

The background of the cover is a dark, muted green. A central point on the right side is the origin for several lines that radiate outwards towards the left. These lines are of varying lengths and thicknesses, creating a sense of depth and movement. The lines are a lighter shade of green, creating a subtle contrast against the dark background. The overall effect is a modern, minimalist geometric composition.

COE REVIEW

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masthead

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Contents

PANOS INVICTUS	
Harland Ristau.....	1
AFTER THE CAR STOPPED	
Harland Ristau.....	2
FUNZIES OR KEEPS	
Richard Chandler.....	3
EX CATHEDRA	
Richard Chandler.....	4
IN SEARCH OF	
Emilie Glen.....	6
CIRCUS GUN	
Mother Quack & Bimbo	7
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH HORSES	
William Virgil Davis	17
SONNY OF NICK'S PLACE	
Doris Radin	18
THE NEEDLEWORK SHOP	
Doris Radin	20
PREPARATIONS FOR THE EVENING MEAL	
Doris Radin	22
THE TRUCE	
Alyce Ingram.....	23
COMPLAINT TO GIRLS AT SUMMER CAMP	
Esther M. Lelper.....	28
THE CITY	
A. J. Hovdo	29
THE PEACOCK	
A. J. Hovda.....	30
THE COMMITTEE ROOM	
A. J. Hovde.....	31

CLIPPED	
Bruno LaGanis.....	39
GEOGRAPHICAL DREAM OF MY WIFE	
Richard McLain.....	40
MUSIC LOVER	
Charlie McDade	42
SIMPLE SIMON	
Curt Johnson	43
WILLIAM T. EDDY	
William Sayres	46
PROFESSOR TRUMBULL	
William Sayres	47
RAINBOW POEMS	
Alan Britt.....	48
DIRIGIBLE SECRETS	
Charles Gerard	50
OUCH	
William M. White.....	57
ASHES AND DUST I TASTE	
William M. White.....	58
HACIENDA HEIGHTS, CALIFORNIA	
Robert Joe Stout.....	59
WHERE THE BIRD FLYS TO:	
A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH	
TO THE PASSAGE OF TIME	
Mahatma.....	60
DREAMING OF GENE	
George Flynn	61
THE NO-BETWEENS	
Judson Crows	62
above	
Lloyd Gold.....	63

THE FEAR

Lewis B. Horne 64

SUNDAY MORNING

Robert L. Tyler 77

NUDES

Gerald Cohen 78

KNOT

Gerald Cohen 79

PANOS INVICTUS

Harland Ristau

it no longer question
how shall we long live
long why, still alive
there is an answer where

it is no no question
no longer love truth life
absolutes no not even
eros even erased

no questions answers no
anymore? we yet there's
no yet only in now
prayer beggars silence

AFTER THE CAR STOPPED

Harland Ristau

i think it was a hand,
a once a time ago it was
it did not bleed
child in my arms after
the rain
my voice checked from screaming
i saw an eye float down the gutter
the driver only asked
for his attorney

FUNZIES OR KEEPS

Richard Chandler

Adam plays marbles
with a full bag
he leaves home
to snitch aggies
along the way
to play
for funzies
he saves his
one eyed
glassy for keeps.

EX CATHEDRA

Richard Chandler

silver stars silver stars
silver stars shoot across the blue
the blue blue golden shines
golden shines the buckles
the buckles tarnished with brass
the brass holds the belt holds
holds a belt upholds the copper
the copper heads closely packed tight

the blue cruises
the blue blue cruisers stop
stops by the plug
the red red fire plug
the cruisers spray sprays the copper
the bullets hose down
hose down a house
a fire house burns
burns down the fire

red red the lights wail
red the sirens flash red
flashes down the halls
the halls flash down
covered in green
the corridors cover jackets
white spins spins madly past blue
the nurses rush the surgeons rush the past
rushes past the knife
the knife falls

fall falls the knife past a green
green table draped by crimson bright

the crimson red gushes past
the plug the copper cruises past the blue
the fire hoses hose down the
plug the red red plug
fixed the blue blue fired
black the golden buckle shines out
the tarnished brass the brass brass
knuckles dig in the pain
the pain digs the pine the copper goes
goes lower lower down down lower
the bells the silver bells fall across the blue
the blue blue slashed red.

silver stars unpin
a coffin song that pines into green

IN SEARCH OF

Emilie Glen

Up the Po

In search of amber

Poplars musical swans

So Lucien says

Po sacred river of the sun

Down the Hudson

Polluted Hudson

In search of Manhattan schist

Hanging gardens in the sky

My name of fame

CIRCUS GUN

Mother Quack & Bimbo

It is Tom's forest of arms that I allude to when I think of barking skin and the skin's being marked much in the fashion of trails and cheap slaves. Harlots, dogs devoid of foam, my starving possession of those footprints which are heard only at dusk; these too I will to my children's children. Signs and traces of signs, all at once in the forest, translucent and shimmering with the fleshy pearl beneath the veins, the quick dark behind one's eyes. Life has led me on, through the dog waste, through the alley, through the forest, on up and through to you. For whatever that's worth. To me or to you. But there's been that occasional osmosis between us that points to something peripheral, tense and at times warming. A player piano singing with no foot on the pedals, you might say. Just them mother pearl keys playing all by themselves, and me gazing through baby lemon drops, waiting for you to beg a taste.

My mouth was sweet with that taste once. There was once that flavor in my mouth. I tried to keep it as long as I tried to hold your touch which, despite everything lay transient on my arms and wet and full of what could only be called a trashy kind of attention, parasitic. I believe we were both born with that taste.

Hey, I've got no time for those people that hurt you so. It ain't us. It ain't me. Don't be so crazy. (I talk talk for myself, don't paint these walls blue.) What brought us to this part of town? The bus brought us. The bubble top track brought us. The one with us sitting stoked in the cab talking shit. Trading garbage. But enough. (Don't paint at all on second thought.) Your attention span is becoming shorter as the night drags on. We should fall asleep together; how do they say it, in one another's arms? I should ejaculate into your gingham, but that would be, how do you say, cruel? Say it and leave.

You're my carousel, stoke my fire, I'll stash you in my basement. Your horses ride up and down. Carry me, I'll try to grab the golden ring and bring home the bacon, lean and meaty. My hands are SOS pads to your frying pan. It will never be empty though, you can count on that. Never a bored cup-

board or a skillet covering a yawn. Because I will be your Good Provider. The man you will thank God you stumbled upon. Or tripped over, depending on how infinite His wisdom really is.

Jesus died to make your blood pure. Use it, Prudence. Boil-in the-bag like Birdseye Hawaiian delight. A veritable glazed carrot. You play on my oral fixation. Do you mistake me for the kingfisher who dodged Sidhartha's ferry, only to be washed up onto the other shore? Like the day you wanted me to "lick a little higher, just a bit higher." So I licked higher, so high, so thorough. So complete my tongue stiffened and you lay back with your hands palm-up around your ears and wouldn't touch me, you lay surrounded by something cloddish and perverse waiting to fly. So you flew. So what? So you flew. Big deal.

Meanwhile, I've still got my feet firmly planted in the soil. You might say I'm the realist among deviants. And your ethereal madness spreads in concentric circles, like a pebble dropped in that river, the tree trunk overlooking the gentle rivulets between your breasts, dangling your very pink feet among the collective community of pebbles. The same tree you bore many years ago in the forest. I know you'll turn for me in Autumn. Every year it's the same thing. More and more flowing gowns straight from Ophelia and the ferns at her side. Turn for me this year and I'll buy you roses for your birthday, or even for lunch since you're not too carnivorous these days. Not too. Beef-eater and gin and no end in sight. All night long and into the dawn and on and on.

Ahead of ourselves & out of time.
Out of rhyme. The step is the
same, backtracking the way we
came. But I forget the name.

The beat isn't the same as when the lights signaled you as you turned for me on the corner, in the creases of the night, ragtag and wearing out faster

than you'll ever know. It takes you so long to get things. Are you just stupid or is it me doing all the bitching?

Or are you simply another boob-tube, offering up your knobs to some irresponsible repairman? I'm taking you into the shop, and you can panhandle for spare change as long as you like. I'm the only one that listens anymore, anyway. It's no use looking any further. I'm a rim shot. Send your egg back to the mother you love, pronto, parcel post. She's dying. Already there are flies hovering above the stains she makes on the sheets. Her sores are beginning to run freely. First it'll be the floor of the bedroom, then the hallway and stairs, down to the kitchen, knee, waist, shoulder-deep in your progenitor's abscess excess. I can see it now. You'd probably call the plumber. Or sprinkle sugar over her so that the flies fracture themselves getting to her.

Some would think it strange the way I speak in sucking, tribbling voice to you. In such extra-ordinary fibrous tone. Some would say I was too harsh and commend me to that sentimental region back of their minds where things remain green and beautiful and gorgeous and liltng and so nonsensical as to defy any notions of time. But the salt in my voice is so that nothing can ever grow again, in those bald spots you once thought so fertile. The sucking is a type of inoculation you could never understand, the type I chose in choosing you, where the only way to draw strength is through suction. The strength leaks out and I am failing.

You better come down off that ceiling and fly back home before your mama becomes terminal. Just like everyone else's mama. I went down to Pop's dispensary to try to cop some cherry licorice, but all he had was the regular. So I told him to fill 'er up. Does that bother you honey? Does it mess your mind? I wish you could chew so easily. Watch me and chew like I do. Savor your words or you'll choke on them. Work your jaws up & down like this, like you were somewhere alone where no one could see you. And don't be self-conscious, be confident, as confident as you would be alone in a cave, a cave with glass icicles hanging from the ceiling. And into your open hands drip hot particles of glass that burn the flesh. But you are chewing faster and don't notice. To your right the glass that hasn't fallen into your hands is

beginning to get up and walk around, aware of its new freedom. Somehow this has a strange ring to it, as though it were a leaf dropped in water. I feel we've been through this all before. Whenever it was, it was too long ago to recall the reason for having gotten into it. A circular argument become a circular ruin, something dead and Druid. Don't let any get on me.

I went down to the shop to cop some sputum. I knew how dry your mouth was after I left your rooftop nook. It kind of gets you sideways. It kind of makes me humble. Not quite on the same level as Hugh Hefner whipping out this month's Playmate of the Month and nature me, but well, you know what I mean. He'd probably yawn anyway.

Every summer is a millennium spent with you. I spent one, the snow is falling, the millennium has not passed. Perhaps we two could never perceive that momentary passage of time in the same light. I was your Prince of Darkness then. I served as the right arm to Caesar, as Mark Antony did for God. What happened to my crown of laurel when you cleverly replaced it for your crown of thorns?

Imagine a voice at once loving and caressing, a part of it shows the caress to be apology for feeling a tightening of the heart. It knows not that it knows not and its other part doesn't care. Imagine the width of lovers' bodies, their depth, at once the fear of heights and terror of the deep. To be afraid of being pushed from the cliffside into an envelope of satin paper, but with teeth, the teeth of the prince, the teeth of the late night hollow man with no teeth and yellowing gums, the teeth of armor, the bite of cities and buildings in the dark grave stones, the windows opening upon the groan of complaining beds. But nothing to complain about because there is nothing to call their own and clap to dissolving breasts. It's a strain to consider. More and more I'm dissolving. We happened together at precisely the right moment, I haven't the slightest idea why, whether or not it was destructive. But you were a catalyst and convenient and such a charming individual.

