I thought it rather intelligent to deduce that much.

"Not at all," Tina contradicted me. "It is most real. It is the only genuine interest I have."

There was nothing for me to do except look at her flawless face and wait. There was something magnificently peaceful and passive about her mouth and eyes that I hadn't noticed before. Something hard earned.

"My husband and I were married five years ago," she said after a while. "We lived happily until we got tired of looking at one another. Or rather he got tired of looking at me, and I was left groping. Two years ago he began collecting gems. I had no interest of my own, so I followed him. I became interested too. So when he began resenting my growing interest in his collections and travels, I was confused. He told me I was trying to steal something from him, something more than the collection, something vital. Perhaps I was. So he planned his trip to Ceylon alone. He wanted to bring his puppy."

"And now while he is away you have found an interest."

"Mah Jong."

"Mah Jong."

"Yes."

"But why does it have to be Mah Jong?"

"Why Mah Jong? You will have to understand the game a little better before I can tell you."

That was all I could get out of her that night. At midnight the party broke up,

It took only a week for me to reform my irresponsibilities in accordance with Tina's precision. Sally and Don Lewis were by now quite accustomed to it. The hours were from nine to twelve. Tina never told us these hours. To arrive at nine-five would not do. To time a game so poorly that it stretched beyond the hour of midnight would not do. A break for refreshments and chats arranged itself around ten-thirty. It lasted until eleven-fifteen. If you had not timed yourself to finish your drink, that was your own business. But you did not pick it up during the game. Things were run on clockwork precision. Rules were enforced by Tina's pale, commanding eyes. More than once we were sent home early like children expelled from the classroom for naughty behavior.

But during the sixth week everything began dropping into place. We met four nights a week. We played the game Tina's way. We learned to obey her rhythm of precision. We revolved around Mah Jong like Swiss clockwork. I had learned to obey the rules. I had yet to understand them.

But I found myself enjoying the game now. I had thought it a game mostly of luck. I began to think perhaps it had as much precision involved as Tina's own personal precision. My avid fascination for Tina's way of conducting herself began to transfer itself over to this complex game, until I could no longer separate Tina from Mah Jong. And this is what Tina must have been waiting and watching for.

At the end of six weeks, exactly, everything clicked into place with a snap I could almost hear. I got shivers. Tina, our schedule, and the game itself had fused in my mind. They were one in the same. And I was one with it. I looked at Tina and tried to make the shivers go away. Tina must have seen it in my face.

"Now do you believe the game is real?"

I stared at her and heard myself say "yes".

"It's your turn now," she said softly. "Take your turn."

I felt a little numb. I took my turn. From that moment I was in the rhythm, a part of it. Sally and Don obeyed it. There is a difference.

The blizzard had no right to arrive on November twelfth, even in New England. By noon, six inches; by eight, twelve inches. We left early. But everything went wrong. The first accident held us up till nine. We backed away from the second and took a detour. It probably saved us thirty minutes.

No one should feel the way I felt about a simple thing like being late for an evening of Mah Jong. What I felt was closer to anguish than anxiety, all because of nature's circumstance. Nature does as she pleases without consulting us.

We arrived, Sally and Don were apologetic. I was helpless and numb. Tina. She emanated a silent defeated calm. The four of us crept to the bridge table. I greeted it like a friend.

We took our customary positions; we didn't play immediately. Tina huddled over the table and occupied herself toying with the tiles. With her fingers she made little trails through them, scattering them over the surface of the table. She picked one up, holding it up so I could see.

"East wind prevails," she said. "Why did I pick up east wind instead of north or south? This is what frightens me. Chance. Nature. Nature refuses to be tamed into a system of logic. We turn our backs and ignore chance, hoping she will go away. But every system will fail because of her. Even my own."

"Let's talk about your system.

"About Mah Jong?"

"All night, about Mah Jong.

"Again you have to deal with nature. Everything about Mah Jong is precise except for one thing. It is still chance which tiles you pick up. You cannot choose your own hand."

"That's the end of it. Start from the beginning.

Tina turned to Sally. "Do you mind?" She was still huddled over, her arms spread on the table.

No, Sally didn't mind. Don didn't mind. Their presence annoyed me.

Tina turned to me. "You know the game fascinates me.

"Yes. "

"You know my husband made it essential for me to have an interest of my own.

"Yes. "

"And now you know my interest is no less real because of it.

"Now I know that too."

"Well good!" Tina straightened and smiled her most devastating smile. Then she started shuffling the tiles around and preparing the first game as if the talk were at an end.

"But you haven't said anything." That came from Sally Lewis, which surprised me a great deal.

"Oh. Pardon me. Let me tell you the only thing in the world that matters to me. It is to keep my husband in love with me. The rest is game. But gaming is necessary. To build something you need tools. My husband' a tool happens to be a love of bright, shiny gems. My own is the game of Mah Jong."

"But surely there are more important things in life than gems and Mah Jong."

"No, there aren't." Tina didn't feel the need to explain further. She began to build her wall.

"Please go on," I said.

"I would have been content to tag along after Alfred and his collection of gems, but he wouldn't have it. He knew the game. Nothing would do. I had to have an interest of my own."

"But a game that is nothing more than rummy," said Sally Lewis, "is hardly worth such a commitment."

"What do you commit yourself to?"

"She is doing volunteer work in the emergency ward at the hospital right now." Don Lewis poked his voice into the gap.

"That's mere ambition. Or boredom. I think ambition is silly. Thank God I never had to work. I'm lucky and very grateful for it."

That one left Don and Sally floundering. Tina turned to me.

"I tried to play Alfred's hand but he wouldn't let me. So now I have picked up my own."

"I understand that part." I felt a cruel superiority to Sally and Don. "Now, what about Mah Jong?"

Tina began the construction of her wall. I thought I would never be able to drag what I wanted out of her. I began my wall too. In a moment Sally and Don surrendered and began theirs. Tina tossed the dice. We began to draw. I could see my hand was going to be good. I had a set of three already, a pair of dragons, and a pair of south winds.

"In Mah Jong," Tina said abruptly, "there is one objective, that is to complete your hand as quickly as possible."

"What does that have to do with your husband?" asked Sally. Sally Lewis was back in the game.

"If I complete my hand in less time than he completes his, I win. Let me tell you some tricks to win. Block your opponent by retaining the tiles he needs. Meanwhile, you complete your own hand."

I was beginning to catch onto things. "Mah Jong itself is the tile you will prevent him from acquiring. And if his gem collection is the tile you want, he will not let you have it."

"So you retain the other's tile and the game stays in a deadlock.

"Yes. The game remains in a deadlock and Alfred and I remain thoroughly in love. The second trick is to build on high tiles. Mah Jong is mine, the gem collection is his. We both build on them."

"So he is his winner and you are yours, and the game will never be completed."

"True. The game will never be completed as long as each of us perpetually tries to win."

"But that isn't true with Mah Jong. There is usually a winner," said Don in full surprise of his own words.

"But that winner is usually me," said Tina. "Let us suppose that the three of you concentrated as hard as I do. Except when chance gave one of us a far superior hand, we would end in stalemate. Alfred and I are of equal ability. I drew my hand to match his. If there is a winner in my game with Alfred, we will never play again."

She looked around the table to see if we were still with her. Apparently she was satisfied. "Alf has taught me all this. I can weave it into a system of logic so it keeps making sense to me. He has understood it always. He can afford the indolence of a gem collection. Not so for me. My fascination must remind me constantly of the logic of it, so I don't become careless and make a mistake. He won't make mistakes. He won't drop the tile I need to win. This is his by nature. With me it is forced. But it is none the less real for it.

There was a silence while the three of us digested. There it was. All complete. It made sense.

"Your husband doesn't know of your Mah Jong, does he?" Sally asked.

"No. "

"Then how do you know he will be drawn to it as you are drawn to his gem collections?"

"Of course he will, he will have to. If he isn't, he will lose because my love for it is real. He can't afford not to be drawn into it.

"But can you be sure?"

Tina smiled. "I can be sure. It is a law."

She took up the dice and threw them, to determine who would start. We counted and it was me. I felt it would be a good idea for me to win this game. Much as I knew Tina to be right about things, I was taken with a desperate desire to prove her wrong. It occurred to me that I felt now the way Alfred would in just a few short weeks.

But I didn't win the game. No one did. Tina led us through, proving everything she had just said, and her own ability to apply it. The game ended in a stalemate. In spite of my good hand, I could not win it. And I knew I should have won.

Tina looked up at me and smiled her energetic beaming smile.

"You did that on purpose," I said.

"Yes."

"How?"

"I have perfect concentration. It is the only difference between my ability and yours. I know almost to the tile what you have in your hand. You see? I have the two dragons you need.

She held up the dragons.

"You wouldn't drop yours. I decided not to drop mine.

She paused a moment while I admired her diverse ability.

"But I can't always carry out what I plan to carry out. There is still the element of chance to deal with. If I am dealt a perfectly rotten hand, I will lose the game no matter what."

"And you are afraid," I said, "that nature or chance will sometime crop up and destroy the delicate balance that you and Alfred will create when he arrives home."

"I am certain. There is always something. I can manipulate to perfect all I can see. It is the thing that I can't see that will destroy us. Not a snow storm perhaps. But there is always something.

* * * * *

On the morning of December twelfth, Tina came to see me. I made her comfortable in my meager apartment.

"I came to tell you that I won't need you any more. My husband comes home tonight."

"Thank you." I could not help the spark of sorrow and resentment that reared up in me. "Please let me know if there is anything I can ever do for you in your life."

She looked at me. Ice-cold eyes, but warmth in the smile she gave me. I caught just an instant of an unfathomable sadness.

"I wish it didn't have to be this way. I wish I didn't have to love Mah Jong the way I do."

"So Alfred will be your fourth," I said. "And you will let him play, but never let him in on what I know."

Always I have been knowledgeable of the deepest secrets, but never allowed to partake.

"Yes," she said. "He will never know what you know. I have taken you into my mind the way I could never take Alfred in."

"What about Sally and Don? They know as much as I. Aren't you concerned?"

"I don't think they do. They only know the rules and obey them. They will be too curious to present any sort of a threat. You know more. You could twist the whole game. You would be a threat."

Tina stayed only a few more minutes. It was the last I was to see of her. She and Alfred moved away about six months later. Yet up until now her game had been successful.

Through all the distortions and coldness, Alfred and Christina recognized each other and wanted to stay together. It saddens me to know that the only means they had of doing so is crumbling too. The rope lies slack between them and after all is over, they will drift apart, each wandering aimlessly.

Perhaps the letter I received today means Alf tired of a struggle he was not permitted to understand. But I think it means that somehow nature or circumstance dealt him an entirely new hand. Nature that Tina could foresee, but never define, never prevent. Nature within Alfred himself, beyond Tina's control, beyond Alfred's control.

There is no band in this place

Tom Adamson

There is no band in this place,
all the ribbons have fallen from your face.
We sit beside a man who calls this home,
with a face that is our moon at night
and a forehead bigger than the state-prison dome.
The sunshine burns my eyes but not these walls
and I moan the morning away. . . yes, I should give my wife a call.
Many years I've been domesticated
with a wife and a dog and house that stays warm
and safe from the London fog.

What stays on my mind is the nights in this place;
I can't see who I'm singing to or even find their face.
Sometimes I turn my head into the pillow and smoke on and on

until my chest rattles low and the filter's gone.
And suddenly the night will be broken as voices dance together,
grabbing their partner's breath until they discover
who is the witch and who is the lover.

Wonder so madly what is the time of day?
My fingers sit cold, pasting each crime away in my head
in my head
in my head the situation's getting so bad
I jump a passing lad for a smoke;
there is no band in this place
there is no living when it's all a bad joke...
tears flick my eye's ashes in burning crawl
like all the months and years I recall

with so many sweet moments glowing
wet in my outstretched hands.

I rest a last curse on sadness reflected off your face,
there is no band in this place.

THE PERIPATETIC WANDERING OF FRANK

by Joseph Shea

FRANK'S EPITAPH

Cooing and crying. It seems beers and beers ago. I grew up in an old mill town. And an old man asked me to shut the door because of a cold draft. And instead, I had to fly away with it.

Signed sincerely,

X

(Found beneath a big oak tree, on a tombstone, in a high grass, open field. 1086 Main Street, downtown Buffalo, New York. Date: 1682.)

She told me she had some time to pass, and not to mind the tramp who was all tied up in the backseat, and I said OK by me, and hopped in. It was cold outside, and the heat felt good on my ankles. We must have gone about enough tick-tock (I was asleep) when the car did a sharp careen to the left, and, naturally, according to the law, I fell out the door. I managed to level my view, in perplexity, to watch the jalopy disappear into a great hole. Other than that, I can't remember annnyyything. Somewhere inside, I said thank you.

And so is I Frank, and Frank only, stranded and forgotten, hitched from the who knows where to the way out here, footzez too dumb for direction, thumb too frozen (not another chariot in sight) to beg. So lone, so hugger-mugged by the night. Lame jackstraw on a barren bend of highway.

Go west, young man I Hell!!! I'd kicked my can all over enough that day. Now, there's buzzards circling my brain. I say, Sam--at a moment like this, there's nothing better than an old friend --Sam, man, they ain't gonna git us yit. Sam justs scratches his head and wanders over to the great hole.

Then, knowing I couldn't depend upon anybody but me Self, I set about gathering up the local rubble, and built a moonfire.

When this is finally imagined, with me all bellowsed out, I cry DAMN, DAMN, to the ravenous birds, and settle down, as comfy as the shattered glass landscape will allow, to my ragged, ancestral, photograph album. Also, a "Red Hot" jawbreaker.

Gasping through a purplish sphere, an image catches my fancy:

She is wrapped in quilts, still and asleep, in the morning. The picture is a blurred by sunlight, through the window. She must be dreaming. Charlie, her brother the priest, is chasing her down a maze of tunnels, threatening with a stiletto of a crucifix. She's desperate for an escape exit.

Then, she sees me standing in a doorway. I'm wearing a cape, that I open like wings.

I toot my horn. HURRY UP, SWEETHEART, I'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME FOR YOU! We kiss and hug, in the outside, with all our might. Charlie, meanwhile, commences to carve an obscene message into the wall.

I whisper, let's go to heaven while we're still alive. And a rainbow stripes through my baby's blue eyes, a herd of white stallions blaze in the sky, and a May rain gently falls in the sunlight, I hear a street singer with red shoes, and she says, WHY NOT. And I feel like for the first time in my life, I believe, I'm an angel who found his music. We'll play like this forever, I think.