One moment, one millennium, life destroyed and the dead living in the leprosy of my decayed senses. Even if you were to touch me right there, I

would probably swat you for a fly. God damn, come down off that ceiling before my ugly gets twisted the wrong way.

You're a credit to your sex in the unassuming way you do things. I saw a woman downtown the other day coming out of the dime store who looked just like you from behind. Her hair was the same color and clung to her jacket the same way yours does. For a moment I thought you'd bought a set of new rags to impress me with and keep me around telling you how good you look in your new clothes. I thought you'd thought of how I'd automatically reach for the fabric to feel the worth of your taste and its message of the moment. I thought it was you in new clothes for a purpose. I followed her three blocks through the loop, in and out of stores. I watched her glance up to the signs above the entrances before she'd go in, as if to detect a flaw in the neon chain. I waited for her to come out, by then I knew it wasn't the tiniest bit you, but wanted to string along because I wanted to tell you how I'd strung along, keeping up with her every step with you perched on a ledge poking somewhere behind my eyes. So I waited. And the time she came out finally, the time I'd become tired and figured to settle for a long lie to you of blocks and blocks of aimless love, romantic weakness, she pivoted as though her shoes had been drifting off downriver with the current and she would follow them wherever they went, and she looked right into my knowledge of not-you like she'd been waiting as well, and I saw for the first time how much better she would have been for me, in no time at all.

It's not like I've been messing with anyone else, or anyone else for that matter. It's just that you are my source of meaning or something, and how can I see other people after seeing you? I spend my life in the various shopping plazas along the strip, and every woman from every store is female. The analogy is obvious. I wouldn't think of boring you with redundant menstruations.

It wouldn't take all that long for summer to come around again. Quite a trip, if he were to spend that time with her again. Would they do it up in the same way? Would he wake up every morning, stare at her shaded chartreuse ceiling, waiting patiently for the breakfast she prepared in the chipped teflon

skillet, greased with ancient lard? Hip, bladder would coerce him out of slumber, to spew out the leak he had saved all night long, his liquid contribution to aesthetics, the morning sacrifice to his functional art. She'd allow the dishes to pile in the grease corner, and settle with the newspaper's Home and Family section under her sunlamp, while he'd search for things to knick-knack about the place. She must remember not to stay under too long. Her skin could turn violet, begin to scale, peel, and worse. There's no sense growing old before one's time.

Even before held hung up the receiver after her few words the day everything smells mildewed around the apartment, it was the day he was to see someone named Gomez about some considerable poundage of marijuana, even before her voice had trailed off from the last word - "city" - he knew things could never be the way they'd been the year before. All their friends were complaining about the heat then. They said it was because the pollution in the upper atmosphere was slowly igniting and dispersing throughout the cloud layers immediately above the city. Now she wanted him to return with all his bags and the bronze medallion she'd given him in a fit of repentance for neglect unduly obvious. To work it out she said. Now the parched landscapes sped back in a continuous transmitting cable. He drove and was determined that things should not be the same.

There'd been times when he would have enjoyed watching her fly into cinders under the goddamned sunlamp, in the middle of a pyre with funky incoherently unfunny comic strips blazing about her. The made-in-Thailand meager gesture of a medallion had turned into a green dot below his breastbone, and he'd had to scrub at it ever so often to remove the traces of ownership it implied. He kept trying to tell himself he liked the way it had been formed, he thought the angles were in the right places.

He wasn't always quite so infatuated. At times his body ached all over, his sinuses teetered pain and sensuous itch. That pallid green point so close to his left tit ceased to be his source of flattery. It was too much effort to keep his decrepit ethos tuned to her desire. Just barely enough *joie de vive* to sweep the ashes from her bedsheets. The time they spent together served as

its own justification. To dwell on this was much easier than to consider where it all might lead. He smiled a greeting to his own reflection. The apocalypse would be soon.

Everybody seemed to be talking about apocalypses those days. In small towns, news travels quickly. String a few small towns together and you eventually get flashes of blanderous screeching virgins being raped with ax handles by rampant bands of Negro youths. Or in the luckier regions, all the husbands will start getting bumped off and the stiffs disappearing--"No really, it's not there."--the liquor cabinets of the world dry up and leave skeletons clinging to bar-rails. All that would be sooner than he suddenly cared for. He wavered between making 180° at the next exit and turning the car for home and just forgetting about it, just let her brew in his head and take the wheel. Chunks of gravel shaved the doors of the car, reminded him of the beach held never been to, only been told of. She had told him of the beaches in western Mexico where there was danger of being robbed and murdered for pennies by children. Some could ask for coca-cola and piss to your corpse, she said. There was sand in the playground across the street from her endangered rooms. Endangered by his razor and comb and the things that were his. She had to have it there to give it presence. In not too many miles he would walk into a revolving image, a robe of brilliant colors, and when her indifference bled him, into transsubmissiveness. Huskdom the ghost apparent. Out the left window a billboard flacked on about banking and suntan lotion. Everything was peeled, brown spears of sand cracked swordgrass hung to the legs of the sign and wound outward, shattering vision. He felt as though a pot of steaming colors had been spilled on the road and taken shape. The highway leaked rays of heat before him. He would have to stop. He would have to stop a lot of things.

The highway wended its way through aborted hills, the slopes severed by the rude mechanical giant slaves of tax - appropriated contractors. Slimy red - orange clay formed malleable crustations along both sides of the road's surface. The automobile was beneficiary to the bounties of progress, and willingly followed the pavement's will around the sharp bends that preceded the

valley. The hills surrounding the valley created a green rainbow through which he made his motorized incision. The rainbow was his gothic cathedral. In the heat of the asphalt, even as it melted his tires, he was sole supplicant.

A filling station came into view, flying the traditional colors in triangular banners strung across its front. Downshifting, he gunned the car sharply into the drive and heard the bell wake the attendants as he bumped over the customer cord. No one immediately visible inside. Then the flash of red when the attendant, wiping his hands slowly on a paper towel, jerked into the driveway.

"Help you sir?"

"Fill it up. How far yet to the city?"

"'Bout twenty mile. Where you drive from?"

"Been driving all night. From Pennsylvania. Philly."

Ding of the pump. Perhaps the man is a mechanic. His face shows obvious interest in the customer's story. Out-of-towners not often drop in. Behind the glass, the numerals race dollars and cents upward, clicking, ringing.

"Beautiful town, that."

"So I've heard. I'll find out soon enough."

"Oh yeah. Got just about the most beautiful parks I ever seen. One of 'em they even got ducks, swans and shit, swimming all over. You oughta like it. You going to see relatives, you don't mind my asking?"

"Sort of. Going to see a lady."

The mechanic reaches down, looking toward the pump, squeezes the last few cents off, pulls the nozzle of the hose out of the tank.

"Be six thirty -five. So you going to see a lady huh? Oughts be nice. Nice place to visit a lady in."

"Here you go. Keep it. Yeah, I hope so."

"Thank you, air. Have a nice stay. Be good now."

"Thanks. Later."

The motor turned over with a slight protest. Through the rear windshield he watched the figure of the attendant as he stepped into the garage of

the station. The pumps stood hard at attention like steel figurines to be put on a table.

Heading back into the city again. Yeah, back into the city. God knows how many times he had done that trip, but each time was a new instant fantasy, the culmination of a mysterious tragicomedy in which he, the hero was at long last heading back into the city, A rolling of the drums as he swung onto the main drag; a flourish of trumpets as he crossed the majestic span of river bridge that connected the west bank with the insurance district. No plot. No play. Just a hero with a purpose that a nonexistent audience had yet to begin to fathom. Trite? Who was around to give a shit?

Interlocking girders rising fifty feet above him making a corridor to feel humble next to. No one to smear shit and strew flowers in his path, or nibble at his ear when he crossed the city limits; the personal touch that makes entrances worthwhile. A welcome wagon or bubbling embrace from a visiting coed holding a trophy in one hand and a jar of city specialty in the other. Instead the endless mall of rivets and steel piling, like a transparent reclining robot had swallowed some poor Jonahs, to the obvious chagrin of the state.

He wheeled into the fake cobblestone driveway that led to the enormous apartment complex enclosing her inner sanctuary. He climbed the stairs two at a time, but lost his sense of urgency by the second landing, resumed a normal pace, and reflected on her own perverse sense of timing. There were only downbeats in her universe. Sort of a dangling tonic chord that left one waiting for the next. Perhaps it would be soon.

The change of color in the directional eyepiece of #304's door indicated she was still home. She didn't have the audacity to ask who it was, but the chain was on the door. All thought escaped him. But then, there was so little that hadn't been said before. He shifted his weight from leg to leg in front of the door; he was acutely aware of the eye in the little window sizing him up. Unconsciously, he was closing his fingers and opening them upon his pants, wiping away perspiration. She waited for him to display more discomfort, to show herself in full throttle control of the pressure which was becoming heavier, she knew, in spite of his forced patience. There was a squeak from

the other side of the door like wet shoes, a hesitant slide of the chain lock, a resignation to be dealt with in one moment, some other thoughts of never having clapped the phone to one's ear in the first place, an opening and closing of fingertips spreading sweat, a look upward, squinting into the light, sound of shuffled wood and brass, a rush of inside air... The light which suffuses the face of a faithful slave when the master returns from a long voyage showed in his face as the door was nearly flung open. It was crazy. Crazy for automobiles to have ever been invented, and telephones, cablecars, the tireless network of umbilicus without ceases which was becoming more efficient and irrevocable by the hour, with a greater ability to make years important, even essential.

THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH HORSES

William Virgil Davis

Riding half way higher in the sky
Is the feeling of conquest that Caesar,
Cortez, and others, must have known
Quite often in their own different worlds.

It isn't the same thing here on a trail
Hooved over by the distance of an hour
And four hundred pennies. Yet we like
To go riding as often as we can; same

Horse, same sights. Today when we
Passed between the thorn bushes and I
Got my legs scratched on both sides
I realized the difference. The mare I ride

Always returns unscathed. I used to ride
Back, show my blood, and think nothing
Of it. Until I realized that the trail at
That point was wide enough for horse

And rider to pass between the bushes without
Hurt, Horses have historical perspective too.
Jane must have known, somewhere beneath
Her mane, she wasn't in Gaul or Mexico.

SONNY OF NICK'S PLACE

Doris Radin

He was thin, perpetually
on a diet, his pants he
kept having them taken in,
so tight I wondered how
he could breathe

Sonny
the waiter
at Nick's place.

He must have been thirty
but he looked seventeen,

Sonny
seldom
spoke

louder than a whisper

When you spoke to him

his eyes
slipped

off to a palm,
a crab in a hole in the sand
He loved steel drums, had his own band
once

I watched him make a drum, he hammered
out the notes with a rock and a punch
infinite

patience

Sonny
played

soft as a dove

He went to San Juan

his band

didn't make it in the
Big Time Sonny

back in Antigua at Nick's place
"Sonny what are you doing
with all that dye?" "I'm dying
my clothes. There's black power in New York.
Uncomplicated Sonny
made his
preparations

THE NEEDLEWORK SHOP

Doris Radin

but on the counter,
"I'm sorry, they're not for sale,
her eyes bright

two terra cotta bowls

I picked them up

perfect

without a glaze

"I took

a course in ceramics once.

I thought she'd dance a *merengue*,

"Come

Sunday" there she was, her brother

Willy's overalls, his white shirt,

the sleeves chopped at the

elbows, and on her head

a straw hat

eighty years old

her mother gave up ... daughter

those unladylike ways, Miss

Williams showed me

unfinished

work she never stopped

talking. .. clay

the glaze

the slip,

Something with the kiln--

she built it herself

Everything

cracked,

Miss Williams

in the outfit borrowed from her brother

that bothered her mother-

her earnestness, her

enthusiasm

fired me

PREPARATIONS FOR THE EVENING MEAL

Doris Radin

Young brown bodies
on fire with the
setting
sun, dance
along the seals edge
to a fresh
water
 spring/bottles basins
 buckets cans
 to the brim
 their cool
burden on their heads

(young brown bodies
bent over
in
big cities'
 bare-
 bulb
flats
turn on
 taps
burn up)

THE TRUCE

Alyce Ingram

With Father deciding at the last minute to stay at home and work upstairs at his drawing board ('keep my nose to the grindstone') Peter had had Mummy all to himself on their Sunday walk except for newborn Jeremy they'd had to drag along in his carriage but this time Baby had slept almost the whole time and not yowled once so Mummy didn't have to change his diaper or pick him up and jiggle him and they'd had a lovely, lovely time even stopping to gather a basket of red and gold maple leaves that Mummy said they would press between pages after tea while Father and Baby napped.

But now their walk was ended and they were back home again to find Father very cross saying he had just hung up on Aunt Claire who said she was driving down for the day to pick up her cardigan and would spend the night if invited and Mummy was fussing at Father saying she hoped he hadn't been rude again to her sister the way he was last time.

"--the poor dear," Mother said unwrapping Baby. "On weekends she gets lonely and we're all the family she has so for my sake I wish you'd just try to get along... or call a truce... it's so childish the way you're always at one another's throats. . . ."

And Father was looking all white and upset as though his whole Sunday was spoiled saying to Mummy, "Well your sister's not exactly my cup of tea. . . she upsets the apple cart every time she comes." Mummy, going over and smoothing out Father's forehead: "I'll admit she's somewhat mercurial, Dear."

"*Bitchy* is the word," Father snorted throwing his head back like an angry horse.

And now Mummy was scolding Father for using bad words 'in front of them' and Father was saying he was sorry and if she didn't mind he could go upstairs and get on with his work until Auntie arrived and would Mummy call him for tea later on and he promised to be a Prince Charming during Auntie's visit if it killed him and he went upstairs and a door slammed which meant that Father was stuck in his studio drawing designs on large sheets of white

paper and would not like it if anyone disturbed him but sometimes when Auntie came Father just would not come down at all for tea--Mother would have to take it up on a tray--and then during dinner, all through dinner last time Auntie came the two of them, she and Father, acted as though they'd just met and didn't much like each other until even Mummy who never ever used bad words told them finally to 'stop being so goddam polite and act civilized for God's sake.'

(Not that that helped much. Father just went over and turned up the music so high no one could hear themselves talk and Baby woke up and screamed and wouldn't stop and pretty soon Auntie flounced out to her car and took off with a squeak of rubber forgetting to take along her sweater she was coming for today.)

Now Mummy had got Baby settled in his downstairs bassinet and had changed into her pretty pink fluffy blouse and was setting the table for tea in the sun room and he helped her put another log on the fire and make a batch of sugar cookies and almost before anyone knew it here was Auntie slamming to a stop and getting out of her car looking all bright and shiny and the first thing Auntie and Mummy did was to press their checks together for just a second and then Auntie was going around the house touching things and changing them around and suddenly everything in the room seemed different and even Mummy said:

"You just seem to give off sparks when you come... maybe that's why Tom... he's working... will be down later for tea... but if you'd just try for my sake...."

Auntie now made an ugly mouth.

"What on earth you ever saw in him, " she said going over to the mirror and fluffing up her hair. "He's coarse. When I think of him ... with you... it's disgusting." And Auntie went over and looked down at Baby but instead of picking him up she just pulled her skirt around into place and then went walking around the room as though she'd never been in it before finally picking the red velvet chair beneath the mirror that she always sat in and now Mummy had come back in the room and was taking the chair opposite and they were

starting to talk but Baby began to cry so Mummy jumped up and got him and offered him to Auntie who said *not on your life, this spots* and she flicked her hand across her skirt as Mummy opened her blouse and began to nurse Baby who clawed at her breast and acted like a little baby pig at the Fair while Auntie's eyes turned color (Auntie had all sorts of eyes) and all of a sudden she was pulling off her earrings and dropping them into her handbag while Mummy was looking into Baby's face saying: "Did you ever...?"

Auntie, now, was acting sleepy. Yawning.

"Not lately," she said but Mummy did not seem to be listening to Auntie, was nuzzling Baby who was growling and Mummy was saying: "He wants me all to himself. Doesn't like it when I'm diverted, .. senses it immediately... he's so possessive..."

"It's a wonder you aren't all black and blue the way he punches," Auntie said suddenly. "You'll get cancer if you don't watch out. I've heard of a case... had to remove it..."

Mother hardly seemed to be listening. Was teasing Baby, taking her pink nipple out of his mouth and giving it back. "I don't know where he gets it," she was saying. "Such a little roughneck."

"Takes after his father," Auntie said pulling out her lipstick and now Mummy was angry.

"You're so unfair," she was saying almost as though she were ready to cry. "How can you possibly say... I don't believe you've ever taken the trouble to ... why, I've never once seen him rough... really Claire... if you'd only *try*..."

"If you say so," Auntie said and she smiled as though they were having a happy talk and so Mummy was half-smiling and looking down at Baby saying: "Watch him now... he's playing 'possum." And she pulled her nipple out of Baby's mouth and Baby set up a yowl and Auntie said *you're a tease... I can still remember* and her voice trailed off but Mummy did not answer and she hugged Baby and gave him back her nipple and stroked his fat legs that he'd thrown half-way up around her neck and Baby sucked hard for just a minute and then he bit Mummy right smack on her nipple that looked ever so much like a new pencil eraser of Father's and Mummy yelped like their puppy and she pulled

herself away from Baby and spanked him hard (should have smacked him harder, kept on spanking him for hurting Mummy) and Mummy was saying *naughty, naughty* and cuddling him close and kissing him and trying to give him back his nipple but he kept spitting it out and Auntie now was laughing and telling Mummy *it serves you right* as she lit up a cigarette but now Mummy was frowning and telling him (first time she'd even noticed him since they got back from their walk):

"Go and open the French door, Dear... if Auntie's going to smoke and pollute his air."

But even before held got back from doing as Mummy ordered Auntie had put out her cigarette so now for a minute he stood behind Mummy's chair and put his arms around her neck and Mummy looked up into the mirror over Auntie's head and she smiled almost as though the three of them were having their pictures taken with Auntie holding the camera and Auntie, sounding suddenly very angry, said *anything to drink around here for Chrissake* and Mummy, scolding her, answered *help yourself but you didn't use to so early in the day* and Auntie left and came back with a tall glass and she sipped at it all of a sudden she began to shiver and Mummy said he was to go and close the French doors again because Auntie was chilled and when he got back Auntie's eyes were narrow as cats and she was asking:

"Isn't he j-e-a-l-o-u-s?" (as though he couldn't spell).

Mother answered: "I prepared him... he's participated right from the start."

Auntie--snorting: "I shouldn't think *that* far back.

Now Mummy, sounding angry again: "Must you be coarse... it's what you accused *him* of."

And Auntie said angrily tossing her hair off her shoulders: "Oh for God-sake Prissy." And she set down her emptied glass with a tinkle and snapped her bag shut and stood up and said *I shouldn't have come down... intruded on your Sunday... just wanted to pick up my Angora... a recent gift from someone* and she grabbed her sweater from the table where Mummy had put it and left and just as the door slammed shut Baby woke up and began yelling and Mummy was

looking ready to cry and now here was Father asking for tea all tousled as though he'd been sleeping and not working after all and Mummy said "go and bring her back, Dear ... we've had a little tiff... coax her if you must... she's in one of her moods." And she pushed Father out the door and began fixing tea with sugar cookies on the fancy plate and when Auntie and Father didn't come back Mummy said laughing *it's like that nursery tale... now I'll have to send you* and he went out looking and found them across the road in the glade behind the old barn fighting on the ground like naked white horses but he did not call out to them and pretty soon Mummy was boiling the tea water all over again and Auntie was looking very pretty with bits of maple leaf in her hair and they were gathered around the table and Mummy said *it'll soon be winter ... will you come for the holidays?* and then she dropped a spoon and said *pick it up for Mother please Peter* and when he stooped down to get the spoon from where it had fallen under the table he saw Auntie kicking off her shoes and Father his moccasins and they were tangling their feet together and he wet himself which made a large spot on the rug and Mummy, looking very frightened, said to Auntie *do you suppose he's j-e-a-l-o-u-s after all... reverting?*

Father said: "For shame... a great big boy like you wetting himself."

And Auntie shrieked as though they were having a party and she said to Father "Look who's talking."

And Mummy said: "Well, I guess it's best to pretend you don't notice until they straighten out."

And she filled everyone's cup again.

COMPLAINT TO GIRLS AT SUMMER CAMP

Esther M. Lelper

Fish: My girls caught them;
Won't eat them
But won't let them die.
My pretty girls keep them, thrashing,
in a pail under the Sky.

They'll slow and slug to nothing,
Lose their silver, slip to nothing;
Cape their months-
They'll be stiff by twelve noon;
Soon now.

I'll have to dispose of them
on the compost heap; no rainbows
Catching on each scale,
Only the slosh, slosh of stagnant water
And them in the pail.

THE CITY

A. J. Howdo

A million voices, babbling, dissident,
Well from our public squares as spittle
Sprays the senility of withered men,
All heroes, on the careless passers by.
The virgin governess is mute and shy.
Old dogs must stink; teeth sharper still
Glearr, deadly white for sun or moon.
The governess must cross the park at noon.

Somewhere a hero died. Some monster,
Mindless as the sacrificial stone,
Screams death to love, screams pain
From barricades of innocence and dream.
The governess would linger by the stream
To touch a rose, but even roses bear
A terror that she dare not bring to view
From mirror depths that once her image drew.

THE PEACOCK

A. J. Hovda

Today they count them, the feathers,
Giving a nomenclature to a bird
That with a thousand evil eyes
Struck fear in ancient Kahns;
Myth mingled with the true.

Now knives dissect, transplant,
Transvestite birds bear plumage
For Experiment Station eyes
Where beauty serves a god
Proud Juno never knew.

The peafowl still remains.
Unseeing eyes or no it shakes
Its feathered fan, and colors
Shift and shimmer, green to mauve,
To gold, to brilliant blue.

If those who worshipped Krishna
Lived with fear, the god himself
Chose beauty for his steed:
Our gods, omniscient at last,
Of neutered peacocks read.

THE COMMITTEE ROOM

A. J. Howde

It had been a long day. The three hours of lecture had been tiring and now, at a quarter of four, he had time for a quiet cigarette before the committee gathered in Room 210 to discuss the problems of staff. The problems were intricate. The word intricate, in respect to the staffing problems for the coming year, was very appealing. It had just the right tone, the right sense of complexity, of tenuous, sinewy threads that spread outward from a common center, the committee, to link the dossiers of the applicants to the staff already employed. In that linkage lay judgement and power, and a hidden fear.

He lit the cigarette he had been anticipating and leaned back and away from his desk in the swivel chair.

DR. ALGERNON LOREN

Office hours: Daily - 2:00 to 3:00

Other times by appointment

The small sign on his door, swung inward and left open when he entered, caught his eye. The dark, black type showed clearly and the neat spacing of the three lines upon the white card gave him satisfaction. He had typed that himself, a neater posting, he knew, than that on any other door of the adjacent offices. Teachers could be sloppy, unbearably so, about such things.