Not without misgivings. She wakes up from the dream, just five years later, and immediately makes a move for the door.

What happened?

I don't know, Frank. I have to leave, because you're killing me. I can't buy the rock-ya-around-the-world line any longer. I have to be free, alone, and by myself.

But what about our spirit?

You got your problems, I got mine. Right?

Dis is alotta hot pastrami. While she's packing, I slap some spicy mustard on, and am reminded of how she once was rescued from assault.

So, she'd be better off dead today. Would I please put the sandwich down? Don't I need to be free, too?

I must be too involved to listen, with the pastrami dripping and falling apart. Such is the state of the body and blood gone bad, in the twentieth century. Either you're together, or the happy, receptive half of you slams the door, leaving a pillow and a few hairs of belief.

This belief business is no pie in the sky, but a painful burden. How could I ever forget that slam?

Well, Alice finally made it to Hollywood, where she poses in the sack for lonely hearts all day. Yes, soap-opera. But when am I going to learn? Which brings another photo.

Very dark. A hurricane lantern In the background casts a shadow of a man holding a telephone. He drums his forehead. He listens to it ring.

A voice answers.

Yes, darling?

Alice, this is Frank.

Frank? Let me think. Frank... Frank...

Heaven, Alice. Remember Heaven?

Yes. Now I place it. Rudi wanted me to do some silly thing with a chorus of flamingos...

Listen, I need. . .

But they kept turding all over the set. We must have done a million takes, still the foolish birds...

Alice, I love you.

What's your address, honey? I'll send you. . .

You don't read my postmark, Alice. There's been a flood here. Disaster!

You want charity, buster? Drop dead!

DIAL TONE

Should I have known, not
to ask
I love you?

I tried her number, once more, but the hook was off my line. I was listening to the screaming of all the lost conversations, In between busy signal (... 9...yes...BUZZ...0...of course...BUZZ...5...yes...BUZZ...) when a fancy lady butts her big behind into my belief. She queries, ever so cutely as to whether or not I would like her to stain my sleeping bag tonight. I had been warned of this temptation on a record by Elvis. I remembered he bit, and got real broke up in the last stanza. So I offered the lady a pepperoni (cold cuts being so handy), zipped her up, pulled down the shade, and wandered into the woods alone.

There I am, confused without a radio, and a tree is talking to me. It sounds like a crowd mugging each other on New Year's. And I yearn to be in Times Square, shaking a telephone pole down, screaming GREEN LEAVES, GREEN LEAVES, GREEN LEAVES!!!

I asked the Justice of the Peace, how a poor lonely was to earn an honest buck. He took a sip of courtroom and gavelled, "Stand behind a mule and recite Shakespeare for 99 years."

So serving a thicket of nightmares, my HOWL --- Oh, I want so hard to forget you. Always, I'll hear something crunching in the brush, cracking in the twig. I'll think it's you. I'll jump. I WANT TO DANCE. But it's just a porcupine, with wind in its needles. Oh, it hurts me

when sometimes, I think, I hear thinks
when sometimes, I think, I hear things,

In the morning, I don't have a penny to my pocket, and my bladder is swollen. There be not a pot of gold to see, so I saunter over to the great hole, as calm as god, and take a hefty 3 minute whizz. Afterwards, while contemplating the nothing to do, a monk approaches wearing a coin belt. O my lost child, that will be on nickel.

Handing him a jaw breaker, I explain that all I did was to hop on Eddie's milk truck, that I just wanted to buzz downtown and play a few tricks, and I don't know where I ammmm, or where pop and mom are, and I had to tinkle, so won't he be my benefactor?

The monk, unable to assume any more responsibility, dives into the great hole. He left a dusty book, which I picked up, and open to the first page. It reads ----- GO INTO TOWN -----The rest appeared pretty melodramatic. Something about farm girls and boa constrictors. So as I had my mojo working, I took the title advice and moseyed into the big city.

I meet a salesman weeping on a park bench, who tells me nobody wants the real pig he has got tied to the rope. They all want electric bacon. Enough gas, I reprimand. What's playing in town? Lennie and Marge don't want the kid.

They want to tool over town the rest of their life, eatin' hamburger.
Chickie's down at the dump, shootin, rats.

There was an abortion on tenth street last night. Also, some kid got
ditched in the dessert.

Like I said, nobody wants the real pig.

I give my sympathy, but understand, I must relieve him of the weight.
Listen, friend, I get the real pig back on the scales, and you may search for
inspiration.

Lickety-split, the salesman disappeared. Godspeed, I prayed he'd get the
Cadillac, someday.

Now, I teach the pig how to announce Thank You in an Anglican
accent, and lead him into the nearest haberdashery. As Mr. Pinstripe looked
like an exclamation point! I consulted him in full. My colleague here, Mr.
Pinstripe, though well-mannered, has been raped of his threads by hooligans.
Since that day, he's eating nothing but bread, and scurrying round, naked. He
has also contracted a frightful case of worms. Thus, the rope around his neck.
At times, he's uncontrollable. I believe a black bowler will do him hand-
somely. Size 8, possibly? By the way, you should get some sun.

GET THIS PIG OUT OF HERE

After crudely landing back on the street, I swore vengeance: when the
bombs begin to explode. No place to duck but a doorway. I bumped into a
guy there who knew the scene. Turns out, this kind of thing happens every-
day. During their coffee breaks, the checkout girls, from two opposing gro-
cery stores, duel it out with anti-tank guns. Only the children got hurt. My
friend and I waited and rolled cigarettes. Then the girls went back to their
registers.

I'm examining a pothole in detail. A crowd gathers, a bus pulls up and we
all get on. I ask the driver where he's hauling, but he's blindfolded, so I flash
an assuring wink for a window in the rear.

The chap sitting next to me, rolling a pair of loaded dice, suggests craps.
Never being one to object to a game of chance, I consent and hand over two
Mickey Mantles and ten Red Hots. As Tishman once told me, "When you're

travelling, you have to be ruthless. Pack only the necessities and keep a sharp toothbrush. You never know what you'll pick up in the next encounter." That's a daddy for you. I open up my photograph album, and show the gambler a picture of Tishman drinking a coke in front of a captured Zen monastery, dated 1945. Dad's quenching a horrible thirst. In the background, the monks are crying. I am crying. The gambler's crying, and returns the boodle. No matter that I refuse, he insists I'm the Son of God. No dime-store junket for me, no air, I deserve a thousand Our Fathers. He pulls out the rosary, and begins Penance. As if this isn't enough, the gambler promises me ten percent of all future earnings, and leans to my ear his confession:

Next Tuesday, I snatch Mrs. Rockefeller's purse, you get the diamonds.

On Wednesday, I bust in on her birthday party, you get the cake.

Thursday, I blow up the oil refineries, you get the headlines.

Friday, I hijack their private jet, you get the ride.

Saturday, both of us are home free, across the border.

But Sunday, we're nabbed. We're hung like thieves. Then you surprise everybody by resurrecting yourself, and proclaiming the end of misery. It'll work, I tell you. Jesus, I'm just a man, maybe just a by-line. But you! The Creation! The Body and Soul"

So this is where a little sentimentality gets you, I think, and all for the wrong reasons.

Listen, chum. My name is Frank.

Frank, Schmank. Nobody understands anymore. Believe me, Frank Schmank, I got your number.

With a terrifying jolt, the bus crashes into the next burg, killing everybody on board except the driver, the gambler, and me. The driver's in a sweat, and gleans I Made It. He removes his mask. His eyes are drooling.

As we climb out the window, I say something appropriate, of God, to a gambler. Never bet on a blindfolded busdriver.

The cops scribble that into little black books, and immediately recognize me for what I am not. An innocent of higher breeding, who's been out in the rain too long. While they investigate the other two, I head into the nearest bar.

Just like a kid, the first day at school, I hobble through the swinging doors, and the whole joint shuts up. I grin. A quick-shooter, about 19 asks me how old I think he is. I say 28's my guess. The whole joint snarls WRONG. Quick-shooter makes a move for his gun, and I erect my bullet-proof shield. Wow, his bullets bounce! The whole joint shuts up. Really, I'm just standing, but everybody else figures...

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| He picks his nose | He fucks his mother | He blows |
| He beats off | He beats off | He picks his nose |
| He farts in public | He blows | He fucks his mother |
| He blows | He farts in public | He fucks himself |
| He fucks himself | He picks his nose | He beats off |
| He's a bastard | He's a bastard | He's a bastard |

AND CONCLUDES

String him up!!!!!!!!!!!!Fuck him over!!!!!!!!!!!!Tie him down!!!!!!!!!!!!

Recalling my responsibility to my fellow man, I don my top hat and bark, the drink's are on Frank. Hells Bells break loose, everything in full tilt. Bottles pop, aces slip, roulette spins, the Player cranks away... A man said he knew me when I was a tyke. His wife said yes, it's always good to see you home.

I'm about to ramble on, but her nose gives a distinctive twitch that flutters my necktie. You're not an ordinary fellow in my eye, young Frank. Nobody is, I give her hair-lip a gentlemanly tug. While her husband fills out the adoption papers, I take the opportunity to announce myself as the son of a brand-new father, and receive a box of coronas from the mayor. Citizens, I congratulate you.

Later, back at home, Pa tells me he likes to watch. You know how it is when the well runs dry. Ma's on the chesterfield, playing with a banana. Very slinky, I say to myself, and take a peek through the window.

I spy six redskins pulling a huge, wooden buffalo down the street. I open a knock on the door, and the last Mohican falls flat on his face. His last words

being --- the prophecy. . . Must be a gift from the gods, I think, dragging him to the closet so as not to cause a commotion. I feel a pending danger below my ribs.

Young Frank, you come here this minute and give me a tickle, Ma mint juleps from the living room. Pa stares through a hole in his Daily. Without a second to spare, I red-mark the date on the calendar, and slip down the laundry shute.

Eddie, and the get-away milk truck of course, are waiting for me. Look, kid. You know I go out of my way for you. But you got to think of settling down. You got to stop running. Out of sheer courtesy, I keep a thought to myself and open up a cottage cheese. Unfortunately, it's a large curd, and we're only going 30. I tell Eddie that the Indians are closing in, and where does he keep the small curd. He says it's in a coffee can labeled old nails, and steps on it.

Fending off our pursuers by not paying the least attention, and relishing my first meal since Easter, I realize they are no longer riding horses. In fact, they're not Indians at all, but little green men on motorcycles. I tell Eddie to pull over, and I hop off. Last I heard, he made it to Pittsburgh.

The little green men are extremely glad to see me. The minute one of them speaks, I know I've won. Today's my lucky box-top. They inform me that I shall receive a twenty-four carat washer-dryer, and as a special bonus: a free ticket for the rest of my life.

I suppose, at this point I should be gracious---for my hanker after the finer essence will no longer be hindered by the hard dinkum of beating the rock. The little green men sense my embarrassment and it should suffice to say I am thankful that they disappear.

I need a movie, and so slouch myself down at the local rialto. The infamous couple next to me, Dick and Jane, are doing a nasty with a box of popcorn. See Jane pet. See Dick pant. Matter of fact, I don't. The creep, holding a flashlight in my eyes, scissors the red coal of my corona. The pirate says mind your own business, and I sit up straight. Apparently (since I walked into the middle of the plot, and an invisible hand had already scratched TEN YEARS LATER on a wash of sand), the pirate had found peace and happiness, shipwrecked on an island with monkeys and mangoes. Presently, he's

being harassed by little green men, who demand he graciously receive the appliances they offer. Since the flick is in Icelandic, this translation may be merely suggestive. Anyway, I'm hollering JLKIPXWER, brutally exposing the riddle of language devices to fool the public, and the lobby boys, bless their dollar-an-hour, get ugly. Luckily, the pirate, fed up with isolation, eats the lobby boys.

Intermission: The crowd cries for more. I step up to the stage. Using my special low tone to gain attention, I explain that the theater may be an escape, catcalls from the peanut gallery, but responsibility still lies at home. A young buck-tooth stands forthright to counter. But I masturbate, because family life is a bore, he pleas. Innocent, I stomp my foot. Another, with a blue wind-breaker pleads 4 rapes and 7 murders. Innocent again, I grimace my lobes, and remove the rotten tomato from my eye socket. Innocent? Innocent... but guilty, the crowd finicks. Don't get clever, I demand. innocence may be guilt, but Love is the only experience. What does young buck-tooth dream of? What pains the rapist? I believe their ponderings, but actually they've escaped again. This time into deepest Africa, and Tarzan and Jane and the chimp, and Boy, all treasuring Paradise, savoring coconut milk in the treetops. Recalling Tarzan's soft spot for nature, I climb into the flick to warn him of the white race. He offers a bowl of fruit. No, no, no. White man threatens to ravage your kingdom with a zoo. They'll take Boy for the circus. As our Man of the Apes does not speak the Sioux tongue as well as I suspected, Jane tells him that I say- - Far off in Hollywood, there's a sucker born every minute, human beings bought and sold at the most attractive price, caged in movies, deprived of farts, excretions, creations, moles, and full coition. They are garbed and eye-shadowed. They are made to act for the ringmaster, who carries a whip. Children learn that the mightiest tiger cowers before a lonely man, with a squeaky whistle. Then, they are given Pepsi-cola and machine guns. They happily kill wild Indians and niggers. They grow old amidst the rabble of their childhood safari. They claim greener neighborhoods in the name of the Company. They want Boy. They'll take you to court.

Nobody take Boy.

That's the stuff, Tarzan, the chimp two-bananas. You'll show them, Tarzan, Boy playfully wrestles an alligator. I love you, Tarzan, Jane adjusts her

palm ---- a berry ripens in the moist jungle sun, a native fish flows over the horizon, it does not speak English---- silence descends upon the quivering moment---- Tarzan contemplates action ---- THEN RISE THE WRATH AND RESOLUTE NATURE- - - he calls...

OOOOOOOOOEEEEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAII-

IIIIIIIAAAAAAWWWW

Elephants, lions, snakes, gorillas, rhinos, deadly vipers, a cast of millions charge off the screen, plunder and ravar,., totally disrupt, pillage, and destroy the well-mannered audience. Great cries of anguish ascend. The auditorium panics, running terrified. Dick finally pops off. A lady screams OBSCENITY and is neatly gobbled. The manager quickly dials a number. DING DONG, this is the bells of peace speaking. Listen, Tarzan's misplaced the script, my fortune's ruined, animals wild are appetizing on the public, Console me!!!