The door was seldom closed. It looked out upon a hallway and directly across the hall was another door that opened into a general storeroom, and because of its central location a telephone had been installed within the storeroom, to be used by the lesser beings in the great hierarchy of the English department. It was only a few steps away and aside from the convenience to himself he liked to watch his colleagues as they made their calls. They were so painfully aware of his own nearness. Some of them closed the door and spoke so softly into the instrument that he could barely hear, old Potter and Mallom. The newer, younger members spoke plainly. They had little to say that

was not routine. He still trembled in anger, he couldn't help it, when he remembered the door of his own office slamming shut - Mallom had slammed it, and without a word of apology after making his call. The fool had smiled that leering smile of his and walked away.

Strangely - he could not conceive of it now - he had liked Mallom at first. He seemed a singular person. He had come fresh from the East to take his first job as college teacher; and he brought with him that intangible air of sophistication, an aura of city life with its cosmopolitan taste and its critical judgement. If he offended certain members of the faculty with his wordy modernism, his air of superiority they would say, he did not offend Loren. His youth, his cryptic speech, his knowledge of art and of the world were quite refreshing, Loren's own training in literature was Victorian; but he liked, as he told everyone, to season it with modern spices. He was drawn toward Mallom, as Mallom was toward him, through mutual interests.

Then came the change.

Neglect at first, or so it seemed. Mallom came less and less frequently to Loren's bachelor apartment where they talked of writers, of the stage, listened to music or drank the very expensive liqueurs that Loren made a point to have available, a difficult thing itself in their locality. And he rarely stayed late. The long hours of the night became as lonely as they had been before Mallom's arrival, almost as frightening. And at last, on the campus itself, Mallom came less and less frequently to Loren's office where they amused themselves by feeding pigeons from the office window. It was Mallom, in fact, who first noticed that they always returned at the same time; and it was during this part of their relationship that Loren fell into the habit of feeding them. He continued this even when Mallom stopped joining him; Mallom, apparently, having things to do elsewhere.

And so he seemed to have. He was seen often at the Faculty Club with Arthur Jenkins or Haines, even with old Potter and Dr. Crim. He was seen much with chairman Adams. People, all of these, concerned with promotion and tenure. All so blatantly obvious. And it was then that Loren, suspecting at long last that Mallom was shunning him, took his stand. He accused him of

utter selfishness, to his face, of betraying friendship and affection for his own advantage. There was a terrible scene.

He did not like to remember it.

He had tried, after that, to warn the others. The matter had come to a head with the question of tenure, Mallom's tenure. There was a committee, of course; Loren had discreetly approached its more important members, chairman Adams and Jenkins and Potter. Mallom had obviously fooled them. Arthur Jenkins, in particular, has been difficult.

"But don't you see?" Loren said. "The man's compulsive. His precious manners and dress, that silly penknife that he always carries -- look how he fondles it -- like a --" He had left it unfinished, merely going on to point up the general character of Dr. Mallom, his aberrational qualities.

Jenkins had looked at him coldly.

"Oh, he's a personality, I suppose. But we don't lack our share of the unusual, do we Loren?"

They had left it at that, but his own relations with Jenkins were severely strained. His relations with Mallom were unbearable. They rarely spoke; and Loren felt, with plenty of evidence now from this committee on staff, that Mallom was after him. That had become so obvious at their last meeting, Mallom suggested, had actually had the effrontery to suggest, that the department could use a new man in the Victorian period. That was Loren's specialty! Then, for a few desperate moments, it seemed that the committee took him seriously. They wrangled interminably at that, leaving things unresolved. But Loren felt that he had won, had outbested Mallom at his own game. The experience was so distasteful it had made him ill.

Jenkins was leaving now for a better job. His departure, by a magnificent kind of poetic justice, had thwarted Mallom.

The satisfaction of his cigarette was suddenly spoiled by the smell of stale ashes from the ashtray. He dumped it quickly, emptying the contents in his wastebasket. From his desk drawer he took a paper tissue and wiped the tray, carefully working ashes from the ridges in the glass below the rim. When it was wiped clean he crushed the cigarette, rose, and went to the window.

There were his pigeons.

They weren't really his, of course; but they came every day to be fed and every day, five days a week, he fed them. He fed them now, taking the paper sack from his desk drawer, opening the window, tossing the handful of crumbs to the flock below. The birds pecked and cooed and pushed and shoved at each other to get at the food. He loved the sounds they made, like the sounds of poetry; but more than that he loved the soft, blue-gray of their coloring, feather soft, against the lighter gray of the sidewalk, wide and spacious enough, that hugged the wall of the building. He amused himself, sometimes, by naming them. That puffy-pouter one was chairman Adams. And Mallom. That droop feathered thing that had appeared lately, so lean and hungry, pecking nastily away behind the others. But he could not watch them today; there was the meeting. He would have to wash his hands along the way.

"Dr. Loren."

Adams' voice was officious, even in greeting. He voiced his own reply quietly, greeting the others at the table as indirectly as he could.

"I hope I'm not late."

He knew perfectly well that he wasn't. He caught the flicker of a smile on Mallom's face, a thin, ascetic twitching of the lips.

"As a matter of fact you are early, one minute and forty seconds early, if one wished to be precise."

There was light laughter.

He took his seat at the table, across from Mallom and old Potter and Dr. Crim, wondering why everyone had to laugh at what Potter had said. The old fool had been here too long. The department humored him, like the fools in Shakespeare were humored, but with less cause. Any intelligent department chairman would have got rid of Potter long ago. But not chairman Adams, Ph.D. from Minnesota, pouter pigeon, author of one book and six articles and two monographs on Chaucer and his times. Dr. Adams had laughed politely with the others but now he picked up that sheaf of papers on the table and rustled them rather suggestively.

"I suppose we should call the meeting to order, gentlemen. I have to decide about certain matters of staffing for the coming year."

"We'll have to replace Jenkins," Potter said. "I hate to see Arthur go."

Dr. Adams paid no attention to the interruption.

"I should bring you up to date since our last meeting. We are at present engaged in correspondence with an Edwin Foss. I mentioned him briefly, you'll remember, at our last discussion. Dr. Foss is expressing considerable interest in the position here. You have all seen his credentials."

Loren wished he were home, or watching his pigeons, or that he were anyplace but here with this tedium. He thought back to the endless meetings of this kind, of voices droning, of the endless hours spent in such rooms as this when he could have been elsewhere, at home with a drink, those soft, sophisticated colors inviting repose. He could think of his own book there, upon Samuel Rogers, still but a third finished. In his office he couldn't.

Adams rustled his papers but no one spoke.

"Well, what's your opinion, Dr. Loren?"

His mind snapped to attention. He tried to remember whatever he had read about Dr. Foss. He had given a most cursory glance to those credentials and his mind went horribly blank of all details. Two children, he remembered that. Thirty two years of age, quite young, really, quite young. Presently teaching at some place in Dakota, South Dakota? Doctoral thesis on the Dakota influence in Cooper? And a couple of articles too, as he remembered. Not much of a bibliography. Foss had not sent the offprints. Assistant professor now as he remembered. He saw Mallom toying with that stupid knife of his and wished he had been more attentive to those credentials.

"I wasn't too impressed with the bibliography," he said carefully, "But perhaps he will do. "

"Did you read the articles?" Mallom asked.

He tried to control the flush that he felt mounting to his throat, moving to his cheeks. He mustn't let Mallom upset him. Damn the man! He fixed his eyes on Mallom's fingers, watching the opening and closing of that stupid knife blade.

"No," he said, "I didn't read them."

"Solid," Potter said. "He knows Cooper and he knows Whitman and he probably knows the rest of the field just as well. He's young and up and coming. I think we should take him."

"He would work in your area, of course," Adams said. "You are the best judge of his work and publications. You approve then?"

"I approve, I do thoroughly and wholeheartedly approve."

"And you, Dr. Mallom?"

"I read both the articles. And I approve."

"Dr. Crim?"

Crim merely nodded. Dr. Adams made a brief notation on the papers of Dr. Foss. The man would be hired.

It was four twenty. The pigeons were gone now; they rarely stayed half an hour. It occurred to Loren that a man's future had been decided in that space of time. A man would give up his job in one place to take another. He would move goods and family and become immediately involved in matters here. He would face Mallom across a table and would probably hate him. He would listen to Potter's corny jokes and watch Crim nodding his head and would wonder why people laughed with old Potter and when Crim would open his mouth to say something. He would spend hours with trivia.

It was too casual, too unreal, almost ludicrous. He wondered if that sudden throb in his stomach were real or imagined. Adams was talking again.

"We simply can't find a linguist. We can't compete, apparently, with what these people are demanding elsewhere. Consequently we have given up the search for another year."

The dull throb became active now. He felt it physically. It tightened his nerves.

"That means," Mallom said decisively, "that we get a replacement for Arthur and still another man in addition."

It was Potter who nodded now. A round, shimmering circle of reflected light appeared on the balding surface of his head, at the forward part of the skull. Dr. Loren watched the light dancing, thinking that Potter knew of this

all along. He had therefore made up his mind as to what should be done about it, what position to ask for; and if Potter knew, so did Mallom.

His eyes swung to Dr. Crim. Crim had stopped nodding. The thin, horsey face was expressionless, dulled, as though sleep were taking it. Loren wanted to shout at him to wake up, to speak, to know danger.

"Well, yes," Adams said. "I should think us extremely remiss if we did not take this new development as a chance to -- ah -- bolster our department."

"I suppose Jenkins has been replaced," Loren said. "I didn't hear of it, of course, but I suppose he has. Is that correct? Dr. Adams?"

"It is too soon for replies," Adams said, "but I might say I do not anticipate trouble in that regard. I know a number of people, highly qualified, who will be happy to come."

"The question," Potter said, "is whether we want a man to teach Milton or a man in the nineteenth century. That *was* the question, was it not, before Arthur decided to leave?"

"That was the question," Mallom said.

The sharp tapping, like the peck of birds, sounded throughout the room. It was maddening. Without looking at Mallom's hands Loren knew that the man was tapping that miniature knife against the table. Words, violent and profane, whirled through his mind; and he found himself, foolishly, like a student in class, raising his hand to be heard.

"Dr. Loren?"

"I would like," he said thickly, "to reiterate my former stand. Dr. Snecker will retire soon. It seems imperative that we have a man here who can take over his courses in Milton when that retirement comes. It seems equally imperative that he get here as soon as possible, to get his feet on the ground, as it were, before he takes Snecker's classes. Or should I say chair?" He stared at Mallom.

"It's traditional terminology, Dr. Loren."

"If one wishes to be traditional," Potter said.

For once no one laughed. Crim stirred in his place, lifting his head erect.

"I might add a word at this point," the tone was clipped and precise, "If I remember correctly, and I think I do, Dr. Snecker is exactly two years older than I, almost to the day. He is now sixty one.

"Six years," Mallom said, "is a long time to break someone in."

"Then why don't you say what you think?" Loren said wildly. "Why don't you say that you want to push me around -- if not out? You know -- every one of you -- oh! Pigeon dirt!"

He thought of the classes he now taught, of someone else teaching them, and of promotion, of his book, that definitive work on Samuel Rogers, on his desk at home. He looked across at Mallom's sneering eyes and he wanted desperately to get away, to lie on his bed in his own room, to wait for that pulsing throb in his stomach to die away, for the thoughts to quit whirling in his mind as they were whirling now. He half ran toward the door.