We are menaced by a foreign element: Frank's behind it all. Probably supported by ex-Nazi communist, bohemian organization. We'll be right there.

The auditorium went black at the end. Tarzan, Jane, Boy, and Heaven remained safe in the film box. The movie was regarded as subversive by the critics, and is presently on ice in Siberia, where it's used as a thawing device.

Past tense, because this happened before the little green men dragged me off to the rest home, where I now reside. Totally bored, I often call upon ray imaginary Sam's dumb blond cousin from Mississippi, Tulip. My keepers know nothing of her, but wonder why I have such abundant affection for my pillow. Would I care to take a walk in the garden? I merely scratch the wallpaper and refer them to my files.

December 4, Frank stared at a fly for fifteen consecutive hours, and refused to eat the cheese and macaroni served.

December 5, Frank cut off his buttons and polished the ceiling with his saliva. He refused to eat the frankfurts and beans served.

December 6, Frank pretended to be the son of god, and demolished the wall on the east side facing Main Street. He refused to eat the fish sticks served.

December 7, Frank was found toasting his bed feathers with matches.

Extremely hungry (for petesake), he refused the London broil and peas.

Knowing well of my excusable record, I kept pace by rollicking @lip's follicles, while she related her biography to her admirer.

There was so much nothing, growing up. Getting up in the morning. Turn on the electric light. Cook the bacon. Nobody wants the real pig anymore, Frank (surprised at how expressions get around, I attend to her forehead with a feather). Anyway, the doldrum of everyday life. I detest eating. I detest ironing clothes. I detest sleeping. Everything felt dumb, useless, meaningless. I couldn't be a r a thing. I couldn't taste or feel. Until, one day, I picked up a newspaper. It said that a strange sea monster was washed up on the bayou. Wasn't a whale or shark or turtle. What it exactly was, nobody knew. Scientists remained baffled. And, O my God, I Imew that everybody was finally going to understand. The secret would be revealed. The whole world would know and rejoice and love each other. Everything began to have meaning. A PRECIOUSNESS! I made ready for a pilgrimage, packed my camera. I'd tell my grandchildren - - I WAS THERE THE DAY THE WORLD WAS FOUND OUT. I was ready. Singing every second of it. Kissing strangers on the street. I was ready to go - - then an historical society dragged our unidentified, strange a a a monster away for investigation. O, I was a a o young and innocent. Years later, in the back pages, it was defined as a soviet plant.

Other things happened: flying saucers, little green men, disappearing ships with no sign of wreckage, a guy walking on water, a monkey atop the Empire State Building, Tarzan, another alive except for his fingernails, Rock In Roll, dancers who levitated, singers who pierced I believed them, I knew. Such futility, Nobody got the message. The historical society dragged it all away. I went back to my dead house. I received pity, brief understanding. I continued ironing, mes&. ing, dressing, and stripping. I met a man who wanted babies. Fe r what, I asked myself. To scrub around in bed slippers the rest of my life. He wasn't my type. The third month, abortion. It's all about suicide. Then I meet you, Frank. And you believe...

I am a bit out of the ordinary scheme of events, I agreed, and warned the zombies that unless they take their mits offa me, I'll be forced to use my powerful blue ray. They inform me, they're from the historical society, but I notice they dematerialize as well as anybody else. Unfortunately, @lip does too.

At four in the morning, the orderlies bring my next meal, and while they're hypodermicking, a masked man appears with a gun.

After the orderlies obediently agree to model the straightjackets, the masked man and I board the get-away vehicle.

You can't fool me Eddie. (the riddle unfolds)

Ah, howja know, Frank?

Your fingerprints check.

You mean I did somethin' wrong?

Probably right, I comfort my accomplice ethically. But you better lead-foot it. They're hot on our tail.

As you might imagine, ladies and gents, there's not a split-second to elucidate. Eddie bears down, cuts the corner, rides the high side. Nip and Tuck... until we make the big delivery of two hundred pints of raspberry yogurt to Miss Henrietta Sodapopa.

Immediately, Eddie and I have a foot inside, when we spot Henrietta's prize pet Rickets taking a turn for the worse.

I understand completely, Miss Sodapopa. I hoist the yogurt, while she disrobes, and Eddie dissimulates a beastly fire in his pocket. It's all in the eye, I toss Eddie a magazine and examine Miss Sodapopa's naturally small curds.

Very peculiar.

Not really. I'm acquainted with cases that don't stop until they're grown women.

Tell me more.

About what? she suckers the lamphrey onto her nipple. About the problem, I persist.

Well, Rickets has such weak bones. I pity suffering life.

I won't tell you lamphreys don't have bones, but I will tell you I question the real nature of our delivery. I inspect the red pools on the carpet, and Sherlock they are not raspberry yogurts, at all. Not conceding to sheer voyeurism, I act upon an instinctual need for help.

The hospital wants to know something of Miss Sodapopals lineage, when King, her husband, barbells into the room, making a lewd, biceptual suggestion. Nothing of the sort, I wash my hands of the matter, and point at Eddie. I mean Eddie's got the getaway, I rationalize. All I got for Christmas are my eight itchy feet. And so, hastily spider up the chimney.

Me and a bluebird are discussing cloud formations. Splendid view, I grab my hat from a bewitching antenna wave. Simply angelic, a he retorts.

Why so bitter, I hold a rooftop edge.

Because (bluebird notes my compassionate, knotted brow) here, the sky is always blue and puffy cumulus. Indeed, virgin mermaids in the sea, I'll grant you. But do you imagine the people below realize that? Of course not! Listen, I watch the people go by everyday. Do you think they keep their heads to the sky/ Do you think they understand? Of course not! The smart slacks content themselves with weather forecasts. Do you know what they calculate? He says- - Hey, Marge, can't play golf in the drizzle. How about us and the kids gettin' hamburgers? - Shitheads! They look at the ground. They keep track of the asphalt. They stare at blank walls. They think that niggers make good chocolate, but not neighbors. They're afraid to look at each other. They're afraid to look where their two feet stand. In fact, you're the first human I've spoken to.

Much obliged, I sunset blush.

Don't be embarrassed. You're not an ordinary specimen. Still y 0 u must return to earth, and I shall fly away. You should ask more questions. This incident is not commonplace.

I glean deep into the bird's eye. I feel the tremor of an earthquake in my bones. I feel a flood in my blood. Screaming cyclones in my brain. Howling ghosts in my heart. Wingless and forsaken, I weep. Bless you, my child, I bless you. She fans the tears of my long face. She birdies me her soft breast. For you see the storm approach, while the others are blind. For all your torment, you alone shall survive. And for me, you'll be a loving homeland. Even bluebirds, in the end, die down in the dirt and water of humanity.

I watch the last glint of her fly away. I ache to follow. But the isolation of her journey. The abandoned soul of her wing span. Nobody listens. The cry so far above telephone poles and rooftops.

But me,
I slide down,
to the kingdom come.

After an episode like that, you would expect the supernatural. I hate to disappoint you, but I have this craving for cauliflower. The waiter immediately understood, and brought a huge dish of broccoli. A stranger happened over to strike my matches. Since I soak my matches in cold water, he stuck his stogie behind my ear and pulled up a chair.

Howls the cauliflower? he opportunues. Don't get nose, I rebut. Besides, he misunderstood the nature of broccoli.

You think that I think that you think I think too much, bull?

Don't be clever, I craftily music the chairs. Say, do you remember your dreams?

Only for a lucky box-top. Otherwise, keep your hands to yourself.

I hand over my last one, as we're walking down the street.

THE STRANGER'S DREAM

Yeh. It just so happens next Saturday, I'm gonna have a besot. Right? Well, I'm in this bank. I walk up to a cashier and deposit five bologna slices. They're really strange. They have plastic ellipses on the inside. It's an ordinary coffee break, and I'm about to get back to the plant. When I hear whispering like--- Don't tell him - - - Wait--- You can't. I say, what's going on here, and a crazy dame hands me a telephone. I pick it up, and this little green voice tells me I'VE WON. Well, I can tell you I was so excited I accidently went through a closet door. My sister's insideacrib. She has cuts on her face. She screams MOTHERISDEAD.

Then I woke up. Never felt happier. Like a kid getting all the gum drops in the world.

Where're you going now?

I got a place.

Where 'bouts ?

You think I'd tell you ?

It must be heavenly.

Better believe it. They got laws there to keep scum like you at a distance.

They know about me.

You're no secret.

Where are you going now?

The stranger got a place he never been before. But so afraid of being RIGHT HERE, he runs as fast as his little legs can carry him.

me? I'll root my old, brown shoes for a spell and let my greentipped fingers catch a rustle in the wind.

THE SITUATION

Place: The Bad Lands, Street: Corner of Hog Jowl and Copper Kettle,
Year: 1972, Month: Capricorn, Day: Tuesday, Birth: 5000 b. c., Father: Tishman O'God, Mother: GinnyJenny, Occupation: Peripateties,
Children: Twin gonads, Humpty-Dumpty and Egg Yolks, Eyes: Bathroom pastel, Race: Acne, Wife: Alice Hollywood, Other identifying marks: A tattooed scar of a flag on a lapel, Clubs: Sons of Thuringer, Book of the Month, Reason:.....

In other words, here I am, trying to make sense out of thin air, and a poodle on me, mistaking me for a tree. Lucky for the mutt, I mistake its mistress for true love.

I'm making the most romantic advances, when a monk intercedes. To the exclusion of all else, you choose her, he points warningly at a lonely crowd shuffling to work.

Sounds of coin change jingling, muttering facelessness. Mugs worn like lame dogs. A man fiddles with a crayon, searches for a white scrap. Finds none. Drops the color despairingly. Punches the clock. Fritters away on the pavement assembly line. Meets an old school teacher. They grunt the weather, exchange slaps on the fanny. Feel like empty plates, and invite each other to grub. Remember the divorce, and excuse themselves. He begs the moment's pardon, and mentions something about a vacation. They both watch another in a hole sense pride, pity, and scorn. Wooden nickel some hope to the street miner. Who with barely an eye stuffs iron bolts down their

throats. School teacher coughs, chokes, then adaptably recalls a doctor's appointment. Must do something about my stomach, his o Id pupil runs. A cop waving his arms catches the speed, swings his bat. You're haywire, he scores and the crowd applauds.

Back at home, ma fondles a plastic frankenstein. Junior loved his toys so (no stopping her now). He was always a gold star. Oh, there were times when held get a bit out of scope. I'd say, Junior, you got brains to burn, but you don't burn them in the right way. Then he Id homework and save every penny for Mother's Day. Such a darling. In kindergarten, he never used a handkerchief, but one must have a liberal sympathy, the board of directors yeaed. How does the same boy sabotage the work?

That's a pretty strong word, Me, I gallant, smashing through the door. Thank God, you're here Frank. What a strange age we live in, I paradoxically chew her homecooked fat. Get off my nose, she grit a fly, and my loafer son Humpty apprehended the old maggot w it h a quick swat, waffling her face. Well done chimes Grandfather clock. Bedtime, Ma weezes her nostrils asunder. Lay me to rest, I gospel. Turn me down, and tuck me in.

I noticed Ma set out a picture of my favorite astronaut, Crewcut, as a child. Also, a book entitled --- WOIJLD YOU HAVE RUN AWAY FROM HOME IF YOU KNEW THE MAN WHO WROTE ALL ABOUT HEAVEN IS LIVING IN MIAMI WITH HIS MOTHER --- by Horace Teapot.

I tilt Teapot's biography to page 171. He traces the effects of radio waves upon his herols nervous system, when I get unsynapsed, and discover a dingleberry (slang for the Latin - Pious Groinous) pinched between my thumb and index. I think I am killing myself. I think I will turn out the light, and have a blank wall stare.

Across the street, two men in trench coats are dragging my brother Junior into a concrete pool. They are disguised as artists. Downstairs, my son Humpty is dropping pennies on Mals eyelids. Miscalculating the angle of the doorknob on the way out, he cracks into Aunt Tot who spills baby Eggyolk and slips all over the floor. Uncle Fred, the umpire in the family, balks an attempt at living while taking a slug of turpentine, and chasing it down with disinfectant, as Pa, whols been all tied up in the closet, ceases his incessant

grumbling. I believe he has suffocated. A vacuum cleaner sucks the whole mess up, and in spit the new residents.

When I wake up, everything feels strangely out of place. The walls are cardboard, I think. Anyway, after dusting my whiskers and resuming my naturally optimistic brow, I merrily trip down the stairs.

Ma, knitting harmonious but bias stars, looks startingly over to Pa, whols reading Tales of Freedom to Humpty, and says --- What's the thud? The heart beat of courage, he assures her, straightening his spine. No, no! O my God! Whols that? ? Good morning, I unzip a smile in my favorite chair. He your friend, Humpty? Uncle Fred totes and teabags. That creep I Humpty, pride-fully angered, adjusts his cute, and sticks his tongue in my direction. Keep it, lad, I wipe off a greenish pallor. O my God, we're being robbed, Me hysterics, while Pa loads the gun, and Uncle Fred calls Aunt Tot safe. Exiting, I'm so struk out, I slip on Eggyolk. Child molester! Ma crtes. This all gives Pa an opportunity for his tool to dramatic.

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|
| So you want our ashtrays | Take this | Ka-Boom! |
| So you want our linen | Take this | Ka-Boom! |
| So you want our insurance | Take this | Ka-Boom! |
| So you want our name | Take this | Ka-Boom! |
| So you want our home | Take this | Ka-Boom! |

Is that enough? I wonder, stuffing holes in my head with Kleenex. I don't deserve any of it. I never asked for it. It doesn't belong to me. Why did this happen?

An infiltrator, Uncle Fred deduces. From where? Aunt Tot intellectualizes. While they quabble, I crawl out the door. Nobody seeing. Last thing my son said--- He's disappeared! An extra-terrestrial!

Whatareyou? Somekindofwhatareyou? Somekindofwhatareyou? Some-kind

Believe me, at this point, if I had wings...

I repair to a hill, overlooking the town. What a set-up, I think, I am quite alone in my bleeding. When along came a ... my lord ... a breeze caressing my

nape. For a moment, I disregard this kind gesture, and ponder the futility of continuing. But for voice sweetly . . . Hello. That's the most incredible thing I've ever heard, I fall back into the lap of what must be a cherub.

Jumpin' Jahosifatl How did you get here? Lord knows, Frank. I was just on my way to steno Mr. Peabody's grocery list when. . .

Lord don't know, it's the company, I interject, when what?

When I see this trail of the richest, ripest strawberries leading up the hill. I'm given to pause at first, but I couldn't resist. I was hungry and unafraid.

Were you followed?

How could I be? This morning I was as dusty as an attic, and sixtyfour. I expected some sort of raise from Mr. Peabody, but this I never expected.

Neither did I, healing my nausea in the maiden's joyous bosom. Beat, beat beneath her blouse she peeped.

Oh, you're saving me, I graced the hidden moonman, which in any case he must have winked.

Where you going anywhere? she buttercupped, ready to pick.

Can my ambitious escape, I studied her profile without design, without a word to explain, without the slightest inclination to comb hair or witty my posture. Only an intimation, a wiggle in the toes, a belief in the careless line of her hem forced me to open my pockets out to the wind with nothing to lose, my laugh went cloud - high like broken kites. Her yellow bonnet just fluttered, petalling a tangent.

·O yellow is my favorite color.

O you're. . . unpickable, the open soles of my brown shoes flap at the mere suspicion that fire and water possibly...

Frank, sing that song you're always singing when somebody tries to listen too loudly to you.

Never before, or my body became completely disassembled and mispleed, spreading my clothes like a sour rag sweetening in the sunlight. My brain tagged along to my blood streaming and swirling and burning cracks in the ground, where it writhed and wrenched to exhaustion.

Never before, nobody breathes like that in front of an official, this unrecorded but highly significant disembodiment, dismagical, di amystical joining

of two unsuccessful orphans through a yellow affinity. Causes one to be silent like canaries in a tiger's belly.

Ha-- Ha---

Let's jump up and down so hard this animal will vomit. Ha --- Ha ---
Nausea ain't terminal.

Oh - - - Ho ---

Kees -- - Seeee

Hoop-tee-doo

Woo - - - dee --- pooo

The hillside didn't move, but our minds jogged in swirling exhilaration. I thought how free, yet I love this lady who brought revolution. Just then her bonnet got whipped off by the wind. Like an old hoop, it rolled down the hill toward the town. We chase blindly after it. Down the hill toward town. Down the hill toward town. We forgot our shoes and socks. We ran and tumbled and rolled.

The last time, I get up in a huge crowd of, must be, hundreds of me. Desperately, I search, push, and wrestle to see her. She's disappeared. Me is all blocking the way. I say to me, in an orange jacket, get out of my way. Me, in a blue hat, says leave him alone. Me with the buck teeth, says I don't know nothing about it. Me, with the purple nose, says It must be cold. Then all of me starts a great moaning and lamenting for the lost woman in the crowd. So great that a cyclone appears of the cloud that once was a bluebird. Miraculously, I get together with my splits and look for a cosy basement.

In the corner, like a rat, for must be days, I begin to feel the first telltale signs of starving to death. 0 where is Alice, my family, the girl on the hill ? 0 where am I to be found ? In a basement, checking the oil ? Upstairs, the wind whips around all the loose saucers a n d plates. Maybe a good movie. Maybe a picnic by the brook with fried chicken. Maybe a red balloon or a piece of chalk. Maybe I shall fling myself to the storm.

Crawling into the furnace, I feel a presence.

What's buggin' you? the presence edges toward a closer realization. It can't be, I think.

It is, it pushes a riflebutt to the back of my head.

Fine and bowdy-doody, I notice no strings attached.

Would those be your last words ?

I wouldn't ask questions If I were a puppet, lighting my last stogie.

Whose puppet, asks the freckly face, snuffing out his tootsie roll.

I'm no kid, and you're no knucklehead, I bravely retort.

A SILENCE OF WHAT MUST BE THE LONGEST SPONTANEA-
ITY EVER UNRECORDED

Say, can I have your autograph? Dear cousin Bottie, serve I um up right,
Best wishes, sort of the thing.

I haven't the time.

How can you be so smug?

Ask the sponsor.

Who is the puppet here?

YOU ARE= i

YOU ARE =

There's nothing common about them demonstrators. But I guess if you saw either one of us bitching in that furnace, we would be mistaken as anyone of a million with nasty habits. I can't say much for your values, remember the burger stand closes in five minutes, your kids are chewing wax crayons, and it's drizzling, so you may need a wrap and rubbers. GODDAMMIT, ARE YOU LISTENING? Outside, a wierd purple whirl is devouring the entire city. I have seeken refuge in a furnace with a sponsored puppet, who lacadasically wants to know what the problem is. He is driving me crazy. I'd rather take on the wrath of heaven than remain in here a second longer. But I can't get out. The landlord just came down to say TIME'S UP, and locked the door. I have one cigarette left.

YOU ARE = and got to

YOU ARE = help me

WHOSIDEAREYOUONWHOSIDEAREYOUONWHOS
IDEAREYOU Forget the chicken pot pie, I tell you, this ain't beat the clock. Use your imagination if you will (TURN OFF THE TELEVISION). Now, listen. Yes, something monstrous is groaning in the basement, in the attic, in

the nursery, in the very beams and rafters of your existence. Alright, pick up the phone. Why is the line dead? Scratch your head. Why is there blood on your fingers? See sweet nookums holding a flamethrower. What is plastic? Might it decimate your structure? Yeh, yourbeehivedon'tcomeundone, but-baby, you're bald, I know. And the goddam roof is caving in! The good house keeping ain't gonna help. Do you want to murder a punk like me? For chris-sakes, are you gonna wash me down the drain with your eyebrows? Don't I mean something more than your make-up? You're the one with the last answer! What's it going to be? Aluminum poisoning or the real pig?

"THEN GOD GAVE ME A GREAT JOLT"

(Thank you Mrs. John Smith with regards to John and family)

- 1) my cold shell of a furnace burst into the furious havoc of the world
- 2) ripping the lie of atomic bubblegum from my mouth
- 3) stripping a walletfull of secrets from my hip
- 4) laying my breast to a hill of hungry red ants
- 5) standing me up
- 6) sitting me down
- 7) flying me around
- 8) a world, except one, that cried "We can care less about you then"
- 9) covering my groin with cheese and letting loose the rats
- 10) thumping into a mound of ex-catholic church
- 11) my brains oozed
- 12) my heart bled
- 13) a terrible scream pierced the university
- 14) and the professors
- 15) and the wives
- 16) and the custodian
- 17) stuck pencil marks on my soul
- 18) and I was just about ready to die
- 19)when...

GOD ROARS:

How Dare You Do This

crucifycommanddemandbuysellpoisonpollutemurder
hatecravepickhisittybittybrainsapartstarve
fuckoverrobnedleteasepleasesnickerscorncondem

To My Son

Man, I never seen ugliness clean out ad fast in my life. Usually, you have to wait until nobody's looking, then you find a dressing room without a camera, and sneakily undress. But I swear everybody heard this time. I was saved. But first thing they wanted to know what shampoo I used. I lit a firecracker and crawled out my egg and to the greatest surprise, the whole world brought a picnic on vacation, naked, skinny dipped in pickle rhine mustard and happy fish innards (chicken bones, bless your throat). What a glorious day after the storm. The master of ceremonies announced himself as the A&P Chairman of the Board for Pig & Head incorporated. The whole world cheered. Well, you would have thought so if you were there like I was. Fresh from the furnace and the son of god. But I didn't let on. I told an ancient philosopher that descending from the eye of a tired woman and a tired man was too brittle to question. He said, we all get better in the end, and I blessed him with a holy piss downwind.

DAN GRAVITY

THE LONESOME DEATH

by Richard F. Hodges

far-flung patchwork sky felled in the end
glimpse gone wild unto another urinal grown growth gone wild slush sui-
cidal and yes madness unto yet another spin - out wept & watered it's all
been bought & paid for...

he who be kind.

he who become loose after that final long-sweat cosmic cuss he who becorlie
confident and couraged as even seldom one calls his crow to scare the
straw man but always on the look-out

he who with last - stretch arrmesia could circumference the world if only not
a knotted string - out sadly casting incantations to a heavenly body brown
- eyed and only photographed was not clogging the works

he who could caress multiple soap opera indifference if it were not his scat-
tered abhorrence he on the run he gone blessed back he cannot retrace
he come to serve he saddened back to paper - mechee friends piniatas
dizzy weave oh mama dan choad 2nd grade outcast to die in twenty years
unloved he scared carribean gone there never back peephole madness
served on no plate

he who spatula and garlic lost of season batched hatched & born nova menu
could scream soon will don't ask he 2nd grade caught in a future mem-
ory.

at his house straight womb dan fat loved loaded leaving even me he
doesn't need a friend he's free dead now

store attic dan's room wept inside me flushed empty here picture once
sad book crippled boy color fade rocking horse wheel chair squeam-dirt grey-
dead

mother strong kitchenette elmerts glue diaper dung fried egg we standstom-
ach muscles off-centered on belt heart beat //i loved you, dan choad //

father gone will paint house forgetting fast his treasure boy no fault his he
loves you too only man-being strength his he's the heroyour his son he
silent dies in his son's doom synapse mother -kiss buried butterfly.

dear dan,

they hated you because you were death in their midst. no one knew but
all understood.

dear dan,

you don't plant bad seeds. the bad babes are left in spartan fields to die.

dear dan,

it was my perversity that loved you. you could never wash your hands
clean. or maybe they were always clean and too clean and for no pur-
pose. your piss must've been blue. why else would they peek at you
under the toilet stall? your fuzz-hair & freckles marked you against
buttermilk skin. you were hated. you didn't react.

all hands home playground softshoe you on side doctor's orders choad the
goat choad the goat choad the goat choad the goat ball float and you
elsewhere..... warmth on the cafeteria steps all alone, choad goat.

day grey monday rains desk-top grain you freeze eyes scanning miss rapalle
grew a greenhouse with her brother taught 1st grade & didn't like you,
dan

you moved away to other hair-pullers taunting their wicked dirty baltimore
dirty dan..... maybe you'll stay there and leave us alone.

**Cedar Rapids
Spring, 1972**

STUB

by *D. Howard Kameron*

Twilight. That time of year. I once mused but rapid chain of events cut that one short as thoughts spewed flypaper through the open window.

"Are you busy?"

(This is the big one, I remember thinking, but interjected nonetheless.) "I left my matches in the john. Wait a sec. "

I always wondered if straight teeth had anything to do with it. If the sister's got her ethic to deal with, I figure I could use a raise. But time is on her side. Everyone was born during a war in those days, some kind of black magic mantra that the government couldn't suppress. I must have read a dozen books the year before I saw Petrouchka, Miss Streetcorner Hardware, and the motley crew of half - assed cheapies in the golden cage; where M Street made like a pencil, and hippies wiped their roles on the protruding edge. Crumpled visionjuttet its arrogance into the path of the more sanguine minds. I stepped around the puddles and opened the door.

"I can't find lem. "

"You asshole.

I've waited for at least an hour, hoping those bastards might show. It's strange how, when the sun's setting, I can sort of see my reflection on the rails; not too clearly now, but enough to interrupt that Baltimore and Ohio continuum, stretching from the 5:24 to the Cincinatti Express. When I was a kid, I played mypunk games. Forevery smashed parlor window, there was a quick chase down a stretch of track, a dodge of oil slicks, a dive for the inevitable poison ivy. "He wouldnt look for me here." Usually about this time of day, too. It was so dark, I couldn't see, but too light to know it. The conductor turned his back; he was showered with sweaty pebbles. A few passengers would peer drowsily through steam-crusty windows to see if it was Cleveland. The struggle didn't concern them. The conductor and I were hidden in shadow. The train could go fuck itself. Those bastards haven't shown up yet.

"First you breathe in . . . then you close your eyes ... relax your spine . . . lower your head, very slowly... join your palms . . . widen your nostrils ... release your breath, very slowly . . . erase all thought ... recite the liturgy ... no, wait, I've got it now. First you close your eyes. "

Samantha joined some new fringe society spiritual group, one of those California based operations. A green goddess, she wilted during the summer of 168. Summer was making a whole lot of people. My companions spent nights salvaging rusty blastfurnace couplings. They never told me why. "On the edge of town", they told me. The red of their tents Was quite visible through the clearing, where there still remained charred remnants of the childhood ritual. The ground was still soft with rain, and ants gnawed the underside of the cabin. Wet chill from the cabin kept me searching the fields for bait. I finally caught up with my fishing accident, and moved to the city.

"Marty still needs that ride to Philly. " She took me completely by surprise, right there, smack in the middle of the afternoon.

"I'll talk to him. "

I hope she remembers to lock the door.

Cedar Rapids 1972

THE MECHANICS OF DEFORMABLE BODIES

by *Charles Aukema*

I stood transfixed, watching her. My throat was thick and dry with that first rush of anticipation. There were quick mutual glances among the four men... a slight flickering of eyelids... but nevertheless the death penalties were carried out at various spots so as to impress the natives over a wide area, and the hangings were watched by large assemblages of rigid nipples pointed skyward. Their size and color fascinated me.

"Do not be deceived," she warned me.

Yate Emptum drew one hand along his ferocious red moustache while Rose danced around the room, hips jerking obscenely, until she stood before Sir William, who was determined to enforce recognition of the new authority of the Cyclops. He reached out for Rose, but instantly a whip-like extension shot out of the robot, trapped Sir William's arm, and jerked it away from Rose, whose enormous breasts swung lazily to and fro.

"What's wrong?" Prudence demanded.

"The thing grabbed me," Sir William moaned.

"Where?" Timberlake wondered.

She inhaled deeply, as if performing for me. Then the camera panned down until her head was completely out of the picture. Would the appropriate concatenation of molecules - nucleic acids and proteins, for example - occur in the time available? Sunnyside was just blocks away, but the springs of the car seat were beginning to squeak erratically, and I could hardly breathe.

"Is the... Horse... still active?" Rose wondered.

Four of the natives were sentenced to death; five others were imprisoned for twelve months; the other one was still passed out on the kitchen table. Pretty sexy, she thought. Mary's skirt was bunched up around her waist and her panties were around her knees, but what about methane in the atmosphere of the Jovian planets? Suddenly, Prudence screamed: "I'm getting a demand drain on the synthesizer... is it something you're doing over there?"

I was singularly charmed, not only at the success of my stratagem which had given into my hands so luscious a victim, but also at the extraordinary sensuality of her constitution and the evident delight with which she lent herself to my desires. "I'll have the frog legs," I said, after a moment's hesitation. The people heeded this message. No work was done, some four hundred pigs were killed and eaten, and then we started to play Dylan records.