"Excuse me," he said, "I *must* excuse myself."

He stumbled past chairma Adams, around the table and behind Mallom and Potter. His eye caught, once again, the quick flicker of light from Potter's head; and an answering gleam from the small, metallic object still in Mallom's hand. He continued on, but in his mind now as he walked there was a terrible image. Mallom bound to a table; and the swift, shimmering arc of the descending blade in one emasculating stroke.

CLIPPED

Bruno LaGanis

Clipped am I clipped with a clip
to the page
Some call me dum-dum and some
call me sage
Some think the clip hurts my face
and the page
The clip and my face, we both
like the thrill
Of being clipped with a clip,
dipped in chlorophyll.

GEOGRAPHICAL DREAM OF MY WIFE

Richard McLain

Whether it was because you said

not to, I do not know, but,

anyway, I cut off

at the shoulders

before - I remembered

my head

(as I had done once

remembering)

And suddenly, this

headless and rather

carrying my head

time

embarrassed

before me

like a platter

whether I

I wondered

would mend . . .

But you

wanted to go

to sultry Rio

with neon

(or I think it was you)

to South America

to the Casinos lit

cha-cha-chas

and sambas where

green fronds were

though

was more concerned

my anatomical problem,

to go

even the cool

sweating

at this point I

with

I wanted

to Northern Europe.

I was thinking

as I carefully

balanced my head

upon my shoulders

of fjords

(after combing my hair)

like a tall cap

and tied it down

with a single
at the throat
I thought,

And I remembered
have to be careful
lest a sudden turn
top-piece crashing
before the flesh

And I remembered how
I had unwrapped
clotted with blood
brittle as an old
unwrapped it
placing it neatly
with razor blades

cooling after-shaves
that reminded me

strip of bandage
(barely discernible,
under a high collar)

thinking I would
with myself
send my balanced
to the floor
had knit.

once before
the bandage
and rotting
newspaper
from my neck
upon the shelf
shaving cream

and a sticky perfume
of your mother.

MUSIC LOVER

Charlie McDade

I bought a guitar
last night
& have been practicing
learning chords
guaranteed
to open your legs

SIMPLE SIMON

Curt Johnson

"In there. And then we'll need you in the Chinese Room. Hurry now! go much to do, so much to do!"

Lifting the pedestal, Gasserpod backed through the door. "Ouch," he said when he set it down. "Eeeeeek!" he heard behind him. He turned, rubbing his palm where it had been pinched by the pedestal.

A woman was seated before a dressing table, her head turned toward him. "Get out--" she began, but then stopped.

Gasserpod stared back at her. Almost to the top of her thighs she wore curious trousers of red silk held up by plain green cords that hung loosely on her waist--curious trousers because they were like cowboy's chaps--there was no inner side to them, only separate outside legs of silk.

His gaze moved up. The woman was naked above the waist and her skin looked moist. It looks like it's been soaked in honey, Gasserpod thought. And he couldn't be sure, but he thought he recognized that navel, those breasts.

The woman touched each nipple of her breasts with a lipstick. "Slocum," she said, "long time no see."

He looked at the woman's face. She had moistened her hair with oil and it clung to her neck and shoulders, framing her face. The face seemed familiar, too--what? hi? what!-- "Marlene!" he said, recognizing his wife--his wife who had deserted him two months ago in Detroit. "Kee-rist, Marlene," he said, "you didn't even leave a *note*?"

She stood up and approached him. "No. How have you been, Gasserpod?"

She was close to him now and he saw that she had put an indigo shading on her eyelids. "Well, so-so," he said. "How about yourself?" He saw the familiar purple tinge in her eyes that had always indicated passion in her, the few times she had been passionate, the times afterward when she would call him her "little keelaw eel," and sometimes stroke his head. Those had been

good times, those few times, he remembered. He wondered what she was doing in this art museum, wondered if she'd given up nursing.

"Can't complain," she said. She took his hand. "Hurt yourself?" He had thought he would be angry when--if--he ever met Marlene again, but he didn't feel angry at the moment. "Pinched it," he said, looking at the bronze-cast basketball on the pedestal. She moved her legs slightly and he felt their heat radiating to him. She blew softly on his palm and he felt it down to his toes. Perhaps now was not the time to bring up the subject of a divorce, he thought, with Mr. Schoenobatic waiting for him at the auditorium door.

"Even my breath hurts you," she said. "I'll rub in a little cream." She began to rub in cold cream and when she had done his palm she touched it with her tongue and he leaped from the touch.

She turned his hand over and the black hairs on the back stood out when with her other hand she unzipped his chinos. She looked up at him with emotion in her eyes now, along with the purple coloring, and her face was now slightly swollen below the eyes. "I'll be damned if I know what it is about you, Slocum," she said hoarsely. "My blood is clogged with desire."

She moved nearer to him and he found every muscle in his body clenched in the effort to restrain himself. He felt a pressure on his eyeballs as if they might burst out of his head. All that noise going down the museum's hall, he thought--it's affected my head. She stood in front of him, her lip held between her teeth and her whole body tensed and then he saw that almost hostile look of desire shoot out from her eyes at him and her hands went to his shoulders and she leaped off the floor and seized him around the waist with her legs.

Sshhloomp, sshhloomp! and it was over in seconds and she dropped from him to the floor.

There was a trickle on his neck and he put up his hand, thinking it was sweat, and found that it was blood. Kee-rist! she had bitten his ear. He looked at her as she lay panting beneath him close to his mudcaked boots. It was a long time before she spoke.

"In God's name," she said finally, rising and brushing herself off, "you haven't changed one iota, have you. Wham-bam, thank-you, ma'am."

"Marlene, I'm glad we ran across each other like this. I've got something to tell you."

"If I ever had any second thoughts about divorcing you, buster, I don't any longer. Not after this. Wham-bam, all over, every time."

"I don't get it," he said, zipping up his chinos. "What's this about divorcing?"

"I have *got* it, buster," she said. "We are no longer man and wife."

Then I'm a free man again, Gasserpod thought, thinking that Marlene had probably never really liked him anyway, it seemed. He turned and left the room, feeling as if a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders, not regretting in the least now that Marlene had left him, divorced him for good and all, surprised that he was not feeling the least bit sad or sorry.

"Ssssst, lad," he heard. It was Mr. Schoenobatic standing where he had been left at the door to the auditorium. "Let's get a seat before my legs give out. Your *ear's* all bloody. Goddam. Whaddaya been *doing*?"

"Nothing," Gasserpod said. "I met an old friend."

He was halfway down the aisle with Mr. Schoenobatic before the tears started to come.

WILLIAM T. EDDY

William Sayres

*William T. Eddy
was elected Mayor of Rapid City, Idaho, e
leven hours after he made his climactic
campaign speech in the nearly empty Town Hall:*

Tonight there is glass on my rug,
That it is there tonight instead of some other night
is not significant.

That it is glass instead of some other material
is irrelevant.

That it lies on a rug instead of some other object
is unimportant.

How it came to be on my rug
is a problem of no consequence.

Whether or not the rug is really mine
scarcely matters.

Why the glass is on, not under, the rug
matters even less.

I regard neither glass nor rug as symbols.
I am sorry for neither,
inspired by neither,
curious about neither.

Indeed, I must say that
the least interesting observation
I have made all month is that
tonight there is glass on my rug.

PROFESSOR TRUMBULL

William Sayres

Professor Trumbull raised chimpanzees in his home
to see if he could teach them to talk.

After seven years
none of the chimpanzees could talk,
but Professor Trumbull had become adept
at riding unicycles,
rolling truck tires, doing handsprings and
swinging by his legs from a trapeze.

In his report
to the Behavioral Studies Association,
he noted that although the experiment
had not turned out exactly as planned,
it had nevertheless done
wonders
for his sex life.

RAINBOW POEMS

Alan Britt

1

Hands holding windows of cacti
inside a
man with a dark animal crouch beside a candle

2

A drop of a raddish's blood
becomes a cloud of rain in a horse's eye

3

The eyes fall into reeds
and die in a field of damp stones

4

A raindrop faints a tin roof
the roof's eyes grow hands

5

A man descends a faraway hill
a dark leaf thick with stars

6

My hand becomes a spotted dove
and flies deep into the folded stomach of a wave

7

The sun sags from a root's balcony
a rockdove alights towards the infinite sadness
of seals air

8

A woman pulls bed-sheets over stones
her body crumbles
into a pile of orange spotted larkspur

9

A raindrop's hand
tugs on a lime

10

A hand touching an automobile door handle
pulls a mountain of dark rocks
across a desert's cactus

DIRIGIBLE SECRETS

Charles Gerard

Charlotte was smiling and secretive those days. Hidden in her mind, I thought, was a teasing about the cellar and the strange chewing gum; but I wasn't sure. Old lady Spivis was watching us every time our hands touched. When she looked like she was about to mount her broom was scurried away.

It was the dirigible in her house that made old lady Spivis mad those days. A witch haze of smoke swirled around her head when she looked at me because I knew how to spell dirigible and she didn't.

Daddy poked the fire in our stove upstairs. Leaves turned yellow after the first frost. Sometimes he coughed. But when my dirigible shriveled, Daddy's lungs were still strong enough to blow into that long rubber balloon until it stretched taut into a giant dirigible again.

The brick chimney was covered with green wallpaper; it had a whisper of warmth when I leaned against it. The black stovepipe went straight up and then an elbow turned it to the chimney. With burning bright eyes Daddy would look out the window and far away, the leaves falling. Holding my dirigible and dreaming, I sat behind the stove with my feet on the nickel plated fender. Daddy's coughing stopped, and from hollow cheeks he smiled at me.

"All the way," he said, "across the ocean, all the way to London that's the way it'll be some day with the dirigibles."

"Daddy, what about winter storms?"

"Dirigibles will fly above the storms like smoke flying out of this chimney. They won't worry about snow and sleet."

"Daddy, what about on the ground? The dirigible will be so coated with ice it'll never lift off again."

I showed him how my toy dirigible would be an icicle with sleet from the nose to the cardboard tail fins.

"In London the dirigible will have a hangar," said Daddy. "That's like a big barn. The doors shut on the dirigible inside."

"I must look for a dirigible hangar, Daddy. Indian Summer will be gone."

Outside the house I hunted for a nook under the porch that snow couldn't reach. Old lady Spivis saw me buzzing around with my toy dirigible.

Glaring through her pince-nez glasses, she said, "Is that balloon full of hot air like some of the people here? I hope it blows up!"

Her eyes were full of malice as if she would like to see the dirigible and its passengers and me crashing to earth. Old lady Spivis snorted away. Charlotte's black hair rose out of the shrubbery next door. A warm excitement came over me.

"You don't have to listen to her," Charlotte said. "I hate her. She doesn't know how to spell. Where will you hide your dirigible?"

"Maybe in the old barn," I said, realizing that Charlotte's eyes had been on me. The wind blew her long black curls, beautifully swooping in a curve like the nose of my dirigible, above her shoulders. I held my dirigible with both hands to keep it from blowing away. Her thin neck sprouted out of the leaves like a blossom. She was so graceful that I felt clumsy around her.

"Try the old barn, but I'm wearing my new dress- it's too dusty for me. I will help you some day!"

Her eyes twinkled like moonlight on a spinning propeller.