"What is this fluid called?" Elizabeth gasped.

"It has many names," Sir William said.

The girl now entered a bedroom in which a man lay asleep on a large circular bed. She proceeded to open the curtains which covered three walls of the room. Suddenly, the man on the bed screamed: "*If Martian Astronomers Had An Instrument Which Permitted Very Sensitive Examination Of The Visible Spectrum Of The Blue Haze That Encircles My Body, They Would Conclude That I Was Unfit For Life!!!*" Smiling coquettishly, the nurse exposed herself, but unfortunately the doctor was out on the town. "I think frog legs are disgusting," she said, backing away from the table. That was when I finally realized that several thousand synthesizers actually existed on-planet.

Hardin nodded thoughtfully. "Go on, go on."

She looked at me and smiled.

"I was in Iowa City at the time... ."

"Yeah... ."

"I was sitting in the Mill with Nolloedo."

Hardin nodded thoughtfully. "Go on, go on."

"Remember Nolloedo?" she asked me.

"Homeric," I said, remembering.

He removed the newspaper clipping, put the wallet back, and once again read the text attentively from beginning to end. The White Man's goods were banned: tin match boxes, pocket knives, National Book Award winning novels, and Propp's *Morphology Of The Folktale*. As for the veiled formulas used to describe the manner of her death, all belonged to the conventional language of the press. "I took out the synthesizer," she continued, "and then Nolloedo said, 'I can also play pool.'"

Hardin nodded thoughtfully.

"Well I'll be a muckraker's pimp," Sir William mumbled.

"Recognize it?" Prudence cackled evilly.

I was confused, but she must have been reading my mind. I saw her shadow through the opaque fiberglass panels, and I thought to myself: This problem must be discussed in theoretical terms in the next two chapters, but for now we must limit our discussion to the detection of big issues. "Have you broken up the romance between my sister and that two-bit guitar player?" whispered a soft sultry voice from the overhead speakers. Timberlake could not believe this was happening to him. The humdrum years seemed to be falling off his shoulders, the shackles dropping from his neck, the weight of time falling down around his ankles like his Levis. All he had to do was step out of them. Incredible. "Listen," she said, blowing her nose on his disco shirt, "there's a new girl coming tonight, one that's never been to one of our parties. If you like her, you can have her first."

"Give me time," I said, sipping a slipper of wine.

"So me and Nolledo went to Donelly's," she continued.

"Go on, go on," Hardin nodded.

The cry had come from the hillside beyond the house. For a moment Stephan caught the glimpse of a white figure running in the bright moonlight, followed by a horde of darker figures, but consider what would happen if the more massive component in a binary star system suddenly vanished, completely disappearing because of the supernova explosion. "I'll tell you," said Carol, with a fine air of candor. "Like a bitch in heat, she'll attract all of your old friends, and she'll take them on in cars, movies, backyards, and your bedroom and she won't stop until you catch her in the act, and then they'll all gang up on you and rip you to pieces, and then you'll be stuck here with us, on the outermost jagged edge of sensibility, magnificently corrupt and hopelessly jaded." The couples settled down in a tight circle around the girl in the yellow dress. I was sitting on the floor - taking a break - listening to some records - Bartok, this time - the Fourth Quartet - Carol blowing smoke in my ear, when in comes Rose and Yate Emptum. Sir William was in the shower, Prudence

was snorkeling Hardin, and Jenny was whispering, "The men in that car - they're watching us - they can see everything." To people not newly enjaded, however, the explosion of an erotic synthesizer by the communist Chinese seemed a very serious matter.

"Take it easy," Mary whispered to Stephan.

Prudence reached back and unhooked her bra.

"Anybody got a cigarette?" I wondered.

"That voice," Timberlake cried. "Was that Hickel... that crazy bastard Hickel?"

I considered the possibilities.

His awareness was a brilliant point of light that grew dimmer and dimmer... and dimmer... changing color... starting violet, somewhere around 4,000 angstrom units... tracing a continuous wave shift until it flickered out at the red end. The robot at the inner hatch whirled the dogs, opened the hatch, scurried inside. Why me? Prudence wondered, but Yate Emptum knew she wasn't fat. 15,000 native lives had been killed... but this mysterious message from Earth, ordering him to keep his people out of the Mare Imbrium in the future, must have something to do with the girl in the back seat. I was just about to put my finger on it when the lights of an oncoming car confronted me. Prudence was moaning steadily now.

"He put a quarter on the table," she sobbed.

Hardin nodded thoughtfully.

"Do you mind?" she asked in a husky whisper.

"Just... hold it still," I answered quickly.

Many contemporary lasers utilize synthetic ruby crystals, although other substances have also been used. Under certain conditions, these crystals can be induced to emit relatively short pulsed beams of information concerning Nollo. We need all we can get, if we're going to persuade him to tell us where he's hiding the synthesizer. Prudence nodded to herself. All men are parts of the total stream, she thought. We are tributaries... our minds are tributaries, our most private thoughts... and with her whole body quivering with delirious impatience, and her full red lips giving vent to short expressive excla-

mations which announced extreme gratification, she gave herself up body and soul to the delights of synthesis. "I can kill you, even now, quite easily," he went on slowly. "But the choice is yours. Join me, serve me with your fine brain and muscles, and you need not die. What's your answer?" A relatively modest transmitter can send signals over distances of some tens of light years, a dragon turns into a golden goat, the emotional disturbances among the giants are becoming more and more pronounced as the pressures increase, her excitement obliterated all the sense of pain, and I said to myself, I am mad... mad with passion for you, mad with lust to possess you, to enjoy you, to satiate myself inside you, but unfortunately, I am not that mad.

"Please ...," she begged, still on her knees.

Is this why cells metabolize? Prudence wondered.

Sir William thought of the neuro-regulatory shifts, the psychic aches that would arise from manipulating body chemistry in this fashion, but I was getting very tired of this nonsense, so I got up off the floor, put on my clothes, grabbed Jenny by the hand, pushed her out ahead of me, hailed a taxi, told the driver to go to the Mill, settled back in the seat, put my arm around Jenny, reached in my pocket for a cigarette, took out the pack with my right hand, tapped the pack on my left index finger in order to shake a cigarette loose, grabbed it with my left hand (the arm of which no longer encircled Jenny's lascivious waist), lifted the cigarette to my lips, reached into my shirt pocket with my right hand, extracted a pack of matches, unfolded the cover, thinking, Jesus Christ, I've only got three months to live and I'm still smoking these damn things, when suddenly the driver turned around and said: "I have to fly to Guadalajara in the morning, so we'll keep this very brief and have a long conference when I get back tomorrow night. Where's Timberlake?"

Is everybody in on it?

"Kiss me," Jenny pleaded.

"How about this way," Rose giggled.

I dove like a white horned owl into the cockpit and caught her around the knees in a flying tackle. "Are we conscious?" Prudence whispered, rolling the thought over and over in her mind. Time and space meant nothing to me now.

I heard her saying, "Oh, John, oh John," and I felt her fingers through the silk of her skirt, trembling lightly on the back of my head as I rolled down her pants and dropped them to her ankles to the opening strains of the haunting *Non troppo lento* third movement. I was hot as a blast furnace and cool as a cucumber, know what I mean? but at fifteen weeks they killed all the animals and dissected their brains.

"Let's not think about it," Yate said.

Hardin nodded thoughtfully.

"I'm tired of thinking about it," Yate said.

"You mean Nolloedo?... or the synthesizer?" Jenny asked.

"Let go of me!" Timberlake's voice shouted from the crowd.

Again that whip-like extension of the robot shot out and wrapped itself around Timberlake's neck; then the taxi moved off slowly, the man still not having said a word to the driver. So I made for Norway, and on the second night of this definite intention, about nine o'clock, the weather being squally, the sky lowering, the air sombrous, and the sea hard-looking, dark, ridged, I was steaming away at a good rate, holding the wheel, my poor port and starboard lights still beaming there, when, without the least notice, I received the roughest shock of my life: Nolloedo was walking on the waves, the synthesizer in his arms, the giants tramping behind him like words. It was January, 1970, and it was in the back of a motel on Route 66 in Socorro, New Mexico. These were the pressures involved in entropy, Nolloedo explained, the pressures of proliferating variability. Then he saw that something was happening to the dome. Light was splashing it from all directions, and its brilliance was increasing second by second.

Like the red shift, Sir William thought.

"It's my cousin," she explained.

Experimentally, I sipped the wine.

Routine spectroscopic measurements of the Earth might possibly reveal quantities of oxygen and water on the Earth that are enormous, especially when compared with Mars; but it was just at this moment that the kind of picture I have been describing was looming before me and I didn't see how I

could escape doing something about it. Turning to the full length mirror on the wall, Rose examined her nude image, running her hands over her breasts and belly and fluffing up her maidenhair. You got nice tits, Baby, Sir William thought, but the 674th was not a comfortable century for him. More than once it occurred to him that his presence in the century as a man, not of that time, could fork its history.

"Had enough?" Mary asked, rising on her elbows.

"Give me more time," said Hickel.

Hardin nodded thoughtfully. "They're queer ones," he said.

"Electro-gravidic," Yate Emptum explained. "No propellants, no nucleonics. It's an aesthetically pleasing device. A pity we must destroy it. A pity."

"You can't come in," I warned him.

The band stopped playing, someone turned off the Dylan record, the water pipes seemed to hover in mid-air, and Jenny stopped performing when Nolledo pushed into the room, opened up his black trenchcoat, and revealed the lost synthesizer. Then Stephan leaped up on the table, Sir William grabbed his copy of the Morphology, and the Cornell man roared at Timberlake, who was still trying to tear the whiplike extension loose. "What's going on?" Yate Emptum demanded. "Where did everybody come from?" A door was closing, and a glistening piece of pink, semi-transparent ass was just visible in the space that remained. The pink ass did not move. Nothing moved. Is this another one of those hideous Nolledo tricks? I wondered. Almost immediately, she was enveloped in hot, breathing, groping flesh. She felt limbs, both real and artificial, smooth and hairy, chests and breasts, bellies, hands, scales, suction cups--as though she were being attacked by some conglomerate hermaphroditic monster from the 674th century, although she reasoned that the time warp was not big enough to allow this much through. Had Timberlake deceived her once again?

"Where's Mary?" someone shouted.

"Have you seen Mary?" Sir William asked outloud.

That tense breathless silence had endured but for a moment when it was shattered by a terrific detonation. We felt the whole place tremble and shake.

The assembled mob looked wildly about, their eyes filled with fear and questioning. But before anyone could voice a question, another tremendous detonation rocked the ground we stood on. Jenny squirmed violently. Another detonation, and Jenny squirmed even more violently. Sir William screamed, "Would you let a native marry your sister or daughter?" Yate Emptum drew one hand along his ferocious red moustache, and Hardin nodded thoughtfully as Nolledo, poised in the doorway like James Dean, delivered his farewell address. There was a lot to look at, of course. Every man stared at her when she pulled up her skirt, but struggle as he might, Timberlake could not pull it loose.

"Are we still getting the drain on the synthesizer?" Prudence whispered.

"Yes," said Stephan..

"Kiss me," I gasped, frantic with lust.

"If Hickel turns this mechanical monster loose it could wipe out Earth," Timberlake sputtered.

"Why don't you put your money where your mouth is?" Prudence suggested. Timberlake's face was getting very red.

"Like the red shift," Sir William pointed out.

"Have you seen Mary?" Hardin wondered.

"What's happened to the music?" sobbed Rose.

My first work was to go into a grocer's shop, which was a post and telegraph office, with the notion, I suppose, to get a message through to somewhere. What would you like to hear? Shall we put a quarter in the jukebox? Then she screamed. He withdrew slowly and plunged in again. She screamed again. He began to move in and out more gently now, soft and easy, in and out, but are we taking the measure of Bill and Barbara, who sit on the other side? Then I was struck by a lovely sepia etching by Manet of a girl with long light hair. She was wearing a long-sleeved gown, and she hit me alongside the left ear. "Do you realize," I said rather angrily, "that the gap between technological possibilities and technological development is not unique to city development... that on the one hand there is a great deal of resistance to large-scale innovation, and on the other hand, that there is a great deal of participation in

creeping change?" Without waiting for a reply, I slipped my right hand down from her breasts and over her rounded belly, and began to toy gently with the whiplike extension that was still choking Timberlake to death.

"Creeping Change???"

"Creeping change," I repeated defiantly.

Walt Whitman, whose ears were eager and appreciative enough to hear all America singing, observed that a man is not contained between his hat and his boots; unfortunately, my Life-Plotting had indicated that she would die before delivery, so I took no precautions. It was June, 1962, and it was in the back of a shop on Chartres Street in New Orleans. A sensor tip was in front of Sir William's eyes and he found himself staring into the baleful red and yellow glow of a transformed Nollo. "But how does the industrial question go on?" Yate Emptum wondered, drawing one hand along his ferocious red moustache. "What is man's relationship to it?" But there was no way to tell if the missiles had done any damage. That monstrous and soundless explosion might have dissipated itself harmlessly into space. Yet consciousness was a valve whose function was to simplify. All the complexities had to flow through it and be reduced to an orderly alignment; but if we examine the many cases of "sexual excess," "erotic communism," "morbid asceticism," and all the other labels pinned to ritual obscenity and sacrilege, it becomes clear that we are not dealing with unbridled lust or with ascetic perversion. The misuse of language in public life is a widespread and notorious practice, ranging from ignorant faults and obscurities to calculated deception, but other less transparent forces are renunciation and rejection, the destruction of animal and material wealth, the abandonment of gardens, the throwing away of money, and, on the spiritual plane (which is now transporting Nollo and the stolen synthesizer back to New York and Dr. Caligari), the deliberate and pre-meditated obstruction of traditional genres and modes, combined with the vicious exposure of obscenely sacred objects (like living dildoes and shaved pudenda) to women and children... and with that thought in mind, Sir William pulled his trousers down to his knees and pulled Mary onto his lap.

"What's going on here?" I demanded.

"May I guess?" Prudence whispered.

She could feel his stiff flesh nosing into the hairy tangles of pseudoneuron fiber, easing into the winking lights and the snap of relays, slicing through the hiss of tape reels and the bitter ozone smell of burnt insulation from overloaded circuits. Then an electric shock ran through her.