I ran speechless toward the old barn, being careful that old lady Spivis didn't spy me. The brown boards, sooty from the smoke of the Chicago & Alton trains, were broken on the north wall. The wind whistled through the cracks and across the dirt floor. Stacked kindling was prickly with nails sticking out like cats' claws. It was too treacherous for the delicate fabric of my high flying dirigible!

* * *

The next day gray clouds swept through the sky. A coal wagon, pulled by two black horses, rattled its steel rimmed wheels over the brick pavement. Wisps of smoke puffed from Daddy's chimney because a chill gripped the dark curtained house.

Against the fence leaned an old willow tree. It was rotting like old lady Spivis. There was a hole in the back big enough for a boy to crawl inside the trunk. The long dirigible fit inside, but it fluttered with the whipping wind.

I turned to fly- and there was Charlotte, secretly watching me, her brown eyes haunting.

She said, "We can't leave the dirigible here for the storm. The passengers will never fly. Come with me to the cellar."

Charlotte's brown eyes warmed me as if the dirigible and I were the most important things in her world.

"How can we find a hangar in the witch's house? She's always spying on us!"

"She's watching her son now. She's hiding behind the window curtain while Barney is parked with his girl friend."

The wind feathered Charlotte's black hair. Far away, a train whistle echoed across the fields, whispering and promising through wigwams of yellow corn shucks.

"Be very quiet," whispered Charlotte. "She's so busy watching Barney that she won't hear us opening her cellar door."

Charlotte squeezed my hand in the shadow of the house. Casually we stood by the cellar door, that slanting wooden door that I had never entered. Timidly my hand moved toward the handle. Shhhh, I pulled up on the door. Charlotte tiptoed downward on her slender legs. Sliding under the door, I closed it over our heads. We smelled damp wood. We felt our way down the steps.

In the cellar we looked up at two dusty windows. Through the cobwebs, pale shadows fell on pots of ferns. There was a rusty tin can that the witch used for watering. Charlotte put her fingers to my lips.

"I'll show you my new kind of chewing gum," she whispered.

She pulled me away from the ferns. Wide-eyed I looked for a hiding place for my dirigible. I had always been afraid to explore old lady Spivis's cellar.

Mysteriously, Charlotte opened an old wooden door and slipped inside. I carried my dirigible and closed the door behind us. It was a small room of one window with a dark view under the porch floor. Shelves held many glass jars of fruit.

"Where's that new kind of chewing gum?"

"I'll show you my secrets."

She glided to the shelf and carried back a glass of strawberry jam. The top of the glass was sealed with paraffin. With her thumbs she pushed in the glistening, snowy paraffin lid. She poked a finger in the strawberries and licked the goo off her finger. She broke off a hunk of paraffin and put the whitish wax in her mouth and started chewing.

"The strawberries give this chewing gum a sweet flavor."

She handed me a hunk. Well, it chewed something like gum; but it was harder and more crumbly.

"Your dirigible will be safe on the shelf."

I put the dirigible on the shelf. It parked there as if it were moored while the passengers looked at their watches.

Charlotte glanced at the dirigible. Her hand grabbed mine hotly.

I hadn't realized she had so much fire.

"You won't tell Mrs. Spivis or anybody," she said, her voice tense and low. "I'll take off my clothes, and you can see me. I don't have any brothers. Let me see what boys look like. That's fair."

Newspapers covered the floor, I think for spreading apple slices to dry, but the apples were gone. Bewildered, I thought about how she had pretended to bring my dirigible to the cellar, and all the time she had this other secret.

Charlotte took off her shoes. She peeled her dress off and folded it on the newspaper. So I took off my shoes, my shirt, and my pants and piled them beside her dress. She took off her bloomers. I took off my BVDS; that was fair.

She bent slightly and looked wonderingly. She came close to me and studied me as lovingly as I had ever studied the dirigible.

She relaxed and let me look at her. Her white body slanted down to her thighs so cute.

Only the passengers in the dirigible were observing our secrets.

"You and I aren't the same," she said. "We're different." She stepped very close and put her thin arms around me. The chills ran up and down my neck. The two tiny bulges of her breasts nudged against me. Her lips brushed against mine.

The collar door moaned far away.

"Oh!" whispered Charlotte, "that must be old lady Spivis. She may be rnarried twice, but she'll always be an old maid."

I jumped into my clothes. Charlotte slipped into her dress. I pulled her to a box by the window. I boosted her up while she gingerly opened the window on its hinges. She screeched through. I handed her the dirigible, and then clambered up and closed the window behind us. We crawled across the earth under the front porch. The under edge of the porch was rimmed with lattice, like a palace, through which sunlight oozed. The lattice near the old willow tree was always loose; we crawled out fast.

We squirmed into the shrubbery that masked the foundation of the old house. Like birds we poked our heads out of the bushes. Barney was laughing with Lillums in his parked car. There was nobody else around; we strolled out while I held up my dirigible proudly.

"I'm going home and wash my knees," said Charlotte. "I'll be back. You look for a hangar. Old lady Spivis won't know until winter that anybody opened her jam jars."

I climbed the porch steps with my dirigible. Propeller spinning powerfully, I gained altitude toward the attic. With the witch in the basement brooding over her herbs, I opened the attic door softly. The ceiling slanted downward with the roof. Two chimneys stood in the middle of the room like pillars and went up through the roof - so that the room was warm and dry.

By a sooty window I saw the floor was complete only in the center; a narrow lane of boards connected to the stairs. I remembered Daddy telling me how the second husband of old lady Spivis died working on the attic floor, and she had never had it finished. Beyond the floor boards was the rough plaster and lathe of the ceiling beneath. In each brick chimney was an iron door- I suppose for cleaning out soot.

I put my hand on a chimney and felt a trickle of heat. Straddled like spiders on rafters, bracing the eaves were old trunks. A corner between the trunks and the roof looked like a quiet place for my dirigible hangar.

As I crept toward the slanting roof I heard behind me the shrieking of the stairway door like a ghost.

"What are you doing up here?" shouted old lady Spivis.

My blood raced. She was lunging toward me. Terrified, I dodged behind a chimney.

"I'm looking for a place to put my dirigible," I said, trying to calm her, "so the winter storms won't wreck it."

"I'll wreck it!" she screamed, pulling a long pin out of her hair. "I'll blow it to pieces!"

She darted toward me with the long pin pointed at the dirigible like an anti-aircraft gun. Heart pounding, I backed away from her, wishing for a cloud to hide behind. On she plunged, like fury, gasping and stabbing with the long pin, while I had wild visions of her husband's last moment in the attic.

I circled around the opposite chimney. My eyes fell on the soot door. I hesitated and began to sweat. Would I throw my dirigible away? Tensely, I decided that I would not let it be blown up by the enemy.

"You'll never have my dirigible!" I cried.

I opened the iron door and shoved the dirigible into the chimney. It was like pushing it into the cave of a smoke-bellowing dragon. I spun away from her long pin.

"It'll burn!" she cackled wickedly.

While she cackled I jumped toward the stairway.

"I've ended that dirigible!" she screeched at the shadows.

Like a devil she bobbed toward me. Suddenly she screamed. She had tumbled off the floor in her insane cackling and plunged one leg through the ceiling below.

I dove down the stairs, and ran until I was out in the grass. There were tears in my eyes for my lost dirigible.

I could hear Daddy pounding up the stairs.

"What's going on up there?" Daddy called.

"Your damned dirigible!" shrieked old lady Spivis like an air raid siren. "Shoved me through the ceiling. Tore up my house. It will be the death of me!"

Charlotte ran out to the sidewalk.

"What's the commotion?"

"I found a hangar, but I lost my dirigible!

I heard Lillums laughing behind me. The car door slammed.

"Reggie, Reggie!" shouted Barney. "Look up in the sky. Your dirigible is flying!"

Charlotte and I looked above the house. Rising and bobbing in the warm smoke from the chimney was my dirigible, free at last, and flying above the earth.

"The pilot is steering to a new hangar!" cried Charlotte. "Let's follow him."

The dirigible soared in the breeze above the tree tops. Charlotte held my hand, and we smiled at each other. Charlotte and I soared as the dirigible soared.

How skillfully the captain had piloted the dirigible up the chimney! How desperate the passengers had been in the gondola, bellowed at by flame and smoke, pursued by a fiery tongued dragon, and then soaring to freedom! How delighted the passengers were now, drinking coffee, and laughing at the squealing witch stuck up to her knee in the attic.

Charlotte and I followed swiftly below. With us laughed Barney Spivis, grunting as his big legs jogged, grunting because he had been gassed by the Kaiser. The dirigible shimmered in the sunlight as its propeller spun it onward. Did ever a boy hold such a sweet, girlish hand, following such a wonderful dirigible! Swiftly and joyously we ran like sweethearts that day!

OUCH

William M. White

Grant me a windy mind
A sun to scorch it hot
Gentle hands to cool
Against the heat of noon

Abide with me
Naked in mobility
Reflected from the lake
Taste this fragrant time
With me

Nowhere lurks in sagebrush
Just beyond the peak
I'll stumble back to dawn
To clutch a furry bear.

ASHES AND DUST I TASTE

William M. White

From the ghostly red meadow of east
Into the purple of a second tier
Mist coats the inner glass
To trace strange longings

The apple of the day waits
To rot its core away
Baskets there be
Stacked to tumbling over

There's no one to plunder
No stern guard to halt it
Only the random offer
Of an awesome dawning

Yesterday's splendor passing
Into a newness cold as clay.

HACIENDA HEIGHTS, CALIFORNIA

Robert Joe Stout

Pigeons dangle
like spaghetti from the trees
leaves undulate their metal joints
I listen to the wings of airplanes
coming loose, hear doughnuts fall

and squash against the faces
raised to a commandment no one reads
my dog sits on the chimney eating salt

**WHERE THE BIRD FLYS TO:
A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH
TO THE PASSAGE OF TIME**

Mabatma

The old man was sitting on the park bench, picking his nose intently. He lowered his graying nostril forcefully onto his forefinger, trying to draw full satisfaction from his quest. A little girl gingerly skipped and tripped, and fell upon his bended knee. Waning to wailing womb, he enjoyed her presence. She gently lowered his Talon zipper (made of nylon synthetics of mohair loom), and thrust her eager, clutching digits into his sweat dripping vitality. Having not spoken a word for thirty years, his face contorted to a grimace, as he screamed, "You have twisted my UGLY!" The little girl, her fluids vital, and her vitals fluid replied, "Mmmm. Feels good. Krishna consciousness." Then slowly, with an expertise born of experience, she twisted it again, this time to the left.

* * *

The native boy, dripping heavy yellow moss, peered fearfully through the bamboo shoots shot with bamboo. For no reason in particular, a herd of elephants made their way through the jungle. The native boy covered in horror, his limbs like cactus in the noonday sun, his eyes alive like rodent hair. The chief elephant (his name was Barumba) trotted close to the boy, and crushed a colony of ants within a short five steps. It would suffice to say, the ants trickled manfully the path home. Isn't that amazing?

DREAMING OF GENE

George Flynn

Dreaming of Gene

The pianist arises

From a stool in the park

Removing a blue cap

To dance around the oak tree

His pockets bulging with crackerjacks

Gene smiles in porcelain

Ending his dance

To retire to the john

Where the long streams of the past are

Entering the valley of 'Parade-rest.'

THE NO-BETWEENS

Judson Crows

Have taken over
 politics
and they have

Taken over
 the arts
--fish or fowl

They edict
 and I have
taken hare rare

above

Lloyd Gold

it says that when the shadow
tugs to keep from dragging
there'll be no more of golden shoots

only the monochrome overlaying
former focal points
and clouding leafless horizons

save sunning it out as
henceforth glows the soaring crane
riding the wind above the stagnant grey

THE FEAR

Lewis B. Horne

"Look at that! The leaves are turning here, too."

He had found the door handle and was just straightening up, his hand on the top of the car door, his other hand holding the injured partridge.

"In the windbreak," cried Martha. "See at the top. They're changing. And it's not even September."

He closed the door and listened. The river ahead. The kids running here and there. Martha ahead where the other car was parked, calling his attention, Vangiels, Doug's, to the phenomenon of the leaves. Just like La Ronge: changing here, too. After the hours on the road, his legs were cramped. Holding the bird, he stepped awkwardly toward the voice, the cluster of minor sounds.

Doug stopped him. "Watch it, Colin." Then to the group generally, "Who left the wheelbarrow in the driveway?"

Doug's hand closed on his elbow, familiar pressure even after eight years. Large hand around his bony arm. It guided him quickly, firmly, without hesitancy or trepidation. Doug took the partridge from him.

Car doors continued to slam, the kids in and out after neglected things. The sun scratched his back. Camping at La Ronge held sunbathed, sat or lain in swimming trunks, smeared with lotion, while the kids swam, while Doug proofread, while Vangie and Martha picked blueberries. Now in tee shirt and Bermudas his burned skin felt the abrasive warmth in the air, in the sunlight. He touched his cheek. It was papery.

"You don't look as red as you did yesterday," said Vangie. Her elbow touched his. He slipped his arm around her waist.

He said, "So it's early for the trees to turn."

"We've barely had summer," said Martha.

"It's not that bad," said Doug. "The garden's done well."

"But I'm not ready for winter." In her mock dismay Martha's voice took on the sharp edge it had when she was excited, one of the first qualities he'd

noticed when he shared an apartment with Doug back in grad school. At first she had spoken to him too heartily, too nervously, as though he were a foreigner. Then she'd grown used to him. "I'll have to start my classes in another couple of weeks." She made a brrr-ing sound.

"Shall we get the stuff out of the cars?" said Vangie.

"Let it go for now. I've got to take care of the ducks and geese and the other birds."

Vangie said she'd start taking in some of the things.

"What shall I do?" he asked.

"How about holding your youngest? Then I can help Martha."

"Is she here?" He took two-year-old Bev from her mother. "So quiet I didn't hear her."

"Martha's so shocked by the trees," said Doug, "you couldn't have heard anything else."

"Think about winter..."

He sat on the curbing of the drive where it led into the belowground garage. Doug said if he was okay there held take care of the partridge and then help Vangie empty the cars.

"Fine, fine."

He was glad to be alone. Bev's fingers on his cheek were soft. Like a nesting bird, she rested her head on his shoulder and was still. Tired. They'd all been close during the last three days. Too close. But you'd have to expect that from Doug and Martha--the extreme, the eccentric. They'd arrived at their farm only four days ago--four days of steady driving from Arizona, crossing the border in Montana, tired on their entry into Saskatchewan. But elated at seeing friends they'd not seen in eight years. Almost immediately came the question: Feel like going farther north tomorrow? If we don't go now, said Doug, we won't get away at all this year. What could they answer? Even Vangie had said, It sounds great, though she'd been driving steadily the whole time, and the thought of driving another three hundred miles...

Still it had been pleasant. Relaxing. Most of all held been glad that what the invitation registered was fact: that the Makows--Doug and Martha --were

not changed. Had they stayed here at the farm there would have been no time to talk, to gossip. But there at the lake, after the last hundred miles of dirt road through country Vangie tried to describe to him -- "It's like being in the high country except we aren't in the mountains"--they'd gotten Doug and Martha at as quiet a point in their schedules as they were likely to find them.

Doug had bought a printing press and was putting together his first issue of *Willow*, a poetry magazine. "You should see the list of contributors I've lined up for the first two issues." He was building - "while the weather's good" -- an addition to the house that he could use as a study. They'd been busy with Martha's dance recital this year. The MAKOW SCHOOL OF BALLET was "established" as far as Martha was concerned. Subsistence level. "You should see what we had to scrounge for sets. But the *Les Sylphides* was beautiful. I swiped a bit from the New York production, toning it down to our abilities, YOU understand. But it was a beauty. Some of my dancers are really coming along." She still had her antiques to refinish, antiques she'd bought in Michigan after she and Doug married. She tried to hold on to enough money to play the stock market, but that was a risky thing in the best of times, much less now... She would show Vangie the candles she'd made last winter and sold most of to get money for *Les Sylphides*.

Colin had been pleased simply to lie in silence on the sand, the splashing and voices taken up by the beautifully still air. To catch his breath. So much, so much... Occasionally Vangie was beside him.

"They're still holding their pace," he said.

"So are you." She took his hand and held it. "Are you glad you came?"

"Yes. Though I'd hoped you'd get more rest."

"I'm fine," she said. "Things weren't getting at me the way they were with you. It's easier seeing, even those war pictures and that apartment house, seeing it--"

"I'm glad we came. Don't say anything about Myra, though, till I talk to Doug." He didn't want to say anything at all at the lake.

They'd corresponded in Christmas letters over the past years, they and the Makows. But no one visited. Then this summer, only a couple of weeks

ago, after Myra's-- Only a couple of weeks ago, he had said to Vangie, Let's go see the Makows. Though she'd not been fond of Doug and Martha, too shy to feel comfortable around their boisterous largeness, she said she thought that it was a good idea, that he needed to get away. Maybe it would do him good to talk to Doug.

For a moment he had wondered if she understood better than he knew how much was bothering him. Lists of Vietnam dead. Summaries of news accounts on Uganda and Northern Ireland. Most horrifying to him were the catalogs of events in their own town, in their neighborhood even. Then only a couple of weeks ago--Myra... The police were searching for a boyfriend from California. What defenses could one raise? He wanted to talk to someone from the past, to retouch an easier time. What were the Makows doing? His roommate needed few defenses. Activity, activity.

Unlike Doug Makow, he was pulling his boundaries in. Sometimes he thought his senses were failing. His hearing seemed so muffled that he could miss a child entering a room. His smell was never very good. The pores on his face, open to sun and air and temperature, seemed to be closing. Only the shadows. Only what he could touch. But how much could he touch? How much dared he touch? He would shiver as he wondered and reach out, feel the texture of the lamp beside him, slip off a sandal to feel under bare foot the knap of the rug, walk about the room touching walls, curtains, doorframes, furniture. Run his fingers through Bev's hair or Cindy's or Vangie's. In his own house he knew where each thing was. But suppose something should intrude? He imagined cavities before him, a body to trip him, an unheard approach from behind.

Here, sitting in the driveway with Bev, he sat in a large space. Currents of air moved across without blockage. He heard the trees in their slumbrous motion, supple and unthrashing. The sun moved through a long day. He felt a hunger to see it all. He felt reduced to a small point, felt the possibility of obliteration, resting inside a space his senses could not touch, not like the Makow's life that spread out in larger and larger circles. If he could but see.

Martha returned. She had let the birds out for greenery. He heard chickens, ducks, geese. Approaching. About.

"You want to come in?" asked Martha. "Or do you want to wait out here?"

"I should get into more clothes if I'm going to be out in the sun. Vangie's footsteps came from the house. "Here," she said, "I'll take Bev. Why, she's asleep."

"Ah, that's nice," he said.

He took her arm and went with her up the stairs to change.

When he came back down he was well - covered- -long - sleeved shirt for his arms, long trousers for his legs, tennis shoes and socks to replace the sandals on his feet. He negotiated the stairs slowly. Doug waited for him at the bottom.

"You have to be careful of the sun," he said. "When you've been cooped up--"

"The Arizona beat, " he said, as though it were an explanation. "Did you take care of the partridge?"

"It's in the cages where the cats can't get at it."

"Cages?"

"We're thinking about raising dogs. Didn't I tell you?"

"I tell him it might be easier than making candles," Martha called from the kitchen. "What about some vegetables?"

"Want to come to the garden with me?" Doug asked.

Doug's hand on his elbow brought back memories. He'd learned his way around campus and the route from their apartment to the campus, reaching out with his cane. He knew where the sidewalk buckled, where children were likely to have left toys. But he had depended frequently on Doug's hand. Doug had accepted a blind roommate with more naturalness than he'd known anywhere outside the schools he'd attended. Even Vangie had needed time before she could feel free with him. But Doug neither hedged nor over-compensated. The only time he'd ever been embarrassed was once, after a year,

when Colin had asked to touch his face. Colin knew his roommate was large--could tell that from his movements, from brushing against him, from his sounds. Doug himself had told him his vital statistics--6'1", 195 pounds, red-haired ("carrot variety"), and freckled. "One gold tooth in my mouth that can be seen when I grin my biggest. All parts functional. Et cet. Et cet." But the contours of his face--he didn't know them. He wanted to feel them. While he moved his fingers over the broad nose, the wide cheek bones, the narrow eyes, he felt the tautness of muscle, and he realized that Doug was embarrassed. He dropped his hands as though finished and pretended not to have noticed.

He didn't understand the reaction, was himself embarrassed to have noticed it, was pleased to note this taboo in his uninhibited friend. They had girls in again that weekend, and the whole thing was forgotten.

"You want to sit or stand?"

"I'm ready to stand for a while."

"Here." Doug took his hand. "Try these raspberries."

"Delicious. The partridge will be okay?"

"Should. Give it a few days."

The partridge had flown into the car on the way back. At Prince Albert where they'd stopped at a drive-in, he had gotten in the car with Doug, Vangie with Martha, mainly so Vangie would be relieved of driving. As they neared the ferry the bird had whirred into the car, Colin starting at the surprise thump. Doug backed the car up, the two kids in the back exclaiming. When he set the bird on the seat between, it fluttered, so Colin held it.

It might have fleas.

He stroked it, holding the wings with his bony fingers. I can feel its heartbeat, he said.

Damn thing must be blind.

I hope not.

Doug chuckled. So did Colin. They knew each other too well to be embarrassed by a slip of the tongue.

He put another raspberry in his mouth. He heard the thump of beans as Doug dropped them into the plastic bucket--a distinctive sound. He could smell the vegetable smell.

He spoke in Doug's direction, as he shifted along the row.

"You find it peaceful here?"

"Sure. Now is the good time of the year, though. Martha isn't the only one depressed to see the trees turning. God, I hate winter. That damn river freezes clear across."

"But still, it's quiet. You don't have--" What did he want to say? "Do you know how many muggings there have been down there in the last month? Murders in the desert--?"

"That's one nice thing about being up here--"

"And God, two weeks before we left, a girl in some little apartment house near us was raped and murdered. You remember all those murders in Ann Arbor--"

"What's with you? You keeping tally?"

Instead of saying, Yes, I am, he laughed. "I guess I just get scared. I guess what it is--I'm aware, as I've never been before, of the hazards of being blind."

How did people go on regularly? Walking downtown with Vangie he heard the jamboree of footsteps, the bleat of horns and roar of cars; smelled the exhaust; felt the reflected heat from the sidewalk; felt the shift of air currents at street corners, stirred by the passing and crossing of bodies. In the interstices of the streets business slid on. Suppose a giant foot squashed down?

"Things getting to you, eh?"

"The girl in the apartment house--the one I mentioned--her name was Myra. She was from Texas. Very sweet but syrupy, putting it on thick, I used to think, though I never once saw her drop it. You know--the drawl, the talk about 'mah big brother,' and all that. But a very sweet, a very pretty girl. She was at our house the night it happened."