He came with a great concourse of warriors, and the fighting was furious, but he might have brought a million men against our thousand and not immediately overcome us, since only a limited number could fight at one time in the entrance way to the throne room. Already the corpses lay stacked as high as a man's head, yet no single member had crossed the threshold. I poured another glass of wine.

"This is... rather abrupt, isn't it?" Prudence remarked.

"Damn right it is." Yate Emptum snarled.

"Should we go upstairs now?" I asked Mary.

"Why?" she asked, rolling up her sleeves.

"Come on up for a while," I pleaded.

"Why don't you ask Jenny?" she suggested.

When I was awake after the operation I had not been away. You do not go away. They only choke you... like Timberlake. The whiplike extension was now walking around with Timberlake's head completely in its snatch, and although Timberlake seemed to be in agony, we all thought it was funny.

Jenny was just too much for Timberlake. For years he had boasted that he would be the first to create artificial intelligence in the clouds of Venus, but now she was leaning far back in the chair, gasping as she squeezed her legs together in a scissors-lock. I felt her quiver. She was silent for a moment.

How long the fight was waged I do not know, but it must have been for a considerable time, since I know that our men fought in relays and rested many times. The symbolism of the movements amply bears this out. There was no sun in the sky, the ground was covered with snow, the dogs were barking, and the reports indicated that a giant storm was coming in from the west. We found him a month later... violets growing in his eyesockets, a bird nest in his

mouth, and in his wallet, which had not entirely decomposed, a slip of paper with these words written in green ink: "We should start at the end."

"Is that all?" Rose asked.

"Go on, go on," Hardin nodded.

"Don't stop now," Sir William muttered.

Is this the end? Yate Emptum thought.

"There's got to be more to it than this," Mary insisted.

"Let's go, Jenny," I said, trying to yank her away from Timberlake.

"Shhhh," Prudence hissed.

GABRIEL

by Cindy Veach

Blue sky, some gulls scattered and pecking. The sun beginning to set over this beach. Blue waves lapping. Silent and somehow the air seems to be moving in circles. Whipping. The movement surrounding and swallowing this sea shore.

Last night it was warm. Eleven o'clock ... you were trying to sleep. There were people there on the beach; they were playing some game. You didn't know what game. But they were running and screaming a o loud... and laughing. You watched them running. There were many of them. Screaming. They were chasing each other around, some were climbing the wooden logs that stand in the sand. You wanted to sleep, you were so tired but they were screaming so loud that...

you laid awake eyes on the black ceiling black walls. Blankets clutched around your breezing body, circled. Circled tears, circled hands touching your body this woman walks through the field. There's an image in the grass. The moon full and it lights her back. Gentle. A flower in her hand. White hands, gold rings circled around her fingers. One moon has passed.

You dream of some distance that runs too far into the wood. That a string breaks and two pieces fall into separate deserts, where dust is spit against the sky. Where all days become one day, circled on into distance between. A distance runs too far Into the sky so that no plane can reach. Driven into space speeding too fast. A canyon splitting in the middle- and where are the words to speak with?

Some man stands across the room. Tall. You know that it is Spring behind the door. Blue sky - you know. This man spreads his arms to open a curtain. Sun into your eyes. Raw sunlight. He leans to you, the morning sun on his

back. Kissing. Touching, and then he stands. Fresh morning haze over the river. Spreading his arms, speaking of something distant (war circled on) he beckons you to hide.

Then the nightmare comes as the screaming people have left and you sleep. A nightmare comes... a little girl falls down and cries. Stretching her arms ... a little girl. A nightmare with breath and pulse comes where two images walk-cold morning haze so she can barely see - hands clutching. A strength being sucked from this little girl who is growing from this and being laid under the ground. Tired little girl. Laughter sucked out. No smile. First image. A nightmare stalks. Breathing fire and she falls. Crumpled to the ground. The distance between grows farther. The air so tight. hi the corner they cannot see you

black air, black walls

black hair and heat rising

blinking blinking.

The nightmare again creeps slowly through this city. The people fear. A step-pewolf ripping the linings apart of these city souls. This monster follows somewhere a light that moves in circles, surrounding a distant image. The image is locked inside his mind. The effect pushed. There is no way for this monster to get out. And locked inside he reaches the universe

a great vastness

devoid of all color

vast black: sometimes velvety to touch

at times a carpet

at times an enormous black rainbow

with some black gold at the end.

in the distance

there is only black to see

and black on black.

holding all that has been expressed

woven into black

golden pocket watches, tinfoil gum wrappers

and ivory soap carved into a little boy and a little girl
circled on black

and black

and black vastness.

and the sea rides onto the sand - crashing down. the walls fall apart. The castle dragged out into the water. Blue, blue sky seagulls fly. Pecking the sand.

One sits on a pole and watches, blue blue sea

crashing on blue

and blue.

THE FLUTE

by Philip K. Shaner III

The flute stood in the far corner of the clean, orderly apartment, tucked away and almost unnoticeable. It was a little tarnished inside the case, and the case was torn and battered. Bits of black leather shredded off, sullyng the creamy white carpet. The clasp had broken; Karen tied the case together with a small red scarf.

Bedraggled little thing. It did not fit comfortably in this room. The apartment belonged to Stuart Williams and the flute seemed to clutter It a little.

Since marrying Stuart, Karen had come to love the flute more, though now she rarely took it from the case. Perhaps it was the case she loved best; the battered case and the defiant, red scarf. She identified with it, for only Stuart's friends came to visit. She needed something like this.

And no matter how long she lived here, the people who came would say to others, 'Vs visited Stuart Williams last night. He has a lovely apartment now... oh yes, he has a wife now, too... I think her name is Karen.

Before Stuart there had been another. Richard had not cared for Karen well. He and their friends fed off her in every possible manner until she had become exhausted. She found herself in a perpetual struggle to ward off hysteria.

She had a small income, enough so that she and Richard could afford a tiny apartment with linoleum floors and yellowed walls. Karen supported him- and helped their friends. They were six in all, and they led a tight group life in the old bohemian style. The world outside with its wars and jealousies meant nothing to them. They were enough in themselves and admired only that which they created. Their friendship, their creativity and Karen's income were quite enough to sustain them.

They slept the hot, sultry days away - long, drugged slumber. At night they would live, roaming streets and mocking "the other world", or sitting in the apartment flashing their films on the wall, painting or writing poetry.

And Karen played the flute. Certainly they needed no other audience. They lived ideally. The outside world dropped away, life became small and closed and simple. For a time Karen was full and happy.

But someone had to keep a hold on things, so the others could abandon themselves. Karen found herself awake twenty-four hours a day, to guard her children as they slept; nothing must hurt them, they must not be allowed to hurt themselves. She protected and consoled them. She cooked for them and made them rest sometimes. She prevented them from flaunting too outrageously the law. But more than that, she gave to each a special, individual approval. She made each one feel unique and somehow chosen. Like children, they took and took and took, adoring Karen, never realizing they were somehow starving and destroying her.

She later blamed it on Richard. She confessed everything to Stuart - she needed protection too. He comforted her, brought her back to health. Stuart was a doctor, a psychologist. He assured Karen that Richard had the mind of a criminal.

Once mother, now child. Richard had destroyed her. But Richard had given her the flute. Richard had even given her the small, red scarf.

Being married to Stuart Williams couldn't have been a more comfortable situation. Karen let him care for her. She became his child, waiting obediently and trustingly to be formed. Nothing was required of her except that she be still. Stuart loved her like an exotic jewel, a rare treasure to guard and polish, to display proudly to his friends.

But she began to grow restless and discontented. She felt Stuart had somehow emptied her of all mystery, all passion. Nothing vital was left of her. And the more he guarded and loved her, the more restless she became. It had been nice for a while, but one couldn't live this way! She was lost, and in spite of everything, very much alone.

When she looked around for someone to turn to, she saw only the flute. She never longed for Richard or the life she had led with him. Past is past, and you must go on. But the flute was here and it was a Karen too - a faller,

richer, more compelling Karen. She would sit holding it sometimes, gazing at the battered black case, toying with the red scarf. She began to play it a bit, slowly and softly, as if expecting it to give her some answers to things.

Then one evening, she lost track of the time. She had been playing a couple of hours. Stuart came home and caught her. She was guilty like a child.

"Put it away, Karen. I don't like it. I don't like you to play it. Put it away. It isn't good for you.

Stuart was a doctor, after all. He had seen things like this before. No, it wasn't good for Karen. It might remind her of certain things in her past. It could conceivably destroy her health. Didn't she remember how exhausted and hysterical she had been when he found her?

It was easier not to argue. Karen put the flute away, back in its customary corner. Stuart suggested that if her days were too long, she could work—perhaps even as his assistant. She might learn something of psychology. It would be good for her to have something like that.

She declined politely, assuring Stuart she was quite content. During the days she continued to play the flute, but now she was more careful. Each time she played, she felt a little better. She felt as if each clear, firm note went inside her. Slowly they were filling something empty there.

How odd I am, she would think. How peculiar and mad. I am peculiar and just a little mad and absolutely delightful. Then she would laugh. She thought her laughter sounded like the clear, capricious notes of the flute. She loved this little game. She wouldn't let anyone see how mad she was. She didn't care who *knew*, as long as no one could see her. The flute shared something intimate with her, something for the two of them only. And she began to play it each day, a little longer, a little quicker. She felt herself becoming full. She was childishly delighted with her cleverness, yet deadly earnest too. Now when Stuart came home, she held her head a little prouder; she began to enjoy teasing and mocking him a bit.

"I know you've been playing your flute," Stuart ventured one evening. "I'm worried about you. I don't want you to hurt yourself."

He walked over to the special corner. When his fleshy hand touched the case, Karen felt a shock like electricity run through her. She very nearly screamed. Stuart put the flute away in a walk-in closet they used for storage. With the flute hidden away, Karen had nothing.

She sat calmly for a few minutes. Then she got the flute and placed it back in its corner. So there *are* limits on what I will suffer, she mused.

Now during the days, she played harder, in bursts of frenzy, until she felt the entire apartment filled with the sounds and given life. Her life. Her challenge. She became real to herself.

It shouldn't have to be done this way, she thought, but I haven't a god. Really, I haven't even a man. And it's working, it's working. Then she would become exhilarated.

She would have questions for the flute - small daily questions. Shall I do something exciting today? If so, what? She would play then, improvising as she played, so the notes were full and free. Answers came. I will buy an antique bracelet of emeralds. Where shall I wear it? Only when I go to museums or to the park. I will visit Richard, but I won't stay long. I will drive to the Poconos and stay a couple nights in Stuart's cottage. I will walk, talk to the peddlers and antique dealers. I will write a book, I will go horseback riding in the park.

She felt young and smooth and graceful. Her days were suddenly filled, and she dreaded the evenings terribly - the evenings which began with the dull sound of Stuart's heavy step. She hated the tiresome weekends, her slowness and lethargy with Stuart. Poor Stuart, the dedicated man, the man of purpose-but to what end? He was inert. The defiant red scarf flared there in the corner. She wanted to hurt him.

She tried not to think of him, but after a time she understood that she would have to leave. The flute had told her many times. Underneath the whimsical gaiety of the notes, the flute persisted, chanting, "you must leave him soon, you must leave him soon, when you are ready." She was forced to hear what she did not want to hear. Soon, she knew, the playful excitement would be gone. She would have to obey the flute or give it up.

"As soon as you are ready," the flute chanted like a heartbeat or the inevitable rhythm of time, but when would she be ready? Something wasn't quite right with her yet. Something kept holding her back. For the next week, she hardly left the apartment. She begged and cajoled the flute to answer - why shouldn't I leave now? What must I do, what is it I am waiting for? I am mad and with this flute, she thought, but it was no longer a game and she didn't care.

She had again become uncertain and restless, and she needed an answer. But the flute could not make her understand. The notes pulsed forth sharp and frenzied. They pulled her on, at times enticing, at times demanding and angry. What is it that is missing! Something vital. And after a frantic period of playing, she would lie back, exhausted and confused. The flute understood what it was. She could tell by the urgency of its tone, the shrill pitch of its demands. But it could do nothing more to convey it all to her. Listen to me, it begged, listen to me. She couldn't. She clung to it and nothing else was real.

The week stretched into two, and Karen did not look well. She never went out now. There was nothing except the flute. She was careful not to let Stuart catch her playing again, though she denied nothing. She dreaded the inevitable footsteps which closed her private days, and opened the grueling, intolerable evenings. She no longer wished to mock him. Everything took too much energy. She hardly moved from her chair. Everything was petty and wasted. There was only the flute. She became tired and limp.

In the second week the question had swelled, encompassing more than leaving Stuart. That was part of it. She could not put it in words now, but it writhed into her mind and coiled itself there, pushing everything else away. Memories of the flute's frail, persistent efforts to answer haunted her in the evenings.

"You see, " Stuart was saying, "it is not good for you, this business with the flute. I am worried for your health. You are not a well woman, Karen, and this must stop. It is not good for your mind. I've helped you before, and I'm sure I can again, if you'll only let me."

Karen tried to listen, tried to be polite. But nothing mattered now. Stuart didn't matter. To reply or to argue took such tremendous strength, and Karen was very tired.

"Is it Richard? Do you want to be with Richard? Do you want to live as you lived before?"

"No. No, I don't want to go back to Richard."

Couldn't he see? She wondered. No, not Richard. Richard had nothing to do with it now. He gave me the flute, but it's beyond that now, *beyond* that.

She felt tired. She wished for silence, an end to this useless talking.

"Please promise me, Karen," Stuart persisted, "that you will put the flute away and not play it again. Until you promise me that, I can do nothing to help you. "

"I can't promise that." Her voice sounded dull and thick.

"You are unhappy with me perhaps? You don't want my help?"

"It's not a question of that. You can't help me. It's not a question of help." She didn't know what else she could say.

Poor Stuart, she thought. Too kind, too selfless. She felt for a moment she should be comforting him. But she only sat silent and sullen when he was there; and there was something in his manner she had come to hate.

After that, she noticed a change in Stuart, he seemed bitter now, and didn't speak to her much. The change relieved Karen.

One morning she awoke later than usual, and Stuart had already left. She had a habit of glancing at the living room corner as she walked out of the bedroom. She would greet the flute quickly and silently before she fixed her tea and Stuart's breakfast. This morning the flute was not there.

She remained calm as everything fell away beneath her. She walked slowly to the stove, holding her head high. When the tea was ready, she carried it to the armchair and drank it slowly. She stared at the naked corner.