"She was a friend then. I'm sorry."

"We had police and investigators in and out for days. I had to get away. I told them we were coming up here--said we had to because this was my vacation time. She was a friend of Vangie's and was helping her that night with some toys for the carnival Cindy's nursery school puts on. She liked kids. Bev and Cindy loved her. She was there and I wanted her to let us walk her home. She said no, she had her bike, she was out in the evening a lot. She was expecting a friend to come by. She had two or three boy friends--the pill. . . But that didn't matter to Vangie. Or to me either. I'm still old-fashioned, but it didn't matter."

"All those femmes in Ann Arbor--"

"It's inconsistent. But that was a different, maybe an artificial, situation. At least that's what I tell myself. She was a lovely girl, all the same. We let her go, and then next morning, I'd just gotten out of the shower, Vangie was getting breakfast--a police car stopped in front. . . It really shook Vangie.

"Shook you, it looks like."

"Yes. They think it might be one of the boy friends. They can't find him. The other two were clear. But the one from California, I don't know where she picked him up, she told us about him. Held just come out of some commune wrapped up in Satanism, astrology--"

"A Manson place?"

"Not like that or Myra would never have taken up with him. I never saw him. All I know is what Myra said. She was naive. She was excited about him. I kept telling her to be careful, but she teased me about being old-fashioned. He's the one the police are looking for.

Doug said, "I see why you're hit hard."

"Yeah. Suppose it wasn't someone Myra knew though. Suppose it was some jerk with a knife who forced his way in, caught her at the door and threatened her. Suppose, see, that I'd walked her home. I could have. Hell of a big help I would have been, wouldn't I!"

"You can't let something like that eat at you. A bad conscience can. . ."

"It isn't really conscience. It's what I said before. I'm really becoming aware of the hazards of being blind. You have to be able to trust, have faith.

I'm scared to go out of the house sometimes. And I think of Cindy going up the street..."

Fearful of exposure outside the house, he must have been pasty white when they'd arrived. No wonder he'd burned so at the lake. Back in the old days when he roomed with Doug they'd spent many summer days at Silver Lake, where the University students went. Now he wanted to be touching close to Bev and Cindy. Next year Cindy would be going to school. Then what would he do? He wanted the nest to be secure. But whenever he thought of her walking off down the street--no dangerous crossings, not far from home--great palpitations of fear went through him. Not an adventure. A great risk.

Days of adventure belonged back in that apartment on State Street. The adventure came with the girls they'd filled some of their weekends with. Now it all seemed nostalgic, old-fashioned, naive. He felt futile, trying to scratch hieroglyphs in the dirt before a wind storm.

Yet here were the Makows still venturing--a poetry magazine, a ballet production. Et cet, et cet, as Doug would say.

"This should be enough," said Doug taking his arm. They scattered ducks rustling in the lawn. Doug was no taller than he--both of them peaked six feet--but he was stronger. "Let me run these peas and beans in. Then I'll show you the printing press."

The kids ran about the lawn--their two girls and the Makow's four. Jana, the oldest Makow, was a lovely dancer, said Martha. You should see her turn-out, and her feet. I'm green with envy.

A hand grasped his. Small and sweaty, it was Cindy's. "Hi, love, having fun?"

The printing press was in a garage separate from the house. Cindy held his hand and came with them.

"The garage wasn't insulated," said Doug, "so I had to take care of that and then get some heat inside."

"Where the hell did you get the time for all this?"

The barn was musty, air coated with the smell of ink. He reached out to touch the press. It was cool under his fingers. He traced its shape.

"I have to set it by hand. But that gives it, you know, the personal touch." He said it tongue-in-cheek, but Colin could tell he was serious, proud. "I'm using quality paper, getting each poem lined up right so that it looks good on the page. You wait, Willow is going to be a handsome journal."

"I believe you." He followed the machine around, stumbling a bit on the uneven floor. "You'll send me a copy, won't you?"

"I'd hoped to have the first issue done when you got here. But other stuff came up. The day's too short."

Spread out, open up. To do that demanded treat, faith.

Doug closed the garage door and Cindy ran off with the other kids. Makow activity, activity. . . What did it signify?

Night. Vangie slept. He lay on the daybed beside her. It had seemed best to sleep down here so he wouldn't have to negotiate the stairs to the second floor so often. It was late. The sun had gone down. Then near eleven there had been a display of northern lights. Now the house was quiet. Everyone was asleep. Except for him. He recognized the sounds of a house when everyone sleeps--the creaks that louden, the sleeper who shifts. Doug still mumbled when he turned. He heard him from here. He stretched out his arm so it lay against Vangie's back. At home with the Makows.

When he got ready for bed, he had stumbled and reaching down touched a sewing machine. He walked across--what?

Vangie said, "That's from *Les Sylphides*. Martha sewed some of the costumes herself. She's not put away the patterns, sewing machine, or scraps of material."

"Hell, that was two months ago.

Vangie giggled. "I know. She's rather much of a muchness, isn't she? But they were lovely. She showed me one. If I could sew like her. . . I'm sorry you didn't see the pictures from the dress rehearsal. I don't know how she does it."

They lay there, sheet pulled up to their waists. The night chilled. The turning--fall was virtually here, winter would be coming. He was glad they wouldn't have to meet the winter--frozen rivers, blown roads, sub-zero temperatures. That was something for the Makows, not for Colin and Vangie Dunstan. Instead they would return to... Something inside him triggered. Would the police have everything taken care of? What panicked him was the thought, What next?

He turned on his side. He brought his hand up to touch Vangie's head, the curling hair that both Cindy and Bev had, thick curling hair close to the head, rich in texture. Vangie said the girls had lovely hair. His fingers traced out plump faces, round cheeks and firm little noses. Round and plump like Vangie. Neither had gotten his own tall frame. They were upstairs with the Makow kids in sleeping bags. He wished they were with him here in this bed. Or that they were on the floor beside the bed. He wanted them in a tight gathering where he could touch and know they were safe. He could never like the Makows spread activity out so. He needed areas of safety, areas as shrunken and inviolate as they could likely be. The thought of things sliding from his fingertips left him gasping, reeling.

The night sounds of the house picked up--the motor of the frig, the pilot light of the hot water heater. From the basement came the flutter of wings. The partridge. At first he thought it was moving in its cage, but then from the range of the noise he knew it was out. He lifted his head. The cats could get it. He wondered about waking Vangie. But knowing how tired. . . He could find his way.

He swung his legs out of bed. Rather than change to pajamas he had gone to bed in his shorts. Against the chill air he pulled on trousers, careful against the burn on his legs. Shoes? Usually he had them right where his hand could touch. But everything was upset. Where? He couldn't find them. He knew where the basement steps went down. The air cooled. His toes lifted when he stepped off the bottom step and touched cold cement.

The bird was silent now. He reached out a hand to find himself and touched boxes. Against the outside wall. Cages were where? In the back. He

edged forward, uncertain what might be on the floor. At home the basement was kept cleared. Here. . . His feet touched a gunny sack, crusted with dirt.

He heard the partridge. Here was the washing machine. Dryer. More boxes. A bit of warmth touched his ankles as he passed the hot water heater. He walked over straw to where he'd heard the bird. Something squashed under his foot. Foul smell--chicken droppings. The bird rustled and he reached, kneeling. Fingers grazed feathers. Movement. Ah, quick.

He fell forward and caught. Rolled and brought a shovel clattering, a bucket half full of. Striking his waist. Half full of mash. But he held the bird. One wing loose flailed. He sat up, his elbow skinned maybe. Dirt raised, sifting in his nostrils. He felt an urge to shower, the straw, the itch, the mash, the dirt on him. The bird shit on his foot. He got the bird's wing in place under his hand, sat cross-legged on the floor. Easy, easy. He stroked the bird, small under its feathers, short tail. The head bobbed under his fingers. But he stroked, letting his breath come through his teeth in an almost audible whistle. It's okay, okay. He stroked steadily, slowly.

After a while the bird seemed to calm. Then when it came time to do something else, he didn't know what to do. Where were the cages? How did they work? Could he be sure, once he got the bird inside, that it would be safe? A fine mess, he thought, mocking himself. Come on, bird. Back upstairs. We'll hold on to you.

But standing he found his sense of direction gone. How large was the Makow basement? He turned. His feet left the straw and found the cold concrete floor again. But his hand, reaching out, missed the washing machine, missed boxes. Here was a chest, one of Martha's antiques--still in the rough. What else? A rug, another chest, a mattress. He'd never find. Nothing was in order. What could he manage?

Moving on, he found his way blocked by a piano. Around the piano--blocked by a bed. But following, he came to a rug on the floor. Warmer to his feet. Should he call Vangie? Doug? He decided against. He felt his watch. Four-thirty. It wouldn't be long until dawn. The slightest bit of light set Vangie stirring. Ah, now, a rocking chair. But he must take care. A

Makow rocking chair could collapse beneath you. A Makow rocking chair could wait a decade to be fixed. He lowered himself slowly, bird against his belly. Rocked tentatively. It was safe. He leaned back.

Well, bird, he thought. He stroked the smooth feathers. The head, the small head with the fragile skull, did not bob under his fingers. The body against him was warm. It made him feel easy, gave him a sense of strength even, to have something living under his fingers. Bev's hair. Cindy's. Vangiels. Then morning. What lay ahead? Winter. He stroked the bird. Till morning. That was what he could manage, all; the temporary. It wasn't much.

Still he leaned his head back against the chair. It wasn't much, but it was all.

SUNDAY MORNING

Robert L. Tyler

I.

What songs our guts can process, anthems from the dying
and renewing protoplasm. From some such chorale of love and
the winging up of spirit over the sodden mash, I crash to
the wet tiles and scratch my chin at the mirror ready to scrape
bristles from piggy jowls in the steamy mist of this improbability.

II.

I can take a gift and neither fawn nor fear and thus
accept this bright Sunday city under the trick or treat
October sun and walk down the empty streets past closed
shops like one modest but not undeserving.

I shall neither shout out nor sing but merely take the
gift of you glowing at my side after love and breakfast
as some surprise party thrown by my friend the world.

NUDES

Gerald Cohen

Why keep picturing you?
trying for year touch, waiting
when there is flesh always everywhere:
fifty collegiates jogging naked
to greet dreamers leaving their late skinflick,
five in Brazil waving along a highway,
bathe-ins, in ripples and reeds, heads low
contorted, grabbing seeking out bulgings,
one squatting on his knees, rounded in fervor
humping a sand mound, his mouth on a gritty tit.

Groupies, touch-ins, bare romp curling
poses and thrusts of sandy sunny asses,
these blowup poster gestures of buddhas
lost crosslegged in cavities of their own navels
struck dumb by the baubles of their rotund minds,
they clutch even at fountains
settling for moonbreasts of stone and bronze.

Why not reach instead to our pas de deux?
the skin one taut with sudden jerks
off-center turns swooping
into the fluid hold of hips, hug of thighs
wrapping waists, stretching our lengths
in the fullest tightness of your frame,
arched surfers riding a real crest
bone by bone leaping an arc
from our own pulse.

KNOT

Gerald Cohen

Bulging
the bright giant knot is light!
Overhead it swirls into itself
and out
spreading waves and fields
radiating eyes
linked by the dark crack in grain
arching its brow,
one eye
darkly wrinkled and intent
swirling below, it flashes high
splits
and throws jagged lighted streams
around all river cracks
edges and shadows:
hanging over space
it broods deep.