Later, she searched the apartment mechanically. Closets, bookshelves, drawers, cupboards. Almost a ritual. She moved slowly, knowing she would not find it. She went back to bed. Stuart came in at noon. Karen was in her nightgown, and didn't bother to dress.

"Where is the flute?" she said when she saw him. She wasn't angry - only tired and bored and a little frightened. She dreaded to hear as much as she wanted to, but she stood calmly.

"I gave it to Richard. I went down and gave it to him. I didn't go to work today." He sounded defensive. She realized he was afraid of her.

"Oh," she said. The relief flooded into her, but her face and bearing refused to show it. She stood very tall. "Why? What did you tell him? "

"I told him what the flute is doing to your health and mind. But I told him to give it back to you if you went to get it. If you do, Karen, then there is nothing I can do for you, and no reason why we should remain together. The decision is yours. I can't force you.

"But why Richard? Why didn't you just get rid of it?"

"I think you are still in love with him. And anyway, I didn't want to force you. It wouldn't work. I can't force you to let me help you."

"Oh, God, Stuart," she said dully. The exhaustion came over her again. "No, I don't miss Richard. I rarely think about him." But for the first time, she realized she had been unfair. She pitied Stuart.

So this was it. This was the ending, dwindled down to nothing.

She felt she was beginning to understand what the flute had sought so urgently to tell her.

and pressed close the tags

Rick Adkins

of war whoops and pathworn tracks
in long fallen woodhue nature lanes,
of squaw cries for vanished teepee
warmth and village hollow emptiness,
of fanatic stainless saber rattlers
and broken crusted treaty cheaters;
with sequel glory that pushed fancy
tappers to the brink, sealed an evic-
tion clause, and handed a final whiff
of pallid smoke to the swirl on a
wednesday windswept prairie glare, as
troopers closed an orbal gap In new
west resiliency and pressed close the
tags of reservation tenets, an eagle
form laid preservation tournequets...

SEVEN INSTALLMENTS

by D. Howard Kameron

SYLLABUS

We entered through the gates,
And creeping past brief glimpses
Of bamboo vacuumousness,
We found ourselves rundown
By the palace guard.

Duty was secondary.
We watched time creep past,
Presently we saw our future,
In a context more outspoken,
When I once heard the dog bark.

A wind from the North blew frigid.
You stumbled over a plow,
I tried to speak.
The sun rose westward,
That once happened the day before.

Stuck yet ?

Cedar Rapids 1970

TRAILS

Amber In highnoon
Multicolour
Ravens speak through the intricate;
We turned.

Chicago 1971

BETWEEN STRINGS

Remove your shoes.
A rustic abrasion of soil to
Flesh.
The mountains are green with acceptance,
An avalanche of ears
Awaiting direction to a basin.
Blend mind and hands.
Outstretched, a sea awaits
Awareness of its pottery.
Holy is a root
Whose branches it nurses.
Sacred is the seed
Whose blossom it fathers.
Divine is that earth
Whose mankind it respire.
Blessed prophet,
A voice was heard in heaven.
A billion stars
Pushed into deliverance.

Darien 1969

NEWTON, a play of gravity

Newton: My, what a beautiful day. I think I'll sit under that there
apple tree.

Tree: If he sits on my fucking roots, I'll bonk him. You wait and
see.

Newton: What a lovely root. I think I'll sit on it.

Tree: Apple, relieve me.

Newton: What a juicy apple. I think I'll eat it.

Apple: Zen.

Rockville 1970

**IF YOU READ BETWEEN THE LINES,
YOU MAY NOTICE THAT WASHINGTON WAS
VERY COSMIC**

Thrice they offered him a crown,
And thrice he refused.
"Aye", spoke his spokesman,
"He is the Father of our Country.
"Nay", cried the grinning soothsayer,
"The country is father to the father.
But Pontius ducked,
And with Lancelot's truncheon,
The gentleman ended as he began.

GarrettPark 1970

MAUDE CONNE

Whence did you come, maam?
I called the other night,
And fearing a fall
Broke the plug.
It took Scottish kings to move a forest,
Lisergic dreams to prevent a fire.
Refrain from potatoes.
Colors have not converged.

Darien 1969

FIRE ESCAPE NIGHTMARE EXPRESSED

I
Coffee, forchrisake.
The steam clears, and.
Dissipation multichannel
Twelve steps, it
Is dark, der Meistersinger

Stops down, twelve
Steps.

II

Fume thickens in quiet
Distance now, pork greaze ooze
Darkened in cement;
If Goodrich meets Portland more slowly
Now. Mahatma screams from the windowsill,
Mahatma, slum witch infinite
Beckons, more slowly now;
Many shadows follow winding
Dispatch of night shuttle.
Some with regret, not turning
Now but onward.

III

Impass is not turning.
It was revealed, for those
Whom God had wrenched forth
Spectre so brightly.
Impass is tumor
Terminal.
"It hurts, man" and he turned to
Me in seamed source of tears.
Down, oh so very much
Down I felt chill
"He screamed" and
Heat rises.

Chicago 1971

STUDENT CERTIFICATE

by *Wm. H. Graff*

1. Authentication of information on this form may be by any means evidencing that a responsible official of the institution has verified its preparation.

2. Aynchon's kitchen window was never locked and through the kitchen window was Aynchon's kitchen complete with the usual complement of plates, silverware, cooking utensiles, heating surface, baking/broiling box, a complete eight piece setting of instants; and a new modern kitchen washer. Aynchon found very little difficulty in fitting through the window.

3. At the moment he was sitting with the flour and the sugar and the baking soda. He also had been able to sift it well into his dark hair and mustache. John seemed like only a mere object in the huge kitchen. The ceiling rose to about 4 meters, tiled in lime plastis. The cabinets were wooden and of matching texture. Floating between the wall and the middle of the room was the refrigerator and dishwasher. The oven mumbled rhythmically. The street ran like the river down the middle where the road dipped. Each car spit water onto the window.

4. monster (man(t)-star) n: a large grotesque mythical beast who resides in the mind near the borders of Consciousness. This benign aberation of modern man's imagination is held responsible for some of the worst and most colorful acts ever accomplished by man. The modern day monster in its present form has become associated with such diverse and imaginative concepts as lust, greed, America, marijuana, automobiles, Hells Angels, pornography, youth, and police to name a few.

5. They stretched out on his bed again. He picked up a comic book. Sgt. Fury stop bombs. Stop rain. We will do it. We are the Howling Commandos. Benjamin didn't like war. He wondered where he would be in nine years. He

stared at his gun and holster. It was a Fanner Fifty. Benjamin has killed many times. He has seen his friends killed.

6 . He kept himself physically as well ordered as he did. Dojo was an outgrowth of the kun-fu he learned for theater. He learned it because it was necessary. And he was good at it, or so he was told. And when he returned from St. Paul he quietly explained to his teacher he was leaving the club. But Aynchon was bothered. They all were so nice about it; it seemed almost planned that Aynchon would leave. Aynchon thinks they know of plan for Aynchon to leave.

7. soft touch. smile slow. open your eyes. softly. greet him softly for when will this chance come. this night space. night smiling softly touching. the other. blanket falls. it takes a while to move your eyes your brow your hair. brown hair, straight and sleek mare. ride your pony ride. ride a burning mare. ride a mare with flower fingers only ride it softly pony nights. in your back yard stable. tri night stall after evenings special time light, mute clink tinkle trails and smell, delicate smell drink. controlled; settle bone ties. brown man waves. smiling laugh lick. pleasant soft tap mane touch. turn your face. bend to her. bite fight tickle time tongue tied tremor. short slicks. french fucks. you know the score and how a night taste chills. and how dark mid fine and deep mid times and takes and takes. and we know yet do not wish to possess

so you open

8. Trisha,

is cold. The weather too changeable. Must have a personality. I have the snow I asked for. New York is out for this year due to a very long winded problem. But I do believe I'm out for a long time. I feel the best I've felt in over a year - mentally and physically. I'm renting a house. I have started a small business. I have a three hour radio show once a week. Have remained behind the veil. Good time to sit and place pieces in back.

Read your letters a number of times.

with love,
Sasha

9. It's so dark the escalator nearly tripped us for we even see the ninth floor. Is it true what they say about skyscrapers and how they never have a thirteenth story because it's bad luck and the building might tip over? If so how do we know how many stories contained in a building when god knows what been jumbling up the number system. you know about number think. well, know this an average person read bout 300 words a minute and an average sentence to be clear and concise is bout ten words and one thought is in one sentence so read 30 think a minute.

10. and tomorrow perhaps the best can be a burned camel in the ashtray sitting since when and it's the best butt of the day or, at least perhaps, the nicest hectic trail that day. and nothing can be done. so me sit here and finger my cigarette with flower finger times mindfull. and when the magic ceases buena vista, you all kiddy - kiddies. seep me sweep night time. roll out the band boys and stack them up again. were comes the sand and peanut shells underneath me. feet on the rail. and two shells to closing. hey man when is two clocks like a tigers tail. well try when they is stripped or shaped bullet like as in torpedoes na, man. give me fly stains if santa haunts me. try a dozen more like them and then caress me with your eyeflash.

11. "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another and not be like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his Brother. And why did he murder his Brother? Because his own deeds were evil and his Brother's righteous.
(1: John 3:11-12)

12. IMPORTANT NOTICE: Read Each Paragraph Carefully. If you are so far from your own local board that reporting in compliance with this order will be a hardship and you desire to report to the local board in the area in

which you are now located take this order and go immediately to that local board and make written request for transfer for examination.

When you report pursuant to this order you will be forwarded to an armed forces examining station where it will be determined whether you are qualified for military service under current standards upon completion of your examination you will be returned to the place of reporting designated above it is possible that you may be retained at the examining station more than 1 day for the purpose of further processing you will be furnished transportation and meals and lodging when necessary from the place of reporting designated above to the examining station and return following your examination your local board will mail you a statement issued by the commanding officer of the station showing whether you are qualified for military service under current standards.

13. Sent a resume off to a firm on monday applying for a position as an appliance repairman. announced and withdrew my candidacy for vice president of the world within 72 hours. spent \$115.05 in five days but at least I'm out of the hole. Got really drunk at someone's birthday party, someone came in and asked me to fix her stereo, wandered down the room, fixed it; and then told the bitch what a subtle asshole she was. Fixed a broken VW accelerator. Drank 32 cups of coffee, 10 pots of tea, smoked 3 packs of cigarettes, and decided my crush on Anar was over. Got my radio show slot changed from 3-6 AM Monday. Wrote two letters to the editor. Considered taking karate lessons . Talked someone out of a severe suicidal depression. Decided water beds can be clammy when the heat goes off. Made three gallons of beef and barley soup for a dollar. Had a rootbeer and cold pizza with anchovies and green peppers when I woke up. Watched snow fall. Sat up late one morning and tried figuring out the essence of humanism. listened to the testimonial hour on KMAK. Watched an old ford falcon run off the highway, run into the swamp. driver scrabble out drunk, car sink to the bottom. only the red ball on top of antenna stuck up out of the gook; collected the insurance. Watched sunshine eat a cricket. Cleaned up the throw up. Let myself get snowbound for 48 hours with lesbian with five kids and lost my gloves. Pissed on an ant. Bought three albums for a dollar fifty, lost one and burned the other. Got

kicked out of the bar for lack of identification. Broke a bottle of tokay out the window smash the pavement. Gave a couple of little kids not yet ten their first motorcycle lesson. Darlings ate it up before mama called them in for supper and I felt kind of sad in away.

with love, the son

14. Act I

Aynchon exists. In the evening, Aynchon comes back to his place and mounts the steps to his flat, Wooden steps. Made a hundred years ago to be worn and painted and worn down once again. And the nails which were once rigid and firmly held each plank have now grown rotten. And their heads are chopped off. one might even imagine they scream with each step. Today they are grey. The landlord purchased the paint at discount army surplus. And they pushed the grey paint cause it was only good on steps, No on,, wanted it on their wall, calling, or lamp shades. So landlord painted the steps grey. And Aynchon was irritated when he came to his place brushed a few evening star flakes from his shoes and found the steps were painted. There wasn't anything wrong with their color before and a sign on a string strung from the railing to the light switch ordered him not to use the steps until nine when the grey you'd bet would be dry. It irritated Aynchon to use the fire escape because he didn't trust it. And the iron pulled small pieces of skin from his palms. leaving pulled pieces of skin from his gloveless palms to rot when spring came. Rot just like the headless nails stuck to their places, unable to move.

15.ninty nine mega mothers with babes in arms suckling tenderly while mama's coffee freeze dries on his melt and the spoon then becomes a rino mad with terrible flashing eyelids charging down the runway as the tripex folds out over the concrete ass land dick empire which, however, as mysterious as a gail, leaves her lip prints facing frame pits as the fire truck races down the tubeway and over plantation life and pushes pretty peter/garvey out the door with so little as a thanks screaming about some knocked up bitch whose farmer father in a deli strung some sausage meat upon a hook when dunder-back so mean so bad faced gone picks up a sewing desk hurls it through the window twenty stories up upon a scotchgard vest of green strange looking

stuff and she gives him a stiff upper lip right in the mouth sending him for
viemiuse up the hudson in a leaky water spigot float and waving to the crowd
on board his captain nemo suit in hand he comes to the high points of the
career just as the car man smacked him pointless upon the groin, bleeds a
blackened vapor track out general electric and get the name of that bus as it
halts for 99 umbrella mouths with rain quaked turtle necks while hilter crosses
the azores bringing a couple of keys and florida's on the rampage burning up
on thee when this glacier from alaska sails into miami bay and this jewish
lady's swedish accent returns a fish in her mouth and momma seen peggy do
it and scolds it for free cause if ya gotta do it at least keep papa fed and a corn
cob in his ear lobe comes right on dennis' chest and mississippi fell largely
into a saran wrap sponge while mickie whose escape had done this plantation
more good than when was new skips up his campbell soup raft and floats
around for days when all seems lost and broken and the indiana seaway seems
put a mile big when he turns his face to heaven and prays for a 707 so mickie's
lady can finally see a sewing machine fly right out of daddy's room into the
lady's eye just above upper cut of polish sausage muscle man made up from a
piece of tin end tiny grey and his dancing prats gives shakey such a scratch she
jumps right up from a wheel chair and runs across the street and turns around
and shakes her feet to be ran over by a fire track. and captain nemo's laughing
bout some new cabin mate when a boeing plane taxi's on his chest about the
time gail comes in with the kid on her tit and smothers it to death with an ice
cube she found outside her hut and papa with his fist and chants some lines
bout a poker playing stud who mickie knew and laughs a lot as he swims out
to his raft

with love,

16. An A train rolls past and I'm left alone on the platform with tempo-
rary incandescent blindness. I listen to the urrp of the express, winding up,
raising in pitch; increase in tempo. My eyes adjust from the point glance glare.
There are 14 bulbs on this side of the platform. Through the pillars I count
15 lamps on the opposite platform fixed to the ceiling. Three are burned out.
Once I felt a great empathy for broken lights. Every time I turn around I'm
told to drink Pepsi. Doubt though, if I will. I prefer Dr. Pepper. Maybe I

always root for the underdog. Pepsi lady smiles down on me with her super sex pepsodent smile. Looks like someone just stepped off the beach. Sand in her toes. Perfect manicured toes. Nice ankles. She's a blonde, of course. And familiar. Maybe I picked her up on the boardwalk one salt night and a half gallon of beer and I. And the lady could have flicked her hair and we all spellbound. The lady has class sitting there on the console of my supersport. It'd be easy to find low and grab her snatch between those yellow pants. But no, let's be cool. The lady got class, and it wouldn't be good to grab her cool away. Driving away from the opposite platform a B train slams tight, a pneumatic clasp. An empty freighter shipped down a tube. Pepsi lady smiles on.

who's this joker

a toy man comes up and asks me for a light. he rests his tray on his knees. his knees on his cart. his leg ends at his knees. the cart his feet.

"Are you dumb, bud?" I check my pockets. Anar smiles from her wall. Toyman lights up.

"Thanks." Toyman hands back my matches. I notice how Ids gloves are abraided at the nuckles but the palms are crinkle polished.

I gaze down the tracks. Three blocks away the station light silvers four forged steel rails.

"Buy a toy mister?" There are forty pillars separating the uptown from downtown tracks.

"Look in the box and see whatcha like. " Funny, his box is as silver as the steel.

"A lot of guys like yo -yols. Executive Ye -Yols. Lights up when it bounces. " A step down transformer hums.

"Lights red on one side, green on the other. " DANGER. 2300V HIGH VOLTAGE.

"If you want I got some white ones here. Only a buck and a half. Comes complete with a penlight cell. " DO NOT ENTER.

17."Come on mister, buy it for a friend?' The wires led down a conduit--- I imagine they go to the third rail.

"Come on, pal. Buy it from a veteran. I saw action over China. I wonder what the voltage is across the primary winding.

"Got any kids? How about a toy pistol? Kids love guns," Hopscotch chalked concrete platform. Yellow edge marks danger.

"Remember how kids played with sticks?', I looked at the box.

"Cap pistols. Fifty shot repeater." Fifty shots repeat. Bang, bang, etc.

"It comes sterilized in a celophane wrapper. No danger, see." I see his shiny shoulder tray melt on the tracks.

"Come on, mister. Buy a toy for a cripple. I lost my legs in China."

I Stop. no need to watch him incinerate down there. water passes down drain. rat is watching my witness. he would testify against me, peeking from his lair. hungry. no food for you today, my pretty.

I look in the silver tray. There is a box. a painted box. a B train passes through a glare. I file through. a painted glare. a music box in hand. toyman leaves with the change. I am crowded. I crowd myself. man in the box. toyman returns. silver shadows the watching returns to his lair. i crowd alone with no crowd. florescent clasp of the car, i nickname the cripple in the box.

UNTITLED UNFINISHED LOVE PIECE

MICHAEL JACKSON

I wanted to write you a poem
about a house whose door
swings open and shut in the breeze
and a flower that blooms
only to close again,
or about a bush that burnt down
and how stars can explode.

Islands are real
but there are boats
(or you can see that
they meet under the sea
where fallen stars lie.)

My bass on the wall all these years

SA CONE

My bass on the wall
all these years

From the time I was
six
in canada,
and thought it was a weed.

My dog on the floor
my companion to please
to obey.
to hunt my purpose further.

My mind made, my hurt stayed,
my love weighed.
my eyes green
my coffee cream
my days in bed
my poets dead.

LAZARUS (a sonnet)

s. m. hicks

you lie there asleep,
preparing your hangover
for a dewed morning.

it is almost eight thirty.
i have had two Alka-Seltzer
and put on the coffee pot.

your stomach is too large
and your sleeping child's face
is my mirrored fear.

having met you only yesterday
i am too dry
to force metaphors this morning.

the morning paper is not here
because i no longer have a subscription.

this laughing man

Richard Adkins

the past
diseases him
this laughing
man in
raving white
he smiles
a chinless
torture as
finger spines
play tunes
to the
sockets of
his constant
eyes at
once a
concrete rare
fuses
image of
the keep
house for
sapling minds
as his
late plagued
mirage stands
rock hard
deep-welled
after him
this man
called crutch
this man
has crowd
broken

BETTER FARMING

by Richard F. Hodges

House of Further Fragments

Baywyn Tate, Proprietor

... Tate: one so fastidious in his own moral decay that he pastes commercially saleable labels from his imagination onto such items as trees, distances, empty toothpaste tubes, sewer caps, people, etc.; and, one inclined to spend a few hours each week drawing grotesque warts on glossy *Playboy* pin-ups, thereupon mailing them to influential officers of the Sexual Inhibition League, signing them "Affectionately, Mother Goose", and, finally sealing each plain brown envelope with a wax stamp reading "Beware the Perils of the Flesh!"...

Baywyn Tate, infamous for his crippler device used only on *All Star Wrestling*, bowed his head before the Royal Court of Munchkin Land, at which time he also registered his deadly karate hands with Queen Gertrude, Lady Acrobat of the Court. Baywyn had just reached Munchkin Land, cradle in high country that it is, so he decided that his best move would be to find a spot in which to meditate, consider all the avenues of corruption open to him, and then to select one, using his own logical process of elimination. Baywyn was always a very organized fuck-off. He immediately found an atmosphere conducive to such contemplation - - the Munchkin, Laundromat. Meanwhile, all the loose ends of cohesive support evolving below the surface of the sky could not inhibit Queen Gertrude from casting misfitting pieces to her collaborators, bent on the eventual destruction of all constancy. She blew bubbles from her bathtub in the direction of Marlboro, a prince of a guy, a lone cow poke from the Vast Prairie. The Queen commissioned him with a kiss to slay Baywyn Tate fair & square in the wrestling ring in order to win Her Ladyship's hand in holy wedlock. Baywyn, a man plagued with the dreaded conception of his own decomposition, would have definitely felt a bit uptight at the thought of such a wedding present had he been hip to all that was going on. However, in the backroom of the laundromat, the lecherous cur was busy losing his blues with the physical assistance of one Mrs. Genie, whose old man's got a spot on

t. v. popping out of a washing machine and flexing his muscles for housewives, **Middle-class Sexual Fantasy #4796.**

"This kingdom ain't big enough for the both of us, motherfucker!" practiced Marlboro, shaving in a mirror with the same straight edge he once used on the now defunct Wizard of Multiples, connoisseur of countless if disconnected abstractions..... One landscape ago, the Munchkin rainy season lasted so long that a Fear Element began to sprout in the village church garden. The flowers there were blooming better than ever, even though tending the garden with everything short of fertility rites had been abandoned. Nature's infringement on the Munchkin townfolk replaced duty with beauty - -dangerous shit in any technician's handbook. Some visionaries began to fear that this abominable backstab was as things used to be in the days of yore --- odiously *natural*. Many pulled their shades and went to church no longer. Still others built huge ships atop nearby mountains. But, there were also those who sought to find a sinister underling responsible for their freedom. The Wizard of Multiples, paganist extrodinaire, was the logical culprit. Prince Marlboro, a citizen well-respected for little talk and lots of finger, gathered up his bed sheet and straight edge and cut the roots of a windy tree belonging to the Wizard. The Wizard then gathered up his windy tree and built with it a quiet cabin on the side of a wooded slope, paying for his passport with a wave of his hand to bring about a drought so the people could tend their flowers again

BUMMER THERAPY:

A Comprehensive Approach To

Chronic Genital Psychosis

*Prepared by Vladamir Katchakoff
and his Dancing Bear*

PREFACE

HE WHO SLIPS ON BANANA PEELS
DOES NOT FALL
ZEN SPELLED BACKWARDS IS ZEN
"I" THAT SAYS IT ALL-

The authors would like to express their ineptitude in this completely unqualified success.

The process of Bummer Therapy (hereafter to be referred to as B. T.) is derived from the ancient Ven Bidist and highly Kosher doctrine explicitly described in the Ripped Script of the Venereal Liturgy of the Venerable Bidi. However, this must not be confused with its essence, which will be discussed in Chapter II.

Bummer Therapy differs from the thoughts of Dr. Snoid, although it is strangely similar to his dreams.¹ This is not surprising, considering the latter's shaking assault.²

Being firm believers in the philosophy that one should never do things halfway, we don't do them at all. Such is the nature of man. It is rather our purpose here to refrain from defining the mystic doctrine itself, because to define is to fence in and thus lose the full meaning of the infinite and eternal truth. At this point, we would like our readers.

We wish now to discontinue our frivolity, so that we may devote our attention to little girls under four, and Polish immigrants, for these are the two groups in which Genital Psychosis most frequently occurs.

Many of our colleagues in the past have tried to decipher the great equation cited in the Sh'ma, but now modern science has made all things possible.³

What causes Genital Psychosis? Our studies indicate that this mystifying ailment may be attributed directly to distorted cerebral impressions left by rechanneled suppressed genital energy. Bummer Therapy is effective in that it readjusts the imbalance of cranial-genital chemistry and allows the sufferer to break free and meet his destiny.⁴ Once a diagnosis of G. P.* has been established, it is the therapist's job to lead his patient to his Ultimate Bummer (known as U.B.), a cereal matter indeed! When this has been achieved, the patient's fluids become vital, as his (her) vitals become fluid.

1. To be further discussed in Chapter III.

2. The victim was also a known pepper shaker, and has been convicted of shaking pepper as well as shaking a salt.

3. The Sh'ma was a clever anagram designed to obscure the true meaning which was written in dialectical materialism.

4. There have been repeated reports of lost destinies.

* G. P. No one under seventeen will be admitted without parental guidance.

In its advanced stages, the psychosis transcends the Astral Plane, and in some rare cases even flies United. . . Quid, Quad, Kwud. This may smack of schoolboy Latin, butdomi,i I, Obscurum et Pepperoni In his widely publicized experiments with Renee Souffle, Dr. Lapis LaZoolie discovered a strong link between medieval plumbing and foreign matter. This tarnishing recovery was critically acclaimed as the most dismal distribution to nescience in the history of drip-dry shirts.

There is no need to get more specific at this point, so we will converge with the subject immediately, and introduce some notes of hysterical importance:

There was at one time a hamlet called Point Of Rocks which was in the province of Pube, where the Meatsauce River joins the Lymphatonia. It is here, history tells us, that "the sound of one hand clapping became the shot heard round the world. "

The inhabitants of this quaint village had met the confusion with heart-warming screeches and murnblings of " . a fungus among us", until they realized the full significance of their net weight.⁵

Out of their midst there rose a great human bean, fulfilling the ancient prophecy- "... Today is The Tomorrow You Thought About Yesterday." Women wept, and men took off their clothes to him, for here among them was Arnold Shmidtlapper, destined to become the local butcher, and perhaps the only man alive who can say he sold tenderloins to Hershel Bubkis, the father of Bummer Therapy.

In the early days, when egesta was not taken lightly, gentlemen of a peculiar nature were prone to flivvers. It is for this reason that we find so many examples of reluctant homotaxis, among which a strange trend toward (CENSORED) may be observed.

To return to the tissue from this exceleation, follow us in observing some navally **oriented** situations⁶:

5. An archaic fascination with weighing nets.

6. This is not to be confused with **occidented** . The difference is as great as Yin and Yang. (see color plates in back)

I. (No time for this one)

II. Any number divides evenly into six

III. Number II may be supplemented by pounding on frozen corn with a mechanic.

a) Minorities question the President's Commission onobscenity, but we all know he has a whip fetish (choice nuts). It slipped by in the stream of time.

While all this was going on, Hershel Bubkis was proving his manhood down at the Y. "What now?" he asked himself. The tintinabular affect of his dentures when left dangling in the breeze was mosturinating. You see, he moved so quickly they were wont to follow some time later. It was the most alarming thing that had ever happened to Hershel. Suddenly he began to sing-

MOON BEAM MOON SHINE

MOON SHADOW, SHINE ON HARVEST MOON (what
a loony toon)

We must not forget that he's the cream of the crop without brains enough to come in out of the rain. Now isn't that food for thought?

Now to get back to the point. Genital Psychosis is truly frightening in some of its more deviant forms. You've just got to believe me!! This information was gathered by the Tom Thumb Fact Finder. Yes, we're dealing with a homosexual here; sound familiar? Well just remember, geography has no silent vowels.

Those of you who have succeeded in coming this far now know that all that has come before this was an esoteric cloak, designed to keep the profane from discovering THE SECRETS ENTRUSTED TO FEW, THE UNPUBLISHED FACTS OF LIFE. Fill your hours with pleasure, fill your homes

with beauty, a little protein goes a long way. This type of problem has been known to have serious side effects.

Of course you may ask why do Buddhas smile? Well, we won't give you the answer to that just yet, but as silent testimony to it, look at the Mona Lisa.

As we continued our investigations, we noted with pride the profound changes coming over our patients. Loretta Lobotomy, and Mario Mazzerella gave evidence in support of the program's value. UM TUT SUTI

Patient 1: I think I am talking to GOD.

Patient 2: I know GOD is talking to me.

Bummer: Talk is cheap.

Therapist

This segment of a recent Bummer Therapy session was taken out of context, by virtue of its original intent, and is a fairly good indication of absolutely nothing. "Bull manure," someone cried approximately⁷, touching off a chain of events with embarrassingly weak links. One of these links was later found to be missing; hence, the missing link. This reminds us of a parable.

While delving into the primordial origins of poultry, our researchers vanished mysteriously. We immediately suspected fowl play. We waited and waited several days for our researchers to return, and finally one came in his pants.

It was then that we realized that in analyzing the data, one cannot overlook the fact that Bummer Therapy is not the cure, but in fact is the problem. This raises the question.

In conclusion, just look at all this good shit we've got here, how could you ask for more ?

Cedar Rapids 1972

7. Courtesy of the *Des Moines Register*



1971 - 1972